



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Conference Report

Opening Ceremony, Tuesday 2 June 2015, 16.00 – 18.00

Agenda Item I: Opening of the Meeting

Agenda Item II: General Statements

1. The Ramsar Flag was transferred from the COP11 official representative of **Romania, Doina Catrinoiu**, Chair of the Conference Committee, to the representative of **Uruguay, Eneida de León Pérez**, Minister of Housing, Planning and Environment of Uruguay, host country of COP12.
2. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Rodolfo Nin Novoa**, warmly welcomed participants to Uruguay and noted that an apt title for his presentation could be “Nature can live without man, but man cannot live without nature”. He said that Uruguay took its environmental responsibilities seriously, under the slogan “Uruguay Natural”, and pointed out that 12% of Uruguay’s land area consisted of wetlands, compared to a global average of 6%. He was pleased to report that the country’s largest wetland, Bañados del Este y Franja Costera, had just been withdrawn from the Montreux Record, due to improved management associated with increased national awareness of the importance of wetland conservation. He noted that it was an important year for sustainable development as a new set of Sustainable Development Goals was due to be agreed at a UN meeting in New York in September. He said the Uruguayan Government was here to help achieve a successful outcome.
3. The Mayor of Maldonado, **Susana Hernández**, welcomed participants to Punta del Este and explained that, although the Department of Maldonado had extremes of wealth and poverty, it was striving for an optimal distribution of resources to create a better environment for all. She noted that Uruguay was a small country that had previously not valued its wetlands properly but now understood their environmental, cultural, educational and economic importance. She recognized the relationship between nature and society and explained how the Department was working in collaboration with national government and other agencies to improve the sustainable development of wetlands.
4. The Chair of the Conference Committee, **Doina Catrinoiu**, noted that the period between COP11 and COP12 had been very active and constructive and expressed her thanks for all those who assisted her country in hosting COP11 and chairing the Standing Committee during the last triennium. She felt that the theme of COP12 was particularly relevant because of the global loss of biodiversity and associated natural capital, and reinforced the potential importance of Ramsar in contributing to discussion on the proposed new Sustainable Development Goals. She also underlined the importance of the forthcoming meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and expressed the hope that the present meeting would send a clear message that the future was low carbon. She encouraged the

participants to fulfil the Ramsar mission and wished everyone a rewarding, successful and enjoyable meeting.

5. The Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, **Inger Andersen**, thanked the host country for its warm welcome. She was sure that the COP would be a milestone in the advancement of the conservation of wetlands worldwide. She drew attention to the alarming global rates of degradation and loss of wetlands and wetland biodiversity, observing that wetland loss had quadrupled in the past 100 years but that humanity appeared to have become almost blind to the severity and likely impacts of this. Huge amounts of natural capital were being wasted and action was needed to reverse this. She observed that true success would be achieved by action at the national level and by building networks and communities on the ground that could restore wetlands on a large scale. She urged the Convention and its partners to make Ramsar a catalyst for massive change, noting that it was the first of the modern-day multilateral environmental agreements and it was natural that it should lead the way.
6. **Jane Madgwick**, speaking on behalf the International Organization Partners (IOPs: BirdLife International, International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, International Water Management Institute, Wetlands International, and WWF), thanked the COP for the opportunity to speak and the Government of Uruguay for hosting the meeting. She looked forward also to working with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust during the course of the meeting. She drew attention to the commitment of the IOPs in helping implement the Convention. She noted that awareness was increasing in the international community of the importance of water resources and the risks posed by their degradation, and observed that the call to restore wetlands in all parts of the world was getting louder, welcoming the Convention's ambitious programme of wetland restoration. She suggested that indicators in the Ramsar Strategic Plan might focus more on outcomes than processes. She particularly welcomed Draft Resolutions on Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation, Protection of Water requirements for wetlands, and Wetlands and disaster risk reduction, but felt that DR XII.11 on Peatlands, climate change and wise use, might better reflect the global importance of peatlands as wetland habitats.
7. The Ramsar **Secretary General (SG), Christopher Briggs**, thanked the Government of Uruguay for hosting the meeting. He noted that the definition of wetland under the Convention went far beyond the general understanding of what a wetland was, emphasizing their immense importance in providing ecosystem goods and services and noting that more money was spent in wetlands (as defined by Ramsar) than in any other ecosystem. He also emphasized the severe rates of loss and degradation of wetlands and wetland biodiversity. Reversing this and restoring wetland habitats would require collaborative work amongst all stakeholders. This was a major theme of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and would involve engagement with sectors such as agriculture and infrastructure development that were major drivers of wetland loss. He noted that the draft Sustainable Development Goals and Targets to be discussed in September in New York made many explicit references to water and wetland habitats. COP12 was well timed to provide input to these discussions. He was optimistic that the COP would be a success.
8. The Minister for Housing, Planning and the Environment, **Eneida de León Pérez**, welcomed participants to Uruguay. She thanked all those in her own Ministry and those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries who had worked hard to organize the meeting. She noted that Uruguay was a small country but one with an

international outlook. Its commitment to Ramsar's goals was demonstrated by its hosting of the current COP. She outlined the history of wetland management in Uruguay, noting that until relatively recently inappropriate management and lack of understanding of the value of wetlands had led to extensive degradation. With the restoration of democracy in the country this had changed and there was now real commitment to sustainable development. An innovative project on sustainable rice production in eastern Uruguay had been implemented, three new protected areas containing important wetlands had been declared in 2014, and new legislation on land management and sustainable development included measures for protecting wetlands and other ecosystems. The country had joined Ramsar in 1984, inscribing the wetland area of Bañados del Este y Franja Costera on the Ramsar List. She signalled Uruguay's intention to include a new site on the List, that of the Laguna de Rocha Protected Landscape. She also stressed Uruguay's willingness to work on a regional level with the other countries that formed the catchment of the Rio de la Plata, one of the world's most important river basins.

First Plenary Session, Wednesday 3 June 2015, 10.00 – 13.00

9. The **President, Doina Catrinoiu**, introduced the new **Deputy Secretary General (DSG), Ania Grobicki**, who expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Parties and the Convention. She believed that Ramsar was a valuable tool in helping the world shift to a more sustainable future and wished everyone a very successful COP.
10. **The SG** warmly welcomed the DSG and looked forward to working with her to improve the power and efficiency of the Convention.

Agenda Item III: Adoption of the Agenda

11. **The President** invited the Parties to consider COP12 DOC.1 and adopt the Agenda.
12. **Denmark** observed that, according to the Agenda, the Draft Resolutions (DRs) would not be considered until Thursday 4 June. He suggested that consideration might start today if there were time. This was agreed by **the President**.
13. **South Africa** sought clarity regarding the application of Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, which states that all documents including an annotated provisional agenda should be distributed in the official languages by the Secretariat at least three months before the COP, i.e. 1 March. The provisional annotated agenda (COP12 DOC.1bis) was not distributed until 26 May.
14. **The SG** noted that the annotated provisional agenda was a new document that had not been used in previous COPs and the delay was due to the late confirmation of keynote speakers. He welcomed the Parties' opinions on the issuance of this new document.
15. COP12 DOC.1 was adopted by acclaim.

Agenda Item IV: Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

16. **The President** noted that SC49 had recommended the adoption of the Rules of Procedure used at COP11 (COP12 DOC.27) for this meeting. The proposed Rules of Procedure in COP12

DOC.3 would be discussed in an informal working group during the present meeting, with the intention of adopting revised Rules of Procedure for use at future COPs.

17. **Cameroon** and **Senegal** made suggestions concerning additions and amendments to the proposed Rules of Procedure in document COP12 DOC.27.
18. **The President** suggested that interested Parties, including Cameroon and Senegal, join the working group on the Rules of Procedure.
19. COP12 DOC.27 Rules of Procedure was adopted by acclaim.

