



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
AND
PLANNING AGENCY

**RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Irán, 1971)**

Report

**V Pan-American Regional Meeting in preparation for the 11th Conference of the Parties
(COP11)**

**Kingston, Jamaica
6-10 December 2011**

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Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Mr. Peter Knight, Chief Executive Officer of the National Environment and Planning Agency-NEPA as well as the Minister of Housing, Environment and Water of Jamaica who welcome all delegates and participants to the meeting. Likewise, expressed his satisfaction for hosting the meeting and welcome participants to enjoy the cultural, gastronomic and touristic opportunities that the country offers.

Mr. Anada Tiega, Secretary General thanked the Jamaica Government for the warm welcome and excellent organization of the meeting. Highlighted that is the first Pan American meeting that takes place in the Caribbean as well as his first visit to Jamaica, therefore expect to learn more about wetlands management in Jamaica and encourage the participants for fruitful discussions.



The Ramsar Secretariat recognized the governments of Jamaica, Ecuador and Nicaragua for the designation of the Ramsar sites Mason River, la Tembladera and Playitas Moyua. The Contracting Parties of the Americas and the Ramsar Secretariat recognized as well Mr. Herb Raffaele for his support to wetlands conservation and the Convention.

The opening, was warm animated by the students of the Mico-Practicing High School and the Jamaica assemble "Voices for Climate Change" who performance about the importance of the environment and the problems of climate change.



Afterwards the Senior Regional Advisor for the Americas made an introduction of the meeting's agenda as well as the methodology and objective of the 5 thematic panels that took place on the 6 and 7 of December in Management of Ramsar Sites, Wetlands and Climate Change, Wetlands and the Business Sector, Regional Initiatives and Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation.

In Annex II are the conclusions of the 5 thematic panels, however is important to highlight here that the panels were an opportunity to discuss experiences in the region about key thematic issues as well as to provide inputs to the Contracting Parties discussion of draft Resolutions for COP 11 consideration and setting of priorities for the next triennium.



Thursday 8 December 2011

Plenary and Sub Group discussions of DR Resolutions for COP 11 consideration

Opening

The Senior Advisor for the Americas Ms. Maria Rivera welcomed the participants to the second part of the Pan American Meeting, which will consist of plenary and sub regional group discussions of the draft resolutions for consideration of the COP11 as well as other regional issues.

The election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the meeting followed, resulting in Jamaica as Chairman and Mexico as Vice Chairman.

The Chairman of the Meeting, Mr. Peter Knight, CEO of the National Environment and Planning Agency introduced the agenda, which was approved by consensus.

Subsequently, the Secretariat read the list of registered and present observers for the meeting, which were accepted by the plenary.



Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Americas 2009-2011

The Senior Advisor for the Americas of the Ramsar Secretariat, presented the main achievements of the region in the implementation of the Convention during the triennium 2009-2011 with emphasis on the development and consolidation of regional initiatives that emerged from the IV Pan-American Meeting in 2007, the continued designation of Ramsar Sites, the use of Ramsar Advisory Missions to support the decision processes of Ramsar Sites and the celebration of the 40 years of the Convention in Huatulco, Mexico, among others.

Regarding the difficulties in the implementation she highlighted the threats to the ecological character because of development projects in about 25 Ramsar Sites particularly in the Neotropics, the constant change in the focal points and the lack of coordination between them, as well as the changes in the representatives to the Standing Committee and the decrease in funds for the implementation of projects. Similarly, she highlighted the importance of political support from the Administrative Authorities in the various regional processes involving the focal points.

The Chairman then thanked the presentation and opened the floor for plenary discussion.

Jamaica thanked the sub-region of the Caribbean for allowing Jamaica to represent them before the Standing Committee and reported on the efforts of recognition of the designation of Wetlands of International Importance in the system of protected areas.

Mr. Anada Tiega, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, emphasized the importance of strengthening the Parties for global challenges such as urban development, extractive

industries and the increased natural risks and disasters. In addition, he highlighted the importance of including local stakeholders in wetland management.

Mexico highlighted the positive trend in the region on the implementation of Ramsar while urging the parties to be self-critical, to engage in joint learning processes and stressed that the Convention is a great tool to support the Parties and that it is important to include wetland managers and other stakeholders in the different processes as they are the direct implementers of the Convention.



