

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
CONVENCION SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES (Ramsar, Irán, 1971)

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Technical Session / Séance Technique / Sesión Técnica



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[Note: The presentation of Mr Ken Newcombe, Chief, GEF Coordination Division, Environment Department, World Bank, was keyed to a series of slides and is not suitable for printing here.]

Summary Report of Technical Session C

“Interactions with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Bank (WB), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)”

Chair: Mme Monique Barbut, French Global Environment Facility (FFEM)

Vice Chair: Mr Swarn Singh Boparai (India)

Secretariat: Michael Smart (Ramsar Bureau)

Keynote Presentations

“Issues of Common Concern to Ramsar and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Mechanisms to Address Them,” Dr Calestous Juma, Executive Secretary of the CBD

“Issues in Wetland Management: Bank-GEF Portfolio Experience,” Mr Ken Newcombe, Chief, GEF Coordination Division, Environment Department, World Bank

Issues of Common Concern to Ramsar and the CBD

Dr Juma

1. described the evolution of the CBD and its focus on specific ecosystems; the first is marine and coastal biodiversity, which in large part overlaps with Ramsar’s purposes and offers opportunities for joint programming. The CBD’s functions, as Ramsar’s, are largely as guidance and it will not have its own programmes. It will work with other entities which do have programmes and intends to work closely with Ramsar on all matters concerning wetlands. There is an opportunity for the GEF to support Ramsar work through the CBD. This was the origin of the idea of signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ramsar Convention. There will be many future opportunities to harmonize, in order to avoid duplication and coordinate activities.

Discussion of Dr Juma’s presentation

2. It was suggested that the first priority is exchange of information on activities concerning wetlands. It was argued that the CBD is bound to respect the other conventions and should not duplicate what is done by other biodiversity-related conventions. The chief function of the CBD is to coordinate the experience of the existing Conventions and to fill the gaps in the areas that they cover. It was noted that sustainable use of biodiversity will benefit greatly, particularly at national level, from Ramsar’s 25 years of experience. The CBD was not intended to be an umbrella for other conventions that cover more restricted areas but have a role in the conservation of biological diversity.
3. Several speakers noted that Ramsar lacks a function for providing financial assistance for the conservation of wetlands, so efforts to establish links with the CBD, which does have access to financial resources, is a cause for hope for countries requiring financial assistance. The conventions can be complementary to one another, and the CBD can cover this part not covered by Ramsar.
4. It was observed that a Contracting Party could avoid duplication of efforts by using the same national institutions to coordinate its relations with both conventions. There should be a harmonization of reporting requirements for the two conventions in order to avoid more work for national officials. It was also suggested that there is a need for integrating national strategies and plans for wetlands into those for biodiversity, and for coordinating them with the fight against desertification and with the Framework Convention on Climate Change as well, given the impact of sea level rise on Ramsar’s interest in coastal zones.

5. Projects involving the Ramsar Convention could benefit directly from GEF funding through the provisions covering international waters and the protection of biological diversity. Nonetheless, these projects must be presented directly by countries eligible for GEF assistance and not by the Convention itself. Moreover, they must be consistent with the Operational Strategy of the GEF, and the funding provided can only cover the incremental costs as defined by the Instrument of the GEF.

World Bank-GEF Portfolio Experience

Mr Newcombe

6. observed that the World Bank finances projects which serve the purposes of all conventions. He described the structures of and relationships between the WB and the GEF and gave examples to show that the WB seeks a strong relationship with the Ramsar Convention. Though it is difficult to quantify the wetland projects benefiting from GEF assistance, assistance to wetlands is definitely growing as rapidly as to other biodiversity areas. He noted that many WB development projects can be controversial, with built-in conflicts. The WB assesses critical natural values (for example, Ramsar listing), but it may be that at times the overall goals of a project (e.g., development of infrastructure) require some wetland loss; in those instances, compensation will be established.
7. The GEF takes advantage of its contacts with the Ramsar Bureau to strengthen wetland components in projects targeted in other areas. Successful cases tend to include early consultation with stakeholders, a national biodiversity strategy which ensures national political commitment, and empowerment of local communities.

Discussion of Mr Newcombe's presentation

8. There was discussion of the mechanics of the GEF's approval and funding of proposals, and of how well are able to manage project funds. It was noted that the local population always has a say in project management, but this is not to say that GEF assistance is only for NGOs—some 95-97% of the projects go to the governments which will actually be organizing the work. Many projects include provisions for strengthening the management capacities of local communities, where this was seen as necessary.

