

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee
San José, Costa Rica
28-29 January 1988

Present

Members.

Canada (H.A. Clarke) (Vice-Chairman)

Chile (R. Plaza)

Netherlands (F. van Rijckevorsel)

New Zealand (J. Owen)

Pakistan (A.L. Rao) (Chairman)

Poland (Z. Krzeminski)

Tunisia (S.B.H. Kacem)

Switzerland (A. Antonietti)

USA (L. Mason, E. MeKeon)

Permanent Observers:

UK (C. Folland, M. Ford)

IUCN (K. Miller, P. Dugan, M. Forster, J. Harrison, R. Pellew) (for different agenda items)

IWRB (G.V.T. Matthews)

Contracting Party Observers:

Australia (J.D. Ovington) (part of the meeting)

Denmark (V. Koester, K. Stjernholm, Greenland) (part of the meeting)

France (I. Paillet) (part of the meeting)

Jordan (A. Teel)

Mauritania (I. Thiaw)

Nepal (B. Upreti) (part of the meeting)

Norway (S. Eldoy)

Non-governmental Observers:

WWF-US (E.U.C. Bohlen) (from agenda item 3)

WWF-UK (S. Lyster) (for agenda item 3 b)

NRDC (S.J. Parcels) (for agenda item 3 a)

Host:

Costa Rica (G. Canessa, J. Jiménez)

Secretariat

D. Navid (Secretary General)

M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

M. Katz (Administrative Assistant)

Z. Karpowicz, IUCN/CMC (Rapporteur)

Agenda item 1. Opening and Welcoming Remarks

a) The Chairman, Mr. A.L. Rao (Pakistan) opened the meeting at 09h10 on 28 January 1988. He thanked the Government of Costa Rica for hosting the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee, for lending support to the Convention Bureau, and for the excellent arrangements. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to Dr. Kenton R. Miller, Director General of IUCN, and to Prof. G.V.T. Matthews, Director of IWRB, for attending the meeting and noted that this would be the last Standing Committee meeting they would attend in their present capacities. He referred to the importance of wetlands in Costa Rica and noted the appropriateness of holding this meeting in San José. The Chairman invited Mr. Canessa, the representative of the Government of Costa Rica, to speak.

b) Mr. Canessa welcomed the members of the Standing Committee, the Convention Bureau and observers on behalf of his government. He gave a brief outline of the protected area system in Costa Rica, highlighting a number of areas of international importance. He noted that the major threat to wetlands in his country came from agricultural development and emphasized the importance of integrating conservation of wetlands with rural development. Representatives of Costa Rica had participated in several meetings concerning the Ramsar Convention and at present ratification of the Convention was before the Congress. Mr. Canessa invited Dr. Miller and Prof. Matthews to discuss this matter with the President of the Congress and indicated that there might be a positive announcement about Costa Rican participation during the IUCN General Assembly.

The Chairman thanked the representative of Costa Rica for his welcoming remarks and emphasized the importance of working with the government of Costa Rica to achieve this country's accession to the Ramsar Convention. He noted that all the members of the Standing Committee were present along with a number of observers whose number might increase in the following sessions.

c) Adoption of the Agenda: the Chairman suggested that this item should be covered in three parts: amendments and additions to the provisional agenda; comments by the Secretary General; and the question of admittance of non-governmental observers.

The draft agenda was amended by addition of the following items:

To agenda item 3: a subsection "(c) Guidance for the Working Group meeting on 30.1.88";

To agenda item 4: a subsection "(e) Statement from the Bureau on the status of ratification of the Regina amendments";

To agenda item 9: a subsection "(b) Discussion on issues for the IUCN General Assembly";

To agenda item 11: a subsection "(b) Discussion on incomplete instruments of ratification or accession"; a subsection "(c) Arrangement of Bureau staff time on IUCN and IWRB business"; a subsection "(d) Possible open discussion with NGOs"

An item 12: "Closing remarks".