Agenda Item V: Election of the President and Vice-Presidents and remarks by the President

20. **The President** reported that the Conference Committee had nominated the following:
President: Jorge Rucks (Uruguay)
Alternate President: Jose Luis Remedi (Uruguay)
Vice-Presidents: (North America) Scott Johnston (United States of America)
(Oceania) Eleni Marama Tokaduadua (Fiji)
21. The COP endorsed by acclaim the Conference Committee's nominations.
22. The President, Alternate President and Vice-Presidents were invited to the podium to assume their responsibilities.
23. **The SG** thanked the outgoing President on behalf of the Parties.
24. **The President, Jorge Rucks**, accepted the role of Chair of the Standing Committee, recognizing the valuable work carried out by the previous Chair and Romania. He acknowledged the mistakes Uruguay had made in the past in wetland management, particularly the draining of wetlands to create pastures for cattle, and affirmed that Uruguay, assisted by the scientific community, was in the process of changing management methods and redefining policies. Uruguay had accepted the commitments required to conserve wetlands and worked hard to have one of its Ramsar Sites removed from the Montreux Record. In electing him as Chair, the Convention had shown confidence in his small country which was used to working in close consultation with others, and would do this throughout this triennium to achieve clear rules and transparency within Ramsar. He assured the participants that Uruguay would be open to all comments, observations, advice and criticism in order to improve efficiency in managing their wetlands.

Agenda Item VI: Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other Committee

25. The following Contracting Parties and their individual representatives were nominated to serve on the Credentials Committee for COP12:
Africa: **Kenya** (Professor James Njogu)
Asia: **Thailand** (Nirawan Pipitsombat)
Europe: **Austria** (Wolfgang Pelikan)
Neotropics: **Argentina** (Fernando Thourte)
North America: **Mexico** (Talia Cruz)
Oceania: **New Zealand** (Margriet de Poorter)

26. **The Credentials Committee was elected by consensus.**
27. **The SG** reported that Burundi, Canada (Chair), Chile, Denmark, Fiji and the Republic of Korea were all members of the Committee on Finance and Budget.
28. **Finland** noted that as outgoing Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance and Budget she was also a member of the Committee. **The United States of America** reminded the meeting that any interested Parties could participate. This was confirmed by **the President**.
29. **Senegal** requested that Cameroon (and Senegal as Alternate) participate in the Committee on Finance and Budget.
30. In response to a question from **Denmark**, **the President** stated that all information concerning this group would be posted on the Ramsar website.

Agenda Item VII: Admission of Observers

31. **The SG** introduced COP12 DOC.21 which listed all registered Observers.
32. **COP12 DOC.21 Admission of Observers was accepted by consensus.**

Agenda Item VIII: Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee

33. **Doina Catrinoiu, Romania**, outgoing **Chair of the Standing Committee**, presented her report contained in COP12 DOC.5 *Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee*, and wished everyone a very successful COP12.
34. **The President** proposed deferring the special presentations until the following session and this was agreed.

Agenda item IX: Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level

35. **The SG** made a presentation on the implementation of the Convention during the past triennium based on document COP12 DOC.8 and actions taken relating to the Ramsar 3rd Strategic Plan. He thanked the outgoing Chair, Romania, for her leadership and commitment to the Ramsar Convention.
36. **Uganda** reported that his country had lost around 30% of its wetlands in the past 30 years, and felt it was important to understand better the drivers of wetland loss. He welcomed global initiatives to restore wetlands and believed this would require improved legal protection of wetlands everywhere. He reported that Uganda had embarked on an ambitious plan to demarcate and restore its wetlands.
37. **Denmark** noted that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was the closest partner to Ramsar amongst all the multilateral environmental agreements, with the two Conventions having a joint work programme. He asked the SG to elaborate on work carried out under this.
38. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** believed there to be two gaps in the report: how Resolutions agreed at previous COPs had been implemented and the extent to which the goals set by the

COP for the Secretariat had been met. **Cameroon** and **Senegal** agreed that the report should address implementation of Resolutions and past Recommendations, in particular the extent to which the Secretariat had helped in this. They drew attention to Recommendation 5.7 on the establishment of National Committees, which they considered important.

39. **The Democratic Republic of Congo** suggested there should be indicators to determine progress in implementation of Resolutions. He asked what use was made of Ramsar National Reports and noted that, as the Ramsar National Focal Point for his country, he had difficulties in knowing whom to contact within Ramsar regarding any particular issue.
40. **Peru** suggested that information on Ramsar Sites extension could be related to that on other national protected areas and Biosphere Reserves.
41. **South Africa** drew attention to its highly successful wetland restoration programme “Working for Wetlands” and suggested the Secretariat collect and make available to Parties examples of best practice.
42. **The Seychelles** noted that some Parties had had difficulties with the new electronic Ramsar Site Information Service (RSIS) and suggested a two-year transition period during which the old system could still be used. He also called for capacity-building to help Parties with using the new RSIS.
43. **Pakistan** urged improved collaboration between Ramsar and CITES, noting that some wetland species were threatened by international trade. He also asked the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to address the issue of conservation of wetlands that did not meet Ramsar criteria.
44. **The Dominican Republic** stressed the importance of capacity-building and noted that the regional training centre in Panama was in need of logistic and financial strengthening.
45. **Venezuela** believed that the role of indigenous communities and other civil society groups was not adequately reflected in the Ramsar Strategic Plan.
46. In response, **the SG** reported that Ramsar had a close working relationship with the CBD and was working with it to ensure that Ramsar’s concerns were well reflected in the criteria for the forthcoming new cycle of GEF funding. Regarding implementation of Resolutions and Recommendations, he stressed that this was fundamentally the responsibility of the Parties and other actors; the Secretariat’s role was to facilitate this. He agreed that National Committees were key to making progress but stressed that it was the choice of each Party whether to establish one or not. He noted that an independent study had found Ramsar National Reports generally to be of high quality. They were drawn on to produce regional overviews and served as a resource for those involved in wetland conservation and management. He agreed that indicators were of great importance in assessing progress and urged the Parties to work during the meeting on those in the Strategic Plan. He believed that the new quarterly newsletter should facilitate communication. He reported that the Secretariat was actively pursuing South Africa’s suggestion, hoping to make such information available in all three languages of the Convention. He suggested Parties help each other in implementation of the new RSIS and called on donors to provide support for capacity-building. He hoped that the regional training centre in Panama could be supported once appropriate

legislative and governance structures were in place, and agreed with Venezuela that it was important that the views of indigenous communities were represented in the Strategic Plan.

47. **BirdLife International** drew attention to “Caring for Coasts”, a global joint Ramsar/CBD /BirdLife International initiative.
48. **IUCN** responded to the management issues raised by the SG in his presentation and in document COP12 DOC.8, noting that there had in fact been continuity of leadership at IUCN. He believed that any past difficulties had been resolved and that the six-monthly liaison meetings called for in Resolution 11.1 and that were now in place were working well.
49. **UNEP** outlined the areas in which it was working to help in the implementation of Ramsar, noting that Ramsar and UNEP were in the process of finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding. She stated that UNEP focused on areas that offered most opportunity for synergy, for example through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and through helping organize regional meetings for pre-COP consultations, drawing attention to a meeting in the Oceania region that had jointly addressed Ramsar, CITES and CMS. The UNEP regional Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) focal points were working to help Ramsar implementation at regional level and UNEP was working with Ramsar in the drafting of proposed wetland Sustainable Development Goals. A sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related Conventions would be launched during the present meeting.

Second Plenary Session, Wednesday 3 June 2015, 15.00 – 18.00

Special Presentation: “Wetlands in Uruguay”. Alejandro Nario, National Director of the Environment, Ministry of Housing, Planning and Environment of Uruguay

50. **The National Director of the Environment** welcomed the participants and stated that this was a significant meeting for Uruguay. Wetlands covered 12% of the country, which currently had two Ramsar Sites: Bañados del Este y Franja Costera and Esteros de Farrapos e Islas del Rio Uruguay, with a third proposed, Laguna de Rocha. He mentioned the Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas (SNAP) and outlined Uruguay’s conservation legislation, in particular the National Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020 and legislation on water policy. He explained how government and civilian agencies worked together to conserve their wetlands and ensure that conservation policies were in place to improve water and wetland management. He drew attention to the Rio de la Plata basin, one of the largest river basins in the world, and the need for the five bordering countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) to act together to conserve the biodiversity of the region.

