

General Overview



- 160 Contracting Parties,
- 1,929 Ramsar Sites, totaling 187,868,884 ha
- Level of activity required of the Secretariat continues to increase with more CPs, new challenges and emerging issues
- Limited capacity but
- More energy from Secretariat
- Strong support mutual is needed between CPs, Secretariat, OIPs and all Ramsar partners

Discerning and meeting the needs of people

- **Secretariat 's actions are meant to Enhance the recognition of the contribution of wetlands to:**
 - **Human well-being,**
 - **livelihoods and human health,**
 - **biodiversity, and**
 - **climate change adaptation and mitigation**

Management of wetlands

Using Landscape-scale integrated approaches

- Root Causes of Degradation:
 - unsustainable land use planning
- Results: Loss of vital wetland values for life

Example: Urban development

- “Water”, a successful “entry point for explaining significance of wetland values for life on Earth .

WETLANDS-WATER LINKS



- Urgent need for good economic information
- Dependence of water supply and water resources quality and sustainability on healthy wetland ecosystems
- Good, quantitative economic and financial information supports decision making about water infrastructure and water allocation decisions.

Fundamental Areas of work

- Concrete examples of the actual economic and social values of wetlands
- Where high priority management areas are?
- What services should be managed?
- How they should be managed by precise stakeholders?
- **Actions: Ramsar Secretariat is exploring possibilities for a TEEB study on Wetlands and Water or Water and Wetlands (TEEB is The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity)**

Implementation at local level

- Building momentum with local governments & cities
- Some States, regions or cities are translating national policies into action
- Some local governments and cities are even taking the lead in developing local policies that may provide models for future national efforts. However, these local policies need technical and institutional support to suitably integrate wetland issues into their development plans.

Secretariat acknowledges facts



- Nature conservation and conservation management strategies do not necessarily pose a trade-off between the “environment” and “development”.
- Investments in wetland conservation, restoration and sustainable development can be economically attractive,
- we need to incorporate the values of nature into decision making at all levels, including urban development and business practices

Secretariat acknowledges facts



- Many wetlands, including Ramsar Sites, are under the direct or indirect influence of local governments and cities
- In fact, all wetlands are under the direct daily influence of local stakeholders.
- However, radical and far-reaching power belongs to national authorities and big business companies

Secretariat acknowledges facts



- 3.3 billion people live in cities
- Urban landscape continues to grow.
- Urban areas expected to absorb all the population growth expected over the next four decades + some from rural areas
- Globally, the level of urbanization is expected to rise from 50 per cent in 2009 to 69 per cent in 2050.

Secretariat acknowledges facts



- **New research finds mangroves key to climate change**
- BOGOR, Indonesia (April 5, 2011) _ New research shows that mangroves store exceptionally more carbon than most tropical forests : from Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the USDA Forest Service
- But they are being destroyed from coastlines at a rapid rate causing significant emissions of greenhouse gases.

Secretariat takes Actions



- Cooperation with ICLEI ('International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives') - Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is an association of over 1,220 local government members who are committed to sustainable development. Their members come from 70 different countries and represent more than 569,885,000 people.

Actions needed from CPs

- Five Tisza River Basin countries: Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine will enter a new stage in joint water management to ensure good water quality.
- In the course of a Ministerial Meeting held in Uzhgorod (Ukraine), a management plan will be signed that will commit the five countries to further cooperation in their efforts to protect the valuable environment of the basin.

Actions needed from CPs



- The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): new strategy to promote the use of green infrastructure by cities and towns to reduce storm water runoff which pollutes the nation's streams, creeks, rivers, lakes and coastal waters.
- Green infrastructure decreases pollution to local waterways
- American Water Works Association (AWWA): publication of *The Future of Water*

Actions needed from CPs

- US/ EPA will work with local governments, watershed groups, tribes and others in ten cities that have utilized green infrastructure and have plans for additional projects.
- US/EPA will encourage and support expanded use of green infrastructure in these cities and highlight them as models for other municipalities around the country.