It was also noted that, at the close of the Standing Committee meeting, there would be a presentation by Mr. Sanchez on wetland conservation in Costa Rica. The agenda was

adopted with these amendments (see Annex I). The Secretary General then provided an outline of the working schedule and procedures for the meeting. He noted that, according to the Rules of Procedure, informal interpretation would be provided by Bureau staff and that the documentation had been produced in both English and French language versions. He proposed that agenda items 2 through 4 should be concluded in this day's session, with items 4 and 3 inverted to take advantage of the presence of Dr. Kenton Miller. The Chairman invited the participants to introduce themselves, after which Mr. Canessa gave details about the excursion on 31 January 1988.

Discussions then began on the question of admittance of NGO observers. The Secretary General noted that this possibility was foreseen in the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee. He stated that the secretariat considered it extremely important to have NGO participation in the work of the Convention but recognized that the Standing Committee was a governmental body. It was noted that a group of NGOs had selected one representative to act on their behalf at this meeting (Mr. Bohlen, WWF-US). The Secretary General concluded by saying that, in addition, two other NGO representatives had requested to take part in agenda item 3. While several members and observers strongly supported the admission of NGOs to the standing Committee, others felt that NGO access to this intergovernmental body should be restricted. It was agreed that one representative of the NGO community might attend the full meeting, but that, upon the request of any member, the Standing Committee would meet in executive session. The Standing Committee also agreed to invite the two additional NGO participants for specific agenda items: Mr. S. Parcells (NRDC) was invited to attend for part of item 3(a) and Mr. S. Lyster for item 3(b). In addition, it was agreed that other NGO representatives might be invited to attend for item 11(d).

Agenda item 2: Presentation of 1987 Annual Report by the Convention Bureau

The Secretary General presented the report, highlighting the major activities of the Bureau. He noted that it followed the structure of previous Annual Reports. As the Report had been produced in November 1987 in time for distribution for the present meeting, he provided supplementary information. In December 1987, Nepal had deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention, thereby becoming the 46th Contracting Party. The one site listed by Nepal brought the total number of wetlands on the List to 384. Further information was provided about relations with other organizations, including the report of the Fourteenth General Meeting of the Ecosystems Conservation Group (UNEP, FAO, Unesco, IUCN), held in Rome in September 1987, which had pledged strong support for Ramsar Convention activities. Other new developments were mentioned in connection with 1987 Convention finances, preparation of the Proceedings of the Regina Conference, the conservation status of listed wetlands and preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, all of which were to be covered elsewhere in the agenda.

In the ensuing discussion, the importance of close working relationships with other nature conservation Convention secretariats was stressed. Emphasis was also given to the value of wetland training courses. The Bureau was commended for its thorough report. In order to remain fully informed on Bureau activities, the Standing Committee requested the Bureau to provide members on an informal basis with copies of consultancy reports and mission reports by Bureau staff. In answer to a question from the Chairman, the Secretary General stated that a report would be provided in 1988 and annually thereafter on the specific item of contacts with development assistance agencies, as mandated by Regina Recommendation 3.5.

Agenda item 3: Follow-up to Regina Conference - Conservation Matters

a) Discussion on Requirements to Implement Conference Recommendations

A brief presentation was provided on the implementation of the Recommendations. Considerable attention was devoted to Recommendations 3.4 and 3.5 concerning Development Agencies and to 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10 concerning further Contracting Parties to the Convention, as the subjects of the other Recommendations were to be covered in other agenda items.

Mr. Parcels of the Natural Resources Defense Council addressed the meeting on the subject of "Tropical Wetlands and the Development Assistance Agencies" (see Annex II). He highlighted the creation by the World Bank of a Critical Ecosystems Task Force, which would give special attention to tropical wetlands. Mr. Parcels suggested that the Bureau should seek to participate in this Task Force, thereby seizing the opportunity to influence development assistance aid in this field. He offered his organization's services to achieve this end. The Committee greatly welcomed this information and offer of assistance and encouraged the Bureau to pursue the matter.

Mr. Parcels added that, with regard to Recommendation 3.5, considerable funds were being made available by development assistance agencies for wetland-related projects. In the case of USAID, some US\$ 4.5 million had been allocated for projects on biological diversity. He suggested that there was a pressing need to provide USAID with advice on the location and conservation requirements of critical wetlands.

