

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**  
**Gland, Switzerland, 27-29 February 2008**

**Standing Committee 36 : Subgroup on COP10**

Report on the meeting of 25 February 2008, 10h00-12h45

chair: Mr Boonam SHIN (Korea), Austria, El Salvador, Kenya, Samoa, Switzerland, Thailand, USA, plus a number of observers in attendance

**1) Progress report on preparations by the Republic of Korea**

Mr Suk Tae HWANG, head of the Korean COP10 task force, presented a detailed overview on the preparations for COP10 in Korea. His illustrated presentation addressed the conference venue in Changwong, its set-up, hotel accommodation, exhibition space, planned field visits and special events to happen alongside COP10.

It is planned that COP10 adopts a “**Changwong Declaration**”. The subgroup proposes that its intent and contents should be further clarified in plenary under Agenda item 12, dealing with COP10 Draft Resolutions.

Korea intends to establish after COP10 a training and capacity-building **Ramsar Centre for East Asia**. The subgroup proposes that its purpose and structure should be further detailed, in accordance with the discussions to be held in plenary under Agenda item 15.3 addressing regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention during the triennium 2009-2011.

Korea mentioned plans for a NGO conference to happen during two days prior to the opening of the COP. This will be organized without direct support by the Korean authorities nor the Ramsar Secretariat. However, the chair of the Standing Committee suggested that the output of this NGO conference will be reported to the COP in an appropriate way during the opening session.

The importance that the Korean authorities facilitate the issuing of visas to participants needing one and residing in countries without a diplomatic Korean mission was stressed and possible means to achieve this were proposed.

**2) Progress report on preparations by the Ramsar Secretariat**

The Secretariat explained the planned procedure for pre-registration through Internet. There will be two categories of participants: a) delegates from Contracting Parties, and b) observers from non-Contracting Parties, IOPs, other organizations and NGOs and invited experts working with wetland issues. The Secretariat will check pre-registrations and exclude proponents who do not fit in any of these categories.

It was proposed that observer delegations from NGOs, including Korean NGOs (but excluding the Ramsar International Organization Partners, IOPs), should be limited to 5 persons in each delegation, to be listed by the respective head of organization when pre-registering.

The Secretariat stressed the need to have clarity on a number of logistical issues by **mid-April**, in time to prepare the translations for the Diplomatic Note including the formal invitation to the COP and supporting documentation on accommodation, side event facilities, pre and post-conference excursions and others that will be sent to all Contracting Parties in early May.

The Secretariat and the Korean delegation agreed to meet again in the morning of 26 February, to discuss the issues of visa, conference venue setting, accommodation, registration, support to sponsored delegates, and others in more detail during a bilateral meeting, and to clarify the way forward. During that meeting, it was agreed that a Ramsar Secretariat mission will visit the conference venue during the week 7-13 April 2008, including an expert of the Ramsar travel agent supporting sponsored delegates.

Several delegates asked how to provide key topics and results of the COP to a wider audience, including notably NGOs and the private sector. It was suggested that such topics could be addressed during specific key note presentations during the COP as well as in supporting and side events. It was strongly suggested that STRP experts actively take part in such events.

### **3) Procedures for selecting the Ramsar Award/Evian Special Prize laureates at the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee (DOC. SC36/SG COP10-01)**

By the deadline of 31 January 2008, **56 nominations** for the Ramsar Awards 2008 were received in the fields of education (16), wetland management (30) and science (10) with a good geographical spread. The Secretariat will make a preliminary analysis and submit to SC37 a shortlist of proposed candidates. The Standing Committee will treat these nominations in confidence and go into closed session during its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting (early June) in order to decide whom to award prizes and how to announce the winners publicly afterwards.

Some delegates suggested that the themes of COPs should remain major communication tools of the Convention beyond the COP itself, e.g. during a full triennium in between COPs. Wetlands and health, climate change and drinking water supply were felt to be important themes to enhance the Ramsar image with others. STRP experts are currently preparing a specific message on health aspects related to people but also related to wetland ecosystems. It was also suggested that the Secretariat prepares media release texts to be distributed to CPs prior to the COP, in order that the latter can use these messages for promotional purposes at national level.

It was further suggested that the Secretariat encourages the national Ramsar Administrative Authorities to submit COP10 invitations to experts and colleagues in other Ministries (including Health Ministries).

The chair closed the meeting by thanking the Danone-Evian group for their lasting support of Ramsar and the renewed prize money.