



Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

INFORMATION PACKAGE

**6th Pan-African Regional Preparatory Meeting
for the 11th Session of the Conference of the Parties
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
3 to 8 October 2011**

**Hosted at the Hotel Splendid by the Ministry of Environment
and Sustainable Development (MEDD) of Burkina Faso**

**With generous financial support from the Federal Government of Switzerland, the US Fish
and Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, and the Government of Burkina Faso**

The government of Burkina Faso is delighted to host the 6th Pan-African Regional Meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, from **3 to 8 October 2011**, at the Hotel Splendid in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This meeting is intended first and foremost as preparation for the 11th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the Convention on the theme “Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation”, and which will take place in Bucharest, from 19 to 26 June 2012. The preparatory session will also include:

- A evaluation of progress in the implementation of the 2009-2015 strategic objectives of the Convention
- An assessment of the template for the new Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)
- Amendments to the draft Resolutions for COP11
- A workshop for journalists on the African Dialogue on Wetlands Governance and Valuation of Wetlands.

The governments of Burkina Faso and Switzerland, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Environment Canada, have all made a financial contribution to the organization of the meeting. The meeting is being hosted by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), the Ramsar focal Point in Burkina Faso, under the patronage of his Excellency Minister Jean Koulidiati.



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General information about Burkina Faso

General information

Official name: Burkina Faso

Area: 274,222 km²

Population: 14 017 262 inhabitants

Capital city: Ouagadougou

Main cities: Ouagadougou (1 475 223 inhabitants), Bobo-Dioulasso (489 967 inhabitants)

Official language: French

Currency: CFA franc (XOF)

National Day: 11 December

From Upper Volta to Burkina Faso

The colony of Upper Volta was created in 1919 within territorial borders of present-day Burkina Faso. The colony was broken up in September 1932, when it was divided among French Sudan (present-day Mali), Ivory Coast and Niger. Upper Volta was reformed after the Second World War, in 1947.

Like many countries in Francophone Africa, Upper Volta demanded and achieved its independence in 1960. The first president of independent Upper Volta, Maurice YAMEOGO was forced to resign on 3 January 1966 following a popular uprising led by the trade union movement of the time.

Acting in the name of the army, Lieutenant Colonel Aboubacar Sangoulé Lamizana became president of the Republic; he overthrew the First Republic, established a military regime and abolished political parties. On 14 June 1970, the Head of State held a referendum to approve the new Constitution and the Second Republic was born.

The fledgling democratic process was to be short-lived. On 8 February 1974, Lamizana staged a coup, suspended the Constitution, and dissolved the National Assembly thereby putting an end to the brief Second Republic. Once again, the army seized power.

But on 27 November 1974, a new Constitution was approved by referendum, marking the birth of the Third Republic. No less than seven parties stood for parliamentary election, but only the three most successful parties were allowed to continue their campaigning.

In 1980, Lamizana, the winner of the May 1978 Presidential election, was confronted by a general strike and overthrown on 25 November 1980 by Colonel Saye Zerbo, the leader of the *Comité militaire de redressement pour le progrès national* (CMRPN) (Military Committee for the Restoration of National Progress – unofficial translation).

Two years later, on 7 November 1982, he too was overthrown and had to relinquish power to the *Conseil de salut du peuple* (CSP) (Council for the Salvation of the People – unofficial translation) led by Commander Jean-Baptiste OUEDRAOGO.

On 4 August 1983, a section of the army rose up and overthrew the CSP which was replaced by the *Conseil national de la Révolution* (CNR) (National Revolutionary Council – unofficial translation) led by Commander Boukari Lingani



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and Captains Blaise Compaoré, Thomas Sankara and Henri Zongo, who led the Revolution. Captain Thomas Sankara was co-opted by his peers as President of the CNR and Head of State.

The following year, on 4 August 1984, on the first anniversary of the revolution, the country was re-named Burkina Faso (Land of men of integrity), with a new national anthem, a new motto (“Fatherland or death, we will vanquish” – unofficial translation), and a new flag. The country was newly sub-divided into 25 provinces and 121 departments.