In regard to Recommendation 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10, the Conservation Coordinator reported on contacts with non-Party States in Africa, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, Asia and the Pacific. The member from Tunisia reported on his promotional activities at other international meetings. The member from New Zealand noted that training workshops organized in her country presented an excellent opportunity to promote the Convention among future decision-makers from the Oceania region. The Chairman indicated his intention to pursue the matter through the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Participants agreed that the forthcoming IUCN General Assembly would present excellent opportunities for promoting the Convention. The Secretary General noted that, in view of the constraints upon Bureau personnel's time and resources, a strategic approach to promotion would have to be adopted; this should be discussed under Agenda item 5, the Bureau workplan for 1988.

The Chairman invited the observer from Jordan to provide an update on the situation at the Azraq Ramsar site (Recommendation 3.8). The observer from Jordan welcomed the interest of the Contracting Parties and reported that a new Water and Irrigation Ministry had very recently been established in his country; this should help in establishing a large scale long-term plan for Azraq, a subject which his Minister had already discussed with the Prime Minister of Jordan.

b) Procedures for Improved Conservation of Listed Sites

The Chairman invited the NGO representative, Mr. Bohlen, to present the NGO proposal on this matter. Mr. Bohlen thanked the Committee for this opportunity and remarked that the

NGO community had been most pleased with the outcome of the Regina Conference. An NGO meeting had been convened by WWF in November 1987 to assist in the follow-up to the call made at Regina (see PLEN.C.3.10) for procedures to improve the conservation status of listed sites. Mr. Bohlen indicated that the NGOs wished to see the Bureau implement an early warning system. The proposal for such a system was in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Mr. Lyster, the observer from WWF-UK, then outlined the procedure, emphasizing that it was intended to help Contracting Parties to solve problems, particularly in developing countries. Mr. Bohlen added that the NGO proposal was intended as a monitoring and not as an enforcement procedure.

Comments from the Vice-Chairman and members from The Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland and Tunisia indicated general support for the concept of a monitoring procedure but noted that the proposed text would require redrafting to avoid impinging upon sovereign rights of Contracting Parties and that the implementation of the procedure would call for sensitivity and discretion on the part of the Bureau. The Secretary General pointed out that the concept was embodied in the Convention, which provided for information to be submitted to the Bureau. He considered that clarification of working procedures for the Bureau was required. Thereupon, at the suggestion of the Chairman, a drafting committee was established to revise the language of the proposal.

The text of the revised procedure (see Annex III) was later presented to the Standing Committee, and was adopted after some discussion. In view of time constraints, the Committee empowered the Bureau to make any editorial amendments which might be necessary. The member from The Netherlands indicated that he was obliged to enter a reservation on the matter pending further consultations with his government.

The member from the USA, on behalf of the Standing Committee, expressed thanks to the NGO community for their active concern and assistance.

The Bureau was requested to draw attention to this working procedure when conveying the report of the Standing Committee to the Parties.

c) Guidance for the Working Group Meeting on 30.1.1988

The Conservation Coordinator reported on the preparation of the meeting of the working Group on Criteria and Wise Use, to be held on 30 January 1988. The member from The Netherlands suggested that major revisions to the criteria were undesirable and that most attention should be devoted to improved presentation of the criteria and to the elaboration of the wise use concept. The Committee concurred with this statement, and advised the meeting of the Working Group to proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 4: Follow-up to Regina Conference - Administration Matters

a) Review of Bureau Personnel Arrangements

The IUCN Director General, Dr. Kenton R. Miller, recalled the steps taken for the appointment of Bureau personnel based at Gland. Mr. D. Navid had been appointed to the new post of Secretary General and Ms. M. Katz to the new post of Administrative Assistant, both with effect from 1 January 1988. Following appreciative comments from several participants, the Chairman noted that these appointments met with the approval of the

Standing Committee.

The IWRB Director, Professor Geoffrey Matthews, recalled the steps taken for the appointment of Bureau personnel at Slimbridge. Mr. M. Smart had been appointed, with effect from 1 January 1988, to the new post of Conservation Coordinator. The Chairman noted the Standing Committee's approval of this appointment. The IWRB Director noted that, as indicated in his correspondence with Chairman Rao, he believed that the second post at Slimbridge should provide scientific and technical support to the Conservation Coordinator. He had proposed that the secretarial support should be provided by IWRB, with reimbursement - at least in part - from the overhead charges allowed. He did however appreciate the Secretary General's concern to establish full-time staff for the Bureau. The Secretary General welcomed the statement from the Director of IWRB; he emphasized the necessity for a secretarial position. He recognized that further scientific and technical support would be required in view of the workload of the Bureau and he pledged to seek external funding for this purpose.

