



Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Third Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative

May 20th - 24th 2013

Paramaribo, Suriname

REPORT

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Paramaribo, Suriname

Monday 20th May, 2013

Opening remarks

Paramaribo, a Unesco World Heritage site was the scenario of the III Meeting of the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Caribbean Wetlands-Cariwet. The opening took place on the 20th of May and was made by the Minister of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management, Mr. Ginmardo Kromosoeto who also on behalf of the President of the Republic of Suriname Excellency Desire Delano Bouterse, gave a warm welcome to the country delegates members of the initiative and the representatives of the different organizations. The Minister highlighted that it is of great importance that wetlands gets a position within the development plans of the Caribbean countries as well as at the agenda of Caricom or the Association of the Caribbean States. He called the attention that Caribbean wetlands probably are some of the least known, least protected and most threatened.

Mr. Ainsley Henry, from Jamaica and Mr. Juan from Cuba as the initiative's coordinators thanked the government and people of Suriname for hosting the meeting, the delegates and international organizations for their attendance and expressed the importance of this meeting to work together in the initiative's consolidation as this is a Contracting Parties's process.

The Senior Advisor for the Americas Ms. María Rivera thanked the Minister of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management Mr. Ginmardo Kromosoeto for hosting the meeting and his whole team of the Suriname Forest Service for all the collaboration in the organization of the meeting. The Secretariat also welcomed the Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties and the international and national institutions and observers. The Senior Advisor indicated that this meeting is very relevant for the consolidation of the Caribbean Regional Initiative and encourage the Contracting Parties and partners to continue providing high level support to the initiative consolidation.

The meeting agenda's was approved (Annex II) and the sessions of the meeting were chaired by Jamaica, Suriname and Cuba.

Presentation Introduction of Wetlands in Suriname

Ms. Ms. Claudine Sakimin, Head Nature Conservation Division, Suriname Forest Service made the presentation about the main wetlands and actions taken and ongoing in

monitoring and management measures. Suriname is now also discussing to bring the Bigi Pan area as the next Ramsar Site.

Overview of ongoing activities in the Caribbean Region and Country Implementation

During the first day discussions there were Country Presentations on the main progress of implementation of the Convention but also on the main threats to wetlands. All the countries agreed that wetlands in the Caribbean have great value and importance not only in terms of climate change mitigation *“We are moving in the right direction but we are still not there”*.

Ramsar International Organization Partners, WWF Guianas presented the ongoing activities in the creation and management of protected areas in Suriname and Guyana with focus on wetlands and BirdLife on the initiative of mangroves alliance and ecosystem services.

All the presentations were given in a USB key to the participants along with other complementary documentation and pictures.

From the different Contracting Parties' presentations it was clear that there has been progress in the implementation of the Convention but also that the main threats to wetland ecosystems among the Caribbean countries continue being the Coastal development for tourism, other urban needs, as well as the lack of specific regulations for wetlands protection in some cases.

Some of the limitations for an effective implementation of the Convention mentioned were:

- a) Insufficient budgetary allocations.
- b) In some countries most of the land is private making difficult the implementation of conservations measures.
- c) Few human resources capacity (only one person dealing with all the MEA's.
- d) Access to Ramsar sites should be more controlled (both local visitors and tourists) now causing pollution and disturbing of species;
- e) It is unclear how governance is organised in the Region to manage the Ramsar sites due to lack of overall control and monitoring of initiatives;
- f) Lack of awareness of the value of the designated Ramsar sites which is shown by the economic policies carried out, giving the wetlands another destination leading to the building of houses or industrial properties.

All the countries agree that the Wetlands in the Caribbean have great value and importance.

Based on the discussions, below the comments and suggestions made to improve the implementation:

- a) Ramsar should be more punitive.
- b) Increase the visibility of the Convention.

