



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
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Agenda item XI

Ramsar COP10 DOC. 6

Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention at the global level

Preamble

1. This is the progress report regarding the implementation of the Convention from the closing of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP9) on 15 November 2005 to 15 August 2008. In addition to the analysis made by the regional teams of the Ramsar Secretariat, the report provides my personal views in my capacity as current Secretary General.
2. The global overview is based on the analysis of the implementation of the Convention at national and regional levels, taking into account the national reports for COP10 but also available information from various sources, including reports from Ramsar partners. The structure of this report is based on the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.
3. This global report will be introduced and discussed in plenary in the afternoon of Wednesday, 29 October; in addition, an analysis for each of the six Ramsar regions will provide opportunities to discuss the implementation at regional level on 28 October 2008.
4. Three other reports for this meeting of the Conference of the Parties provide additional perspectives about the progress made in the implementation of the Convention:
 - The report of the Standing Committee Chairperson
 - The report of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
 - The report of the Secretary General under Article 8 on the status of the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Significant progress

5. During this triennium, the Convention growth shows the following progress:
 - From 146 Contracting Parties to 158
 - From 1505 Ramsar sites to 1758

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number, and will not be distributed at the meeting. Delegates are requested to bring their copies to the meeting and not to request additional copies.

- From 126.5 million hectares of Ramsar sites to 161.3 million hectares. It is worth noting the outstanding actions taken by Mexico to methodically apply the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Strategy 2.1 of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008). The Ramsar Secretariat is pleased to praise Mexico for this outstanding achievement and encourage other Contracting Parties to take similar actions.
- There is an increasing worldwide recognition of the role of wetlands in conservation and sustainable development with a particular emphasis on:
 - Wetlands and climate change
 - Wetlands and agriculture
 - Wetlands and energy
 - Wetlands and human health
 - Wetlands and urbanization
 - Wetlands and water supply, especially with regard to the relationships between wetland ecosystem quality and water yield/quality.

Key remaining challenges

Organizational and management challenges

6. While the membership of the Convention is growing with significant increases in Ramsar sites and more demand from Contracting Parties to provide assistance, the Secretariat's capacity to respond to Contracting Parties is not growing at the same pace. In this regard, it is worth noting that unless the Contracting Parties accept to include in the core budget the financial implications of holding meetings of the Conference of the Parties, there will be no guarantee for developing countries to host or perhaps even to attend the future meetings of the COP.
7. Voluntary financial support is no longer a feasible option from the traditional donors who used to provide funding to sponsor delegates from Contracting Parties that are unable to cover the cost of their delegates. Many Contracting Parties are unable to attend COP10, and it is now clear that the only practical and viable option is to include the cost of the meetings of the Conference into the core budget, as is already the case for other conventions..
8. The perception of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities about their role and responsibilities is a key aspect that needs to be clarified. From the Secretariat's point of view, the Ramsar Administrative Authorities are more effective when they play the role of catalysts, facilitators who persuade stakeholders, build teams, push, or carry national teams to new levels of collective achievements. It is important to know if our Administrative Authorities are working alone or building partnerships at local, national and regional levels to take responsibility for making their own COP recommendations happen.
9. It is also important to encourage all relevant players and to give them credit for their contributions in the promotion of wetland conservation and wise use.
10. It is time to decide about a feasible option regarding the legal and institutional status of the Ramsar Secretariat in order to improve the work of the Convention as a whole, taking into account the Secretariat's budget and staffing.

Scientific and technical challenges

11. The most prominent and well-known question remains: how can we ensure that the Convention has the necessary understanding of the state of global wetlands, trends and threats in order to support an up-to-date decision context and to fully engage Contracting Parties where actions must be taken to promote timely and relevant application of the Convention's assets/resources?
12. The Secretariat's approach is to encourage all relevant key players at all levels and to give them credit for their achievements, so that mutually we can own the basic knowledge regarding the global extent of wetlands and their legitimate significance for conservation and sustainable development.
13. The second key question is: how can we make the best use of existing scientific knowledge and the guidance offered by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to achieve effective management of wetlands, especially Ramsar sites? The current trends confirm an increasing number of Ramsar site designations but many designated sites are receiving neither the expected attention nor the sufficient care for their values.
14. The Convention is increasingly working with relevant organizations to contribute to the progress on new concepts and approaches such as:
 - Payments for ecosystems services/ environmental services
 - Carbon sequestration/emission by wetlands
 - Methane production/emission by wetlands
 - Wetlands and extractive industries
 - Wetlands and water quality/quantity

Emerging challenges

15. More decisions by Contracting Parties will emerge from COP10, and the Secretariat will have to find ways to increase and enhance its assistance to provide the necessary operations to cope with new challenges emerging from decisions on:
 - the Strategic Plan 2009-2014;
 - the Convention's Programme for 2009-2014 on Communication, Education, and Public Awareness;
 - future implementation of the scientific and technical aspects of the Convention; and
 - Regional Initiatives for 2009-2012.