After an exchange of views on this subject, the Committee recognized that the existing symbiosis between the Bureau and IUCN/IWRB provided considerable technical and administrative support for the Convention. The Committee requested the Director of IWRB, in consultation with the Secretary General and the Conservation Coordinator, to fill the second post at Slimbridge as soon as possible.

b) Review of 1987 Income and Expenditure

The Secretary General introduced the financial statement for 1987. He explained that this had been produced prior to the final closure of accounts for 1987 and that, since its preparation, New Zealand had indicated its intention of making a voluntary contribution for 1987. Certain expenditures from late 1987 would also need to be included. As in the past years, staff time had not been covered by the budget. The Committee recorded appreciation to IUCN and IWRB and the many Contracting Parties and organizations which had provided financial support for the Bureau in 1987.

c) Review of Financial Procedures 1988-1990

The Director General of IUCN and the Director of IWRB reviewed the arrangements made to implement the financial regulations adopted at the Regina Conference. The Committee noted that separate accounts had been established for Ramsar purposes at both Gland and Slimbridge and that withdrawals from these accounts could not be made without the signature, respectively, of the Secretary General and of the Conservation Coordinator in addition to the signature of the appropriate IUCN or IWRB official.

d) Priorities for Expenditure in 1988

The Secretary General presented this item by tabling an additional document. He requested guidance from the Standing Committee on priorities among the various budget items for expenditure in 1988, in the event of delays in the receipt of income. In addition, he noted that the Conference of the Parties had empowered the Standing Committee to make changes in budgetary allocations. Pursuant to the decision of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, he requested that, due to exchange rate fluctuations between the time of the preparation of the budget in December 1986 and its adoption in June 1987, SFr. 10.000.- be re-allocated to

budget item 1 (staff costs) and SFr. 2.500.- to budget item 5 (administrative services) from budget item 10 (contingency fund). For all other budget items, the Secretary General indicated that the Bureau would endeavour to limit expenditure in line with the 9.5 % budgetary shortfall caused by exchange rate fluctuations.

The Standing Committee approved the proposed re-allocation. The Committee, while agreeing with the Bureau's proposal concerning the ordering of priorities, decided that a higher priority should be given to data and information requirements and noted the understanding that budget item 8 (support to delegates for meeting participation) in 1988 could be met from external sources of support, as in the case of the Standing Committee and the Criteria and Wise Use Working Group meetings.

It was noted that invoices for 1988 contributions had been sent to the Contracting Parties through diplomatic channels in October 1988, in the format approved by the Standing Committee, and that contributions had already been received from Australia, Denmark and Sweden; the latter two had transferred funds in line with the higher US dollar/Swiss franc exchange rate. Several Standing Committee members noted that their country's contribution for 1988 were en route.

e) Status of Ratification of the Regina Amendments

The Committee noted that the Proceedings of the Extraordinary Conference in Regina had been distributed and that this would facilitate acceptance of the amendments to the Convention adopted at Regina. In addition, the Secretary General noted the importance of the Resolution on provisional implementation of the amendments to the Convention adopted at the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chairman informed the Committee that the process of ratification of the amendments by Pakistan was in a fairly advanced stage.

Item 5: Bureau workplan for 1988

The Secretary General presented the document on the 1988 workplan, and explained that this lengthy list of activities was derived from the text of the Convention and from decisions of the Contracting Parties. The specific activities of the Bureau in line with the major headings of this workplan would depend upon the availability of funding; in any event, priorities would need to be identified. The Secretary General noted that the Bureau would have to work in close cooperation with partner organizations, notably IUCN and IWRB.