Panel Discussion on “Innovative Public-Private Partnerships” with Danone and Livelihoods Funds. Laurent Sacchi, Bernard Giraud and Ramsar Secretary General

51. The **SG** introduced **Laurent Sacchi** and **Bernard Giraud** from **Danone**, noting that Ramsar and Danone had been working together since 1998. **Laurent Sacchi** went on to explain Danone’s involvement with Ramsar, noting that it was for business and not philanthropic reasons. A film was then shown outlining the role of Ramsar and Danone in water conservation. **Bernard Giraud** explained Danone’s need to reduce their carbon footprint and how the Livelihoods Fund began in 2008 as a result of an agreement between Danone, IUCN and Ramsar, and now

involved ten large corporations with a fund of 40 million Euros. He gave an overview of projects in Senegal and Banda Aceh in Indonesia, amongst others, and explained how they only invested in large projects that involved big, efficient, local NGOs.

52. Following a question from the **SG, Laurent Sacchi** gave his views on how to establish a public-private partnership, believing that each side could learn from the other and build on respective strengths. **El Salvador** asked if the videos were available online and **Bernard Giraud** confirmed they were, at www.livelihoods.eu. **Brazil** congratulated Danone on the projects. **Iran** asked if Danone would consider supporting projects in other countries. **Laurent Sacchi** responded that they were very keen to support projects in countries where they had offices as the more local the project, the more effective it was. **Mexico** requested technical support on how to create such partnerships and **Laurent Sacchi** responded that they would be delighted to encourage other companies to work in partnership with governments and non-governmental organizations.
53. **The President** then gave the floor to **Redmanglar Internacional (International Mangrove Network)** who believed that the contribution of black as well as indigenous people had not been recognized in the SG's report and that this contribution should be recognised by the Parties to this Convention, as it is under other Conventions. **The SG** acknowledged the work of local communities, agreeing that they enhanced conservation projects.
54. **Virginia Juele**, representing the World Wetland Network, made a presentation on behalf of the NGO community. She observed that NGOs and civil society groups were often the true custodians of wetlands. Enabling NGOs required resources, but small amounts spent could often lead to large outcomes. She believed collaboration between Parties and civil society was vital if conservation at local level was to be achieved. She suggested it be recognized that involvement of NGOs often led to longer term and more continuous management of wetlands than management solely by government. She advocated finding more structured ways for national focal points to engage with NGOs and believed NGOs could be more closely involved in decision-making at national and international levels, noting that they could often provide valuable input into the selection of candidate sites and assessment of existing Ramsar Sites, including those on the Montreux Record.

Agenda Item X: Report on implementation of the CEPA Programme 2009-2015

55. **The Secretariat** presented the report on the implementation of the Convention's CEPA Programme 2009-2015 as contained in document COP12 DOC.18.

Agenda Item XI: Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

56. **The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), Royal C. Gardner**, presented his report as contained in document COP12 DOC.6, drawing attention to its annex in which there was a detailed breakdown of all tasks included in the 2013-2015 STRP workplan.
57. **Chile** observed that language was still a barrier to effective participation in the STRP. She welcomed the proposed restructuring of the way in which scientific and technical advice was provided under the Convention and asked that summaries of important work be translated into Spanish and produced in forms targeted to specific audiences, particularly those involved in wetland management on the ground.

58. **Bangladesh** thanked the STRP for its advice on dealing with the oil spill in the Sundarbans in December 2014. It appeared that there had been no significant immediate impact of the spill. The Government intended to undertake monitoring to assess any long-term impact.
59. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** asked whether the work undertaken under CEPA and by the STRP was based on specific Resolutions. He also wished to know what the connection between different bodies under Ramsar was.
60. **Panama** asked if it would be possible to see the consultant's report produced in response to Resolution XI.16 as this would provide useful input into work on Draft Resolution XII.5 regarding the proposed new framework for provision of scientific and technical advice and guidance.
61. **The Chair of the STRP** acknowledged the existence of a language barrier in impeding the full participation of non-English speakers in the work of the STRP. He reported that the Panel had worked with the communications team to produce the briefing note on the State of the World's Wetlands in all three languages. He also noted that the consultant's report referred to by Panama was available as a Standing Committee (SC) document.
62. **The SG** explained that the COP was ultimately responsible for deciding on actions undertaken and then passed responsibility to the SC for day-to-day implementation during each intersessional period. The STRP worked directly under the guidance of the SC. The communications department was part of the Secretariat and was responsible for ensuring good coordination of and uniformity in communications. He noted that a proposed CEPA Action Plan had been presented to SC49 and would be refined and presented again to the Standing Committee for approval.
63. **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** encouraged Ramsar to develop a high profile report on the State of the World's Wetlands that could be periodically updated, analogous to the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the World Heritage Outlook and the Global Environment Outlook. He also noted that the Ramsar Convention was actively engaged together with CBD in discussions regarding targets and indicators under the proposed new Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the index on wetland extent, being considered for possible inclusion as an indicator under proposed SDG Target 6.6.

Agenda Item XII: Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

64. **The SG** explained that all matters had either been considered under the previous two Agenda Items or would be considered under Agenda Item XV on Consideration of Draft Resolutions.

Third Plenary Session, Thursday 4 June 2015, 10.00 – 13.00

Special Presentation: "Can the Sustainable Development Goals help save wetlands?" Jane Madgwick, Executive Director, Wetlands International

65. **Jane Madgwick** outlined the proposed new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), stating that she believed they presented Ramsar with a major opportunity to promote the role of wetlands in sustainable development. She highlighted those that were of particular relevance

to Ramsar and wetlands more generally, notably proposed Goals 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, and presented a brief analysis showing overlaps between proposed targets and indicators under these Goals and those in the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

66. **Finland** stated that it would be appropriate to discuss indicators in any contact group that might be established to discuss DR2 on the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021.
67. An observer from **Uruguay** described an integrated management plan that he was attempting to develop for the coastline of eastern Uruguay and adjacent Brazil and asked for potential collaborators.
68. **Senegal** wished to thank Wetlands International for all its efforts in supporting the conservation and sustainable management of Senegal's wetlands. The meeting acclaimed Wetlands International for this and other work.
69. **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** noted that the Secretariats of the CBD and Ramsar had been working together, specifically through UN-Water, to coordinate input into the process of developing new SDGs and reported on the current state of development of these.

Agenda item XIII: Financial report for 2012-2015 by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance

70. **Canada**, as Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance, introduced documents COP12 DOC.14 and DOC.15 and gave a summary of the work of the Subgroup over recent triennia, noting that the figures presented could be found in more detail in the relevant Standing Committee documents. She reported that there had been an urgent request from the Secretariat in April 2015 for a loan of CHF 285,000 from the reserve fund to cover a shortfall in the sponsored delegates fund for COP12. The Subgroup had agreed to this as an exceptional circumstance. Of this sum, CHF 115,000 had not yet been repaid into the reserve fund, but the latter still remained at between 6% and 15% of the Ramsar operating budget, as required. She noted that, despite action by the Secretariat, outstanding assessed contributions remained a concern. The most recent figure for these – CHF 943,000 – represented 20% of the core budget. However, SC47 had decided not to propose punitive measures for Parties in arrears. She drew attention to the three proposed budget scenarios for the forthcoming triennium in Annex 1 of document COP12 DR1 Rev.1 and concluded by stating that the Secretariat had managed the budget prudently, efficiently and openly during the past triennium.
71. **Ecuador** and **Jamaica** reported that their countries had paid their assessed contributions and were no longer in arrears.
72. **Senegal** stressed the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions and believed that provision for them should be made in all proposed budget scenarios. He also sought clarification regarding unfilled staff positions and the relationship between the post of Regional Affairs Officer identified in line 21 of Annex 4 of document COP12 DOC.14 and the post of Regional Officer for Africa, which he believed had been approved for core-budget funding. He believed that a Regional Officer for Africa should come from the region.
73. **The SG** responded that the title of the post in Annex 4 of the document was in error, and that the post was indeed a Regional Officer for Africa. He agreed that such an officer should come

from the African region.