Venezuela noted that Contracting Parties are responsible for the implementation of the Convention and in this sense, reported that the country has developed 4 types of activities such as involving state policies in the water policy, the reformulation of the National Wetland Committee and the focus on social policies. Venezuela also noted that the indicators used must go beyond numbers and more towards recognition and management from the grassroots.

Uruguay reported on changes in the Administrative Authority to the Ministry of Environment and the appointment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Political Focal Point and the Ministry of Environment as the Technical Focal Point, as well as the preparation for the designation of six Ramsar Sites in the near future and the project for the removal of Bañados del Este Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record. Uruguay also mentioned the interest to be part of the next Standing Committee and reiterated the offer to host the COP12 to be held in 2015.

El Salvador requested the Secretariat to not only send the original bill of contributions by appropriate means, but also to send a copy to the country's focal point for monitoring.

Ecuador informed about the development of a National Workshop for the development of the CEPA National Strategy with representatives of all Ramsar sites and involving different stakeholders.

Chile agreed that the Contracting Parties are responsible for carrying out the process of implementation of the Convention with support from the Secretariat, outlined the proposal to

designate an alternate representative to the Standing Committee, and reported on the efforts made for the removal of their Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record. Chile also outlined the efforts to involve other stakeholders in the process of wetland conservation.

Cuba noted that changes in the governance of the country and the economic crisis led to the delay in payment of contributions.

Costa Rica requested the integration of the Central American Wetlands Policy in future reports and the consideration on the management of other wetlands although they are not Ramsar Sites. Regarding the Standing Committee, Costa Rica requested to solve the limitation of the use of the English language and supports the idea of an official and an alternate representative.

Argentina stressed the importance of coordination between national focal points with the missions in Geneva.

Dutch Caribbean reported on the preparation for the designation of two new Ramsar Sites in Curacao and Bonaire. On the other hand, as the Government of Bonaire, reported on the next request for the inclusion of its Ramsar sites in the Caribbean Sub-region so that they can be included in the regional report. It also highlighted the progress in management tools and legal issues surrounding the Ramsar Sites.

Suriname reported on the development of a GEF project with a component on improved coastal zone management that includes their Ramsar site. Suriname also expressed the need for support and guidance for the creation of the National Wetland Committee and the importance of sharing information.

Peru informed about the need for a reporting system that is more inclusive and that considers other indicators.

Dominican Republic reported on the importance that has to be given to other wetlands that are not Ramsar Sites and incorporate the principles and tools of the Ramsar Convention.

Guatemala thanked the Secretariat for the organization of the Ramsar Advisory Mission to Laguna del Tigre Ramsar Site and its recommendations, which have been instrumental in securing the social and political support that have led to strengthening restoration activities in the area.

Mexico urged to consider the importance of the designation of under-represented wetlands in the list of Wetlands of International Importance in future reports and emphasized the importance of Ramsar site designations as an expeditious means to support the processes of conservation. Mexico also thanked the Secretariat for the organization of two Ramsar Advisory Missions that have been instrumental in positioning of wetlands issues in the agenda, the involvement of other stakeholders and the legitimacy of the Focal Point in the country, among other things.

Grenada announced that on December 1th the Government signed the approval to access to the Ramsar Convention. The announcement was well received by all participants and the Secretariat that pointed out that will be visiting Grenada early next year and highlighted that with Grenada there will be 30 Contracting Parties in the Americas.

The Secretariat thanked the comments and complementary information given by the parties and noted that the indicators used for the implementation report are based on the objectives and indicators of the Convention's Strategic Plan 2009-2012, in which the National Report is also based. Also stated that in the National Report the Parties had the opportunity to consider appropriate changes to the Strategic Plan and may also do so in the context of the proposed resolution on this issue.

WWF urged the parties to know about the experience of Mexico in terms of Ramsar site designations, and stressed the importance of the joint mission between the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention and the potential synergies between the Conventions in the interest of saving resources.

The Cartagena Convention, referred to the importance of working together with the Ramsar Convention in particular taking into account the activities that they carry out in the wider Caribbean.

UNEP-CMS urged to review the Work Plan established at the last COP10 to identify areas of synergy and reiterated its support for the Ramsar Convention.