Call for Actions to save invaluable wetland areas

In Africa:

16. Lake Victoria, the world's largest tropical lake and the second largest freshwater lake, is profoundly affected and is losing the irreplaceable ecosystem services that sustain exceptional biodiversity, human life and the livelihoods of millions who depend on it for food, employment, and recreation. The lake should not be allowed to die as a result of the

dumping of untreated effluent by several industries, the clearance of natural vegetation along the shores, and the growth of algae. Actions from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda as well as support from the international community are needed to put matters right and make sure that this much-needed set of wetland ecosystems will not cease to sustain life.

In Asia

17. The *Hanoi call to Action on Wetlands*, signed by representatives of 20 countries from Asia, urges the Ramsar Contracting Parties to take more action on restoration of degraded marine/coastal, freshwater and human-made wetlands so that they can continue to conserve biodiversity and provide the range of ecosystem services that contribute to human health and well-being, such as food and water supply, water purification, climate and flood regulation, coastal protection, and recreational opportunities. Alongside restoration, maintaining the ecological character of existing important coastal and inland wetlands, including the key migratory staging and non-breeding areas of migratory waterbirds, is equally crucial, particularly given that waterbird populations using Asia-Pacific flyways are in even more serious decline through habitat loss and other pressures than on flyways elsewhere in the world.

South America

18. Mangrove restoration and careful consideration of positive and negative effects of biofuels are important actions to ensure a sustained availability of ecosystem services to a range of wetland users, especially indigenous people and local communities.

Central America and the Caribbean

19. Around 25 Ramsar sites in the Neotropics are threatened by urban developments and tourism activities (resorts and golf courses), mainly in marine and coastal wetlands from the coast of Mexico to South America with an emphasis in Central America and the Caribbean. These activities are changing the ecological integrity of Ramsar sites and in some cases changes are already having a great negative impact in the ecological character of some of them, with a decrease in their goods and services.
20. Action is urgently needed from Contracting Parties, therefore, to raise awareness at national, regional and local levels about wetlands values so as to increase the political commitment for conservation and maintain the ecological character of the sites through the implementation of legal frameworks (policies and specific wetland regulations), protection measures, strategic planning, and the use of EIA and SEA in the decision-making process.

North America

21. Partnership among public agencies and other interests is needed to:
 - 1) protect, enhance, restore, and manage an appropriate distribution and diversity of wetland ecosystems and habitats associated with migratory birds and other fish and wildlife in North America;
 - 2) maintain current or improved distributions of wetland-associated migratory bird populations; and

- 3) sustain an abundance of waterfowl and other wetland associated migratory birds consistent with the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, the Partners In Flight Conservation Plans, and the international obligations contained in the migratory bird treaties and conventions and other agreements with Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

Europe

22. Partnership at local, national and international level is needed to undertake joint activities with a careful balance between the need for water supply, energy production, and navigation.

Globally

23. There are many agendas on environmental and development issues, including biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change, urban development and habitats, tourism, food production, water supply, energy production and distribution, economic growth and poverty reduction, desertification control, human health, and wetland conservation and sustainable use. Some of these agendas are conflicting and work against one another, and it is urgent to take action to find a coherent perspective that advances the right balance amongst these legitimate aspirations. To that end, Ramsar Administrative Authorities have to build partnerships with key players at local, national and international levels, including government agencies, parliaments, municipalities, research institutes, business sector, donors, NGOs and wetland user groups.

National Reports

24. A total of 129 Contracting Parties submitted their National Reports in preparation for COP10 (as of 15 August), all of which are available (in the language of submission only) in the Ramsar Web site at http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_natlrpts_index.htm. Parties that have recently joined the Convention are not expected to submit a National Report. Annex 1 contains the list of Parties that submitted reports by the time of the analysis for this report.
25. Taking into account the views of Contracting Parties about the National Report for COP9, a simpler model of National Report form was adopted by the Standing Committee for COP10. This new format seems to be user-friendly, and it enables easy analysis of the main trends in the Convention, as well as allowing effective feedback to Parties on the key trends that are emerging.

