

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland; 23-25 October 1989

MINUTES

Present

Members:

Canada (H.A. Clarke, Vice-Chairman)
Chile (R. Schlatter)
Netherlands (F. von der Assen)
New Zealand (J. Owen)
Pakistan (A.L. Rao, Chairman)
Poland (Z. Krzeminski)
Switzerland (A. Antonietti, P. Goeldlin, P. Hunkeler)
Tunisia (S.B.H. Kacem)
USA (L. Mason, M. Willis, T. Dahl)

Permanent Observers:

UK (R. Bone, Chairman subgroup on Programme; D. Langslow)
IUCN (M. Holdgate, P. J. Dugan)
IWRB (M.E. Moser, C.M. Finlayson)

Contracting Party Observers:

Australia (H. Jenkins, B. Martin)
Ghana (C.A. Punguse)
Hungary (L. Lakos)
Japan (K. Kitada, M. Komoda, J. Nishimura)
Norway (S. Eldoy, Chairman Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use)
South Africa (T.G. Visser)

Non-governmental Observers:

WWF (P. Kramer, M. Gawler)

Secretariat:

D. Navid, Secretary General
M. Smart, Conservation Coordinator
M. Katz, Administrative Officer
T.A. Jones, Technical Officer, rapporteur
C.M. Samuel, Secretary, rapporteur
P. Cobley, Secretary
M. Visser, Ramsar Intern
C. de Klemm, Consultant to the Bureau and Legal Advisor

Standing Committee closed sessions: Closed sessions of the Standing Committee were held on 23 October 1989, prior to the commencement of the full meeting, and in the evening of 24 October 1989. The minutes of the closed sessions have been produced for the participants as a separate document.

Agenda item 1: Opening and Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman, opened the meeting at 10h00 on 23 October 1989 and welcomed members of the Standing Committee, observers and non-governmental organizations. He was especially pleased to welcome the Director General of IUCN and the Director of IWRB and expressed his thanks to the Vice-Chairman, Mr. H A Clarke, for Chairing the Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee, which was held in October 1988. He congratulated the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Bureau and partner organizations on the major steps forward which had been achieved since the Third Conference of Contracting Parties held at Regina, Canada in 1987 and noted that the present meeting provided an important and timely opportunity for the Standing Committee to review the arrangements and documentation for the Fourth Conference of Contracting Parties, to be held at Montreux, Switzerland from 27 June - 4 July 1990. A number of other important issues were also on the Agenda and the Chairman thanked the Bureau for providing relevant documents to the Standing Committee. Finally, the Chairman expressed his particular thanks to the Secretary General for overseeing arrangements for the present meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General extended a warm welcome to all participants and made a number of administrative announcements about arrangements for the coming days.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director General of IUCN noted that the meeting provided an opportunity to examine what Ramsar and IUCN could achieve as partners. Both organizations were striving to secure further member countries as part of their respective programme development work. It was important that this was carried out in the context of sustainable development. Ramsar provided a legal and procedural framework for wetlands protection and it was admirable that the Convention defined wetlands in such broad terms. Wetlands were centres of biodiversity and provided a range of crucially important physical, chemical and biological services.

The Director General of IUCN went on to say that Ramsar and IUCN were natural partners in the context of wise use. IUCN was developing a wetland conservation strategy based on sustainable development and it would be important to continue contact with Ramsar in finalizing this strategy. National wetland conservation strategies would have to take full account of the findings of conservation science, regarding the impacts of climatic change and other global factors. The implications of such changes were fundamentally linked to the economic world. The assets provided by wetlands were being acknowledged increasingly, especially in economic terms.

The IUCN World Parks Conference in 1992 would promote sustainable development and examine the relationship between the current network of parks and biodiversity. The Ramsar Conference at Montreux and the 1990 IUCN General Assembly would provide an opportunity for developing mutually supportive programmes. IUCN would be able to offer scientific support to Ramsar. IUCN greatly valued its role as host to the Ramsar Bureau and would be able to provide legal support, financial services and secretarial help for Montreux.

He looked forward greatly to delivering the opening address at Montreux and was certain that a fair arrangement for sustaining a mutually beneficial partnership could be established.

The Chairman thanked the Director General of IUCN for his opening remarks and invited the Director of IWRB to take the floor.

The Director of IWRB reported that the integration of IWRB and Ramsar had resulted in a number of important achievements even though resources had been very limited. Later in the meeting the Standing Committee would be discussing proposals to consolidate the Bureau into one office in Gland in the interests of efficiency and strengthening its program. Discussion of this subject during the past year had concluded that with such a consolidation it would be essential for IWRB to maintain its partnership with Ramsar. The links which IWRB provided with field contacts were particularly valuable to the Bureau.

The 34th IWRB Executive Board Meeting, held in Astrakhan, USSR, earlier in the autumn, had been extremely successful and unique opportunities for collaboration with Soviet colleagues had arisen. The Executive Board had approved IWRB's Forward Plan (1990-1992) as a firm framework for future activities.

The Chairman thanked the Director of IWRB for his words of welcome and for his support of the Ramsar Convention. He then called upon the Director (Conservation) of WWF International to take the floor.

The Director (Conservation) of WWF International welcomed the Standing Committee to Gland on behalf of his organization. He noted that wetlands had been a conservation priority for many years and would continue to be so. WWF had followed the valuable definition of wetlands provided by the text of the Ramsar Convention and saw itself as a translator of the Ramsar message to non-governmental organizations around the world. WWF was holding a meeting to prepare NGOs for Montreux and it was hoped that NGOs would make a very positive contribution to the Conference.

Agenda item 2: Admission of Observers

Drawing attention to page 5 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) the Chairman recalled that Contracting Parties which were not Members of the Standing Committee were nevertheless entitled to attend Meetings of the Standing Committee as Observers. Contracting Party observers present included Australia, Ghana, Hungary, Japan, Norway, South Africa and United Kingdom (Permanent Observer). IUCN and IWRB were present as Permanent Observer organizations and WWF International was present as an invited Observer organization.

The Standing Committee approved the admission (except to closed sessions) of all the observers mentioned above.

Agenda item 3: Adoption of Agenda

No additions were made to the draft Agenda, which was subsequently approved for adoption by the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Standing

Committee not Otherwise Covered by this Agenda

The Bureau had provided short notes for the meeting on three items which it believed merited discussions under this agenda item: the Convention's Data Requirements, Mediterranean Activities and Contracts with Development Assistance Agencies

(a) Convention Data Requirements

At the Chairman's request, the Conservation Coordinator outlined the progress which had been made towards establishment of a Ramsar database. The Cambridge-based World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), which had been handling the Bureau's data needs for the past several years, had been asked to provide a number of alternative strategies for implementing a Ramsar database, using a paper commissioned from Dr. Derek A. Scott as a starting point. In view of the options submitted by WCMC, the Bureau and its advisers had decided to recommend a "stand-alone" PC-based solution which would hold data on wetlands designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance. The database would provide a means of readily storing and updating information which could be used for the day-to-day work of the Bureau and for the preparation of the Ramsar Directory.

The Secretary General informed the Committee that it had been proposed to him at the IWRB Executive Board meeting that the Ramsar "stand-alone" database should be located with IWRB in Slimbridge. This was suggested in the context of discussions about Ramsar maintaining a permanent, physical presence with IWRB following a consolidation of Bureau staff in Gland. The Secretary General advised the Standing Committee that such an approach would be feasible and in many ways desirable in that IWRB had much data which could be integrated with Ramsar's database. He noted, however, that Ramsar had a long and beneficial history of cooperation with WCMC and that links must be maintained with WCMC should it be decided to adopt a database solution based elsewhere than at WCMC.

The Standing Committee reviewed options for the Ramsar database and agreed that it was of paramount importance to move to implement the "stand-alone" concept. The Chairman noted that the consensus of the meeting was to instruct the Bureau to develop such a solution based at IWRB headquarters. He noted further that this matter and related issues would be discussed again under agenda item 8) "Bureau Workplan for 1990" and under agenda item 13) "Secretariat Matters".

(b) Mediterranean Activities

The Conservation Coordinator presented an overview of the many activities the Bureau had been pursuing in the Mediterranean region during 1989, recalling to the Standing Committee that this region had been identified by the Standing Committee as a priority region for Bureau attention.

The Conservation Coordinator laid greatest stress upon the workshop to be held at Doñana in November 1989 in cooperation with the Spanish Ramsar authorities and the Council of Europe, Bern Convention Secretariat. He paid tribute to the work done by the Ramsar secretary in Slimbridge for her organization of the meeting and promised to keep the Standing Committee informed about progress with this work.

The member from Tunisia applauded the efforts of the Bureau in the region and noted that

these were especially appreciated by the North African members of the Convention.

(c) Development Assistance Agency Contacts

The Secretary General reported upon Bureau action in pursuance of Recommendations 3.3 and 3.5 from the Regina Conference. Within its available resources, the Bureau had been working to promote the concept of wise use of wetlands with development assistance agencies. He indicated that very useful contacts had been established with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Commission of the European Community (DG VII), at multilateral level and with several national development assistance agencies. There were high expectations of gaining support for developing country participant travel grants for the Montreux Conference and for ensuring the participation of aid agency personnel at the Montreux Conference. Furthermore, the Bureau had large “wise-use” projects pending with the Netherlands and the Swedish Development Assistance Agencies.

The observer from Norway noted that Bureau contacts with the development assistance agency in his country had been very useful and he had expectations of considerable future cooperation.

There being no further discussion of this agenda item, the Chairman thanked the Bureau and turned to agenda item 5.

Agenda item 5: Presentation of Report on 1989 Activities by the Convention Bureau

A report had been circulated previously to the Standing Committee members and observers. The Secretary General quickly highlighted aspects of the report, noting that practically all activities would be the subject of discussion under other agenda items during this meeting. In reply to a question from the Chairman, he noted that the Annual Report, including financial report, of the Bureau for the year 1989 would be issued early in 1990.

The Secretary General also drew attention to a document on the Monitoring Procedure, produced by the Bureau’s Technical Officer and noted that this would be considered under agenda item 18).

The Chairman thanked the Secretary General for tabling the report and noted that the report had been received and accepted by the Standing Committee. He also expressed his personal appreciation for the considerable and high quality work produced by the Bureau in 1989.

Agenda item 6: Review of Convention Finances

(a) Income

At the Chairman’s invitation, the Secretary General introduced pages 55-66 (English version) of the Standing Committee documentation. Referring specifically to income, he noted that the Bureau had been gratified that so many Contracting Parties had paid their contributions promptly, whilst others had indicated that payment was imminent. However, not all Contracting Parties had paid and for some the position remained legally and diplomatically delicate. Happily, some countries (Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands) had chosen to provide additional voluntary, unearmarked contributions to Ramsar, thus providing important additional support for the Bureau’s activities.

The Secretary General went on to record the Bureau's appreciation of significant support in kind provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and WWF-US, which had enabled work on the Ramsar database and Newsletter to be carried out. The Swiss Government had provided important tax benefits to foreign employees working in Gland, whilst major project funding had been granted by governments (Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA), Unesco, and by NGOs (RSPB, WWF-UK, WWF-USA, WWF-Netherlands, WWF-Germany, WWF-Belgium, and the Dutch Society for the Conservation of Birds).

Furthermore, the Convention had benefited from high bank interest rates made available through a "48 hour" account maintained by IUCN. A formal agreement between Ramsar and IUCN had been signed on this point following discussions in June 1989 with the Vice-Chairman and with the Convention's auditors. By setting up a joint account, Ramsar was able to benefit from higher interest rates than would be available on its own basic current account. The minimum investment to qualify for the higher interest account was SFr 500,000 and Ramsar had been able to contribute SFr 250,000 to an arrangement with IUCN. Funds were available with 48 hours notice, and all expenditure from the Ramsar funds in the account required the Secretary General's authorization.

The Director General of IUCN confirmed that no extra administrative charge would be levied on the Bureau for this arrangement.

The Secretary General concluded by noting the Convention's income was in a healthy position, although further work was needed in order to secure payment of outstanding contributions from Contracting Parties. The Bureau had more or less been able to carry out its programme during 1989 but reliance on project funding made long-term planning difficult.

The member from Tunisia congratulated the Bureau on the work which had been achieved and he expressed his satisfaction with the Convention's income position. He noted that project funding from the US F&WS had enabled the construction of an Ecomuseum at Lac Ichkeul; the first such wetland education facility to be built in Tunisia. The museum had been inaugurated on 1 February 1989 and had received up to 5000 visitors in one week. A second US F&WS grant would result soon in the publication of a major document dealing with the status of Tunisian wetlands.

The member from Tunisia went on to state that for some reason his Government had not yet received an invoice for its 1989 contribution to the Convention. Therefore, no payment had yet been made.

The Secretary General noted that the Ichkeul Ecomuseum project had also been supported by the World Heritage Fund and WWF-International. He also offered to provide immediately a duplicate 1989 invoice to the Tunisian delegate.

The Vice-Chairman considered that project funding was vital for the successful implementation of the Convention. The Bureau could not do everything and had to form partnerships in order to tap the well of support and goodwill which existed.

The Chairman agreed but expressed his concern that the Ramsar Bureau should not become a project management body. The Bureau could act as a clearing house for project funding, but

overseeing implementation of the projects should be carried out by partner organizations such as IWRB.

In conclusion, the Standing Committee noted its satisfaction with 1989 income, but encouraged the Bureau to work closely with those Parties which had not as yet made contributions to the Convention's budget in order to seek ways in which such support might be provided in the future.

