

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS of INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

Eleventh Meeting of the Standing Committee
Kushiro City, Hokkaido, Japan
21-23 October 1992

Draft Proceedings

PRESENT:

Members:

Africa: Tunisia (S. Kacem), Alternate Representative: Kenya (S. Njuguna)
Asia: Pakistan (A. Jan - Vice Chairman; A.L. Rao), Alternate Representative: Iran (S. Motallebi-Pour, B. Behrouzi Rad)
Eastern Europe: Poland (Z. Krzeminski), Alternate Representative: Hungary (L. Lakos)
Neotropics: Venezuela (J. Mendez Arocha), Alternate Representative: Uruguay (M. Villalba)
North America: USA (L. Mason - Chairman; J. Van Der Walker), Alternate Representative: Canada (D. Brackett)
Oceania: Australia (B. Phillips)
Western Europe: Netherlands (F. von der Assen)
Host of Next Conference: Japan (K. Kikuchi, M. Komoda, M. Komaru, N. Nakamura, Y. Natori, K. Okura, M. Sakurai, T. Satoo, T. Shigeeda, H. Shinsho, T. Takemori)
Japan - Observers (T. Akasaka, T. Chiba, T. Harada, W. Jhojya, A. Kobayashi, S. Mori, Y. Nakanishi, N. Saito, T. Sawada, T. Wanibuchi)
Host of Last Conference: Switzerland (A. Antonietti)

Permanent Observers:

UK (H. Neal, M. Ford)
IUCN (P. Dugan)
IWRB (M. Moser, F. Parish, S. Subramaniam)

Invited Observers: WWF (S. Lyster)

Contracting Party Observers:

Austria (R. Turk)
Bangladesh (M. Katebi)
France (M. Bigan)
Indonesia (A. Abdullah, K. Soemarna, A. Sugandhy)
Jordan (Y. Al-Zubi)
Mexico (E. Ezcurra)
Norway (S. Eldoy)
Russian Federation (S. Tveritinov)
South Africa (M. Upham)
Viet Nam (N. Kinh)

Invited Observers for Portions of the Meeting:
Marlin Conference Management (B. Demmery)
Ramsar Press Liaison (P. Underwood)

Apologies for Absence:
New Zealand (Alternate Representative, Oceania)
Spain (Alternate Representative, Western Europe)
Dr M. Holdgate (Director General, IUCN)

Secretariat:
Secretary General (D. Navid)
Assistant Secretary General (M. Smart)
Director of Conservation (H. Lethier)
Administrator (J. Tucker)
Technical Officer, Asia (S. Kobayashi)
Technical Officer, Listed Sites (M. Herzig)
Communications Officer (M. Katz)
IWRB/Ramsar Liaison Officer (T. Jones) Rapporteur
Programme Assistant (A. Pavlic)
Secretary (F. Conus)
Secretary (E. Luthi)
Secretary (M. Wittig)

Agenda item 1: Opening and Welcoming Remarks

Opening proceedings, the Chairman welcomed all participants and expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan, Government of Hokkaido and City of Kushiro for their provision of excellent meeting facilities and generous hospitality. He noted that the present meeting was of special significance as it was the final gathering of the Standing Committee prior to the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to be held in Kushiro in June 1993.

The Chairman introduced Mr Sakurai of the Japanese Environment Agency who expressed a heartfelt welcome to participants of behalf of the Government of Japan, noting that only 231 days remained before the commencement of the Kushiro Conference on 9 June 1993. He stressed the important role of the forthcoming Conference in promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Japan and in the whole of Asia. He wished participants a pleasant stay in Kushiro and hoped that the coming days' discussions would prove most fruitful. Finally, he expressed his profound appreciation of the hospitality provided by the City of Kushiro and Government of Hokkaido.

The Chairman introduced the Mayor of Kushiro, Mr Toshiyuki Wanibuchi, who welcomed participants to the City. He recalled the occasion of the Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee, held in Gland, Switzerland in October 1989, the meeting at which he had personally extended the first formal invitation for the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to take place in the City of Kushiro. Three years later, the Standing Committee was meeting in Kushiro and, with the guidance of the Japanese Government, preparations for the

Conference were well advanced.

Mayor Toshiyuki Wanibuchi continued by introducing local officials - Mayor Yuichi Nakanishi of Kushiro Town, Mayor Takeshi Chiba of Shibechea Town, the Vice Mayor of Tsurui Village Mr Wasaburo Jhojya, Mayor Akira Kobayashi of Hamanaka Town, and Mayor Terue Sawada of Akkeshi Town - who would also be working hard to ensure the success of the Kushiro Conference and the conservation and wise use of Kushiro-shitsugen. Finally, he renewed his personal pledge to provide the best possible facilities for the meeting.

On behalf of all participants, the Chairman renewed his thanks to the City of Kushiro for hosting the present meeting and for making outstanding efforts towards preparation of the forthcoming Conference. He then invited the representatives of IUCN and IWRB to make some welcoming remarks.

IUCN's Wetland Programme Coordinator, Dr P. Dugan, conveyed apologies for absence on behalf of the Director General of IUCN, Dr. M. Holdgate, who had been unavoidably detained by other urgent business. Dr. Holdgate had, however, provided a written submission that would be distributed to all participants. The present meeting was of particular importance, not only as the last major Standing Committee session before the Kushiro Conference, but also as the first session since the UNCED meeting. During mid-1992, IUCN and the Ramsar Bureau had moved into new Headquarters, generously provided by the Government of Switzerland. The IUCN Wetland Programme had also undertaken a major strategic review of its activities during 1992. A document concerning this review would also be distributed to participants.

The Director of IWRB expressed his thanks to the Japanese authorities and to the City of Kushiro for the truly remarkable efforts being made in preparation for the Kushiro Conference. He considered that the Convention had now entered a phase of its development where it could make a truly global contribution to wetlands conservation. However, the growing numbers of Contracting Parties and Listed Sites meant that increasing demands were being placed upon the Convention. If expectations were to be met, future evolution of the Convention needed to be on the basis of preparation of frameworks for action at regional, national and local levels; increased catalytic activity; and partnership. These comments were echoed by the Chairman, who then requested the Secretary General to make his opening remarks.