Analysis of the National Reports

26. As for the previous COP, a relational database has been created to store and analyze the information provided by the Parties in their National Reports for COP10. For COP10, the database includes 66 indicators related to the implementation status of the actions included in the Convention's Work Plan 2003-2008, as reflected in the National Reports form.
27. The following section reviews the implementation of the Convention by Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat's activities in the last triennium in relation to the 24

strategies identified in the COP10 National Report form, cross referenced to the Operational Objectives in the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS AND WATER RESOURCES

GOAL 1. The wise use of wetlands

STRATEGY 1.1 (Operational objective 1.2)

Assess and monitor the condition of wetland resources, both globally and nationally

28. About 37% of respondent Parties currently have or are in the process of developing a comprehensive wetland inventory. This is a significant global progress compared to COP9 (25%). Although the percentage of Parties with an inventory is higher in Europe (53%) than in the other five Ramsar regions, since COP9 in 2005, no progress with National Wetland Inventories seems to have occurred in Europe, as the number of European Parties with inventories has remained the same.
29. Given the importance of national inventories as a baseline for National Wetland Policies, the remaining Parties that have not yet engaged in the preparation of a National Wetland Inventory are strongly encouraged to do so. It is important to work with - and to use - wetland inventory data and to make them available to all stakeholders. These data provide a baseline to assess the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands. Forty Contracting Parties (31%) indicate that they have made such information accessible to stakeholders. This is twice the number of Parties compared to the situation at COP9, three years earlier, and represents significant progress, particularly among European Parties (44%). Africa is the least advanced in terms of national wetland inventories (23%), while the Neotropics are less advanced in making the data available to stakeholders.
30. The majority in North America (67%) and a medium number in Oceania (50%) are realizing that the need to address adverse change in the ecological character of wetlands is now greater than in the previous triennium. However, it is still unfortunate to find that pressures on Ramsar sites and other wetlands are increasing throughout the world.
31. *For the next triennium the main challenges remain systematic inventories of all types of wetlands, effective processing of data, and efficient dissemination of key information about wetland values to ensure that inventories are being used to help focus on vital wetland issues, such as poverty reduction, flood defence, environmental security, human health, biodiversity conservation, and economic development.*

STRATEGY 1.2 (Operational objectives 2.1 & 2.2)

Develop, review, and implement national or supranational policies, to ensure that the wise use principle of the Convention is being effectively applied.

32. Some progress has been made globally in policy development from COP9 (35%) to COP10 (41%) with the greatest in Asia (58%) and Oceania (50%). Africa (26%) and North America (33%) are less advanced in terms of development of policies. 36% of existing policies globally incorporate some WSSD targets and actions, with the highest in Oceania (75%).

33. From COP9 to COP10, we notice a decrease in the percentage of Contracting Parties that are developing National Wetland Policies and incorporating wetland issues into a national strategy for sustainable development: 70% of Parties in 2005 and only 47 % in 2008. This is unfortunate, keeping in mind the increasing number of emerging issues dealing with wetlands and human health, wetlands and energy production, wetlands and extractive industries. However, it is encouraging to notice that 100% of respondent Parties from Oceania are incorporating wetland issues into national strategies for sustainable development.
34. Only 20% of Contracting Parties are assessing the quantity and the quality of water available to and required by wetlands. 45% are applying Strategic Environmental Assessment practices when reviewing policies, programmes, and plans that may impact upon wetlands.
35. *For the next triennium the challenges are to continue developing new National Wetland Policies and to review existing Policies to integrate emerging issues relating to the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the interactions between wetlands and biofuels, the implications of increasing extractives industries and the role of wetlands in agriculture and tourism development.*

STRATEGY 1.3 (Operational objectives 3.1 -3.3)

Increase recognition of the significance of wetlands for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defence, food security, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and scientific research.

36. Only 13% of respondent Parties are conducting an assessment of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar sites. This is unsatisfactory, because Ramsar sites are the flagships of the Convention and the perception of the general public about the values of Ramsar sites is of critical importance. 29% are carrying out wise use wetland programmes/projects that contribute to poverty alleviation. Only 15% are taking national action to implement the *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands*. Taking into account the role of peatlands in carbon sequestration, it is time to accelerate the implementation of these guidelines. 25% of respondent Parties are taking action to apply the *Guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands*.
37. *For the next triennium the challenges are to assess the values of outstanding Ramsar sites from each Contracting Party so as to highlight their vital role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and raise awareness about the services and goods they provide to the local and national economy. Special attention is to be paid to peatlands to ensure that decision-makers recognize their wide-ranging values, including carbon sequestration .*

STRATEGY 1.4 (Operational objective 3.4)

Integrate policies on the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the planning activities and decision-making processes at national, regional, provincial and local levels, all in the context of implementing IWRM.