(b) Expenditure

Turning to expenditure, The Secretary General noted that it was difficult to plan expenditure because of the uncertainty of accurately predicting income. The Bureau took a conservative approach to expenditure in view of this problem. Expenditure in 1989 was within the overall budget, although some individual budget lines were presently overspent.

Telecommunications, for example, was 50% over-budget. Adjustments would be made at year end to reallocate as appropriate some of this expenditure to the budgets of Convention projects. The Secretary General explained that the Convention's finances were healthy, but that certain budget lines were clearly insufficient in light of the needs of the Bureau, or evident over the past two years.

In conclusion, the Secretary General noted that a complete statement of accounts had been produced and distributed to the Standing Committee to enable an overview of the Convention's financial position.

The member from the USA considered that it had been useful to see the details of the Convention's expenditure. He suggested that, in future, it might be even more helpful to see in one paper a budgeted premise against expenditure.

He also queried whether the statement of income and expenditure appearing on page 60 of the Standing Committee Documentation (English version) should indicate specified allocations to particular projects.

The Secretary General replied that the brief statement on page 60 did not include project income. As in previous years, the figures shown dealt only with the transactions involving the Convention's core funding.. Project income and expenditure were tracked in separate accounts and were provided to individual donors. These were also reviewed by the auditors.

The Vice-Chairman noted that an explicit statement of individual budget lines would be presented at the Montreux Conference, including full details of project funding and allocation of expenses.

The Secretary General offered, should the Standing Committee wish, the Bureau could provide such a document for the current meeting. The member from the USA agreed that such a full statement would assist the Standing Committee in discharging its responsibilities. This more detailed statement was subsequently distributed to all Standing Committee members. At the motion of the member from the United States, it was accepted formally by the Standing Committee.

(c) 1990 Income Projections

The Secretary General noted that it was considerably easier to project income (both core and additional funding) in the second and third years of a triennium than in the first year. It was anticipated that those Contracting Parties which paid their contributions in 1988 and 1989 would continue to do so in 1990, whilst there was a strong likelihood that at least some which had not yet paid, would pay during the coming year. In addition, certain project funds had already been secured, with other sources of support being actively investigated.

In response to a query raised by the member from the US, the Secretary General noted that the value of Contracting Party contributions would be little affected by changes in inflation and/or exchange rates. All invoices were sent out in Swiss Francs; inflation in Switzerland was currently running at 3.5% and was therefore a negligible factor. In addition, some project support for work in the UK (e.g. database) was held in a Sterling account in the UK.

The Standing Committee accepted formally the Secretary General's analysis of likely 1990 income.

(d) Priorities for 1990 Expenditure

Introducing pages 63-65 of the Standing Committee Documentation (English version), the Secretary General emphasized that it would be unlikely once again that the Convention budget would be covered in full by core funding (i.e. Contracting Party contributions). In the past, this had led to the establishment of priorities for expenditure. Thus for 1990 the Bureau was proposing a first priority totaling some SFr 523,000.

In addition, the Standing Committee was reminded of the budgetary shortfalls which had resulted each year of the triennium 1988-1990 due to exchange rate losses between the time the budget was calculated (in US \$) and adopted at Regina (in Swiss francs). Hence, as in 1988 and 1989, the Standing Committee would be asked to make adjustments in the budget to cover fixed items dependent upon Swiss Franc calculations (e.g. Priority item No 1. Staff costs, and Priority item No 2 IUCN/IWRB Administrative Services). It was thus proposed to increase items No 1 by SFr. 48,000 and item 2 by SFr. 13,000, taking these funds from first budget item 10 (Contingency Fund) and then No 7 (Expert Services).

Referring to Priority item No 2 (IUCN/IWRB Administrative Services), the Director General of IUCN confirmed that his organization would continue to calculate this item as 24% of the total Ramsar salary bill in 1990, although the basis for calculation would be altered with effect from the Convention's next triennium (see agenda item 11).

Replying to a query raised by the representative from the US, the Secretary General emphasized that reallocation of funds from one priority category to another would not alter the basic requirement for the Convention's budget to be "topped-up" by project funding. However, it would still be appropriate to increase the budget for items 1 and 2 by decreasing items 7 and 10.

At the request of the member from New Zealand, totals were read out for the proposed actual expenditure on each budget item in 1990.

The member from Tunisia emphasized the importance of Priority No 8, (Travel for delegates) which, in his opinion, should not be a secondary item. It would be particularly important in

1990 because many delegates to the Montreux Conference would be seeking assistance with travel costs.

The Secretary General replied that as with the 1988 and 1989 Standing Committee Meetings, external support was being pursued for delegate travel costs in 1990. In particular, financial support for delegates' travel to Montreux were to be made available by the Swiss Government, with further significant contributions requested from e.g. France, Scandinavian countries, Canada and the USA. As a result it would be possible once again to afford this item a lower priority in the core budget allocation.

The observer from the UK noted that purely budgetary matters should be distinguished from the actual Convention programme. He urged the Standing Committee to support the proposed relative adjustments in budget lines.

There being no further comments, the Chairman noted the Standing Committee's consensus that expenditure on budget items Nos 1 and 2 should be increased by SFr. 48,000 and SFr. 13,000 respectively, with relative decreases coming out of budget items Nos 10 and 7.

Agenda item 7: Review of Administrative Matters

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman recalled that the Standing Committee was authorized to discuss and oversee the administration of the Convention Bureau. The closed session of the Standing Committee had reviewed the classification of Ramsar staff within IUCN salary grades and had considered staff performance appraisal, training and development.

At the request of the Chairman, the Director General of IUCN reviewed developments with regard to the future location of IUCN. No public statements could be made until the position had been finalized. However, faced with generous offers from the Netherlands and Switzerland, IUCN had decided to remain in Switzerland. Progress had been made slowly but was now accelerating. This reflected the need to reach agreements at Commune, Canton and Confederation levels. Following agonizing discussions, IUCN had decided overwhelmingly that it was important to remain along the international Geneva-Lausanne corridor. The Municipality of Gland had now offered a site near the Route du Lac zoned for a 4800m² development. It was hoped that formal Communal approval would be received in coming weeks (N.B, approval given in November 1989). The Confederation had not yet made a final decision on this site but no problems were anticipated. The next step was for IUCN to make formal decisions/agreements with the three administrative levels in Switzerland and to then accelerate the pre-construction phase.

The Director General of IUCN went on to say that following discussion with the Secretary General, IUCN's planned new HQ could make provision for a Ramsar Bureau office suite accommodating up to 12 people, together with a meeting room for 12-15 people. The shared facilities would also include a 100-person conference hall and a dividable cafeteria/reading area. Timing of further activity was difficult to judge. However, the most optimistic forecast would be for construction to begin in mid-1990, with completion in early 1992. While the building would be rent free to Ramsar, there would no doubt be some additional charge to the Ramsar budget for increased services and facilities IUCN would be making available to the Convention. It was impossible at the present time, to calculate exactly the likely changes in the charge made to Ramsar. An estimate was being made in the 1991-93 budget; the situation

would be clearer by the time of the Montreux Conference.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, the Director General of IUCN stated that the precise arrangement for IUCN's tenure of the new site/buildings had not yet been finalized.

In reply to a query raised by the Secretary General, the Director General of IUCN noted that the rights and responsibilities of the Ramsar Bureau in connection with the new building would be formally set out in a legal document.

There being no further discussion, the Chairman drew discussion of this Agenda item to a close.

Agenda item 8: Bureau Workplan for 1990

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced pages 69-74 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that the presentation of the workplan was similar to that submitted to the Standing Committee in 1987 and 1988. However, in response to requests that certain objectives should be qualified, asterisks had been used to denote items which the Bureau would not expect to undertake intensively. As requested by the United Kingdom observer, the Bureau would present its Annual Report according to Workplan headings during the next triennium. It was necessary for the Bureau's Workplan to be flexible because not all activities could be programmed. The major activity in 1990 would, of course, be the Montreux Conference. Advice was needed from the Standing Committee with regard to the intensity with which particular activities should be carried out.

At the suggestion of the observer from the UK, the Chairman called for the Standing Committee to comment on each of the eight sections (a) to (h) in order.

(a) Administration of the Convention

There were no comments on heading (a).

(b) Promotion of the Convention

The Secretary General explained that many countries found the procedure for adhesion to Ramsar daunting and it was desirable that clear, concise explanation be provided. The Vice-Chairman emphasized the importance of stressing the benefits which a country would obtain by joining Ramsar.

The observer from Australia asked for more emphasis to be placed on Asia and the South Pacific under item (b). The Secretary General noted that the Bureau would appreciate increased assistance from Contracting Parties in that region. The "Directory of Wetlands in Oceania" project would provide important opportunities in this respect.

The Director of IWRB stated that the Directory project was ready to begin, although there were several outstanding funding proposals. The Directory was an excellent example of a project which could be used in order to promote the Convention.

The observer from Australia suggested that expertise could be offered by his country; for example, there was an active wetlands programme operating in Victoria.

The member from New Zealand noted that her country was supporting important cooperative initiatives, building upon established links, including the setting-up of a major database.

The observer from IUCN informed the Standing Committee that his organization was working to build on the "Directory of Asian Wetlands". A regional office would be opened in South-East Asia, whilst a national office would be established in Vietnam. He agreed that South-East Asia had been neglected in the past but hoped that the newly published Directory would provide the basis for major future involvement.

The Conservation Coordinator recalled that South-East Asia was already a priority region for Ramsar activities. The Asian Wetlands Directory had provided many opportunities for a major promotional effort. In this regard, the Secretary General referred to discussions which the Bureau had held recently with the Japanese authorities and expressed optimism that Japan would be able to provide crucial support for the Convention in Asia.

(c) Production of Publications

The observer from the UK noted that the Montreux Conference would dominate the production of publications during the year. It was important to ensure that adequate resources were assigned to this item.

In response to a question raised by the observer from the UK, the Secretary General stated that a draft Ramsar Directory had been submitted to the Bureau by WCMC. The draft included all Ramsar Sites designated since the Regina Conference, whilst other information had been partially updated.

The Chairman recalled that large quantities of new data had been made available by the Asian Wetlands Directory. It was desirable that such relevant information should be included in the new Ramsar Directory.

(d) Promotion of Wetland Conservation Activities

The observer from the UK stated that the Bureau should be a project facilitator; not a deliverer. Many of the points listed under item (d) included direct action which would be beyond the scope of the Bureau. It was also doubtful whether the Bureau should become heavily involved in advising on management plans; such work was inevitably time-consuming.

The Secretary General agreed with these points but recalled that the Bureau had been instructed by the Regina Conference to carry out many wetland conservation activities. Governments asked for assistance with management questions from time to time and it was difficult for the Bureau to turn down such requests. However, where funding was available, consultants were employed to undertake the work involved. He agreed that the wording of item (d) might be modified in order to take full account of the limitations on Bureau time.

The Vice-Chairman considered that whilst it was true that the Contracting Parties had instructed the Bureau to undertake all of the activities covered by item (d), it was clearly impossible in practice. Such a situation gave rise to the need for a sound strategy, with the future clearly in view. An ad hoc approach was unacceptable.

The observer from the UK agreed that the Bureau needed a workplan which was achievable. It was unfair to expect a small staff to undertake all of those activities summarized in the present workplan.

On the other hand, the member from the Netherlands said that he personally found it difficult to decide on which conservation activities, if any, to delete. He felt that the workplan was sufficiently flexible for levels of activity to be adjusted as appropriate but it should prove possible to do something for all headings. He supported maintaining the existing document with no substantial modification.

The member from the USA agreed that the workplan was simply a list of legitimate activities which could be undertaken. It was impossible for the Standing Committee to micro-manage every point.

(e) Database

The Conservation Coordinator recalled the Standing Committee discussion on this point under agenda item 4. He asked for views about work in 1990.

The Director of IWRB expressed his support for a database system which would be restricted to wetlands on the Ramsar List. It was better to establish a working database for these sites before considering coverage of a "shadow list".

The observer from IUCN agreed with the Director of IWRB, noting that there are far too many examples of databases that started off without a carefully planned set of objectives, and as a result have subsequently developed into something which was very large, difficult to handle, and expensive.

The member from Chile emphasized the difficulty of producing an adequate classification of wetland types. The Conservation Coordinator noted that the Bureau's consultant, Dr. D.A. Scott, had devoted considerable effort to developing a simple yet logical classification. This had received widespread approval.

In reply to a query raised by the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary General noted that significant funding had already been secured from the United Kingdom and that other potential sources were being actively pursued. The Conservation Coordinator noted that these sources had already provided between one half and one third of the required total.

The member from Tunisia stressed that a simple, usable solution database was required; this was especially important in view of the needs of developing countries.

In reply to a question from the member from the Netherlands, the Conservation Coordinator stated that the Ramsar database was unlikely to overlap significantly with EDWIN (Environmental Database on Wetland Interventions, based at Leiden, Netherlands), although Wise Use would probably be an important area of cooperation for the two organizations.

The observers from Norway and from Australia urged the Bureau to proceed with caution. In particular, the use to which such a database was to be put should be carefully evaluated.

(f) Organization of Convention Meetings

The Secretary General noted that the first two points listed were self-explanatory (Seventh meeting of the Standing Committee and Fourth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties). In terms of regional meetings, a very successful East European conference had been held in Poland in September 1989 and there were preliminary plans for similar meetings in 1990 in Mexico and India.

(g) Participation in Wetland Meetings Organized by Other Bodies

The Chairman noted that item (g) was straightforward.