74. **WWF** drew attention to World Heritage Missions funded by the World Heritage Convention.
75. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** considered the amount spent on translation to be large in relation to other budgetary items. He advocated seeking innovative approaches to reducing this cost, for example by asking Parties to undertake translation on a voluntary basis. He also asked what the main factor was in driving budget allocation.
76. **Canada** supported the idea of trying to save costs on translation. Regarding the allocation of the budget, she drew attention to Annex 5 of document COP12 DOC.14. The budget was established to ensure the Secretariat had the resources to implement Resolutions and the Strategic Plan, and to cover activities relating to general implementation of the Convention. There was also some allocation for regional initiatives in the core budget.
77. **The SG** welcomed the idea of Parties providing translation on a voluntary basis, provided that they could respond to the Secretariat's needs on a daily or weekly basis in a way that did not incur significant cost and that the translations were in line with the standards that had been established. Regarding budget allocation, he noted that plans were approved by the Standing Committee at the start of each year, based on the Strategic Plan as approved by the COP.
78. **Panama** sought clarity on the relationship between the post of Head of Partnerships in Annex 4 of document COP12 DOC.14 and the possible staff member included under non-core budget 2016-2018 in sub-paragraph 29. c) of the document. She added that she believed provision for a Regional Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean should be included in the core budget for the following triennium.
79. **The SG** explained that the Head of Partnership post was different from the proposed post for a staff member to convene a Global Partnership on Wetlands Restoration. The former was core-funded but the latter was not. He also explained that the proposed budget scenarios would not currently allow for the funding of additional Regional Officers from the core budget.
80. **Colombia** regretted the current absence of the Small Grants Fund, stating that his country had found it very useful and asking what needed to be done to reinstate it.
81. **The SG** explained that the fund was non-core and expressed his thanks to those who had contributed to it in the past. The Secretariat, in particular the Head of Partnerships, would be seeking contributions to reinstate the fund.
82. **Chile** stressed the great importance of ensuring that all documents were translated into the three languages of the Convention.
83. **Sweden** disagreed with the statement in paragraph 13 of document COP12 DOC.14 that redevelopment of the RSIS had been completed and believed that increased support for Information Technology (IT) should be a feature of the core budget in the forthcoming triennium.
84. **The SG** agreed that more investment was needed to improve the RSIS and bring all Ramsar databases together. The Parties could address this in their deliberations on the budget for the next triennium.

85. Regarding translation, **Honduras** drew attention to document COP12 DOC.17, concerning the accommodation of Arabic and other UN languages into the Ramsar Convention.
86. **Switzerland** believed that the COP should be funded out of the core budget, in line with other MEAs. The current system put a great burden on the host country and on donors. **The SG** noted that any decision rested with the Parties.

Agenda item XIV: Election of Contracting Parties for the Standing Committee 2015-2018

87. The **Alternate President** invited each Ramsar region to nominate Standing Committee representatives for the forthcoming period.
88. The following nominations were made:

Africa:	Democratic Republic of Congo (alternate Central African Republic); Kenya (alternate Uganda); Senegal (alternate Mali); Seychelles (alternate Botswana); Tunisia (alternate Egypt)
Asia:	Iraq (alternate Bahrain); Republic of Korea (alternate Japan)
Europe:	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Romania (alternates France, Russia, Ukraine). Switzerland, Permanent Observer
Neotropics:	Colombia (alternate Argentina); Honduras (alternate Costa Rica); Suriname (alternate Cuba)
North America:	United States of America (alternate Canada)
Oceania:	Australia (alternate Samoa)
89. The Asia region stated that the third nomination for their region would be put forward at a later session.
90. **The SG** noted that following a request made at SC48, a representative of the UNFCCC had been invited to participate at COP12 but due to a clash of meetings this had not been possible. He then read out a statement from UNFCCC (see Annex 1). **The President** invited the Parties to agree to its inclusion on the Ramsar website.
91. **Brazil**, supported by **Argentina**, informed that the statement came from the Secretariat of the UNFCCC and not the Parties of the UNFCCC, who were not aware of it until then. Brazil asked, supported by Argentina, that the statement should not be posted on the Ramsar website; and stressed that the letter should be signed and clearly identified as belonging to the UNFCCC Secretariat.
92. **The SG** noted that the statement had been provided to explain how the two Conventions worked together.

Agenda Item XV: Consideration of the draft Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee

93. **The SG** explained how Parties should submit interventions to amend Draft Resolutions. He underlined the fact that any interventions made in writing should reflect exactly what was said in Plenary.

COP12 DR1: Financial and budgetary matters

94. **The President** confirmed that this would be discussed by the Subgroup on Finance, which would report back to Plenary.

COP12 DR3: Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

95. Consideration of this DR was deferred until after consideration of DR7 (*Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention and an Application for IOP Status*).

COP12 DR2: The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021

96. **The President** opened the floor for comments.
97. Interventions were made by **Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Senegal, South Africa**, and **Turkey**.

Fourth Plenary Session, Thursday 4 June 2015, 15.00 – 18.00

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the draft Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

COP12 DR2: The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021 (contd)

98. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Turkey, Uruguay**, and **Venezuela**. Each Party read out proposed amendments to DR2 and the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021 in its annex.
99. **The President** established a Contact Group to address DR2 and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2021, and asked all Parties that had proposed amendments to the text to forward their interventions electronically to the Secretariat so that the group could incorporate them into a consolidated revised draft for further consideration by Plenary.
100. A statement from **Monique Barbut**, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was delivered to Plenary concerning synergies between Ramsar and the UNCCD (see Annex 2).

COP12 DR7: Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention and an Application for IOP Status

101. **The President** opened the floor for comments.
102. **Brazil**, supported by **Argentina, Armenia, Chile, the United Kingdom** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, and **Uruguay**, suggested that the application

of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust to become an International Organization Partner (IOP) should be discussed elsewhere.

103. Further Interventions were made by **Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **the United States of America**, and **Uruguay**. **The President** reminded all Parties to forward their proposed amendments to the Secretariat.
104. **The President** established a Contact Group to address DR7 and proposed that the application by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust to become an IOP be discussed under DR3.

COP12 DR3: Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

105. **The President** opened the floor to comment.
106. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, India, Iraq, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Libya, Mexico, Norway, Oman, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America**, and **Uruguay**. These would be forwarded electronically to the Secretariat.

Fifth Plenary Session, Friday 5 June 2015, 10.00 – 13.00

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the draft Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

COP12 DR3: Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions (contd)

107. **The President** re-opened the floor for comment.
108. Interventions were made by **Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Sudan, United Arab Emirates**, and **Venezuela**, the texts of which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR3.

COP12 DR9: The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2021

109. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
110. Interventions were made by **Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Finland** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Guatemala, Honduras, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Samoa, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America**, and **Uruguay**, the texts of

which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR9.

111. **Oman** and the **United Arab Emirates** also drew the meeting's attention to the recently published *Handbook on the Best Practices for Planning, Design and Operation of Wetland Education Centres*. They wished to commend the Republic of Korea for their financial support of the publication.
112. [A statement on behalf of **Achim Steiner**, Executive Director of UNEP, was presented to Plenary, the text of which can be found in Annex 3.]

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by the Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

COP12 DR10: Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation

113. **Argentina, China, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sweden** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Thailand, Tunisia, and the United States of America** all made interventions, the texts of which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR10.
114. [To mark World Environment Day, **Eneida de León Pérez**, Minister of Housing, Planning and Environment of Uruguay, made a presentation in which she affirmed her Government's commitment to socially equitable and environmentally sustainable development, outlining existing and future actions to this end. She then signed into force a Decree concerning the management of the Laguna del Sauce. Following this, the design for a new set of postage stamps celebrating Uruguay's wetlands was unveiled by the Head of the Postal Service of Uruguay. Commemorative covers bearing the stamps were franked by the Minister, the Head of the Postal Service, the President, Alternate President and Vice-Presidents of the COP, and the Ramsar Secretary General. The Secretary General then presented the Minister with a recently taken photograph of a wetland scene in Uruguay.]

Sixth Plenary Session, Friday 5 June 2015, 15.00 - 18.00

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the draft Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

115. **Mexico** asked that the running order be changed and that DR12 be discussed immediately after DR10. This was agreed by consensus.

COP12 DR10: Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation (contd)

116. **The President** re-opened the floor for comment.
117. Further interventions were made by **Brazil, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, United Arab Emirates** and **Uruguay**, the texts of which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR10.

118. **WWF** and an observer from South Africa also made interventions.

119. **The President** established a Contact Group for this draft Resolution.

COP12 DR12: Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

120. DR12 was introduced by **Mexico**.

121. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States of America**, and **Uruguay**, the texts of which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR12.

