

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee  
Gland, Switzerland, 29 May – 2 June 2017

**Monday 29 May 2017**

**10:00 – 16:00 Meeting of the Management Working Group (MWG)**

**Draft conclusions and action points**

**a. Working Group on CEPA Implementation** Doc. SC53-03 *Progress in the implementation of the CEPA Action Plan 2016 – 2018*

Following introductions to the document by the **Chair of the CEPA Working Group** (South Africa) and the **Secretariat**, interventions were made by the following members of the Management Working Group (MWG): **Australia, Senegal, Uruguay** and the **United States of America**.

In response to questions and comments, the **Secretary General** noted that:

- The Ramsar Culture Network, supported by MAVA and mentioned under Target 1.5 of the CEPA Action Plan for the Secretariat 2016-2018, would be covered under SC53 Agenda item 13 e).
- The CEPA Oversight Panel and CEPA Working Group would be holding parallel meetings on 30 May 2017, followed by a joint meeting of the two Chairs.

The **Chair** (Uruguay) concluded that the comments made during the discussion of this item should be sent to the Secretariat, to be taken into account during the parallel CEPA meetings on 30 May.

**b. Proposal of new MOUs** Doc. SC53-04 *Proposal for a new memorandum of understanding and update on other agreements*

Following an introduction to the document by the **Secretariat**, interventions were made by the following members of the MWG: **Australia, Canada, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United States of America** and **Uruguay**, and by the following observers: **Argentina, Colombia, Japan**, and **WWT**. WWT informed the MWG of the renewal of the MoU between the International Organisation Partners (IOPs) and the Secretariat after a useful meeting of the IOP heads and the Secretary General.

It was agreed that the MWG should recommend to SC53 that:

- a review of all current and proposed cooperative agreements (whether Memoranda of Understanding, Memoranda of Cooperation, or similar) should be conducted, taking account of the present document as well as the work previously conducted for SC52, to report to SC54;

- this review should be conducted on the basis of criteria mentioned by MWG members, which might include an assessment of costs and benefits of existing and proposed agreements, value added, mechanisms for monitoring results, possible development of an agreement 'template' and consideration of whether some partnerships could be taken forward effectively without the need for formal written agreements;
- the draft MOU with SACEP (Annex 1 to Doc. SC53-04) should be considered within this wider review of cooperative agreements;
- the Secretary General may sign the proposed letter of agreement with the International Partnership on Blue Carbon once the invitation letter received from the Government of Australia has been circulated to the MWG.

It was also noted that the Joint Work Plan 2015-2017 between the Ramsar and CMS Secretariats (Annex 2 to Doc. SC53-04) might need to be revised to take account of the new CMS Strategic Plan being tabled for adoption by the CMS COP in October 2017.

**c. Review of existing Working Groups** Doc. SC53-05 *Status of Working Groups of the Standing Committee 2016-2018*

Following an introduction to the document by the **Secretariat**, interventions were made by the following members of the MWG: **Australia, Romania, Senegal and South Africa, Switzerland** and the **United States of America**, and by **Sweden**.

The **Chair** (Uruguay) concluded that there was some agreement within the MWG on the need to review the mandates, terms of reference and timeframes of the existing Working Groups, that Working Groups which had fulfilled their mandates should be dissolved, and that Doc. SC53-05 should be updated accordingly.

The **Chair** (Uruguay) further concluded that a wider issue concerning the possible need to amend structures to enhance the convention's effectiveness, was a separate point and would have to be dealt with as such, perhaps based on a further proposal to the SC along these lines. Parties that had expressed an interest in this matter would be further consulted by the Chair and a proposal would be presented when reporting on the recommendations of the MWG.

**d. Strategy on the use of UN languages** Doc. SC53-06 *Language Strategy for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*.

Following a detailed introduction by the **Secretariat**, interventions were made by the following members of the MWG: **Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland and United States of America**, and by the following observers: **Colombia, Japan, Ramsar Regional Initiative for Central Asia** and the **Chair of the STRP**.

The sensitivity and potential budgetary implications of this issue were particularly underlined.

It was agreed that:

- the open-ended informal working group on this matter established by SC52 should meet to consider the subject further and bring forward a proposal to the plenary session of the Standing Committee when the MWG provides its report.