(h) Contacts with other Conservation Convention Secretariats

The observer from IUCN noted that a very important SADCC meeting would be held, with IUCN support, before the end of 1990 (NB now likely to be early 1991). This meeting would provide a major opportunity for Ramsar to promote the Convention in southern Africa.

The member from the USA said that a Regional Agreement on the Caribbean Sea had been reached under UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. The Agreement had not been widely publicized but could provide an important opportunity for Ramsar/UNEP cooperation.

There being no further comments from the floor, the Chairman drew discussion of Agenda item 8 to a close by asking the Standing Committee to adopt the Bureau's Workplan for 1990. This was agreed, with the Bureau requested to make the few adjustments noted during the proceeding discussion.

Agenda item 9: Preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

At the Chairman's request, the Secretary General introduced pages 75-78 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that the Swiss authorities had undertaken considerable work in connection with the Conference. Messrs. Antonietti, Goeldlin (proposed President for the Conference) and Hunkeler (Executive Secretary of the Swiss Organizing Committee) along with the Administrative Officer, had been largely responsible for the success of the preparations to date. News of this progress was welcomed warmly by the Standing Committee members and observers, who expressed their thanks to the Swiss authorities.

The Secretary General noted that the Official Conference Programme had been mailed recently, together with the Conference Registration forms. The final documentation for the Conference itself was being prepared by Bureau staff, with the assistance of the Swiss authorities.

The member from Switzerland reported on financial and formal matters. There had been some initial difficulties in the Federal administration, but these had now been overcome and the budget was now ready. The Confederation, Canton de Vaud and the city of Montreux would be providing funds to cover the costs of using the Montreux Conference Centre, promotional matters, assistance for publication of Proceedings, and organization of the "Alpine Day", support to the Bureau, Conference equipment and interpretation, The Swiss

Government would also be providing assistance to enable participants from developing countries to attend the Conference. Arrangements were being made for a wetlands exhibition which would tour Switzerland in 1990 and 1991. The exhibition would include general information about the Ramsar Convention, with specific reference to Swiss wetlands.

The member from Switzerland noted that arrangements for the main Conference excursion, for up to 400 people, would require detailed organization; this was being worked on. Preparations for staffing, equipment, evening meetings and early morning nature walks were also in hand. The organizing group included representatives of the Ramsar Bureau, the Swiss authorities and Swiss NGOs. It had been decided that some of the post-Conference excursions would visit very small wetland sites of high biological value. This would provide an important opportunity for drawing attention to other organizations working on Swiss wetlands. To show how this was already successful, he noted that a small entomological group had recently named a species of fly after the Convention: *ramsarensis*!

The member from Switzerland went on to say that owing to the initial problems connected with finance, the Federal Council had not yet completed its formal responsibilities, although formal approval was thought to be imminent (N.B. budget formally approved in December 1989).

The Secretary General expressed the Bureau's appreciation of the Swiss authorities' cooperation and assistance. It was a special advantage that part of the Bureau was based within the host nation; he noted that it would be a matter for concern if formal budget approval had not yet been granted were the Conference to be held in a country with which the Bureau did not have such close links.

The Secretary General also noted that additional Bureau staff would be required in order to deal with the work generated by the Conference. Generous pledges of support had been received from IUCN and IWRB, from Swiss organizations and from former collaborators.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman expressed thanks to the Swiss authorities and to the many other agencies involved for their efforts in preparing for the Conference. He then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Standing Committee members and observers.

The member from Tunisia echoed the Chairman's thanks and went on to emphasize the importance of ensuring participation at Montreux by as many observers as possible. This would provide important opportunities for promoting the Convention and increasing the number of Contracting Parties

The member from the USA wished to add to the thanks already expressed for the time and thought which had been devoted to the preliminary arrangements.

In reply to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the member from Switzerland noted that his country was small, with a limited number of wetlands. However, there was a new legal basis for designating protected areas and it was hoped that some new Swiss Ramsar Sites could be announced at Montreux, although no guarantees could be given at the present time. During the main Conference excursion, the Swiss authorities would attempt to demonstrate the wetland protection work being undertaken in their country.

In reply to a question raised by the observer from South Africa, the Secretary General stated that a deadline for the return of Registration forms (28 February 1990) had been set in order to provide an early indication of the likely number of participants. It was impracticable to expect to receive Credentials in advance; these documents would be received at the Conference itself and would be examined by a Credentials Committee.

The Chairman recorded the Standing Committee's satisfaction with the arrangements for Montreux and again thanked all those involved. There being no further comments, discussion of this item was drawn to a close.

Agenda item 10: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Draft Programme 1991-1993

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced the documentation on the Convention Programme 1991-1993. In 1988, the Standing Committee had established a strategic programme subgroup comprised of representatives of the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The subgroup had worked via correspondence and met twice, with part of the subgroup having met a third time, together with the Standing Committee's Vice-Chairman, in order to prepare the present documentation. Bureau staff had discussed the results of the subgroup's deliberations with representatives of other Contracting Parties in recent months and had received many comments, all the reactions of which the Secretary General was aware had been favourable and helpful.

The report contained many crucial elements which the Standing Committee as a whole needed to focus upon. The Bureau was very pleased that priorities had been established for work in the next triennium. The Secretary General considered that the report formed the basis for a realistic and complete work plan.

An additional paper entitled "Priorities for Implementation of the Ramsar Convention - A Note for Discussion" had been circulated to the Standing Committee. This paper had been prepared by an expert "outsider" Dr. David Munro (a former Director General of IUCN) at the request of the subgroup, and was intended to provide a short readable presentation on the forward thrust of the Convention. It was especially important that the Standing Committee reviewed this additional paper, as it had not previously been circulated.

At the request of the Chairman, the observer from the UK (in his capacity as Chairman of the programme subgroup) expanded upon the points made by the Secretary General. He noted that the task set for the subgroup had been to provide a logical programme for the next triennium to further the work of the Convention. The first priority had been to define the respective responsibilities of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee and Bureau. These were set out in Document C.4 Attachment I, on pages 83-88 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). The subgroup had also set out basic objectives for the Convention Bureau, namely:

- (1) To assist Contracting Parties to meet their obligations to conserve wetlands;
- (2) to promote international cooperation in wetland conservation;
- (3) to foster communication about wetland conservation; and

(4) to administer the Convention.

This was not an exhaustive list, but the subgroup had set out legitimate activities under each objective, which were listed in logical groups.

Doc. C.4 Attachment I provided a basic framework against which any proposals submitted to the Bureau, Standing Committee or Conference of Contracting Parties might be viewed and/or judged. The subgroup viewed the paper as a document which could stand alone for some considerable time and act as a preamble to the programme for each triennium. An appendix could list the specific areas for progress to be covered in each triennium, the first task being to elaborate a programme for 1991-1993.

The Convention (especially the Bureau and Standing Committee) could theoretically be asked to tackle every single subject with which it was legitimately concerned. This was obviously impossible and there was thus a need to focus on priorities in order to be able to make progress. The subgroup had therefore assembled a series of areas for which specific activities had greater priority. The results of this "prioritization" were contained in Doc. C.4 Attachment II, on pages 89-95 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version).

Activities had been divided into "Essential" and "Desirable" categories. Essential activities were those without which there would be no effective operation of the Convention. Desirable activities could be undertaken if and when funding was available. Because desirable activities were not all of the same priority, they had been divided into priority groupings under the headings "High", "Medium" and "Low". It was emphasized that low priority did not signify low value. The subgroup Chairman considered that the Convention would not be a world force, would not be well known and would have very little to show for its existence if only "essential" activities were undertaken.

Doc. C.4 Attachment III on pages 96-97 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) itemized the activity categories together with indications of costings. The cost of carrying out all essential and high priority desirable activities was indicated, together with a grand total showing the cost of undertaking all activities of every priority. Pages 81 and 82 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) included draft introductory notes for the Montreux Conference and offered a draft resolution for the Standing Committee's consideration.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee invited comments from the other members of the subgroup.

The member from the Netherlands noted that his recently retired colleague, Mr. Frans van Rijckevorsel, had been closely involved with the subgroup's work and that he would be making a few comments at Mr. van Rijckevorsel's request. Mr. van Rijckevorsel had also wished to pass on his grateful thanks to the members of the Standing Committee for their kind words on his retirement. He had been especially pleased to receive a telegram sent by the Vice-Chairman on behalf of the Standing Committee and for the presence of the Secretary General at his "going away" party.

The Chairman next opened the floor for discussion of the Subgroup's work with first attention being given to the "Framework" document (Doc. C.4 Attachment I).

The Secretary General said that Doc. C.4 Attachment I had been intended as a factual document. He asked to know whether the Standing Committee found it useful and, if so whether or not it was accurate.

The member from the USA considered that Doc. C.4 Attachment I was very useful for existing and potential Contracting Parties because it dealt with the responsibilities and roles of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee and Bureau.

The observer from Norway agreed with the view expressed by the member from the USA. He considered the paper to be a good overview of the different obligations of the Convention's component parts, although he felt that a greater emphasis on the possibilities for cooperation with other bodies involved in wetland conservation would usefully strengthen the document. In particular, point 2.b) on page 84 (English version) was too restrictive.

The observer from IUCN said that C.4 Attachment I provided a very useful basis for the Conferences of Contracting Parties in judging the programme for the forthcoming triennium. Both Attachments I and II were relevant to any organization working in world conservation. This was good in one respect, in that all such organizations were working towards a shared ultimate goal, but a more detailed global strategy was needed. He noted that IUCN would be developing such a strategy document and sought Ramsar assistance in this process. The Chairman thanked the observer from IUCN for introducing a valuable initiative and invited the views of the Standing Committee.

The member from New Zealand moved to support the suggestions made by the observer from IUCN, although she was concerned that some of the proposals contained in Doc. C.4 Attachment I might bring the Bureau into an operational mode it didn't have the capacity to support.

The member from Switzerland considered that the Standing Committee should defer discussion of implementing Doc. C.4 Attachment I. The question for immediate consideration was whether or not the paper formed a complete basis for further work.

The observer from the UK agreed with the member from Switzerland and supported the view of the observer from IUCN that integration of Ramsar, IUCN, IWRB and WWF programmes was essential. The option of a single strategy could have enormous benefits. One cautionary note needed to be sounded, however. IUCN's role under the Convention was the product of developments over the past two decades, and some of the comments made by the observer from IUCN might be interpreted by some Contracting Parties as a takeover bid.

The observer from IUCN stressed that he was sensitive to this point, but he was sure that future events would prove any such fears to be unfounded. IUCN's initiative was in no sense a takeover, and in any event, this was impossible on legal grounds. IUCN had a responsibility to facilitate the Convention's activities by helping to secure new Contracting Parties and by providing other support.

The member from Chile congratulated the subgroup for its efforts in producing a well-structured paper. He asked whether the first part of Doc. C.4 Attachment I could be sent to all Contracting Parties.

The Secretary General replied that a package containing basic information about the

Convention was being prepared for circulation to current and potential Contracting Parties and that this could be provided.

Noting that there appeared to be a consensus that the first part of Doc. C.4 Attachment I (i.e. pages 83-85 of the Standing Committee Documentation, English version) was very acceptable, the Chairman asked for the Standing Committee's views on pages 86-89, which outlined a framework for Bureau activities.

The member from New Zealand asked whether Objective 1.11(b) meant that it was intended for the Bureau to become involved in national policy or legislation reviews. If so, she considered that the Bureau would be over-extended.

The member from Switzerland underlined that the pages under consideration formed a checklist of possible activities which could and/or should be undertaken by the Bureau, with due regard for available funding. He had one suggestion for an amendment, namely that objective 3.11 be included under objective 2. This suggestion was supported by the member from the Netherlands.

The observer from Norway noted that objective 3.11(b) mentioned other Convention Secretariats and bodies involved in wetland conservation. An overview of the roles and activities of such bodies would be useful.

There being no further suggestions or comments, the Chairman invited the Chairman of the subgroup to reply to the queries raised.

The subgroup Chairman thanked the member from Switzerland for his useful comments but noted that Objective 3.11 could be placed almost anywhere in the first three objectives. It had been placed where it was in order to incorporate a measure of balance between the four objectives. He had no objection to moving it, but did not think this was essential. He agreed with the observer from Norway that an overview of other bodies could be useful - although not for inclusion as part of the paper under discussion as a comprehensive list would be difficult to produce.

The subgroup Chairman stressed that the Doc. C.4 Attachment I was not a workplan but a checklist of legitimate activities which could be undertaken at the request of the Conference of Contracting Parties.

The Chairman noted the agreement of the Standing Committee with the conclusions of the Subgroup Chairman, and asked the Standing Committee to move on to consideration of the detailed workplan for 1991-1993 contained in Doc. C.4 Attachment II on pages 89-95 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version).

The member from New Zealand noted that the subgroup had carried out a very difficult task and had produced a good document. Most of the points raised by the Standing Committee might now seem to be negative, but these should be interpreted as constructive additions to the document as a whole.

The Vice-Chairman and member from Canada echoed the member from New Zealand in thanking the subgroup for its careful deliberations and he expressed the hope that all comments would be of a constructive nature. Recalling the evolution of the Ramsar

Convention, the Vice-Chairman noted that during fifteen years of operation, 52 states had become Contracting Parties. This was an important achievement, but there remained gaping holes in the global distribution of Contracting Parties, with most of the developed world having become Parties and much of the developing world having yet to join. The strategic programme documentation could hopefully help with tackling this situation at Montreux, although he had hoped to find an explicit statement mentioning the Ramsar “family” of Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Bureau and partner organizations.

