



United Nations Environment Programme

Additions to the Consultant's Report of November 2009  
prepared for the third meeting of the  
Ramsar Convention Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform  
*submitted to the Chair of the Ramsar Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform, 12 September 2011*

As invited by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform, UNEP welcomes the opportunity to provide input towards an updated analysis of the November 2009 Consultant's Report to the AHWG.

UNEP remains committed to on-going efforts to enhance the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Ramsar Convention at all levels. In this context, UNEP continues to offer to the Contracting Parties its services as a possible host for the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

UNEP agrees that the 2009 Consultant's Report is out of date in many aspects. In particular, from UNEP's perspective, the 37-page UNEP report, plus annexes, of 7 October 2010 containing the review of the possible change in institutional host for the Ramsar Secretariat provides pertinent information which has not been captured in the 2009 Consultant's Report. This is also applicable to the UNEP additional observations of 20 June 2011, with executive summary, as distributed to and discussed by the AHWG. These two detailed and more comprehensive submissions, provided upon request by the co-chairs of the AHWG, have both been prepared after November 2009 and are thus not part of the Consultant's Report. Further, the multiple queries from individual countries that UNEP has answered, also in writing, and which were distributed and discussed among the members of the AHWG, are not covered in the report. This leads to the regrettable situation where some important subjects, such as those pertaining to the financial calculations and the various costs, are not included or discussed at any point in the 2009 Consultant's Report.

AHWG members have repeatedly remarked that the quality of UNEP's reports has been very good and that the total of UNEP's submissions provided until now contains all the information required for the decision-making of the Parties. UNEP underlines that it is not possible to reiterate all this wealth of clarifications and details in a format that would simply provide an update to the November 2009 Consultant's Report. Therefore, and with the aim of ensuring that the Standing Committee and the Contracting Parties to the Convention have all the required information necessary for a fully informed decision making process, UNEP kindly requests that the Standing Committee and possibly also the Conference of the Contracting Parties will among others be provided, in addition to these comments and the 2009 Consultant's Report, with the two original UNEP submissions to the AHWG.

It is necessary to reiterate UNEP's firm view that under a **cost-neutral scenario** the Ramsar Secretariat will have **similar or enhanced capacity, quality, services and facilities under UNEP hosting arrangements** compared to the current administrative arrangements.

As stated at numerous occasions, UNEP wishes to recognize that the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, working under the guidance of the COP, is advancing the implementing of the Convention. UNEP's submissions have always been made in response to requests of Parties, which have often expressed their opinion that a strengthened implementation and impact of the convention could be improved through a change in hosting arrangements.

Throughout the AHWG process, UNEP has been appreciative of the opportunity offered with the aim of providing the Parties with the necessary facts to take an informed decision regarding the future hosting arrangements of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. UNEP is of the view that the success of any Convention should be measured upon its effectiveness, and its actual compliance; while options for future developments should be anticipated as to remain relevance.

In direct response to the most recent meeting of the AHWG, UNEP further appreciates the opportunity awarded to provide some further updated information, which can be found below. With the aim of keeping the submission concise and to the point, UNEP is not commenting on the comparative parts of the Consultant's report. This means that UNEP's comments below are therefore only related to Part B of the Consultant's report, the comparative analysis. We will thus not react to the Executive Summary, or Part A, which represents merely a summary of the information, contained in Part B of the same report. Similarly, in order to remain factual, UNEP prefers to reserve its comments on the greater part of the more analytical Part C "innovative approaches and next steps" since it appears rather to represent the consultant's interpretation, as do the Conclusions.

**UNEP comments in Consultant's Report Part B: Comparative Analysis  
(paragraphs 15 – 66)**

i. Institutional hosting (paragraphs 19-25)

