

## Report of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

(Opening statements and PowerPoint presentations [signified by “PPT”] are available at [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-sc42-ppts/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E25127\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-sc42-ppts/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E25127_4000_0__).)

Tuesday, 17 May 2011

1. **The Secretary General (SG)** welcomed the participants and explained that the Chair of the Standing Committee elected by the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10), Mr Kim Chan Woo of the Republic of Korea, has been appointed to be Korea’s ambassador to Kenya. He expressed the Convention’s gratitude to Amb. Kim for his leadership and support and wished him well in his diplomatic career, and he took the opportunity to welcome Mr Kim’s replacement, Mr Yeon-Chul Yoo, Director General of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Republic of Korea.

### Agenda item 1: Opening statements

2. **The SC Chair (Mr Yeon-Chul Yoo)** expressed his gratitude to the participants for welcoming him so warmly and expressed his pleasure at joining the Ramsar family. He drew attention to the Convention’s many achievements during its 40 years, but he noted that we still have a long way to go, and in particular he cited several of the important issues to be considered at the present meeting.
3. **The Director General of IUCN (Ms Julia Marton-Lefèvre)** welcomed the Standing Committee back to IUCN for its first meeting since the inauguration of the new Conservation Centre. She described the vision for the new Centre as a home not only for IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat, but also for a family of organizations all working towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. She noted that IUCN has hosted the Secretariat for many years and reiterated IUCN’s strong commitment to continue doing so successfully. She described the nature of IUCN as a union of governments, NGOs, and scientists which provides multiple resources for partnerships with the Convention.
4. **Ms Marton-Lefèvre** drew attention to the collaboration amongst the CBD, Ramsar, and the other biodiversity-related conventions, with IUCN’s assistance, in contributing to the CBD’s Strategic Plan adopted in Nagoya, and she noted that the Ramsar Convention is tailor-made to drive forward the efforts to meet the Plan’s 2020 targets. She felt that given the importance and urgency of working towards those targets, this might not be the best time to be contemplating disrupting the Convention’s work with the bureaucratic transition of moving the Ramsar Secretariat. She noted that in fact the synergies that might result from being part of UNEP are already largely being achieved through Ramsar’s increasingly close collaboration with a considerable number of other conventions. She pledged IUCN’s continued support in working together with the Ramsar Convention, the Contracting Parties, and its partners.

5. **The CEO of Wetlands International (Jane Madgwick)** extended congratulations to the Convention on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on behalf of the five International Organization Partners and expressed the IOPs' satisfaction at being able to support the Convention's work in numerous ways. She outlined a daunting array of challenges to people's livelihoods around the world and described wetlands as being on the "front line" of the key development and security challenges that the world now faces. She said that the Ramsar Convention must play an even stronger role in catalyzing effective action, through its own mechanisms but also by increasing its influence on other conventions and international policy processes, and she described several ways in which the IOPs can add value in all this work by bringing their experience from programmes and supporting effective policy development. She urged the Standing Committee and the next COP to solve the alarming arrears in payments of Parties and to seriously consider the possibility of increasing both the core budget and the staffing level of the Secretariat.
6. **Ms Madgwick** foresaw that the signing this week of a new Memorandum of Cooperation for 2011-2017 between the IOPs and the Ramsar Secretariat would seal the renewed commitment to keep working with Parties to achieve the Ramsar mission, and she looked forward to the time when additional IOPs could also help to maximize synergies. She noted that the CBD target 10 demands urgent action that Ramsar can deliver and said that the IOPs feel that we cannot afford to waste years on all that is involved in changing administrations or moving the Secretariat.
7. **The SG (Mr Anada Tiéga)** briefly described the Secretariat's recent work on the key environmental issues of wetlands and forests, and particularly mangroves, the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation and mitigation, wetlands and biodiversity, water security, livelihoods, tourism, urban development, and human health. He drew attention to the growing importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as one of the key means of assisting the Parties in addressing challenges but noted that there is no provision for such Missions in the Secretariat's budget, and he urged the Parties and partners to provide more voluntary financial support for the RAM.

#### **Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

8. **WWF International** proposed that Agenda item 18 on business partnership activities be moved forward to be considered in conjunction with items 8 and 9 on financial matters and regional initiatives. It was agreed to consider item 18 in that place if sufficient time is available to do so before the STRP Chair's report, or if not, as soon as possible thereafter.
9. **The USA** urged that Agenda item 8 on financial matters should also include consideration of the budget for the next triennium, which was not discussed in the Subgroup on Finance meeting. It was agreed that budgetary matters for 2012-2015 would be considered under item 8, and the Subgroup could then meet for further study if necessary.
10. **The SC Chair** said that, with those two amendments, the agenda was adopted by consensus.

#### **Agenda item 3: Admission of Observers**

11. **The DSG** explained that under the Rules of Procedure Observer Contracting Parties, IOP representatives, and the STRP Chair do not need to be formally admitted. Amongst other observers, the DSG recognized two representatives of UNEP, representatives of the Ramsar Regional Centres for East Asia and for Western and Central Asia, and STRP member David Stroud.
12. All of those proposed observers were admitted by consensus.

#### **Agenda item 4: Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform**

13. **The SC Chair** noted that no written report had been received by the Secretariat for distribution to the Standing Committee, and he introduced one of the Working Group's two Co-Chairs, Ms Miranda Brown (Australia).
14. **The Working Group Co-Chair** apologized for the lack of recent communication amidst a very busy time for the diplomatic community in Geneva. She provided a brief report on the Working Group's progress since the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee (SC41, April-May 2010): the Group met in May 2010 and considered a list of issues requiring further work, requesting further information from UNEP on possibly hosting the Ramsar Secretariat. UNEP provided that information, which was considered by the Working Group in its next meeting, in January 2011. She observed that the matter involved very complex issues which still need further work, and the next meeting is planned for mid-June.
15. **The Co-Chair** noted that her Co-Chair from Chile is leaving his posting in Geneva and the Working Group will have to find a replacement. Moreover, she will be leaving soon as well, and though she believes that Australia will continue in its role as one of the Co-Chairs she cannot promise that. She noted that the Working Group's Terms of Reference (Resolution X.5, 2008) stipulate that the Group must choose its own Co-Chairs, and the relevant missions in Geneva will be consulted for suitable candidates to be selected at that June meeting. Because of the press of urgent matters, she would not be able to participate in SC42 for the rest of the week, but she offered to provide more details bilaterally to any Parties wishing more information at this time, noting that the Working Group's documents that are presently available on the Ramsar website present a full picture of progress to date on the issues.
16. **The Co-Chair** expressed great pleasure at having been able to work with the Working Group and thanked IUCN, UNEP, and the Ramsar Secretariat for their collaboration.
17. **The Netherlands** expressed surprise at the lack of a substantive report and inquired about the recurrence of this item on the agenda throughout the week. **The Deputy Secretary General (DSG)** explained that the Secretariat had expected a substantive report and developed the draft agenda to provide for as much discussion as might be needed. **The WG Co-Chair** noted that most of the Parties present were already represented on the Working Group and fully up to date.
18. **Cameroon, Mexico, Panama, and the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee (Paraguay)** also expressed surprise that a detailed report was not available for discussion

by the whole Standing Committee of such an essential matter. **Panama** reported that there have been other meetings amongst Parties, all of which wished for further information about evolution of the issues since SC41, and he suggested that information was not flowing as it should.

19. **The USA** agreed with the Co-Chair that the reports on the Ramsar website are very informative and felt that SC42's time would be better spent on other important issues. She urged that the SC let the Working Group continue its work and expressed confidence that the Group is aware of the deadlines that must be met.
20. **The DSG** sensed that there was surprise at the lack of more detail at this meeting but a general wish to encourage the Working Group to continue its work. He suggested wording for a possible SC decision: that the SC would thank the WG and encourage the Group to continue its work with a view to providing a full report in advance of the SC43 meeting, with a Draft Resolutions (DR) if necessary. The SC would thank the current Co-Chairs for their hard work and wish them well in their future positions, and urge them to organize the selection of new Co-Chairs as expeditiously as possible.
21. **Mexico** noted that time would be lost by not deciding upon the designation of new Co-Chairs before June and urged that steps should be taken at the present meeting so that the new Co-Chairs could be chosen now and be able to prepare for the June meeting well in advance.
22. **The Netherlands** observed that the regional meetings would have the opportunity to discuss these matters and come back with their views to a subsequent plenary session of the present meeting. **The DSG** felt that that would be appropriate.
23. **Japan** noted satisfaction with the current arrangement with hosting by IUCN and requested that the next Working Group meeting be sure to discuss the Secretariat's response to the UNEP report, which was earlier circulated to the SC members at Japan's request.
24. **Paraguay** noted that people have come to the present meeting to discuss this agenda item and consider the report of the Working Group. He felt that the SC has competence to read the report and asked that Mexico's request be considered. **Colombia** supported that request.
25. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Co-Chairs in previous meetings of the WG. He said that since the WG was expected to deliver its report to this meeting and did not hold its scheduled February meeting, he would request an expression of the WG's commitment and future plans, so that the Parties could rest easy that timely progress will be made.
26. **The WG Co-Chair** agreed that there are very difficult and complex matters at issue and that consensus has been very difficult to achieve. The Co-Chairs had hoped to have a substantive report prepared for SC42, but there is a wide range of firmly-held views. There must be full consultations with both sides before there can be any consensus on a Draft Resolution. She promised that every effort would be made to meet the schedule outlined earlier.

27. **The DSG** explained the relevant timetables, that all DRs must be approved by the Standing Committee for transmittal to the COP and then issued by the Secretariat three months before the COP's opening. SC43 is the last face-to-face opportunity for the SC to consider DRs, so any proposed DRs must be distributed one month before SC43, i.e., in September of this year. He noted that during the COP the Conference Committee is able to approve "emergency issues" for COP consideration, issues that could not have been foreseen, but that is not the case in this matter.
28. **Cameroon** felt that an urgent method, without careful consideration, would not be sufficient to dispel the dissatisfaction felt by many Parties.
29. **The SC Chair** invited volunteers for the Co-Chair position; **the Co-Chair** felt that the community of missions in Geneva should first be consulted and suggested that those interested in volunteering should approach her and learn more about this considerable task.
30. **Mexico** reiterated the wish that the present meeting should nominate the new Co-Chairs and suggested that **Argentina** be nominated to stand. **Argentina** promised to consult with Buenos Aires. **The Co-Chair** noted that other Geneva missions might also have an interest and promised to consult widely and take **Argentina's** nomination into the process.
31. **Panama** observed that decisions need to be made with transparency and impartiality. **Paraguay** added that it is important to say that some countries might have made different decisions on the issues, and he felt that **Panama's** point should be taken into account in agreeing the new Co-Chairs.
32. **The SC Chair** summarized the discussion and proposed that the regional meetings discuss the matter on their own, if they wish to, and the agenda item be revisited on Thursday morning. **The USA** and **the DSG** observed that the matter should be reopened if any of the regions should wish to add new comments from their meetings, but not just to rehearse the same points already made. This suggestion was agreed.
33. After discussion, the meeting agreed to consider agenda item 6 in the remaining time in the present session.

#### **Agenda item 6: Report of the Management Working Group**

34. At the invitation of the Chair, **the DSG** referred to the report of the Management Working Group's earlier meeting and explained the points discussed and recommendations made there. As noted in the report, the MWG considered the issue of Swiss work permits for interns and received the SG's report that the issue seems to have been resolved with the assistance of the Swiss authorities.

**Decision SC42-1: The Standing Committee noted that the work permit issue has now been resolved and expressed its gratitude to the Swiss authorities for help in achieving that result.**

35. **The DSG** summarized the Secretariat's experiences with its "Staff Advance", led by an external facilitator, and online "Strengthfinders" exercise to help in improving staff synergies and effective communication for a better work environment. There were also suggestions of developing an award scheme for staff, in addition to any monetary recognition, and of instituting a "360° evaluation" process for involving all staff in assessing one another's performance and achievements. It was recalled that a grievance procedure had been put in place for Ramsar staff, separate from IUCN's.