IAC noted that many Ramsar Sites are areas of importance for turtles and highlighted the potential synergies of working together.

The Secretariat highlighted the work being carried out with the SPAW Protocol and with the UNEP-CMS in the context of different regional processes of implementation of the Convention.



Draft Resolutions for consideration of COP11 and of interest to the region

Administrative and Financial Affairs

The Secretariat introduced the general synthesis of the Standing Committee 43 decisions emphasizing in the financial, administrative and technical draft resolutions and the process for review and discussion during the meeting.

The floor was then given to **Jamaica and Mexico**, as the regional representatives of the Neotropics and North America in the Finance Sub Group as well as in their role as Vice-Chairs of the Working Group on Administrative Reform.

Jamaica stressed the importance of making a decision and concluding the issue of administrative reform under the resources and time invested. Reported that the working group presented two resolutions for consideration by the Standing Committee given the different positions of the parties and the decision of SC on the preparation of a briefing paper to facilitate decision-making. In this regard Jamaica urged the parties to conduct the necessary consultations in their countries so that they can make a decision at the next COP.

Furthermore, as representative to the finance group, reported on the budget discussions especially on the maintenance of resources for regional initiatives and adjustments made during the SC-43 budget for 2012. Also mentioned the request to the Secretariat to prepare two budgets for the period 2013-2015 for consideration by COP11 one that reflects no growth and no inflation and a second with an increase of 2% contribution.

Mexico highlighted the need for the Parties to reach to the COP with a position as a conclusion of the issue of Administrative Reform.

Argentina said to be satisfied with the service of the Secretariat under current conditions and noted that UNEP's proposal does not reflect the benefits or an improvement of the Secretariat's functioning according to its financial conditions and the disruption during the transition period. Similarly, Argentina thanked the group of countries that attended the SC-43 for their interventions regarding adjustments in budget cuts, as the current proposal is more balanced.



Canada stressed the importance of an informed decision-making around the issue of Administrative Reform.

Chile emphasized the need of having as soon as possible the informative document on the Administrative Reform for decision-making.

The Secretariat said that the document would be ready for distribution in late January 2012.

Jamaica stressed the need to review the roles, composition and rules of procedure of the Standing Committee and highlighted the potential of the Wiki System as a document reviewing tool, but only prior to the meetings and not for decision-making. Jamaica also mentioned that two Standing Committee meetings were held during the year and that all draft resolutions were submitted only in the last Committee meeting.

USA mentioned the difficulties identified around reviewing resolutions in the Wiki System as it is not user-friendly and files are in PDF format. On the other hand, USA urged the parties to consider Article 8 of the Convention in the framework of next decision on the Administrative Reform as well as the process of Rio+20.

Technical Proposals

Climate Change

The Secretariat invited Dr. Max Finlayson in his capacity as expert on Climate Change in the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to present some additional considerations to this issue.

Max Finlayson presented some considerations on the draft resolution on Climate Change, such as the need for cooperation between conventions to avoid duplication and Climate Change implications for the implementation of the Convention.

Chile and **Venezuela** suggested considering the findings of the UNFCCC COP17 in Durban.

Ecuador stressed the need to incorporate experiences and national experts in the work on Climate Change conducted by the STRP. Ecuador also mentioned the importance of avoiding the use of certain terms in the resolution that could lead to rejection, such as payment for environmental services.

Mexico, **Ecuador** and **Costa Rica** agreed on the need to obtain documents in Spanish to facilitate the feedback process to the STRP and their application.

Dutch Caribbean suggested caution in the use of terms that could guide decision makers to actions that are detrimental to certain ecosystems.

Antigua and Barbuda agreed about the need of cooperation with experts on the issue of climate change.

The Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention suggested using support elements from documents of other Conventions.

Review of procedures for the description of Ramsar site designations

Dr. David Stroud presented some considerations on the draft resolution for the description of Ramsar site designations.

Mexico and **Brazil** agreed on their concern about thorough changes in the RIS format, considering that the current format is complete and that other uses at national level and in other cases would increase the workload for the Contracting Parties. They stated that they disagree on major changes to the RIS.