The Secretary General welcomed participants on behalf of the Ramsar Bureau and added his thanks to the Japanese Government, Government of Hokkaido and City of Kushiro. He believed that the Convention was now better known in the Kushiro area than in any other part of the world. Referring to the Asian Wetland Symposium which had just been held in Otsu and Kushiro, the Secretary General welcomed the conclusions of that meeting as an important step on the road to the Kushiro Conference. He was also gratified to hear renewed pledges of support from partner organizations. Finally, he stressed the importance of the present meeting as the final chance for the Standing Committee to review documentation prior to the Kushiro Conference.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of Agenda

The Chairman noted that the Agenda was extremely full and that, in view of the size of the

present meeting, it might be necessary to create subgroups and to hold a number of closed sessions in order to expedite the Standing Committee's work.

At the Chairman's invitation, the meeting agreed to adopt the draft Agenda and the procedural methods outlined.

Agenda item 3: Admission of Observers

Following the Chairman's reiteration of the time and space constraints that might require the Standing Committee to meet in closed session for some Agenda items, the meeting approved admission of all of the observer Contracting Parties and observer organizations present.

Agenda item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee not otherwise covered by the Agenda

The meeting determined that all matters arising would be covered adequately under other existing Agenda items.

Agenda item 5: Presentation of Report on 1992 Activities by the Convention Bureau

At the Chairman's request, the Secretary General presented the Bureau's report, referring to the brief overview contained in pages 37-40 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He noted that the number of Contracting Parties had now risen to 70, while 4 further countries (Brazil, Croatia, Paraguay and Tajikistan) had only to finalize technical matters concerning their instruments of accession before they too could become full Contracting Parties.

1992 had seen extensive regional consultations, including the convening of several regional meetings of Contracting Parties. Such regional fora provided important opportunities for extending the Convention's coverage, while the impetus offered by the forthcoming Kushiro Conference was another important factor. Thanks were due to both headquarters and regional staff of AWB, IUCN, IWRB and WWF for their important role in promoting the Convention amongst potential Contracting Parties.

It was important that the Regina Amendments should enter into force in time for the Kushiro Conference, but while several Instruments of Acceptance had been deposited with UNESCO during the year, further efforts were required to ensure that the goal was reached. The Bureau had just learnt from UNESCO that the Jordanian authorities had signaled their intention of depositing an Instrument of Acceptance in the very near future, a step which the Secretary General welcomed warmly.

The Bureau's increasing workload had made it necessary to appoint an additional secretarial staff member. The new post-holder would be specifically responsible for supporting the Bureau's activities under the European Community-funded Mediterranean wetlands initiative (MedWet).

The Secretary General expressed his thanks to all Bureau staff for their hard work during the past year, which, in addition to a rising workload, had seen the disruption of a move to new

headquarters.

Reminding participants of the emphasis placed on partnership by the Montreux Conference, the Chairman invited the representatives of IUCN, IWRB and WWF to report on relevant activities undertaken by their organizations during 1992.

The observer from IUCN emphasized the vital role played by the organization's growing network of regional offices. During 1992, IUCN had been especially active in contributing towards the Ramsar project on Wise Use, funded by the Government of the Netherlands. IUCN had also provided support to Contracting Parties and other countries in the fields of technical/field support and development of national wetland conservation policies. The IV World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas had provided an important stimulus for furthering the conservation and wise use of protected areas.

The observer from IWRB referred to the high level of contact and cooperation between IWRB and the Ramsar Bureau, notably through contract work on the database being undertaken by the IWRB/Ramsar Liaison Officer. Amongst specific activities being undertaken in support of the aims of the Convention were completion of the Directory of Oceanian Wetlands, preparation of a similar regional inventory for the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Baltic States and Georgia; follow-up to the "Karachi" Symposium on Wetland and Waterbird Conservation in South & West Asia (Karachi, December 1991), MedWet; and training needs workshops held for South/West Asia and Central/Eastern Europe. The forthcoming IWRB Board Meeting would be considering a proposal for linkage with the Asian Wetland Bureau, and would also feature a workshop on change in ecological character.

Finally, IWRB would welcome the guidance of the Standing Committee and Contracting Parties concerning its work on inventories, training, support to the Monitoring Procedure and Wetland Conservation Fund, and development/implementation of the 1993-95 IWRB Forward Plan.

The observer from WWF expressed appreciation of the opportunity for participating in the present meeting. He noted that WWF currently had an extensive programme of conservation activities at wetlands throughout the world and that the organization attached great importance to working in partnership with the Ramsar Convention. It was especially important that the present meeting and the Kushiro Conference worked to strengthen the Wetland Conservation Fund and implementation of the Monitoring Procedure, both of which WWF considered to be extremely valuable tools for achieving the goals of the treaty.

The representative from the Netherlands, speaking as Representative of the Western European Region, expressed his thanks to the Government of Japan and to the City of Kushiro. He continued by thanking the Bureau for its work and stressed the important role played by IUCN, IWRB and WWF.

Agenda item 6: Standing Committee Matters

At the invitation of the Chairman, reports were presented for each of the seven Ramsar Regions.

(a) Africa: The Regional Representative for Africa (Tunisia) began by noting that there were now 17 Contracting Parties in the Region that had between them designated some 43 sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance. The Monitoring Procedure had been applied at sites in Algeria, Egypt, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia. A number of African countries - many, but not all, Contracting Parties - had submitted applications for financial assistance under the Wetland Conservation Fund. Two important sub-regional meetings had been held since the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee, while African Contracting Parties had also participated in the Wise Use meeting hosted by the Government of the Netherlands in September 1992. It was proposed that a regional meeting of Francophone Contracting Parties from North and West Africa should be held in Senegal in January or February 1993. This meeting would address matters such as implementation of wise use, regional cooperation and promotion of the Convention.