**Decision SC42-2: The Standing Committee a) noted the Secretary General's progress in establishing a strategy for the maximization of the Secretariat's synergies; b) urged that the process should continue, fully involving all staff; c) requested that further information on current staff award systems, including options for non-monetary awards, should be provided to the Management Working Group at its next meeting; and d) agreed to review the current grievance procedure for staff to ensure that it remains appropriate to the present operations of the Secretariat and Secretary General.**

36. **The DSG** explained the criteria and methodology for the annual evaluation of the SG, which have been agreed by the Executive Team (SC Chair and Vice Chair and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance) and are now being applied for the 2010 assessment.

**Decision SC42-3: The Standing Committee noted the progress made by the SC Executive Team in establishing a clear process and criteria for the annual evaluation of the Secretary General and requested that those criteria be circulated to all Standing Committee members.**

37. **The DSG** noted that the MWG meeting confirmed that all of its recommendations to SC41 have been addressed in SC41 decisions and subsequent actions reported to the present meeting.
38. **The DSG** reported that Panama and Paraguay had requested that simultaneous interpretation be provided for future MWG and Subgroup on Finance meetings, in order that all delegates should be able to participate on an equal footing. It was noted that this is not done in any other conventions or UN meetings, because of the cost implications, and that the Ramsar Convention has considered the issue several times in the past and found it to be impossible within the budgetary constraints. The MWG recognized the virtues of being able to provide such interpretation but noted that many issues need to be looked into before a decision could be made.
39. **Panama** requested that the Rules of Procedure be changed regarding subgroup interpretation so that the important issues can be discussed equally by everyone in the Subgroup on Finance and MWG. **Paraguay** noted that the budget makes many allocations of funds provided by the Parties, and some of that should go back to the Parties when there is a special need. He felt that, though English is more common, the use of Spanish and French is also growing. **The SG** recognized the great value of additional interpretation in these meetings but stressed that under the current budget arrangements there is no possibility of funding that. He said that any favorable decision on this issue would necessitate a budgetary increase for that purpose as well. There could be no further tightening of the current budget, if basic services were not to be compromised.

40. **The SC Chair** and **the DSG** proposed that the MWG's recommended decision be formulated provisionally at this stage, as elements of a draft decision that could be reconciled with any decision taken after discussion of the Subgroup on Finance's report. (See Decision SC42-19 below.)
41. **The DSG** reported that the MWG considered whether the present method of electing a new Standing Committee during each Conference of the Parties, and of selecting its Chairs at the SC meeting immediately afterward, could be made more effective. The MWG had suggested establishing a small group to review the issue; the DSG noted, however, that the matter had been further discussed by the Subgroup on COP11 and that a possible way of addressing the process for COP11 had been identified, so that creation of a separate small group might not be necessary.
42. The Standing Committee deferred further discussion of the appointment process for new Standing Committee members for Agenda item 7, the Report of the Subgroup on COP11. (See Decision SC42-8.)
43. **The DSG** reported that the MWG also considered whether there might be a need to develop clear Terms of Reference for the Management Working Group to be considered at SC43, and requested the Secretariat to discuss that matter further with the MWG in the meantime.

### Wednesday, 18 May 2011

44. **The DSG** drew attention to the draft of the report of the first day's session and invited participants wishing to make minor corrections and amendments to communicate them directly to the rapporteur, so that only substantive matters need to be mentioned during the adoption of the report on the final day.
45. **The CEPA Programme Officer** announced a contest for SC participants in which they are invited to guess the languages of the World Wetlands Day posters found in the IUCN lobby. They illustrate the number of languages in which Parties and groups have produced their own WWD posters based upon the design files provided by the Secretariat.

### Agenda item 5: Report of the Secretary General

46. **The SC Chair** invited the Secretary General to make a presentation [**PPT**] based upon his report in DOC. SC42-11.
47. **The SG** began with an overview of the Convention today and said that the Secretariat's work is intended to enhance the recognition of the contribution of wetlands to human well-being, livelihoods and human health, biodiversity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. He observed that our guidance on water issues is of high quality but known only within the Ramsar community; to reach out to the water sector, we must be more strategic, and he argued that we need someone with water expertise in the Secretariat, either on salary or by secondment. He noted that nature conservation does not necessarily require a trade-off between environment and development, and investments in wetland

conservation, restoration, and sustainable development can be shown to be economically attractive.

48. **The SG** looked at the implications of a number of key issues, such as the need to build momentum with local governments and cities, the pressures of growing urbanization, and the rapid loss of mangroves, and he described some of the promising initiatives occurring in the Parties, such as progress in setting up joint water management amongst the five Tisza River Basin countries, the US EPA's new strategy to promote green infrastructure in a number of cities to serve as models, and Australia's national guidelines for Ramsar Sites and implementation of the Convention in Australia.
49. **The SG** drew attention to the Secretariat's areas of increasing cooperation, for example with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), with UN-Habitat (on joint guidelines on wetlands and urban development for consideration by COP11), with the World Tourism Organization (on a DR on wetlands and sustainable tourism in collaboration with the WTO and the CBD), with the UN Forum on Forests (on our 2011 World Wetlands Day materials), with UNESCO, and with other UN bodies, such as the UNEP Environmental Management Group, the World Bank, UNDP, WHO, UNOPS, UNEP on Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies, UN-Water, and the CSD process. He also described our cooperation with the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the "Water Convention") on a number of policy papers. He noted that the Secretariat takes part in debates relating to the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Forum, Green Economy, Rio+20, UN ECOSOC, the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG), and IPBES, within which the CBD and Ramsar are representing the other biodiversity conventions.
50. Increasingly, **the SG** said, the Secretariat's advice is sought in the assessment of wetland-related project proposals, as by the World Bank and recently by Switzerland and Burkina Faso. Ramsar, IUCN, and Danone have prepared a methodology on "Afforestation and reforestation of degraded tidal forest habitats", focused on mangroves, and submitted it to the UNFCCC Clean Development Mechanism, where it is in the last stages of analysis. If approved, it will provide additional incentives for investments to maintain these critical mangrove ecosystems.
51. **The SG** pointed out a number of limitations to the Secretariat's capacity to maintain this progress in collaboration: he mentioned the lack of legal expertise, of expertise in information technology, of a media officer and a water expert, and he cited the need for ensuring continued financial support through prompt payment of contributions to the core budget and increased voluntary funding. He noted that Ms Claudia Fenerol has taken up her post as Partnerships Coordinator and is now preparing a fundraising strategy in preparation for rolling out a fundraising campaign in July with the slogan "Wetlands for Life". He also described a number of ongoing relations with the GEF CEO and Secretariat.
52. **The SG** noted the significant difficulties in preparing the logistics for Ramsar COPs with limited staff capacity and no core budget for them, and he argued that after 40 years it is time to adopt a more sustainable way of organizing COPs through a more reliable funding mechanism. COP11 will be particularly problematic for fundraising in view of the large number of other important environmental events that will also be taking place during



2012. He also noted that the number of specific requests for assistance from Parties has been increasing, through Ramsar Advisory Missions and other forms of support, all of which require additional fundraising to achieve.
53. **The Netherlands** congratulated the SG on the impressive list of activities and noted that they demonstrate that the Convention is already very well embedded in UN processes.
  54. **The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)** noted that the prominence of the theme of water highlights Ramsar's suitability as the 'Water Convention'. The Ramsar guidance on water is prominent in expert circles but we have not made the best use of this by engaging with the water sector only on an ad hoc basis. She felt that we need to take up the discussion of how to engage more strategically.
  55. **Wetlands International** also emphasized the centrality of water issues and noted that IWMI was brought into the IOPs to provide that additional expertise. The IOPs support the idea of developing a wetlands and water product with the TEEB to be launched at the World Water Forum and would welcome the Parties' support. **The DSG** explained that the Secretariat is finalizing a concept note for The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) team about developing a synthesis report on the economics of water and wetlands for presentation to COP11, with a preliminary report for the World Water Forum.
  56. **Paraguay** described the importance of wetlands for his country and the recent progress in developing closer ties with neighboring countries.
  57. **Tanzania**, on behalf of the Africa group, encouraged the Secretariat's efforts to forge long-term cooperation with the GEF, noting that wetlands fall within almost all of the GEF's focal areas for funding. He cited the need for the Secretariat to help the Parties in drawing up projects for submission to the GEF.
  58. **Mexico** stressed that the Parties need the Convention to act as a defender of wetlands and seek more representation for wetland issues.
  59. **WWF International** noted the SG's mention of Ramsar Advisory Missions and the increasing number of RAM requests. He pointed out that this very valuable service of the Secretariat, like the on-the-ground small project mechanisms, are all based upon voluntary funding, and he emphasized the importance of finding ways to keep these instruments active, whether by core or voluntary funding. In addition to the Secretariat's need for legal, IT, and media expertise, he said that the IOPs see an urgent need to strengthen the regional teams, as they are called upon by the Parties more and more frequently.
  60. **The CEPA Programme Officer** reported that the UN General Assembly has designated 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation and suggested that this should be considered as our theme for World Wetlands Day 2013.
  61. **Panama** described his country's recent efforts in maintaining water quality and quantity, as for example with the clean-up of the Bahía de Panamá, and he cited the need to strengthen the Regional Initiatives. He suggested that water should be reflected in the COP11 logos

and elsewhere. He described Panama's work in encouraging local participation by holding workshops and called for the Secretariat to strengthen its ties with the Parties.

62. **Mauritius** noted that the study of mangroves mentioned by the SG would be very useful for its relevance for some of the Parties. He saw financial constraints as a problem and suggested organizing a meeting of high-level policymakers to raise their awareness.
63. **Marshall Islands** stressed the importance of communicating emerging issues to practitioners on the ground, especially concerning water, and she asked for more information about the STRP's work. She provided an update on several countries in the region that are nearing accession to the Convention.
64. **IUCN** reported that the IOPs and other NGOs have formed a "Friends of Ramsar" group to hold a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary seminar at the Stockholm World Water Week in August, which will be an important opportunity to increase visibility in the water sector.
65. **The SG** thanked all for their comments and support for this strategic direction. Regarding the suggestion of a high-level meeting, he said that it would be difficult to organize such a meeting with limited resources but Secretariat staff do take advantage of any other high-level global meetings to present the Convention's views. He noted that at an upcoming meeting on river basins Ramsar was not even invited, but through the good offices of WWF will now have half an hour to address the thirty heads of state. He asked all Parties to inform the Secretariat of such meetings and facilitate its participation.
66. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed support for the SC41 instruction for the Secretariat to explore an MOU with the GEF but cautioned that care should be taken to ensure an equitable distribution of any resulting resources among the regions. He sought clarification about Ramsar's fundraising strategy with the business sector. **The SG** explained that such an MOU has been explored, but the GEF Secretariat does not make decisions – those are made by the GEF Council made up of country representatives, and we need legal advice to understand that process. He confirmed that there will be careful consideration among regions. He noted that the fundraising strategy is meant to reach out to all potential donors, not just the business sector, and to find out where they are putting their resources. Regarding the business sector, the key element is to be in line with the principles adopted by COP10 to ensure that we do not undermine the Convention's reputation.

#### **Agenda item 7: Report of the Subgroup on COP11**

67. **The Romanian delegates** noted the presentation [PPT] made to the Subgroup meeting the previous day and proceeded to offer a presentation [PPT] on Romania and the COP11 venue, explaining that preparations were on schedule, as described in the report of the Subgroup's meeting. They presented the suggested logos and slogans [PPT] and invited comments.

**Decision SC42-4: The Standing Committee welcomed the proposed logos and slogans but suggested that the importance of wetlands for people should also be reflected, as well as the idea of wetlands being both a "home" and a "destination" for both people and nature, bearing in mind that a slogan should be as short and as**

simple as possible. The SC requested Romania, working with the Secretariat, to finalize the logo and slogan as quickly as possible, taking into account the SC's advice.

68. **Romania** indicated that it is likely that no substantial additional funding would be required for the venue and COP logistics, though the host country and Secretariat might seek modest contributions to cover specific items; in any case, any additional funds would be welcome. In addition, the Secretariat will be seeking about CHF 1 million to cover the costs of two delegates from each eligible Party.