38. 29% of respondent Parties are using the Convention's water-related guidance in decision-making related to water planning and management. Only 28% of respondent Parties are incorporating CEPA expertise and tools into catchment/river basin planning and management, and only 22% are using the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal

zone management in Integrated Coastal Zone Management planning and decision-making. Only 9% of respondent Parties are assessing the implications of national implementation of the Kyoto Protocol for wetland conservation and wise use.

39. *For the next triennium the key challenge is to make sure that the various agendas on climate change and other environmental concerns are not undermining the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. Careful attention is to be paid to biofuels development and assessing all possible negative and positive impacts before making decisions.*

STRATEGY 1.5 (Operational objective 4.1)

Identify priority wetlands where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial.

40. It is encouraging to note that 67% of respondent Parties are implementing wetland restoration or rehabilitation programmes or projects. Yet the Convention's guidance on wetland restoration is used by only 22% of the respondent Parties in designing and implementing wetland restoration or rehabilitation programmes and projects.
41. *For the next triennium the challenge is to assess the added values of existing programmes/projects on restoration in order to stimulate more actions on wetland restoration.*

STRATEGY 1.6 (Operational objective 5.1)

Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems.

42. There is clearly a growing concern about invasive species, since 34% of respondent Parties have developed national policies, strategies and management responses to threats from invasive species, particularly in wetlands. In addition, 34% have carried out such policies and strategies in cooperation with the focal points of other conventions.
43. *For the next triennium it is strongly recommended to Contracting Parties to have a strong programme on education, communication and public awareness about invasive species.*

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

STRATEGY 2.1 (Operational objective 10.1)

Apply the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*

44. A promising approach is indicated by the fact that 51% of respondent Parties have taken at least the initial steps to use the Strategic Framework for Ramsar List.
45. *For the next triennium it is hoped that many Contracting Parties will make better use of the Strategic Framework in developing the list, to recognize the wide-ranging values of wetlands in their territories.*

STRATEGY 2.2 (Operational objective 10.2)

Maintain the Ramsar Sites Database Service and constantly update it with the best available information.

46. Only 33% of respondent Parties have submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat all required updates of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. It is

also unfortunate that only 40% of Contracting Parties are using the Ramsar Sites Information Services and its database in national implementation of the Convention concerning Ramsar site issues.

47. *For the next triennium the Secretariat is appealing for a better use of the Sites Database by all Contracting Parties, to ensure adequate feedback to the Database itself, and to ensure that the funding expended on maintenance of the Database is well used.*

STRATEGY 2.3 (Operational objective 11.1)

Maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites.

48. It is unfortunate to notice that the Convention is losing ground with some Contracting Parties moving back and losing many values of wetlands. Only 25% of the respondent Contracting Parties have defined and applied the measures required to maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites. This is really a backward move compared to the last triennium, when 30% of Parties reported that they had made efforts in this area. Likewise, only 26% of responding Parties have developed and implemented management plans/strategies at all Ramsar sites.
49. The establishment of cross-sectoral site management committees at Ramsar sites by 21% respondent Parties is a promising sign of stakeholder involvement, but it is not satisfactory to find only 19% assessing the effectiveness of site management.
50. *For the next triennium the Secretariat urges all Contracting Parties to raise awareness about the values of their Ramsar sites and facilitate the work of cross-sectoral committees to involve all stakeholders and achieve mutual support in the management of Ramsar sites, in order to ensure that maintaining ecological character provides the expected ecosystems services to all stakeholders.*

STRATEGY 2.4 (Operational objective 11.2)

Monitor the condition of Ramsar sites, notify the Ramsar Secretariat without delay of changes affecting Ramsar sites as required by Article 3.2, and apply the Montreux Record and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.

51. COP10 draft Resolution DR13 about the status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance and the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance” (COP10 DOC. 7) provide the details regarding this issue.

STRATEGY 2.5 (Operational objectives 12.1 + 12.2)

Promote inventory and integrated management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.

52. It is encouraging to report that 53% of Parties have identified all transboundary/shared wetland systems, although only 18% of Parties have effective cooperative management in place so far for these wetland systems. Encouragingly, eight shared wetland systems with Ramsar sites have already been formally identified by the relevant Parties as Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRS) co-managed in collaboration, and more Parties are reported to be poised to follow these examples soon.