The Alternate Regional Representative (Kenya) referred to initiatives taken in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where national wetland working groups had been established. A similar group was proposed for establishment in Malawi. Discussions had been held in Lesotho with regard to that country becoming a Contracting Party to the Convention. Ghana had recently added five sites to the Ramsar List and financial support had been obtained from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support conservation and wise use of these wetlands. GEF funding had also been identified as a source of support for activities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. During the year, a number of African Contracting Parties had contributed to the African Waterfowl Census coordinated by IWRB.

(b) Asia: The Regional Representative (Pakistan) began by conveying thanks to the Government of Japan and to the City of Kushiro for hosting the present meeting. During his report, he informed participants of the rapid growth of Ramsar activity in Asia during the past two years. In 1991, a Ramsar Regional Meeting had been held in Karachi at the invitation of the Government of Pakistan. Further meetings had since been held in Islamabad, Pakistan (May 1992) and in Otsu, Japan in October 1992. One of the key results of the former meeting had been adoption of the "Islamabad Statement" which set out recommendations to the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee and Bureau for strengthening implementation of the Convention in Asia. Bangladesh, China and Indonesia had all become Contracting Parties in 1992 and it was understood that preparations for the accession of both Papua New Guinea and Philippines were well advanced.

At the Chairman's invitation, the representative from Japan added that Japan was committed to increasing the number of Listed sites in its territory. Utonai-ke, which a number of participants had visited recently in conjunction with the Asian Wetland Symposium, had been designated in 1991 and preparations were in hand for designation of another wetland in 1993. It was to be hoped that the Kushiro Conference would serve to promote the accession of further Asian Contracting Parties in the near future. Referring again to the Asian Wetland Symposium, it was noted that more than twenty countries had participated and that recommendations had been adopted concerning eight major areas of activity in the areas of conservation and wise use of wetlands.

(c) Eastern Europe: The Regional Representative (Poland) referred to the recent meeting of the European Regions held in Lelystad at the invitation of the Netherlands Government. After

careful consideration, it had been concluded that the status quo should be maintained in the next triennium, i.e. retention of Eastern and Western European Regions. This decision reflected the large number of European Contracting Parties, making retention of two representatives desirable, while ongoing political and economic changes were also significant factors. IWRB had recently organized a training course on restoration of eutrophic lakes and fish ponds in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland hoped to complete the procedure for acceptance of the Regina Amendments prior to the Kushiro Conference; the necessary documentation would be conveyed to the Polish President in the near future.

(d) Neotropics: The Regional Representative (Venezuela) reported that there were now 11 Contracting Parties and 17 Listed Sites in the Region. He informed participants of the results of a Regional meeting held in Cuare, Venezuela in August 1992. This meeting had reviewed and updated the twelve-point plan presented by the Neotropical Contracting Parties at the Montreux Conference. The meeting had also adopted the "Cuare Declaration" which aimed at slowing the degradation and loss of wetlands, their functions and values, through their protection and wise use. Attached to the declaration were a series of recommendations concerning the means for achieving this goal. A further Regional meeting would be held in Bolivia in January 1993 with the aim of identifying technical training needs and reviewing the current conservation status of Ramsar sites.

(e) North America: The Alternate Representative (Canada) noted that work in the Region was characterized by a high degree of cooperation between Contracting Parties, notably through implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Since the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee, Canada had adopted a Federal Wetland Policy. Canada, Mexico and the USA had entered into a new trade agreement which included a number of environmental aspects; a tri-partite environmental commission was being established. Canada was also participating in cooperative conservation efforts initiated by countries in the Arctic zone.

(f) Oceania: The Regional Representative (Australia) welcomed the steps being taken by Papua New Guinea towards becoming the region's third Contracting Party. He went on to report that an Australian National Ramsar Committee had been formed, bringing together representatives of each State. New Zealand had been invited to participate in the Committee's work and it was hoped that Papua New Guinea would do likewise. Australia was continuing to expand programmes for training wetland managers, including those from other countries in the Asian and Oceanian regions. An Asian - Australasian Migratory Birds Agreement was currently being elaborated under the framework of the Bonn Convention.

(g) Western Europe: The Regional Representative (Netherlands) reported on recent initiatives taken by the European Community, including adoption of the so-called "Habitats Directive" and associated LIFE regulation, together with support for the MedWet project. He referred to the Lelystad meeting of the European Contracting Parties, at which 27 countries and 6 international organizations had been represented.

At the request of the Spanish delegation, the meeting had specifically instructed the Regional Representatives to convey to the Standing Committee the wish that Spanish be an official working language at the Kushiro Conference. The report of the Lelystad meeting would be

distributed to all participants at the present gathering.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the observer from the UK informed participants of the recent completion of a preliminary study of potential Ramsar sites in UK Dependent Territories. The work had been carried out by IWRB and the NGO Forum for Conservation in the Dependent Territories and would be of particular interest to representatives of the Asian, Neotropical and Oceanian regions.

Having heard the reports from the European Regions, the Chairman asked the Secretary General to work with the Regional Representatives to develop appropriate documentation reflecting the decision of the Lelystad meeting to retain current Standing Committee Arrangements in the next triennium.

Agenda item 7: Review of Convention Finances

Owing to time limitations, the Chairman proposed that certain items be dealt with in closed session and the appointment of a subgroup (Kenya, Netherlands, UK) to examine in detail the documentation for this Agenda item and to report back to the full Standing Committee.

Subsequently, the representative from Kenya reported that the subgroup had reviewed the revised documentation for this Agenda item. The revised version was similar to that appearing in the bound Standing Committee documentation, but a number of minor amendments had been made.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the meeting agreed to adopt the revised documentation, subject to the incorporation of the minor corrections suggested by the subgroup.

Agenda item 8: Review of Administrative Matters

This Agenda item was discussed during closed sessions of the Standing Committee and is covered under a supplementary Summary Report.

Agenda item 9: Bureau Workplan for 1993

Owing to time limitations, the Chairman appointed a subgroup (Iran, Switzerland, Venezuela) to examine in detail the documentation for this Agenda item and to report back to the full Standing Committee.

The subgroup's report was subsequently presented by the representative of Venezuela. No significant changes were required, although it had been felt that more attention should be given to sensitizing multilateral and bilateral funding agencies. It was especially important that this issue received appropriate coverage in the Kushiro Conference workshops.