**Decision SC42-5: The Standing Committee noted that Romania and the Secretariat have an adequate but tight budget to cover the costs of the venue and in-country logistics, though there might be a need for them to request from the Parties modest funding for certain specific items in the near future. The Committee noted that the Secretariat is responsible for finding resources to cover sponsorship of delegates from eligible Parties and is currently seeking 1 million Swiss francs to support two delegates from each of those. The Committee indicated that contributions and suggestions for fundraising for this purpose would be welcomed.**

69. **Romania** described the security and visa arrangements that would be in place for the COP and emphasized that all participants should arrange their visas early and be prepared to show passports or equivalent IDs when entering the high-security Convention Centre. Romania is bound to follow EU regulations on visas but will support delegates to the extent possible.
70. Concerning the COP11 agenda, **the DSG** noted that traditionally there have been four 30-minute special presentations in the COP plenary, in addition to the host country's own presentation, and he suggested that topics for these might be tourism, Rio+20 outcomes, water security, and the economics and value of water and wetlands, though there are still other topics and potential speakers under consideration. The Subgroup considered that a report on CEPA Programme activities should be added to the agenda.

**Decision SC42-6: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue to develop the list of special presentations for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties and identify the appropriate speakers, and to report back to SC43. It was suggested that an additional agenda item should be added, following the Secretary General's and STRP reports, for a report on CEPA Programme activities.**

71. **The DSG** indicated that the Subgroup on COP11 discussed ways of reducing the time spent on interventions for particular agenda items, especially those concerning the status of Ramsar Sites. It was felt that the Secretariat could provide guidance for Parties to the effect that comments on Information Papers should be given in writing, since such papers are not intended for negotiation during the COP, and that Parties should be requested to send written comments in advance concerning corrections to the draft Resolution on the status of Ramsar Sites so that a revised version can be prepared before the COP.

**Decision SC42-7: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to draft an advisory note to Parties to guide streamlining their input to COP informational documents (including the draft Resolution on the status of Ramsar Sites) in order**

to save time spent on corrections and comments during plenary sessions and, along with the COP Presidency, to structure and facilitate COP plenary sessions to seek to retain a focus on matters of significant policy and substance relevant to the conservation of wetlands during those sessions.

72. **The DSG** recalled that the appointment of a new Standing Committee has traditionally taken place late in the COP, with its first SC meeting immediately afterwards. After discussions of the shortcomings of that method, it was suggested that the whole process could be brought forward: SC nominations could be sought at regional preparatory meetings and the new SC selections made at the COP regional meetings, so that the new SC could be appointed earlier in the COP, and so that it could hold a first meeting jointly with the old SC as the Conference Committee during the COP.

**Decision SC42-8: The Standing Committee determined that the election of the new SC should be conducted early in the COP proceedings to allow time for the new members to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The SC determined that the pre-COP regional meetings should begin to identify their new representatives for COP appointment to the Standing Committee and complete their nominations during the regional meetings just before the opening of the COP; following the election of the new SC members, they will be charged with participating as observers in the meetings of the Conference Committee throughout the COP, and will take over as the new Standing Committee at the close of the COP.**

**Decision SC42-9: The Standing Committee approved the draft agenda for COP11, subject to the amendments noted above, and requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised draft agenda to all Parties.**

73. **The DSG** reported that the Subgroup considered the suggestion that the COP11 agenda should include a high-level segment for ministers, but noted that given the limited financial resources, limited staff resources in the Secretariat, and undesirability of extending the duration of the COP, the inclusion of a high-level segment might jeopardize the rest of the COP process, which would be inadmissible. The Subgroup suggested instead that it would be preferable for the appropriate minister of the host country to invite any other Parties' ministers present to join a separate roundtable on some suitable topic.
74. **Romania** reported that the Subgroup learned that there have been an unusually small number of nominations for the Ramsar Award and was suggesting bringing forward some nominations from the past of people who had not received the Award at that time.
75. **IUCN** noted that the IOPs endorse the special plenary presentations but had not been included in the discussion, and he urged that the IOPs be consulted in the planning for these as there are several areas where they can make a good contribution. **Wetlands International** agreed that the IOPs could assist in framing special presentations and selecting suitable speakers and noted that disaster risk reduction had been suggested as a good topic; she urged reconsideration of the topics and suggested that disaster risk reduction could perhaps be brought together with the topic of water security.

76. **Cameroon** reported that in their regional meeting, the African participants addressed the idea of a ministerial segment and noted that some important problems could be resolved by the ministers, such as the Parties whose payments are in arrears. He felt that Ramsar is the only convention that does not have a high-level segment and urged reconsideration. Concerning the Ramsar Award, he said that given the low degree of participation it would be appropriate to ask the reason for this lack of interest. He felt that it was an opportunity to re-examine whether the problems lies with the rather rigid criteria for the Award.
77. **Paraguay** also urged that there should be a high-level ministerial segment and that it should be the Convention itself that convenes it, rather than the host country. Paraguay also agreed that rather than re-invite past Award nominees, it would be preferable to review the criteria and conditions for the next SC meeting and extend the nomination deadline in the meantime.
78. **Romania** felt that it would be desirable to have a high-level segment if funds were available, but it is necessary to take account of the lack of financial resources. It would be preferable to have a high-level session with those who are there and not to invite additional ministers.
79. **The SG** agreed about the benefits of having high-level people present but pointed out that that would add to the length of the COP and consequently to its costs. The Parties would certainly expect the Convention to find the money to bring them and their entourages. He said that by sending an invitation we would be making a commitment, and the Parties would have expectations. He pointed out again that the Ramsar Convention does not have a budgetary provision for holding the COP.
80. **Cameroon** reiterated that the African group would like a decision to hold a high-level segment and said that at COP10 the African environment ministers agreed that it would be at the Parties' own expense. He said that the segment would only take half a day, and he urged that a small group be set up to study the potential costs.
81. **The SG** felt that the duration would certainly be extended, since even absent ministers might send representatives to read out statements. **Romania** pointed out that the Convention Centre is available only for precisely the present dates of the COP, but that Romania could host a suitable roundtable. He observed that no such segment is foreseen in the agreed MOU, but he said that such a segment might be held if it were sure to be within the agreed costs and duration.
82. **Cameroon** said that under international law, high-level representatives cannot participate in roundtables, as their resolutions would not have any effect. He said that the Africa group wishes to adopt such a decision. He felt that the MOU could be modified and that the SG represents the Parties and a Party is making this request. **Paraguay** agreed and felt that other conventions can hold high-level segments and generate resolutions of a binding nature.
83. **The Czech Republic** reported that the European region supported the idea of the host country inviting participating ministers to a roundtable within the duration and costs already foreseen. **Thailand** supported the Secretariat's and host country's proposal.

84. **The DSG** felt that no decision could be taken without further study, and **Cameroon** agreed.

**Decision SC42-10: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat and host country of COP11 to study further the implications of holding a high-level segment, and to report to the Subgroup on COP11 at SC43.**

**Decision SC42-11: The Standing Committee requested that, given the small number of nominations so far for the Ramsar Award, the members should assist in identifying appropriate nominees and spread information about the Award widely. The Committee determined, if few further nominations are received, to consider whether it would be appropriate to review and re-admit nominations made for the COP10 award.**

85. **The SC Chair** expressed appreciation and gratitude to Romania for presenting the beautiful video about Romanian wetlands during the luncheon break.

#### **Agenda item 8: Report of the Subgroup on Finance**

86. **Finland, Chair of the Subgroup on Finance**, reported on the Subgroup's constructive meeting. She reviewed the Subgroup's consideration of the 2010 core and projects income and expenditure, the current status of the Reserve Fund, and the update on the Secretariat's staff salary awards.
87. **The USA** pointed out that, since there was a CHF 61,000 deficit in 2010 caused by exchange rate losses and since SC41 approved a transfer of CHF 50,000 from the Reserve Fund to STRP priority tasks, it would be fair to say that that transfer would not have been made if it had been known at that time that the surplus would turn out to be deficit. He asked whether steps were being taken to ensure that that would not happen in the future.
88. **Finland** agreed that we should henceforward hold any transfer until the end of the year when the real surplus or deficit situation is known.

**Decision SC42-12: The Standing Committee noted the CHF 61,000 core budget deficit and the CHF 50,000 transfer from reserves to STRP priority projects as directed at SC41, such that the Reserve Fund stood on 31 December 2010 at CHF 302,000; noted the continued decline in voluntary contributions and the current over-dependence upon one private sector donor; and noted that the draft 2010 Financial Statements presented in DOC. SC42-04 have been finalized and signed off by the auditors in April 2011. The Standing Committee requested the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance and the Ramsar Finance Officer to develop guidelines for ensuring that transfers are not made until after end-of-the-year financial results are known.**

89. **Finland** reported that the Subgroup members considered the problem of unpaid contributions but did not support sanctions on Parties in arrears. They also discussed the possibility that non-payment of contributions is a symptom of a wider lack of engagement in the work of the Convention.

90. **Cameroon** said that the Africa group is very concerned with the problem of arrears and believes that it also has to do with the functioning of government in some countries. The Africa group is taking steps to contact Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance to request them to coordinate their planning with the Ministries of Environment.
91. **Mexico** agreed with the need for a payment structure to deal with the problem of arrears, with an agreed schedule of payment. She noted that Mexico has already begun to catch up.

**Decision SC42-13: In the matter of payment of Parties' contributions, the Standing Committee thanked all Parties that have made their contributions on time; urged all Parties experiencing difficulty or delay in their payments to advise the Secretariat at the earliest opportunity; urged Parties in arrears to correct that situation by making all possible efforts to reduce their outstanding arrears to 50% of current levels by the end of 2011 and to 30% of current levels by the end of 2012; and urged Standing Committee members and the Secretariat to continue to work with such Parties, stressing to all relevant ministries in such countries the importance and benefits gained from meeting their commitments to the Convention following their accession.**

92. **The USA** pointed out that this is symptomatic of a fundamental concern facing the Convention, namely how the Standing Committee and COP can reach down to the people in the countries. The Administrative Authorities (AAs) are often completely ineffectual and can create a real bottleneck. We need to find a stronger mechanism, in addition to working with the AAs, to engage more with people and groups, perhaps with the help of the IOPs, perhaps by contacts with other local NGOs. He suggested that more time and energy should be devoted to considering an overhauling of the way we work with the Parties, which has been known to be a problem for the past forty years.
93. **The SG** agreed and suggested that the Secretariat should think about the matter and make some preliminary proposals for discussion at regional meetings, also sending them to all Parties for feedback and having something to report for SC43.

**Decision SC42-14: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to begin the process of considering new ways of dealing with the Parties which would avoid the longstanding bottleneck that is sometimes caused by the inability of Administrative Authorities to engage effectively; to seek feedback on ideas from Parties and regional meetings; and to report progress to SC43.**

94. **Finland** reported on the Subgroup's consideration of the core budget for 2011, the non-core requirements, and the suggestions for a new budget framework for COP11. She pointed out that approximately CHF 1.5 million will be needed for COP11 regional meetings in 2011 and about CHF 1 million for sponsored delegate participation in COP11, for a total of 1.8 million to be raised in 2012.

**Decision SC42-15: The Standing Committee approved the 2011 budget with minor reallocations between core budget lines, as set out in DOC. SC42-07, and agreed to use any unallocated or unused 2011 Regional Initiatives allocations for pre-COP regional meetings or necessary 2011 legal costs; thanked all Parties that have made additional voluntary contributions but expressed concern at the continuing decline**

in such voluntary contributions; and urged all SC members, Parties, and the Secretariat to redouble their efforts to find voluntary funding for important upcoming activities such as pre-COP11 regional meetings, COP11 sponsored delegates, Small Grants Fund, STRP, and Ramsar Advisory Missions.

**Decision SC42-16:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to explore options for reducing voluntary contribution requirements for sponsored delegate participation, including a review of the rationale for sponsorship based on the OECD DAC list, in consultation with other convention's secretariats, and to provide options for SC43 consideration.