The various categories of activities in the Bureau workplan were reviewed:

a) Administration of the Convention

It was noted that this was the Bureau's principal responsibility, requiring considerable attention.

b) Promotion of the Convention

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that contacts with Contracting Parties should be related to opportunities, but that the Bureau might devote particular attention to Contracting Parties that were members of the Standing Committee, to countries of the Sahel and the Mediterranean (in particular Greece), to assist in wetland conservation activities. It should enhance involvement with certain major industrialized countries, notably the USSR and

Japan. Among non-Party States, priority attention should be given to those which had participated as observers at Regina, to Southeast Asia and to the few remaining countries in Europe. There was a need to set goals for specific achievements in 1988. The Committee also agreed to encourage promotional activities by its own members, in consultation with the Bureau.

c) Production of publications

The Standing Committee noted with appreciation the rapid production of the preliminary Regina report in both English and French versions, and the publication of the Proceedings of the Extraordinary Conference. It acknowledged the value of producing a Spanish translation of the Preliminary report (or of sections thereof), should external funding be available. Other Convention publications, including the proposed Newsletter (see Agenda item 7), were discussed.

d) Promotion of Wetland Conservation Activities

It was noted that the extent of action on the points enumerated would be contingent upon the availability of funding. For this reason, several items had been included in the project proposals presented under Agenda item 6. Special interest was registered in promotion of training activities and in pursuing contacts with development aid agencies.

e) Data base

This item was considered in detail under Agenda item 6.

f) Organization of Convention Meetings

g) Participation in Wetland Meetings Organized by Other Bodies

b) Contacts with Other Conservation Convention Secretariats

The Standing Committee noted the importance of pursuing the activities enumerated under these headings. Upon the proposal of the observer from Denmark, supported by the member from The Netherlands, the Bureau was requested to pursue contacts with the Commission of the European Communities in view of the relevance of the EC Directive on Wild Birds, the CORINE data base and EC development assistance activities to the Ramsar Convention.

Item 6: Convention projects

The Secretary General presented the project documentation, distinguishing between general and site-specific projects. He indicated that the implementation of projects would require external funding. Although the Bureau would not seek to perform a major project management function, outside project funding for a selected number of project activities of a demonstration or catalytic nature could be extremely beneficial.

The Standing Committee reviewed each project proposal in the general section. The projects related to the Criteria/Wise Use Working Group, to flyways studies and to publicity materials were considered to be appropriate. The project concerning contacts with development agencies was also supported, with the suggestion that it be extended to encompass contacts with the Asian and African development banks and aid agencies such as CIDA, DANIDA, NORAD, ODA, SIDA and USAID. The New Zealand member, the IUCN observer and WWF-USA all offered assistance in establishing contacts with development aid agencies.

The Standing Committee recognized the importance of the monitoring procedure discussed

under Agenda item 3(b). The NGO representative expressed appreciation at the conclusion of a satisfactory procedure and conveyed a pledge of US\$ 35.000 to support the project, subject to matching funding from Contracting Parties. The Chairman thanked the observer on behalf of the standing Committee and Bureau for this generous support.

The Chairman opened discussion of the project on data bases, noting that the Bureau had received two project proposals on this subject, one from IUCN/CMC and one from the University of Leiden, The Netherlands (EDWIN). He suggested that the Standing Committee should consider whether the Bureau should have an independent data base or utilize existing facilities. The Committee considered that establishment of an independent data base would be inappropriate because of the expense and complexity of such an operation. The Chairman then inquired whether the Bureau should work with a centralized data base or with regional data bases. The Secretary General considered that this matter required further investigation; for the moment, the main priority was to maintain the List and to use existing data for monitoring wetlands.

The Director of IUCN's Conservation Monitoring Centre (CMC), Dr. Robin Pellew, presented an overview of his centre's activities and emphasized that the Convention Bureau had to define its data needs, and the operations it wished to carry out. Mr. J. Harrison, head of the IUCN Protected Areas Data Unit at CMC, presented the CMC project proposal on data bases. He emphasized that CMC had for some time been providing the data base for the Convention by maintaining the List and information sheets on listed sites; the funding currently included in the Convention budget was sufficient to maintain these services, to produce sheets on newly listed sites and limited updating. It was not sufficient, however, for detailed periodic reviews for the triennial Conference, nor for analysis of information on actual and potential sites and for monitoring purposes. After comments from the USA member, the observer from Denmark, the Conservation Coordinator and from IUCN/CMC, the Committee concluded that the valuable services provided by IUCN/CMC should continue to be used in 1988 (see above discussion on item 4(d)). The Bureau was requested to prepare a report for the next meeting of the Standing Committee on its data needs for the long-term activities of the Convention, taking into account the availability of IUCN/CMC's and EDWIN's services and regional data bases and funding requirements for the additional activities mentioned by CMC.