The Chairman invited the meeting to adopt the documentation before it, subject to the inclusion of the matter raised by the subgroup. The Bureau workplan for 1993 was duly adopted.

Agenda item 10: Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, 9-16 June 1993)

Representatives of the Japanese Government reported on preparations made for the 1993 Conference in close collaboration with the Ramsar Convention Bureau, Kushiro City, and the Hokkaido Prefectural Government.

They underlined that the Japanese Government would be making its utmost efforts to meet the requests made by the Ramsar Convention Bureau, both with respect to organizational matters as well as funding for delegate travel. They assured the meeting that the full contribution for fiscal year 1992 (SFR 190,000) would be transferred to the Ramsar Convention Bureau by 31 March 1993. Special attention would be given to facilitating the issuance as necessary of visas for delegates and to ensuring that documentation and equipment required for the meeting could be taken in and out of Japan as easily as possible, subject to the laws and regulations in force. It was noted that the Conference could not be a complete success through the efforts of Japan alone and an appeal was issued to other Contracting Parties, especially members of the Standing Committee, to consider how best they might contribute.

The Japanese Government confirmed that Japan would provide a Chairman for the Conference and Professor Taisitiroo Satoo, a most distinguished scientist who had experience in international conservation meetings, was introduced as a candidate. Professor Satoo briefly addressed the meeting, saying how honoured he was to be considered for this very important role.

The representative of the Kushiro City authorities presented plans, charts, and photographs detailing the layout of the Conference hall and satellite facilities, currently under construction. The completion deadline was 10 May 1993. The Manabotto Nusamai building on the opposite side of the Kushiro River would be used as a sub-hall during the Conference and a shuttle bus would be available to transport delegates between the two sites. The sub-hall would be used for poster displays, exhibitions, film shows and cultural activities.

The Chairman thanked the Japanese delegation for their very complete presentation and congratulated the Government of Japan, Prefectural Government of Hokkaido and the authorities of Kushiro City for making excellent and extremely generous logistical, administrative and financial preparations for the Conference.

The Secretary General echoed these comments, and said that it had been a pleasure working with the Japanese authorities during the long run-up to the Conference. Contacts between the Bureau and Japan had been greatly facilitated by the City of Kushiro's secondment to Gland of Dr Satoshi Kobayashi, the Technical officer for Asia. The Secretary General continued by reporting that the Conference Programme and Registration Forms were being prepared for mailing, and that the Conference documentation in English, French and Spanish would be ready for distribution by early 1993. He appealed to cooperating organizations and to all Contracting Parties to consider providing assistance through supply of technical and/or secretarial staff who could be part of the Conference secretariat team. Finally he noted the need for additional support for developing country delegate travel to the Conference. The Bureau would be taking contact with Contracting Parties and relevant funding agencies in the near future to discuss this matter.

Delegates were invited to convey comments on the draft Letter of Understanding (between the Bureau and the Government of Japan) to the Bureau as quickly as possible so that formalities could be concluded. The Chairman advised the Secretary General to go ahead with signature, subject to any comments received from Standing Committee members.

The possibility of charging a Conference fee for NGO participation was discussed and it was decided that the Bureau, in consultation with the host country, would monitor the number of NGOs registering and that the matter would be further discussed by the Standing Committee at its meeting immediately preceding the Conference.

Agenda item 11: Review of Kushiro Conference Agenda

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced the draft Agenda for the Kushiro Conference. He noted that the basic programme structure would follow that of the 1990 Montreux Conference.

Agenda item 12: Review of Kushiro Conference Draft Documentation

The Chairman recalled that the Programme and Budget documentation had been prepared by a subgroup of the Standing Committee which had met in Gland (Switzerland) in March 1992. Members of the subgroup and Bureau staff presented the draft documentation as outlined below. In addition, the Secretary General provided the Committee with an overview of a document on the legal status of the Ramsar Bureau and its relationship with IUCN. These presentations were followed by discussion of each set of documents.

(a) Programme 1994-1996 (pp. 147-168 of Standing Committee documentation, English version) including: Resolution on the Kushiro Statement and Framework for the Implementation of the Convention; Kushiro Statement; Framework for the Implementation of the Convention; Programme Overview for the Bureau 1994-1996 (DOC. C.5.12 & attachments).

Following a suggestion by the representative of Switzerland, the meeting agreed to incorporate two additional points in the preamble to the draft Resolution on the Kushiro Statement and Framework document (p. 149, English version). Interventions by the delegates of Canada, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, UK, Venezuela and by the observer from IWRB, IUCN and WWF led to agreement that the Kushiro Statement (pp. 151-152, English version) would benefit from further drafting work. The representative from the UK was asked to work with the Bureau in achieving this.

Recalling the conclusions of the European Regional Meeting at Lelystad, as distributed to all participants, the representative from Hungary proposed an additional sentence for inclusion in the Framework document (p.155, English version). This addition, concerning financial support for wetland conservation projects in Central and Eastern Europe was duly agreed upon by the meeting. Amendments of an editorial nature were proposed by the delegates of the USA and Switzerland. These amendments were accepted by the meeting.

Referring to page 164 of the Standing Committee documentation (part of Programme Overview for the Bureau 1994-1996), the observer from Norway asked that specific reference be made to the Wise Use Action Plan being developed as a result of the recent meeting in the Netherlands.

Following an initial proposal by the representative from Australia, and supporting interventions by the delegates of the Netherlands, UK and USA and the observer from WWF, the Standing Committee decided to transfer the Implementation of the Monitoring Procedure from the Highly Desirable category of activities to the Essential category. The Chairman asked the Bureau to advise the Standing Committee of the likely financial implications of this decision.

(b) Financial and Budgetary Matters (pp. 169-192 of Standing Committee documentation, English version) including: Resolution on Financial and Budgetary Matters; Proposed 1994-1996 Budget with explanatory notes; Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention; sample invoices for contributions to the Convention budget (DOC C.5.13 & attachments).

This item was covered during a closed session of the Standing Committee. The Chairman presented a brief summary of some of the conclusions reached by the closed session. The Bureau had been asked to prepare additional documentation describing staffing requirements in the context of the long-term development of the Convention.

