

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

48th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

SC48-11

Report of the Secretary General and the Secretariat

Actions requested:

- The Standing Committee is invited to take note of the Secretary General' s report and his vision for the Secretariat

Background

1. The fifth Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands started work on 12 August 2013, and prepared elements of a vision and a report of actions undertaken up until the end of 2013 for consideration of SC47. This year of 2014 has been central to development of that vision and the development of a new Strategic Plan for eventual approval by the Contracting Parties, IOPs and other key partners, as well as other organizations and groups interested in the wise use of wetlands and water. The report covers refinements to the vision, and details meetings and other actions undertaken in support of the Convention and progress made towards objectives.

Vision of the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands

2. Wetlands are the source of sustainable development and play a vital role for humanity and for nature by providing all our water for drinking, cooking and washing, for agriculture, food, storm protection and flood resistance, and provide other services such as carbon sinks, transport, leisure and spiritual and cultural inspiration. Wetlands have important economic and non-economic values, and are the basis of all civilizations and our natural world.
3. Recent studies show that 64% of wetlands have been lost in the last 100 years and that 76% of wetland wildlife populations have been lost in the last 40 years. Wetlands are still being degraded or lost due to our increasing demands for land and water for agriculture, economic development, urbanisation and other domestic and industrial use, and the situation is worsened by climate change. The loss of wetlands could increase further with a growing human population, reaching nine billion by 2050, and with a growing population that increasingly seeks the same benefits as the Western world. The pressure on wetlands is increasing, while the understanding of the benefits they bring has not grown. Our role as the Wetlands Convention must be to stop, slow and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands and to prevent future loss and degradation.
4. All of us must learn to balance development against wise use, and we can help and support stakeholders to seize alternatives to destruction of natural infrastructure and show examples of good win-win practices. If we want to ensure that wetlands are managed sustainably, stop their

increasing loss and restore degraded wetlands to provide their natural benefits and services into the future, we should design our approach around four areas of work:

- 1) Communications and outreach**
- 2) Helping countries by building capacity**
- 3) Partnerships to achieve goals**
- 4) Measurement of the status and values of wetlands**

1) Communications and outreach

5. Many people still do not realize the importance of wetlands to their lives, nor the threats they face. By reaching out to them with targeted messages, and with the support of local champions and global ambassadors, we can affect their idea of wetlands and stimulate interest and engagement. With the help of supporters, we are setting up public awareness campaigns with traditional and new media to increase awareness about wetlands among the youth and other target groups, and encourage local involvement and solutions. We need to explain the simple, clear message that wetlands are the source of water for us all, that they are under threat. A campaign that attracts attention and sparks the imagination can make attitudes change and bring energies to focus on the future of our wetlands,
6. It is a fact that is all too easily overlooked that we spend more pleasure money on wetlands than any other ecosystem and devote most of our leisure time to wetlands, above and below the surface (i.e. coasts, beaches, coral reefs, ponds, streams, lakes, rivers, etc). We need to know the value of investments on leisure in wetland and then find ways to engage the enthusiasts and those working to maintain healthy wetlands for their sport and engage them in the work of Ramsar.
7. I see that one critical step for the Convention to take now is to reach out to the wide world and get across messages that reach into hearts and homes and aspirations. Wetlands are relevant to all our lives and central to our future, but this is not a generally accepted fact which is known or internalized by most people. We already have key audiences to reach out to and this includes policy-makers, from the environment and water sectors and other related sectors and wetlands practitioners and wetland managers. We also have a need and ambition to reach out to youth since they need to be aware of their opportunities and responsibilities and what they can do to affect the future. We already have one great tool in our World Wetlands Day and, next year, it will focus on youth and getting increased involvement of the public in wetlands issues by asking youth to take photographs of wetlands and make pledges on behalf of wetlands with prizes as an added stimulus. Special WWD2015 information sheets are already online to help get young people to understand the basics of wetlands, and having this information tailored for specific audiences will define our approach to reaching out to the world.
8. We have also developed one page factsheets that treat central questions in simple clear language that can reach our target audiences and many others. The first four topics are “Wetlands – Why should I care?” “Wetlands – Wise use basics on site” “Wetlands – A global disappearing act” and “Wetlands – What can I do?” The continuing expansion of these factsheets will power up our outreach into social and traditional media and allow a large range of topics to be widely accessible and raise the profile of wetlands and the Convention.
9. In the coming year, we seek to source the preparation and launch of a publication, with Star Alliance support, on the “Ramsar Effect” in Africa that would show ten illustrated stories of why the Ramsar Convention is so important and useful to Parties, and how it has helped people and

nature and the role of stakeholders. Each story would show what the specific role of Ramsar in making positive changes happen, and display best practices of wise use management or restoration of Ramsar Sites and show how the normal developmental challenges for Ramsar Sites were positively resolved. Each “Ramsar Effect” publication would be made available through the web and in hard copy, and used to stimulate its replication around the world.

10. Equally important in our drive to increase knowledge about Ramsar and wetlands would be the preparation of a pilot “Ramsar Compendium”: a folder with one page summaries of each Ramsar Site, for a region of the world or for a country, which would give a set of stunning images, map and other key information on Ramsar Sites to act as a model for other countries or regions. Basic information on the area, animals and plants present would be visible to attract visitors and tourists and attention of other sectors. Other highlights will cover how the Site is being managed and how it is integrated with local communities, with human interest stories showing how the Ramsar Site improves quality of life for local residents and delivers other important wetland services.