122. **Turkey** asked for the following statement be put into the records and reports of COP12:

Turkey recognizes that the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands are regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic fauna and flora, especially waterfowl. However, Turkey has serious concerns for placing the water issues into the core of the Convention and not giving all other matters equal footing.

COP12 DR3 attempts to emphasize the importance of allocation of certain amount of water to maintain the ecological characteristics of wetlands. However, the Resolution COP12 DR12 goes beyond this major assumption and promotes one model for the allocation of water to wetlands. Turkey believes that it is the Contracting Parties to decide which model suits best to their local conditions, in accordance with their capabilities.

Consequently, Turkish Delegation asks to delete paragraphs 10 and 21 of draft resolution COP12 DR12. If this deletion could not be performed, then the Turkish Delegation would like to put a reservation on paragraph 10 indicating water allocation and on paragraph 21 that gives a mandate to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for drawing up a global action plan to conserve water necessary to maintain the wise use of wetlands.

COP12 DR11: Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention

123. DR11 was introduced by Denmark.

124. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Indonesia, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, the United States of America**, and **Venezuela**, the texts of which they were asked to forward electronically to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of DR11.

125. **Brazil** sought further clarification from the Secretariat regarding the statement from UNFCCC that had been read out in Plenary the previous day. **The Secretary General (SG)** explained that SC48 had agreed that an invitation should be extended to the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC to attend Ramsar COP12. A clash of meetings had made this impossible and, instead, the Secretariat of the UNFCCC had provided the statement that had been read out.
126. Taking into account the wide range of opinions put forward on the issue, **the President** proposed that a small informal working group, comprising Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand and the United States of America, meet to prepare a revised version of DR11 and report back to Plenary, with a view to determining the best way forward at the following session. He asked Denmark to coordinate the work of the group.

Agenda item XVI: Report of the Credentials Committee

127. During the session **the SG** presented a preliminary report from the Credentials Committee, noting that 156 Contracting Parties had registered to attend the COP, of which 141 were in attendance. Of these, 105 were present and had had their credentials verified; seven had presented credentials which had yet to be verified; eight had presented incomplete credentials; and 21 had missing credentials. The Committee had asked that dispensation be given to those with incomplete or missing credentials until 15.00 on Monday 8 June.
128. **Mexico** as a member of the Credentials Committee reported that three further Parties had had their credentials verified.

Seventh Plenary Session, Saturday 6 June 2015, 10.00 – 13.00

129. In response to a question from **Mexico**, **the President** reported that the Conference Committee was working on the text of a proposed Declaration from COP12 which would be made available to Plenary as soon as possible.

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

130. **The Deputy Secretary General (DSG)** announced that the Conference Committee had decided that all Parties be asked to forward electronically interventions made concerning a Draft Resolution (DR) no more than three hours after discussion of that DR in Plenary. The Secretariat would compile all interventions received during this period and then distribute them electronically to all Parties.
131. In the interests of time, **the President** asked Parties to concentrate on matters of substance when making interventions concerning a DR. Minor editorial amendments could be forwarded directly to the Secretariat.

COP12 DR11: Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention (contd)

132. **Finland** reported that an informal working group had met earlier in the morning and that a smaller drafting group was preparing a revised DR11 which they hoped to have ready that afternoon.

Special Presentation: “International Water Governance: Nothing Fishy about it.” Sybille Vermont, Deputy Head of Section Global Affairs, International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

133. **Sybille Vermont** described the scope and operations of the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (New York, 1997) and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki, 1992), drawing connections and making comparisons between these and the Ramsar Convention.

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

COP12 DR5: Proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

134. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
135. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **the United States of America, and Uruguay.**
136. The **United Kingdom** asked for the following to be inserted into the record of the meeting:
- Whilst taking the floor on STRP matters, the EU recognises that the work of STRP for many years was greatly strengthened by strong inputs by, and the support of, former Deputy Secretary General Nick Davidson, and the EU would like to take this opportunity to record our thanks to him for his considerable personal commitment which has greatly strengthened the scientific and technical development of the Convention.
137. These thanks were echoed by **Jamaica, South Africa** on behalf of the Africa Group, and **Switzerland.**
138. **The President** announced that a revised DR5, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR13: Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

139. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
140. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guinea, Honduras, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Madagascar, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, and Zambia.**

141. **The President** announced that discussion of DR13 would continue during the next Plenary session.

Agenda item XIV: Election of Contracting Parties for the Standing Committee 2015-2018

142. **Nepal** announced that it had been nominated for Asia.

Agenda item IV: Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

143. **The Secretary General** reported that a drafting group had prepared a new version of the draft Rules of Procedure in document COP12 DOC.3 and that this was now available in all three languages.

Eighth Plenary Session, Saturday 6 June 2015, 15.00 – 18.00

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

COP12 DR13: Wetlands and disaster risk reduction (contd)

144. **The President** opened the floor for further comment.
145. Interventions were made by **Colombia, Honduras, Malawi, and Mauritania**.
146. **The President** announced that a revised DR13, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR6: The Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

147. **The President** opened the floor for comments.
148. Interventions were made on the DR by **Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Switzerland, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay**.
149. In addition, **Belarus, Jamaica, Senegal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom** provided updates to or corrections of information contained in the Annexes to document COP12 DOC.7 (*Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance*). **The President** asked other Parties that had corrections to forward them directly to the Secretariat.
150. **Ukraine** asked for the following to be included in the report of the meeting:

Already over the year (since March 18, 2014) the illegal actions of the Russian Federation, which violated all international norms and resorted to the use of force to unilaterally revise internationally recognised borders of a sovereign state by illegally

occupying and annexing Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea, undermine the entire system of international relations and the security architecture.

That includes also violation of the Ramsar Convention principles. One of them the Convention recognizes the exclusive sovereign rights of the Contracting Party, in this case Ukraine, on their responsibility for protection, restoration and sustainable use of Ramsar wetlands and their flora and fauna.

Based on the current situation we would like to state that the Ukrainian government and national Non-government organizations are not able temporally to carry fully and support their international responsibilities for the conservation, management and wise use of 6 Ukrainian Ramsar Sites located in Crimea occupied by Russian Federation and 1 sites in Donetsk region (located on Azov sea coast) occupied by Russian separatists in the activities recognized in the Ramsar Convention Articles, in the Frame of the Articles 3, 4, 5, the Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention.

The Ukrainian contracting party request Six Crimean and One Donetsk region wetlands (in total 7 Ramsar sites, which are the following : Karkinitzka/Dzharylgatska Bays, Central Syvash, Eastern Syvash, Aquatic cliff complex of Karadag, Aquatic-costal complex of Cape Opuk, Aquatic-cliff complex of Cape Kazantyp and Kryva Bay/Kryva Spit) to be listed on the Montreux Record.

Furthermore, Ukraine request the Convention Secretariat to urgently organize, security conditions permitting, a Ramsar Advisory Mission to evaluate the state of conservation and the management conditions of these 7 Ramsar Sites, and to help or advise the way forward regarding the updating process for their respective Ramsar Information Sheet (all of them having not been updated since more than 4 years).

We would like the Ramsar COP12 meeting to express their concern on these Sites and desire on soon full restoration of Ukrainian responsibility on these Ramsar Sites.

151. In response to a question from the Observer from **WWF, China** provided an update on the status of the Poyanghu Ramsar Site.
152. **Zimbabwe**, having only recently become a Contracting Party to the Convention, made a statement drawing attention to important wetlands in and around Harare and requested a Ramsar Advisory Mission by early 2016.
153. **The President** welcomed Zimbabwe as a new Party. He then announced that a revised DR6, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR8: Regional Initiatives operating in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

154. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
155. Interventions were made by **Bolivia, Colombia, Hungary, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Senegal, South Africa, and Thailand.**

156. **The Mediterranean Wetland Initiative (MedWet)** stated that it would submit to SC51 a review of the *Operational Guidelines 2013-2015 for Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands*.
157. **The President** announced that a revised DR8, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR14: Conservation of Mediterranean Basin Island wetlands

158. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
159. An intervention was made by **Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12.
160. In response to a suggestion from **Senegal**, supported by the Observer from **WWF**, that the DR could be made more widely geographically applicable, **Greece** responded that they considered its scope should be restricted to a defined geographic area.
161. **The President** announced that a revised DR14, incorporating Latvia's amendments would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR15: Evaluating and ensuring the effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites

162. **The President** opened the floor for comment.
163. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Philippines, Seychelles, South Africa, Thailand, United Arab Emirates**, and **Uruguay**.
164. **The President** announced that a revised DR15, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

COP12 DR4: The Responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention

165. **The President** opened the floor for comments.
166. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Canada, Denmark, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Mexico, Panama, South Africa**, and **Tunisia**.
167. **The President** announced that a revised DR4, incorporating interventions received from Parties in electronic form within the deadline agreed, would be produced by the Secretariat for further consideration by Plenary.