95. **Finland** reported that the Subgroup considered the Secretariat's suggestions for a revised budget framework that would reflect all that would be needed to deliver all aspects of the Strategic Plan, in order to support fundraising for non-core-funded work. It was requested that suggestions for prioritization of different budget elements be made in the 2013-2015 budget proposals for SC43 consideration.
96. **The USA** urged that it would be helpful to have clear guidelines on bottom lines for the three budget scenarios to be proposed, and he suggested that one of them should be "zero growth" (allowing for inflation), "flat" (no growth, not adjusted for inflation), and some other reasonable option. **The DSG** recalled that last time the third option was for "modest growth" of 4%. **The USA** felt that given present conditions, 2% might be more realistic.
97. **The SG** suggested that two categories could be used for voluntary contributions to fulfilling the Strategic Plan, cash and in-kind.

**Decision SC42-17:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare for SC43 three budget scenarios for 2013-2015, including both core and non-core funded elements for implementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, based on the format provided in DOC. SC42-07, with priorities for different budget elements. The Committee requested the Secretariat to provide to SC43 some suggestions for 2013-2015 budget scenarios based upon "zero growth" (allowing for inflation), "flat" (with no adjustment for inflation), and "modest growth".

98. **Finland** reported on the Secretariat's update on engagement with the Global Environment Facility, and **the SG** noted that further legal advice is needed on this issue.
99. **Finland** described the Subgroup's consideration of the problems with the Convention's three grants programmes, the Small Grants Fund (SGF), the Swiss Grant for Africa, and the Wetlands for the Future Fund. In particular, despite its acknowledged importance and value, the SGF has experienced a long downward trend to the point where very few projects are being funded, and both grant proponents and Secretariat staff experience great frustration and loss of time. The Subgroup was recommending that no new proposals be considered during 2012 and that the SGF be suspended unless alternative methods of funding could be found.
100. **Switzerland** wondered whether the problem was really a lack of money or rather a lack of attractiveness in the projects, and whether they could be presented in a more attractive way.



101. **The SG** noted that many donors today have their own small grants funds and many have decentralized so that their funds are administered within the target countries. One alternative is to focus on assisting the AAs to develop proposals for submission to other donors, as the most important thing is not that Ramsar should provide the grants but that the projects should find the funding they need. The Secretariat has limited capacity, however, and cannot help more than a few at a time, but we will explore such an approach.
102. **Uganda** suggested that perhaps the transaction costs are too high for such small grant possibilities, and the Fund might be more successful if it were amended to offer larger grants. He felt that the word “suspended” had too negative connotations.
103. **The SG** also pointed out the problem of matching donors’ priorities and strategies, and he suggested that perhaps the regional centres and initiatives could help. Often the Parties do not have the capacity to develop a good proposal that is in line with donor priorities. As Tanzania has explained, he said, if the Parties have the capacity to make a good proposal, they can approach the GEF in a number of focal areas.
104. **Marshall Islands** observed that Parties in Oceania have been heavily reliant on SGF funding, and suspending the fund might cause gaps in work already initiated.
105. **Cameroon** urged setting up a study of the consequences of the SGF before considering options such as suspending it.
106. **The DSG** said that over the years all sorts of ideas have been tried to keep the SGF alive, but there have been progressively declining levels over the past ten years, causing great frustration for staff and proponents. Donors’ approaches are changing and tightening, and the SG might be right that the Secretariat can provide better types of assistance than operating the SGF ourselves.
107. **The USA** observed that there is a significant negative side to the downward trend: 81 proposals were submitted by people who spent a lot of time on them, and 79 of them received rejection letters to exactly the organizations we are trying to help. It sends a very negative message. The Secretariat is investing a tremendous amount of time that could be directed to many other parts of the Strategic Plan, a great waste of human resources.
108. **Cameroon** felt that we cannot suspend the SGF until we’ve found an alternative method.
109. **WWF International** pointed out that there is a new Partnership Coordinator, who should be given a chance to have a positive effect. The Secretariat has never had fundraising capacity before.
110. **The Finance Officer** explained that the suspension for 2012 was intended to halt unsuccessful proposals to allow time to focus on raising funds and alternatives without spending time on 2012 project assessments.
111. **Uganda** recommended conducting a review of the SGF, but during this period no new submissions would be sought or assessed until the review has been completed.

**Decision SC42-18: The Standing Committee, recognizing that the Small Grants Fund in its present form has become increasingly unviable in cost/benefit terms,**

- a) requested the Secretariat to continue to seek alternative sources of financing for the Small Grants Fund and to report to the SC regularly;
- b) encouraged the Parties and other potential donors to demonstrate their desire to keep the SGF operational by making significant voluntary contributions to the Fund;
- c) instructed the Secretariat not to solicit or assess any SGF proposals for the 2012 cycle and to focus instead on seeking further funds for approved 2010 and 2011 portfolio projects; and
- d) requested the Secretariat to explore additional alternative methods for providing on-the-ground support for Parties, such as providing advice and information to Parties and others on opportunities for funding for wetlands from other organizations.

112. **Finland** explained that the Subgroup concluded that simultaneous interpretation for subgroup meetings would require about CHF 15,000 for an SC meeting in Gland, more if extended to COPs and additional meetings. It was noted that interpretation for subgroup meetings is not provided for under the current Rules of Procedure and that such a service is not part of the practice of other intergovernmental processes, including in the UN.
113. **Finland** indicated that the Subgroup was very aware of the benefits of such a service but was concerned about the additional costs involved. It suggested that additional contact meetings might be held in French and Spanish prior to the first SC plenary to allow the regions to discuss the subgroups' recommendations to the plenary, with the subgroups' chairs available to offer explanations.

**Decision SC42-19: The Standing Committee noted that the additional costs of subgroup simultaneous interpretation are not included in the current core budget and requested the Secretariat and the Subgroup on Finance to explore options for such funding for 2012 and for the 2013-2015 budget, including providing to SC43 a full cost estimate with all its implications as well as other low or no-cost options to facilitate the participation of non-native English speakers.**

#### **Agenda item 9: Regional Initiatives**

114. **The Senior Regional Advisor for Europe, Mr Tobias Salathé**, made a presentation [PPT] covering the origins and history of the Regional Initiatives, the lessons learnt from the experiences so far, and the current status of each of the Initiatives that have been proposed, endorsed as operating under the Convention, and in some cases receiving financial support from the Convention. He explained the Secretariat's proposals for the allocations of funds for 2011, with CHF 293,190 available and CHF 318,070 requested. Since the allocations for 2012 do not require COP11 approval, he suggested that the SC should decide next year's allocations by e-mail in April 2012, so that the Initiatives would not have to wait until SC44 in mid-June.
115. **The Senior Advisor** indicated that the Secretariat will provide SC43 with a draft summary report to COP11 to be considered with a Draft Resolution for the next triennium. It will

provide an analysis and evaluation of the programme and show its added value for implementation of the Convention.

**Decision SC42-20:** The Standing Committee noted the progress of the Regional Initiatives that it endorsed at its 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> meetings as operating within the framework of the Convention in 2009-2012; determined to withdraw consideration from three inactive Initiatives (Pacific Islands, Himalayan, and Lake Chad Basin); approved the 2011 allocations to Regional Initiatives as summarized below; agreed to require 2011 reports and requests for 2012 to be submitted by 29 February and make the allocations for 2012 by electronic circulation no later than April 2012; and noted that the Secretariat will prepare a review for SC43 of the success of the Regional Initiative programme to serve as an Information Paper for COP11.

#### Allocations for Regional Initiative, 2011

(all amounts in CHF (0.9 CHF/USD, 1.3 CHF/EUR))

Regional Initiatives	Allocation for 2011
<b>Regional centres</b>	
Eastern Africa (Kampala)	<b>35,000</b>
Western Hemisphere (Panama)	nil
Central and West Asia (Ramsar)	<b>65,000</b>
<i>total for centres</i>	<i>100,000</i>
<b>Regional networks</b>	
West African Coast	<b>20,000</b>
Niger River Basin	<b>20,000</b>
High Andean	<b>25,000</b>
La Plata River Basin	nil
Caribbean	<b>28,800</b>
American Mangroves	<b>32,000</b>
Carpathian	<b>29,000</b>
Black Sea Coast	<b>38,390</b>
<i>total for networks</i>	<i>193,190</i>
Total	293,190

#### Agenda item 9.2: Presentations on representative Regional Initiatives

116. Brief presentations were made on invited Regional Initiatives [PPTs] by Mr Grigore Baboianu (Romania) on the BlackSeaWet; Ms Frizia Ortiz de Ora Flores (Mexico) on the Regional Initiative for Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Mangrove Ecosystems and Coral Reefs; Mr Paul Mafabi (Uganda) on the Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa, RAMCEA; and Ms Yasaman Rajabkhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) on the Ramsar Regional Centre for Central and Western Asia, RRC-CWA.

**Thursday, 19 May 2011**

117. **The SC Chair** requested that Agenda item 10 on STRP matters could be addressed at this point in the agenda because of the travel constraints of the Chair of the STRP.

**Agenda item 10.1: Report of the STRP Oversight Committee**

118. **The DSG** described the purpose of the STRP Oversight Committee, the key roles of which concern STRP appointments and advice on budget allocations. There is little to report at this time because most of the STRP budget line goes to meetings and the costs of the Scientific Support Officer, both of which were determined last year. The Support Officer is now based in the IUCN Bangkok office until COP11; that requires lower salary costs, and the Oversight Committee will be informed as soon as they have been calculated.

**Agenda item 10.2: Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel**

119. **The Chair of the STRP, Ms Heather Mackay**, drew attention to her report in DOC. SC42-18 and proposed to highlight the key points with a PowerPoint presentation [**PPT**] rather than repeat its contents. In summary, the tasks involving COP11 deliverables are on track, though budget shortfalls mean that other tasks are not as far along as hoped. She recalled that much of the STRP's work is done pro bono or through collaborations with people from other organizations; there is almost no core budget available for the work, but there have been some generous voluntary contributions. She referred to the table of budget estimates and noted that there is a significant shortfall overall and for 2011 for the July workshop, the Support Service, and some priority tasks.
120. **The STRP Chair** reviewed the highlights of the past year, including a very successful meeting for STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) in Africa in Johannesburg, the report of which is available from the website of the Water Research Commission; the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Chairs of Scientific Advisory Bodies (CSAB), co-hosted by Ramsar in February 2011, the report of which is available from the CBD website; the discussions involving a potential TEEB synthesis on the economic values of water and wetlands; the collaboration with UN-Habitat to introduce wetland issues into urban development guidelines; the collaboration with the WHO on wetlands and human health, with a report to be published jointly; and the request from CBD that the STRP lead an expert working group on water and biodiversity, with funding supplied through the CBD. She invited the SC to approve the addition of the CBD expert group to the Panel's work plan.
121. **Paraguay** reported that Bolivia had asked Paraguay as Regional Representative to communicate a request for more information on the STRP's work on the ecosystem services of wetlands. **The STRP Chair** responded that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment synthesis on wetlands has a great deal of information, but not much on economic values, so one must look forward to the TEEB synthesis report. She promised to pass the request to the STRP and see what else could be provided now, and noted that there will be several relevant products for COP11. **The DSG** noted that the request shows the interest in this subject and hoped that funding would be found for the TEEB report. He said that there is additional work going on on the economic aspects of carbon storage.