2) Helping countries by building capacity

11. It is clear that Parties find that there is a heavy burden deriving from the decisions and resolutions of the Convention and a consequent need to build capacity at different levels and get more support from the Secretariat. However, the Secretariat has maintained its size for many years despite an increase in calls on its time, and has not been able to respond more. For that reason, the Secretary General believes it is the right time to increase the strength of the Secretariat to respond to the increased call for help in meeting needs of Parties for technical support in using and updating the new RSIS, analysis, investigation and resolution of Article 3.2 files, helping in making regional initiatives happen and securing finance for regional and national initiatives advice across the broad range of Sustainable Development Goals, as currently drafted.
12. In addition, we need to find out what our wetland professionals need to do their job better and deliver solutions and capacity development to their queries. We should reach out, through Parties and our Partners to get in contact with the professionals and listen to their voices, as this has not happened before. Simple virtual surveys can help us know the challenges faced and we can develop solutions with our broad range of partners. We can help them to share their rich knowledge around the world of all aspects of wetlands management so that others have easy access to a network of other professionals that can respond to their needs. By building such a network, we will find more about the conditions that exist and the challenges faced by practitioners. Questionnaires will allow us insights into priority issues that can be tackled by online courses, webinars, guides or manuals adapted to their regional realities and languages. There are already many courses provided and much material but it may not be accessible or visible or usable in that format. Building a network will help access the most relevant materials and a high volume of similar requests will make it possible to design and deliver at volume the right product out of universities, institutions, colleges, UNESCO, NGOs, etc. Another great benefit of such a Ramsar Network, is that we can listen to and transmit stories of best practice through the Communications team to the world through the media and increase information flow across countries and people.

3) Partnerships

13. As a Secretariat, our job is to support our countries and help them achieve the goals of the Convention, but many of these goals simply cannot be achieved by any one country or by any

one organization. We need to work with, and through, many partners to bring in the wide diversity of skills and experiences needed, to help multiply local investments, bring in global strengths and reduce risks to the investments in wetlands. We see potential partners in our International Organisation Partners, in United Nations agencies and other Conventions, as well as private sector actors interested in water and wetlands. With such partners, as well as local and international NGOs, we can help to tackle key problems that affect our wetlands across the Water and Agriculture sectors.

14. The need for partnerships works in both directions, as we seek partnerships with groups that are affecting wetlands in order to achieve their wiser use. Examples include engaging with the water supply and treatment industries, with the water and sanitation (WASH) sector, engaging in the governance of transboundary aquifers, or seeking increases in water productivity in agriculture. Our strategic plan needs to look at the drivers of loss and degradation of wetlands and work with partners to find solutions and offer alternative models of a more sustainable development.
15. We must work to support Parties and all relevant partners such that wetlands sites, especially Ramsar Sites, are better managed, as all indications are that the status of wetland sites is deteriorating, even when protected by international or national designations, as the IUCN Conservation Outlook figures show. However, the massive loss of wetlands over the last years (64% lost between 1900 and 2000; 40% reduction in extent in the last 40 years), leads to an urgent need to work on restoration of wetlands. Already, there is a volume of work going on to restore wetlands, but it is not necessarily directed at the highest priority sites and is not being supported by an International Convention, nor are all the good works being added up to assess how the actions support the restoration targets of the Bonn Challenge. These needs have led us to consider how best to respond to the challenges, and we have already designed a Global Wetlands Restoration Partnership that has received positive feedback and support from some Parties and is proposed for consideration by all Parties at the next COP. The current needs include developing a plan, consulting with Parties to incorporate all recommendations, building a coalition of partners and allies, securing pledges and commitments from national governments, and then launching and implementing it as an inclusive global initiative.
16. One partnership that has been continuing successfully for over 15 years is with Danone and Evian in a fully supportive relationship. To meet our joint needs for greater outreach and change of image, we have also been re-focusing the way we work together, and the products we are putting out, and have had a very positive response to these new ways of working. We will be working to see how to make a larger impact on the large audience of consumers that use their products, but one great example of that responsiveness was the decision of Evian to put a link to Ramsar on their new line of bottles. Collaboration has also led to our inputs in a wetland centre in Evian and will likely lead to inputs to the refurbishment of the factory, reflecting the important role of Ramsar in the Evian story.
17. Danone has seen a change in leadership in the year, but the commitment to Ramsar continues strongly and we are more involved in their policy-making processes and continue to work with them and IUCN on a new Water Management Tool for the company that will soon be made public as an example of best practice for other companies. Indeed, we see that the relationship between Ramsar and Evian and the good example is expanding to Danone's other water companies, but we can hope to transfer such good examples outwards to other companies. One good example is how a public private organization has been set up in Evian to distribute the local taxes from all companies using the mineral water in Evian to support the wise use management of the Evian Impluvium.

18. Another interesting development has been our partnership with, and the coming of age of, the Livelihoods Venture, which could be described as a private sector development agency. Ten companies have invested over 40 million Euros in projects such as large-scale mangrove restoration, afforestation, and sustainable cookstoves, which all improve livelihoods for people in Senegal, India, Kenya, Guatemala, Burkina Faso and Indonesia. Projects benefit the local people and the land, while the companies earn the carbon credits from these carbon positive actions. Ramsar has been involved in the process and would intend to be involved in the next stage where more companies will commit far larger sums to improving livelihoods of family farmers using similar approaches. We see that this type of innovation is key for increasing engagement with the private sector and capturing the goodwill of private sector companies and their employees to do good, while covering all costs of the operations. Replication of this example would be a very positive model to employ in working on wetland restoration where the multiple benefits of such restoration can be monetized and costs spread across beneficiaries.

4) Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

19. Measurement of wetlands' status and change is essential to inform action and influence change. We still lack a clear picture of the status of the world's wetlands and to find out how much wetlands are lost, Ramsar's own Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is focusing on an assessment of the global state of wetlands with multiple partners. The work to be done builds on existing work including the Global Wetland Observing Systems (GWOS) and Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) and will allow us to map the State of the Worlds' Wetlands and Wetland Services as is needed as a baseline and to set aspirational targets for the world's wetlands.
20. But we now need to work with multiple partners and seek ways to combine Earth Observation, Citizen Engagement, and key partners to improve the availability of up-to-date knowledge on extent and status of wetlands. One avenue being explored is the combination of data from different sources such as NASA, JAXA, ESA, and the Chinese Geomatics Centre in order to gain a clearer view of the status of wetlands and wetland types around the world. Our close collaboration will help us achieve more precise data, but we need to work further to have as clear an overview of our wetlands as we have of, say, forests.
21. Other necessary steps in gaining more knowledge are to improve mapping and categorisation of Ramsar Sites under Protected Areas categories, and to move towards integrated management of sites with multiple international protected area designations (e.g. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Man and Biosphere, GeoParks and Ramsar Sites). This will help Parties in management of their globally important treasures and ensure that full attention can be given to keep their values intact.
22. On Valuation of ecosystems, we know that "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) for Water and Wetlands report in 2013, commissioned by Ramsar, has provided highly useful data on the value of wetlands ecosystems and the costs of their loss and degradation. Further work is now being done by UNEP at country level that will give more data on scenario analysis and help decision makers assess the impacts on wetlands of development options and help steer towards wise use of natural capital.
23. Another example of the work ahead on valuing wetlands is the task of promoting wetlands as "natural infrastructure" and collaboration with partners to explore the structured combination

of green and grey infrastructure to give long-term sustainable solutions. Much work still needs to be done to convert engineers and planners to the cost effective greener solutions, but this is a key tool in mainstreaming wetlands into development.

24. The idea of payment for ecosystem services (PES) has now caught fire with new solutions on how to provide the necessary quantity and quality of water for cities and industries by paying for sustained upstream basin management. The “Water Funds” in Latin America highlight the value of water and wetlands, and have some solutions on how to maintain reliable water supplies with growing populations. Likewise, the success of the Evian watershed management and the Livelihoods Initiative show other ways to have fully fundable, commercially viable solutions in wetland restoration and management that lead to major improvements in livelihoods and food security. Such ideas have great potential and need to be replicated around the world, and the Convention should assist in this movement of good practice around the globe.

Actions undertaken and missions of the Secretary General from 1 January to 31 December 2014:

25. Bringing the vision of the Secretary General (SG) to life in 2014 has brought about a number of Secretariat and Party actions and led the Secretariat and SG into a series of meetings around the world to advance on the major themes covered in that vision. The broad layout in his first report has been retained in order to allow the Parties and our partners to assess the progress, and necessary adjustments made in response to realities and opportunities.

- i. **Preparation of COP 12**
- ii. **Office layout and design in IUCN**
- iii. **Collaboration with IUCN**
- iv. **Collaboration with UNECE**
- v. **Collaboration with UNESCO**
- vi. **Collaboration with UNEP**
- vii. **Collaboration with UNDP**
- viii. **Collaboration with MEAs and other bodies**

- i. **Preparation of COP 12**

26. The SG visited Uruguay in January to see the site for COP12 and discuss all arrangements with the Government, and found that all was going well and meetings were held to address outstanding issues that have now been resolved. Ongoing meetings with the Mission have proved helpful in progressing on remaining issues and there has been, as yet, no need to carry out more missions. The positive and supportive collaboration with the Uruguayan government has continued and all necessary arrangements have been made on their side and on the side of the Secretariat, including informative briefings at SC47 that showed the new logo and motto for the upcoming COP12.
27. The financial gaps have now been filled in for the respective arrangements, apart from the need to raise funds for the attendance of some Parties to COP12. Letters to request support from previously supportive Parties have been sent out and we are following up with them to ensure that we can get the necessary support for around 100 participants that are entitled to request support under DAC / OECD bands.

28. The final draft decision papers for COP12 will be discussed in SC48, and the strong representation of country-led DRs in this COP has indicated the growing interest in wetlands at a national level and all SC48 papers will be translated into French and Spanish, for the first time as a result of SC47 decisions and the ongoing needs to continue this action are well taken account of in the next budget for the triennium.
29. The Secretariat has been at pains to increase the clarity and reduce the length of the papers at SC48 and for COP, and will seek to bring in page limits for all papers that are to be translated at cost to the Parties' core budget.
30. In order to save trees, energy, water and other costs, COP12 is planned, with full support of Uruguay, to be run as a paperless meeting and this will be able to indicate the potential for replicating this trend for other Convention meetings.

ii. Office layout and design in IUCN

31. The support of IUCN has helped us to renovate the offices and bring them up to the standard and equivalent appearance to the IUCN offices, as per the terms of the Agreement between IUCN and Ramsar. Staff and Parties have both appreciated the more open plan offices and more efficient use of space. A sign of the Ramsar logo has also been mounted on the outside of our shared headquarters with IUCN, but more branding is still possible and needed. It is hoped to make the approach to the Ramsar offices a more interesting wetlands experience and give visitors a different experience vision from outside the offices with support from wetland enthusiasts.