Ramsar was a global umbrella for wetland conservation which now needed to take a quantum leap forward. This process had already begun but a clear signal had to be sent out globally, especially to potential Contracting Parties. The strategic programme documents needed to stress that Ramsar was a useful convention, which was beneficial to Contracting Parties. The Convention needed to do more for current Contracting Parties, especially in terms of being useful on the ground. The Convention had to be attractive at international, national, regional and local levels and should be geared especially to developing countries. There was a need to identify priority thrusts for the next triennium which would constitute attractive reasons for joining the Convention. Activities which were useful to people on the ground were what would actually result in the furtherance of wetland conservation, and there was a need to explicitly state the strategy for achieving these.

The Vice-Chairman continued by emphasizing the necessity for integration of the work of the Bureau with that of Contracting Parties, between Contracting Parties, with Non-governmental Organizations, development agencies, etc.; whosoever was interested in partnerships of all kinds. Development Agencies were looking for signals from Ramsar to justify initiation of projects to promote wise use in developing countries. The Bureau was at the centre of the Ramsar family and, although directly responsible for certain things, was largely a facilitator and coordinator, promoting and bringing together, helping to make things happen. The size of the Bureau was a constraint. It wasn't possible to wait for the Bureau to grow, although growth was essential; much had to be achieved via partnerships with other bodies.

He expressed the opinion that the strategic programme focussed too much on the Bureau, and lacked explicit statements in relation to the mode of future business. He felt therefore that the paper needed some reworking, amplification and casting as an explicit stand-alone statement by the Ramsar family.

The member from Switzerland considered that the Vice-Chairman's comments should be placed at the beginning of Doc. C.4 Attachment I because they related to all future triennia and not only to 1991-1993. This could constitute a chapeau for the entire document.

The member from the USA supported the Vice-Chairman and hoped that the final drafting of the programme documentation would be mindful of his comments. The programme documents should drive the energies of the Contracting Parties rather than budgetary considerations.

The observer from IWRB wished to make two points as a representative of a major partner organization. First, he echoed the point made earlier by the observer from IUCN regarding the importance of developing a single integrated programme. Secondly he noted that the Convention could demonstrate its importance on the ground via a “bottom-up” approach such as that functioning in IWRB's network. He drew the attention of the Standing Committee to current IWRB/Ramsar projects in Egypt and Uganda as examples of attempts to demonstrate

the benefits of Ramsar membership.

The Secretary General said that he had been delighted to hear the comments made by the Vice-Chairman. The Bureau was in the process of fostering cooperation with several partners. The Contracting Parties “owned” the Convention and had many obligations which the Bureau could help facilitate. The Bureau was able to provide service functions to the Contracting Parties. Successful interaction of the Bureau with the rest of the Ramsar family could raise the Convention to a much higher level. The Bureau had to be of sufficient, though limited, size in order to achieve this.

The member from Tunisia congratulated the Vice-Chairman for his intervention which he felt raised some fundamental points which it was useful and necessary to stress as priority objectives.

The observer from the UK welcomed the Vice-Chairman’s views and also agreed with the member from Switzerland that such an overview should come at the beginning of Doc. C.4 Attachment I. The details of implementation should be left until later.

The observer from IUCN welcomed the Vice-Chairman’s comments and agreed with the member from Switzerland that the points raised would make an excellent chapeau for the strategy documentation. Liaison between the Bureau and the regional offices of IUCN could be very useful in promoting the Convention amongst potential Contracting Parties.

The member from the UK considered that the four top priority areas identified on page 89 of the Standing Committee Documentation (Doc. C.4 Attachment II, English version) were too broad. One or two areas should be highlighted for the Contracting Parties to home in on, especially those activities which they were unable to carry out unaided.

The member from the Netherlands considered that the four top priority areas should mention the formulation and implementation of the reserves concept which was mentioned as essential on page 90.

The Vice-Chairman viewed the four top priority areas listed on page 89 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) as the prime strategic thrusts for the Ramsar family. Their identification would send the correct signals to encourage funding for projects aiming to further the strategy. However, they did not have to be mirrored exactly by the Bureau.

Referring to Doc. C.4 Attachment III on pages 96-97 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) the Chairman asked for comments on the summary of priority activities.

The member from New Zealand was concerned about the placement of activity II.C.3.III (disseminating information on reserves and exchange of information with other secretariats and organizations), in the “low priority” category of highly desirable activities. She considered that it should be moved to the category of “essential” activities.

The member from New Zealand also referred to activity 1.1.111(a) (Assisting in formulation of concept and promotion of establishment of wetland reserves) and indicated that she hoped Ramsar would work very closely with IUCN’s Commission on National Parks and Protected

Areas (CNPPA). She would be very cautious about Ramsar setting up a parallel initiative. Ramsar should be facilitating and integrating with IUCN's work to encourage focussing on wetland areas. Activity I.I.III(a) was therefore desirable, but should not be a main thrust of the Bureau's work.

The member from the Netherlands emphasized that the Contracting Parties had an important obligation to conserve wetlands. Of course the Bureau should cooperate fully with other organizations, but reserve establishment was a major concern for the Contracting Parties and, therefore, for the Bureau.

The observer from the UK agreed that the Contracting Parties had an important obligation to conserve wetlands, but doubted whether this was essential for the Bureau itself. The member from the USA supported this view.

The observer from Australia felt that many of the functions entrusted to the Bureau were in fact the responsibilities of Contracting Parties. Looking at the essential functions of the Bureau, they were all equally important, if not more important, for Contracting Parties. More of the burden should be placed on the Parties.

The observer from Norway urged the Standing Committee to examine the prioritization of activities in the light of the earlier discussions dealing with strategy. There appeared to be some overlap in certain areas - e.g. activities 1.3.11(a) and II.C.3.II(b).

Returning to the point raised by New Zealand, the member from Switzerland considered that activities 1.1.11 and 1.1.111 were fundamentally essential to the conservation of wetlands.

Referring to the comments made by the member from New Zealand and the observer from Norway, the Secretary General recalled that the Third Conference of Contracting Parties had given the Bureau very specific directions to sensitize development agencies. The Secretary General also noted that it would be useful to work with IUCN regional offices in order to promote the Convention amongst potential Contracting Parties, but that the Bureau had to have the structural and budgetary capacity to undertake such steps.

The member from New Zealand agreed that the establishment of protected areas was an important companion to the promotion of the wise-use concept. However, the Convention was not fundamentally about the establishment of "hands off" wetland reserves and it had to go forward with the concept of wise use. She remained concerned that activity 1.1.111(a) threatened to duplicate work already being carried out by IUCN's CNPPA.

In response to questions from the member from the USA and the observer from Australia, the Secretary General said that the Bureau would be aiming to promote implementation of the wise use concept. Comments received by the Bureau suggested that more work needed to be done in terms of learning lessons from field experience around the world. The Bureau would wish to work with the wise use committee and with Contracting Parties to further these aims.

At the request of the Chairman, the Chairman of the strategy subgroup briefed the Standing Committee on his reactions to the comments made. He felt that the Convention had made a good start by identifying wise use as an area crucial for demonstrating the value of Ramsar. The part of the Convention responsibilities relating to nature reserves was fraught with problems, in particular the diversity of reserve types. The Ramsar family as a whole had to

come to a decision regarding interpretation of the wording of the Convention text dealing with reserves. Unless the formulation of the wise use concept was tackled quickly, it would become a nagging tooth. He saw an important role for the Bureau in this regard.

Regarding development agency assistance and the recruitment of new Contracting Parties, there were two distinct categories of activities; those which were best undertaken by the Contracting Parties themselves and those which would benefit from an international approach by the Bureau. The Bureau should work to secure new Contracting Parties and assistance from elsewhere should be regarded as a bonus.

The subgroup Chairman felt that the activities listed as essential and highly desirable had been correctly identified and he would not recommend any major changes, although he recognized that elaborations were needed in some areas in order to incorporate the views of the Standing Committee.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, the subgroup Chairman noted that the Bureau might not have the capacity to undertake the extra work which would be created by moving activity II.C.3.III to the essential category. The member from Switzerland suggested that the item should be moved to the highly desirable category rather than to the essential category.

The Chairman noted general consensus that the list of essential and highly desirable activities was basically satisfactory, although some modifications should be made in the light of the Standing Committee's comments. He wished to move on to consideration of medium and low priority activities in the desirable category.

The Committee reviewed quickly the activities in the medium [and] low priority categories. Agreement was expressed with the list, with the exception that the item II, C.3.III should be moved to the "highly desirable" category.

The Chairman then invited the Standing Committee to comment on the "Note for discussion" relating to this agenda item.

The Vice-Chairman considered that the paper constituted a very valuable addition to the subgroup's work. It focussed on a number of important issues such as increasing dissemination of information; extending the network of Ramsar collaborators; consideration of climatic change; sustainable development of wetlands; and training.

The subgroup Chairman agreed that the additional paper would be useful in refining the subgroup's documents but did not consider that it should be submitted to the Montreux Conference. This view was agreed by the Standing Committee.

In response to questions regarding the budget necessary to undertake the activities so far discussed, the Secretary General noted that the budget set out on pages 102-103 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) was based on providing the Bureau with the capacity to undertake the essential and highly desirable activities only. The costings provided on pages 96-97 were of an indicative nature, but had been taken into account in preparation of the main budget.

The Standing Committee next turned its attention to the draft resolution on Programme Matters which would present the Programme documentation to the Montreux Conference.

The observer from the UK and the member from the Netherlands queried the necessity for reference to the budget in point 2 of operative section of the draft Resolution; the budget was the subject of another Resolution. This was agreed.

The Standing Committee thus approved the draft Resolution on Programme along with the strategic programme documentation proposed by the Standing Committee subgroup, subject to the various proposals for amendment raised in this discussion. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman thanked the subgroup members for their valuable work and requested the Chairman of the subgroup to work with the Bureau in finalizing the programme documentation for circulation to the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 11: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Financial and Budgetary Matters

Introducing the budget at the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General said that pages 99-112 of the Standing Committee documentation had been prepared in line with the recommendations of the Regina Conference and in accordance with the strategy subgroup's report. The first part of the documentation was a draft Resolution similar to that approved at Regina. In addition to providing the basis for the budget decisions at Montreux, it drew attention to the importance of Contracting Parties accepting the amendments made to the Convention text at Regina. Attachment 1 set out the budget for the triennium 1991-1993 according to the ten budget lines operating in the present triennium, with all costings in Swiss Francs. Attachment 2 contained the scale of contributions by Contracting Parties for the triennium 1991-1993, together with the present United Nations scale of assessments. Finally, Attachment 3 included the Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention.

He explained that the draft budget before the Standing Committee was prepared at the recommendation of the subgroup in light of the costings calculated to enable implementation of the "essential" and "highly desirable" activities in the strategic programme document just approved by the Standing Committee. The Secretary General noted that the proposed budget represented a large increase over the present financial budget, and he requested the views of the Standing Committee about the feasibility of this approach. He was convinced that the funding of this magnitude was required if the Bureau was to provide services requested by the Contracting Parties.

The member from the USA agreed that the Bureau would be unable to carry out its programme without a budget increase, but governments were not always willing to provide more money. The overall proposed budget increase of 100% was politically difficult and the Standing Committee should therefore consider the priorities for funding so that reductions might be made in certain areas if necessary.

The observer from Australia agreed, pointing out that with this proposal the budget would be increasing by approximately 100% - a level which would be difficult to justify to governments given the present climate of economic stringency.

In response to a question raised by the observer from Australia, the Secretary General said that there was a "critical mass" in terms of the number of Bureau staff which would be needed in order to carry out the essential work of the Convention. Four persons had been

budgeted for at Regina, but this had proved inadequate. Project funding and the services of volunteers had enabled the Bureau to continue operating in the short term, but experience had shown that a sufficient number of permanent staff based in one location would be required. In order to accomplish the activities in the essential and highly desirable categories of the proposed Bureau programme for 1991-1993, the Bureau and the Programme subgroup had concluded after considerable calculation that 8 staff would be required. Furthermore, if permanent staffing did not increase, the Bureau would find it difficult even to sustain its present operations. These had only been possible in the short term through staff carrying unacceptably high workloads and with the help of volunteers. The Secretary General expressed his thanks to the Secretariat for their commitment but the situation could not go on much longer.

The observer from Australia reiterated his grave reservations that sufficient funding would be forthcoming. If it was assumed that the contributions actually received would remain proportionally similar to those received in the current triennium, income would barely meet the projected salary and overhead costs. He agreed with the "critical mass" point but there was a need to look at the money which was actually likely to come in and to then make hard decisions.

The member from the USA also accepted the point made by the Secretary General regarding "critical mass" but questioned whether it would be possible to fund eight persons from the core budget. Would it not be possible instead to establish secondment arrangements with Contracting Parties?

The Secretary General pointed out that quite intentionally the proposed budget was based on the assumption of no external funding, although he was hopeful that substantial funds would continue to be forthcoming. Japan and France, amongst several other Contracting Parties, had been approached with regard to secondment possibilities. The Bureau might also use project funding for additional staff posts; this might be possible, for example, should substantial funding of the wise use project become available from the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, he expressed the view that it would be more appropriate for core staff to be covered by the core budget.

The member from Switzerland reminded the Standing Committee that it was unlikely that the Regina amendments would be in force by the time of the Montreux Conference and that it might therefore be difficult to secure contributions from all Contracting Parties. Therefore, the draft budget for Montreux should not be too limited.

The observer from Hungary felt that it might be difficult to persuade the Hungarian authorities to fund a substantial increase in the scale of contributions, although she agreed that the budget should aim to cover the essential and highly desirable activities.