53. *For the next triennium the Secretariat recommends that Parties complete the identification of all transboundary/ shared wetland systems and recognize the services they provide in order to gain mutual support from stakeholders of relevant countries. Where appropriate, Parties are urged to enter into collaborative management relationships for their transboundary wetlands containing Ramsar sites and to notify the Secretariat of their intent.*

STRATEGY 2.6 (Operational objective 12.3)

Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.

54. 63% of Parties have been involved in some way in the development of a regional initiative under the framework of the Convention. This is a clear improvement with regard to the situation at COP9 (45%).
55. *For the next triennium, the Secretariat recommends that Parties strengthen the organizational arrangements and improve communication in the identification of regional priorities as well as in the implementation of joint activities to address regional concerns. In this regard, the adoption of the Operational Criteria annexed to COP10 DR 6 for regional initiatives will serve as a reference to assess the operation of regional initiatives and their success.*

GOAL 3. International cooperation

STRATEGY 3.1 (Operational objective 13.1)

Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other agencies.

56. There is an encouraging movement with 57% of responding Parties reporting that they have mechanisms in place at national level for collaboration between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the focal points of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). This is a positive change compared to COP9, when only 33% of Parties were doing so. In addition, 39% of Parties are inviting the national focal points of other MEAs to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committees. However, it is regrettable to report that only 13% of African Contracting Parties have participated in the implementation of the wetland programme under NEPAD.
57. *For the next triennium, in line with COP10 DR 11, the Secretariat will continue to develop cooperative relations with UN agencies such as UNEP, UNESCO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN-Water, the World Tourism Organization, and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as with other relevant intergovernmental organizations such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), UNEP-WCMC, and the CGLAR networks, to seek membership in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and to seek to reduce duplicative activities. In addition, the Secretariat has proposed the adoption of "Principles for partnership between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector" to strengthen relationships with the private sector where these can be beneficial to the Convention and consistent with the Convention's mission and objectives.*

STRATEGY 3.2 (Operational objective 14.1)

Promote the sharing of expertise and information.

58. A slight improvement is reported regarding this area, with 36% of Parties sharing knowledge and undertaking training for wetlands. In 2005, only 30% of Parties reported that they were sharing information.
59. In addition, it is encouraging to report that 66% of Parties are making information about wetlands publicly available.
60. *Assuming that this trend will continue, Contracting Parties will have a better implementation of the CEPA programme.*

MANAGING THE CONVENTION

GOAL 4. Implementation capacity

STRATEGY 4.1 (Operational objective 6.1)

Encourage active and informed participation of local communities and indigenous people, including women and youth, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, including in relation to understanding the dynamics of cultural values.

61. There is a need for greater improvement in this area, since only 27% of responding Parties have compiled information about local community and indigenous people's participation in wetland management. Likewise, only 33% of Parties have documented traditional practices in relation to wetlands, but it is encouraging to report that 65% of Parties say that they have promoted public participation in decision-making in relation to wetlands. 34% are developing educational and training activities concerning cultural aspects of wetlands. Another encouraging development is that 43% of Parties have included the cultural values of wetlands in the management planning of Ramsar sites and other wetlands.
62. *Hopefully, Contracting Parties will benefit from this trend through a better use of cultural values of wetlands in tourism development.*

STRATEGY 4.2 (Operational objective 7.1)

Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

63. Heartening progress is underway with 49% of Parties encouraging the private sector to apply the wise use principle in activities and investments involving wetlands. 17% have established private-sector "Friends of Wetlands" or similar mechanisms.
64. *To strengthen this trend, the Secretariat is appealing to Contracting Parties to adopt the "Principles for partnership between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector" to strengthen relationships with the private sector where these can be beneficial to the Convention and consistent with the Convention's mission and objectives (COP10 DR 12).*

STRATEGY 4.3 (Operational objective 8.1)

Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use principle and the removal of perverse incentives.

65. 41% of responding Parties have taken actions to promote incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. An encouraging trend is underway

with 26% of Parties reporting that they have taken actions to remove perverse incentive measures that discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands – in 2005 only 10% of Parties reported activities promoting the reduction of perverse incentives and the development of incentives that promote the application of wise use principles, and an additional 20% were planning such actions.