iii. Collaboration with IUCN

32. Relations with IUCN have continued to be solid and supportive and have expanded in many technical areas such as in water, protected area management, world heritage sites, marine and coastal areas, and opportunities for expansion are being explored with the sections involved with fundraising, GEF, business and biodiversity. Indeed, the mutual advantages of collaboration are becoming more evident on the technical side.
33. High-level meetings are held twice a year to look at issues requiring attention and potential areas for cooperation. These have proved useful in signalling areas for improvement and recognizing success.
34. The support received from IUCN on human resources issues and the assistance given to renovate its offices has been well recognized and appreciation given for the work carried out on Ramsar's logo to complement the flag and other signage that recognizes the status of Ramsar as sharing headquarters with IUCN, but the goal of greater visibility for Ramsar requires further work. The support for IT services has been less satisfactory, in the absence of a leader in IUCN, but this situation looks likely to improve steadily under new dynamic leadership.
35. Three issues continue to need further attention, and have been signalled in all the meetings in 2014. Firstly, a system is needed to ensure that IUCN consults the Secretariat, at the early stages and before putting in place any policies and procedures that affect Ramsar. This has lately been recognized after new draft proposals were circulated on travel policies and grievance procedures that had not been discussed with the Secretary General. It is expected that a system will be set up under the new Director General.

36. The delivery of financial services has been particularly unsatisfactory in 2014 and charges were originally increased from 2013, despite the levels of dissatisfaction expressed. Apparently, IUCN has been introducing a new financial system across the world and had delayed introduction into Ramsar until 2014. From the start of the year, until mid-September, no monthly accounts were provided, although this is a requirement under the 2009 “Services Agreement” between IUCN and Ramsar. The situation was brought to the attention of IUCN both in the March and October high-level meetings and in other discussions, but insufficient time and resources were committed to resolve the matter quickly. The matter was complicated with the departure of the Finance Officer (FO) in September after moving to 50% work in July, but the situation made budgeting extremely complicated and burdensome. The FO and SG have held meetings to discuss the IUCN service charges, mostly recently on 3 December, and the fees to be charged are still under negotiation.
37. Due to the lack of any information from IUCN on the status of budgets, it has been necessary to pursue a path of budgetary caution. When budgetary information was eventually made available, it was not feasible to use potentially available funds cost-effectively in the remaining two months, and so use of unspent funds will be decided upon by the Finance Subgroup.
38. With a new FO in place, one priority to renegotiate the 2009 “Services Agreement” between IUCN and Ramsar, in cooperation with the Management Working Group and in line with Resolution IX.24 on improving management of the Ramsar Convention. There is goodwill to improve the situation and a positive result is eventually expected as well as a satisfactory outcome for negotiation on the Services fee in 2014, but the process will be complex.

iv. Collaboration with UNECE

39. The SG and other staff have continued to attend all relevant UNECE meetings on transboundary waters, as the regional convention slowly moves towards a global convention. The expansion of this role is appreciated by many countries and the collaboration with UNECE is now growing with mutual planning of events and discussions so that the transboundary issues are tackled consistently and well and include all aspects of wetlands appropriately. More remains to be done to ensure that the full potential of the relationship is realized, but counterpart UNECE staff and European countries present are all supportive of this collaboration and our network of contacts around the world will be of assistance to UNECE as they expand the membership around the world. The formation of a Water Hub in Geneva by the Swiss will help to cement closer relations between all the bodies working in the Water and Wetlands Arena.
40. As one outcome of the series of UNWATERS meetings in Geneva, the closer collaboration with UNECE staff and the need to collaborate ever more closely with all the other International Waters Conventions was noted; this close work with UNECE continued through the year bilaterally and as part of UNWATERS, where discussion of the text of the SDGs was collaboratively and supportively handled with all UN bodies present, and led to useful text that positions wetlands and water implicitly or explicitly in 7 Goals and 27 Targets under the current OWG draft.

v. Collaboration with UNESCO

41. Relations with UNESCO have been steadily strengthening in water, with the SG’s attendance at Council and inputs to the preparation of the International Hydrology Programme in June and other meetings to extend our collaboration in groundwater issues in the Mediterranean to different regions with our support and GEF funds.

42. Follow up on the successful 2013 launch of the Ramsar Chair on Wise Use of Wetlands led to a visit to the UNESCO Water Training Centre in Delft and joint definition of the support that Max Finlayson will fulfil in this role for the first three years of the Chair with costs covered by Sturt University and the UNESCO centre. The Ramsar Chair will give us support to prepare technical training material for distance learning for wetland managers and for policy work in close cooperation with the STRP and Secretariat and in response to actual needs.
43. Our cooperation with UNESCO on World Heritage Sites, Geoparks and Man & Biosphere (MAB) sites has grown, in Paris, Republic of Korea and Australia and here in Gland, as we work together to set up substantial equivalence in the way we deal with threats and challenges on sites and how we can achieve more by working in synergy at all times on our complementary missions. This was shown up well in the recent cases of Virunga and Cota Donana and in discussions on the Great Barrier Reef. Indeed, we have also started on a joint Korean/IUCN/UNESCO project on how to manage sites that have double or triple designations under Ramsar, WHC or MAB. This is a new project with R.O.Korea funding for better management of internationally important sites and is a positive step.
44. In addition, the excellent work done by IUCN on the Conservation Outlook with its independent assessment of 222 World Heritage Sites (including 49 Ramsar Sites) has been helpful in demonstrating the challenges faced by all our sites and the risks to the maintenance of their ecological character, and the need to consider more sources of information than national reports to ensure that the full picture of important sites is maintained forever.