In consideration of the proposed budget, the Standing Committee had determined that certain core budget lines were insufficient but had been reassured that a number of important voluntary contributions would be received. The Standing Committee had also been gratified to learn that the original estimate of the cost of IUCN administrative services (especially in the area of EDP) had been substantially reduced. The presentation of the budget would be amended to provide further detail concerning the present and proposed sources of funding for staff posts. The overall core budget for 1994 would need to be around SFr2.2 million.

(c) Legal Status of the Ramsar Bureau and its Relationship with IUCN (pp. 193-196 of Standing Committee documentation, English version). (This item was covered in closed session).

Agenda item 13: Review of Kushiro Conference Draft Workshop Documentation

At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Secretary General made some introductory remarks concerning the four technical workshops to be held in Kushiro. He drew particular attention to the need for Contracting Parties to submit their National Reports at least six months before the Kushiro Conference (i.e. by 9 December 1992), in accordance with the guidance provided by previous Meetings of the Conference.

Workshop A: Conservation of Listed Sites - the representative of the UK, in his capacity as Chairman of the subgroup which met to discuss Listed Sites matters in Gland, in March 1992, introduced the documentation for the workshop (pp. 213-230 of the Standing Committee documentation, English version). He noted that while the subgroup had not been dealing explicitly with preparation of Workshop A, it nevertheless covered two key issues for discussion in Kushiro, namely:

- maintaining integrity of the List
- Record of sites where change in ecological character has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur

Following interventions from the delegates of Austria, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK, the meeting agreed that a number of amendments were required. The Chairman asked the representative from the UK to work with the Bureau in finalizing Annex 1 to the draft Recommendation concerning the Montreux Record of sites where change in ecological character was possible. Following these consultations, the observer from the UK provided new wording for paragraph 6 on page 225 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version), in order to make it clear that changes to the Montreux Record needed to be in the context of agreement from the Contracting Party concerned. The meeting also asked the Bureau to redraft paragraph 4 of the same page in order to ensure the establishment of parallel procedures for addition and removal of sites to/from the Montreux Record.

The observer from the UK requested that references to a scientific committee should be removed from draft recommendations, since it had not yet been determined that such a committee be established. He also recommended that the Bureau be asked to prepare a paper for discussion at Kushiro, including a review of the various options available to the Convention in terms of developing some kind of technical advice body. This proposal received the agreement of the meeting and the Secretary General indicated that a paper would be prepared.

There being no further comments, the meeting agreed that the documentation should go forward for presentation to the Contracting Parties at the Kushiro Conference, subject to inclusion of the amendments noted above.

Workshop B: Wise Use of Wetlands - the Director of Conservation introduced a revised version of the documentation contained on pages 231-236 of the Standing Committee papers (English version). The updated documentation, distributed at the present meeting, had been prepared in the light of conclusions reached at the Wise Use Conference, held only a few weeks previously, at Texel in the Netherlands. He informed participants of the progress being made towards completion of the Wise Use Action Plan, currently in preparation according to decisions made at Texel.

The chair emphasized his support for development of a Wise Use Working Group Action Plan that identified priority activities and estimated costs in order for the Standing Committee to incorporate this work into the Convention's Budget. It was agreed that a core group would complete the Action Plan, probably in the United States, in sufficient time for this documentation to be presented to the Contracting Parties at the Kushiro Conference.

Workshop C: Establishment of Wetland Reserves - the Assistant Secretary General introduced pages 237-245 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). Attention was drawn to draft Conference Recommendations concerning methodology for the preparation of management plans for wetland reserves, and guidelines on size and zonation of wetland reserves.

The representative from the Netherlands drew the attention of the meeting to the conclusions of the European Regional Meeting in Lelystad, where a number of improvements to the documentation had been put forward. Chief among these was to remove language giving the impression that a clear-cut distinction could be made between the management of large and small sites.

Following further discussion, with interventions by the delegates of Kenya, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK and USA and by the observers from IWRB and WWF, the meeting agreed that the documents should be the subject of further drafting work prior to submission to Contracting Parties.

Workshop D: International Cooperation for Wetland Conservation – Pages 247-251 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version) were introduced by the Secretary General.

The Chairman suggested that the Administrator of the Global Environment Facility be encouraged to attend the Kushiro Conference. He also suggested that Contracting Parties convey to GEF the Convention's disappointment that support had not yet been forthcoming. Attention should also be focused upon the important contribution that wetlands make towards maintenance of biodiversity. The Chairman further encouraged Contracting Party Governments with overseas development agencies to ensure that representatives of their Overseas Development Administrations were included in delegations to the Kushiro Conference.

The meeting supported the view expressed by several delegates and observers that the role of multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, notably GEF, should be a major item for discussion in the workshop. The representative from the Netherlands presented further information on the conclusions of the Lelystad meeting which had called upon Contracting Parties to convey directly to GEF the importance of supporting Ramsar activities.

Agenda item 14: Review of Kushiro Conference Miscellaneous Draft Documentation

Reminding participants of the Montreux Credential Committee's request that Rules of Procedure concerning credentials be reviewed, the Chairman asked the Secretary General to introduce the remaining Kushiro documentation, one item of which concerned this point. The Secretary General reported that careful consideration had been given to the question of credentials. The Bureau was suggesting that the Rules of Procedure did not require amendment but that clearer guidelines should be given to Contracting Parties on exactly what was needed in terms of credentials and when the documents needed to be submitted.

The Secretary General continued by introducing other Kushiro Conference documentation contained in pages 255-272 of the Standing Committee papers (English version). Referring again to the Rules of Procedure, he reminded participants that national NGOs required the official approval of the Government of the country in which they were located before they could be considered for admission to the Conference. It was the responsibility of individual NGOs to take early contact with the Government authority responsible for implementation of the Convention in the country concerned in order to seek approval for attendance at the Conference. He noted that no organization had ever been refused admission to a Meeting of the Conference. In response to

questions raised by the representative from Japan, the Secretary General agreed that the Bureau would provide additional information on this issue in future consultations with the Japanese authorities.