1. The Ramsar Convention is currently the only global multilateral environmental agreement that remains outside the United Nations framework. Indeed, it is extremely likely that had the Ramsar Convention been adopted a mere two years later, after the UN General Assembly established UNEP in 1972, UNEP would have been requested to host its Secretariat, as happened with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.
2. Institutional integration into UNEP, and therefore the United Nations system, as recognized by all those global conventions adopted after the Ramsar Convention, will have various positive effects for the image, visibility and recognition of the Ramsar Convention and for wetlands as vital assets for conservation and sustainable development. This is also considered the case with e.g. the ongoing negotiations on a legally binding instrument on mercury, where UNEP is expected to be requested by the Parties to host the Secretariat.
3. Indeed, currently the Ramsar Convention already cooperates closely with the other biodiversity-related conventions, and IUCN is also active in a variety of relevant fora. However, there remains a substantial difference between being part of the United Nations, and thus an equal partner in every aspect, or only cooperating with the United Nations, and its agencies and programmes, as has often been commented upon by delegates and others in the framework of the AHWG and its preceding discussions. For instance, integration into the United Nations system would ensure full participation in and attendance of United Nations-based negotiations, as appropriate, because status as a United Nations multilateral environmental agreement automatically facilitates access to international meetings and conferences. In addition to raising visibility at the international institutional level, the Convention's visibility among the general public would also be enhanced by becoming part of the United Nations system.
4. Furthermore, a large number of countries have repeatedly reiterated, both in the AHWG and in the Standing Committee meetings, and as part of one of the key arguments for a strengthened implementation and impact of the convention at the national level, that the priority and importance accorded to wetlands at the national level will be significantly enhanced if the Convention is under the UN umbrella. Countries have also repeatedly stated that their most important consideration in this debate is enhanced implementation. These countries have said that they are convinced that the Convention will enhance its implementation and therefore its impact at the national level under a UNEP administered arrangement, due to the

attachment to the UN system but also due to an anticipated increase in substantive cooperation and support from UNEP to the Ramsar Secretariat at the programmatic level.

5. A UNEP administrative arrangement for Ramsar would not only enhance integration with the other biodiversity-related conventions and organizations, but also reach out to the wider UN-family. As the environment programme of the United Nations, UNEP has a central role in the United Nations system in dealing with the environment and achieving coherence, through:

- (a) Its membership of the United Nations Chief Executives Board chaired by the UN Secretary-General;
- (b) Its membership of the United Nations Development Group;
- (c) Chairing the Environmental Management Group and hosting its secretariat;
- (d) Participating in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Inter-agency Standing Committee;
- (e) Provision of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel Secretariat, an advisory body to the Global Environment Facility;
- (f) Supporting United Nations country teams in the common country programming and implementation processes;
- (g) Partnering with United Nations agencies and international institutions on priority issues, such as with the United Nations Development Programme in the Poverty and Environment Facility.

6. In addition, in June 2012, about two weeks prior to the 11th meeting of the Ramsar Contracting Parties, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. One of the two main themes of the Rio+20 Conference will be “the institutional framework for sustainable development.” At this moment, it is not entirely foreseeable what the specific outcome on this topic will entail, but there is expected to be a strong focus on the institutional framework of international environmental governance, including environmental conventions. In the preparatory process, many delegations have expressed the view that reforms to institutional arrangements will be based on the existing structure, while enhancing coordination, cooperation and coherence; they have also pointed towards the urgent need for enhanced coordination and cooperation among all international organizations, agencies and conventions, so as to ensure implementation of commitments, promote synergies and allow the participation of major groups. This will lead to a direction where Parties to MEAs will benefit from Secretariats of MEAs working closer together under one umbrella compared to different hosting relationships and status in international fora and negotiations. Although the Ramsar Secretariat currently cooperates with other relevant MEA Secretariats, it is easy to see that an attachment under a same institutional host would make even closer cooperation more readily accessible and have greater impact.

ii. Enhancing the overall implementation of the Convention (paragraphs 26 – 33)