Noting the reservations expressed, the Chairman requested the Standing Committee to review each of the ten budget lines and to identify areas where savings could be introduced.

The member from the USA noted that the two largest budget lines were for staff costs and IUCN administrative services, respectively. It would be sensible to begin by reviewing these items.

The Secretary General said that the budget line for staff costs was formulated on the basis of eight staff working in Gland, five of whom would be professional staff, with the other three being support staff. There were currently three staff based at Gland. It was proposed that the two permanent staff members in Slimbridge relocated to Gland. Then it was projected to increase this number by the recruitment of two Technical Officers and one additional secretary. Salaries would be based on IUCN scales. The Secretary General also noted that although the present Ramsar office accommodation in Gland was inadequate for eight staff, the Bureau was investigating with the Director General of IUCN ways of solving this problem.

The observer from the UK said that he appreciated the problems faced by the Bureau but that it would be difficult to get governments to fund a 100% increase in budget over a three year period. He wondered that much of the work envisaged for the Technical Officers could, in fact, be carried out in partnership with IUCN/IWRB. This would maintain integration of the Bureau with its major partners whilst helping to reduce the budget to a more acceptable level.

The member from Switzerland pointed out that different organizations inevitably work in different ways. It would be difficult to ensure that work done by partners was always carried out exactly to Bureau requirements. He also wondered whether it was possible for IUCN to reduce substantially its charges for administrative services.

The observer from IUCN said that it would be unacceptable for IUCN to provide free services but there were many areas where considerable technical assistance could be provided at significantly reduced cost.

The Secretary General emphasized that he saw fantastic opportunities for cooperation between IUCN/IWRB and Ramsar. However, in order to ensure this cooperation he felt that it was essential that the Technical Officers were Ramsar staff members. He stressed several practical matters in this connection including the availability of staff for Ramsar meetings, daily correspondence, and cooperation with additional other organizations.

The member from the USA considered that the budget would be indeed accepted if it was put before the Montreux Conference in its present form. But this situation could clearly result in severe cash-flow problems. Thus, he wondered whether it was possible for the Conference to agree that there should be eight persons on the Bureau staff but to recommend funding of only six persons for the current budget cycle.

The observer from Australia supported the views of the member from the USA. He queried whether it was necessary to have a wise use Technical Officer in post in 1991 in view of the fact that the working group was still formulating the wise use guidelines. Australia would endorse the establishment of secondments.

The observer from South Africa noted that the high cost of living in Switzerland would make it very difficult for all but the richest Contracting Parties to consider making a secondment.

The Secretary General welcomed the need to recognize that there was a minimum staffing level at which the Bureau should operate. Whatever budget was to be adopted by the Montreux Conference, it would be useful to acknowledge this fact. He would clearly prefer to see staff funded by the core budget. The Bureau had started off with too few staff and now needed to switch to a more realistic level which could be sustained for a considerable period

of time.

The Vice-Chairman said that he was sympathetic to the “critical mass” concept, although he was not convinced that eight persons was the correct level. The Standing Committee had to be seen to be fiscally responsible in taking forward a budget to the Conference. A 100% increase was not feasible but on the other hand the current level of funding and staffing was clearly inadequate. The proposal by the member from the USA was more fiscally responsible. The Vice-Chairman also called on the Secretary General to seek external funding for the Bureau.

The observer from Australia suggested that it would be difficult to secure funding for activities which were merely desirable. The core budget should cover essential activities only. The member from New Zealand supported this view and considered that whilst the Contracting Parties should fund essential activities, desirable activities should be funded by external sources.

The member from the Netherlands was concerned that cuts in the budget would affect negatively the programme already agreed by the Standing Committee.

The Secretary General reminded the Standing Committee that the subgroup had recommended that the “essential” and “highly desirable” activities be covered by core funding. Limiting core funding to the “essential” activities would mean that the core budget would not cover any work relating to such elements in the “highly desirable” category as the Monitoring Procedure, the Newsletter, or training activities.

The observer from the UK noted that there appeared to be consensus that recommending a budget of nearly SFr. 1.4 million would be irresponsible. There was a need to find alternative options for meeting the workload. The opportunities for working together with other organizations should be explored fully.

The member from Switzerland considered that a 100% budget increase shouldn't be seen as alarming. The Contracting Parties should be able to adopt the budget. In addition, Contracting Parties should seek the support of NGOs for funding the work of the Convention. Furthermore, in his view the Monitoring Procedure should be seen as an essential activity and should not be cut from core funding.

The observer from Norway emphasized that the budget had to be approved if the formerly agreed strategy was to be possible. Although the increased contribution required from Norway would not be a problem, he understood that other Contracting Parties were in more difficult positions. He also stressed the importance of seeking funding from external sources.

The member from New Zealand considered that the Standing Committee needed to decide the main priorities for funding so that substantial cuts could be made in other areas. It was impossible to bring the budget to a more reasonable level by cosmetic trimming.

The observer from Australia agreed that there was very little to be gained from going through the draft budget line by line. Nevertheless, it was agreed to be useful to also take a close look at the budget line “IUCN Administrative Services”.

Discussion then switched to the subject of IUCN's charges for administrative services.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director General of IUCN took the floor in order to speak with regard to budget line 5 - page 103 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) - (IUCN administrative services) noting that the budget line concerned only IUCN and did not involve IWRB.

The Director General said that IUCN was not willing to continue the basis of the present charges to Ramsar as an arbitrary percentage of the Bureau's salary bill. This system was not intellectually compelling and was difficult to justify. IUCN would introduce a new and far more logical system based on the division of overhead charges into three elements:

(1) Personnel and general services - would include payroll, recruitment, employee benefits, occupancy of building, language lessons etc. The charge for this element would be based on a simple head count.

(2) Electronic Data Processing (EDP) - would include services from specialist IUCN staff, access to the IUCN EDP network, etc. It was assumed that the Bureau would have its own hardware and servicing contracts. The charge for this element would be based on the number of terminal screens being used by the Bureau.

(3) Financial servicing - would include all the financial services currently provided to the Bureau by IUCN. The charge for this element would be based on the number of transactions to be made.

The Director General of IUCN informed the Standing Committee that IUCN's Finance Officer had calculated the projected total costs of these three elements during the triennium 1991-1993 as follows:

1991 = SFr. 161,000 These three totals were within the budget
1992 SFr. 164,000 outlined on pages 102-103 of the Standing
1993 = SFr. 181,000 Committee documentation (English version).

These calculations assumed that there would be:

- a 5% per year increase in IUCN's costs;
- no need for IUCN to recruit additional staff to service Ramsar;
- Bureau financial transactions remaining at 3% of the IUCN total;
- an increase in Ramsar staff at IUCN headquarters from three to eight; and
- four EDP screens in 1991-1992 and five in 1993.

Detailed explanations were available from IUCN's Finance Officer.

The member from the USA expressed thanks to the Director General of IUCN, on behalf of the Standing Committee, for clearly explaining the new basis on which IUCN's charges for administrative services to the Bureau would be calculated.

The Secretary General welcomed the revised method of calculation introduced by the Director General of IUCN and said that the Standing Committee needed to decide which services were essential to the Bureau.

The observer from the UK doubted whether it was possible to improve upon the value for

money provided by IUCN. However, he suggested that budget line 5 be amended to show the three categories according to which Ramsar would be charged in future.

At the request of the member from the USA, the Secretary General provided a document indicating the overhead and administrative charges applicable if the Bureau rented its own premises outside of, but close to the IUCN headquarters. It was explained that the Bureau had looked into this in view of possible delays in the construction of the new IUCN headquarters building. He stressed, however, that the Bureau was not looking for its own separate accommodation at this time.

The Secretary General explained that the Bureau analysis had shown that the annual operating costs in a separate facility, including rental costs which were not a factor within the IUCN Building, were roughly comparable to the administrative costs being proposed by IUCN. There would be a large capital expenditure (some SFr. 200,000) to outfit the office, and the proposal was based upon the premise that the Bureau had at least eight staff members so that tasks such as reception, postal services and personnel administration might be done by the Ramsar staff themselves.

The Standing Committee welcomed the information and agreed with the Secretary General's conclusion that there were greater benefits to be gained from collection with IUCN on the assumption that IUCN would continue to be able to provide adequate facilities to the Bureau. To this point the Director General of IUCN reiterated his undertaking to adequately house the Bureau, in current IUCN facilities subject to his own space restrictions, and to provide extensive, separate facilities as agreed with the Secretary General in the new IUCN headquarters building.

There followed considerable discussion about the level at which the total budget should be set in order to be more realistic for those Contracting Parties which would bear the burden of any increase. Consensus was reached that the Secretary General and his staff should revise the budget to come within a figure of about SFr. 1 million for the first year of the next triennium. It was agreed that a revised budget should be prepared which would cover the "essential" but not all the desirable activities. The Secretary General was asked to present the revised budget to the Standing Committee the next morning.

Reconvening at 09H05 on Wednesday 25 October, the Standing Committee returned to consideration of Agenda item 11 in order to review the revised budget prepared overnight by Bureau staff.

The Secretary General noted that the changes made to the budget would need fine tuning but as instructed the Bureau had endeavoured to maintain support for essential activities, concentrating on reduction of the costs of highly desirable activities. As a result, work on wise use, the Monitoring Procedure, and the Ramsar Newsletter had been cut from the core budget. The projected level of Bureau staffing had also been reduced by two (one professional, one support). Legal support had been halved, and the budget lines for database work, equipment purchase and travel had been cut by a third. The smaller staff meant that the budget line for IUCN administrative services could be reduced, whilst delegate support and contingency fund were the other budget lines which had been pruned.

Having detailed the areas where reductions had been made, the Secretary General went on to indicate his disappointment that these changes had been requested. Whilst respecting the

political difficulties of seeking a substantial budget increase, he felt that the revised budget would not be adequate to fund the requested programme activities. The cuts had resulted in key areas of Bureau activities being dropped from core funding, in particular, two needed staff, and all work relating to the Newsletter and Monitoring Procedure. The Secretariat could work to secure sources of external support for these activities, but this might not prove successful. As the member from Switzerland had pointed out during the previous day's budget debate, the Regina Amendments were unlikely to be in force by the time of the Montreux Conference. If this factor resulted in a substantial short-fall in contributions, the Bureau would have to take further serious steps to reduce its size and activities. He went on to say that for most Contracting Parties, the difference in the level of contributions under the original and revised budget were essentially similar. It was only those Parties at the top of the scale which would notice a substantial reduction. The Bureau would wish to work with those Contracting Parties sharing the bigger financial burdens to seek ways to acquire necessary funding, by expanding the national funding base.

The member from Switzerland said that he could accept the revised budget of SFr. 1 million, although he felt that it was important to make a few changes. In particular, the Monitoring Procedure should receive some core funding and in the light of the important points which had been raised by the member from New Zealand during the previous day's discussion, funds for information dissemination should also be included. He suggested sums of SFr. 30,000 and SFr. 20,000 respectively. These changes could be somewhat counterbalanced by reductions in travel and telecommunications and resulted in a net total budget of SFr. 1.046 million.

The observer from Australia commended the Secretariat for its revision of the budget and confirmed that he found the changes more acceptable. He expressed optimism that many of the reduced budget lines were likely to be funded through external sources.

The member from the USA agreed that the revised budget was more in line with political realities and he hoped that Contracting Parties would be able to support the Convention in kind to help plug some of the holes made in the original budget.

The observer from the UK supported the views expressed by Australia and the USA. He also agreed with the member from Switzerland that information dissemination should be included in the core budget, although he disagreed with the proposal to treat similarly the Monitoring Procedure. He was also concerned that the database budget had been cut back too far and recommended a slight increase in that line.

The member from the Netherlands expressed hesitancy and anxiety about submitting the revised budget to the Montreux Conference. He was satisfied that the original budget was necessary for the implementation of the approved programme of essential and highly desirable activities. He felt that the Bureau and the Standing Committee should be very cautious in expressing hopes that other sources of funding could be found to make up for the decrease in the core budget.

The observer from WWF recognized the importance of submitting a prudent budget to the Montreux Conference but she endorsed the proposal made by the member from Switzerland to include core funding for the Monitoring Procedure, which was an important aid to the credibility of the Convention.

The Vice-Chairman supported the changes proposed by the member from Switzerland (particularly in relation to the Monitoring Procedure) and echoed the views of other previous speakers by stressing the opportunities which existed for securing additional support from external sources.

There followed some discussion of whether only the revised budget should be submitted to the Montreux Conference or whether one or more alternatives should be presented. In the light of the Standing Committee's views, the Chairman suggested that only the revised budget should go to Montreux but that the urgent need for additional support should be strongly emphasized.

In reply to a question raised by the member from New Zealand, the Secretary General suggested that the revised budget should be slightly amended as a result of the points raised by the Standing Committee. The Monitoring Procedure would have a budget of SFr. 30,000; data and information would be reduced to SFr. 25,000; travel would be reduced to SFr. 30,000; telecommunications would be reduced to SFr. 25,000 and a new budget item "information to Contracting Parties" of SFr. 20,000 would be introduced as line 7(e). These changes would produce the following annual budgets for the triennium:

1991 = SFr. 1.051 million)

1992 = SFr. 1.075 million) These average out at SFr. 1.089 million/year

1993 = SFr. 1.155 million)

The member from the Netherlands considered that the costs of highly desirable activities, which were included in the original budget but which had been cut from the revised version, should be retained and shown in parenthesis. This was agreed in the case of the Newsletter with a zero allocation shown for each year of the triennium.