- c) Work on the harmonization of regulations.
- d) Improve the engagement of the governments.
- e) Urge to send to the meetings the same focal point.
- f) Best communication/interface with the Secretariat
- g) Bring the message internally.
- h) Include Ramsar issues in the annual work plans/programs.
- i) Sent a letter by the Secretariat to the head of the Administrative Authority/Ministers, Permanent Secretaries.
- j) More focus in strategic issues as climate change, linking with water and biodiversity.
- k) Setting of priorities.
- l) Liaise with stakeholders to achieve the common goals → based on mutual interest and funding;

Tuesday 21th, 2013

Impact on Wetlands and effective management of Ramsar sites

The Secretariat presented the current status of Ramsar site designation in the Caribbean indicating that there are 41 including the ones of the Caribbean Netherlands, France and UK overseas territories. Also indicated that the main threats to wetlands in the region and also in the Caribbean are the fast economic development, infrastructure (dams, ports, touristic and urban developments) aquaculture, agriculture, pollution, alteration of natural flows.

It was also explained the Article 3.2 and the process under the Convention stressing the importance that the Parties are aware of their obligations of reporting to the Secretariat on any threats to the ecological character of Ramsar sites. The Secretariat also explained the main tools under the Convention to implement the wise use concept such as:

- Ramsar Advisory Missions
- Preparation of management plans
- Implementation of legal framework, policies and land use planning.
- Harmonizing policies

The Secretariat made a strong call for action to improve the implementation of the Convention and mentioned that some of the mechanisms that need to be strengthen in the Sub Caribbean region are:

- Increase awareness at all levels (national, regional and local) about wetlands benefits.
- Increase the political support at national and regional implementation.
- Articulation among the different stakeholders and institutions
- Support at the highest level.
- Effective management of Ramsar sites.
- Collaborative Strategies/ involvement of stakeholders.

Bonaire and Curacao presented the management measures that they are taking in their Ramsar sites highlighting the main threats but also benefits of Ramsar site designation.

During the panel discussion some of the steps identify to move ahead were:

- a) At 2020 at least 15 more Ramsar sites in the Caribbean.
- b) Report issues regarding Ramsar sites directly when noticed in line with article 3.2.
- c) Management plans should be in place and communicated.
- d) Political support is a success factor.
- e) Involvement of stakeholders is crucial.
- f) Through annual planning, monitoring and reporting one should address the agreed points regarding Ramsar sites.

Strategy document of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative

The Secretariat presented the current status of the Strategy document and the work plan. The participants by working groups worked on the review and adjustments to the objectives of the Strategic Framework and by plenary discussion agreed on its final version.

Wednesday–22.05.13

Review of the work plan and financial sustainability of the initiative

by working groups the participants worked on the review and adjustments to the work plan and by plenary discussion agreed on its final version. Likewise, they discussed the financial mechanisms that can be implemented (Donors, small grants, GEF etc) and donor opportunities to implement the work plan in order to achieve the financial sustainability of the initiative.

Thursday–23.05.13

Field Trip

Suriname Forest Service organized the visit to Warappakreek in the District of Commewijne and to Bakkie a former citrus plantation. During the visit the participants learned not only about the culture of Suriname but also had the opportunity to appreciate the pristine mangroves and biodiversity of Warappa Creek wetlands.

Friday – 24.05.13

Operational Guidelines on Regional Initiatives

The Secretariat presented the Operational Guidelines 2013-2015 approved during Standing Committee 46 and indicated that based on SC46-11 the initiative has to improve some of the criteria which have to be reported to Standing Committee 47.

For the above purpose the participants discussed on the improvement of the following criteria:

- 1) Support from the Contracting Parties involved. Formal support letters between two COPs (Criteria 3).
- 2) Regional initiatives must have their own identity to avoid confusion / website (Criteria 7)
- 3) Interested parties are responsible for coordinating the regional Initiatives (Administrative mechanisms for the management of the funds, open account) (Criteria 8)
- 4) Mechanisms that ensure minimum coordination between the Contracting Parties.
- 5) Operational proceedings/ terms of reference (Criteria 16)
- 6) Involvement of other interested actors (ministries, intergovernmental organisms, associated international organizations, NGOs, academia, local communities, actors in the economic sector) (Criteria 20)
- 7) Development of collaboration networks for the involvement of actors at all levels. (Criteria 21)
- 8) Increase the visibility of the Convention. Specific activities in the areas of communication, education and participation. (Criteria 25)
- 9) Political and financial support from the Contracting Parties and other stakeholders (Criteria 27)
- 10) The initiative must ensure the funding for the development of its activities and projects. (Criteria 29)