After four years of revolutionary rule, on 15 October 1987, President Sankara was in turn overthrown by Blaise Compaoré. The CNR was dissolved and replaced by the *Front populaire* (Popular Front).

In 1991, Blaise Compaoré introduced multi-party rule. In 1992, a new Constitution was voted ushering in the Fourth Republic.

The city of Ouagadougou

Ouagadougou, known by its familiar name of ‘Ouaga’, is the capital of Burkina Faso and the largest city in the country with a population of 1 475 223 inhabitants (2008). It is the cultural, economic and administrative centre of the country. The inhabitants of Ouagadougou are the *Ouagalais* or *Ouagavillois*.

These words have their origins in “Woogrtenga” and “Wogodogo” and mean “the place where honour and respect are given”. Ouagadougou is situated more or less at the geographical centre of the country (at 12°17.5' latitude and 1°7' longitude), in the province of Kadiogo. The city of Ouagadougou includes 30 sectors and 17 villages divided into 5 boroughs: Baskuy, Bogodogo, Boulmiougou, Nongr-Maasom and Sig-Noghin. Each borough is governed by an elected mayor.

The city of Ouagadougou has little industry save for a few industries in the agro-food and textile sectors. The city has an international airport, and is the end of a railway line operated by the *Société Internationale de Transport Africain par Rail* (SITARAIL) which starts in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and has branches extending to Lomé (Togo), Bamako (Mali), Niamey (Niger), Accra (Ghana), Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Cotonou (Benin).

Most inhabitants of Ouagadougou travel by two-wheeled transport. There are an estimated 600,000 motorbikes in the city; more than 50,000 new motorbikes come on to the market each year.

Climate

In October, Ouagadougou has a fairly pleasant climate. The average temperature is between 30 to 35°C. Light cotton clothing is recommended.

Currency – exchange rate

Currency: F CFA

Exchange: 1 Euro = 655,957 F CFA

For other CFA exchange rates please enquire directly at the bank.



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Water – electricity

In the principle towns, tap water is clean and potable, however, it is nonetheless recommended to consume bottled or filtered water.

There are good electricity supplies; the standard is 220 volts.

Local time

Local time is GMT (Greenwich Meridian Time)

Health

As in all tropical countries, malaria is prevalent year-round. It is recommended to take a quinine-based prophylactic before, during and for two weeks after your stay.

The Yellow Fever vaccination is mandatory. Other recommended vaccinations include cholera, meningitis A and C, typhoid and hepatitis (A and B).

Shop and public administration opening hours

Shops open at 08h00 and close at 18h00.

Telecommunications

Three (3) mobile phone operators (Airtel, Telecel and Telmob) offer good coverage at reasonable prices.

Useful numbers

- Airport Police: Tel.: +226 50 30 65 22
- Hospital Ambulance: Tel.: 226 50 30 66 43 / 44 / 45 - 226 50 30 60 74 or 50 30 69 47

Arrival and Departure

A welcome desk will be set up at Ouagadougou International Airport from 1 to 3 October 2011. It will offer help with completing arrival formalities, and transport from the airport to hotels. Transport will also be provided from the hotels to the airport at the end of the conference.

Customs formalities

Special formalities

Certain goods are subject to special regulations on arrival and departure from BURKINA FASO. These include:

- Drugs and contraband which are strictly prohibited. The import, export or simple possession of contraband are customs offences which are punishable by serious sanctions including confiscation of the merchandise, customs fines, legal proceedings, etc.
- Vegetable or animal products whose import requires a phytosanitary or sanitary certificate.
- Currency transfers: if you are in possession of money or securities whose value is equal to or exceeds 1,000,000 CFA or € 1,524.49 or equivalent, you are required to declare this to the customs authorities. Money and securities include: cash, bankers cheques, travellers cheques, debt securities and bearer negotiable instruments, securities, gold bullion and gold coins.