The Standing Committee next turned its attention to the proposed scale of contributions (Attachment II) and the Terms of Reference for Financial Administration (Attachment III) as well as the covering draft Resolution for the full package of budgetary materials. The Standing Committee noted its agreements with these documents as drafted.

Drawing the discussion of budgetary matters to a close, the Chairman noted the approval of the Standing Committee for the Secretary General to prepare the final draft budget documentation for Montreux.

Agenda item 12: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Standing Committee Matters

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced the documentation relating to this agenda item. He pointed out that the draft Resolution was essentially the same as that presented at Regina, excepting one or two modifications. He noted that in connection with point 2. (a) on page 116 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) IWRB's role might need to be clarified, whilst point 2. (e) had been introduced to ensure some continuity of Standing Committee representation and point 2. (g) had been proposed by one member concerning the method of selection of the Chairman.

The observer from the UK considered that point 2. (g) concerning an individual chairman was problematical. How would "an eminent individual" be defined and/or selected? In relation to point 2.(a), he felt that it would be desirable to also include a representative of the

country hosting the previous Conference of Contracting Parties. Such representation would be a useful source of advice for current and future host countries.

After some discussion, the Standing Committee agreed to the draft Resolution as presented with the deletion of the proposal in paragraph 2. (g) concerning election of the Chairman.

The Secretary General was requested by the Chairman to finalize this documentation accordingly for submission to the Montreux Conference.

Agenda item 13: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Secretariat Matters

The Secretary General referred to pages 119-127 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). The Regina Conference had adopted a Resolution on Secretariat matters and for various reasons modifications were now being proposed. The Secretary General had discussed this matter with members of the Standing Committee, with individual members of other Contracting Parties and, especially, with the Directors, Boards and Councils of IUCN and IWRB. It was proposed that the secretariat structure adopted in Regina be modified in two areas:

- (a) the authority of the Standing Committee; and
- (b) consolidation of the Bureau into a single office in Switzerland.

He noted that the first item should not be controversial and that the changes were important as matters of clarification. The second point was also extremely important, but the matter was not so straightforward. The independent Bureau has been in operation since the Regina Conference and had gained valuable experience about the requirements of the Contracting Parties. Unfortunately, the present structure of the Bureau, with two permanent staff based at Gland and two at Slimbridge had not proved to be an effective mode of operation. It was therefore being proposed to “consolidate” the permanent staff at Bureau headquarters in Switzerland. The Secretary General explained that this required alteration of the Memorandum of Agreement reached between IUCN and IWRB at Regina, at the request and with the approval of the Contracting Parties. It was a complicated and difficult question. The Bureau felt strongly that the operational mode of the Convention would be best served by consolidation. Matters of practical working arrangements, efficiency, avoidance of serious overlap, and avoidance of diplomatic difficulties had been amongst the key factors for consideration. It was not considered feasible to continue with the status quo.

However, despite the difficulties, the current arrangement had provided benefits. The Secretary General noted that this was particularly true of the Convention’s flourishing relationship with IWRB. Thus the Secretary General was sensitive of the need to maintain existing benefits whilst seeking the most efficient working arrangement possible. He had met the Council of IUCN and both he and the Conservation Coordinator had attended the recent IWRB Executive Board Meeting in Astrakhan. Both these meetings had provided opportunities for the consolidation issues to be thoroughly debated.

The Standing Committee documentation included a draft Resolution on Secretariat matters on pages 121-122 (English version). Pages 123-124 contained a draft Memorandum of Agreement which the Director General of IUCN had indicated his willingness to sign. This agreement still provided a formal role for IWRB in providing scientific and technical services

under the Convention. The Secretary General would not anticipate the views of the Director of IWRB but the letter from the President of IWRB which had been circulated to Standing Committee members indicated a way forward to achieving agreement for this consolidation while retaining a continuing physical presence of the Bureau at Slimbridge.

The Secretary General stressed that this was a difficult issue involving a number of historical and personal problems. However, for the good of the Convention and the long-term working arrangements of the Bureau, such a move was indispensable and should be recommended to the Contracting Parties at Montreux.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of IWRB took the floor. He began by saying that he appreciated the difficulties faced by the Bureau and that he was grateful for the open and frank discussions which IWRB had engaged in with both Ramsar and IUCN. It was true that IWRB considered itself as a parent of the Convention and that there were personal, historical and emotive problems to be considered. The letter sent to the Standing Committee by the President of IWRB gave a fair and open view of the discussions which had taken place at IWRB's Executive Board Meeting. There were four main points:

- (a) IWRB realized that the decision was for the Ramsar Standing Committee and the Contracting Parties to the Convention.
- (b) Nevertheless IWRB was concerned at the speed of change. It was only two years since the Regina Conference and from IWRB's perspective, the Secretariat arrangements were working extremely well. The Director of IWRB found the integration of IWRB and Ramsar staff very fruitful and he would personally be disappointed to see the Bureau leave Slimbridge, although he recognized the problems of having a split-site office.
- (c) IWRB had an active ground network which had been partly responsible for the growth and success of the Convention. IWRB was important in keeping Ramsar's feet "wet" on the ground by providing contact with wetland managers and others directly involved with practical wetland conservation. This must be maintained.
- (d) IWRB would be willing to help try and solve any accommodation difficulties which might arise temporarily during the consolidation period.

The Chairman opened the floor to discussion.

The observer from the UK agreed with the previous speaker that the letter from the President of IWRB was a very fair reflection of the discussions which had taken place at Astrakhan. The over-riding concern was that the Convention should deliver as much as possible for wetland conservation and concerns had been expressed that the proposed changes, while appropriate, might adversely affect the Bureau's relationship with IWRB. However, he felt that a mutually agreeable solution should be found within the framework of the present proposals.

In response to a question raised by the observer from the UK, the Secretary General said that the costs of relocating two permanent staff from Slimbridge were relatively insignificant. Although the level of salaries was higher in Switzerland than in the UK, the costs of this to the Convention would be offset to a large degree by tax relief provided by the Swiss government and by saving in communication and travel costs.

The Conservation Coordinator indicated his view that consolidation was essential. He said that the Bureau wished to maintain close contact with the IWRB network. He emphasized the inefficiency of an organization with only four permanent staff having two persons based in Slimbridge and two based in Gland. It was important for the Convention to mature in a manner which would improve efficiency but this did not mean severing the very positive links which had been developed with IWRB.

In the ensuing discussion, all members stressed the importance of continued close cooperation by the Bureau with IWRB. The member from the USA noted the close relationship with IWRB had provided Ramsar with the technical and scientific credibility which many Contracting Parties considered essential to the Convention's success. He saw no reason why this close cooperation could not continue following the consolidation of permanent Bureau staff in Gland. He strongly supported the consolidation although he urged that this should not occur at the expense of technical competence.

The observer from the UK said that the most important consideration was to ensure the future growth and success of the Convention. If continuing with a split office was detrimental to this success, the UK government would not object to consolidation, although it noted the valuable links which had developed between Ramsar and IWRB. In any event, the UK would hope to remain as a permanent observer on the Standing Committee as had been retained in the Standing Committee documentation.

The member from Switzerland saw consolidation as an inevitable long-term solution. He felt that the Bureau would be better equipped to promote the development of the Convention if its staff were gathered together in one office.

The member from Tunisia strongly supported the consolidation proposals, stressing that the staff of the Bureau were at the root of the Convention's work. He did not agree with fears that the Bureau would become isolated from IWRB; after all, there were many people who were closely involved with the work of both organizations. The members from the Netherlands and Poland shared these views.

The observer from Norway said that he understood the current difficulties faced by the Bureau. He raised a concern about maintaining a partnership with IWRB, in particular, ensuring that the Convention budget cover the provision of scientific and technical services from IWRB.

The member from Chile expressed concern that should the Bureau be consolidated for administrative reasons there was a danger of conservation work being overwhelmed by bureaucracy. He was also concerned that a strong scientific interaction with IWRB should be maintained following the consolidation. The member from New Zealand also raised questions about the desirability of a consolidation in view of future relations with IWRB.

The Director of IWRB agreed that this was an extremely important question. IWRB was one of only a few organizations with a global technical interest in wetlands able to support the Convention's activities. IWRB had also played a major role promoting the Convention. If and when consolidation were to take place, formal links between IWRB and the Bureau must continue to exist. There was a need to find a way of maintaining the partnership and incorporating details of this into the Memorandum of Agreement to go before the Contracting

Parties at Montreux. One way in which this could be achieved was by a Ramsar liaison officer being employed to work with IWRB at Slimbridge.

The member from Switzerland felt that many of the support activities which would be carried out by IWRB should be implemented on the ground, using the IWRB network, rather than at Slimbridge.

Agreeing with the member from Switzerland, the Secretary General expressed the hope that IWRB would continue to support the Convention in making things happen on the ground. He expected that with anticipated funding from the Bureau, IWRB would be able to provide even greater support to the Convention in future than it had already achieved over the years. He stressed the need to effect the proposed changes at the first possible opportunity and urged the Standing Committee to recommend the Montreux Conference to provide the Bureau with the means to be an effective secretariat.

The Chairman then requested the meeting to give attention to the proposed memorandum of Agreement between IUCN and IWRB to give effect to the new secretariat arrangements.

The observer from IUCN wished to see the best possible outcome for wetland conservation. IWRB was very important to the work of the Convention and he would not wish to see the partnership affected in a detrimental way. He would support the maintenance of the closest possible links between Ramsar, IWRB and IUCN and hence supported the revised memorandum of agreement.

The Secretary General recalled that the Standing Committee's discussions on setting up a database had led to the conclusion for a stand-alone PC option maintained at Slimbridge. The Convention budget for 1991-1993 included a line for database and other technical support from IWRB. The Director of IWRB would be responsible for administering the money allocated for these purposes. Arrangements for regular bilateral meetings would also help to maintain close links between the two organizations.

The Director of IWRB said that he would like to see some changes made to the Memorandum of Agreement, including a better definition of the support activities which would be covered by the new partnership arrangements. He also queried the reference to the maintenance by IWRB of a separate Ramsar account; wondering if this would still be necessary?

The Secretary General replied that legally the consolidation did not alter IWRB's role in helping to provide the Bureau. IWRB would still be responsible for providing part of the Bureau even though the permanent Ramsar payroll staff would be based in Gland. Hence, the need for the separate bank account clause. Of course, necessary substantive changes to the Agreement should be introduced, but if possible should be kept to a minimum. The revised Memorandum of Agreement would apply for a three-year period, and would be reviewed at the 1993 Conference of Contracting Parties.

In reply to question from the Chairman, regarding the specific changes which needed to be made to the draft Memorandum of Agreement, the Director of IWRB said that he would like to see the database mentioned and other major support activities to be carried out for the Convention by IWRB should also be listed.

In reply to a query raised by the observer from the UK, the Secretary General said that should

IWRB maintain a Ramsar liaison officer at Slimbridge it did not necessarily mean that the projected level of five professional staff based in Gland could be reduced. Indeed the money for support activities would be for IWRB to spend as it saw fit. This might mean the employment of one staff member or several consultants. In any event, the terms of reference of the Ramsar technical officer would involve working with IWRB and other partners on common ventures.

In response to questions raised by the member from the Netherlands, and from the USA, the observer from IUCN recalled that construction of IUCN's new accommodation should begin in 1990 and could be ready for occupancy in early 1992. However, if the Standing Committee and the Montreux Conference wished the Bureau to consolidate by bringing staff to Gland from Slimbridge sooner than 1992, IUCN would make space available.

The Secretary General confirmed that there would be no real problem in accommodating staff relocating from Slimbridge. Regarding the timeliness of the proposed changes, he felt that the current situation was going to get worse rather than better and that consolidation should therefore take place as soon as practically possible following the decision at the Montreux Conference.

The Director of IWRB concluded that the Standing Committee's views and comments had provided a very valuable addition to the detailed discussions which had already taken place at IWRB's Executive Board Meeting. He pledged IWRB's support for the consolidation and for continued technical support and scientific assistance under the Convention.

Drawing discussion of this agenda item to a close, the Chairman noted that the consensus of the Standing Committee was to support the proposed changes, including the consolidation of the Bureau's staff in Gland, and he invited the Secretary General and the Director of IWRB and the Director General of IUCN to finalize the wording for the Memorandum of Agreement and the covering documentation for the Montreux Conference.

Agenda item 14: Review of Montreux Conference documentation: Interpretation of the Convention

At the Chairman's invitation, the Secretary General introduced Standing Committee documentation pages 129-144 (English version). He noted that there were three areas for discussion, namely the interpretation of Article 4.2 of the Convention, interpretation of Article 5, and discrepancies between the English and French texts of the Convention. At the last meeting of the Standing Committee it had been noted that the areas mentioned would benefit from decisions by the Contracting Parties, so that uniform application of the Convention could be achieved. The Bureau's legal adviser, Mr. C. de Klemm, had suggested methods of overcoming the various difficulties and these were detailed in the papers presented to the Standing Committee.

At the request of the Chairman, the Bureau's legal adviser guided the Standing Committee through the problems relating to Article 4.2, the English text of which he read to the Standing Committee. He noted that the text provided some guidance as to the nature of compensatory measures which should be undertaken by Contracting Parties who wished to delete or reduce site boundaries, but was insufficient to show Parties how to proceed in such circumstances. Two resources were emphasized in Article 4.2, namely "waterfowl" and "the original habitat". Original habitat was clearly meant to refer to original habitat type, since the original

habitat was the area subject to delisting. This implied that a site listed in compensation should be similar to the delisted or reduced site. However, the Convention text provided no guidance as to what should be done when no similar site was available. There was also no explicit requirement for Parties to inform the Convention depositary that a new (i.e. compensatory) site was being listed. Finally, Article 4.2 mentioned the establishment of nature reserves but no guidance was given as to what constitutes a nature reserve.

