



General information on the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP10) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will take place 28 October to 4 November 2008 in Changwon, Republic of Korea, in the Changwon Exhibition Convention Center (CECO). Delegates from the Parties and others who may wish to participate in the COP will be best served by beginning the pre-registration process as soon as possible in order to avoid disappointment or complications later.

Here you will find brief information on:

- Pre-registration
- Accommodation
- Getting to COP10
- Visas
- Side events
- Exhibitions
- Children's picture exhibition
- Excursions
- Banking
- Internet access at the COP
- Mobile phones

Pre-registration

All participants must pre-register for the COP through the online process managed by the Ramsar Secretariat. Participants are asked to pre-register online by going to <http://www.ramsar.org> and using the password provided by the Secretariat when prompted **OR**, if you do not have a password, by completing the ***Request to be invited*** form. Any participants experiencing difficulty in pre-registering online should contact the Secretariat at COP10@ramsar.org. Following pre-registration, each participant approved for COP10 participation will receive an acceptance e-mail from the Secretariat.

Accommodation

The host country has appointed an Official Housing Bureau to manage the reservation of hotel and motel rooms for participants in three towns: Changwon, Masan (20-30 minutes by car from Changwon), and Changnyeong (50-60 minutes by car from Changwon). The host country will provide a shuttle bus service in the mornings and evenings between the Housing Bureau hotels and CECO. Hotel/motel reservations can be made on Korea's COP10 Web site from 16 June 2008 and **after completion of the COP pre-registration procedure**. Further details on the hotel/motel booking process are available at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_accommodations_e.htm.

Getting to COP10

Flying to the Republic of Korea: Through the Convention’s relationship with Star Alliance through the Biosphere Connections partnership, Star Alliance has been designated as the Official Airline Network for Ramsar’s COP10 with advantages for participants who wish to benefit from that arrangement.



The Star Alliance Members are pleased to be appointed as the Official Airline Network for Ramsar’s COP10. To obtain details and

conditions on Star Alliance™ Conventions Plus discounts and participating airlines*, please contact your local Star Alliance Member and quote the Event Code number that you be sent to you by the Secretariat upon successful pre-registration.

When making your travel plans, please present confirmation of acceptance of your pre-registration as proof of attendance and ensure that the Event Code is listed on your ticket.

For further information about Star Alliance Members please visit: www.staralliance.com/conventionsplus

*Participating airlines include: Air Canada, Air China, Asiana Airlines, Austrian Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, SWISS International Air Lines, Scandinavian Airlines, Shanghai Airlines, South African Airways, Spanair, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, United.

In-country travel: Many participants will arrive in the first instance at Incheon International Airport, Seoul, in the northwest of the Republic of Korea. There are various options (flight, train and bus) to travel from Seoul to Changwon in the southeast of the country. Some useful in-country travel information is available at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_travel_e.htm.

Visas

As is usually the custom for international events of this nature, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea will take all necessary steps to grant a visa as speedily as possible for all delegates and observers invited by the Convention Secretariat. Participants who need a visa should complete the required formalities well in advance.

Information on visas is available on Korea’s COP10 Web site (www.ramsar2008.go.kr), where participants can find out if they need a visa, as well as the list of countries with Korean embassies and consulates.



Citizens of countries for which an entry visa to the Republic of Korea is required should contact the relevant Korean embassy or consulate. Participants are encouraged to make arrangements to get their visas three months in advance.

Participants also need to note that in some cases they may need a transit visa or visas through another country, or countries, before entry into Korea. Please establish the likely transit point(s) and make arrangements to obtain a transit visa before departure from your country.

For further clarification regarding visas for Korea, delegates may contact the local organizers by e-mail: Ms Seonah LEE (visa@me.go.kr).

Side events

As usual, there will be an opportunity to hold a number of side events on relevant global and regional thematic issues. Please be aware that, because rooms and time slots for side events are limited, requests arriving at the Secretariat after the deadline of 10 August may no longer be considered and that, in fact, sending us a request in time does not yet guarantee that your proposed side event can be approved. Preference will be given to topics that are of high relevance for Contracting Parties and COP10-related discussions.