66. *For the next triennium the Secretariat suggests promoting the concept of Payment for Environmental Services (PES). To that end, Contracting Parties can consider the following approach:*

- *Watershed services can be used as umbrella services and they operate in diverse settings and take several forms;*
- *Securing land tenure can provide a powerful incentive for PES;*
- *Reward mechanisms can take different forms, e.g., cash, secure tenure;*
- *Scientific research is a key requirement for the sustainability of PES;*
- *Promotion of incentives for wise wetland use should be a priority for the Convention's implementation, especially as more information becomes available on the ecosystem services provided by wetlands.*

STRATEGY 4.4 (Operational objective 9.1)

Assist in implementing at all levels the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Programme.

67. 14% of reporting Parties have a mechanism for planning and implementing a Wetland CEPA programme and 53% have a National Action Plan. 53% also report that actions have been taken in these countries to communicate and share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues among relevant ministries and other stakeholders.
68. 53% of Parties are carrying out national campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness of the ecosystem benefits and services provided by wetlands. Furthermore, 89% globally report that they have carried out World Wetland Day activities. Education centres have been established at Ramsar sites and other wetlands by 36% of Parties.
69. *For the next triennium the Secretariat encourages Contracting Parties to sustain these encouraging trends and implement the CEPA programme for 2009-2014 proposed in COP10 DR 8.*

STRATEGY 4.5 (Operational objective 15.1 + 15.2)

Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

70. Fully 67% of North American Parties and 25% of European Parties have provided funding support from development assistance agencies for wetland conservation and management. 31% of Contracting Parties receiving development assistance have mobilized funding support for wetland conservation and management.
71. *For the next triennium it will be useful to explore opportunities from the business sector, assuming that COP10 will adopt DR 12 to endorse the Principles for partnership between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.*

STRATEGY 4.6 (Operational objective 16.1)

Provide the financial resources required for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

72. 60% of responding Contracting Parties are reporting that they have paid dues in a timely manner. This is an improvement with regard to COP9 (50%). COP10 DOC. 17 provides a listing of the arrears in the annual contributions.
73. 13% have made additional financial support through voluntary contributions to the Ramsar Small Grant Fund or other non-core funded Convention activity.
74. *For the next triennium the Secretariat calls for more commitment from Contracting Parties that have not paid their contributions promptly. More support is needed for the Small Grants Fund as well -- in this regard, the Secretariat recommends continuing to explore and apply the concepts of the "SGF Portfolio" as well as the "Signature Initiative".*

STRATEGY 4.7 (Operational objective 17.1)

Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.

75. 29% of Contracting Parties report that they have used their previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring the implementation of the Convention.
76. The STRP has provided great assistance to the Convention with substantial scientific and technical guidance. However, two studies bring to light the fact that various categories of Ramsar stakeholders, including wetland managers, are not always aware of the array of guidance documents or they simply do not know how to use the materials. Much of the guidance so far prepared by the STRP is designed for use primarily by Ramsar Parties at the national scale, and is of less direct relevance to other Ramsar users such as at the wetland site or local scale. The STRP has recognized this and will be exploring approaches to preparation of guidance for a wider range of users.
77. *For the next triennium, the challenge will be to improve the outreach and dissemination of materials provided by the STRP, including through designing the style of guidance to fit better the different needs of a range of users and through establishing capacity-building mechanisms for better understanding and use of existing guidance.*

STRATEGY 4.8 (Operational objective 18.1)

Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

78. 26% of responding Parties have completed a review of national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
79. 46% of Contracting Parties have a cross-sectoral National Ramsar/Wetland Committee in place.

STRATEGY 4.9 (Operational objective 19.1)

Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.

80. It is encouraging to report that 52% of Contracting Parties have received assistance from one or more IOP in the implementation of the Convention, and 29% of Parties report having provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs.
81. The Ramsar Secretariat appreciates the role and responsibilities taken by the IOPs to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and promote key priority areas of the work of the Convention. The Secretariat expresses its gratitude to the IOPs for their fruitful actions especially with regard to the designation and management of Ramsar sites, capacity building, promoting the role of wetlands in poverty reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustaining agriculture and food security, and offering a wide range of other ecosystem services.