Uruguay consulted on how the procedure process on line would be conducted, considering that the official submission is made through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

David Stroud said that this would not create significant problems. The Secretariat responded

that currently it is done by following the appropriate diplomatic channels and that given the formality of the countries in the region regarding this issue in case that the Parties approve this resolution, a way would be found to keep the formal processes required by the Parties.

Ecuador expressed concern about the new proposed structure given that there is a database based on the current format, which is used nationwide and the change would require an investment to adjust the database.

Peru stressed the easiness of the current format for the involvement of users of the wetland.

Chile emphasized the importance of not simplifying the RIS in terms of ecological character descriptions, as these are central to management actions required for follow-up and thus should be reviewed.

Dr. Montserrat Carbonell talked about her experience as a regional STRP networker for the Neotropics, referring to the difficulties with the involvement of focal points of the Panel. As well, she mentioned that in the past there was also an alternate representative to the Standing Committee.

Subsequently the Contracting Parties were divided into sub-regional groups – Caribbean-North America, Central and South America to discuss the most important draft resolutions for the region.

Friday 9 December 2011

The **Vice President Mr. Carlos Garcia of Mexico**, summarized the previous day and invited each of the Sub-regional groups to present the results of discussions on the draft resolutions to be considered at COP 11.

Central America Subgroup

The Central America Subgroup was formed by **Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico by North America**. Mr. Jorge Gamboa of Costa Rica reported to the plenary that the group regretted the absence of the Republic of Panama in its capacity as Regional Representative, since its presence could have energized the process as well as the communication processes. In that regard, they asked the Secretariat to inform the Government of Panama about the previous concerns and, in particular, regarding comments on the draft resolutions that are still awaiting discussion given that they must be conducted by the regional representative. For this reason they asked the Secretariat for an extension of the deadline for the resolutions in the wiki.

Regarding DOC. SC43-6 on Administrative Reform the Secretariat was asked to send the information paper in preparation for the end of January 2012 and it was stated that the parties will engage in discussion in order to establish a position and make a decision in the next COP 11.

Regarding the document DOC. SC43-11 on the “Proposed adjustments to the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of Parties” in rule 2 the inclusion and definition of the category of permanent observer is requested. In rule 6 the reason behind the specific reference to the International Atomic Energy Agency to be represented as an observer is queried. In rule 18 the removal of the square brackets is requested. In rule 54 point No. 2 the Secretariat is asked to promote the use of digital media for the dissemination of documents in order to reduce the use of paper.



In DOC SC43-17. Adjustments to the roles and composition of the Standing Committee, it is requested that an adjustment be made to number 6 of annex 1 of the Resolution to include the alternate representative to the Standing Committee.

Finally, the group requested to reflect the importance of the Regional Initiatives in the framework of Resolution X.6 in the Kingston Declaration.

South America Subgroup

The South America sub region was formed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Mr. Rafael Gonzalez from Paraguay representing the group reported concerning the Administrative Reform, the lack of a consensus among the countries of the sub-region regarding the administration of the Secretariat, therefore there are three positions: maintain the status quo administration within the IUCN, move to the United Nations System-UNEP and wait for the information paper on administrative reform from the majority in order to make a decision.

Regarding DOC SC43-20. Wetlands and energy issues, Paraguay stated that **Brazil** requested a change to be made to the text concerning biofuels and **Venezuela** emphasized that the draft resolution should oversee the protection of the sovereignty of countries over the use of their resources.

Regarding DOC SC43-21. Climate change and wetlands, the group stated that it did not agree with the content of the draft resolution given that this issue is dealt with in another

international forum and that it did agree that they needed to know the results of the COP held in Durban on the topic. The group also requested the preparation of a new text that eliminates the term payments for ecosystem services (PES). The group asked the Secretariat to deliver the new text in due time and manner so that it can be analyzed by the Parties before the COP and emphasized the need for this to be a draft with a new focus that takes into account comments that were made by the Standing Committee and those expressed by the region.

Regarding DOC SC43-22. An Integrated Framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication. The sub-region unanimously suggested that special importance be given to this draft resolution and its application within the framework of the Convention and the relevance of the topic in the Agenda of Rio+20.