The training courses project was discussed next. There was general agreement on the importance of this item. The USA member urged that all site specific projects should contain a training element, and the observer from Mauritania called for courses to be part of a longer-term training strategy at regional level, like that recently developed for West Africa at a symposium sponsored by IUCN and the US National Parks Service, or like the US Fish & Wildlife Service training workshops in Central America. The Conservation Coordinator, who had taken part in a number of training workshops, offered to prepare, for the next meeting of the Standing Committee, a document on the Convention's role in training courses and follow-up. This proposal was endorsed by the Committee.

Before turning to discussion of site-specific projects, the Secretary General, in response to a question from The Netherlands, confirmed that funding for Convention projects, whether general or site-specific, was not included in the Convention budget and required external sources of income. The Standing Committee's discussion of site-specific projects concentrated on the issue of whether it was appropriate for the Bureau to deal with such projects at all.

The Vice-Chairman felt that, given the constraints on time and money, the Bureau should probably give priority to general projects of interest to all Contracting Parties. The Vice-Chairman emphasized that he was not opposed to site-specific projects, as long as they were in harmony with the Convention's objectives. Several members and observers warned against involving the Bureau in detailed project management in which other bodies already had considerable experience. After interventions from the members from The Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Tunisia and USA, from the observers from Denmark, France, Mauritania and WWF-USA and from the Secretary General and the Conservation Coordinator, the Chairman summarized the conclusions as follows:

- It was not appropriate to convene a sub-committee on this matter, as some had suggested, but participants were encouraged to have further informal discussions;
- The Bureau should not act as a project management body;
- However, it was appropriate for the Bureau to provide a clearing-house function for projects on wetlands, by receiving requests from Contracting Parties and transmitting them in an opportunistic manner to funding sources.

The member from Switzerland strongly supported the proposal from the observer of Norway on the need for the Convention to have a strategy on which to base its activities, and emphasized the need for a policy on project work to be included in a strategy document. The Bureau undertook to provide a draft for such a document for the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 7: Promotional Activities

The Secretary General emphasized the importance of the proposed logo, letterhead, newsletter, plaque, diploma and brochure for the promotion of the Convention and dissemination of its message on wetlands. He presented examples of these items, emphasizing the urgency of a decision by the Committee, particularly as regards the logo. After review, the Committee approved the colour logo and letterhead, but requested the Bureau to produce additional concepts for the diploma and a detailed design for the plaque.

The Committee reviewed the proposed format for the Newsletter. It approved the proposal on this subject and emphasized that the quarterly document should be simple and inexpensive. The Committee welcomed the offer of support from the government of Canada in the initial stages of the design and production of the Newsletter. The offer from WWF-USA of assistance in preparing a possible Spanish language edition was also gratefully accepted.

The members from Tunisia and USA requested the Bureau to make copies of promotional material, including texts of lectures by Bureau personnel, available to them.

Agenda Item 8: Preparation for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

The Secretary General (in the absence of the member from Switzerland, who had been called to another meeting) reported that the Bureau had already had three meetings with the authorities of the Swiss Confederation and of the Canton of Vaud. The venue for the

Conference would be the Montreux Conference Centre, where facilities were excellent. The dates had been confirmed as 27 June to 4 July 1990. Several participants pointed out possible clashes with other events, but the Committee noted that clashes were inevitable and confirmed the proposed venue and dates. The Bureau was requested to convey as soon as possible information on the venue and timing of the meeting to the Contracting Parties and concerned organizations. The Secretary General noted that efforts were under way to produce a cooperative agreement with the Swiss authorities for the meeting and that the Standing Committee would be consulted once a draft had been produced.

Agenda item 9(a): Proposed IUCN Global Wetlands Strategy

At the Chairman's invitation, Dr. Miller, Director General of IUCN, explained that IUCN, as part of the Union's collaboration with its members, UNEP and WWF, developed programmes on themes such as plants and wetlands. The efforts of the Wetlands Programme were offered as a form of collaboration with the Ramsar Convention and he requested Dr. Dugan, the IUCN Wetlands Programme Coordinator, to present the IUCN document, no longer named a Global Wetlands Strategy, but "Wetlands Conservation and Sustainable Development".