Following a proposal by the representative from Australia, the meeting agreed that the Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure should be amended to change the deadline for submission of Conference papers from 30 days to 60 days prior to the Conference. The Secretary General pointed out that while a formal change to the Rules of Procedure could only be made by the Conference of the Parties, the Bureau would ensure that documentation under its control would be distributed at least 60 days before the meeting. In actual fact, many documents would be distributed by early 1993.

Several delegates referred to the question of the credentials committee and following discussion it was agreed that the Bureau should provide clear guidelines to Contracting Parties. The Secretary General indicated that this would be put in hand. Ideally, credentials should be signed by the Head of State, Head of Government, or Minister for Foreign Affairs, but there were some advantages to be gained from retaining a degree of flexibility.

The representative from Canada suggested that some thought needed to be given to limiting possible intrusiveness by the press at the Kushiro Conference. The meeting asked the Secretary General to draw up appropriate measures, perhaps based on the experience of other conventions.

In response to a question raised by the observer from Indonesia, the Secretary General said that delegations to the Kushiro Conference should include at least two members and that the Bureau was working to secure funding to enable full participation by developing countries.

Subject to satisfactory treatment of the additional matters raised, the meeting agreed that the documentation presented under this Agenda item should go forward to the Contracting Parties for consideration at the Kushiro Conference.

Agenda item 15: National Ramsar Committees

The Chairman asked participants to review the paper presented on pages 273-277 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version). He asked Contracting Parties which had established National Ramsar Committees not included in the summary prepared by the Bureau, to present information on the activities of their Committees in time for the Kushiro Conference.

Agenda item 16: Development Assistance

The Secretary General was asked by the Chairman to introduce this Agenda item and the Standing Committee received his report on the Bureau's experience in dealing with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Secretary General felt that while the bulk of GEF funding was rightly directed at individual countries, it was nevertheless important for GEF to provide some support to Conventions such as Ramsar.

The Bureau had been invited by GEF to put forward a proposal and had duly submitted an

application for support, in the form of an endowment for the Wetland Conservation Fund and financial assistance for wetland conservation activities in Central and Eastern Europe, in the spring of 1992. Unfortunately, owing to a variety of procedural reasons, this application had not been considered. However, the Bureau had been asked to undertake a short consultancy for GEF with regard to advice on supporting wetland conservation activities.

More recently, the Bureau had taken contact with other convention secretariats to discuss mutual experiences in dealing with GEF. It was felt that there was considerable scope for the existing treaties to work together in ensuring that in supporting the new Biodiversity Convention, GEF did not overlook the important work already being carried out by Ramsar, and the other conventions. A meeting of the Secretariats with GEF officials would be held on 19 November in Lausanne.

Recalling discussion of Kushiro Workshop D (International Cooperation) under Agenda item 14, the Secretary General appealed to all Contracting Parties to take appropriate steps to ensure that GEF was made aware of the importance attached to the question of GEF support for the Wetland Conservation Fund.

The Secretary General concluded by presenting pages 279-283 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version).

The Chairman stressed that the Bureau's partners, notably IUCN and IWRB, should be invited to contribute towards the Bureau's consultancy work on behalf of GEF. The Meeting agreed that cooperation was an important matter and requested the Bureau to keep the Contracting Parties aware of further developments.

Agenda item 17: Wetland Conservation Fund

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced pages 285-287 of the Standing Committee documentation (English version), together with an additional portfolio containing the applications for funding and the Bureau's summary of these applications. He reviewed the guidelines governing the operation of the WCF and noted that the Fund currently had available the relatively modest sum of SFr310,000. This was a figure somewhat below what had been hoped for at the time of the Montreux Conference and reflected the rather small number of voluntary contributions that had been received from Contracting Parties, together with lack of success in obtaining support from multilateral agencies such as the Global Environment Facility. He stressed that the sum available for the Standing Committee to allocate was insufficient to cover all of the applications received and that some difficult decisions would therefore be required.

The chair stressed the need for more Parties to support the fund financially - that success of the fund was critical to the Convention's credibility; that, without adequate funds, the Convention was creating false hopes among its developing countries partners. The observer from Austria echoed this statement.

The Assistant Secretary General briefly introduced each of 29 projects in turn, drawing attention

to the very tentative suggestions made by the Bureau with regard to priorities for expenditure (pages 5-14 of the Wetland Conservation Fund documentation, English version). Following this presentation, the delegates of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran and Jordan provided brief additional comments concerning their applications to the WCF.

The Chairman announced that the Hokkaido Regional chapters of the Seroptimists Association of Japan had agreed to make a donation to the Wetland Conservation Fund. This announcement was greeted with acclamation by the Standing Committee.

In response to concerns raised by the delegates of Australia and UK, and by the observer from WWF, the Secretary General reported that in view of the lack of core provision, the 10% administration fee levied on allocations was essential for ensuring sound stewardship of the Fund and of the Convention's overall financial situation.

At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Secretary General led discussion on allocations from the Fund. It was agreed that around SFr250,000 should be allocated. Following protracted debate, it was decided that the following allocations would be made:

Africa:

Niger SFr 20,000

Tanzania SFr 13,000

Uganda SFr 6,250

Asia:

China (i) SFr 28,000

Indonesia SFr 25,000

Pakistan SFr 12,000

Neotropics:

Argentina (i) SFr 24,000

Guatemala SFr 34,500

Peru SFr 25,000

SFr187,750

The meeting agreed that efforts should be made to fund the projects submitted by Costa Rica, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Venezuela from other sources; authorization was given to grant up to SFR 20,000 for the Gomishan proposal from the Fund if other sources proved inadequate.

After discussion by an informal working group, nominated by the Chairman, the meeting approved the Tunisian project supported by Senegal for a Regional African meeting (SFR 40,000), support for the proposal from Indonesia for a regional workshop (SFR 20,000), and a token contribution to the proposal from Papua New Guinea of SFR 15,000. The meeting agreed that the Convention should endorse other requests for funding of the projects from Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The total funds allocated from the Wetland Conservation Fund (not including the 10% administration fee) would thus amount to approximately SFR 282,000 of the SFR 310,000

available.