Ninth Plenary Session, Monday 8 June 2015, 10.00 – 11.15

168. Following a suggestion from **El Salvador**, the meeting applauded the fact that today was World Oceans Day.
169. **Senegal** presented a short film on the Bassin du Ndiaël Ramsar Site, currently on the Montreux Record, outlining plans for its restoration.

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

170. On an invitation from **the President**, representatives of Contact Groups and informal working groups provided updates on the state of revision of the various Draft Resolutions (DRs).

COP12 DR14: Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands (contd)

171. **Greece** noted that small editorial amendments to the DR had been tabled by Latvia on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12.
172. **Turkey** made the following statement for the record:

There are interrelated issues between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean Sea. The adoption of the present resolution should not be construed as having any effect on the legal position of Turkey regarding these issues.

173. Resolution DR14 Rev.1, as amended, was adopted by acclaim.
174. **The President** adjourned Plenary at 11.10.

Tenth Plenary Session, Monday 8 June 2015, 15.00 – 16.15

Agenda item XIX: Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

175. The **United Arab Emirates** offered to host the next meeting of the Ramsar COP in Dubai in 2018, having first presented a short film about wetlands in the United Arab Emirates.
176. The COP accepted the offer by acclamation.
177. **Bolivia** presented a short film about wetlands in Bolivia entitled “Wetlands – water and life”.

Agenda item XVI: Report of the Credentials Committee

178. **Mexico**, as Chair of the Credentials Committee, summarised the Committee’s final report (Annex 4): of 141 Parties in attendance, 121 had had their credentials approved, seven had incomplete credentials and 13 had not provided any.
179. **Senegal** observed that all accredited Parties had been issued with electronic voting devices. He suggested that these be removed as he sincerely believed that, in the spirit of Ramsar, all decisions could be reached by consensus.

180. His intervention was greeted by the Parties with acclaim.

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

181. On an invitation from the President, **the Secretary General (SG)** provided an update on the status of each of the Draft Resolutions (DRs), other than DR14, a version of which had been adopted during the morning's session. This information was supplemented by representatives of some of the Contact Groups and informal working groups working on revisions.

182. All outstanding DRs were either still in the process of having comments incorporated or were being translated. **The President** therefore adjourned the session to allow work on the DRs to continue and announced that he would reconvene the Plenary at 18.00 for a further update.

Eleventh Plenary Session, Monday 8 June 2015, 18.10 – 18.30

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

183. On an invitation from the President, Parties working on the revisions of DRs provided an update of the status of each of the outstanding DRs. **The President** adjourned the session and announced that he would reconvene the Plenary at 20.00 for a further update.

Twelfth Plenary Session, Monday 8 June 2015, 20.10 – 20.40

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

184. On an invitation from the President, Parties working on the revisions of DRs provided an update of the status of each of the outstanding DRs.

185. In response to a request from the President, **Canada** noted that several DRs (namely DRs 2, 9, 11, 13 and 15) made reference to "indigenous peoples" or "indigenous people", and that there had been disagreement as to which was the most appropriate phrase to use. Consultations with several Parties had resulted in the following wording which she suggested the COP might find acceptable to use in these DRs: "indigenous peoples/people and/or local communities, depending on national perspective".

186. **Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Honduras, South Africa, and Switzerland** all expressed views, some supporting the proposed wording put forward by Canada, others suggesting that the language used in other Multilateral Environmental Agreements be used in these DRs. It was noted that reference to indigenous peoples and local communities was included in the preambular section of Resolution XI.12 (*Wetlands and health: taking an ecosystem approach*). **Latvia**, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, asked for more time for consultations on this matter. Accordingly, **the President** deferred further discussion until the following day.

187. **The President** adjourned the session and announced that he would reconvene Plenary at 09.00 the following day.

Thirteenth Plenary Session, Tuesday 9 June 2015, 10.00 – 13.00

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

Agenda item IV: Discussion and adoption of the Rules of Procedure

188. **The President** reported that the final versions of all unadopted Draft Resolutions (DRs) and a fourth version of the proposed Rules of Procedure (document COP12 DOC.3) were now available in English, but that none of these was yet available in all three languages of the Convention.
189. **The Secretary General (SG)** stated that final versions of the DRs and the proposed Rules of Procedure had been received at various times the previous day, some not until late at night, and that this accounted for the lack of translated versions. He noted that several delegations, including those of France, Mexico, Switzerland and Uruguay, had kindly offered to help with translations if this would expedite proceedings.
190. **Chile**, speaking on behalf of Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, applauded Uruguay's tireless efforts as hosts in organizing the meeting and stated that the American countries were willing to work on versions of documents in English, to help ensure that the meeting came to a successful outcome, for the sake of the Convention and the host country.
191. **The Dominican Republic** supported Chile but asked that the Secretariat make every effort to ensure that such a situation did not arise in future. His delegation comprised only one person who was not fluent in English.
192. **Switzerland** reported that she and Senegal were available to support Francophone delegates in the meeting if they had difficulties in working on English versions of the documents. She echoed Chile's gratitude to Uruguay for their work in organizing the meeting. **France** also offered to help delegates during the plenary.
193. **The SG** read out Rule 35, paragraph 3 of the current Rules of Procedure (document COP12 DOC.27) indicating that the procedure proposed was in conformity with this.
194. In response to an invitation from the President, **Canada** reported back on consultations regarding the proposed use of terms to describe indigenous peoples and local communities, which appeared in several DRs. She believed this subject had been raised too late during the present meeting to be given its due consideration and, on the basis of consultations with interested Parties, recommended that the usage adopted at COP11 be retained, that is "indigenous peoples and local communities", also recommending that Parties that objected to this usage record their objections in the record of the present meeting.
195. **France** did not wish to reopen debate on this, but stated that her country had concerns with use of this terminology.

196. **Chile**, supported by Mexico, noted that DR12 had been the only DR originally submitted in Spanish and expressed a wish to work on the final version of this DR in that language.
197. **The President** asked the Secretariat to make translation of the latest revision of this DR into Spanish a priority.

COP12 DR1 Rev.1 Financial and budgetary matters

198. Further amendments on DR1 were tabled by **Canada, Ecuador, Jamaica, Senegal, Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12.
199. Acting on a request from Canada, **the President** agreed to suspend discussion of DR1 to allow time for the most recent version to be posted.

COP12 DR15 Rev.2 Evaluating and ensuring the effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites

200. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR15 Rev.2 and its annex were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR6 Rev.2 The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

201. Amendments were tabled by **Belarus, Brazil, Senegal, Switzerland, and Ukraine**.
202. Interventions were also made by **Argentina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jamaica, Mexico, and the United States of America**.
203. Taking into account the divergent views expressed, **the President** asked Belarus and Senegal to confer with each other with a view to presenting some compromise text to the Plenary.
204. **Mexico** supported by **Dominican Republic** on a point of order stated that she believed that all substantive discussion should have been completed before the DRs were presented to Plenary for adoption.
205. **The President** responded that this was indeed the case, but that there were occasions when new text could be agreed as long as discussion proceeded in timely fashion. He then suspended discussion on this DR with the intention of returning to it following discussion of DR9.

COP12 DR9 Rev.3 The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2021

206. Further amendments were tabled by **Argentina, Brazil, Finland, and South Africa**.
207. Interventions were also made by **Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Panama, and Senegal**.
208. With the agreed amendments, the Draft Resolution in COP12 DR9 Rev.3 and its annex were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR6 Rev.2 The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (contd)

209. **The President** re-opened discussion of this DR.
210. **Senegal** proposed some text resulting from discussions with Belarus, to which the Parties agreed.
211. **Cameroon** and **Burkina Faso** also made interventions.
212. With the text proposed by Senegal and earlier agreed amendments, the Draft Resolution in COP12 DR6 Rev.2 and its annex were adopted by acclaim.