Dr. Dugan noted that the document had originated at the first meeting of IUCN's Wetlands Advisory Committee in 1985, where concern had been expressed at the loss of wetlands following the action of governments and development agencies unaware of wetland values. The programme's main aim was to explain the importance of wetlands to this community. One major gap was the lack of a major strategic document on the subject, and the draft prepared for the IUCN General Assembly was intended to address this problem. Preparation had been slower than he had hoped, and the first presentable draft was now ready; it would be discussed at one of the General Assembly technical workshops. Further comments and corrections could be received until April 1988 and the final version would be submitted to IUCN's Programme Advisory Committee in June 1988 and published after the Committee's approval had been received. He emphasized that there was a major role for the Standing Committee and all Contracting Parties in commenting on the document; a special section on Ramsar was intended and he would welcome discussion on how Ramsar perspectives could be reflected in the final version.

In conclusion, Dr. Dugan sought to allay two concerns: as shown in the title, IUCN was not promoting wetland development but showing how wetland conservation could contribute to development. In some cases this contribution would be in the form of strict wetland protection measures. Secondly, he was concerned if the impression had been given of a lack of cooperation between the IUCN Wetland Programme and the Ramsar Bureau. Although there had been inadequate consultations in 1987, Mr. Navid had attended the original 1985 Vienna meeting of the Wetlands Advisory Committee and had commented on an early 1986 draft of the document.

The Secretary General reassured the Committee on the Bureau's relations with IUCN colleagues, and asked for its views on how the document could be of value to Ramsar and how the Bureau should be involved in this work. The Vice-Chairman and the members from The Netherlands and USA all supported closer collaboration between the Bureau and the IUCN Wetland Programme. The Vice-Chairman suggested the need for a document stating clearly the linkages between the different bodies working in the same field. The observer from Norway felt the IUCN document was important for the work of the Convention and filled a gap on the wise use issue which had been felt at Regina. He reiterated the need for

the Convention to have a document on its own strategy.

The member from The Netherlands felt that the IUCN document was too much oriented towards development and showed insufficient concern for nature conservation. The IUCN Director General, recalling definitions in the World Conservation Strategy, emphasized the need to influence governments and development agencies who supported projects affecting wetlands. Dr. Dugan and the observer from Denmark supported this approach.

Concluding this discussion, the Committee approved the Secretary General's suggestion that the Bureau should prepare, for the next meeting of the Standing Committee, documents as requested by the Vice-Chairman and the observer from Norway and that it should make sure that Ramsar's concerns were reflected in the IUCN document.

Item 9(b): Issues for the IUCU General Assembly

The Committee urged participants to play an active role in the General Assembly in the light of the discussion under Item 9(a) and to highlight Ramsar and its activities. The Secretary General drew attention to the Technical workshop on wetlands, which included a presentation on Ramsar and a session chaired by Mr. Rao and draft resolutions related to the Convention. The member from the USA urged Committee members to support the Resolutions on wetlands.

Item 10: Next Meeting of the Standing Committee

The Committee agreed that another meeting should be held in 1988, the first year of full-time activity by the Bureau. The meeting should be at the Bureau offices in Gland, Switzerland. It was agreed that a three to four day meeting should be held in the week from Monday 17 to Friday 21 October. The meeting might include a visit to the Montreux Conference Centre and to Swiss wetlands. Efforts would be made to coordinate the Standing Committee meeting with a meeting of IUCN's Council and with celebrations of IUCN's Fortieth Anniversary.

The Committee agreed that as a general rule it would be appropriate to meet in the autumn in future years in order to review annual activities under the Convention and consider work plans and financial requirements for the coming year.

Agenda item 11: Any Other Business

a) Conservation Status of Listed Wetlands

The Chairman recalled that major progress had been made under Agenda item 3(b) by the adoption of a monitoring procedure to improve conservation of listed sites. The Secretary General reported that documents had now been received about the Galgenschoor Ramsar site in Belgium, where deletion of a part of the site and compensation by inclusion of a new area was involved. He indicated that information was being provided to the Standing Committee on this matter.