The chair observed that the project review and allocation process needed revision and suggested a new process with firmer submission deadlines, utilization of partners to provide the Committee's technical review, a reconsideration of "emergencies" and the types of meetings which could be supported by the fund all required immediate attention. The Chairman established a working group for this purpose composed of the United Kingdom, Australia and Venezuela to prepare revised guidelines for the Standing Committee to consider at its June 1993 meeting prior to the Fifth Session of the Conference of the Contracting Parties as this Standing Committee was the only one with experience with the Fund.

Agenda item 18: Review of Convention Projects outside the Wetland Conservation Fund

The Chairman presented this item and pointed out an unfortunate mistake on page 291 of the Supporting Documentation. Under Project 7037, Standing Committee Meeting 1992, the funder was not the USA but Japan. Subject to this correction, the Standing Committee adopted the list, welcoming such extensive external support for the Convention.

Agenda item 19: Conservation of Listed Wetlands

At the invitation of the Chairman, the IWRB/Ramsar Liaison Officer, responsible for maintenance of the Ramsar Database, presented pages 294-322 of the Standing Committee documentation. He noted that many of the issues raised had already been discussed in detail under other Agenda items. Eight new sites had been added to the List of Wetlands of International Importance since the papers had been drafted resulting in a total of 575 sites. These included 5 new coastal sites in Ghana and 3 new sites in the UK. Copies of an updated summary list, showing the number and area of sites designated by each Contracting Party, were available to participants.

The IWRB/Ramsar Liaison Officer made a brief report on the status of the Database, emphasizing the fact that only a few Contracting Parties had so far submitted updated Ramsar Information Sheets for their Listed Sites. The timely submission of such information was essential if the Bureau was to carry out the Standing Committee's earlier instructions that maintenance of the Montreux Record be on the basis of officially approved information. Revised Directories of Listed Sites planned for publication at Kushiro could not be produced if rapid action was not taken by many Contracting Parties.

The meeting agreed that only the briefest of entries (e.g. site name, geographical coordinates, area etc.) should be included in the new Ramsar Directory in the case of sites where the Contracting Party concerned had not provided the Bureau with an approved text and/or Information Sheet.

Agenda item 20: Wise Use of Wetlands

The Chairman of the Wise Use working Group referred to the report presented to the Asian Wetland Symposium. The Conservation Director of the Ramsar Bureau focused on the 1992

work priorities which had centered on the preparation of the 17 case studies presented to the 1992 Texel meeting. Publication of the final meeting report and preparation of the Action Plan on Wise Use would be 1993 priorities. The Netherlands representative noted that the Action Plan would be available for implementation, not only by the Netherlands, but by any interested party.

Agenda item 21: Cooperation under Article 5 of the Convention

It was noted that considerable work was being undertaken in this area. As an example, the Secretary General reported on the forthcoming meeting in Portugal, jointly organized by Ramsar and the Berne Convention, which would review Mediterranean wetland matters and in particular the management of shared rivers. The MedWet Project recently approved by the European Commission would also contribute to wetland cooperation in this region.

Agenda item 22: Communications Activities

The Communications Officer of the Ramsar Bureau reported that copyright protection of the Ramsar logo had been approved by the World Intellectual Property Organization. She listed the Bureau's activities in the communication and public awareness field, and the large number of publications which had been produced thanks to special contributions received from several Contracting Parties. In preparation for the Kushiro Conference, several promotional items (T-shirt, scarf, tie) had been developed. The Japanese hosts had made arrangements for a commemorative stamp and a number of other items.

The representative from Venezuela welcomed the decision, reported from the Closed Session, to seek to make Spanish a working language of the Kushiro Conference and the Bureau's increasing use of the Spanish language.

Agenda item 23: Next Meeting of the Standing Committee

The Chairman reminded participants that the Twelfth Meeting of the Standing Committee would take place on the afternoon of 8 June 1993, the eve of the Kushiro Conference, in the Conference Hall which was currently under construction and which had been viewed by the Standing Committee during their excursion the previous afternoon.

Agenda item 24: Any Other Business

The Chairman noted that the Bureau had received a number of expressions of interest in hosting the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1996. He asked the Bureau and the Standing Committee to pursue further contacts with the Contracting Parties concerned so that a firm proposal might be presented at the Kushiro Conference.

The Chairman continued by referring to the closed session of the Standing Committee that had been held earlier in the meeting. It had been decided that changes were required in the arrangements between the Bureau and IUCN. The Standing Committee had established a subgroup to explore the possibility of establishing an independent legal personality for the Bureau, whilst strengthening the technical relationship between the two organizations, notably in

terms of technical links with IUCN's Wetlands Programme. The subgroup would consist of the Netherlands (Regional Representative for Western Europe), Pakistan (Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee), Switzerland (as the Bureau's Host Government), and USA (Chairman of the Standing Committee).

The observer from IUCN replied that he had conveyed the earlier brief report from the closed session to the Director General of IUCN who was looking forward greatly to meeting with the Standing Committee's subgroup and to hearing the full conclusions of the closed session. The observer from IUCN expressed a personal welcome for any measures which would strengthen technical collaboration with the Bureau.

Agenda item 25: Closing Remarks

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks on behalf of the Standing Committee to all those who had been involved in the organization of the meeting. He thanked the Bureau for preparing so thoroughly for the meeting and offered particular appreciation to the Government of Japan, the Prefectural Government of Hokkaido and the City of Kushiro, especially Mayor Wanibuchi, for their efficient organization and outstanding hospitality.

The representative of Japan congratulated the Standing Committee, especially the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary General for completing their deliberations successfully. He also thanked the City of Kushiro and the Prefectural Government of Hokkaido for their excellent support in making the meeting a success.

The Chairman then closed the meeting, taking the opportunity to look ahead to what he was sure would be an excellent Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Kushiro in June 1993.