Fourteenth Plenary Session, Tuesday 9 June 2015, 14.30 – 18.20

Agenda item XV: Consideration of the Draft Resolutions submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (contd)

Agenda item IV: Discussion and adoption of the Rules of Procedure

COP12 DR1 Rev.4 Financial and budgetary matters (contd)

213. **Canada** tabled the agreed amendments that had been incorporated into DR1 Rev.4.
214. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR1 Rev.4 and its annexes were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR13 Rev.2 Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

215. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR13 Rev.2 was adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR7 Rev.2 Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention

216. **Canada** tabled one amendment.
217. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR7 Rev.2, as amended, was adopted by acclaim.
218. **Canada** asked that all DRs be checked by the Secretariat for spelling and grammar once adopted, drawing attention in particular to DR8 and DR10.

COP12 DR10 Rev.2 Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation (RWCA)

219. **Canada** proposed an amendment but, following an intervention by **Senegal**, withdrew it.
220. **The Islamic Republic of Iran**, supported by **Benin**, **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Gabon**, and **Uganda**, queried the change of title from “Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation” to “World Wetland City WWC Accreditation”.
221. **Tunisia**, supported by **Pakistan** and **United Arab Emirates**, stated that the new title had been reached after much consultation and agreement.

222. **Colombia**, supported by **Brazil** and **Senegal**, suggested a compromise and was asked by the President to coordinate a small group on the fringes of Plenary to come to a consensus within five minutes. Following this, **Colombia** reported that the group proposed the title “Wetlands City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention”.
223. Seeing no objection, **the President** confirmed that DR10 Rev.2 would be amended as requested and noted that the full name would be used throughout the document.
224. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR10 Rev.2 and its annex, as amended, were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR11 Rev.3 Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention

225. **Denmark** tabled one small amendment.
226. **Argentina, Brazil** and **Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12 offered congratulations on the hard work of the Contact Group in reaching consensus on this DR.
227. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR11 Rev.3, as amended, was adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR12 Rev.4 Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

228. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR12 Rev.4 and its annex were adopted by acclaim.
229. Mexico presented a short film about reserving water for our wetlands.
230. In response to a request from **the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretariat** reported that it would make all films shown during the meeting available through its website.

COP12 DR4 Rev.3 The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention

231. **Romania** drew attention to a small error in a date in one of the annexes of the DR.
232. With this amendment, the Draft Resolution in COP12 DR4 Rev.3 and its annexes were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR3 Rev.2. Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

233. Amendments were proposed by **Canada, New Zealand** and **the United States of America**.
234. With these amendments, the Draft Resolution in COP12 DR3 Rev.2 was **adopted** by acclaim.

COP12 DR2 Rev.3. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

235. Amendments were proposed by **China, Finland, Latvia** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12, **Nicaragua, Peru, Ukraine, and the United States of America**.
236. Interventions were also made by **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, and Senegal**.
237. On the basis of the interventions, **Ukraine** agreed to withdraw its proposed amendment.
238. The Draft Resolution in document COP12 DR2 Rev.3 and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 in its annex, with the agreed amendments, were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR8 Rev.2. Regional initiatives 2016-2018 in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

239. **Argentina** pointed out a minor error in the Spanish version.
240. The Draft Resolution in document COP12 DR8 Rev. 2 was adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR5 Rev.2. Proposed new framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

241. **The United Kingdom** on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at COP12 proposed some minor amendments.
242. **Turkey** requested that the following statement be inserted in the record of the meetings:

Turkey joins the consensus on COP12 DR5Rev2, however, this is not to be construed as change of the Turkish position regarding the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and International Lakes, as was expressed in COP11.

243. The Draft Resolution in COP12 DR5 Rev.2 and its annexes, as amended, were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DOC.3 Rules of procedure

244. Interventions were made by **Argentina, Denmark, El Salvador, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mexico**.
245. Responding to a request from **Argentina, the Secretary General** agreed to make a clean copy available to Parties as soon as possible.
246. The revised Rules of Procedure in document COP12 DOC.3 were adopted by acclaim.

COP12 DR16 Rev.1 Thanks to the Host Country, Uruguay, and the "Declaration of Punta del Este"

247. **Chile**, speaking on behalf of all Parties present, thanked Uruguay warmly for their hosting of the meeting. She recognized the hard work that had gone into its organization and applauded the host country's hospitality and the convivial atmosphere that had been created. All of this had helped ensure the active participation of all delegations and been crucial in bringing the

meeting to a successful conclusion. She then read out DR16 Rev.1 and its Annex, the "Declaration of Punta del Este". The Draft Resolution and the Declaration were both adopted by acclaim.

Agenda item XXI: Adoption of the report of the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

248. The report of COP12, up to the end of the Twelfth Plenary Session (Monday 8 June), was adopted by acclaim, with minor amendments requested by **Brazil, Peru, and the United Kingdom.**

Agenda item XXII: Close of the meeting

249. Chile's thanks to Uruguay which had preceded the adoption of DR16 were echoed by **Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Honduras, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, and Zimbabwe.** The Secretariat, interpreters, translators and all others who had worked so hard to make the meeting a success were also thanked.
250. In response, **Uruguay** gratefully acknowledged the thanks from the Parties and stated that without the cooperation of all involved it would have been impossible to have brought the meeting to a successful conclusion. He felt that Ramsar had recovered its sense of unity.
251. **BirdLife International**, on behalf of the IOPs, and **The World Wetland Network**, representing NGOs present, also made statements, each underlining their commitment to the Convention and willingness to work to make sure that it was successfully implemented. **BirdLife International** specifically welcomed the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust as a new IOP, this having been agreed at the present meeting.
252. The **Secretary General (SG)** and **Deputy Secretary General (DSG)** both addressed the meeting. This had been the first Ramsar COP for both of them, and each acknowledged that it had been a steep learning curve. **The SG** thanked participants for their patience, good will and forbearance in the face of operational difficulties. **The DSG** stressed the consensual nature of the decision-making process at the meeting and believed the Ramsar family was now in a strong position to go forward to work together for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. They both specifically thanked individuals in the Secretariat who had played a crucial role in the organisation of the meeting.
253. In concluding, **the President** stressed the importance of Ramsar in helping to maintain wetlands and the livelihoods of those who depended on them. He believed it was important that all Parties were engaged in implementing the Convention. He specifically thanked Romania as outgoing Chair of the Standing Committee and reiterated his and his country's commitment to carrying on the work they had started at this meeting for the next triennium.

Annex 1

UNFCCC statement to the 12th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

4 June 2015

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) share a crucial role in setting the course to a sustainable future for all. Action under the UNFCCC enables society to move towards a new model of growth that restores the ecological balance between human emissions and nature's capacity to absorb those emissions. As carbon sinks and reservoirs, wetlands play a crucial role in achieving this balance.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced. Science shows that we must fundamentally transform development to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Land use and natural resource management must be part of this transformation. This makes action under the Ramsar Convention, namely management and wise use of wetlands of international importance, part of the critical path to meeting the climate challenge.

Although they are guided by separate mandates, there is concurrence in the UNFCCC and the Ramsar Convention. In recognizing this common ground, seeking formal cooperation and developing mutually supportive collaborative actions, we can together deliver benefits to the environment, to economies of the world and to all global citizens.

The UNFCCC Secretariat welcomes all efforts by the Ramsar Convention to take action to tackle climate change and to restore lost and degraded wetlands as part of developing an ever more resilient world. We have everything to gain by accelerating every effort to wisely manage the resources needed to achieve sustainable development and climate-safe growth.

Wetlands increase the Earth's capacity to absorb emissions, protect rich biodiversity and ensure food and water security for future generations – building blocks of a new, green economy. The UNFCCC calls on Parties to the Ramsar Convention and all international treaty bodies, inter-governmental organizations and their partners to pursue cooperative and independent action that turns the challenge of climate change into an opportunity for a better future.

Annex 2

UNCCD Statement at Ramsar COP12

04 June 2015 – Agenda Item XV – DR2: New Strategic Plan

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Monique Barbut, we very much welcome the opportunity to collaborate and align our vision for the future. We have a lot in common and together we will have a stronger voice. Together, we can make our case heard in key international processes and at the national level. The UNCCD secretariat was delighted to participate in the early discussions about the strategic plan being discussed here; and we look forward to Ramsar's inputs as the UNCCD reformulates its approaches for the post-2015 world.