vi. Collaboration with UNEP

45. The SG visited UNEP in Nairobi while attending the first UN Environment Assembly and we are following up the joint MOU that has been developed between our organizations. We should, as a Convention, carefully consider the potential for using the United Nations Environment Assembly in its second meeting as an appropriate place to raise new issues and get an audience for a theme of global importance such as our strategies and goals to tackle loss and degradation of wetlands. UNEP welcomes inputs from the Convention on that idea.
46. UNEP-GRID has successfully developed our new Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) in close collaboration and we will continue to work with them on its refinement. Closer relations with the other UNEP centres in Cambridge (WCMC) and Nairobi will allow us to explore better the needs we have for big data and satellite analysis of the state of wetlands and state of our Ramsar sites. That deepening collaboration will likely lead to a large scale project with NASA, JAXA and ESA *inter alia* for which we will jointly seek external funding.
47. We aim to further our collaboration with UNEP in all the areas of mutual benefit under legal and Convention matters and in support their normative work on wetlands and in their support for countries to internalize wetland issues into national planning on biodiversity (NBSAP). We are also working with the TEEB team in Geneva on economic valuation to follow up on receiving data from their five national level valuations that include impacts on wetlands, and the new developing study on the TEEB and Agriculture.

vii. Collaboration with UNDP

48. The SG has helped build up relations with UNDP for Ramsar and secured help for Ramsar colleagues and a promise to work together in the planning strategy for GEF 6 and include

colleagues in meetings such as the GEF extended constituency workshops in 2015. We have access to information on their total portfolio of projects with relevance for wetlands and we are in a better position to inform countries of funds that are being deployed on the wise use of wetlands and help them in the rules and people to help in increasing that usage. We will use the information of funding as a basis to help get more wetlands-related people in more countries informed and involved in successful project preparation for different bodies. We have already started the process of securing meetings for all relevant regions so that each of the regional team members in Ramsar and UNDP know their opposite number and can work with them on policy and practice issues.

viii. Collaboration with MEAs and other bodies

49. It is helpful to see that the Parties are strongly supporting our approximation with other MEAs, and have already adopted Resolutions X.11 and XI.6 for enhanced synergies with other Conventions and the Secretariat is working closely with the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and ensuring that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is embedded in the work of the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions (CSAB) and especially in the IPBES, as it develops its system; the SG has been supporting these needs in different meetings.
50. Attendance at the COPs for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in 2014 are signs of our closeness and also address the need for enhancing synergies between MEAs. In developing our own Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2021, we have been able to take advantage of their experiences and achieve an exciting plan that addresses many of the Aichi targets together and allows us to work together on achievement of the eventual Sustainable Development Goals.
51. The Secretariat has also been involved in collaborations with the biodiversity-related conventions such as the MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative, and has been part of the project “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” with UNEP.
52. The importance of the other key Convention on land use – UNCCD – has been fully accepted and we have made an alliance to work together on the Bonn Challenge to help restore 150 million hectares by collaboration to achieve wetland and dryland restoration.
53. The SG and Secretariat are always working to strengthen collaboration with the key actors in funding land use change and in sustainable development, and have held informal and set meetings to plan concrete actions to benefit wetlands with the World Bank, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, WHO, WMO, GEF, IFC, WRI, WWT, RARE, Wildlife Conservation Society and others. In addition, we held a key meeting in London to bring together our IOPs and a range of other organizations such as Global Water Partnership, Wetlands International, WBCSD, IUCN, UNEP, UNESCO, UNECE to form new partnerships in communications and joint actions for wetlands.

Annex I

Ramsar Secretariat Workplan 2015

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector <i>Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat)</i>				
1.10.1 Continue existing Partnership between Ramsar and Danone; Review the collaboration between Danone/Ramsar/IUCN ; Continue “Biosphere Connections” partnership with Star Alliance	KRAs: Prepare and implement activities with Danone and enhance the involvement of private partners in wetland conservation & wise use, including with Star Alliance and other partners	In consultation with Danone, adopt and implement an annual work plan and a budget for 2014	Annual work plan and budget approved by Steering Committee; work plan and budget fully implemented	SG, Head of Communications
		Discuss with Danone and IUCN possible new steps and take appropriate actions.	Number of successful projects on carbon offsetting through wetland management, wetland restoration and wetland conservation and wise use.	SG, Head of Communications
		Implement the agreement with Biosphere Connections; enhance communication through Biosphere Connections.	Ramsar experts supported to attend diverse meetings on wetlands. Contributions to the Biosphere Connections e-newsletter ensured, including their travel reports and general Ramsar news.	Head of Communications;
1.10.2 In line with Resolution X.12, work with Contracting Parties and Ramsar partners to make good use of the <i>Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector</i> , including within the frameworks of existing national, regional, and global initiatives and commitments.	KRAs: Resolution X.12 principles applied in any developments of business sector relationships	Prepare and apply a strategy for approaching business sector; identify potential partners in the business sector; prepare a due diligence study and make proposal to Standing Committee.	Standing Committee (SC) considers and approves new partnerships with business sector	Head, Strategy & Partnerships