Eleventh Meeting of the Standing Committee
Kushiro, Japan
20-23 October 1992

Draft Proceedings of the Closed Session of the Standing Committee
22 October 1992

Present

Africa: Alternate Representative: Kenya (S. Njuguna)
Asia: Pakistan (A. Jan) (Vice-Chairman) (A.L. Rao), Alternate Representative: Iran (S. Motallebi-Pour) (B. Behrouzi Rad)
Eastern Europe: Poland (Z.Krzeminski), Alternate Representative: Hungary (L.Lakos)
Neotropics: Venezuela (J. Méndez-Arocha), Alternate Representative: Uruguay (M. Villalba)
North America: USA (L. Mason) (Chairman) (J. VanDerWalker), Alternate Representative: Canada (D. Brackett)
Oceania: Australia (B. Phillips)

Western Europe: Netherlands (F. von der Assen)
Host of Next Conference: Japan (Y. Natori, T. Shigeeda)
Host of last Conference: Switzerland (A. Antonietti)

Permanent Observer: UK (H. Neal, M. Ford)

Apologies: Africa: Tunisia (S.Kacem - indisposed)

By invitation:

Contracting Party Observers:

France (M. Bigan)

Norway (S. Eidoy)

Secretariat:

Secretary General (D. Navid)

Assistant Secretary General (M. Smart)

Agenda Item 8: Review of Administrative Matters (continued)

The Chairman reminded the participants of the basis for the relationship between the Convention and IUCN. While praising IUCN's technical contribution to the Convention, he reviewed several recent administrative matters which had been the cause of friction between the two organizations and invited discussion on future requirements for the relationship.

The Secretary General was requested to speak on this issue. He reminded the participants of the decisions taken at the Regina and Montreux Conferences which had set the authority for the Standing Committee and for his own position vis à vis that of the IUCN Director General in matters of administration. In response to a question, he suggested that legal personality was the critical issue. In order to function, the Convention either needed to acquire its own legal personality, or benefit from the legal status of another body. The latter path had been chosen up until this point, with Ramsar benefiting from IUCN's legal status in Switzerland.

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary General reviewed alternate scenarios, in theory, for either of the options. In the first case, i.e., acquiring legal status, the Secretary General suggested two possibilities in Switzerland: the establishment of the Bureau as an intergovernmental body by the Swiss government), or the establishment of the Bureau as a free-standing organization in Switzerland pursuant to Article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code (the status of IUCN). In the second case, i. e. benefiting from the legal status of another organization, the Secretary General also suggested two possibilities: the continuation of the present relationship with IUCN, perhaps subject to clarification, or the establishment of an arrangement with another Swiss-based organization. The Secretary General recalled that the association with IUCN had been tremendously helpful to the Convention over the years and suggested that sorting out the relationship would be the best way forward for the Convention.

In the ensuing discussion, the members of the Standing Committee agreed that the administrative difficulties cited by the Chairman all stemmed from the Convention's lack of legal personality.

The meeting noted that the most desirable situation would be for the Convention to be established as an independent entity and thus take charge of its own administration. However, it was also noted that this might prove complicated or expensive to arrange, and would necessitate a cost-benefit analysis.

In summarizing the discussion, the Chairman proposed the following points of agreement:

- 1) For the time being, Ramsar would continue its ongoing cooperation with IUCN for Convention administration. However, the Convention should pursue a policy of administrative independence.
- 2) Concurrently, the representative of Switzerland would be requested to approach the appropriate Swiss authorities to explore options of acquiring legal personality for the Convention within Switzerland.
- 3) Concurrently, the Bureau should seek further legal advice about the various other alternatives for legal personality mentioned by the Secretary General.
- 4) A subgroup of the Standing Committee, comprised of the USA (Chairman), Pakistan (Vice-Chairman), Switzerland (host country) and the Netherlands (Regional Representative) should be convened to approach the Director General of IUCN, along with the Secretary General, to discuss administrative measures, with a view to overcoming administrative problems. Such an agreement would need to be concluded in advance of the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.
- 5) Failing the conclusion of a new agreement, steps should be taken at the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to arrange for separation from IUCN.

These points were agreed by the meeting by consensus.

(Immediately after this Closed Session of the Standing Committee, the Bureau provided a note to members of the Standing Committee suggesting the following elements which should be included in a new agreement with IUCN: clarity for financial matters as intended by the Convention's Terms of Reference for Financial Administration; personnel issues, including the procedure for adjustment by the Standing Committee (as might be required) of the application of IUCN staff rules, regulations and salary scales to accommodate decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; arrangements for occupancy of Bureau offices and procedures for consultation or settlement of disputes.)

Agenda Item 12: Review of Kushiro Conference Draft Documentation

Financial and Budgetary Matters

The Standing Committee reviewed in Closed Session the budgetary proposals for the triennium 1994-96 which had been prepared by the subgroup on Programme and Budget.

The Secretary General presented the proposals and pointed out that while the proposed budget represented a large increase over the 1991-93 core budget, in view of full Convention expenditure very little increase was involved. The main problem, as had been faced under CITES, was to include in the core budget certain Bureau positions which had hitherto been covered by project funding. The projects in question were coming to an end, but the work remained central to the functioning of the Bureau (e.g. Wise Use post, Asian Technical Officer, secretarial posts).

Members of the Standing Committee noted the need for greater explanatory information to accompany the budget proposal. It was noted that more detailed comparisons should be provided about actual annual budgets as well as core and project expenditure for each of the years of the past and future triennia. In addition, the Bureau was requested to expand the information about staff requirements, to demonstrate that long-term strategic planning did not envisage continued growth in personnel numbers. It was agreed that the Convention should not continue to rely upon project funding for core or core-related positions, but that this may need to be phased out over time.

Concern was also expressed over the extent of the budget line "IUCN Administrative Services", as well as for what several members saw as insufficient provision in the budget for the Monitoring Procedure and for the Wetland Conservation Fund.

Another observation was made of the need to reflect in the budget the decisions made by the Standing Committee to elevate the use of Spanish as a working language of the Convention.

The observer from the United Kingdom offered to assist the Bureau in recasting the budget proposal in light of the above observations.

Subject to necessary recasting, the Standing Committee agreed to put forward the proposed budget to the Kushiro Conference, with a 1994 budget line of approximately Sfr.2.2 million.