



GOBIERNO DE CHILE  
MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES  
Misión Permanente de Chile  
ante las Organizaciones Internacionales  
Ginebra

From the Co-Chairs of the  
Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform

Mrs. Julia Marton-Lefevre  
IUCN  
Rue Mauverney 28  
1196 Gland

Geneva, 2 April 2009

Dear Mrs. Marton-Lefevre,

As you will no doubt be aware, building on Resolution IX.10 , endorsed at the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Uganda, Resolution X.5 'Facilitating the work of the Ramsar Convention and its Secretariat' was endorsed at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Changwon City, Republic Korea in October 2008. The Resolution calls for the establishment of an open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, the remit of which is to recommend to the Ramsar Standing Committee ways in which the capacity and operations of the Secretariat can be improved. This Working Group held its first meeting on 19 January 2009 and its second on 24 March 2009 in Gland, Switzerland. Representatives from IUCN were present at both meetings.

We understand that Ramsar has a very strong relationship with IUCN, both as a host and an International Organization Partner. This is a relationship that has been critical to the success of the Convention. We note that the Conference of Parties has taken every possible opportunity to thank IUCN for their support. We also note that the Ramsar Secretariat very much appreciate your day to day support.

Part of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group is to recommend to the Standing Committee whether the Secretariat should continue to be hosted by IUCN. At the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group it was agreed that we should solicit from UNEP further detailed and specific information upon the costs and benefits to the Convention of a change in host and to this end we have invited them to provide us with a report.

We understand that IUCN and the Chair of the Ramsar Standing Committee have recently concluded a new Service Agreement covering Accounting and Finance, IT, HR and Facilities Management Services, and this is to be the basis of your service



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offering to Ramsar going forwards. We would however like to invite IUCN to consider the request that has been made of UNEP and provide a similar report identifying specific information on current and future arrangements, highlighting areas where IUCN could enhance their role in the service, support and general facilitation of the Convention. We attach a report outline, based on that provided to UNEP, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you, preferably sometime in Mid May, with a view to having a final report by 30 September 2009. This would allow us to present UNEP and IUCN positions side by side at the next working Group meeting scheduled for mid November 2009.

We are most grateful of your continued support in getting us to a position of sufficient information for our Working Group to purposefully deliberate and advise the Standing Committee and Conference of Parties. I hope our request, discussions and any information you provide will serve as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between IUCN and Ramsar.

Thank you very much in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Guy O'Brien (Australia)

Osvaldo P. Alvarez-Perez (Chile)



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## Annex 1

### Report Outline

The Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform are requesting a report to supplement the October 2008 report on the Legal Status of the Ramsar Secretariat to clearly present to the Ramsar Standing Committee opportunities for improving the operation of the Convention via its institutional host. IUCN is the current host of the Ramsar Secretariat.

#### A. Deliverables and timetable:

1. Draft report, in English, and discussion with Working Group co-Chairs by 31 July 2009.

Contents will include:

- Key assumptions made, including those on location
  - Operational and legal considerations
  - Analysis of staff positions, grading and costs
  - Analysis of current and possible future administrative and financial support services and costs
  - Assessment of the timescales and costs involved in any operational improvements proposed.
2. Final report, in English, by 30 September 2009.

#### B. General

1. How could IUCN further enhance the image, visibility and recognition of the Convention and enhance the recognition of wetlands as important assets for conservation and sustainable development, including the role of wetlands in biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, desertification control, food security, human health, tourism, poverty reduction and other economic and social activities.
2. What specifically could IUCN do to enhance the overall implementation of the Convention? How might it reinforce scientific and technical capability? How might hosting by a different organisation affect the relationship between IUCN and Ramsar in terms of the practical implementation of their shared goals?
3. How could IUCN assist the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to the Convention in gaining greater access to funds?