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar site information <i>Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service, including the Ramsar Sites Database, is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat. (STRP, Secretariat, IOPs)</i>				
2.2.1 Manage and process Ramsar Site designations and updates	KRA: All RISs, including RIS updates, received from Contracting Parties fully processed in a timely manner, within four weeks of receipt of each finalized RIS	Process all RISs received from Parties; deliver certificates, summarize and update Site national and global information. Publicise new site designations and raise awareness about the location and importance of Ramsar Sites through fact sheets, video, etc. Encourage wetland inventories and new Ramsar Site designation; assist Parties in completing Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS). Encourage CPs to update their Sites accordingly.	All RIS duly completed and updated; information on Ramsar Sites summarized and made available; letters and certificates delivered.	Senior Regional Advisors (SRAs)
2.2.2 Ensure the maintenance and further development of the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS)	KRA: Redevelopment of the RSIS by UNEP/DEWA/GRID under contract to the Secretariat. Timely maintenance of the new RSIS to provide support tools for Parties in Ramsar Site designation and update,.	a) Complete the first phase of the redevelopment of the RSIS by UNEP/DEWA/GRID b) Negotiate and sign the contract for the maintenance of the RSIS by UNEP/DEWA GRID c) Ensure and monitor the implementation of the maintenance contract d) Administration of the RSIS at Secretariat level, including user management	New, effective and accessible RSIS with full functionalities in place and maintained.. Effective and efficient services to Parties dealing with Ramsar Sites; improved worldwide communication on Ramsar Sites. Better understanding of the conservation status of Ramsar Sites and integration of Ramsar Sites into worldwide networks of Protected Areas	Regional Affairs Officer,
STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar site status <i>Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)</i>				
2.6.1 Advise Parties on Article 3.2, Article 2.5, Montreux Record and Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) issues	KRAs: All Article 3.2 issues raised with the relevant Parties; RAMs funded, prepared and undertaken when requested by Parties	Implement Secretariat's approach relating to Article 3.2, Article 2.5 and Montreux Record	Reports to SC made by Secretariat; Parties are addressing challenges and reporting to Secretariat; threats to wetlands are addressed.	SRAs

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs <i>Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs). (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs, STRP)</i>				
3.1.1.1 Implement Resolutions XI.1 on Secretariat hosting	Establish an appropriate Working Group representative of Parties to develop strategies that respond to Resolution XI.1	Strategies included in Draft Resolution for COP12, for consideration at SC48	Resolution adopted at COP12, and implemented.	SG
3.1.2 Implement Resolution XI.6 on Partnerships and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions	KRA: Implement 5th Joint Work Plan with CBD and report to SC.	a) Agree on activities for the implementation 5th JWP and take action jointly with CBD and other MEAs focal points and Ramsar AA b) Assist Contracting Parties in implementing joint actions between CBD and Ramsar Convention; between UNCCD and Ramsar Convention; and between AEWA and Ramsar Convention.	5th Joint Work Plan fully implemented; Lessons learned from implementation of 5th JWP;	a) DSG; b) SRAs
	KRAs: the Secretariat and the Chair of the STRP to continue to engage in the future IPBES process and explore further ways of collaboration as appropriate.	Participate in IPBES process and provide Ramsar's input	STRP Chair participates at IPBES and MEP meetings;	SG and STRP Chair
	KRA: CMS/AEWA and UNESCO-World Heritage joint work plans reviewed and updated	Prepare and adopt new activities with CMS Secretariat; AEWA and MAB /UNESCO; and UNCCD; implement agreed activities.	Joint work plans updated	a) DSG; b) Head of Strategy and Partnerships?
	KRA: BLG meetings attended at SG/DSG level; JLG meetings attended as observer (SG/DSG level)	Share the key decisions of Ramsar COP11 with BLG members and explore options for collaboration in the implementation of relevant Ramsar Resolutions	Effective communication of Ramsar's views on key issues; Ramsar's achievements and future actions are recognized and supported by all Biodiversity-related Conventions.	SG
	KRA: SRA level or above represented Convention at key global and regional meetings and identify areas for partnerships	Discuss and reach an agreement about travel plans; undertake approved missions; provide mission reports and publicize key results.	Enhanced partnership with other organizations; Conclusions of meetings are available and shared with all staff. Lessons for Ramsar are drawn and used.	SG

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
	KRA: All Memoranda and annexed plans either updated, replaced or annulled	Implement agreement with IOPs and other partners; discuss and sign new agreements with relevant organizations, including private companies.	Existing agreements are updated and better functioning; new agreements bring about joint and productive actions. Partners substantially contribute to wetland conservation and wise use.	Partnership Coordinator
	KRA: Meetings prepared in timely manner	Prepare and approve quarterly work plans, including all meetings organized by Secretariat; handle logistics and make available meeting materials; hold meetings and prepare reports; disseminate reports.	Lessons drawn from meetings and taken into account in planning and implementing future activities. Ramsar Convention better known and wetland issues better integrated into global debates, and considered as part of national and regional priorities.	SG
STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives <i>Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)</i>				
3.2 Implement Resolution XI.5 on Regional Initiatives	KRA: Manage the core funding support for Regional Initiatives; monitor their implementation in line with Resolution; Approved funds transferred to regional initiatives; advice on implementation progress and issues provided to Standing Committee	Provide report on 2014 activities on Regional Initiatives to SC48; transfer 2015 fund to Regional Initiatives in line with SC48 decision. Follow up progress.	SC approves documents submitted by Secretariat; Regional Initiatives substantially contribute to implementation of Convention.	SA Europe
STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance <i>Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)</i>				
3.3.1 Implement Resolution XI.2, especially through seeking voluntary financial assistance	KRA: Mechanism established for fundraising		Partnership Coordinator working effectively and voluntary funding becomes substantial.	SG; Partnership Coordinator
STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise <i>Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat)</i>				
3.4.1 Design the new national report format for COP13	KRA: Report on the implementation of the Convention submitted to COP13.	Draft COP13 national report format. Explore possibilities for online reporting and identify best approach(s) Maintain COP12 National Report database and answer to requests. Analyse data as required	1 st draft of COP13 National Report format available. Approaches identified for online reporting. All requests addressed on COP12 National Report Database and timely analyses	DSG, Regional Affairs Officer