STRATEGY 4.10 (Operational objective 20.1)

Identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

82. 39% of reporting Parties have provided support to, or participated in, the development of regional wetland training and research. 15% of Parties have made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention, and 40% of Parties report that opportunities for wetland manager training in the country has been provided.
83. *For the next triennium the Advisory Board for Capacity Building led by the Netherlands is preparing a Framework that will be provided to Contracting Parties to improve their capacity for the implementation of the Convention.*

GOAL 5. Membership

84. The Convention has 158 Contracting Parties at present and progress is underway in Africa, Asia, and Oceania.
85. *For the next triennium, efforts should be made to encourage the accession of remaining countries from the Middle East and Central Asia, Oceania and the Caribbean, as well as parts of Africa.*

Working together on a positive way forward

86. The draft Strategic Plan 2009-2014 is proposed as a comprehensive approach to achieving consistent delivery of wetland conservation and wise use in a changing world; it is proposed as a way to firm up the achievements made in the implementation of the Strategic Plans 1997-2002 and 2003-2008 as the basis for the future implementation of the Convention.
87. The draft Strategic Plan 2009-2014 is a broad and multisectoral approach to wetland conservation and sustainable development constructed to take into account the wide range of agendas on development and environment that shape the changing world. In this regard, the Convention will have to consider wetland conservation and wise use in the context of many global issues, especially poverty reduction and food and water security, integrated approaches to water management, climate change and its predicted impacts, increasing

globalization of trade and reducing of trade barriers, the increasing role of the private sector, and the increasing influence of development banks and international development agencies.

88. The implementation of this Strategic Plan needs to be strengthened by the effective application of existing decisions of the Conferences of the Parties and the new decisions relating to the remaining and emerging priorities.

Financial and budgetary matters:

89. The Secretariat expects COP10 to take helpful decisions through the adoption of COP10 DR 2 and appeals to all Contracting Parties to pay their contributions in time. The Secretariat urges all Contracting Parties in arrears to make a renewed effort to settle them as soon as possible.

Facilitating the work of the Convention at national and international levels

90. To raise the profile of the Ramsar Convention and raise the status of wetlands in national and international priorities, the Secretariat requests all Contracting Parties to intervene where appropriate in intergovernmental processes and organizations of which they are members to ensure that the Convention and its Secretariat have appropriate recognition and status in those processes and organizations to reflect the intergovernmental importance of the Convention.
91. In addition, it is expected that each Contracting Party will complement the work of the Secretariat through regularly informing all relevant ministries and other governmental services about the formal nature of the Convention on Wetlands as a global, intergovernmental treaty, the work that the Parties have entrusted to the treaty Secretariat, and the obligations of implementation of the treaty and its Resolutions in each Contracting Party as well as through international cooperation as addressed in Article 5 of the treaty.

Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness

92. The Secretariat continues to believe that a key expected result in this area is to stimulate actions that enhance sharing information cross-sectorally on wetland issues and working together to recognize and make the best use of the various goods and services provided by wetland ecosystems. The Ramsar Administrative Authorities are encouraged to strengthen communication with all relevant ministries, departments and agencies, and the civil society.

Future implementation of the Scientific and Technical aspects of wetlands

93. The capacity of Contracting Parties and Ramsar partners to implement the Convention successfully is underpinned by its ability to understand the scientific and technical aspects of wetland issues. For the next triennium, it is noticeable that the STRP is at least expected to guide the Convention work with regard to:
- agriculture and wetlands;
 - wetlands and extractive industries;
 - wetlands and energy issues; and
 - Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) response options.

Building up and enhancing partnerships with the business sector

94. The Secretariat believes in the vital role of effective communication and collective actions between policy makers, decision makers, managers, and various groups of interests, including governments, business leaders, and communities in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. COP10 DR 12 is intended to validate the required principles that can enhance the success of the involvement of private companies in wetland conservation and wise use.

Conclusions

95. The Secretariat expresses its gratitude to all Ramsar Contracting Parties and to all Ramsar partners for their commitment and their actions taken to share information and responsibilities and to undertake joint efforts to care for wetlands and promote the conservation and wise use of the services they provide.
96. I seize this opportunity to renew my appreciation and my thanks all Ramsar staff members for their dedication and hard work.

Annex 1

Contracting Parties that have submitted their National Reports as of 15 August 2008

Algeria	Finland	Namibia
Antigua & Barbuda	France	Nepal
Argentina	Gabon	Netherlands
Armenia	Gambia (The)	New Zealand
Austria	Georgia	Niger
Azerbaijan	Germany	Nigeria
Bahamas	Ghana	Norway
Bangladesh	Guatemala	Pakistan
Belarus	Guinea	Panama
Belgium	Honduras	Paraguay
Belize	Hungary	Peru
Benin	Iceland	Poland
Bolivia	India	Portugal
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Indonesia	Republic of Korea
Botswana	Iraq	Romania
Brazil	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Russian Federation
Bulgaria	Italy	Rwanda
Burkina Faso	Jamaica	Saint Lucia
Cambodia	Japan	Samoa
Cameroon	Jordan	Senegal
Canada	Kazakhstan	Seychelles
Central African Republic	Kenya	Slovak Republic
Chad	Kyrgyz Republic	Slovenia
Chile	Latvia	South Africa
China	Lebanon	Spain
Colombia	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Comoros	Liberia	Sudan
Congo	Liechtenstein	Suriname
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Sweden
Côte d'Ivoire	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Croatia	Madagascar	Tajikistan,
Cuba	Malawi	Thailand
Cyprus	Malaysia	The FYR of Macedonia
Czech Republic	Mali	Togo
Democratic Republic of Congo	Marshal Islands	Tunisia
Denmark	Mauritania	Turkey
Djibouti	Mauritius	Uganda
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Ukraine
Ecuador	Moldova	United Kingdom
Egypt	Mongolia	United Arab Emirates
El Salvador	Montenegro	United Republic of Tanzania
Estonia	Morocco	United States of America
Fiji	Mozambique	Uruguay
	Myanmar	

Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Zambia

Contracting Parties yet to submit National Reports: **Africa** (7): Burundi, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sao Tome and Principe and Sierra Leone; **Asia/Oceania**: (8) Australia, Bahrain, Israel, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Syrian Arab Republic, Philippines, Yemen (recent accession); Fiji, Marshal Islands, New Zealand and Samoa; **Europe** (6): Albania, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Monaco, Serbia; **Americas** (3) Barbados, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago

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Annex 2

Voluntary contributions to the Ramsar Convention 2003-2005

Voluntary contributions during 2006 to 2008

Country or Organization	Amount Donated
Chile, CONAF	20,500
Czech Republic	45,841
Finland	11,318
Germany	15,809
Hungary	56,700
Italy, for MedWet Evaluation	13,246
Japan	80,000
Korea, Ministry of Environment	563,625
Netherlands, Min van L.N.V.	12,000
Norway	208,915
Switzerland - SDC	50,000
Sweden - Sida	1,055,608
UK - DEFRA	23,329
USA Fish & Wildlife Service	581,213
RSPB / BirdLife	11,299
WWF	3,226
CBD - re STRP/CEPA Workshop	25,118
UNEP for various meetings	62,379
ATEN Montpellier	13,367
MAVA Foundation for MedWet Evaluation	12,958
Bonafonte re tournament game	31,928
Celulose Arauco Y. cons	445,235
Danone Group	1,162,000
Rio Tinto Techno. Resources	36,802
TOTAL	4,542,416

Annex 3

Key Messages from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Draft views from the 12th meeting of the STRP

- Wetlands encompass a significant proportion of the area of the planet; the global estimate is 1280 million hectares and is recognized as an under-estimate.
- A cross-sectoral focus is urgently needed from policy- and decision-makers that emphasizes securing wetland ecosystem services in the context of achieving sustainable development and improving human well-being.
- Management of wetlands and water resources is most successfully addressed through integrated management at the river (or lake or aquifer) basin scale that is linked to coastal zone management for coastal and near-shore wetlands.
- Wetlands deliver a wide range of critical and important services (e.g. fish and fiber, water supply, water purification, coastal protection, recreational opportunities, and increasingly, tourism) vital for human well-being. Maintaining the natural functioning of wetlands will enable them to continue to deliver these services.
- The principal supply of renewable fresh water for humans comes from an array of wetland types, including lakes, rivers, swamps and groundwater aquifers. Some 1.5 billion people are dependent on groundwater as a source of drinking water.
- The services delivered by wetlands have been arguably valued at US\$14 trillion annually. Economic valuation now provides a powerful tool for placing wetlands on the agenda of conservation and development decision-makers.
- The degradation and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that for other ecosystems. Similarly, the status of both freshwater and coastal species is deteriorating faster than those of other ecosystems. Wetland-dependent biodiversity in many parts of the world is in continuing and accelerating decline.
- Wetland loss and degradation has primarily been driven by land conversion and infrastructure development, water abstraction, eutrophication and pollution and over-exploitation. Losses tend to be more rapid where populations are increasing most, leading to demands for increased economic development. There are a number of broad, interrelated economic reasons, including perverse subsidies, why wetlands continue to be lost and degraded.
- Global climate change is expected to further exacerbate the loss and degradation of wetland biodiversity including species that cannot relocate and migratory species that rely on a number of wetlands at different stages of their life cycle.
- The projected continued loss and degradation of wetlands will result in further reduction in human well-being, especially for poorer people in less developed countries where technological solutions are not as readily available.
- The priority when making choices about wetland management decisions is to ensure that the ecosystem services of the wetland are maintained. This can be achieved by application of the wise use principle of the Ramsar Convention.