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### C. Legal Personality

1. Please summarise IUCNs local and international legal status/personality and current understanding of the legal and practical liability that it currently assumes as host of Ramsar.
2. How would IUCN assess the current international legal personality of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, particularly its status in relation to the other MEAs, and its ability to collaborate with MEAs, IOPs (BirdLife International, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Wetlands International), other UN agencies, donor community and the business sector?
3. How could IUCN help the Convention to be better involved in or represented at relevant international meetings system?
4. Are there any changes IUCN might propose to enhance the ability of the Secretariat to make binding contracts with third parties and enhance the ability of the Secretariat to enter into partnerships with the business sector, and the status and role of the existing Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs)?

### D. Staff

1. Analysis of current Ramsar positions, IUCN grading and status (local vs international hire, finite vs indefinite contract) and costs. Cost of living and performance related salary advancement mechanisms.
2. Explanation of the IUCN salary system, specifically addressing cost of living and performance related salary advancement mechanisms, issues of salary escalation with longevity of service, for international professional staff and local hires,
3. Summary of benefits that Ramsar personnel as IUCN employees currently receive, including pension, education, medical costs, relocation costs etc.
4. Explanation of the implications of any mandatory rotation of international professional positions. Consideration of normal periods for and restrictions on recruitment and filling of positions and the normal time that positions remain unfilled.
5. Implications for international travel of designation of a position as an international professional one, covering visas and work permits in the host country, for employee and dependents, travel in the course of duty, access to security and support services when travelling  
(reference:[http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key\\_sc37\\_doc02\\_add1.doc](http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key_sc37_doc02_add1.doc)).
6. Immigration and administration status of international staff and their families, whether international professional staff or locally hired staff. Advantages, privileges and constraints of being UNEP staff depending on the



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staff nationality

(reference:[http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key\\_sc37\\_doc02\\_add1.doc](http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key_sc37_doc02_add1.doc)).

7. Consideration of how the Ramsar intern program (4 staff positions) works and can be maintained/enhanced (at a similar cost to currently).
8. How might IUCN further help Ramsar in the development and maintenance of quality staff in Ramsar? Are there opportunities for enhancing career alternatives for Ramsar staff within the IUCN organisation or beyond?

#### **E. Administrative service and cost comparison**

1. Detailed explanation of services that are currently provided by IUCN under the 2009 Letter of Agreement on Provision of Services. Summary of costs for the past 5 years.
2. Consideration of additional services that might be provided to Ramsar, together with an indication of cost. Assessment of any additional staff resources could be included, such as a legal advisor, to support the work of the Secretariat. Thoughts on any additional staff resources that Ramsar might wish to request and could be negotiated, and at what cost.
3. Explanation of how funds for the Secretariat are kept and administered? Are there any controls or conditions applied to Core and non-Core funds (voluntarily funded projects and private sector funded projects) that we should be aware of?
4. Assessment of the practical issues of using support services such as finance, legal, contract support, personnel, which are located somewhere other than the location of the Secretariat.

#### **F. Location alternatives**

1. Will IUCN be able to continue to host the Ramsar convention in Gland for the foreseeable future? Could IUCN host Ramsar elsewhere and what would be the major practical and cost implications of these.
2. What office space would be made available to the Secretariat. (Note: The Ramsar Secretariat currently pays no rent and resides in a building donated by the Swiss Government for Ramsar use, alongside IUCN, free of charge.)

#### **G. Transition issues**

1. Possibility and assessment of the desirability of transferring current local and expat staff from IUCN to Ramsar under a different host. Implications of transferring existing contracts and accrued benefits.
2. For any suggested operational improvements stemming from IUCN, assess the timeframe for implementation.



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#### H. Sharing of information

1. The Ramsar Secretariat will provide financial and other information to IUCN for the purpose of compiling your report. Your contact for this information should be Anada Tiega, Secretary General, and Anna Goodwin, Finance Officer.
2. Information shared regarding the current operations of Ramsar and any possible alternatives must be treated with the utmost confidentiality by all parties.
3. The report will be made available only to the members of the Ad Hoc Working Group in the first instance. Your permission will be sought to furnish the report to the Standing Committee or any other party.

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