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
3.4.2 Assist Parties with Convention implementation	KRA: Advice and support on national implementation issues provided, in regional and global contexts, to Parties as requested, including through missions to Parties	Provide prompt and supportive responses to Parties' inquiries; take part in national and regional debates; assist Parties in preparing position papers when requested. Disseminate training material and info for high level partners (Government and Parliament) and assist CPs to mainstream wetlands issues within national and regional planning processes.	Number of Contracting Parties express satisfaction regarding the assistance from the Secretariat	SRAs
STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA <i>Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings. (CPs, Secretariat, training centres, IOPs, Advisory Board on Capacity Building)</i>				
4.1.1 Implement the CEPA Programme and further develop a comprehensive plan for CEPA internally, including the activities undertaken with Danone Group and other private sector actors, through the CEPA Oversight Panel	KRA: CEPA Programme implemented, with input of the CEPA Oversight Panel, and Secretariat CEPA implementation plan prepared and disseminated	In consultation with the CEPA Oversight Panel, prepare specific tools and assist Parties in implementation of the CEPA Programme; develop capacity of CEPA focal points.	Increased capacity of CEPA focal points; increased awareness about wetlands at local, national, regional and global levels. Better integration of wetland issues into national planning and priorities. Better perception of wetland values at global level.	Head of Communications
Support the CEPA Oversight Panel in the drafting of CEPA Programme for 2016 to 2021	KRA: Finalize draft of CEPA Programme for submission to SC48	Facilitate panel input and debate and consultation processes for development of the draft CEPA Programme	Programme agreed by Standing Committee and prepared for adoption at COP12	DSG; Head of Communications
Develop Secretariat Communications Strategy		In consultation with the CEPA Oversight Panel, prepare a Communication Plan for the Secretariat. Commission reviews of Ramsar messaging and visual identity.	Improved dissemination of the Convention's mission and messages	Head of Communications

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
4.1.2 Draft proposal of structure, format and contents of 5 th edition of the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks. Prepare and publish Ramsar Technical Reports (RTRs) and Briefing Notes and other guidance materials	KRA: Plan for 5 th edition Handbooks completed and approved; RTRs and BNs published in a timely manner	Finalize Handbooks and approve final documents; produce, publicize and disseminate documents.	5th edition of Handbooks planned and agreed (decided that production will take place after COP12); Ramsar Technical Reports and Briefing Notes widely disseminated and preparations for additional Briefing Notes and RTRs planned before the end of the triennium (as part of the implementation of the STRP work plan).	DSG, Documentation Officer
4.1.3 Fully redevelop the appearance and structure of the Ramsar website	KRA: New-look Ramsar website launched and fully functional	Continue cleaning up the new website; use the new site to increase awareness about wetlands through publication of new materials.	New website fully operational; better public access to wetland-related information	Communications Officer
4.1.4 Communicate ongoing Ramsar information to reach stakeholders.	KRA: Topical Ramsar-related information provided to all stakeholders	Provide information, agreed messages and responses to inquiries from various stakeholders through printed materials such as publications, leaflets, factsheets, video, photographs, and electronic channels such as website, Forum, Exchange, CEPA lists and social media.	Increased engagement and capacity of stakeholders	Head of Communications
4.1.6 Deliver materials, advice and follow up for WWD 2015 and plan and prepare materials for WWD 2016	KRA: WWD2014 remaining materials prepared and dispatched and reporting system put in place.	Final WWD materials produced. All WWD materials made available to all Parties and partners; WWD events take place globally and supported as necessary by Secretariat staff.	Increased awareness about wetlands and better access to materials; better implementation of the Convention through integration of wetland issues into national and regional priorities.	Head of Communications
4.1.7 Monitor implementation of COP decisions on communication	KRA: Facilitate communication between CPs, Ramsar partners and other stakeholders	Effective and continued communication with all Parties, Convention bodies, and partners	Better implementation of the Convention; better recognition of wetland values at local, national, regional and global levels.	SG

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity <i>Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such resources; explore and enable options and mechanisms for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention. (CPs, Secretariat)</i>				
4.2.1 Implement Resolution XI.2 on Financial and Budgetary Matters	KRA: All requests by COP11 on financial matters addressed	Prepare technical and financial reports, including major achievements and lessons learned from the execution of financial matters. Implement 2015 programmes and budgets; monitor and administer funded projects.	Satisfactory reports made to SC on effective financial management, including core budget and voluntary funding	Finance Officer;
Expand partnership and fundraising capacity	Stronger and effective partnership; increased voluntary funding	Review partnership arrangements; prepare and implement a fundraising strategy	Number of effective partnership arrangements; higher level of voluntary funding	Partnership Coordinator
Improve the current Small Grants processes (SGF, WFF, SGA) ; explore alternatives; seek funding for existing SGF portfolio	KRA: New approaches to SGF, WFF and SGA. Clearer understanding on other existing funding mechanisms for wetlands projects	Draft proposal on a new approach submitted to COP12	Facilitate countries' access to funding. More efficient Small Grants Fund.	Partnership Coordinator
Evaluation and follow up process of WFF projects	KRA: On time technical and administrative follow up of funded projects	Preparation of contracts, evaluation of mid-term and final reports. Preparation of closing letters.	Successful on the ground implementation of the funded project contribution to the implementation of the Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean.	SRA - Americas
4.2.2 Make representations to Parties in arrears with annual contributions	KRA: Meetings with missions made	Organize and hold meetings with missions	Better understanding of the Convention and better recognition of wetland importance for sustainable development by Ministries of Foreign Affairs	SG
4.2.3 Manage the Convention budget in a timely and efficient manner	KRA: Maintain financial records and make all payments in a timely manner, reporting to Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance	Undertake efficient financial management	All financial reports satisfactory and approved by SC48	Finance Officer;