In DOC SC43-17. Adjustments to the composition and roles of the Standing Committee, the group reported that in keeping with the administrative procedures of the Convention **Uruguay** will proceed to form part of the Standing Committee in its capacity as host of COP12 and **Chile** expressed its interest in forming part of the said committee.

Regarding document DOC. SC43-11. Proposed amendments to the COP Rules of Procedure. Paraguay stated that the same rules apply to the functioning of the Standing Committee. The group emphasized that the rules and procedure that apply in the Standing Committee do not consider procedures in an efficient and appropriate manner which is why it is necessary to make changes to the procedures to make them more efficient. The group requested clarification of the decision-making process within the Committee in keeping with its structure.



In the same way, the group requested that there should be an alternate representative for the region, with all the powers of the mandate, so that continued representation of the region is guaranteed in the Standing Committee in the absence of the representative.

Regarding the Regional Initiatives within the framework of the Convention the group emphasized the importance of such initiatives in the implementation of the Convention, for this reason they stated their concerns about budget cuts made without consulting the Parties involved. The group pointed out the fact that these initiatives also rely on funds pledged by Contracting Parties so it is rejected any kind of action carried out without first consulting the Parties. The sub-region asked that financial resources earmarked for activities related to

Regional Initiatives be made available in their totality.

At the conclusion of Paraguay's intervention, the floor was given to members of the subgroup for their thoughts on the matter.

Brazil stated that it had no objection to any of the proposals presented by the administration of the Secretariat, however, it noted the existence of a process of revision of environmental governance at the global level, the results of which should be known before any decisions are made. Regarding the Climate Change draft resolution, Brazil emphasized how important it is that the Secretariat presents a new draft resolution taking into account the opinion of the Parties since they were dissatisfied with the current text. In the same way, regarding the draft resolution on wetlands and the eradication of poverty, Brazil supported the notion that this draft resolution should be given more importance. Also Brazil reiterated what was already expressed about having an alternate representative for the sub-region who has the same duties and rights as the regional representative in the case of its absence.

Venezuela agreed with Brazil on the issue of climate change and emphasized the need for the new text to have a different focus in light of the importance of the issue for countries, above all in the context of using wetlands as tools in the fight against CC without undermining the sovereignty of the countries over their resources. Venezuela also emphasized that the Convention is made up of Parties and that this structure should remain in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

The Secretary General agreed that it was important to know the results of the Rio+20 meeting about environmental governance which influenced the change in the dates of the COP11.

Caribbean-North America Subgroup

The group of the Caribbean and North America sub-region comprises Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Dutch Caribbean, Cuba, United States of America, Jamaica, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Ainsley Henry of Jamaica representing the group mentioned with regard to the draft resolution on Wetlands and health (SC43-25) that it is of great interest to the region.

Regarding Administrative Reform of the Secretariat (SC43-13), he indicated that the group considers it necessary to review the information paper financed by Australia in order to make a decision. Although there wasn't a consensus on the issue he expressed that at least one Party stated that the Convention should stay in the IUCN.

Regarding Documents SC43-02 and 03 on financial matters, **Jamaica** explained the adjustments in the budget for 2012 and the next three year period. As alternatives they presented the following options: ask the Secretariat to seek funding with international organizations for specific projects on wetlands and impose taxes on companies for the use of their resources. Also, there was a suggestion that Parties could provide technical services to reduce the costs to

the Convention.

Regarding Document SC43-21. Climate change and wetlands, the group suggested that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel should review the results of the processes that already exist in order to have a clear understanding of the changes in ecological character as a result of climate change and the desire of the Secretariat to take action to reduce the impact of climate change on wetlands.

At the end of **Jamaica's** intervention the plenary was open to discussion.

Cuba presented a proposal on the payment of contributions through the lending of services such as translation and interpretation, as an alternative to the payment of contributions.

Chile and Dominican Republic explained the complexity of imposing a tax since such measures are a matter of national law and could become a type of payment for ecosystem services which would not be well received by many countries.

Brazil again mentioned how important it is that issue of administrative reform takes into account the results of Rio+20. Brazil also reiterated that the Convention is comprised of Contracting Parties and emphasized the need for every decision taken to be discussed and approved by the Parties and not decided by the Secretariat especially with regard to regional initiatives.