122. **The representative of the Ramsar Regional Centre for East Asia (RRC-EA)** inquired whether the STRP had plans to meet with NFPs in Asia, and he said that both of the regional centres in Asia would be willing to contribute to the organization of such a meeting.
123. **Finland** supported the addition to the work plan and reported that Finland has made a small contribution towards updating the restoration guidance.
124. **The STRP Chair** thanked the RRC-EA for its offer to help and planned to follow up in the next triennium. She expressed gratitude for Finland's contribution to the restoration work and reported that a number of expert workshops have been held to review what guidance is available and determine what new guidance might be needed. **The DSG** announced that the CBD's David Coates has confirmed that the CBD has received pledges to cover the STRP role in the expert working group.
125. **Tanzania**, on behalf of the Africa group, said that the Africa group felt that the STRP information is valuable but that there is a difficult transition from the guidelines to on-the-ground work, especially in the designation of Ramsar Sites, and he urged that ways be found to help with that transition.
126. **The STRP Chair** emphasized the STRP's focus on four guiding principles, that is, on ensuring the STRP's independence, transparency, credibility, and the quality of its work. The intention is to document the Panel's editorial and review policies for all types of STRP products (guidances, Ramsar Technical Reports [RTRs], briefing notes, etc.) and provide information about how the products are created, whilst maintaining flexibility and not suffocating with bureaucracy.
127. She stressed that the STRP needs a simple but reliable method for handling and archiving document versions, as the present Support Service is now obsolete. A survey of needs has been conducted and it is hoped that an off-the-shelf product will be found that can be operated by the Support Officer from within the Secretariat. Funding is required for that, and it is hoped that it can go into service following COP11. She noted the valuable help of Monica Zavagli, the Support Officer, and Rebecca Lee of the UK.
128. **The STRP Chair** drew attention to potential conflicts among the Panel's various roles: to a) review and assess scientific data to ensure quality, b) provide scientific advice both in new guidance and on an ad hoc basis, and c) provide scientific support for implementation, increasingly requested these days, and represent the Convention in other bodies. There is a need to recognize that these three roles may sometimes conflict, as at times the STRP is asked to perform what is essentially a staff role, because of insufficient capacity in the Secretariat. The need for on-the-ground assistance is huge and growing, and she suggested the need for a DR on partnerships for implementation support.
129. **The STRP Chair** discussed the strategic importance of the Convention for water issues and noted that Ramsar is as much a water convention as it is a wetland one. She advocated the need for a structured approach to engaging with the water sector, with scientific data and knowledge and with support to and participation in policy processes, and support for implementation at all levels, rather than just a series of ad hoc responses to opportunities. She felt that sustained leadership from within the Convention would be needed.

130. To **Finland's** question, **the SG** said that the STRP is planning a workshop before SC43 which will offer an opportunity to look at these issues and put something forward to SC43 with possibilities to be explored and potentially a COP11 decision. All aspects of the STRP's work will be reviewed.
131. **Wetlands International** raised the possibility of reconsidering the Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance, for example by including the value of ecosystem services. That would gain the attention of the water sector to Ramsar's guidance, which is not given the attention it deserves. **The SG** suggested that that could be included in the interpretation texts for Criterion 1, which would be easier to achieve than a new Criterion.
132. **The USA** requested clarification of the use of the term "independence" among the guiding principles (independence from whom?) and suggested that another principle dramatically missing is "utility", since the ultimate goal is to help implementation on the ground. He recalled that Resolution VIII.45 (2002) charged the SC with exploring how to improve implementation and he noted that despite the urgent need eight years ago that still has not been satisfactorily addressed. He suggested the establishment of a new, independent panel of on-the-ground practitioners to go back and look over the STRP's work and its utility for their own work, and report back to the SC and eventually to COP12 in 2015.
133. **The STRP Chair** responded that "independence" was not intended to mean from any body, only that there should be no bias of any one interest sector over another. "Utility" is the ultimate goal of all four principles. She felt that perhaps an overall review of the STRP would be timely, since times have changed and there are new debates and new mechanisms such as the IPBES. She offered to discuss the interesting idea of reviewing the STRP's role in a changing world with the USA directly. She said that Criterion 1 would be discussed soon by David Stroud.
134. **The STRP Chair** reported on the Panel's work on extractive industries. The STRP saw no need for a new DR or additional guidance but intends to produce a joint RTR with the AEW Technical Committee on a low-cost methodology for identifying hotspots, as well as a guide to available guidance on extractive industries as a "briefing note". She noted the need for training especially for wetland people, but felt that the STRP should not lead on that, though it is valuable that members participate in RAM missions as resources allow. She said that the Panel would propose a DR for COP11, not on extractive industries alone, but on a generic model for establishing sectoral partnerships for implementation support.
135. **Jamaica** suggested making better use of the NFP network, as the focal points could take up some of the roles rather than the STRP itself. He inquired about how easy the Parties find using the STRP's guidance since it is almost always in English. **The STRP Chair** noted that a lot of time has been invested in strengthening the NFPs' network and it is beginning to bear fruit now. She explained that all of the guidance adopted by the COP is available in English, French, and Spanish, but other products are translated only when funding is available. Some Parties take the initiative to translate key guidance into their own languages. It is all a problem of the financial constraints.

136. **The STRP Chair** provided an update on the status of the establishment of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), with the governance mechanisms having been agreed in 2011 and the work programme to be established in 2012. The STRP recommends preparing an information paper for the IPBES plenary on what we need from and what we can provide to the process, and bringing a DR to COP11 on encouraging Ramsar engagement with it. She introduced Neville Ash, who would be happy to answer any further questions. She asked the SC members to find out who in their countries is participating in the IPBES process.
137. **The STRP Chair** enumerated the various products that the Panel is intending to bring to the COP, including several DRs without annexes, several with annexes, and some Info Papers, RTRs, and briefing notes. She urged that the STRP be enabled to participate in COP11, as it did in COP10, with one member supporting each substantive DR and by offering briefing sessions, and she urged that a voluntary contribution be sought to cover those costs.
138. **China** thanked the STRP for its hard work and observed that the revised Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) seems to be too hard to complete. The fields for water pH, water salinity, etc., might differ within the site and change seasonally, and she suggested that these could be replaced by 'status of water quality'. It was noted in response that Parties are asked to supply only the information that they can and not to feel obligated to fill in all the fields.
139. **The Netherlands** alluded to the history of the GAWI collaboration's work on guidelines on agriculture and noted that there has never been a Resolution taking stock of the information gathered. He proposed that the Secretariat, STRP Chair, and GAWI partners should explore options for a concluding document and possibly a Draft Resolution for COP11. He further recommended synergies between GAWI results and current other work on agriculture. **The STRP Chair** indicated that much was learnt from the GAWI and agreed that George Lukas, who is leading the STRP's work, should provide a briefing note to wrap up the links between GAWI and the STRP's work and bring it together.
140. **Wetlands International** welcomed the planned Draft Resolution on energy and recommended that the work of the IOPs in that area should be flagged up more prominently.

**Decision SC42-21: The Standing Committee noted the STRP Chair's report and the progress made by the Panel on its priority tasks for COP11, and it approved the addition to the STRP work plan 2009-2012 of the task invited by the CBD to establish an expert working group to review available information and provide policy-relevant messages on maintaining the ability of biodiversity to continue to support the water cycle, which would be funded through the CBD.**

**Decision SC42-22: The Committee encouraged voluntary contributions both to enable STRP members to participate in pre-COP11 regional preparatory meetings and COP11 itself in order to assist Parties in understanding draft scientific and technical Resolutions and to enable meetings of the STRP National Focal Points to be held in other regions, following the successful meetings for European and African NFPs.**

**Decision SC42-23:** The Standing Committee recognized the importance of the work of the STRP as a key mechanism for supporting and guiding the delivery of wetland conservation and wise use on the ground, and it recognized that the mechanisms and strategies for achieving these objectives should evolve over time. To ensure that the STRP's objectives and strategies for their delivery are as targeted and as effective as possible in a rapidly changing world, the SC decided to establish an informal working group to draft a COP11 Resolution for SC43 consideration designed to review and take these matters forward. The Committee requested the Secretariat to establish this group and invited those interested in contributing to the work of this group to contact the Secretariat.

**Agenda item 10.3: Updating the format of the Ramsar Information Sheet and *Strategic Framework***

141. **STRP member David Stroud** presented the STRP's work [PPT] in reviewing and updating the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) and the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List*. Noting that COP10 asked the STRP to conduct such a review, he reported that the Panel has sought views widely, tested many possible new formats in three workshops, and prepared proposals for streamlined documents that will be easier to use and to manage and at the same time respond more effectively to modern data needs.
142. **David Stroud** reviewed the evolution of both the RIS and the *Strategic Framework* and led the meeting through the features of the new formats. He stressed that Parties are not expected to complete all fields (except for basic mandatory fields), only those for which there is information, to be added to as further information becomes available. He noted that the STRP recommends that the new formats should enter into force in 2014, thus leaving time for a transition with training on their use and the development of information systems suitable for handling the data. He illustrated the planned eventual on-line RIS submission function using a generic on-line reporting tool developed by UNEP WCMC. He described plans to present the formats to the pre-COP regional meetings so that everyone could become used to the concepts before COP11.
143. **Mr Stroud** replied to Wetlands International's suggestion about including the values of ecosystem services in the Ramsar Criteria by suggesting that the present Criterion 1 could be provided with an expanded interpretation in the *Strategic Framework* to include that.
144. **The DSG** described the work as a close collaboration among the STRP, Wetlands International, and the Secretariat, especially the regional teams. He sought the SC's approval for carrying on with the task of finalizing the formats and preparing them for submission to COP11 for adoption.
145. **Uganda** noted that a map is needed with the RIS and said that it was a challenge to delineate the extent of many wetlands with a precise boundary. **Mr Stroud** replied that there is some guidance on that which could be expanded, but legal questions on defining boundaries can vary among countries and make it difficult to generalize. **The DSG** noted that delineating boundaries is the task of the Parties and it is only describing those boundaries that is involved here.



146. **Mexico** asked whether more information would be needed for the RIS than at present, whether greater costs would be involved, and when the Parties would actually have the new format for discussion among their experts. **Mr Stroud** felt that no more information would be needed, indeed some fields were removed, and therefore it should be cost neutral and could be completed much more efficiently. When it would be available depends upon the Standing Committee's approval for the draft formats to go forward. **The DSG** reported that some Parties have been testing the formats and they sense that the RIS is easier and quicker to complete. He promised that, if approved, the formats would be available before the pre-COP regional meetings. **Mexico** suggested putting the new RIS on the Ramsar website so that Parties could try it out and get the support of their own experts.
147. **Mauritius** remarked that there are always pressures on site boundaries from development and wondered whether there could be a discussion of adding buffer zones. **Mr Stroud** responded that different countries have different approaches to buffer zones, but some advice could be provided in the *Strategic Framework* about where to find more information.

**Decision SC42-24: The Standing Committee approved for finalization and consideration by COP11: a) the proposed Draft Resolution on these matters, b) the revised *Strategic Framework* to be annexed to the DR, and c) the revised Ramsar Information Sheet, also to be annexed to the DR. The Committee endorsed the proposal to prepare an implementation plan for the introduction of streamlined procedures for Ramsar Site data and information handling, covering the preparatory period to COP11, the transitional period following that COP, and the introduction of the new procedures in 2014.**

**Decision SC42-25: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to make the final drafts of these documents available on the Ramsar website as soon as possible. The Committee thanked the STRP and particularly David Stroud for their work, and urged the STRP, the Secretariat, Wetlands International, and UNEP-WCMC to make a further evaluation of the most appropriate on-line tool for consideration by COP11.**

148. **David Stroud** expressed his great gratitude to the Secretariat, and especially to the Regional Assistants, for all of their inputs over a long time.

#### **Agenda item 4: Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (continued)**

149. **The Netherlands** reiterated the Terms of Reference for the Working Group annexed to Resolution X.5 (2008), which tasked the WG to recommend to the Parties whether to keep the Secretariat with IUCN or place it under UNEP's administration. He recalled that SC41 mandated the WG to determine the modalities of transferring to UNEP and to draft a DR about transferring to UNEP for SC42's consideration. He said that a DR should have been before the SC now. He felt that COP10 began this process over relatively small issues like travel visas, etc., but the debate has moved on to the capacity of the Secretariat and implementation of the Convention. He voiced the view that, in UNEP's most recent report, scenario 2 would involve no additional cost and the same capacity, and that while there are added benefits of being part of the UNEP family, we've seen that many of those benefits already exist. In addition, he also recalled the SG's letter of November 2010

expressing concerns about the Secretariat's capacity in case of the UNEP option. He also noted that the procedure for selecting a Secretary General under UNEP would reduce the Standing Committee's role in convention governance.

