

Report of the CEPA Oversight Panel

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to take note of the CEPA Panel's activities since SC46, and of the ongoing preparation of the CEPA programme of work for 2016-2021 which will be presented for review at SC48.

Background

1. The Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel has met twice since SC46. The Panel's 6th Meeting took place in Gland from 12 to 14 April 2013, immediately after SC46, while the 7th Meeting was held from 3 to 5 December at the London Wetland Centre. The reports of both meetings are available on the Convention's web site at www.ramsar.org/CEPA-Panel/.

6th Meeting of the Panel, April 2013

2. The Panel suggested some refinements to the draft National Report format for COP12 regarding Strategy 4.1 on CEPA, and these were incorporated in the final format sent to Parties.
3. The Panel noted that the Secretariat was waiting for the formal notice of dissolution of the Advisory Board on Capacity Building for the Ramsar Convention, which had been agreed due to a lack of funding.
Update: The final notification arrived on 7 June and the Secretary General replied, thanking the Government of the Netherlands and all institutions which had taken part in and had contributed to the work of the Board for their invaluable contribution to the work of the Convention.
4. Suh Seung-Oh, the Panel member representing the four Ramsar Regional Centres (RRCs) during this triennium, reported to the Panel on a brief meeting on the fringes of SC46 with representatives of the RRCs for East Asia, East Africa and Central and West Asia, and the Secretariat's CEPA Programme Officer and Senior Regional Advisor for Asia-Oceania. The centres identified a number of training materials on key topics that would be useful to them and could be easily translated. The Panel noted the need to collaborate with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Secretariat to compile a broad list of training materials required.
Update: The Secretariat has continued to draw up this list and develop its plans to create the materials.

5. The Panel made progress on two key tasks on their work plan endorsed by SC46:
 - i. A review of the two Resolutions relevant to participation, Resolutions VII.8 on *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands*, and VIII.36 on *Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands*, to advise on the need for consolidation and updating of this guidance; and
 - ii. The related preparation of a draft CEPA resolution and programme of work for the period 2016-2021, to be adopted at COP12.

6. The Panel assessed the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8) by asking STRP experts and some members of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication a few structured questions. The responses exposed a considerable body of opinion that the presentation of the guidance was not compatible with current approaches to local community participation in wetland management, and that the 'top-down' approach was inappropriate. The Panel agreed that, in the short term, it would be most useful to extract from the Resolution some 'guiding principles on participation' for use in the new CEPA programme.

7. The Panel agreed that the new CEPA programme was the top priority in its work plan, and it hoped to prepare advice for Standing Committee on the future of the two Resolutions on participation later in the triennium.

7th Meeting of the Panel, December 2013

8. Based on discussions during and after the 6th meeting, the Panel identified a number of priorities for the new CEPA Programme:
 - i. A simpler format to encourage implementation;
 - ii. The terms Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness to be re-explained/revised;
 - iii. Participation to be more prominent than in the current CEPA Programme;
 - iv. The role and tasks of CEPA Focal Points to be clearly stated;
 - v. The task of improving communication among CEPA Focal Points to be given higher importance;
 - vi. Resources (such as a shared communication platform, better guidance and peer-to-peer support) to be considered to help CEPA Focal Points play an active role;
 - vii. Roles in implementing CEPA of individual Ramsar actors, including the Secretariat, to be clearly indicated;
 - viii. The role of Ramsar Regional Centres in delivering capacity development to be recognised and supported.

9. Over the three-day meeting the Panel used several group techniques to produce a simpler programme with eight strategies and 28 key result areas that take these priorities into account.

10. The Panel discussed at length the name for the new programme as a result of feedback from many members of the Ramsar constituency that the acronym CEPA was not well understood beyond this constituency. It considered more accessible names (such as Wetlands and People or Communicating Wetlands) and will continue to do so through the online survey described in paragraph 11. It agreed that the key terms 'communication', 'education', 'participation' and 'awareness' should be retained but

would be redefined in the appendix and that the term 'capacity development' should be added. This latter phrase was identified to encompass and replace the terms 'training' and 'capacity building' that are so often used interchangeably. The Panel also agreed that it would be sensible to retain the acronym CEPA as a subtitle, to reflect past actions, ambitions and familiarity with an acronym which is shared with and valued by other biodiversity-related Conventions.

11. The Panel agreed that a range of Ramsar implementers (such as CEPA Focal Points and Administrative Authority National Focal Points, Secretariat staff) should review the strategies and key result areas. Reviewers will be sent a brief introductory text, the draft programme in English, French or Spanish as appropriate, and a web link to an online survey. It is intended that the survey period will be from mid-February to mid-March and a brief verbal report on this process will be made during SC47. The full draft CEPA Resolution and annexed programme of work will then be revised for consideration at SC48.