7. The overall implementation of the Convention as elaborated in Goals 1, 2 and 4 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009–2015 will benefit from an administrative arrangement under UNEP as UNEP’s expertise, experience and capacity both at the global and regional levels will be readily available to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.
8. As for Goal 1 ‘Wise Use’, UNEP possesses excellent and up-to-date scientific expertise and adopts a science-based approach as the basis for all its operations. This is strongly underpinned by the work of the UNEP Chief Scientist and the Division of Early Warning and Assessment combined with UNEP’s wide network of collaborating centres and scientific institutions. Examples of UNEP-led partnerships and networks include the UNEP-World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (WCMC), the Global Resource Information Database (GRID), the information portals of UNEP and its scientific databases and inventories, as well as UNEP’s work in the knowledge management area, in particular as it relates towards support of MEAs. UNEP publishes well-recognized high-quality scientific publications that include cutting-edge research, and is among others focusing on threats to ecosystems and their management, including wetlands. Among the relevant recent examples are the UNEP Year Book 2010 that reports on new environmental science and recent developments in our changing environment; the introductory guide on “Taking steps toward marine and coastal ecosystem-based management” (2011) and the publication “Ecosystems for water and food security” (2011). UNEP also provides summaries for policy-makers to translate scientific information into the policy arena, and to the broader public, in order to bring science to relevance outside the scientific community. Ramsar will be able to benefit directly from UNEP’s ever-growing expertise in this area, including the advisory capacity of the Chief Scientist, and relevant wetland status data might become easier available. Wetland observation systems might also be easier developed.
9. Other elements under Goal 1 will also benefit. UNEP has profound experience and capacity in the area of development of environmental framework laws, subject-specific laws, and environmental policies, and has on many occasions provided assistance to States in drafting these and the follow-up legislative processes. UNEP has been instrumental in advocating integration of environmental instruments and processes into broader processes across sectors at the national level, and will continue to do so taking into account Ramsar specific goals. National assistance could be organized that focuses on Strategic Environmental Assessments and the development and/or implementation of incentive measures.
10. UNEP has longstanding experience in providing technical and capacity building support to MEA negotiators, in particular to those MEAs administered by UNEP, as

part of its Programme of Work. Such support is likely to also include the Ramsar negotiators under a UNEP administered arrangement. Further, UNEP's integrated approach to environment and its dedication to link environment to related areas including poverty, food security, climate change and others, might benefit the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in its attempts to make wetlands part and parcel of decision-making processes in other areas, and to link and apply Ramsar mechanisms to other MEAs. UNEP's emphasis on the ecosystem approach is also fully supportive of Ramsar's objectives and Ramsar would be able to benefit directly from UNEP's work in that area through possibly joint activities at the national level. Also for invasive alien species, this subject is high on UNEP's agenda, in support of programmes and projects under the CMS and CBD, in GEF funded projects as well as in (scientific) publications such as in UNEP's African Environmental Outlook. Parties could be assisted in drawing up national inventories, and the foreseen increased collaboration with CBD to address in international regulation could be facilitated.

11. Cooperation between the Ramsar Secretariat and the private sector will remain as today, and could increase further to the benefit of the Convention as companies, in general, see it as a strong incentive to be able to be associated with the United Nations, and UNEP in particular. The 2009 "Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Community" provide ample opportunity for working with the private sector, engaging them in wetlands management, and accepting funding from the business community. It is noteworthy that UNEP has very good experience in the private sector taking over suggested principles and approaches, such as in the banking and tourism sectors. The existing and foreseen partnership possibilities, including with the private sector, would be entirely feasible. As elaborated in UNEP's submissions, and after taking careful note of the contents of Ramsar Standing Committee Doc. SC42-20, one may even foresee that the current over-dependence upon one private sector donor, as noted in Standing Committee Decision 42-12, could be better addressed with the Secretariat being part of the UN system, since in UNEP's experience this may often act as an incentive for (business) partnerships.
12. As for Goal 2 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, 'Wetlands of International Importance', the implementation activities regarding site designation, management planning, and the site ecological character that parties have to undertake in order to foster compliance, are issues UNEP MEAs have come across as well and lessons can be shared. The pivotal role of wetlands managers in maintenance of the site ecological character through planning and management is an also an issue of technical assistance and capacity building, which is one of UNEP's main areas of expertise, also by offering the possibility of utilizing UNEP's presence in and knowledge of the regions, including the regional biodiversity focal points placed in the UNEP Regional Offices in support of the MEAs at the regional and national level. Parties' implementation of and compliance with the Convention and its management at the national level might further benefit from being of equal (UN)

parentage as other conventions, and be therefore taken more seriously in their work with national counterparts and donors, and have easier access within governmental bureaucracies.

