



Report of the Asian Regional Meeting

The Pre-COP11 Ramsar Regional Meeting for Asian Contracting Parties was held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 14-18 November 2011, being hosted by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry and co-organized with the Ramsar Secretariat. The meeting was attended by over 100 people who were either already actively involved with the Convention or were new to the Convention. Participants heard presentations and held discussions on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention across Asia since COP10 (2008), and on the issues that will be discussed during COP11 (2012) and priorities for the coming triennium.

The meeting was memorable for the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the Ramsar Secretariat, and the announcement by Eng. Mohamed Saif Alafkham (General Director, Fujairah Municipality, UAE) of the intention of Fujairah Municipality to donate USD 50,000 towards developing the first Arabic language wetland management training kit based on guidelines developed by the Ramsar Convention.



Ms. Clarissa Arida and Prof. Nick Davidson signing the MoC between ACB and the Ramsar Secretariat



Eng. Mohamed Saif Alafkham
Director General of Fujairah Municipality, UAE



On the first day, the regional meeting was opened by H.E. Zulkifli Hasan (Minister of Forestry, Indonesia), Dr. Ir. Saptasatri Kusumadewi (Assistant Deputy Governor for Environment, DKI Jakarta Province) and Prof. Nick Davidson (Deputy Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat). Presentations were then given on the status of wetlands in Indonesia by Mr. Basah Hernowo (National Development and Planning Agency) and Mr. Sonny Partono (Ministry of Forestry), who talked about how the importance of wetland conservation was being increasingly recognized within the government through its integration into national planning, and the gradual increase in the number of wetlands being listed as Ramsar Sites. However, there were still issues with the conversion of wetlands for other uses and the need to strengthen the institutional framework for wetland conservation.



Opening ceremony with
H.E Zulkifli Hasan, (Minister of Forestry, second from left)
and Mr. Darori (Director General, PHPA, third from left)

There were then updates from the Ramsar Secretariat, STRP and the regional initiatives in Asia about their work since COP10, as well as an introduction to the main Draft Resolutions (DRs) and priorities for the work of the STRP that will be presented to COP11 for endorsement. More detailed discussion on these then took place on the last day of the meeting.



Participants in discussion during a breakout session



Discussions on the following two days focused on implementation of the Ramsar Convention based on priorities identified beforehand by the Contracting Parties. On the national level, these included the economic valuation of wetlands, working with the business sector, and developing national wetland legislations and policies. Then at the site level, issues included case studies for working with local communities, the management and financing of Ramsar Sites, as well as approaches to tourism at Ramsar Sites.

Throughout these discussions, the emphasis was for Contracting Parties and relevant organizations to present their best practices in order to promote information exchange and better networking. Representatives from the business sector, e.g. from Danone/Aqua, Sinarmas, and the Indonesian Palm Oil Commission, also presented their work regarding the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Representatives from a range of regional organizations, e.g. the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) could attend and give presentations on their work regarding wetland conservation and wise use.

On the final day, participants identified what they considered should be the future work priorities for the Ramsar STRP. This included the economics of wetland ecosystem services, methodologies for establishing payment for ecosystem services at Ramsar Sites, assessing and supporting the capacity-building needs of Contracting Parties in applying Ramsar guidance, and the development of a strategy for Ramsar to engage in the global water debate. In terms of the DRs to be presented to COP11, the participants focused their discussion on the DRs relating to Ramsar Regional Initiatives, responsible investments, and tourism at wetland sites. Draft Resolutions [are posted here](#).

During the meeting, participants had a chance to leave the meeting venue and to get their feet wet by visiting Indonesia's newest Ramsar Site at Palau Rambut, an island which is a short boat ride from Jakarta.



Participants at Palau Rambut Ramsar Site



Mr. Ahmad Saerodzi

DKI Jakarta Nature Conservation Office at Palau Rambut



Palau Rambut Ramsar Site



Participants with a group of traditional Indonesian dancers

Reported by Lew Young, Ramsar Senior Advisor for Asia-Oceania

More Information [is posted here.](#)