In order to tackle the problems which he had outlined to the Standing Committee, the Bureau's legal adviser had prepared two draft resolutions to go before the Montreux Conference. The first of these established clear guidelines for Contracting Parties to follow should they find it necessary to delete or reduce listed sites. The draft resolution also offered interpretations of the terms "wetland resource", "nature reserve", "original habitat" and "adequate portion". The second draft resolution recommended that criteria and guidelines be developed to assist Contracting Parties in the designation of nature reserves, and that a working group be established for developing such criteria and guidelines.

The Chairman invited comments from the Standing Committee.

The observer from Norway said that the Bureau's legal consultant had produced a useful clarification of Article 4.2, although the use of the terms "guidelines" and "criteria" could cause confusion with the Convention's guidelines for wise use or criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance.

The member from New Zealand felt that she supported the principles of the two draft resolutions, although she was doubtful whether they would be effective if the Contracting Parties involved in particular cases were not sympathetic.

The observer from the UK supported the comments made by the member from New Zealand, and expressed reservations that the Convention might get into difficulties by raising these matters at Montreux.

The Vice-Chairman considered that point 3.c) on page 135 of the Standing Committee documentation should be amended to refer to the productivity of a site and not its size.

In reply to a question raised by the member from Switzerland, the Secretary General and Conservation Coordinator explained that whilst there had been no examples of sites being wholly delisted, there were several instances of site boundary reductions, the most well-known of which was the Galgenschoor site in Belgium.

The Secretary General said that interpretation of Article 4.2 could be discussed by the Montreux workshop dealing with legal matters. In connection with the second draft Resolution, he wondered whether a scientific and technical working group (with a wider remit than simply the development of criteria and guidelines for the application of Article 4.2) should be established under the Convention.

The observer from the UK suggested that the discussion paper presented by the Bureau's legal consultant should go forward to Montreux on its own, with the Resolutions being kept back pending discussion in the workshop.

The member from Switzerland expressed reservations about the paper. He was concerned that

the Standing Committee might be seen to be condoning and facilitating site delisting. Compensation measures required should therefore be as severe as possible. A general principle should be established that Contracting Parties should first do everything possible to reduce negative impacts and to implement on-site compensation measures. Other compensatory measures should only be encouraged as a last resort. The second paragraph of point 6 on page 132 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) should therefore be amended to state that as far as possible, Contracting Parties should not proceed with the restriction or deletion of sites.

The member from Chile supported the adoption of a cautious approach, suggesting that a small committee be set up to review potential delisting cases individually. If a Contracting Party wished to delist a site, it would do so.

The observer from Ghana was concerned that the activities of landowners and land users at sites being proposed for compensatory listing would be restricted and that financial compensation should therefore be made available.

The observer from Norway questioned the need for establishing a new set of criteria for identifying compensatory sites. The criteria already developed for identifying wetlands of international importance should be adequate.

The Chairman noted that the issue was multifaceted and needed discussion at Montreux. He supported the UK proposal that the background document should go forward to Montreux without the Resolutions. This was agreed by the Standing Committee. He therefore wished to move the discussion on and invited the Secretary General to introduce the documentation dealing with interpretation of Article 5.

The Secretary General noted that Article 5, dealing with cooperation between states, had been given little attention in the past and was not well known. The Article covered crucial matters such as the application of the Convention to cross-border wetlands and water systems and to migratory species conservation.

At the Chairman's request, the Bureau's legal consultant guided the Standing Committee through pages 137-140 of the documentation (English version). Article 5 noted two main obligations: the first was for Contracting Parties to consult each other on the implementation of their obligations under the Convention in relation to shared wetlands, whilst the second obligation was to coordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna. Owing to the wording of the Convention, the first obligation was, in fact, mandatory. The wording of the second part of Article 5 was rather obscure and the paper on pages 137-139 of the Standing Committee documentation attempted to define some of the terms mentioned. Page 140 contained suggestions for the implementation of Article 5. The starting point was to identify those sites where it was applicable and then to adopt a procedure for dealing with such cases. There were many existing boundary water agreements and these could be used as starting points for discussion.

The Secretary General noted that whilst the Bureau wished very strongly to promote Article 5, such work was categorized as a "highly desirable" activity and would not therefore be fully funded by the revised core budget.

The Chairman invited the Standing Committee to comment on the views expressed by the Secretary General and by the Bureau's legal consultant.

The member from the USA considered that the papers presented by the Bureau's legal consultant would be useful to all Contracting Parties and that they contained valuable thoughts and guidance. However, he was concerned that a balance should be reached between wetland conservation activities and legal and administrative matters. He was doubtful of the need to develop new programmes, especially if funding was problematical.

Following some further discussion, the Chairman noted that the general consensus of the Standing Committee was that the documentation dealing with Article 5 should go forward to Montreux. He then asked the Secretary General to introduce pages 141-144 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version), which dealt with discrepancies between the English and French versions of the Convention text.

The Secretary General recommended that these papers should also go forward to Montreux for discussion at the appropriate workshop. It was important to resolve the various language discrepancies and this could only be done by the Conference of the Parties. This was agreed by the Standing Committee.

There being no further comment or discussion of Agenda item 14, the Chairman thanked Mr. de Klemm for his assistance in developing papers to tackle these difficult problems on legal matters. He then moved the meeting on to item 15.

Agenda item 15: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Workshop Papers

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Conservation Coordinator introduced pages 145-155 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that previous Conferences of the Contracting Parties had been divided into plenary sessions for discussion of largely administrative matters and smaller groups (or workshops) which had dealt with more technical matters, often of an essential nature for defining the future work of the Convention. Workshop arrangements would be available at Montreux; however, the need for simultaneous interpretation facilities would mean that each workshop could have up to 200 participants. Two and a half days of the Montreux Conference would be devoted to technical workshop sessions.

The topics to be covered by each workshop were detailed on pages 148-155 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). Each session would begin with a concise overview paper raising a series of possible issues for discussion, and would be followed by one or two illustrative papers. The content of workshops C and D had been debated in the Subgroup on Programme and it had been decided that they were appropriate for highlighting a number of important aspects of the Convention. Workshop E was aimed especially at developing countries.

The Chairperson for each workshop should have some standing within the Convention and have considerable experience and expertise in the field being covered. A number of Standing Committee members would therefore be invited to Chair workshop sessions. The Bureau and its close collaborators would provide rapporteurs, who would be responsible for writing overview papers. Each workshop would report back to a plenary session of the Conference, so that any conclusions and recommendations could be fully debated and then adopted by the

Conference.

The Chairman invited the Standing Committee to comment on the workshop documentation.

The member from Switzerland said that his colleague M. P Goeldlin would, unfortunately, find it difficult to act as Chairman for workshop C as he would be Chairman of the Conference as a whole.

The observer from the UK said that the general structure of the workshops was fine, although several points needed emphasizing. The overview papers should be concise; a list of points for discussion at each workshop should be sent out to delegates before the Conference; the Conservation Coordinator's burden in acting as rapporteur at three workshops should be reduced.

The Secretary General welcomed the points made by the observer from the UK and stressed that workshop organization was now a top priority for the Bureau.

The observer from Norway noted that workshops E and F, due to run simultaneously, were both of particular interest to development agencies. The sessions should be reorganized to avoid this clash.

After some discussion, it was decided to swap workshops C and F, so that C would take place on 30 June and workshop F would be held on 29 June. The Conservation Coordinator would be the principle Bureau contact in connection with workshop matters.

Agenda item 16: Review of Montreux Conference Documentation: Miscellaneous documentation

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General noted for the record that the miscellaneous documentation for the Montreux Conference had been placed before the Standing Committee. He felt it was unlikely that there would be a need for any discussion of the papers involved, which included a List of Conference Documentation, an Annotated Agenda, and Rules of Procedure. Concerning the Annotated Agenda, the Secretary General noted that many evening and social events had been planned for the Conference. Turning to the Rules of Procedure, he reported that these had been taken from the corresponding document for previous Conferences. The few changes made had been editorial rather than substantive. In response to a query raised by the Chairman, he noted that the financial accounts for the triennium 1988-1990 would also be included in the Montreux documentation.

The member from Chile expressed satisfaction at the number of opportunities which would exist at Montreux for regional consultations, so that common problems and policies could be discussed.

The Standing Committee approved the draft Rule of Procedure for the Montreux Conference as well as the other "miscellaneous documents" for the Conference examined under this agenda item.

Agenda item 17: Report of the Working Group on Convention Criteria and Wise Use Requirement

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chairman of the working group on Convention criteria and wise use recalled that the working group's first report had been circulated at the Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee and to all Contracting Parties. Comments had been received from Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and New Zealand, and the Chairman of the working group had also discussed the report with the Conservation Coordinator and the member from Poland at a recent meeting in Poland. Most comments had been accommodated in the revised report (which had been circulated to the Standing Committee) although this had proved difficult to do in a few cases. In such circumstances, the working group had consulted representatives of the Contracting Parties concerned and agreement had been reached.

The member from the USA said that he considered the wise use guidelines to be extraordinarily important. The working group had done an excellent job in producing the guidelines and there was now an urgent need to implement them.

The Chairman of the working group drew the Standing Committee's attention to the draft Montreux Conference Recommendation on Wise Use on pages 178-179 of the documentation (English version). This was approved by the Standing Committee.

The Secretary General referred to recent talks with the Netherlands Development Assistance Agency and said that he hoped that support for a major wise use project would be forthcoming. The initiative on wise use had developed from the keynote speech made at the Groningen Conference by the Netherlands Minister of Agriculture, and it would therefore be most appropriate for the Netherlands to fund important work in this area.

There being no further comments, the Chairman drew this agenda item to a close.

Agenda item 18: Conservation of Listed Wetlands

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced pages 181-200 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that there were two elements, namely the updated List of Wetlands of International Importance and a discussion of the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure. A separate report on the operation of the Monitoring Procedure, which had been prepared by the Bureau's Technical Officer, had also been circulated. The Secretary General also invited Standing Committee members and observers to report on the status of listed sites within their countries.

The Secretary General noted that the Monitoring Procedure was still at a very early stage. It had not received any core support, although external support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and from NGOs was gratefully appreciated. In any event, it had been proved to be effective for initial contacts to be made by Bureau staff who could then determine the key areas where expert advice was required. This approach had worked very successfully during the course of the Monitoring Procedure applied at the Bañados del Este in Uruguay. An initial mission carried out in 1988 would be followed up by the visit of an expert hydrologist later in 1989. The Secretary General expressed the Bureau's desire and willingness to work with experts from a wide range of other organizations in connection with the Monitoring Procedure.

The observer from the UK said that the Monitoring Procedure was one of the most important activities undertaken by the Bureau, but that careful consideration of the way forward was

required. No one organization had sufficient expertise in the diverse fields of activity which were involved in carrying out a comprehensive Monitoring Procedure and it was an impossible task to expect of Bureau staff alone.

The member from the USA expressed support for the views held by the observer from the UK. He felt that the Bureau was a little vulnerable on technical matters and that it was vital to contract the services of other experts and organizations.

The Conservation Coordinator stressed that the direct involvement of the Bureau was often crucial in (for example) reassuring NGOs that their concerns would be voiced to the appropriate government authorities. Furthermore, government representatives valued visits from people with the official "Ramsar tag". Bureau staff were able to perform a key role in making initial visits for appropriate experts to follow up.

The observer from Norway raised a point in connection with the Monitoring Procedure. He was concerned that reports of changes in ecological character should be dealt with by the Bureau in the most efficient way possible. There was no point in doing a great deal of work, only to find that there was really no problem in the first place.

The member from the Netherlands considered that the Bureau had handled such a case in the Netherlands very well. A complaint had been forwarded, by the Bureau, to the authorities in the Netherlands, who were then able to investigate the situation by letter and telephone. There was excellent scope for dealing with the initial stages of the Monitoring Procedure in rather an informal manner.

Turning to actual cases, the Secretary General reported that the most recently designated Ramsar site was Stage II of the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. The Bureau had received information about potential problems affecting the site from an Australian NGO but contacts made according to the provisions of the Monitoring Procedure had satisfied the Secretariat that government action had resolved the reported difficulties. Reports of change (or potential change) in ecological character had also been received in relation to the St Lucia System Ramsar site in South Africa and the Netherlands sites of De Groote Peel and Het Naardermeer. These were typical examples of matters which the Bureau frequently had to deal with and which could not be foreseen. The Monitoring Procedure might be applied in such cases following initial contacts to establish the exact nature of the situation.

The observer from South Africa elaborated on the Secretary General's reference to the St Lucia System Ramsar site. A mining company had applied for a visa to exploit base minerals on state-owned land to the north of St Lucia in Natal. The proposed mining could have negative impacts on the Turtle Beaches/Coral Reefs of Tongaland Ramsar site and on the St Lucia System Ramsar site. The South African Department of Environmental Affairs had contacted the Department of Foreign Affairs in connection with this matter and both Departments had since been in conflict with the Ministry of Mining Affairs. The latest news was that the mining application had been deferred. The Minister for the Environment had announced that a decision could not be taken until a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment had been completed and the final decision would be taken by the South African Cabinet. The mining company was looking to extract titanium oxide deposits with a potential profit of five billion Rand (2.5bn Pounds Sterling) over the next decade. The Departments of Foreign Affairs and Environmental Affairs remained opposed to the application.