Further information as well as a form to request a side event is available at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_side_e.htm.

Exhibitions

Exhibition space is available at the COP venue. Full details, including location of booths, costs, and a request form are available at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_exhibitions_e.htm.

Children's picture exhibition

The Ramsar Secretariat, in collaboration with the Republic of Korea, is planning an art exhibition to celebrate our cultural diversity at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, using the COP theme as the subject. We invite all delegates of Ramsar Parties to bring to the COP two paintings or drawings from their countries that have been created by children aged 5-18 years. More information can be found at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_children_e.htm.

Excursions

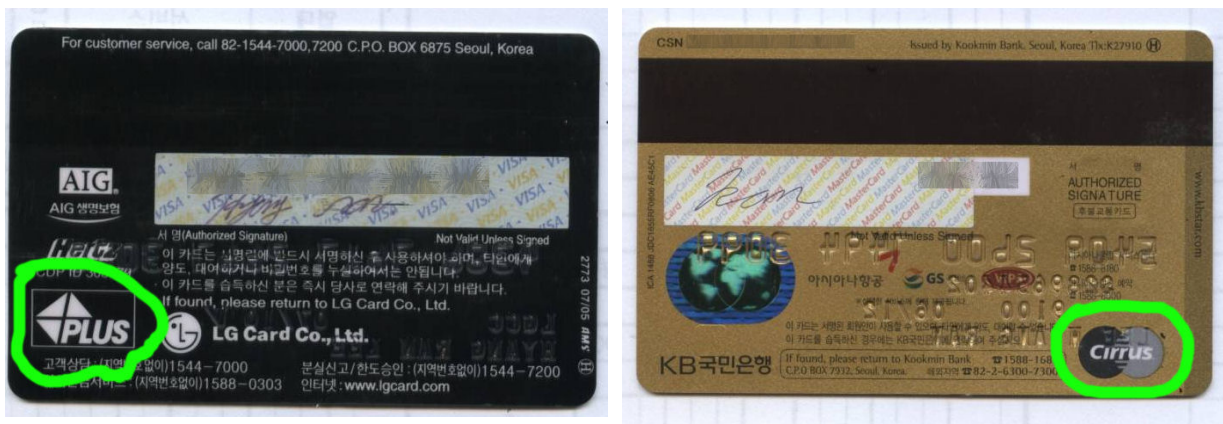
As in all Ramsar COPs, one day is left free to allow the Secretariat time to prepare and distribute final draft versions of documents for adoption. On Sunday November 2nd, eight excursions will be organized and offered free of charge by the host country. Descriptions of the eight excursions and information on signing up for these immediately after pre-registration are available at www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_info_excursions_e.htm.

It is intended that pre- and post-COP excursions will also be made available to participants for a modest charge, as well as early morning birdwatching excursions during the COP. Further information on these is also available at the above link.

Banking

The official currency in Korea is the Won (KRW), so foreign currency such as USD and EURO etc., cannot be used in Korea. Participants should exchange foreign currency for KRW. In early June exchange rates were: KRW 1,000 = USD 0.97 and EURO 0.62.

Many goods and services (such as hotel bills) can be paid for with credit cards. There are two banks and two ATM machines available at the CECO building. The banking hours are 09.30-16.30, and the ATM hours are 08.30-23.30. Participants should be aware, however, that **withdrawing cash at any of these outlets is only possible if you have these additional banking access services on the back of your credit card:**



Internet access at the COP

The Internet lounge and business centre for participants in the CECO building includes 30 computers with Internet access as well as printing and fax facilities. Internet access is free of charge, while printing and fax facilities are available at a modest cost.

The whole building is WIFI-enabled and a significant number of laptop electrical connections will be available in the plenary hall. The diagrams below illustrate the plugs and sockets in use in Korea.



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Mobile phones

It is important to note that **mobile phones purchased outside Korea will not work within the country**. While participants can rent phones for national and international calls at the airports on entry, the host country has also arranged for a mobile phone rental company to be present at the CECO building during the COP to make the rental and return process easier for participants.