150. **The Netherlands** said that we must envisage a situation where we have to vote, as there does not seem to be a likelihood of arriving at a consensus. SC43 will be the last chance to consider a DR for the COP. Last year, the SC41 decision said that the DR should be about the UNEP option but that is not necessarily true now.
151. **The Netherlands** felt that UNEP's scenario 2 would not be more expensive. He expressed surprise that the SC did not get a report on this from the WG, and that no WG meeting was held in February as planned. He urged the Standing Committee to give a clear task to the Working Group now.
152. **Switzerland** said that good reports are on the table and we have come to the stage where we need to finish the work. She felt that scenario 2 involves no greater cost but that the question of added value might need more clarity. She urged that the SC should draw a roadmap now, that the WG should meet in June and draft a Resolution, as we cannot go round and round. She felt that the information document on the relationship between UNEP and the MEAs and some challenges is positive because it brings the problems out into the open.
153. **Cameroon** on behalf of the African region expressed surprise that the costs for IUCN are the same as those for UNEP. He felt that it would be important for the Secretariat to join UNEP, primarily for the visibility, both national and international. He said that being under an NGO harms that visibility. He urged that it is time now for a brave decision, after three years and \$100,000.
154. **Paraguay** on behalf of the Neotropics region reported that Argentina considers that Ramsar reform should be seen in the context of the overall reform of the UN system and thinks that all countries want a more detailed discussion. Paraguay felt that the information provided has been sufficient and for further progress to be made, there should be transparency and more information should be given to the permanent missions, so that a positive result can be achieved. All agree on the need for more information to be given and to permeate to the grass roots level. Paraguay, speaking on its own behalf, has studied the options and considered that we do need to achieve greater visibility by joining the UN system. Further, Paraguay supported Argentina's position that we need to await resolution of the discussions on international environmental governance first.
155. **The USA** expressed continuing serious concern with the process so far and shared the disappointment that the Working Group was unable to provide its report. She noted that the USA continues to participate in the Working Group despite concerns about the whole process and procedures. The USA feels that the issue is a serious distraction for all concerned from the work of the Convention and agrees that it is time now to put it to rest. She indicated that the USA feels that a move to UNEP would be ill-advised, especially in light of the current turmoil. The present Working Group process has lacked balance, and there are serious questions for which answers have never been provided.

156. **The USA** asked ‘what is the problem’ that needs to be solved? What is broken? She felt that this is a solution in search of a problem. The disruption caused by a move would not be small at all, perhaps 3-5 years in duration, a new staff, no institutional memory, at a time when the Convention is gathering momentum. Raising the profile of the Convention is incumbent on the Parties to do. She noted that it is mystifying that people are still referring to IUCN as an NGO. Our focus must be on the implementation of the Convention’s objectives for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and the Convention must remain flexible and dynamic. The USA is pleased that some of the original concerns have now been resolved but notes that others cannot be resolved at all. She felt that the only good decision would be to agree to remain with IUCN and resolve to work together for our goals. The Convention has worked well for 40 years, and if nothing has been broken we should not try to fix it. The cost of making a mistake would be too great.
157. **Japan** supported the USA’s views and noted that UNEP’s cost figures were based on the exchange rate at that time – the scenario would no longer be cost neutral. He felt that most of the benefits mentioned in the UNEP report have already been achieved, and that there are benefits available under IUCN that were never discussed by the Working Group. There would not only be staff costs but also transition costs and the costs of resolving issues of the present staff – there is still a need to explore those hidden costs, even if they are one-offs. The UNEP report is a good job, he felt, but more explanations are still needed. Many in the Asia-Pacific region are not well informed about the WG’s work and do not have sufficient information, so there is a need to continue to explore and study, to make a more thorough analysis of the Secretariat’s views, and to give IUCN a chance to respond to the UNEP report. He agreed on the need for a June meeting of the WG, in which the agenda would include discussion of the Secretariat’s report.
158. **Argentina** noted the lack of transparency in the WG’s work and the lack of communication and information. He felt that both Co-Chairs had seemed to show a bias during the proceedings. Argentina feels that the Secretariat is providing services to the Parties and there is no need to move under UNEP. If some feel that a move is warranted, there is still a need to await resolution of the discussions on international governance first.
159. **Costa Rica** said that it is unfortunate that the SC did not receive a report from the WG, which suggests a lack of respect for the SC. As to the next steps, he said that in Resolution X.5 the WG has an obligation to make its report. He urged an SC decision to remind the WG of its obligation. He felt that the proper forum for discussion is the WG and it should be convened in an open group, and the SC could address the working methods of the WG, which may perhaps consider replacing some of its Co-Chairs, and the way forward.
160. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** said that it is evident that there is a clear difference of views – some regions have a common stance, others have no consensus. He has seen the UNEP report and welcomes the Secretariat’s report on the advantages and disadvantages of moving. The goal is for the Convention to be strengthened as a whole, including the national focal points. We should not compromise the destiny of the Convention, and other issues are not the main point. He encouraged the Parties to focus on what is the best way to strengthen the Convention, and he felt that the SC must wait for the WG with its final report and DR before the next SC meeting, giving the WG a chance to finish its job. There is no obstacle for all Parties to participate in the WG, and if there is a lack of information, the missions should be more active in getting that information or joining the group.

161. **IUCN** thanked the Parties for clearly defining the remaining issues and would like to see a smooth completion of the WG's work. There has been a shift in focus to the capacities of the Secretariat and the added value of a move. The WG had asked for a response on these issues only from UNEP, not from IUCN, and IUCN would welcome the opportunity to provide a similar analysis. He observed that it is necessary to correct once again the misconception that IUCN is an NGO; it is not an NGO, it is made up of both governmental and non-governmental members and is considered by the Swiss government to be a quasi-intergovernmental organization. And this is ideal for agility and partnerships.
162. **Jamaica** requested a clear comparison of the two options and noted that point 3 of the mandate had not been adequately addressed, that there had not been an equitable comparison. After three years, the SC is unable to make the recommendation asked for, so we must make it clear to the WG that we must have its report.
163. **Mexico** supported the views of Costa Rica respecting the leaders of the WG and agreed with Jamaica's comments.
164. **Panama** requested that the process be continued with prudence and impartiality. A mandate exists from SC41, so the WG must make progress and present its results.
165. **The SG** explained once again that the WG is wrong to say in its reports that the Convention has no legal status – it is a treaty like any other and duly registered in the UN system. It is the legal status of the Secretariat that has been under discussion, not that of the Convention. He has corrected the WG twice on this point and it is still wrong.
166. **The Chair** invited a small group to meet at 8:15 tomorrow and try to find language for a decision to be agreed in tomorrow's plenary session. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** offered to serve as facilitator.
167. **Paraguay** felt that we need to recognize the equality among countries, each of which has absolute sovereignty, so if we need to vote, then we should vote. **Cameroon** concurred with that view.

#### **Agenda item 11: The Convention's relationships with the International Organization Partners**

168. **The SG** described the vital role of the IOPs in assisting the Convention and Parties at all levels, regional, national, and local, and he welcomed the representatives of the five IOPs who have gathered to sign a new Memorandum of Cooperation with the Convention. They were Jim Leape, Director General of WWF International; Jane Madgwick, CEO of Wetlands International; Deborah Bossio, team leader at IWMI; Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of IUCN; and Marco Lambertini, CEO of BirdLife International.
169. **Mr Leape** said that he was particularly pleased because WWF is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and shares a common founder with Ramsar in Luc Hoffmann, but more importantly because the past 40 years have shown that it really is possible to make a difference. He looked forward to another 40 years of collaboration.

170. **Ms Madgwick** noted that Wetlands International's predecessor organization influenced the Convention in its conception and was present at the signing in Iran. The IOPs show that we can do more together than alone, for example, with the Wings Over Wetlands project. That synergy is needed now more than ever, in an era of diminishing resources. Wetlands International is mindful that the 160 Contracting Parties share a common goal for wetlands, and that can be a powerful force. She was enthusiastic about the MOC and, on behalf of the 20 WI directors around the world, delighted to express their commitment.
171. **Ms Bossio** said, on behalf of the DG and Deputy DG of IWMI, that the Ramsar relationship is a special one, and she called attention to Ramsar's input to IWMI's *Comprehensive Assessment of Water and Agriculture*, which brought the organizations together.
172. **Ms Marton-Lefèvre** described the privilege of celebrating the Ramsar anniversary nearly every day, not only in Gland but often at international meetings as well. IUCN is very close to the Ramsar Convention in its mission and work. All of the IOPs work in a flexible and cooperative manner. She presented an anniversary gift to the Secretary General, a map of the world showing sites that are inscribed under both the Ramsar and the World Heritage Conventions.
173. **Mr Lambertini** said that BirdLife was passionate about the Ramsar Convention forty years ago and still is today. He noted the congruence of missions between Ramsar and BirdLife and its 120 national affiliates. He said that we have seen a lot of successes and progress, not only with specific sites but also with policies on water management, etc., but we know that many wetlands are still under threat, including many that have not yet been placed on the Montreux Record. He said that BirdLife was proud to be cooperating with Ramsar for so many years and offered congratulations from one of the Convention's best friends.
174. **The SG** noted that these comments illustrate that each of the IOPs is bringing something special, making us all stronger as a family. The participants proceeded to sign copies of the new MOC.
175. **The SC Chair** expressed pleasure at seeing the signing of the MOU between the IOPs and the Secretariat and at learning that it was actually an MOC. He called the meeting back to order and introduced the next agenda item.

#### **Agenda item 12.1: Promotion and utilization of the Changwon Declaration**

176. **The Senior Regional Advisor for the Asia-Pacific, Mr Lew Young**, drew attention to DOC. SC42-14 and made a presentation [PPT] on the uptake of the Changwon Declaration. He noted that the purpose of the Declaration was to make our awareness of the role of wetlands available to others outside of our community. It is organized around five key themes (water management, human health, poverty reduction, land use planning and biodiversity, and climate change) and two cross-cutting themes (sharing knowledge and the need to communicate) and provided some examples from the text. He noted that with the support of Korea, the Declaration is available on the Ramsar website in 14 languages.

177. **The Senior Advisor** recounted the case study of Japan's considerable efforts to put the Declaration into practice. He then identified some of the challenges that have emerged from the two meetings that have been organized by the RRC-EA, with Korea's generous assistance, to bring experts and officials from around the world to assess the progress in spreading the Declaration to as large an audience as possible. He explained a proposal to compile best experience case studies for the upcoming third meeting, but noted that it will require about \$20,000 to design a framework for the studies. The review of the case studies would then comprise an Information Paper for COP11.
178. **The Republic of Korea** noted that the implementation of the Changwon Declaration is very important for harmonizing wetland conservation with other sectors, and he delivered Korea's message of appreciation to all of the participants in the follow-up meetings.

**Decision SC42-26: The Standing Committee noted the report on the dissemination and uptake of the Changwon Declaration; thanked the Republic of Korea and the Ramsar Regional Centre for East Asia for championing the Changwon Declaration and supporting its implementation; encouraged the Secretariat to develop a framework for Changwon Declaration implementation case studies and a report to COP11; and urged Contracting Parties and others to consider providing voluntary funding for that purpose.**

#### **Agenda item 12.2: The Secretariat's work plan 2011**

179. **The SG** recalled that the Secretariat sent out the draft work plan in January to seek comments and approval from the Standing Committee and, following that process, began implementing the plan early in the year. The work plan is in line with the current Strategic Plan, and each task has a timeline and an assignment of a team leader and supporting staff. He said that the Secretariat is pleased with the smooth implementation of the work plan, as detailed in DOC. SC42-15, and invited further comment.

**Decision SC42-27: The Standing Committee thanked the Secretary General for his report and took note of the actions taken since January in implementing the Secretariat's work plan for 2011.**

#### **Agenda item 18: Update on business partnerships**

180. **The Partnership Coordinator, Ms Claudia Fenerol**, said that it was a great pleasure to be part of the Convention and looked forward to working with the Secretariat staff and the rest of the Ramsar family. She noted that DOC. SC42-20 provided a narrative on the status of the existing business partnerships and she would be pleased to answer any questions about that, but her presentation would instead address her preliminary overview of principles, activities, directions, and potential tools. She has been listening carefully throughout the present meeting and realizes that there is a great deal to do.
181. Since joining the Secretariat, Ms Fenerol has been taking stock of the past and present situation and identifying the strengths, weaknesses, gaps, etc. She has met with the management staff with an outside facilitator to help in defining strategic priorities and directions for partnerships.