The observer from Denmark introduced Ms. K. Stjernholm of the Greenland Home Rule Secretariat, noting that, while Greenland was a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, it had its own Parliament and had sovereign rights in many fields including conservation matters.

Danish ratification of Ramsar covered Greenland, but no Ramsar sites had as yet been designated in Greenland. Ms. Stjernholm announced that the Greenland authorities had decided in October 1987 to include eleven Greenland sites, covering over a million hectares, in the List, and circulated a pamphlet in English and Greenlandic about the sites. The observer from Denmark confirmed that a letter notifying designation of the sites had been despatched to the Bureau on 27 January 1988. This communication was greeted with applause by participants.

The observer from UK stated that, while he was unable to make a formal announcement, he had every reason to believe that a new Ramsar site would be declared in the very near future on the Upper Severn Estuary in England. This listing was especially significant since the IWRB headquarters, where one section of the Ramsar Bureau was housed, was located at Slimbridge on the edge of the Ramsar wetland. *

[* Note: The UK Minister for Environment formally designated this site during a visit to Slimbridge on 5 February 1988.]

b) Incomplete Instruments of Ratification or Accession

The Secretary General tabled an information paper on this matter, giving details of four States whose instruments of accession to the Convention were incomplete, and one Contracting Party whose instrument of accession to the Protocol of Amendment had not been accepted by Unesco. In most cases, problems arose since a wetland of international importance had not been designated. He noted that the Bureau had provided many governments with examples of instruments and of maps and descriptions of designated wetlands, but suggested that a more detailed guide was perhaps necessary. The Committee approved this proposal.

The Secretary General then raised the question of interpretation of the Convention, i.e. whether the four States concerned were to be regarded (as he believed) as Contracting Parties which had not as yet fulfilled their listing obligations under the Convention, or as non-Parties, as considered by the Depositary, Unesco. The observer from Denmark concurred with the Secretary General and noted the necessity for a decision on this matter by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that it was appropriate to draft a Resolution on this matter, for consideration by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

c) Arrangements of Bureau Staff Time on IUCN and IWRB Business

The Secretary General indicated that IUCN had requested him to maintain limited involvement in the following IUCN activities:

- Member of TRAFFIC International Committee (CITES Convention)
- Member of Board of Directors of IUCN-USA
- Legal advisor, in particular for negotiations with The Netherlands and Swiss authorities on IUCN headquarters.

He noted that the Administrative Assistant was also occasionally requested to carry out assignments in the field of international affairs for IUCN. He requested the Committee's approval for continuation of these activities, which would be beneficial to the Bureau by

promoting cooperation with IUCN and reciprocal services by IUCN staff for the Ramsar Convention. After several comments appreciating the Secretary General's role in the activities mentioned, and in representing IUCN at international convention meetings, the Committee approved this proposal.

The Director of IWRB indicated that, while the Conservation Coordinator still had some outstanding items of 1987 business to complete, he was not requesting that Bureau staff based at Slimbridge devote time to IWRB projects, though they might be asked to represent IWRB at meetings they attended on behalf of the Ramsar Bureau.

d) Possible Open Discussion with NGOs

It had been intended to extend the discussion of conservation status of listed wetlands (item 11(a)) by an exchange of views with representatives of non-governmental organization. Because of time constraints this was not possible, but participants in the Standing Committee meeting were of the opinion that greater attention should be devoted to conservation of listed wetlands at future meetings.

Agenda item 12: Closing Remarks

The member from the USA, supported by the Vice-Chairman, commended the Bureau on the excellent documentation produced. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman also thanked Bureau personnel for their services at this meeting.

In his closing remarks, the Chairman expressed thanks to members and observers for their active participation in the deliberations of the Standing Committee, and expressed his conviction that major progress had been made in the implementation of the Convention in the course of the last two days. He paid special tribute to the representative of the host country, Costa Rica, for making such excellent arrangements for the meeting of the Standing Committee. He noted that participants were shortly to hear a presentation on the wetlands of Costa Rica by Messrs. Canessa and Sanchez; he felt that this would be a fitting introduction to the Committee's study tour to the Palo Verde wetlands, and in closing the meeting expressed the hope that Costa Rica would in the near future become a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 17h30 on 29 January 1988.