

**5th European Regional Meeting  
on the implementation and effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention**

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4-8 December 2004, Yerevan, Armenia

Keynote

**The Ramsar Convention ... from Yerevan to Kampala**

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*Text from the presentation slides:*

**The road to Kampala...** via New York and on to Mexico *some headline issues:*

- new Contracting Parties update
- development of the scope of the Convention
- COP9 preparation (350 days and counting down...)
- the COP9 process
- World Wetlands Day 2005

**Broadening the scope...**

- international water resource management meeting (Tokyo, December 2004)
- Committee on Sustainable Development 13 on water policy (New York, April 2005)
- **Ramsar COP9 Kampala**, 7-15 November 2005
- 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Mexico 2006)
- 2005-2014 UN International Decade of Water

**COP9 preparation, some meetings...**

- MedWet/Com 6 (Algiers 11-15 December 2004)
- STRP 12 (1-4 February 2005)
- Standing Committee COP9 sub-group (7-9 March 2005)
- Standing Committee Finance sub-group (10 March 2005)
- Standing Committee 31 (7-10 June 2005)
- Regional Meetings:
  - Americas (Mexico, November 2004)
  - Europe (Armenia, December 2004)
  - Asia (to be confirmed)
  - Africa (Tanzania, April 2005)
  - Oceania (to be confirmed)
- Evian Encounters for Himalayan region and Mekong river basin (1-4 November 2004)

**COP9: practical approaches**

- Registration: on-line procedure
- Documentation: primarily only by Web-download (following CITES etc. procedure)
  - documents available in Kampala limited to those available last-minute
  - and/or very large files
- Reduced volume of Information Papers
  - i.e. those not needing COP approval

- STRP technical review & methods papers to be published in new *Ramsar Technical Report* series
- Kampala facilities limited: restricted opportunities for side-events etc.

### **Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) prepares for COP9:**

A set of overarching frameworks, supported by specific additional guidance for Parties, including:

- a framework for delivery of Wise Use of wetlands for human well-being
- updated definitions of the Convention's two key concepts "wise use" and "ecological character"
- an integrated framework for Ramsar's water-related guidance
- guidelines on groundwater, environmental flows, economic valuation
- an integrated Framework for inventory, assessment and monitoring
- an updated COP7 Strategic Framework for Ramsar site designation
- ecological indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Convention

### **COP9 Sub-group meeting in Gland, March 2005**

Will discuss the following issues:

- how to deal with technical Resolutions at COP9
- process for proposed "regional initiatives" (Resolution VIII.30)
- National Reports for COP9 due end of February 2005
- non-technical issues concerning:
  - the name "Secretariat"
  - the Budget
  - synergies with other MEAs
  - outreach of the Convention (CEPA)
  - the Convention's development
  - (Strategic) Work Plan 2006-2008 new draft document

### **COP9 Technical Resolutions**

Responding to Resolution VIII.45:

- streamlining of technical Resolutions process
- STRP/Secretariat proposing:
  - one Resolution adopting suite of new guidelines prepared by STRP (with guidelines as Annexes)
  - consolidated Resolution on "Future technical priorities and implementation of the Convention"
- urge CPs to submit Resolutions to Standing Committee, and in any case not later than 120 days before COP (i.e. by early July 2005)

### **The name of the "Secretariat"**

The legal advice from IUCN-ELC is:

- to have the Convention's Standing Committee resolve to endorse naming the unit within IUCN responsible for carrying out the continuing bureau duties, the "Ramsar Secretariat"
- to have the Convention's Standing Committee develop a motion to present to the next COP recommending that the Parties to the Convention note and endorse the decision of the Standing Committee to name the unit within IUCN responsible for carrying out the continuing bureau duties, the "Ramsar Secretariat"

### **Regional initiatives and COP9**

- Several under current development
- COP required to evaluate proposals against Resolution VIII.30 guidance, especially if requesting core budget funding
- SC Finance Sub-group therefore needs to see and advise on proposals
  - to avoid multiplicity of separate “regional initiative” draft Resolutions
  - SC likely prepare single consolidated resolution, with each proposal assessed against VIII.30 guidance
- But – regional initiative financing is a challenge
  - MedWet currently financial crisis owing to non-payment of funds committed by Mediterranean countries, as agreed at COP8
  - Coordination Unit may be forced to close shortly

### **The 2006-2008 Budget**

To be discussed in detail by the SC sub-group on Finance

Issues to resolve:

- need to have realistic income lines
- need to restore the budget at least to the amount agreed by COP8 (to avoid 2003-2005 interest shortfall)
- need to index that budget by a realistic amount
- may include options for some growth, e.g. regional capacity (Panama Centre, Oceania, etc.)
- outsourced STRP support service will discontinue (this will need to be factored in)

### **And finally... Outreach**

EcoFilms Festival 2005:

- admissions are open for the 2nd Ramsar/MedWet Award for the best film on water/wetlands
- the films will be judged during the next EcoFilms Festival, 21-26 June 2005, Rhodes (Greece).
- the winner will be awarded 4.000 EUR
- deadline is 1 March 2005, entry forms can be found at [www.ecofilms.gr](http://www.ecofilms.gr)

### **World Wetlands Day 2005...**

- on the theme of the Cultural and Biological Diversity of Wetlands
- our slogan is: *There's wealth in wetland diversity – don't lose it*
- materials available: a poster and 3 stickers

### **WWD 2005, a new approach...**

Why?

- to find a solution to the Secretariat's recurring problem of limited capacity for sending the materials and responding to requests

How?

- we are mailing a boxes of WWD materials to all AAs (posters, stickers, covering letters)
- each box includes mailing labels for people in the country who have been active in WWD in the past
- AAs are encouraged to send materials to our “hit list” and any other interested people, and to supply additional copies to those requiring it

**So...** There's is lots to do, and less than a year to do it in!