The **Secretary General** indicated that decisions on adjustments in the budget had been discussed with the regional representatives within the Standing Committee and encouraged Parties to select members who are committed as representatives.

Jamaica agreed with the Secretary General about the importance of the commitment of the regional representatives at the same time stating how important it is that each Contracting Party commits to keeping themselves informed and communicating with their regional representative.

Brazil agreed with the concerns expressed and highlighted the existence of gaps in the system of regional representation which needed strengthening which is a general concern. Brazil also, reiterated the importance of incorporating elements that guarantee transparency in decision-making.

Dominican Republic stated that one of the problems with adequate representation lies in the fact that the documentation is available mainly in English and is translated into Spanish too late for the Parties to give their comments.

Argentina highlighted the importance of receiving the documents in Spanish in due time and manner in order to give feedback.

Venezuela emphasized the need to have the documents in Spanish so that no Party is isolated and encouraged the need for a solution that satisfies everyone.

Immediately afterwards, the Secretariat taking into account the concerns regarding the draft resolutions in the wiki system, explained that this system came out of in the last Standing Committee so that members of the Committee could sign off the DR as well as participants in same could make their comments and have the final versions for the COP. The Secretariat also referred to the draft resolutions in the wiki, which were distributed to all the participants, and the deadlines for comments.

Chile asked what language the documents were in. The Secretariat responded to Chile in the same way it responded to the previous question raised by Dominican Republic on the issue; all the documents of the Standing Committee were available only in English, except the Resolutions that go to the COP which are translated into the 3 languages. The report of the Committee is only available in English and the decisions are translated into the three official languages of the Convention.

Costa Rica reiterated the need for the documents to be discussed to be translated into the three official languages of the Convention. Referring to the Wiki system, Costa Rica stated that it was unaware of its existence and urged the Secretariat to conduct the process in such a way that the regional representative of Central America participates in the revision of the draft resolutions and communicates the decisions of the countries of the sub-region before the COP.

The Secretariat clarified that this concern about the translation of documents and the availability of interpretation for the sub-groups on the Standing Committee was expressed by the representatives of the Americas during Standing Committees 42 and 43 without achieving a positive response given the budgetary limitations.

WWF suggested the possibility of seeking alternatives in regional organizations interested in volunteering these services as was done for the Africa region with French.

Paraguay indicated that all parties have equal rights to vote and reiterated that in order to facilitate communication and informed decision-making on the conservation of wetlands it is necessary to submit a request that the documents be available in the three languages of the Convention.

Brazil supported Paraguay's proposal and asked whether the availability of translation and interpretation had been one of the considerations of the Administrative Reform.

Chile agreed with Paraguay's proposal, emphasized the importance of documents for discussion being in the languages of the countries and added that documentation in English limited the feedback from national experts.

Mexico agreed with the points previously expressed and requested that the documents be

available in Spanish.

Bahamas noted the financial limitations for granting such a request, suggested the incorporation of the issue in the group's management agenda and the exploration of alternatives through the use of translation software.

USA asked whether seeking funding for translations was among the priorities of the Partnership Officer.

Ecuador emphasized that translation of documents cannot be a goal rather should be a basic condition for the work of the Parties within the framework of the Convention, therefore from there on each country should do its own translations into local languages when necessary.

UNEP-CMS asked what the countries' reaction would be if the situation was reversed and all the documents were available only in Spanish. UNEP-CMS also indicated that in CMS all the documents are translated into the three official languages by the Secretariat.

Dominican Republic expressed support for the position of Paraguay and other countries, adding that the ability of feedback and decision-making is limited by the understanding of the documents on which the countries have to comment. **Cuba** agreed and added that the issue becomes a fundamental right for decision-making and participation within the framework of the Convention. The **Dutch Caribbean** supported the availability of documents at least in Spanish.

Paraguay said that language is a limiting factor, reflected in the performance of different members within the Standing Committee.

Argentina called for the formation of a working group to analyze the rules of procedure and make the proposal of the Spanish language in the Standing Committee and **Peru** agreed to formalize the request.

The Secretariat highlighted the need to clearly state this request in the budget discussions during the COP11 taking into account the existing budgetary constraints. Likewise, the Secretariat clarified to the Bahamas that the adoption of the draft resolution presented in the DOC. SC43-17 paragraph 7 would remove the Resolution IX.24, which establishes the management group.

