

Agenda item 12.1

Promotion and utilization of the “Changwon Declaration”

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the report on the dissemination and uptake of the Changwon Declaration and propose further steps as appropriate.

Background

1. The “Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands” was adopted as Resolution X.3 during the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP10, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008). It is intended to complement the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and to transmit key messages concerning the important role of wetlands to the decision-makers and stakeholders beyond the Ramsar community whose business depends on healthy wetlands and their services, in order to better inform their actions and decision-making. The Changwon Declaration is also relevant to all government agencies and private-sector businesses responsible for activities affecting wetlands, who it is hoped would respond to the call for action for wetlands conservation and wise use.
2. During COP10, the government of Korea declared their intention to champion the Changwon Declaration. As a result in November 2009, the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia (RRC-EA) organized the first of a series of annual Changwon Declaration Network meetings before COP11 (2012) to review the progress made in the dissemination and uptake of the Declaration.
3. The results of this 2009 meeting were reported to the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee in 2009 (DOC. SC41-22) and showed that Contracting Parties varied greatly in the degree to which they had disseminated and implemented the Changwon Declaration. Of the Parties that had disseminated the Declaration, they did this mainly to the head of state and civil society, rather than to their parliament or the private sector. Then within the government structure, the Declaration had mainly been brought to the attention of the sectors responsible for water management and climate change, but less so to those sectors responsible for human health, poverty reduction and spatial planning. Furthermore, whilst many of the Contracting Parties had used the Declaration to inform national policies and decision-making, fewer had done the same to inform the positions of their national delegations to other external processes, such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and the World Water Forum.
4. The results show that greater efforts are needed to develop activities and mechanisms to reach out to those sectors and processes with whom the Ramsar community has not normally worked with but who also play an important role in the management and use of wetland. The 2009 meeting also called for the sharing of case studies of activities or

programmes that have been carried out which were in the spirit of implementing the Declaration.

5. The 2nd 'Changwon Declaration Network meetings' was held from 23 to 25 November 2010 in Changwon City, hosted by the Korean Ministry of Environment and organized by the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia. For this meeting, it was decided to bring together the Contracting Parties and organizations that have been particularly successful in implementing the Declaration and to draw together their experiences to be communicated to other Parties and partners.

2nd Changwon Declaration Network meeting (23-25 November 2010)

6. The 2nd 'Changwon Declaration Network meetings' was attended by 32 participants from 12 Contracting Parties. The decision on which Parties to invite was based on recommendations from each of the regional teams in the Secretariat. There were representations from each of the Ramsar regions except, unfortunately, the Americas. Other participants included representatives from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the International Organization Partners (IOPs), Ramsar Regional Centres, and other partners.
7. During the meeting, participants gave presentations on the actions that the bodies they represent have taken to implement the Convention and, since COP10, to promote the roll-out and uptake of the Changwon Declaration. From these presentations, it was possible to gather successful case studies of how Ramsar partners have been able to use the spirit of the Declaration to reach out and work with a wider range of stakeholders to conserve wetlands, and to ensure that wetland conservation can benefit a wider population.
8. Whilst the case studies presented were very important, they were reported on an *ad hoc* basis without reference to a larger framework for tracking the roll-out and uptake of the Changwon Declaration. As a result, it is recommended that such a framework be developed for compiling these case studies according to the issues identified in the Declaration, so that the work being done by the Parties, the Secretariat, the IOPs, and other partners can be measured at the national, regional and international levels. The document produced would also allow collation of the case studies and lessons learnt and, more importantly, allow the prioritization of actions which still need to be taken to deliver the Declaration.
9. It is proposed that such a draft framework document be compiled before the next Changwon Declaration Network meeting, which is planned for around August 2011. The document would then be used as basis for discussion about further action and would also be valuable in contributing to the Information Paper that will be presented to COP11. However, voluntary funding would be required to hire a consultant to work with the partners to produce this document.
10. The Secretariat has also incorporated a number of indicator questions regarding the roll-out and uptake of the Changwon Declaration into the COP11 National Report Form. This will then allow further assessment of national adoption and implementation of the Declaration in time for reporting to COP11.

Main actions undertaken by the Ramsar Secretariat to contribute to the implementation of the Changwon Declaration

11. In its participation in all of the following events and meetings, the Secretariat staff has been diligent in moving forward the purpose and content of the Changwon Declaration. As suggested in SC Decision 41-27, the Secretariat has made presentations and briefing notes based on the Declaration available to the participants in these events for their own use:
- May 2010: the Secretary General (SG) attended the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of CBD (Kenya), and the Deputy Secretary General (DSG) attended the CBD-SBSTTA meeting.
 - June 2010: the SG and the Chair of STRP attended the 3rd meeting on IPBES (Korea). A report is prepared for SC42.
 - June 2010: the SG participated in a meeting of the UN Environmental Management Group (EMG) on a review of environmental and social safeguards of the UN system, and he has since been involved in continuing work on this subject, including the second meeting on environmental and social safeguards held from 14 to 15 March 2011 in Geneva.
 - October 2010: the SG attended a meeting of the US National Ramsar Committee. This was an opportunity to encourage representatives of stakeholders in the USA to promote to their constituencies the messages in the Changwon Declaration;
 - On October 1, the SG participated in a retreat of the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) convened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This proved very valuable and allowed the secretariats of the MEAs to put their objectives together and share responsibilities. One of the main results was a joint statement at CBD COP10 in Nagoya, which embodies some of the spirit of the Changwon Declaration.
 - October 2010: The SG and DSG participated in the CBD COP10 in Nagoya. They contributed to a number of events, and the SG was invited to participate in the Biodiversity City Summit where he was able to communicate with decision makers from local governments from all regions of the world.
 - November 2010: the SG participated in the annual meeting of the Ateliers de la Terre (or Planet Workshop), a conference where decision makers, representatives of the private sector, the media, and renowned environmentalists meet to share experiences.
 - November 2010: The SG participated in the UNFCCC COP16 in Mexico where communication was made with a wide range of groups, including government representatives, parliamentarians, representatives of NGOs, private companies and wetland user groups.
 - From January 2011 to March 2011, the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention has offered opportunities to raise awareness about the essential

messages of the Changwon Declaration, especially in Huatulco, Mexico, with participants from the Americas. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ramsar Secretariat jointly organized the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Convention in Tehran and Ramsar City, Iran, where 300 people, including ministers, ambassadors and senior officials from around 50 countries discussed the future of the Convention.

- From 27 February to 3 March, mayors and African leaders from more than 50 cities in 25 African countries attended the Local Climate Solutions for Africa 2011 Conference (LOCS2011), major climate change conference held in Cape Town, and the Ramsar Secretary General attended the conference together with the Senior Regional Advisor for Africa. This was an opportunity for the Secretary General to make two presentations and a video interview with Dr. Otto-Zimmerman, Secretary General of ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). The Secretariat was able to communicate the Changwon message to about 300 participants, including mayors and African leaders from more than 50 cities in 25 African countries. Considering that the 21st century is characterized by an urban revolution and that urbanisation is unstoppable, it is prudent to address the positive side of it by working with efficient cities that are able to deliver greater sustainability.
- On 22 March, the celebration of the World Water Day was another opportunity for the SG to disseminate the message of the Changwon Declaration to more than 10 organizations and many representatives of the Missions to the United Nations in Geneva.
- The Secretariat will continue to seize opportunities, including through involvement in the Environment Management Group (EMG), the UN-Water process, and the World Water Week, to highlight the vital roles of wetland ecosystems in the provision of basic needs – water, food, energy – with climate change adaptation and mitigation as a way to contribute to sustainable livelihoods.