182. **The Partnership Coordinator** provided a presentation [PPT] that introduced an impressive array of ideas and principles, common practices and available tools that could be drawn upon as we move forward towards establishing a strategic fundraising and partnerships programme. She said that there would be a balance between fundraising work and partnership work that has still to be worked out within the Secretariat.
183. **The SG** noted that we are still at the brainstorming stage with all of these many ideas on the table. He clarified that all of our work would be carried out in line with the Guiding Principles adopted by COP10.
184. **Canada** expressed pleasure at seeing these proactive ideas, but asked whether, if the Secretariat were to move to UNEP, these ideas would still be admissible. **The Coordinator** responded that, historically, there would be less flexibility under UNEP given the UN structures, but it is more a different way of working than a bad one. It's true that some of her suggestions would not be possible under UNEP.
185. **Paraguay** stated that as Regional Representative he would like to convey Bolivia's thoughts, as requested by Bolivia. Bolivia requested more information about Danone and did not want wetlands used for carbon credits for North American companies. Bolivia felt that the money Danone was putting into this initiative would support carbon markets that would allow more pollution and harm to the wetlands of the states where they are located. It is up to the Parties to provide funding for the Ramsar Convention, not to speculative companies. He reported that Bolivia added that IPBES should not become a platform for mercantilization.
186. **The SG** thanked Paraguay for conveying the message from Bolivia but clarified that the purpose of the methodology for restoring tidal wetlands was to restore already degraded wetlands, not to harm healthy ones. It is scientifically sound and taking place within the UNFCCC process of the Clean Development Mechanism. We have stipulated that the results have to be in line with Ramsar principles and our restoration guidelines. The SG said that the only way to influence these processes is to work from within them, and he noted that the same is true of the IPBES. He welcomed learning the concerns of any Parties at all times.
187. **Paraguay** thanked the SG for his clear response and agreed that it would be better if the countries in the region could have been present to hear the Coordinator's presentation. He noted that he was exercising his responsibility to present the views of Parties in his region who could not be present.
188. **Switzerland** noted that the Swiss government works closely with the private sector and suggested increased contacts with the World Economic Forum, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the Nestlé company. **The Coordinator** thanked Switzerland for those suggestions and offer of introductions.
189. **WWF International** congratulated the Partnership Coordinator for her inspiring presentation and hoped that everyone would now understand that there are still good reasons to hope for success about some of the needs expressed earlier. He referred to the recent Tehran Declaration and its idea of a trust fund for the Convention; the idea has failed once, but things have changed since then. He said that WWF is always happy to

help. **The Coordinator** responded with thanks and said that the idea of a trust fund would merit consideration.

**Decision SC42-28: The Standing Committee noted and welcomed the report of the Partnership Coordinator and encouraged the Secretariat to continue working along the lines she has described.**

#### **Agenda item 13: National Reports format for COP11**

190. **The DSG** noted that the Parties have received the NR forms that were approved at SC41. He explained that efforts have been made to make it a bit shorter and include the advice of the CEPA Panel. The deadline for submission is 15 September 2011, which is dictated by the lead time needed to analyze the National Reports information and get it into the Secretariat's database for the preparation of the reports on global and regional implementation of the Convention. The Ramsar Convention is unusual in receiving the Parties' information and being able to provide reports back to all Parties based upon it almost immediately. He looked forward to reading about all of the Parties' successes in implementation.

#### **Friday, 20 May 2011**

#### **Agenda item 14: Review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015**

191. **The SC Chair** drew attention to DOC SC42-12 and requested the DSG to introduce the agenda item.
192. **The DSG** explained that the COP had requested the Standing Committee to undertake a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and report to COP11 about any difficulties encountered or adjustments to be considered for the second half of the triennium. He noted that specific questions have been included for that purpose in the National Reports Form, and it was agreed at SC41 that there should be no separate, parallel process, i.e., that the NR analysis would accomplish the same objective. He noted, however, that only two weeks intervene between the NR deadline and the mailing of documents for SC43, so he proposed that the Secretariat should table a document just before SC43 to advise the SC about whether a Draft Resolution would be needed for COP11.

**Decision SC42-29: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to advise SC43, based on its review of the COP11 National Reports, as to whether any mid-term adjustments would be desirable to the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and, if necessary, to draft a possible Resolution for COP11 for SC approval by electronic circulation.**

#### **Agenda item 15: The status of Ramsar Sites**

193. **The DSG** drew attention to DOC. SC42-17 and suggested that, in order to avoid lengthy explanations and updates during the meeting, delegations wishing to correct or update the information in that document provide written text to the rapporteur so that a revised



version of SC42-17 could be posted on the Ramsar website as soon after the meeting as possible.

194. **The Senior Advisor for Europe, Tobias Salathé**, explained the background to the annual reporting on Article 3.2 information supplied to the Secretariat and the Secretariat's procedures for seeking clarification from the Administrative Authorities when such information is received. Since in most cases outstanding issues are worked out between the AAs and the Secretariat, the documents does not include detailed information, and he suggested that any corrections or updates can be given in writing to the rapporteur for inclusion in the meeting report.
195. **The Senior Advisor** summarized [PPT] that 15 files have been closed since SC41, in most cases because either the reported problems have been solved or they have turned out to be minor or non-existent. There is a longer list of 96 sites whose files remain open, and the SC document is a reminder that there is a need to work towards their resolution.
196. He described the background to the Montreux Record of sites where changes of ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur and reiterated that the MR is not a "black list", but rather a "help list" of sites requiring priority conservation attention. He noted that some Parties use the MR to enlist the Secretariat's support in bringing additional expertise and resources to bear upon problems at Ramsar Sites, whilst others use it preventively in the political arena – he encouraged Parties to make use of the Montreux Record more frequently, but also to take steps to remove sites from the Record as soon as possible afterward. He reported that no Ramsar Sites have been removed from the MR in the past year, and one has been added, so that there are presently 51 sites on the list. He noted that, for 35 of them, there has been no news in the past year, and he urged Parties to inform the Secretariat about what is going on so that we can discuss how to move things along.
197. **The Senior Advisor** recalled that COP6 (1996) urged Parties to update the information on their Ramsar Sites at least every six years, and it has become clear that this has been difficult for many Parties, presumably because there are more and more sites to be updated and because of limited capacity both in the AAs and in the Secretariat. Accordingly, he urged the Parties to update their site data on a rolling basis, site by site as needed and eventually by using the proposed on-line instrument to do so, rather than having the burden of trying to revise all of their site data at one time. He reported that at present three of every four Contracting Parties have one or more sites that have not been updated in a timely way.
198. **China** requested that the following update be included in the record of the meeting: "As to the potential impact onto the wetland areas in Russia by diverting water from Hailaer River into Dalai Lake in China: Hailaer River and Dalai (Hulun) Lake were originally two inter-connected water systems. However, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the links between them were cut off due to the construction of the Euro-Asia railway by China and Russia. With relatively small rainfall in Hailaer river basin in recent years, the water level in Dalai Lake is also declining, posing a great threat to its ecological conditions. To restore the wetland ecosystem of the Lake, and to protect the ecosystem of the river basin, the Chinese government is implementing a water re-allocation project in this area, including diverting water from Hailaer River to Dalai Lake during the flood season. In this sense, this project

can not only help restore the original water system, but contribute to the restoration and protection of Dalai Lake ecosystem. It has been proved that diverting water to the Dalai Lake during the flood season will help improve the ecological conditions of the river basin, rather than cause adverse effects on the river basin and other wetland areas in Russia. In the future we will strengthen our communication and coordination with the relevant parties of the project, closely follow its progress, and enhance monitoring and protection on some important wetland areas in the region.”

199. **Argentina** indicated that updated information is available on the Laguna de los Pozuelos and promised to provide it to the rapporteur
200. **Cameroon** drew attention to potential threats to the Parc national des Virunga Ramsar Site and congratulated the Secretariat both on the excellent communication with the Democratic Republic of Congo about these and on the work done already.
201. **Marshall Islands**, on behalf of Australia, reported that updated information has been sent to the Secretariat concerning the Gippsland Lakes and Macquarie Marshes Ramsar Sites.
202. **The Czech Republic** reported that the Czech Ramsar Committee is presently working on its Montreux Record sites and updating RIS information on its Ramsar Sites, as well as that it has identified two new potential Ramsar Sites and will be informing the Secretariat about them soon.
203. **Costa Rica** congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent and highly professional Ramsar Advisory Mission that was recently carried out at the request of the government of Costa Rica.
204. **Tanzania** reported that his country is now making a written response about the Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) that visited the Lake Natron Ramsar Site and is holding ongoing discussions with the Secretariat about the RAM's recommendations, which it is considering keenly. He noted that the key challenge is seeking a balance between conservation and development and he welcomed assistance and technical capacity for maintaining that balance.
205. **Mexico** reported that as a result of a RAM mission in 2010 to advise on a tourism development project, the recommendations have been very valuable and Ramsar has taken on greater importance in the country. As a result of the recommendations Mexico asked the development company to redesign the project, and now that the new design has been received, Mexico will request another RAM. The Secretariat has been very helpful and offered excellent support.
206. **Jamaica** reported that the Secretariat received a letter from an NGO about the potential impact of road works near the Palisadoes–Port Royal Ramsar Site, and the government will respond soon to clarify that those works will not cause damage.
207. **WWF International** reported that WWF has been informed about threats related to hydropower development to the Selenga Delta Ramsar Site on Lake Baikal in the Russian Federation, and that the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is planning a mission to Lake Baikal on this issue. WWF recommended that, as recently occurred for the Spanish

Doñana marshes (the birthplace of WWF), a joint World Heritage/Ramsar Advisory Mission should be envisaged for Lake Baikal.

208. **South Africa** has provided updates on the threats affecting the Ndumo Game Reserve Ramsar Site and the Orange River Mouth, and promised to provide an update on Blesbokspruit at SC43.
209. **The Senior Advisor for the Americas, María Rivera**, made a presentation [PPT] on the new publication, co-edited by herself and Royal Gardner, entitled *Wetlands in the Americas: the role of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the benefits of Ramsar Site designation*. It was launched in English in February and the Spanish version will be available shortly; with the generosity of Canada, there will also be a French version in due course. The publication is intended to raise awareness about Ramsar in general at all levels and, specifically, to demonstrate the benefits of Ramsar Site designation through 24 case studies from Canada, the USA, Mexico, and Parties in the Caribbean and South American areas.
210. **Panama** congratulated the Senior Advisor and felt that the Americas regions are strengthening the use of what Ramsar offers and helping to influence decision-making at the local level. He urged having further meetings to raise awareness and build capacity in the Ramsar Sites and their local areas.
211. **The Czech Republic**, on behalf of the European region, congratulated the Senior Advisor and encouraged the production of the same kind of work for the other regions.
212. **Paraguay** congratulated the Senior Advisor and reported that Paraguay has already applied some of the simple and understandable tools to help the local people understand the benefits of the Convention. He stressed the importance of having a Spanish version, as well as one in French, and was pleased to learn that those will be forthcoming.

#### Agenda item 4: Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (continued)

213. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed delight in being able to report on a successful meeting of the informal contact group on drafting a potential SC decision on this matter. He invited Jamaica to introduce the draft decision.
214. **Jamaica** presented the proposed decision for comment. **The SC Chair** expressed appreciation to the informal group for being able to reach a consensus text.
215. **Denmark** argued that there still remained a need for a clear roadmap so that the COP will be presented either with a draft decision or a recommendation of no decision. He felt that there should be time for the pre-COP regional meetings to be able to consider a Draft Resolution from the Working Group before expressing their views to SC43. **Jamaica** and **Switzerland** felt that the draft SC decision, with its specific dates, did constitute such a roadmap. **Denmark** said that the draft decision did exactly what was wished, but it remained to be determined what should happen between August and the COP; the regional meetings should have time to discuss the proposed DR or many delegates at COP11 would be unaware of the issues, and the COP discussion could go off in many directions, which could create a bad climate at the COP for other issues as well.