13. As for site management effectiveness, site information, and site status, reviews are required to determine effectiveness of management arrangements, as well as database development and implementation and monitoring status of the environment. All these elements, including governance aspects and the use of indicators are part of a wide array of tools to promote implementation of and compliance with the Convention. The actions that are required here could be undertaken in collaboration with UNEP's collaborating centres and more jointly with other MEAs. UNEP's expertise in database development, knowledge management, assessment and monitoring would be more easily accessible for the Ramsar Convention and linkages at the national level could be more easily established, as well as strengthened coordination at the national level among biodiversity focal points. As for management of other internationally important wetlands, the experiences learnt under other MEAs are of great importance for wetlands that are not (yet) under Ramsar. In such cases, management of these areas to maintain their ecological character will benefit from Ramsar's direction, including areas that might fall under UNEP MEAs.
14. As for Goal 4, 'Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness', the wider awareness of the Convention and its goals and mechanisms, through national action plans, education centres, and participation of stakeholders, will benefit from attaching to UNEP. UNEP has a range of information material specifically for educational purposes, including magazines and interactive material for children and youth. This material also covers the areas covered by the UNEP MEA Secretariats. Further, UNEP has close contacts with a wide network of universities and academic centres around the world, as well with education professionals. Also the envisaged training at national and local level could benefit from joining UNEP, as well as in particular the addressing of the training needs of parties referring to political and legislation and institutional governance mechanisms.
15. The financial and budget staff capacity in the Secretariat will be enlarged through the financial officer being part of a team of UNEP's team of financial and budget officers. The budgetary preparation for decision-making in the Conference of the Parties will maintain the transparent and accessible UN standards that have proven to be effective. The management of trust funds and procurement will become more transparent, and UN auditing will further ensure efficient use of financial means. All international standards (IPSAS) will be applied as is the case across the UN system.
16. Joint resource mobilization exercises for example for biodiversity-related activities including under the UNEP MEAs are successfully being undertaken. New and additional financial resources will be explored, including funds earmarked for UN

organizations and entities. A more transparent and efficient use of administrative and financial resources might occur through enhanced cooperation and coordination among the biodiversity related MEAs.

17. The preparation of timely national reports is a responsibility of the parties and they will benefit from the initiatives that are under way under UNEP and its MEAs on harmonization of reporting. Such efforts will increase the Convention bodies' effectiveness. National focal points will also benefit from increased contact with other MEA focal points at the national level.
18. The Secretariat and other convention bodies will benefit from services provided by UNEP and the UN such as security services, legal services etc. Following the transition, an increase in staff morale is anticipated as the secretariat staff will have access to mobility and rotation opportunities and access to elaborate and sophisticated learning and training programmes, including leadership and management training, teamwork, language training and a broad range of other skills that will benefit the operations of the Secretariat.
19. As indicated earlier, representation in international meetings and fora will be significantly improved and will reap additional benefits through increased visibility and standing of secretariat representatives. The facilitation of issuance of visas for meeting participants and travel documents for secretariat staff holding UNEP contracts will result in a smoother operation of the Convention Secretariat.
20. Ramsar's cooperation with its IOPs will not be negatively affected or have to undergo major changes. The relationship with the current IOPs can be recognized and maintained, especially as the organizations are already accredited to UNEP and/or UNEP MEAs. Joint activities can also include other relevant organizations working closely with UNEP. Finding other partners for high priority issues would benefit from the Convention being administered by UNEP. The UNEP scenario would also facilitate a closer working arrangement with the "intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services" (IPBES), an interface between the scientific community and policymakers that aims at building capacity for and strengthening the use of science in policymaking. This in its turn will strengthen the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel in order to assist parties based on timely, accurate, credible, relevant and consistent data and information. Although the precise governance structure for IPBES has not yet been agreed, it will be established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes, and UNEP is convening its first plenary meeting from 3-7 October 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya.



iii. Legal personality (paragraphs 34 – 43)