Work Plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel- Focal Points- Priorities 2013-2015

Subsequently, the Secretariat made a presentation on the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), its structure, work and priorities for the triennium 2009-2012 and the triennium 2013-2015. Also, explained the roles and responsibilities of the different focal points: Ramsar, CEPA, and the STRP- Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the main difficulties presented during the three years such as the lack of coordination between them, the constant changes and lack

of communication to the Secretariat when changes occur.

For the sub-regional discussions, the Secretariat presented the priorities of the region for the 2009-2012 triennium as a framework for establishing priorities for 2013-2015 and suggested revising the document SC43-19: Scientific and Technical Priorities for the implementation of the Convention.

Mexico asked about the reasons that led to the lowering of the priority on the issue of environmental flows and requested that it be awarded a higher priority given the importance of the issue within Regional Initiatives, especially within the regional initiative on Mangroves and Coral Reefs.

Chile stressed that there are studies funded by the Secretariat through Grant funds that can be inputs to the work of the STRP and asked if the draft resolution submitted by Spain is still relevant.

El Salvador reported having trouble accessing the STRP Support Service.

The Senior Advisor for the Americas answered the question of Mexico indicating that there are already some guidelines on the subject but that the Contracting Parties are the ones to establish priorities for the group. Regarding the question of El Salvador she explained that there were some problems with the support service of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, but these were resolved.

Regarding the question of Chile, the Secretariat explained that since the proposal by Spain and Greece were not submitted on time, the Standing Committee in its decision SC43-36 asked both Spain and Greece to consult with the President of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel about how the elements of the proposal can be integrated into the work being done outside the time constraints of the COP11.

Then the sub-regional groups had a second discussion session to continue reviewing the scientific and technical draft resolutions.

Presentation of the second session of the Sub Regional Discussions, December 9

Central America

Fernando Castro on behalf of the sub group mentioned that in the DOC.SC43-18. Adjustments to the *modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, they request to add in point 18 the Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) to the list of invited observers to the STRP and to amend section 24 in order for the President of the Group and an alternate to participate in the meetings of the COP, meaning only two people and not the 14 experts.



In the DOC. SC43-19: Technical and Scientific Priorities for the Implementation of the Convention in the table presented in annex II, the group indicated that in priority 3, they recognized the importance of the work on the Global Wetlands Observation System (GWOS) however requested to take into account the options that already exist in several countries at a lower cost. They also indicated that this activity is conditioned upon the Parties to know the terms of reference to determine its scope and products.

Nicaragua as a group member said that some countries use systems such as NASA-SERVIR, NOAA and others that could be used to streamline resources and improve the observation and analysis of the status of ecosystems.

Within this same subject, the group requested to change to high priority the development of the guidelines for detecting, reporting and responding to changes in ecological character and said it would be good to have resources to implement this guidance in the region.

On the issue of Wetlands and Human Health they requested to know how many case studies by region will be developed to illustrate the topic and found that this task should not be exclusive of the STRP but rather of the Secretariat. With regards to the Guide on Wetlands and Human Health, requested to know the terms of reference, the scope of the guidance and the benefits for the Convention.

With regard to the task for the development of the "Specific guidance related to wetlands and diseases" considered to assign high priority to the task.

The sub-group requested deletion of the task of "Development for wetlands and health indicators" and "the inclusion of the cost and benefit of health in the economic models and assessment of wetlands" as there is information available nationwide on the first and the

implementation of both issues would not be the responsibility of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention. Similarly requested to delete the task of developing the Guide to human and animal health impact assessment for wetland managers.

On the topic of "Water and Management of Water Resources" requested clarifying the activities and results of the task "Ramsar, water and wetlands: a review and strategy development for the global debate on water" as they are not clear.

In the "Wetlands of International Importance" task of implementing the Ramsar RIS, requested the change to low priority and that the Secretariat promotes the upgrade and development of the current database with Wetlands International and the reconsideration of the amount allocated for this task.