Source: www.douanes.bf



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Tourist sites (in the city of Ouagadougou)

Monuments and sites:

- The Place des Nations
- The 2nd of October Monument
- African Film-makers Monument
- Naba Koom Place
- Yennenga Square
- Princesse Yennenga Monument
- The *Bataille du rail* Monument
- The *Verseuse d'eau*
- The Martyrs Monument
- The Museum of Music
- The National Museum
- The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of Ouaga

Fauna/Flora

Thanks to its varied climate types, the Burkina Faso landscape is very diverse. The landscape in the north of the country, which receives little, if any, rain, includes baobabs and thorny scrubland (Sahel). In the south of the country, species-scarce tropical forests can be observed. The national parks are still home to lions, elephants, hippopotami, buffalo, antelopes and crocodiles.

Economy

Since independence, despite receiving substantial economic aid, primarily from the European Union, Burkina Faso remains one of the poorest countries in the world. This is in part a result of its infertile lands and strong demographic growth. The country's economy is based primarily on subsistence agriculture, which is responsible in some regions for soil depletion. The active population in Burkina Faso includes some 4 million people, of whom 80% are employed in agriculture. Unemployment and underemployment are so widespread that many workers seek season work or permanent employment in the wealthier countries to the south. In 2003, the rate of inflation was 1.7%.

Culture

Although each ethnic group has its own identity, Mossi, Bobo and Lobi art dominate. The Mossi are famous for their antelope masks. These are impressive masks, some 2m high, painted in red or white. They are worn during funeral processions. The Bobo make butterfly masks with red, white and black painted strips, which are worn to appeal to the Gods during fertility ceremonies. Young people's initiation rites are strongest among the Lobi. The Lobi are also known for their wooden sculptures which are intended to protect the family.



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Organization of the Conference: contact details

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Meals

Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided for all participants. Participants with badges will receive meal vouchers.

Meeting documents

The documents will be posted on the Ramsar Convention website and made available to all registered delegates and observers. We strongly urge participants to bring with them the meeting documents provided by the Ramsar Secretariat; only a very small number of documents will be available at the Hotel Splendid. The agenda is available at: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop11-africanregionalmeeting2011/main/ramsar/1-31-58-500^25306_4000_0

Excursion

On Wednesday 5 October 2011, there will be an excursion to Lake Bam (Ramsar Site N°1880) about 100 km north of Ouagadougou.

Departure will be from the Hotel Splendid at **07:00 in the morning**. The host country will lay on a bus for excursion participants.



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Lake Bam, Ramsar Site N° 1880, with a surface area of 2,693 ha was designated on 7 October 2009; it is situated in north-central Burkina (13 ° 24'N 001 ° 31'O). This lake, one of the primary sources of fresh water in the region, is especially important, notably as a habitat for Nile crocodile, hares and rabbits because of its situation in a semi-arid climate. It is also home to several species of fish, including the *Schilbe mystus*, which is endangered as a result of siltation and overfishing. The lake is used for a range of activities including: fishing, breeding, subsistence and export farming (green beans).

The lake also plays an important role in the region's hydrological cycle, notably through the creation and maintenance of a microclimate (made all the more important because it is part of the Sahelian environment), by replenishing the water table, through flood prevention/control, stabilization of the river banks, and capture of sediments. The principle threat to the site is the increase in rates of siltation. A committee has been created and a project is being developed as part of efforts to address these threats.

Some useful links to photographs and maps:

<http://www.gouvernement.gov.bf/>

<http://www.lefaso.net/>

http://www.routard.com/guide/code_dest/burkina_faso.htm

http://maps.google.ch/maps?hl=fr&sugexp=gsis,i18n%3Dtrue&cp=4&gs_id=f&xhr=t&q=burkina+faso&gs_upl=&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.&biw=1280&bih=585&wrapid=tljp131546324840906&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=0xe2dca26d5a6709b:0x27930aed46836dab,Burkina+Faso&gl=ch&ei=GKFoTqW5KMav8gONp82_Cw&sa=X&oi=geocode_result&ct=title&resnum=8&sqi=2&ved=0CGgQ8gEwBw

<http://www.mae.gov.bf/>

Site Web: www.insd.bf



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