The observer from Australia reported that Kakadu National Park Stage II was adjacent to a Conservation Area where mineral exploitation was permitted. This had been the source of the NGO objection mentioned earlier by the Secretary General. In fact, the mineral exploitation zone was more than 100km upstream of the Ramsar site and was subject to stringent conditions. No adverse environmental impact had been recorded locally, or at the Ramsar site. A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment had determined that the conditions attached to mining consents would be sufficient to protect the area, but the government had nevertheless decided not to grant any applications for the time being. The remaining Conservation Zone would be designated as a National Park and only two sites would be considered for mining; these would be further assessed before any decision was made. It was expected that nine new Ramsar sites, covering some 450,000ha in Western Australia, would be designated in the near future.

The observer from Hungary informed the Standing Committee that her country had recently added five new sites to the Ramsar List and extended one of the eight sites which had been designated at the time of Hungary's accession in 1979. The Hungarian authorities had decided to designate two of the five new sites (namely Lake Balaton and "Old Lake" of Tata) as part-time Ramsar sites. The Ramsar designation for these sites would have effect from 1 October - 30 April each year as both areas were very important for wintering waterfowl but were heavily disturbed in the summer by tourism and other recreational activities. Hungary would be making a full presentation on this initiative at the Montreux Conference.

The Conservation Coordinator said that although the concept of part-time Ramsar sites was an interesting one, he could foresee that some Contracting Parties might express concern. For example, part-time designation presumably meant that activities having a negative impact on the sites' ecological characters could take place quite legitimately between 1 May and 30 September. Furthermore, there were also important aspects of wise use to be considered; recreation was not necessarily incompatible with conservation.

The Vice-Chairman questioned whether part-time sites were permitted under the provisions of the Convention text. If so, the concept could prove valuable in showing developing countries that Ramsar was a flexible Convention of which there was no need to be suspicious.

The member from New Zealand informed the Standing Committee that her country's government had announced the designation of two new Ramsar sites on 11th October 1989. The documentation for these designations was still being prepared, but progress was being made.

There being no further comments, the Chairman drew discussion of this agenda item to a close.

Agenda item 19: Convention Projects

At the Chairman's invitation, the Secretary General introduced pages 201-208 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that this was a standard item in the Standing Committee's agenda which outlined both general and site-specific projects, including partnership projects in the field, which the Bureau had been involved with. The Standing Committee was requested to review and guide the development of these projects. The member from the USA suggested that the Bureau might wish in the future to develop

concrete guidelines for methods of obtaining external support.

The Conservation Coordinator asked the members from Switzerland and the Netherlands whether there had been any progress in relation to the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania project detailed on page 206 of the documentation (English version). He was assured by both delegates that they would make enquiries into this matter as soon as possible. The Conservation Coordinator went on to mention that the Mauritanian government had agreed to fund crewing of the patrol vessel.

The Chairman noted the Standing Committee's agreement with the project work of the Bureau and drew discussion of this agenda item to a close.

Agenda item 20: Promotional Activities

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced pages 209-214 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that promotion of Ramsar had been identified by the Standing Committee as an important area which required much activity. The Bureau had made a considerable effort with very limited resources, but there were several issues which needed the Standing Committee's attention. The Bureau had been fortunate in securing the voluntary services of Marjolein Visser, a volunteer student journalist from the Netherlands, who had assisted with guiding press and PR activities, and reviewing promotional products. The Bureau had also solicited the suggestions from PR staff working for IUCN and WWF. All the advice which had been received emphasized that effective PR required considerable expertise and investment, which would be difficult for Ramsar alone; it was important to work with other organizations.

Nevertheless, there were many things which the Bureau could do. To this end it would be helpful to receive the Standing Committee's guidance on the Ramsar logo, regarding its use, protection and role in marketing. The items produced so far (e.g. pin, sticker, greetings card, promotional literature) had been well received and there were numerous possibilities for future use of the logo. The Bureau retained full ownership rights in the logo which had been produced by a Swiss company (not at commercial rates) and was being registered with the World Intellectual Property organization. However, the Bureau was obviously not a marketing organization, and had no legal status to market goods; partnership with WWF could prove very useful here. The Swiss government was generously financing use of the logo at Montreux on T-shirts and on a Swatch watch.

At the Secretary General's request, the Bureau's Administrative Officer detailed the other promotional activities which had been undertaken. These included the Newsletter (number 4 just published; number 5 well advanced), Site Diplomas, Site Plaques (models of suggested designs were passed round to the Standing Committee), Brochure (updated in 1989 in English, French and Spanish), and Slide Show (available in French, English, German; soon also in Spanish). She also mentioned the special items which were being produced for the Montreux Conference (T-Shirt, Swatch Watch, Information Kit, Conference Logo and a special postal cancellation). An information pack presenting general background and facts about the Convention was also in production. A designer had come up with two options which would cost around SFr. 6,000 to SFr. 7,500 for 1000-2000 copies.

The Secretary General emphasized that all these products were being financed outside the core budget. A 1987 development grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service had facilitated

much of the work undertaken as well as a considerable Canadian grant and NGO support for the Newsletter.

The observer from the UK asked whether there was any possibility of producing a First Day Cover for the Montreux Conference. The Secretary General replied that the Bureau would pursue the matter.

The Bureau's Secretary presented an example site plaque design which had been produced by The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge at a cost of around SFr. 80. The design included a site name, description, and map, together with information about the Ramsar Bureau. The plaque was passed round the Standing Committee and was generally well received.

In reply to a question raised by the member from the USA, the Administrative Officer confirmed that there was a script to go with the slide show.

The Secretary General said that the slide show had been greatly improved since last year. Each set consisted of 80 slides and cost \$200 in order for expenditure to be recouped. This cost could not be subsidized without external support. Regarding site plaques, he noted that it was up to each Contracting Party to decide what should be included for each Ramsar site. The Bureau would be encouraging Contracting Parties at Montreux to mark their sites in some way.

In reply to the Secretary General's request for views in relation to the use of the Ramsar logo and marketing, the Vice-Chairman wondered whether there had been any detailed discussion with WWF. The Secretary General replied that only preliminary talks had begun. A cooperative arrangement would avoid the need for Ramsar to make a large staff investment in marketing. WWF had a large catalogue and it would be worth exploring further the possibilities of a page being devoted to Ramsar products. Using a commercial company would be difficult because payment would be required in advance of any sales.

The member from Switzerland said that the financial and educational benefits of producing items for sale should not be overlooked.

The observer from the UK also felt that the production of promotional items was very appropriate for the Convention, but that it was necessary to limit sales to a small discreet group of items; it would be easy to go overboard.

The member from Chile wondered whether the use of promotional videos would be more appropriate than slide shows in developed countries. The Secretary General noted that the Bureau had no capacity for video production at present, but agreed that this was highly desirable. He wondered if individual Parties might help.

The member from New Zealand said that she was very hesitant about going down the promotional road, but wondered whether there was any possibility of Ramsar being involved in sponsorship of the film competition at the New Zealand International Ornithological Congress.

There being no further comments, the Chairman noted consensus that the Bureau be authorized to continue its current and proposed promotional activities. The Secretary General

confirmed that steps would be taken to ensure that the Ramsar logo was fully protected.

Agenda item 21: Next Meeting of the Standing Committee

The Secretary General asked the Standing Committee whether they wished to meet again considerably before the Montreux Conference, or whether it would be sufficient for the Bureau to liaise with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in the first half of 1990, as had been done in the past. He noted that deciding the date and venue of the annual autumn Standing Committee meeting would be the province of the post-Montreux Standing Committee.

Following some discussion, the Standing Committee agreed to meet on the afternoon of Tuesday 26 June 1990 at Montreux and on a daily basis during the Conference itself. The new Standing Committee might then like to meet in autumn 1990 or in early 1991. The Bureau would have time to arrange an autumn meeting after Montreux. The IUCN General Assembly in autumn 1990 in Australia was suggested as a possible venue for the meeting.

Agenda item 22: Any Other Business

(a) Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Chairman extended a warm welcome, on behalf of the Standing Committee, to a delegation from Kushiro City, Hokkaido, Japan. The delegation was led by the Mayor of Kushiro, Mr. Toshiyuki Wanibuchi, together with his family and staff. The Chairman invited Mayor Wanibuchi to take the floor.

Mayor Wanibuchi began by thanking the Secretary General for visiting Kushiro in 1988. He went on to inform the Standing Committee that Kushiro had been working with a view to hosting the Fifth meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention and, since September 1988, had been in continuous contact with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the Environmental Agency. He was delighted to now be able to announce that the Japanese government wished to host the Conference at Kushiro, a beautiful city with many assets, which he felt sure would be the perfect venue for a major Ramsar meeting. A formal letter had been sent to the Bureau via diplomatic channels to convey this offer.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman expressed grateful thanks to Mayor Wanibuchi for his important and generous announcement. He called upon the Secretary General to detail the formal procedure required for finalizing the venues of Ramsar Conferences.

After renewing the Standing Committee's welcome to the Mayor and his family and staff, the Secretary General recalled that the Standing Committee meeting held in January 1988 had recommended that efforts be made to strengthen Japan's involvement with the Convention. As a result of this, he had contacted the Japanese Embassy in Bern, where his initial contact with Mr. Nishimura had been extremely helpful. Very fruitful talks with the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the Environmental Agency and NGOs, especially the Wild Bird Society of Japan, had been held subsequently in Tokyo where the Secretary General had visited at the invitation of the government of Japan. The highlight of the Secretary General's stay in Japan had been his visit to Kushiro, where he had been impressed by the concern for wetland conservation shown by the people of Kushiro and by the high level of interest in the Ramsar

Convention. He had expressed hopes that Japan could, in future, play a major role in the promotion of the Convention and in the initiation of wetland conservation projects. Several areas of activity, in which Japan might become more closely involved, had been discussed with the Japanese authorities; this generous offer to host the Fifth Conference was a clear manifestation of committed support for the Convention.

The Secretary General went on to note that the Conference of Contracting Parties was the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. The final decision regarding the location of the Fifth Conference of Contracting Parties would be taken during the Plenary Session at Montreux. Other countries had requested general information in relation to hosting the Fifth Conference but no other firm offer had been received. Should the Montreux Conference approve Kushiro as the venue for the next Conference, many diplomatic, logistic and budgetary details would need to be sorted out by Japan. He was certain that the members of the Standing Committee would be pleased to assist Japan in this respect, especially the representatives of former and current Conference hosts, namely the Netherlands, Canada and Switzerland. The Bureau would also strive to facilitate information exchange to enable the Japanese government to present a full and complete invitation at Montreux.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Chairman and the member from the USA expressed thanks to the Mayor of Kushiro and to the Japanese government for their very significant and welcome offer. The Chairman indicated that via these proceedings, all Contracting Parties would be notified of the generous offer from Japan.

Mayor Wanibuchi gave his assurance to the Standing Committee that his city would continue to work towards hosting the Fifth Conference of Contracting Parties and he looked forward to welcoming delegates to Kushiro in 1993.

(b) Regina amendments

The Secretary General reminded the Standing Committee of the necessity for Contracting Parties to move as quickly as possible towards accepting the Regina Amendments. This was not only an administrative point, although the Parties had agreed to act as if the amendments were already in force. Official acceptance of the amendments would avoid potential difficulties in the longer-term legal position. The Bureau would be pleased to provide Contracting Parties with details of what was required for Unesco to be assured that the amendments had been accepted

(c) India - Conservation Community Movement

The Secretary General said that he had been invited to attend a meeting hosted by the Indian government and WWF-India at which IUCN and WWF representatives would also be present. A conservation community movement was to be launched under which professionals would assist with wise use projects at a number of wetland sites. Could he convey the support of the Standing Committee to the Indian government and WWF-India?

The Standing Committee confirmed their support of this project.

(d) Gdansk Conference

The member from Poland drew the Standing Committee's attention to the successful East

European wetlands conference which had been held at Gdansk in September. This had facilitated the exchange of information between researchers and managers, especially with regard to wise use. Twenty papers and subsequent discussions had led to a series of recommendations to East European governments. Proceedings would be available soon. Two key aspects of the conference were Polish/US cooperation and East European multilateral cooperation. A second such conference would be held after Montreux.

(e) National Reports - Montreux Conference

The Conservation Coordinator reminded the Standing Committee of the imminent deadline of 27 December 1989 for National Reports to the Montreux Conference.

In reply to a question raised by the member from the USA, the Secretary General said that there would be no problems in participants in the Montreux Conference sending display materials on ahead.

Agenda item 23: Closing Remarks

There being no further matters for discussion, the Chairman thanked all participants in the meeting for the high quality of their contributions, and for working so hard for the Convention rather than for the aims of individual countries.

He recapped the main results of the meeting: 1989 activities and finance had been reviewed and accepted and 1990 priorities adopted. The documentation for the Montreux Conference was considered, with agreement reached on programme, budget, secretariat arrangements and many other points. It had been especially pleasing to receive details regarding arrangements for Montreux from the Swiss delegates and authorities.

There had been useful discussion on current wetland conservation issues and problems at specific sites.

The Convention had been particularly fortunate to have received a generous offer from Japan, personally endorsed by the Mayor of Kushiro, to host the Fifth Conference of Contracting Parties.

In summary, the meeting had been very successful, generating a range of important results. He expressed his thanks to the Bureau staff and consultants for ensuring that arrangements had run smoothly.

The observer from Hungary said that she had found the meeting very useful and interesting. She thanked the Bureau for facilitating her participation.

The observer from Australia expressed his thanks to the Bureau.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the Chairman for his important contribution.

The Chairman then closed the meeting.