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness <i>Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention. (CPs, Secretariat)</i>				
4.3.1 Organise and hold Standing Committee 48, January 2015;	KRA: SC48 held and outcomes disseminated;	Preparation of logistics; preparation and dissemination of documents;	All logistics well organized; all documents sent to SC by 19 December 2014; SC48 successfully held; outputs of SC48 disseminated and follow up actions taken.	SG
Organise and hold SC49 and 50 around COP12		Invitations, agenda, preparation of documents, logistics	SC meetings take place with relevant documentation provided	SG
Finalize all aspects of COP12 preparations; including documentation and logistics for COP12 (incl. registration, participation by sponsored participants, Ramsar Awards, communications, ...)			Documents are provided in time; COP12 takes place.	SG, COP12 Coordinator
After COP12, plan for and organize SC51			SC meeting takes place with relevant documentation provided in time	SG
4.3.2 Provide periodic intersessional briefings to Standing Committee members, as required during the year	KRA: At least two briefings sent to SC	Send 2 Draft Progress reports to all SC members	Satisfactory progress made	SG
4.3.3 Finalize STRP outputs for its highest priorities (as endorsed by SC), prepare STRP participation at COP12 (input to DRs) and follow-up on the post Res. 11.16 DR process, concerning changes to the STRP composition and modus operandi	KRA: Outputs for the highest priorities identified by SC46 finalized; STRP input at COP12 provided; follow up to the DR in place	Publication and dissemination of outputs through the STRP platform and Ramsar website; feedback from STRP regarding participation at COP12 and recommendations; preparation of call for nominations for upcoming STRP	STRP outputs timely completed and disseminated to Parties	DSG, Scientific & Technical Support Officer

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
4.3.4 Maintain an electronic system for communication amongst STRP members & with its National Focal Points. Please note that this system may be incorporated into the Ramsar Website for communications and branding consistency	KRA: STRP Platform (or workspace within the main Ramsar Site) administered and maintained; STRP NFPs assisted to have improved involvement in STRP's work	i) Maintain and administer the STRP workspace ii) Assist the Communications Team with any merging. iii) Conduct a survey amongst workspace users on efficiency and satisfaction with the system and collect feedback for future improvements. iv) Assist and promote involvement of STRP NFPs.	Workspace adequately maintained	i) DSG ii, iii, and iv) Scientific & Technical Support Officer
4.3.5 Support STRP in its completion and delivery of its highest priority tasks (as indicated in its work plan)	KRA: STRP supported finalizing implementation of its work plan High Priority tasks	Support STRP members in the completion of High Priority tasks	Highest priority tasks within STRP work plan implemented	DSG, STRP Chair, and Scientific & Technical Support Officer
4.3.6 Arrange periodic briefings of missions in Geneva on activities taking place between Standing Committee meetings	KRA: At least one missions briefing held	Organize missions briefing	Missions in Geneva fully aware of the Convention's work and importance of wetlands in their countries	SG
4.3.7 With the Management Working Group (MWG), keep under review the existing management structures of the Secretariat and Convention	KRA: Any changes to management structures recommended by MWG implemented by Secretariat, as appropriate	Implement Decision SC41-37 on performance evaluation of the SG and maximizing synergy within the Secretariat. Implement relevant decisions recommended by MWG and adopted by SC42	SG 2014 Performance Evaluation finalized and sent to IUCN DG during first quarter of 2015	SG
4.3.9 With Uruguay, implement the MOU for COP12	KRA: COP12 MOU under implementation	Uruguay to provide progress report to SC48 Support the SG on the issues related with COP12 logistic and organization. Support Uruguay and Secretariat during Subgroup on COP12 discussions.	Progress report from Uruguay and from the Secretariat submitted to SC48	SG
4.3.11 Undertake general administration of the Secretariat and Convention	KRA: Parties, and other stakeholders, provided with timely and efficient service	Secretariat to provide timely and effective services to Parties and other stakeholders	Satisfactory and timely services provided	SG

Strategy/Activities	KRAs	Activity(ies)	Success indicator and/or benefit to Convention	Team Leader(s)
STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others <i>Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others. (Secretariat, IOPs)</i>				
4.4.1 Work with IOPs to develop a common understanding and framework for assistance in delivering the Convention's implementation	KRA: Collaborative activities identified and agreed, information on them provided to Contracting Parties	Increased collaboration with partners, including private sector	Enhanced implementation of the Convention; better perception of wetlands as assets for sustainable development	SG, Head of Strategy & Partnerships
4.4.2 Facilitate and enhance joint activities on the ground between IOPs and Ramsar Administrative Authorities	KRA: Joint IOP/AA activities facilitated and reported	Increased cooperation between IOPS and Ramsar AAs through Regional Initiatives and joint projects	Results of joint activities recognized and publicized	SRAs
STRATEGY 5.1 Membership <i>Secure universal membership of the Convention and provide an appropriate level of service. (CPs, Secretariat)</i>				
5.1.1 Advise countries in the process of accession on any issues of clarification, and on preparing their first Ramsar Information Sheet, as necessary	KRA: Countries in the process of accession further assisted	Assist at least three countries in accession process in Africa, Asia & Oceania, and the Caribbean	Five additional Parties by the end of 2015	SRAs
Other Secretariat activities				
Other activities not covered under any of the above Strategies/KRAs	Assistance to Interns and administration of their studios; and new Ramsar staff	Respond to ad hoc requests from Parties	All requests addressed	Administrative Assistant; Regional Affairs Officer (for professional technical Assistance to Interns)