



**Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**Ramsar COP11**  
**“Wetlands, Tourism, and Recreation”**

**African Regional Preparatory Meeting**  
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 3-8 October 2011

**DRAFT**  
**Terms of Reference of the Sub-regional Working Groups**

## **Introduction**

The 11th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) will take place in Bucharest, Republic of Romania, from 19 -26 June, 2012.

As part of the groundwork relating to this Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention has decided that a series of meetings should be held in the six Ramsar regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, the Neotropics, North America, and Oceania) to review the current implementation of the Convention and prepare for the Conference of the Parties. To allow for more in-depth analysis among those Contracting Parties which, due to geographical proximity and other factors have more things in common, the Secretariat of the Convention has decided to organize sub-regional sessions back-to-back with the regional meeting.

The following 6 sub-regional breakdowns have been proposed for Africa:

- Central Africa (Congo Basin)
- East Africa
- Northern Africa
- Southern Africa
- West Africa
- Indian Ocean Island States

To this effect, the sub-regional sessions are organised in such a way that it will provide space for thematic discussions and plenary sessions for reporting back.

## **Objectives of the workshop**

The objective of these sessions will be to:

- Analyze major issues and concerns that characterise the expansion of the Convention in the sub-regions;



- Review and debate progress with the current Convention Work and Strategic Plans (Priorities for Next Triennium 2013- 2015);
- Make a series of recommendations to solve the problems identified and indicate the needs for the future;
- Administrative Reform;
- Appointment on SC voting members;
- Regional Initiatives;
- Future scientific & technical priorities for the implementation of the Convention 2013-2015;
- Tourism and wetlands.

### **Thematic clusters**

The discussions will be centred on the Ramsar strategic objectives as identified in the strategic plan 2009-2015, they are five (5) in total:

- i. The wise use of wetlands
- ii. Wetlands of International Importance
- iii. International cooperation
- iv. Implementation capacity
- v. Membership

A number of cross-cutting issues will be discussed during the workshops, including: *Wetlands and poverty reduction – Implementation of COP10, Wetlands and Tourism, Mining and extractive industries, threats and challenges for African wetlands, Wetlands and Climate Change*, links to poverty eradication; knowledge sharing and access to information and more.

### **Issues for discussion**

Those issues will be discussed bearing in mind the Changwon Declaration adopted by COP10, the Millennium Development Goals and the overall COP10 Resolutions as well as the Draft Resolutions to be submitted to COP11. Participants will attempt to answer the fundamental questions, given the current status of Africa's development:

1. *How effective has been the implementation of the wise use concept in your country/sub region? Has your country been able to achieve (initiate) the following:*
  - a. Undertaking wetland inventory, assessments and monitoring?
  - b. Addressing the interaction between wise use and public awareness and education, public participation, legislation, institutions, training, policy development, planning, and general decision-making?
  - c. Managing wetlands adaptively in response to the impacts of global climate change



- and sea-level rise?
- d. Developing more sustainable agricultural practices?
  - e. Restoring and rehabilitating the many degraded or lost wetlands and their values and functions, whilst recognizing that it is ecologically, economically and culturally more appropriate to maintain existing wetlands than to permit their damage and then seek to restore them?
  - f. Addressing the major threats posed by invasive alien species to the future of wetlands?
  - g. Promoting and improving existing incentives for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and making every effort to eliminate those incentives which are incompatible with sustainable use?
  - h. Involving the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands?
  - i. Where Contracting Parties are developing National Wetland Policies (or other policies encompassing conservation and wise use of wetlands), have such policies been cross-referenced to other national environmental and development planning measures?

2. *What are the constraints you are facing in implementing the wise use concept in your country/region?*

The List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List) constitutes the flagship of the Convention. As such, it deserves special attention by all those responsible for, or interested in, the implementation of the treaty.

3. *How many sites your country/sub-region has submitted for designation since last COP?*

- a. Have you observed any change in the ecological character of your (current) designated Ramsar sites?
- b. Have management plans been prepared and are currently implemented in your Ramsar sites?
- c. How many sites under the Montreux records?
- d. Any potential transboundary Ramsar sites in your region?

4. *What are the constraints you are facing in sites designation and management?*

5. *What are the constraints in implementing the international cooperation concept in your region/country?*

We will also emphasise on the resources and capacities required for the effective implementation of the Convention in your country/region and address the following questions:

- a. Are the Conference of the Contracting Parties, subsidiary bodies and other



- Convention mechanisms able to support efficiently the implementation of Convention in your countries/regions?
- Have you established effective and efficient institutional mechanisms for implementing the Convention (National Wetlands Committee, National Wetlands Policies, etc.)?
  - Do you think that the Secretariat provided the technical support to enable the Convention's mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expanding expectations of the Contracting Parties?
  - Have you maximized the mutual benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (WWF, IUCN, BLI WI and IWMI) and their membership and expert networks, and other collaborating organizations? and
  - Have you been provided with effective mechanisms for training and capacity-building to equip you to implement the Convention?

What are your major constraints in implementing the Convention at the national and regional level (Please put them in different clusters e.g.: (i) financial, (ii) technical, (iii) institutional, and (iv) political)?

In order for the Convention to achieve its Mission, all UN countries should become Contracting Parties.

While membership has grown steadily to encompass all regions of the world, there remain notable gaps, namely in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and amongst the Small Island Developing States.

As for African Region, it appears that only Eastern and Southern Africa include countries that are not parties to the Ramsar Convention yet.

*6. What is the support needed for countries in your sub-region that are not party yet to the Convention to ratify it?*

### **Organisation of the workshop**

Given the number of issues to be addressed, participants will be assigned to a group depending of the sub-region of origin, breakdown was done as follows:

- Central Africa (Congo Basin) (Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe).
- East Africa (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania).
- Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia).



- Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe).
- West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo).
- Indian Ocean Island States (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tome & Principe, and Seychelles).

### **Workshops facilitation**

A Facilitator will be identified for each workshop as well as a Rapporteur.

- The Chair/Facilitator/Moderator

The Facilitator will draft will make a background presentation on the topics to initiate discussions and raise the issues to be addressed by the working groups. He will facilitate participation of all participants present during the working groups.

- The Rapporteur

He will be in charge of the group report writing.