As part of the discussions different mechanisms were discussed and agreed by the Contracting Parties to improve the criteria some of them are:

- 1) To provide a new endorsement letter to the initiative
- 2) Prepare specific terms of reference for the coordination mechanism
- 3) Finalize the financial strategy in order to start the fund raising activities

Related to the administration of funds the Parties indicated that at this stage the initiative is not in capacity to handling directly the funds allocated to the initiative as per the complex administrative processes especially in the coordination countries and therefore reiterated that the Secretariat have to support the initiative on this issue.

Conclusions and Steps Forward

The Contracting Parties discussed some of the previous agreement such as the preparation of a brochure to raise the visibility of the Convention and the initiative at the national level as well as the preparation of a video that showcase the Ramsar sites and other wetlands in the Caribbean. Likewise, was reiterated the importance to

prepare the case studies about the benefits of Ramsar site designation at least of one Ramsar site/wetland.

As part of the 4 days discussions the Parties agreed on the following issues with specific deadlines:

Agreed Action	Responsible	Deadline
Endorsement letter to the initiative and designation of the focal point for the initiative using the template sent by the Secretariat.	FP-Secretariat	<u>Template to be sent by the Secretariat: 11</u> of July <u>Deadline to be sent to the Secretariat: 11</u> of August
Draft terms of reference for the coordination body of the initiative.	FP-Secretariat	<u>Terms to be sent by the Secretariat: 11</u> of July. <u>Deadline for comments to be sent to the Secretariat:</u> 19 July.
Final version of the work plan and follow up matrix	FP-Secretariat	<u>Document to be sent by the Secretariat: 27</u> of July <u>Deadline for comments:</u> 15 of August
Financial Strategy	FP-Secretariat	<u>Document to be sent by the Secretariat: 20</u> of September <u>Deadline for Comments:</u> 11 October
Template for Case Studies	FP- Secretariat	<u>Template to be sent by the Secretariat: 11</u> of July <u>Deadline to send the case study:</u> November 30

Preparation of brochure	FP-Secretariat	<u>Draft sent by the Secretariat: 10 May</u> Deadline for Comments/text: 26 of July
Preparation of a video	FP-Secretariat	<u>Deadline to send pictures/footage of Ramsar sites wetlands: 31 of July.</u>

Conclusions

The Contracting Parties made progress in agreed ways forward to continue the process of consolidation of the initiative. However, it is clear that in order to achieve the different goals set for the upcoming months it will require a strong commitment of all the focal points under the leadership of the initiative's coordinators and the Secretariat support.

As was pointed out by the Parties on the first day discussion *“We are moving in the right direction but we are still not there”*.

Closing Remarks

All the countries and the Ramsar Secretariat expressed sincere thanks to the Minister of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management and all his team for an excellent organization of the meeting and the commitment to the initiative and the implementation of the Convention. All the activities organized by Suriname as well as all the initiative's materials prepared such as cups, caps, banners, T-shirts and poster showcasing the initiative made possible not only to raise the visibility of Cariwet Regional Initiative but also the objectives of the Convention.

Annex I

Third Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Initiative

20-24 May 2013

Paramaribo, Suriname

Participant's List

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Annex II

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Irán, 1971)

III Meeting of the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative

(Cariwet)

Paramaribo, Suriname 20-24 May 2013

Sunday - 19.05.13

Arrival of participants to Torarica Eco Resort Inn, Paramaribo

Monday – 20.05.13

08:00-09:00 Registration of participants

09:00-9:30 Opening of the meeting by Host Country, Initiative Coordinators and Secretariat

Welcome remarks

Mr. Ainsley Henry, Jamaica and Juan Hernández, Cuba
Initiative's Coordinators

Ms. María Rivera
Senior Advisor for the Americas
Ramsar Secretariat

Mr. Ginmardo Kromosoeto
Minister of Physical Planning, Land and
Forest Management Suriname

9:30-9:40 Adoption of the agenda and purpose of the meeting. Jamaica-Cuba-Ramsar Secretariat

Session chair by Suriname

9:40-10:00 Introduction to Wetlands in Suriname, Ms. Claudine Sakimin, Head Nature Conservation Division, Suriname Forest Service.