216. **Denmark** also felt that, given that the CSD Rio+20 process is reconsidering the institutional framework between UNEP and all of the MEAs, which is expected to reach a conclusion just two weeks prior to Ramsar COP11, it would be more prudent to await the outcomes of those debates. **Switzerland** responded that, as we will learn the likely direction of the CSD discussion as early as April 2012, it would be unwise to delay our own work for that final outcome of Rio+20.
217. **Indonesia** felt that the draft decision was a good text and that since there were only two options the Convention just needs to make a decision. He felt that it should not be linked to the Rio+20 process.
218. **Denmark** noted that all Parties, in considering the issue, would be asking what is going to happen at Rio+20, and so one must take account of that process in some way. **The DSG** suggested that, since we must recognize the possibility of changes to the relations between UNEP and our partner conventions, we must consider the whole DR resulting from SC43 to be square bracketed, in a sense. **The Netherlands** expressed confidence that there would still be time for any necessary reconsiderations before the COP.
219. **Paraguay** said that many countries felt concern that the work of the WG was not completed, and with this draft decision, the SC allows the WG to continue its work but also provides it with a contextual framework.
220. **Denmark** felt that it was important that the Ad Hoc Working Group should receive the report of the present meeting so that it and the next SC meeting could take consideration of what was said here. **The USA** recognized that the Rio+20 process was unfortunate timing for Ramsar and agreed that the report of the present meeting should be communicated to the WG as soon as it has been finalized.

**Decision SC42-30: The Standing Committee:**

- noted with deep concern the absence of a draft Resolution by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform as mandated by Decision SC41-4;
- expressed appreciation for the commitment of the departing Co-Chairs to facilitate a smooth transition of leadership of the WG, and requested that informal consultations with representatives of the Contracting Parties be conducted in order to appoint a chairperson or co-chairs and that they convene a meeting of the WG to appoint the new leadership by 6 June 2011;
- urged the Working Group to reconvene its work as mandated in Resolution X.5 and Decision SC41-4 as soon as possible after the appointment of new officer(s) and not later than 30 June 2011;
- invited IUCN, the Ramsar Secretariat, and UNEP to provide to the WG and Secretariat any additional information they believe would be useful to inform the decision making of the Parties and, due to the urgency of this matter, requested the Secretariat to make available immediately on the Ramsar website any such materials received;
- due to the importance of this matter to the Convention, encouraged all Contracting Parties to actively participate in the deliberations of the WG;

- further urged the WG to report on a consensus position on the matter, or, if that were not possible, to report on the main positions within the WG with clear, precise, complete and comparable information;
- requested the WG to submit its results by 31 August 2011, so that the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the SC may consider those results in reporting to Ramsar COP11; and
- requested the Secretariat to provide all necessary support for the WG to complete its task and to participate in the meetings as appropriate.

#### Agenda item 16: Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee

221. **The DSG** drew attention to DOC. SC42-12 and recalled the SC41 discussion about whether the Netherlands should continue to be listed as a “permanent observer” to the Standing Committee as successor to the United Kingdom on the basis of the Secretariat arrangements with Switzerland and UK circa 1990.
222. **The Netherlands** expressed agreement with any resolution of this matter but questioned the connotations of the word “inappropriate” in the proposed decision, preferring something like “inconsistent” instead.

**Decision SC42-31: The Standing Committee determined that, with the Netherlands’ agreement, it would be inconsistent with the present administrative arrangements of the Secretariat for the Netherlands to continue being considered as a permanent observer to the Standing Committee.**

223. **The DSG** raised the question of whether Switzerland could continue as a permanent observer to the Standing Committee and still be capable of being elected to the Standing Committee as a full member, and he reported that the Secretariat had not been able to progress that matter since SC41 because of a lack of resources for obtaining legal advice.
224. **Switzerland** indicated that its position had not changed since SC41, with the proposal “that it would keep its Permanent Observer status without voting but with full access to, e.g., closed sessions, but would be eligible to seek election as a voting member if it wished to, with the right to go back to its Permanent Observer status afterward” (SC41 report, para. 65). **The DSG** said that legal advice was needed to ensure that there would be no complications to the legal validity of SC decisions.
225. **The DSG** also recalled that SC41 had tasked the Secretariat to prepare a correlation of the COP Rules of Procedure with the Standing Committee’s practices that are generally derived from them, and he said that that would also require legal advice for which resources had not been found.

**Decision SC42-32: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue discussions with Switzerland on options for the future in regard to its permanent observer status and to continue to seek legal advice for interpretation of the Rules of Procedure with regard to the Standing Committee’s practices.**

226. **The USA** referred to the fact that there used to be only one Standing Committee in the year prior to each COP, but that because not all of the required materials had been

produced in time for SC meetings before COPs 8 and 9, additional Subgroup meetings were required to approve the missing Draft Resolutions. This practice of additional meetings became institutionalized to the extent that at present we are simply postponing the important matters for the second meeting. He noted that, because the Ad Hoc WG report had not been produced and only one STRP guidance document was ready for consideration, there was very little reason to have held the present meeting at all. He argued that we should go back to the original pattern of holding only one substantial SC meeting in the year before the COP and insisting that all of the materials for presentation to the COP must have been finalized in time for that meeting. There should only be a second meeting if absolutely necessary.

227. **The DSG** recalled that this is an unusual triennium and so the pattern of meetings has been somewhat odd. He said that it had been hoped that a substantial number of DRs would be ready for consideration at the present meeting but unfortunately that was not possible. **The USA** reiterated that the present meeting should have been more substantive and, for whatever reason, the SC should not have to wait for the second half of 2011 to make decisions on COP materials.
228. **The SG** noted that there was a need for the SC to approve the Secretariat work plan and budget, but that could be done by electronic circulation. **The DSG** suggested that there would be an opportunity in the COP11 Draft Resolution on Standing Committee matters to map out firm timelines for the whole triennium, and this could be examined at SC43.

**Decision SC42-33: The Standing Committee determined to examine the desirability of going back to holding only one full SC meeting in the year prior to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and potentially to include a timeline of its meetings for the next triennium in the COP11 Draft Resolution on SC matters.**

#### **Agenda item 19: CEPA matters**

229. **The CEPA Programme Officer, Sandra Hails**, announced the winners of the contest to identify the languages of the WWD materials that the Secretariat has been notified have been translated and produced around the world. The SC Chair Mr Yoo Yeon-Chul was the runner-up, and the delegate from Thailand, Ms Aree Wattana Tummarkird, successfully identified the most languages, all but three of them.
230. **The CEPA Programme Officer** made a presentation [PPT] which described the origins, make-up, and accomplishments of the CEPA Oversight Panel over the past year. She drew attention in DOC. SC42-21 to the table showing correlations amongst the three Ramsar CEPA Programmes adopted by COP7, COP8, and COP10, showing that they are successive improvements upon one another but not substantially different, and to the Advisory Board on Capacity Building's hopes to conclude its guidance on CEPA for site managers later this year. **The Netherlands** confirmed that the Advisory Board planned to conclude its guidance and then, if the Standing Committee were agreeable, to disband.
231. **The Ramsar Regional Centre for Central and Western Asia** thanked the CEPA Programme Officer and requested more materials to assist the training of trainers. **The Netherlands** noted that the WOW project training kit is now being widely used and that the Training of Trainers courses (formerly from RIZA) are still taking place annually, with

Ramsar Secretariat participation for part of them. **The CEPA Programme Officer** noted that Secretariat staff have been in discussions with RRC-CWA and the RRC-East Asia about working together to ensure that they have the best materials and approach to represent the Convention in their work.

232. **The DSG** provided a brief explanation of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) project and its accomplishments.
233. **The CEPA Programme Officer** reported that the UN General Assembly has designated 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation, and accordingly she suggested that the theme for World Wetlands Day 2013 should be “Wetlands and Water Management”, with a specific focus on working with the water sector.
234. Finland, Paraguay, Panama, and Switzerland spoke in favor of that suggestion.

**Decision SC42-34: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare its World Wetlands Day 2013 materials using the theme “Wetlands and Water Management”, with a specific focus on working with the water sector.**

235. **The CEPA Programme Officer** drew attention to DOC. SC42-22 for its description of Ramsar 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary preparations and activities intended to use the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary to raise awareness and, most importantly, to motivate the Ramsar family to carry that forward. She noted that there is great satisfaction with the number of 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities that are being reported by the Parties, and she pointed out that there remains plenty of time in the year to organize still more celebrations and events.
236. **The Senior Advisor for the Asia-Pacific, Lew Young**, made a presentation [PPT] about the impressive 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations organized in Tehran and Ramsar, Iran, on 5-6 March 2011.
237. **The Senior Advisor for the Americas, María Rivera**, offered a presentation about the imaginative celebrations held in Mexico around World Wetlands Day for the Convention’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
238. **China** reported that China has also developed different activities to celebrate the anniversary, e.g., the Asian Wetland Symposium will be held in Wuxi City, Jiang-su province, in October 2011, and she invited everyone to participate if possible. A special film for WWD 2011, “Forests and Wetlands”, co-produced by the State Forestry Administration, China Centre Television (CCTV), and WWF, was broadcast on 2 February 2011. Posters were sent to government departments and agencies nationwide and various activities were held in many Ramsar Sites, nature reserves, etc. Moreover, China is preparing some additional wetlands for designation soon as Ramsar Sites.
239. **The Republic of Korea** described various activities to raise public awareness, including one in a new Ramsar Site during 11-12 May 2011, as well as a variety of events by 24 local governments nationwide during 11-22 May.

**Agenda item 20: Date and venue of the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

**Decision SC42-35: The Standing Committee decided that its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting would be held 31 October to 4 November 2011 in Gland, Switzerland.**

**Agenda item 21: Adoption of the report of the meeting**

240. **The DSG** explained that Ramsar's longstanding practice is for the SC to amend and adopt the first days' reports, by passing technical amendments in written form to the rapporteur and confining interventions to substantive matters, and to empower the SC Chair to adopt the last day's report on the Committee's behalf. The final report, with editorial polishing, will be released in English only, for budgetary reasons, but the decisions will be published separately in English, French, and Spanish.
241. **The USA** recommended important amendments and additions to three Decisions, which were agreed, and **the Secretariat** promised to review all three to ensure that they are in agreement and do not contain redundancies.
242. A number of additional amendments were suggested from the floor, agreed by the delegates, and noted.

**Decision SC42-36: The Standing Committee adopted the meeting report for the first three days, subject to the amendments made and editorial polishing, and empowered the Chair to review the fourth day's report on its behalf.**

**Agenda item 22: Any other business**

243. **The UNEP representative** thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their skillful guiding of the meeting, the Secretariat and IUCN for hosting it, and the SC members for expressing confidence in UNEP. She looked forward to working with the Ad Hoc Working Group on its next steps. She noted that there were some misconceptions about the UNEP proposals that need to be addressed and promised to do so at the next meeting of the WG. She wished everyone a happy International Biodiversity Day this weekend.

**Agenda item 23: Closing remarks**

244. **The Secretary General**, on behalf of the Secretariat, thanked the Standing Committee for its guidance and committed the Secretariat to implementing the SC's decisions in light of that guidance.
245. **The Chair of the Standing Committee** said that he now felt part of the Ramsar family and was impressed by the SC's endeavors. He expressed gratitude to all participants for their fruitful collaboration, especially the informal drafting group on the Ad Hoc Working Group decision. He thanked the SG and DSG for their assistance and offered special thanks to the interpreters.
246. **The DSG** recognized the contributions of the cafeteria staff, the interpreters, the rapporteur and all of the members of the Secretariat who worked so hard on the organization and running of the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, including the logistics team, the staff members who presented some of the key agenda items, and the Assistant Advisors who were helpful throughout the sessions.



247. **The Vice Chair, Paraguay**, also thanked IUCN for hosting the meeting in its beautiful new building, with all of its comfort and technical facilities; the SG and staff for ensuring that everything went smoothly; Switzerland and its lovely country, on his first visit here; the SC Chair for his excellent coordination and leadership; and to everyone, who are all “heads of a lion”.