Pioneering Cities



- Austin, Texas;
- Boston, Mass.;
- Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colo.;
- Jacksonville, Fla.;
- Kansas City, Mo.;
- Los Angeles, Calif.;
- Puyallup, Wash.;
- Syracuse, N.Y.; and Washington, DC and neighboring Anacostia Watershed communities.

Actions needed from CPs



- **Australian National Guidelines for Ramsar Sites - Implementing the Ramsar Convention in Australia**
- National Guidelines for Ramsar Sites are being developed by the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities in consultation with the states and territories through the Wetlands and Waterbirds Taskforce.

Actions needed from Partners

- **World Bank Report Calls for Coastal Wetlands Protection**
- The World Bank in association with IUCN and wetland specialists ESA PWA, calls for coastal wetlands to be protected and incentives for avoiding their degradation and improving their restoration to be included into carbon emission reduction strategies and in climate negotiations.

CPs to Look Ahead



- Sweeping and transformational changes are heading our way in the not-too-distant future
- Time to take a serious look at how the world will soon value water, use water and access water.
- Wetlands will be differently perceived with increasing water crises
- Time to integrate wetland issues into local & national planning to ensure Water Security

Areas for increasing Cooperation



- **Cooperation with ICLEI:** “International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives”
 - in Nagoya, Japan, on **Biodiversity and Wetlands**,
 - in Cape Town, South Africa, on local government actions on **climate change**.

Cooperation with UN-HABITAT:

- Joint efforts to produce guidelines on Wetlands and Urban development to be considered by COP11

Cooperation with UN World Tourism Organization:

- Draft Resolution on Wetlands and Sustainable Tourism,
- Collaboration between Ramsar, UNWTO, and CBD

Areas for increasing Cooperation



- **Cooperation with UN Forum on Forests: 2011WWD**
- **Cooperation with UNESCO:**
 - Consultation is underway to identify areas of common interest to create synergies, to better share mutually relevant tasks, to create streamlined outputs to better serve our State Parties
 - **Cooperation with other UN bodies**
 - UNEP (EMG)
 - World Bank; UNDP; WHO; UNOPS; UNEP: Environmental & Social Safeguards Policies
 - UN-Water
 - CSD process

Areas for increasing Cooperation



- **Cooperation with the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) on a policy papers in preparation to address :**
- Water-related ecosystems and their services
- Enhancing the role of water-related ecosystems in capturing, filtering, storing and distributing water.
- Ensuring a reliable water quantity and quality.

Environmental Governance



- Secretariat takes part in debates relating to:
 - UNEP Gov. Council & Global Ministerial Forum
 - Green Economy
 - Rio+20 (Secretariat needs CPs's support
 - UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
 - Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG)
 - IPBES

“Safeguards Policies”

- Secretariat is pleased to report:
 - Working with UN agencies to prevent and mitigate undue harm to the environment and people at the earliest possible planning stage
 - World Bank decision to involve Ramsar Secretariat regarding projects affecting wetlands
 - Switzerland requested comments from the Ramsar Secretariat on a project proposal
 - Burkina Faso requested advice regarding a project to be submitted to GEF.

Ramsar & Climate Change

- Preparation of large-scale methodology on “Afforestation and reforestation of degraded tidal forest habitats” with specific reference to mangroves
- Submission of the methodology to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the UN FCCC
- Review of the methodology by Ramsar Secretariat & STRP
- Last stage of Analysis of the methodology is now underway through CDM process

Ramsar & Climate Change

- This Methodology is consistent with our expectations to encourage mangrove reforestation and afforestation.
- Mangrove forests play a potentially important role in sequestering carbon
- Availability of this methodology will provide additional incentives to maintain and re-establish these critical mangrove ecosystems.
- Any support for a healthy coastal mangrove ecosystem is consistent with Ramsar's wise principle.

Climate change and freshwater



- Recent publication of the journal *Marine & Freshwater Research* (March 2011) on “Conservation management of rivers and other wetlands under climate change”.
- This publication confirms and supports the Ramsar principles on River Basin Management and investigates a number of relevant topics

KEY CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



- **Secretariat's capacity:** Legal expertise, Information Technology expertise, and a media officer are sincerely needed to increase and enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat.
- **Financial support:** need to ensure continued financial support through the payment of regular contributions to the core budget and increased voluntary funding to enhance the work of the Convention.