Discussion of Draft Resolution 6.9

10. Several Parties were concerned that the draft text contained a suggestion that Ramsar is to be directed by another convention. The intention lies in the hope that the CBD's next COP will choose wetlands as the second ecosystem to focus upon and then invite Ramsar to contribute heavily. It was felt that the resolution should include wording to ensure that the STRP reports to the SC and the COP on the results of the cooperation being sought with CBD and GEF technical bodies. The intention of this recommendation is simply to encourage the exchange of information.

Discussion of Draft Resolution 6.10

11. It was suggested that the GEF should be encouraged to seek opportunities to address Ramsar values. Contracting Parties could be urged to include matters relating to wetlands as a priority in their national strategies developed under the CBD. They should also collaborate within the CBD to seek protection of wetlands as a priority issue within the CBD COP's guidance to the GEF.

Rapporteur: Dwight Peck

Rapport Résumé de la Séance Technique C

“Interactions avec la Convention sur la diversité biologique, la Banque Mondiale et le Fonds pour l’environnement mondial (FEM)”

Présidente: Mme Monique Barbut, Fonds français pour l’environnement mondial (FFEM)

Vice-président: M. Swarn Singh Boparai (Inde)

Secrétariat: M. Michael Smart (Bureau Ramsar)

Exposé liminaire

“Questions intéressant à la fois Ramsar et la Convention sur la diversité biologique et mécanismes permettant de les traiter”, M. Calestous Juma, Secrétaire exécutif de la Convention sur la diversité biologique

“Questions de gestion des zones humides: Expérience Banque-FEM”, Ken Newcombe, Chef, Division de la coordination FEM, Département de l’environnement, Banque mondiale

Questions intéressant à la fois Ramsar et la Convention sur la diversité biologique

M. Juma

1. décrit l’évolution de la Convention et les domaines auxquels elle s’intéresse: le premier étant la diversité biologique marine et côtière, qui recouvre en grande partie les objectifs de Ramsar et offre des possibilités d’activités conjointes. Les fonctions de la Convention sur la diversité biologique, comme celles de Ramsar, consistent essentiellement à fournir des orientations et la Convention n’aura pas ses propres programmes: elle coopérera avec d’autres entités dûment dotées de programmes et elle a l’intention de collaborer étroitement avec Ramsar sur toutes les questions relatives aux zones humides. Le FEM a la possibilité d’appuyer les travaux de Ramsar par l’intermédiaire de la Convention sur la diversité biologique. Telle était l’idée qui fut à l’origine de la signature du Protocole d’accord avec la Convention de Ramsar. Les occasions d’harmoniser les activités et de les coordonner pour éviter les chevauchements ne manqueront pas.

Discussion sur l’intervention de M. Juma

2. La première priorité est l’échange d’informations sur les activités relatives aux zones humides. La Convention sur la diversité biologique se doit de respecter les autres conventions relatives à la diversité biologique et ses activités ne doivent pas faire double emploi avec les leurs. La grande fonction de la Convention sur la diversité biologique est de coordonner les acquis des Conventions existantes et de combler les vides sur les thématiques non couvertes par ces autres Conventions. Il a été noté que les 25 ans d’expérience de Ramsar pourraient largement contribuer à l’utilisation durable de la diversité biologique, en particulier au niveau national. Il n’a pas été prévu que la Convention sur la diversité biologique chapeaute les autres conventions qui traitent de thématiques plus restreintes mais ayant un lien avec la diversité biologique.
3. Plusieurs orateurs font remarquer que Ramsar n’a pas de mécanisme permettant d’accorder une aide financière pour la conservation des zones humides, ce qui explique que les efforts visant à nouer des liens avec la Convention sur la diversité biologique qui, elle, dispose au-travers du FEM de ressources financières, soient une raison d’espérer pour les pays qui ont besoin d’une aide financière. Ces conventions peuvent être complémentaires, la Convention sur la diversité biologique étant en mesure d’assumer la fonction de coordination qui fait défaut à Ramsar.
4. Une Partie contractante peut éviter le dédoublement des efforts en faisant appel à la même institution nationale pour coordonner ses relations avec les deux Conventions. L’obligation de produire des rapports pour les deux Conventions devrait être harmonisée afin d’éviter un surcroît de travail aux

responsables nationaux. Il serait bon d'intégrer des stratégies et plans nationaux pour les zones humides aux stratégies et plans pour la diversité biologique et de coordonner ceux-ci avec les efforts de lutte contre la désertification, ainsi qu'avec les activités de la Convention-cadre sur les changements climatiques étant donné l'impact de l'élévation du niveau de la mer sur les zones côtières qui intéressent Ramsar.