10:00-10:15 Coffee break

Ongoing activities in the Sub Caribbean region

10:15-10:45 WWF Guianas support to the creation and management of Protected Areas in Suriname and Guyana, with a special focus on wetlands. Mr. Dominiek Plouvier Regional Representative WWF Guianas.

10:45-11:15 BirdLife International in the Caribbean. Mr. Amiro Perez Leroux.

11:15-12:15	Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean. Ramsar Secretariat, Country presentations: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bonaire, Curaçao (<i>10 minute presentations</i>)
12:15-12:30	Discussion Panel
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:40	Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean continued. Country presentations: Cuba, Dominican Republic, France- French Guyana, Grenada, Guyana.
15:40-16:00	Discussion Panel
16:00-16:15	Coffee break
16:15-17:15	Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean continued. Country presentations: Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, (<i>10 minute presentations</i>)
17:15-17:30	Discussion Panel
7:00	Welcome Cocktail Suriname (Torarica Hotel)

Tuesday- 21.05.13

Session chair by Jamaica

Impact on Wetlands and effective management of Ramsar sites

9:00-9:40	Impacts on coastal wetlands and management tools under the Convention. Ms. Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas.
9:20-9:40	Management of Ramsar sites in Bonaire. Mr. Marco Gravenhorst, Government of Bonaire.
9:40-10:00	Management of Ramsar sites in Curaçao. Ms. Ciaretta Profas, Government of Curaçao.
10:00-10:15	Coffee Break
10:15-10:30	Discussion Panel

Strategy Document of the Initiative and Work Plan

10:30-11:00	Background and status. Ms. Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas
11:00-12:30	Working session, Strategy Document of the Initiative
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
14:00- 16:00	Continue working session, Strategy Document of the Initiative
16:00-16:15	Coffee Break
16:15-17:30	Synthesis of the working session of the day

Wednesday–22.05.13

Morning Session chair by Cuba

- 9:00-9:30 Work plan for 2010-2012. Ms. Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas.
- 10:00-10:15 Coffee break
- 10:15-12:30 Work plan towards the financial sustainability (working session on regional information)
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch break

Afternoon Session chair by Suriname

- 14:00-15:00 Work plan towards the financial sustainability continued (working session)
- 15:00-16:00 Presentation and synthesis of the working session
- 16:00-16:15 Coffee Break
- 16:15-17:00 Information - field trip. Suriname

Thursday–23.05.13

Field Trip

Visit to Warappakreek in the District of Commewijne.

- 8:30 Pick up from Eco Resort and travel to Marienburg (30 minutes) by bus and then boat to Bakkie – a former citrus plantation (1.5hrs) for lunch and visit to Museum in Bakkie and look around the small village.
- 13:00 Depart Bakkie by boat and travel along Warappa Creek to the view the birds and mud flats. Then return to Marienburg and Paramaribo.
- 18:00 Return to Eco Resort

Friday – 24.05.13

Morning Session chair by Jamaica

Operational Guidelines on Regional Initiatives

- 9:00-9:30 Operational Guidelines 2013-2015 Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Ramsar Convention.
- 9:30-10:00 Working session initiative´s criteria to be improved

10:00-10:15 Coffee break
10:15-12:30 Working group session initiative's criteria to be improved continued
12:30-14:00 Lunch break

Afternoon Session chair by Suriname

14:00-15:00 Presentation of the working groups
15:00-16:00 Conclusions and steps forward
16:00-16:15 Coffee break
16:15-17:00 Closing remarks

7:30 Farewell dinner Suriname

Saturday – 25.05.13

Departure of participants

ANNEX III



Participants with the Minister Ginmardo Kromosoeto



Participants attending to the meeting



All participants received a souvenir from the Minister Ginmardo Kromosoeto



Visit to Warappakreek in the District of Commewijne.