21. The Consultant's report appears to confuse the legal status of the Convention and the legal personality of the Secretariat, which are two distinct issues.
22. The legal personality of a Secretariat is derived from the international legal personality of the host organization. Under a UNEP arrangement, the Secretariat's international legal personality would be similar to that of the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements hosted by UNEP. The work of the Secretariat would remain directed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Secretariat's powers, functions, rights and duties and legal personality at the international and national levels would be determined by the terms of the Ramsar treaty, the decisions of the Conference of Parties, the delegation of powers by the UNEP Executive Director to the Ramsar Executive Secretary and the relevant principles of international treaty law and international institutional law.
23. All UNEP multilateral environmental agreements have, through the heads of the convention secretariats, adequate delegation of authority from the Executive Director in administrative and financial matters for the Secretariat to enter into contractual relationships and sign legal instruments such as memorandums of understanding for their operational functions, for example. As in the case of the other UNEP administered MEAs, the UNEP Executive Director will sign agreements related to institutional matters, such as host country agreements.
24. The legal status of the Convention is governed by international law. Article 102 paragraph 1 of the Charter of the United Nations states that "Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it." This Article constitutes a legal obligation for member states to register treaties with the Secretariat; its original intention was to eliminate secret diplomacy. The Ramsar Convention has consequently been registered with the UN Secretariat. When a treaty is registered, it does *not* imply a judgment by the UN on the nature of the instrument, the status of the parties, or similar. The acceptance for registration does *not* confer on the instrument the status of a treaty or international agreement if it does not already possess that status. This process of registration is to be distinguished from the role of UNESCO as Depository, as per Article 9 paragraph 3 of the Ramsar Convention. The legal status of the Ramsar Convention will not be affected if the Contracting Parties decide that it will become a UNEP administered convention. The statement in the Consultant's Report in paragraph 43 that, "should the Parties decide to change the institutional hosting, a much thorough review of the legal personality of other MEAS under the UNEP umbrella would have to be undertaken to determine the exact nature of the legal status that the Convention

would enjoy under UNEP” therefore misses any (legal) basis and such review is not required.

25. As stated at numerous occasions, UNEP wants to underline that indeed the Ramsar Convention functions well. Our submissions have always been made upon request of Parties that have often expressed their opinion that improvements of the current arrangements would be possible. UNEP has always been appreciative of this opportunity offered. UNEP is of the view that the success of any Convention should be measured upon its effectiveness, and its actual compliance; while options for future developments should be anticipated as to remain relevance.

iv. Staff (paragraphs 44 - 52)

26. The remark in the Consultant’s Report (paragraph 47) that UNEP would not enforce the rules under the rotation scheme is not entirely correct since neither the UN Secretariat nor UNEP have a mandatory rotation scheme. However, for staff members that are interested, a voluntary rotation scheme exists both at the level of the UN Secretariat and within UNEP. These schemes have been developed to provide interested staff with opportunities beyond their current job and duty station, including in the context of professional development, learning and training as well as career progression.
27. The training possibilities for UNEP staff members, including those working in UNEP administered MEAs, are wide and varied. They range from top-level language training in all official UN languages, to a variety of mandatory and voluntary management/leadership training and learning programmes, communication training, information technology training, career support training, ethics training, security training, project and programme management training etc. There are literally hundreds of class room trainings for interested staff members to choose from. At the Geneva duty station the training and learning of UN staff is managed by the United Nations Office at Geneva. In addition, to the training they provide, UNEP also organizes internal training on project and results-based management, women leadership programmes, professional coaching and counselling to staff as well as a number of other relevant training programmes as identified by management and staff. All of these training and learning opportunities are also provided to the UNEP administered MEAs.
28. In addition, a plethora of on-line courses exists. In 2009/2010, the UN put in place a learning and development policy and a programme for upgrading substantive and technical skills (included in ST/SGB/2009/9 and ST/AI/2010/10), in which a minimum target of five days for professional development per year is established for all staff members.

29. UNEP envisages that Ramsar Secretariat staff skills, capacity and morale may increase due to the increased mobility and rotation opportunities and access to this elaborate and sophisticated learning and training programme that will benefit the operations of the Secretariat and therefore the implementation and impact of the Convention at the national level.
30. UNEP, including its administered conventions, apply the new UN online recruitment system (Inspira), including relevant rules and regulations. While Inspira experienced some technical difficulties at its launch in early 2010, the system is now running at its optimal level and with significant improvements compared to the United Nations' previous online recruitment system (Galaxy). Vacancies in Inspira are posted with either 30 or 60 days deadlines depending on the type and location of the position. Under this new system, the total recruitment time has decreased further.
31. Through "vacancy alert" facilities at both the UNEP employment webpage and in Inspira, information on vacancies posted is automatically disseminated to literally tens of thousands of potential and interested candidates. Through such distribution means, as well as through its reputation as an attractive employer, the UN-system is able to attract staff of the highest capacity and skills from all corners of the world.
32. While Switzerland has awarded certain privileges to staff holding IUCN contracts, these are not based on a multilateral treaty and are thus not recognized by other countries. These privileges do not include conferring of diplomatic status, such as the issuing of a United Nations laissez-passer and the associated protection and facilities to the holder, similar to the protection accorded to diplomatic staff under the provisions of the Vienna Convention.