5. Enfin, les projets intéressant la Convention de Ramsar peuvent directement bénéficier des financements du Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial au-travers des chapitres traitant des eaux internationales et de la protection de la diversité biologique. Cependant, les projets doivent être présentés par des pays éligibles au Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial et non pas par la Convention de Ramsar elle-même. Ils doivent, en outre, être cohérents avec la Stratégie Opérationnelle du FEM et les financements qui y sont accordés ne peuvent couvrir que le coût incrémental tel que définit par l'Instrument du FEM.

Expérience Banque Mondiale - FEM

M. Newcombe

6. observe que la Banque Mondiale finance des projets qui servent les objectifs de toutes les conventions. Il décrit les structures et la nature des relations entre la Banque Mondiale et le FEM et donne des exemples prouvant que la Banque Mondiale cherche à nouer des relations solides avec la Convention de Ramsar. Bien qu'il soit difficile de chiffrer les projets pour les zones humides qui bénéficient de l'aide du FEM, il est clair que l'aide aux zones humides augmente aussi rapidement que l'aide à d'autres domaines de la diversité biologique. Il ajoute que beaucoup de projets de développement de la Banque Mondiale peuvent prêter à controverse et contenir des conflits en germe. La Banque Mondiale tient compte de valeurs naturelles d'importance critique (par exemple les sites Ramsar) mais il se peut que, parfois, les objectifs généraux d'un projet (par exemple le développement des infrastructures) entraîne la disparition de zones humides; dans ce cas des compensations sont prévues.
7. Le FEM profite de ses relations avec le Bureau Ramsar pour renforcer le volet zones humides de ses projets ayant trait à d'autres domaines. La réussite s'explique souvent par des consultations entamées aussi rapidement que possible avec les parties prenantes, par une stratégie nationale pour la diversité biologique qui veille à obtenir un engagement politique national et par le renforcement des capacités d'intervention des communautés locales.

Discussion sur l'intervention de M. Newcombe

8. Le mécanisme d'adoption et de financement des projets par le FEM est discuté ainsi que son aptitude à gérer les fonds pour les projets. Il a été noté que les populations locales avaient toujours un mot à dire dans la gestion des projets. Mais cela ne signifie pas que les fonds du FEM sont réservés aux ONG - environ 95 à 97 % des projets vont aux gouvernements qui organisent en fait les activités. Beaucoup de projets prévoient le renforcement des capacités de gestion des communautés locales, ce qui a été jugé nécessaire par l'ensemble des intervenants.

Discussion du projet de Résolution VI.9

10. Plusieurs Parties ont l'impression que le texte suppose que Ramsar est subordonnée à une autre convention. Les participants forment le voeu que la prochaine Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur la diversité biologique choisira les zones humides comme deuxième écosystème prioritaire et invitera Ramsar à apporter une contribution importante. La résolution devrait être libellée de manière à demander au GEST de faire rapport au Comité permanent et à la Conférence des Parties sur les résultats de la coopération recherchée avec les organes techniques de la Convention sur la diversité biologique et du FEM. Cette recommandation a simplement pour but d'encourager l'échange d'information.

Discussion du projet de Résolution VI.10

11. Il est proposé d'encourager le FEM à s'intéresser de plus près aux objectifs de Ramsar. Les Parties contractantes pourraient être priées d'inclure, de manière prioritaire, des questions en rapport avec les zones humides dans leurs stratégies nationales élaborées dans le cadre de la Convention sur la diversité biologique. Elles devraient aussi collaborer pour que la CdP de la Convention sur la diversité biologique considère la protection des zones humides comme une question prioritaire dans le cadre des orientations qu'elle donne au FEM.
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Informe Resumido de la Sesión Técnica C

“Relaciones con el Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica (CDB), el Banco Mundial y el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (FMAM)”

Presidenta: Sra. Monique Barbut, Fondo Francés para el Medio Ambiente Mundial

Vicepresidente: Sr. Swarn Singh Boparai (India)

Secretaría: Michael Smart (Oficina de Ramsar)