KEY CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



- **Fundraising strategy and priority actions:** with Ms. Claudia Fenerol as the Secretariat's Partnership Coordinator;
- Fundraising Campaign: "Wetlands for Life"
- **Ramsar and GEF:** The Secretariat is still exploring long-term possibilities and, in the meantime, has taken the following actions:
 - Discussion with GEF officials about initiating joint projects with the African Development Bank and GEF support to the lake Chad Basin

Ramsar and GEF

- A joint request to the GEF CEO by the Secretariat of four biodiversity-related conventions
- Submission of a project to GEF: Valuation of environmental services of High Andean Wetlands (HAW): 8 Andean Countries involved
- Africa “Green wall”
- Presentation to GEF Secretariat:” Wings over Wetlands African-Eurasian Waterbird Flyways GEF Project” & related flyway conservation issues

Ramsar COPs



- Significant difficulties in handling all of the substantive and logistics matters
- No distinct approved budget for COPs
- Logistics becoming challenging in relation to the limited capacity of the small Secretariat
- After 40 years of existence, it is time to adopt a more sustainable way to ensure a standardized and streamlined way for organizing and holding COPS through a more reliable funding mechanism.

Ramsar COP11



- Particularly challenging because:
- 2012 will be the year for RIO+20, IUCN World Conservation Congress, CBD COP, Climate Change COP, World Water Forum, World Water Week and many other international meetings.
- Current economic crisis makes it even more challenging.
- Strong and persistent support from the Standing Committee is needed to enhance the likelihood of success

Water dimension in Rio+20



- Secretariat's participation the UN-WATER process.
- Collaboration with UN-DESA
- Secretariat encouraging Ramsar Contracting Parties to take seriously the challenges related to water security to ensure that water and wetland conservation and wise use are included in the priority actions to be adopted in RIO+20.

Practical guidance to CPs

- **How to address particular issues on the ground?** Pakistan is currently requesting this kind of assistance
- STRP guidance is useful regarding **what to do in general terms**
- **Increasing needs for Ramsar Advisory Missions**
- **No funding for Ramsar Advisory Missions**

Partnership at all levels

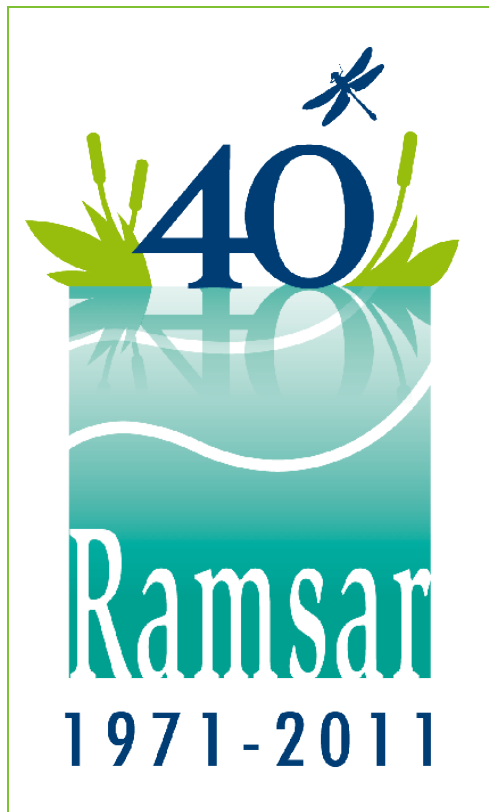
- Encouraging collective action through urban planning;
- Encouraging cross-sectoral actions at river basin level;
- Developing and supporting the networks established by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) at country and regional levels: water security definition & IWRM Toolkit are excellent tools. GWP has engaged with STRP water work



Priority setting

- Secretariat is fine-tuning its planning process to identify a set of overarching priorities based on issues and processes of global concern into which the Ramsar Convention can make an effective contribution:
- wetlands and water;
- Millennium Development Goals;
- Strategic Plan on Biodiversity (2011-2020)
- climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Economic valuation of wetlands (TEEB)
- Wetlands and Tourism

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