v. Administrative service and cost comparison (paragraphs 53 – 56)

33. UNEP charges 13 % Programme Support Costs based on incurred expenditures. This is the standard UN rate approved by the United Nations General Assembly. These funds provide the vital human resources, information technology, finance, budget and other support services required for the optimal functioning and operation of the Ramsar Secretariat. Through UNEP's concerted efforts working with the MEAs it administers, as well as the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), those services are continuously being improved. UNEP continues to be committed to ensuring that the best services are provided to its administered MEAs in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. All service improvements and efficiency gains are to the full benefit of the Parties to the MEAs. We refer to our earlier submissions regarding the precise contents of the wide range of services provided for the 13% Programme Support Costs.
34. With the aim of addressing some possible misunderstandings previously communicated to UNEP, we wish to reiterate UNEP's firm view that under a cost-

neutral scenario the Ramsar Secretariat will have similar or enhanced capacity, quality, services and facilities under UNEP hosting arrangements compared to current administrative arrangements with IUCN.

35. Furthermore, and based on the information, calculations and considerations contained in UNEP's reports of August 2009 and October 2010, UNEP fully believes that based on the Ramsar approved budget 2009-2012, a change in institutional host to UNEP will *not* increase the budget; will *not* impact the assessed contribution; will *not* weaken but enhance the human resource capacity of the Secretariat; and will *not* diminish the quality of finance, budget, human resources, IT and other services provided by the current host.

vi. Location alternatives (paragraphs 57 – 60)

36. UNEP wishes to reiterate that the Ramsar Secretariat can be hosted in the International Environment House in Geneva, as previously stated in its submissions, and as indicated by the Government of Switzerland.
37. Subject to the necessary security and other arrangements in place, it may also be considered to host the Ramsar Secretariat under a UNEP administrated arrangement in its current premises in Gland.

vii. Transition issues (paragraphs 61 – 66)

38. UNEP has put forward a number of proposals for transitional arrangements, including costing, both as they relate to the Secretariat and to the staff. Those somewhat elaborate proposals are contained in UNEP's submission. We underline once more that our earlier assessments on grading of functions and competencies of the Secretariat staff do not include or represent any downgrading, on the contrary, in the case of for example the Ramsar interns, it represents a definite upgrading.
39. UNEP further wishes to state its strong view that a transition to a UNEP administered convention can be done with none or minimal consequences to the ongoing work of the Convention. The impact to staff, if any, will depend on the decision taken by the Parties based on the proposals but forward by UNEP. UNEP believes that in close consultation with IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat staff a personalized flexible approach is possible in order to have a smooth transition period with the best possible staff arrangements.

## **Part C: Innovative Approaches and Next Steps**

40. As stated in our introductory remarks, UNEP has the view that it would be not appropriate to comment on the comparative and concluding parts of the Consultant's report, which express the Consultant's views. The contents of this part of the document, which is based on the information contained in Part A and Part B, have largely been superseded by events and are therefore considered obsolete. Therefore the considerations contained in Part C, and in particular in paragraphs 76 to 85 that refer to the option of hosting by UNEP, should not be further considered by the AHWG and the Standing Committee in its further deliberations.
41. However, UNEP would like to reiterate that the statements contained in paragraphs 77 and 78 on the situation of the staff members of the Ramsar Secretariat under a UNEP arrangement have been overtaken by UNEP's later submissions, as indicated above. A personalized approach, and close coordination with IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat staff, will create sufficient flexibility for individual situations such as for staff members nearing retirement.
42. The statement as provided in paragraph 79 is incorrect, based on faulty information, and overtaken by UNEP's later submissions. Should the Ramsar Convention be administered by UNEP, a cost-neutral scenario is feasible and possible, providing similar or enhanced capacity, quality, services and facilities under UNEP hosting arrangements compared to the current administrative arrangements.
43. Regarding the issues raised in paragraphs 83 and 85, these have been fully addressed in UNEP's previous submissions and in our subsequent interaction with the AHWG.
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