Presentaciones principales

“Cuestiones de interés común para Ramsar y el Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica, y Mecanismos para Abordarlas”, Dr. Calestous Juma, Secretario Ejecutivo, Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica

“Problemas de Gestión de Humedales: Experiencia del Banco-FMAM”, Sr. Ken Newcombe, Jefe, División de Coordinación del FMAM, Departamento del Medio Ambiente, Banco Mundial

Cuestiones de interés común para Ramsar y el CDB

El Dr. Juma

1. describió la evolución del CDB y su especial interés por determinados ecosistemas; el primero es el que forma la biodiversidad marina y costera, que en gran parte se superpone con los intereses de Ramsar y ofrece posibilidades de programar actividades en común. Las funciones del CDB, como las de Ramsar, se centran fundamentalmente en la oferta de orientaciones y no tiene, ni tendrá, programas propios. Su sistema operativo es trabajar con otras entidades que sí tienen programas y pretende colaborar estrechamente con Ramsar en las cuestiones de todo tipo que afecten a los humedales. Existe la posibilidad de que el FMAM preste apoyo a Ramsar a través del CDB. De ahí surgió la idea de firmar el Memorándum de Entendimiento con la Convención de Ramsar. Habrá muchas oportunidades en el futuro de armonizar actividades, con el fin de evitar la duplicación y facilitar su coordinación.

Debate de la intervención del Dr. Juma

2. Se indicó que debía darse la máxima prioridad al intercambio de información sobre actividades que afectarían a los humedales. Se alegó que el CDB estaba obligado a respetar a las demás Convenciones y no debería duplicar la labor que llevan a cabo otras Convenciones relacionadas con la biodiversidad. La principal función del CDB es coordinar la experiencia de las Convenciones en vigor y colmar las lagunas que se planteen en su ámbito. Se señaló que los 25 años de actividad de Ramsar, especialmente a escala nacional, eran una experiencia muy valiosa que favorecería el uso sostenible de la biodiversidad. El CDB no fue concebido para superponerse a otras Convenciones que tienen un ámbito más limitado pero se interesan también por la conservación de la diversidad biológica.
3. Varios oradores señalaron que Ramsar no contaba entre las funciones de ofrecer asistencia financiera para la conservación de humedales, de modo que establecer relaciones con el CDB, que sí tenía acceso a recursos financieros, era un motivo de esperanza para los países que necesitaran asistencia financiera. Las Convenciones podían complementarse entre sí y el CDB podía encargarse de esta función que Ramsar no incluía en su ámbito.
4. Se señaló que las Partes Contratantes podían evitar duplicaciones utilizando una sola institución nacional para coordinar sus relaciones con las dos Convenciones. Para evitar una sobrecarga de trabajo a los funcionarios nacionales, debían armonizarse los requisitos informativos de las dos Convenciones. También se sugirió que era necesario integrar las estrategias y los planes nacionales sobre los humedales en las estrategias y los planes sobre la biodiversidad y coordinar todo ello con la

lucha contra la desertificación y con el Convenio Marco sobre el Cambio Climático, visto el impacto de la subida del nivel de los mares sobre el interés de Ramsar por las zonas costeras.

5. Gracias a las disposiciones del FMAM que incluyen en su ámbito a las aguas internacionales y la protección de la diversidad biológica, los proyectos en que interviniera la Convención de Ramsar podrían obtener directamente fondos del FMAM. Sin embargo, los proyectos tenían que ser presentados directamente por países que cumplieran los requisitos para recibir ayuda del FMAM y no por la propia Convención. Además, tenían que ser compatibles con la Estrategia Operativa del FMAM, y la financiación prevista sólo podía cubrir el incremento de costos, según la definición del Instrumento del FMAM.

Experiencia del Banco Mundial-FMAM

El Sr. Newcombe

6. señaló que el Banco Mundial financia proyectos que conjugan los intereses de todas las Convenciones. Describió las estructuras del Banco Mundial y del FMAM, y sus relaciones, y dio ejemplos de cómo el Banco Mundial trataba de establecer relaciones estrechas con la Convención de Ramsar. Aunque era difícil cuantificar los proyectos relacionados con humedales que se beneficiaban de la asistencia del FMAM, sí era cierto que la asistencia a los humedales sin duda crecía al mismo ritmo que la asistencia prestada a otras áreas relacionadas con la biodiversidad. Indicó que muchos proyectos de desarrollo del Banco Mundial podían ser controvertidos, con conflictos inherentes. El Banco Mundial tiene en cuenta ciertos valores naturales de importancia fundamental (por ejemplo, los que representa la Lista de Ramsar), pero es posible que en algún momento se precise reducir la superficie de un humedal para poder llevar a cabo los objetivos de un proyecto (por ejemplo, la construcción de infraestructura); en esos casos, debe establecerse una compensación.
7. El FMAM aprovecha sus contactos con la Oficina de Ramsar para realzar la importancia de los humedales que pueden verse afectados por proyectos orientados en otro sentido. El éxito obtenido en algunos casos tiende a mostrar la importancia de una apertura rápida de un proceso de consulta con los interesados, una estrategia nacional de biodiversidad que garantice el compromiso político nacional y una delegación de poderes en las comunidades locales.

Debate de la intervención del Sr. Newcombe

8. Se produjo un debate sobre la mecánica del FMAM para aprobar y financiar proyectos y sobre su capacidad para gestionar los fondos destinados a proyectos. Se señaló que la población local siempre tiene una opinión que exponer cuando se trata de gestionar un proyecto, pero eso no equivale a decir que la asistencia que presta el FMAM se dedique sólo a las ONG – entre el 95 y el 97% de los fondos destinados a proyectos se encauzan a través de los gobiernos, que realmente son quienes organizan el trabajo. Muchos proyectos incluyen disposiciones destinadas a mejorar la capacidad de gestión de las comunidades locales, cuando ello se considera necesario.

Debate del proyecto de Resolución 6.9

10. Varias Partes mostraron su preocupación ante el proyecto de Resolución, que permitía concluir que Ramsar debía ser dirigida por otra Convención. El equívoco estribaba en la expresión de la esperanza de que la próxima Conferencia de las Partes del CDB eligiera a los humedales como el segundo ecosistema sobre el que centrar su actividad, para invitar posteriormente a Ramsar a contribuir intensamente en esta labor. Se consideró que la resolución debía incluir alguna disposición que estableciera que el GECT debía informar al Comité Permanente y a la Conferencia de las Partes sobre los resultados de la cooperación que se intentaba con los órganos técnicos del CDB y el FMAM. El propósito de esta Recomendación era simplemente promover el intercambio de información.

Debate del proyecto de Resolución 6.10

11. Se propuso que se instara al FMAM a buscar la posibilidad de atender a los valores de Ramsar. Debía pedirse a las Partes Contratantes que dieran un carácter prioritario en las estrategias nacionales que elaboraran en el marco del CDB a la inclusión de temas relacionados con los humedales. También debían colaborar dentro del CDB para que la Conferencia de las Partes del CDB diera instrucciones al FMAM de que considere prioritaria la protección de los humedales.
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PAPERS / EXPOSES / PRESENTACIONES

(in their original language only / dans la langue d'origine uniquement / solo en el idioma original)

“Cooperation Between the Convention On Biological Diversity And The Ramsar Convention”

Dr Calestous Juma
Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

The 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Convention on Wetlands of Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat has come at an important period in the history of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The transition of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) towards national implementation makes it possible for the two treaties to coordinate their activities for mutual reinforcement. The secretariats of the two treaties have entered into an agreement to cooperate on a number of issues. However, the key to the success of such cooperation lies in the ability of the Contracting Parties to the two treaties to coordinate the implementation of their conservation efforts to ensure that the objectives of the treaties support each other. This meeting could further this goal and move the two Conventions towards closer cooperation in the implementation of their objectives.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is a complex document that has drawn heavily from previous experiences and negotiations in other forums. It was initially intended (as of 1987) to serve as an “umbrella” convention under which many other biodiversity-related agreements would fall. It was hoped that the momentum created by the Rio process would provide the political impetus to achieve this goal. But as time went on, this ambitious goal was abandoned as negotiators sought to reduce the scope of the treaty or to give it a framework character. In the end, the Convention has two relevant features.

The first feature is that the bulk of the CBD contains articles that can be implemented without requiring additional negotiations. The Convention also contains articles that provide a set of priorities which can be implemented without an extended period of discussions on priority measures. Article 6 on “General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use”, for example, sets out the national and sectoral policy basis for the implementation of the Convention. Since the Convention builds on on-going efforts in conservation and sustainable use around the world, it may not require additional formulations in the form of “enabling activities”.

The second feature of the Convention is the existence of specific areas that require additional negotiations. This the case with the sections dealing with the need for and modalities for a protocol on biosafety. Even here, the Convention contains Article 8g, which allows for the national implementation of biosafety programmes which can be undertaken without requiring additional negotiations. The negotiations underway in the Convention on biosafety are limited to the transborder movement of living modified organisms (LMOs). It is important to distinguish those issues related to “risk management” as provided in Article 8g and “risk perception” as outlined in Article 19(3) and forming the basis for the on-going biosafety negotiations.

The CBD is emerging as an important policy guidance body through which the international community will continue to seek solutions to problems related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In exercising this role, the Convention has directed its attention to influencing the programmes and activities of other international institutions and processes. This is being done through the issuing of “guidance instruments” in the form of statements or framework programmes. The first major guidance instruments have been directed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests created by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. One of the interesting features of the instruments is that they request the recipient institutions to act on them and to report back to the Conference of the Parties. The COP may, if deemed appropriate, issue additional guidance.

In addition to the guidance instruments, the COP is also issuing framework programmes intended to guide the implementation of specific activities. The first attempt to do so is contained in the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity. These two instruments reveal the determination of the Convention to influence biodiversity-related activities through giving guidance. Their implementation, however, will depend largely on the ability of the conservation community worldwide to press for their implementation and for the COP to remain vigilant and to assess progress on a regular basis.

Since coming into force in December 1993, the membership of the Convention on Biological Diversity has increased from 30 to 142 Contracting Parties. The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which was held in the Bahamas in 1994, formulated a three-year Medium-Term Programme of Work. The Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, demonstrated in its various decisions the commitment of the Parties to moving towards the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention and outlined in the work programme. A number of decisions of the Conference of the Parties are of particular relevance to the Ramsar Convention.

The CBD is placing special emphasis on cooperation with other conventions and intergovernmental institutions related to biodiversity. This emphasis is reflected in Decision II/13 on “Cooperation with Other Biodiversity-related Conventions”. This decision requests the Executive Secretary to coordinate with the Secretariats of relevant biodiversity-related conventions with a view to:

- facilitating exchange of information and experience;
- exploring the possibility of recommending procedures for harmonizing, to the extent desirable and practicable, the reporting requirements of Parties under those instruments and conventions;
- exploring the possibility of coordinating their respective programmes of work; and
- consulting on how such conventions and other international legal instruments can contribute to the implementation of the provisions of the CBD.

Decision II/13 invites the governing bodies of such conventions and other international legal instruments related to biological diversity to consider at their next meetings their possible contribution to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Convention.

The Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, for its third meeting, a report on the implementation of this decision, containing concrete recommendations aimed at promoting and strengthening institutional cooperation with other global and regional biodiversity-related conventions.

In response to this decision, the Secretariat of the CBD embarked on discussions with the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention which resulted in the Memorandum of Cooperation which was signed on 19 January 1996. In addition to overall institutional cooperation, the memorandum also covers issues related to the exchange of information and experience, coordination of programmes of work and joint conservation activities.

The Memorandum of Cooperation sets out the basis for long-term cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention. This cooperation, however, will need to result in improved coordination and joint action at the national level. In this regard, the challenge now lies in the ability of the Contracting Parties to the two conventions to start integrating their

activities. The administrative authorities for the Ramsar Convention and national focal points for the CBD hold the key to this cooperation.

One area that offers the initial opportunity for cooperation at the national level is the implementation of Articles 6 and 8, which deal with “General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity” and “In-Situ Conservation”, respectively. The emphasis here is on development of national strategies, programmes and plans. Coordination at the national level would ensure that issues of concern to the Ramsar Convention are reflected in the national and sectoral programmed strategies and plans prepared under the CBD.

Another area of cooperation is the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity, as outlined in Decision II/10 of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The decision, which is being elaborated as the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, covers areas of relevance to the Ramsar Convention. Decision II/8, which deals with components of biological diversity under threat, is also relevant to the Ramsar Convention.

The Clearing-house Mechanism of the CBD, an electronic communication network for the promotion of scientific and technical cooperation among the Parties, offers opportunities for further cooperation on issues related to scientific and technical cooperation. In addition to the linkages through the Clearing-house Mechanism, the conventions may also cooperate through the preparation of national reports under the CBD.

Finally, project activities prepared under the Ramsar Convention could also benefit from the financial mechanism of the CBD, currently implemented by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The financial mechanism is country-driven and therefore proposals seeking to implement the Ramsar Convention will need to follow the channels laid down by the GEF.