We applaud the Ramsar Convention for being the first multilateral agreement with the vision to adopt and implement an ecosystem approach, one that guides more effective responses to "prevent, stop and reverse wetland degradation and loss". Healthy wetlands and watersheds are critical for sustaining livelihoods, especially in dryland communities and growing urban areas, while at the same time poor land management practices are a significant driver of wetland loss and degradation.

Last year at the World Parks Congress, just as the SDG negotiations were gaining momentum, Ramsar and the UNCCD made a common commitment to Land Degradation Neutrality in order to help shape a more resilient future. Simply put, this means that all communities and countries aim to reach a state where the total area of healthy and productive land and wetlands stabilizes and eventually increases. This is not just about agriculture but mixed-use or working landscapes where the mining, energy and infrastructure sectors will be equally important partners.

In our view, the principle of wise use and the target on land degradation neutrality go hand in hand. And that the efforts of our Conventions would profit from better coordination and proactive collaborations that help Parties protect and restore ecological character through better land use planning at watershed and regional scales. Our actions can be mutually beneficial, and are absolutely essential for poverty reduction, food and water security, climate action and many other sustainable development goals.

The UNCCD is playing an active role in formulating a global response to land degradation including implementation and monitoring at the national and sub-national levels. Currently, the UNCCD has a LDN pilot project with 14 countries to identify the ways and means to implement a plan of action. This will require cooperation among various sectors as increasing water quality and availability will figure prominently in many country plans.

The new Ramsar strategic plan presents a concise vision for the future and provides ample opportunities for cooperation at all levels. One such opportunity is the Global Partnership on Wetland Restoration which could take advantage of the synergies created by the numerous global and national commitments to restoration and climate action. It could also help focus attention and resources on mitigating the drivers of degradation while sustaining the social and economic benefits of wetlands in the wider landscape. Ramsar has a lot to offer: from technical expertise and capacity building to business engagement and cooperation at all levels. The UNCCD stands ready to work closely with Ramsar to help restore healthy and productive landscapes that support livelihoods around the world.

Annex 3

Intervention on behalf of Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, by Elizabeth Mrema, Head of UNEP Delegation

4 June 2015

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a great honor to participate at this COP 12 of the RAMSAR Convention and wish you a successful outcome. First and foremost, my sincere congratulations to the host country, Government of Uruguay for hosting us all together with the RAMSAR Secretariat for putting up all the arrangements for us to meet here in the coming days and looking forward to working with them and supporting their work for the effective implementation of the Convention.
 - a. **UNEP support for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention**
2. UNEP has been and continues to collaborate with MEAs secretariats as well as parties including for the RAMSAR Convention to undertake different activities in support of these instruments. Taking cognizance that human and financial resources do not permit us to fully support each and every MEA's priority list of needs and wish list, our focus continues to be synergistic approach to those areas which responds to multiple MEAs in a synergistic and coherent manner. Just few examples for illustrative purposes.
3. With biodiversity cluster of MEAs including RAMSAR, continue to ensure that their strategic plans such as the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2015-2021 to be hopefully adopted at this COP will as appropriate be mainstreamed into NBSAPs as its Ramsar contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets. UNEP has collaborated with the Ramsar Secretariat in promoting the synergistic approach through the regional preparations or pre-COP consultations for this very CoP for the Pacific region held late last year together with also CMS and CITES. The outcomes of these joint pre-COP consultations contributed to the 6th Oceania Regional Meeting for Ramsar Convention.
4. I thank the Ramsar Secretariat for its continued and active engagement in supporting the project undertaken by UNEP on "Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies". To this end, Ramsar Secretariat provided inputs in terms of best practices related to synergic implementation responding to the Convention for the Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional level which is a component of the project referred to earlier. The Sourcebook is now completed and ready for use and will in fact be launched this week during this very COP on Monday 8th June. The Sourcebook aims to provide national focal points of the major biodiversity-related conventions, as well as other stakeholders working on those conventions, with options to achieve enhanced implementation of the conventions through strengthened cooperation.
5. In this regard, UNEP acknowledges a draft resolution to be considered by the parties during this COP related to synergies among biodiversity related MEAs which encourages the secretariats and the parties to continue to be engaged in this Programme. The UNEP thematic regional MEAs focal points in all UNEP regions including in this region continue work and support the work of the MEAs Secretariats including RAMSAR for the implementation of their conventions in the regional and as relevant also at the national level. They will continue to collaborate with

the Secretariat in supporting the RAMSAR Convention and implementing your priority activities in the regions and countries within the meager resources available.

6. In support of assessing the status of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan and this contributions to reach the agreed Aichi Targets, UNEP through its Regional Biodiversity MEAs Focal Points has developed the second edition of three regional reports on the State of Biodiversity in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and West Asia. These reports complement the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and provide a mid-term review of progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the three regions. The reports, among other issues, highlight successful examples in implementing multiple Conventions in a synergistic manner, for example, the prioritization of the protected areas that are enlisted as Ramsar sites and World Heritage Sites (case in Nepal), as well as the engagement of multiple Convention focal points in the NBSAP processes (China).
7. RAMSAR Secretariat continues to engage with other MEAs and international bodies hosting different MEAs in the execution of MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (InforMEA) which is another tool enabling the parties and other stakeholders to view at a click of a button all decisions taken at different COPs as well as at a glance to check related decisions adopted by other MEAs COPs related to RAMSAR issues or decisions hence enabling the parties to ensure harmony in the implementation of such decisions. With it among the eLearning Courses on MEAs include one for RAMSAR Convention developed through the Secretariat and expected to be undertaken by all national focal points to better understand the Convention and their roles.
8. As we are all aware, all your countries as well as all stakeholders have been busy this year contributing to the future SDGs as had been called for by the Rio+20, the Future We Want document and with it the new climate change regime all to be adopted later this year, among other important outcomes like the disaster risk reduction all relevant to the RAMSAR wetlands. UNEP is already working closely with your Secretariat to develop indicators for wetlands in response to the SDGs when adopted as well as mapping of wetlands. This collaboration will not just continue but be further strengthened.
9. To further enhance the existing collaboration and cooperation between the RAMSAR Secretariat and UNEP, currently consultations are on going for the signing of a MOU between the two entities. The MOU will lay the foundation for continued collaboration on environment and wetland issues.
10. I wish you a successful COP in this beautiful capital city of Punta del Este, Uruguay and look forward to our mutual supportiveness and cooperation to contribute to the conservation and restoration of the wetlands for the future generations.

Annex 4

Report from the Credentials Committee (Final)

8 June 2015

Total in Attendance: 141

Total of acceptable Credentials: 121

Total incomplete: 7

Cabo Verde Wrong Minister / Portuguese
Malawi No signature
Pakistan Signed by advisor / not Minister
Tunisia Translation not validated
Guinea Wrong Minister
Bangladesh Wrong Minister
Ukraine Wrong Minister

Total Parties Missing Credentials: 13

Approved Credentials

Albania	Croatia
Antigua and Barbuda	Cuba
Argentina	Czech Republic
Armenia	Democratic Republic of Congo
Australia	Denmark
Austria	Djibouti
Azerbaijan	Dominican Republic
Bahrain	Ecuador
Belarus	El Salvador
Belize	Estonia
Benin	Fiji
Bhutan	Finland
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	France
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Gabon
Botswana	Gambia
Brazil	Georgia
Bulgaria	Germany
Burkina Faso	Ghana
Cameroon	Greece
Canada	Grenada
Central African Republic	Guatemala
Chad	Honduras
Chile	Hungary
China	India
Colombia	Indonesia
Comoros	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Congo	Israel
Costa Rica	Jamaica
Côte d'Ivoire	Japan

Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kiribati
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Latvia
Lesotho
Libya
Madagascar
Mali
Malaysia
Marshall Islands
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Niger
Norway
Oman
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Portugal

Republic of Korea
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Saint Lucia
Samoa
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Suriname
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
Turkey
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Viet Nam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Countries Missing Credentials:

Bahamas
Barbados
Equatorial Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Iraq
Jordan
Lebanon
Montenegro
Sierra Leone
South Sudan
Tajikistan
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkmenistan