



GOBIERNO DE
CHILE
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

Mision de Chile
Despachado
Ginebra

Nº 305

ACHIM STEINER
Executive Director
United Nations Programme for the Environment
Nairobi, Kenya.

Dear Mr. Steiner,

Thank you very much for sending us a comprehensive report in response to our request for information on whether the Ramsar Secretariat could be institutionally hosted by UNEP.

The report you provided was very helpful in the Working Group's deliberations. The response of UNEP provided a good basis for conducting a thorough analysis side by side with the report provided by IUCN of the current and future arrangements of the Ramsar Secretariat. Based on the review of responses of both UNEP and IUCN, a large majority of states in the Working Group recommended that there is strong evidence that a Ramsar Secretariat provided by UNEP would more effectively implement the Ramsar Convention and recommended to the Ramsar Standing Committee that the Secretariat be hosted by UNEP.

The Ramsar Standing Committee at its 41st meeting after considering the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group mandated the Working Group to determine concrete modalities for implementing a transfer of the Ramsar Secretariat to UNEP. Accordingly, the Standing Committee has directed the Working Group to seek further clarification from you. The information sought include options for reducing the costs of a UNEP-administered Ramsar Secretariat, transition arrangements, the timeline for implementation of such a transfer, the best possible staff arrangements, and the added benefits of UNEP hosting the Ramsar Secretariat. In this respect, we request you to furnish us with a report based on the attached report outline by 24 September 2010.

We are most grateful for your continued support in providing the Working Group with sufficient information to facilitate our work in advising our Contracting Parties.

Thank you very much in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Miranda Brown (Australia)

Osvaldo P. Álvarez-Pérez (Chile)

Geneva, 22 July 2010



Annex 1
Report Outline

The Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform are requesting a report to present to the Ramsar Standing Committee in its review for implementing a transfer of the Ramsar Secretariat to UNEP.

A. Further options for reducing the costs of a UNEP-administered Ramsar Secretariat:

1. Provide feasible/realistic cost scenarios under a UNEP-administered Convention that do not impact UNEP's over-all budget and Program. Including scenarios that keep total costs the same (i.e. cost neutral) or reduce the costs.
2. State the contributions of each Party under each cost scenario (i.e. under the present arrangement and under a UNEP administration).

B. Transition arrangements

1. Clarify the costs which UNEP foresees as practicable costs and its impact on the Ramsar Secretariat's budget.
2. Clarify the impacts of various proposed budget scenarios on the overall UNEP budget and Program.

C. Timing and a timeline for implementation

1. Provide a possible timeframe for the provision of the Ramsar Secretariat by UNEP.

D. The best possible staff arrangements

1. Provide information on:
 - a. the situation of staff about to go on retirement;
 - b. the situation of the present interns and the internship programme as a whole, and
 - c. whether the Secretariat's staff members would have to apply for their positions.
 - d. changes in staff status and provisions under the UN system regulations.
2. Review the job classifications already undertaken by UNEP based on the positions and job descriptions of the Ramsar Secretariat. For example, the number of P5s under the UNEP job classification appears to be inconsistent with the practice under other MEAs.
3. Provide staff cost scenarios comparing the present situation and a UNEP-administered Convention.

E. The added benefits to the Convention

1. Provide detailed information on the added benefits of a UNEP-administered Convention vis-à-vis the present situation of the Ramsar Convention?
2. What are the benefits to Parties should the Ramsar Secretariat be administered by UNEP in terms of the following:
 - a. financing for capacity building and cooperation projects;
 - b. flexibility of finance and project approval.
 - b. civil society and private sector participation;



- c. regional initiatives, and
 - d. institutional strengthening.
3. Provide information on the obligations that could arise as a result of transfer of funds.
 4. How quickly can a programme or project receive funding, comparing the Ramsar Convention practice under IUCN and a UNEP-administered Convention?
 5. How will the move facilitate the efficient working of the Ramsar Secretariat and its impact on staff?
 6. How would the Ramsar Convention under UNEP be affected in terms of:
 - a. access to funding;
 - b. management of data between the different wetland organisations;
 - c. facilitate the developmental linkages between the regional offices of UNEP;
 - d. maintenance of existing linkages and partnerships;
 - e. facilitate collaboration of wetlands within the UNEP regions, and
 - f. promote regional initiatives.
 7. What would be the legal status of the Ramsar Convention as a UNEP-administered Convention?
 8. How will UN staff and financial rules and regulations affect Ramsar operations?