South America

The reporter of the group, Mr. Rafael Gonzalez, indicated that in DOC. SC43-19 "Technical and Scientific Priorities for the Implementation of the Convention, the group requests the Secretariat to raise to high-priority the tasks relating to the capacity generation so that there is consistency with the priority given to the issue of communication and participation for training STRP Focal Points.

In the topic of "Wetlands of International Importance" under the task of implementing the Ramsar RIS, the group requested to maintain the current structure of the information sheet.

The group stressed the importance that the documents are in Spanish for its revision and requested that there are available resources to translate the working documents.

They requested a review of the STRP budget, specifically the amounts allocated to high priority tasks and reallocate funds between the Regional Initiatives, as appropriate.

Caribbean and North America

Mr. John Bowleg on behalf of the sub-group indicated the consensus of the Parties to request the Secretary an extension in the period of review of the draft resolutions to December 20, 2011 taking into account the change in the dates of the COP.

In DOC.SC43-18 "Adjustments to the *modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel" Canada asked if the adjustments should be made as a region or individually.

In the DOC SC43-17 "Adjustments to the composition and roles of the Standing Committee", paragraph 5 requires adjustments in language so as to avoid confusion about the status of Switzerland.

The candidates for regional representatives in the next Standing Committee are Canada for North America and Suriname for the Caribbean.

After the intervention of the Caribbean the floor was opened for plenary discussion.

Brazil and **Mexico** stressed the importance of changes to the draft resolutions in a timely manner to facilitate the review of the incorporation of the requested adjustments.

El Salvador considered important, in the context of the prioritization of issues for the STRP's work, to have tools of economic valuation of wetlands and instruments to estimate the value of deterioration in a wetland.

The **Dutch Caribbean** expressed that is important to be careful when assigning a value to an ecosystem, as this information can be used negatively by decision makers.

The **United States** asked about the Committee that would be conducting a review of the STRP, should the Management Group be eliminated.

Brazil stressed the reasonable degree of consensus on some issues and asked how these would be put together.

The Secretariat said that a meeting report is being prepared, which will be sent electronically to the Contracting Parties for review, which will have the conclusions of the sub-groups annexed.

Jamaica presented the draft of the Declaration of Kingston. The parties subsequently worked and welcomed the final text, which emphasized the importance of regional initiatives in the framework of the Ramsar Convention (Annex II).

The conclusions about the Scientific and Technical issues are in Annex IV

Other Business

In other business, the Secretariat indicated that a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the Inter-American Convention on Sea Turtles has been distributed to the Parties, which was welcome by Mexico, Chile, Venezuela and the Embassy of Colombia in Jamaica. Also, the Dominican Republic and Brazil mentioned the progress in the process of accession to the Convention of CMS.

The **Dutch Caribbean** highlighted the need for joint efforts not only for the conservation of sea turtles but for other migratory species.

Chile mentioned the synergies on the conservation of High Andean Flamingos and announced the next meeting in Antofagasta.

CONDESAN noted their agreement on continuing support for the Convention processes and building synergies.

Red Manglar informed and invited the participants to the symposium Communities associated to mangrove ecosystem that will take place in 2012.

Main Achievements of the meeting

As main achievements of the meeting can be noted:

- 1) The meeting focused on the issues to be addressed by the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) to be held in Bucharest, Rumania, from 6-13 July 2012. The meeting was an important opportunity to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 of the Convention in the Americas but also to address the main challenges to the next triennium especially the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites.
- 2) During the meeting V thematic panels took place, to discuss issues as Management of Ramsar Sites, Wetlands and Climate Change, Wetlands and the Business Sector, Regional Initiatives and Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation with the participation of experts from the region as well as from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Convention. The results of the panels provided interchange of experiences and inputs for the Contracting Parties discussions of draft resolutions for COP11 consideration and to address challenges and setting of priorities.
- 3) There was also an exhibition about wise use projects that have been implemented by Wetlands for the Future Fund as well as from experiences of the business sector and interpretative centers.
- 4) Another result from the meeting was the Kingston Declaration (Annex I) that calls the attention about the importance of wetlands in the western hemisphere and the relevance of the programme of regional initiatives of the Convention as on the ground tool for the implementation of the Convention. Likewise highlight the importance to have an alternate representative in the Standing Committee.
- 5) About 100 people among country delegates and observers participated in the meeting.

Closure of the Meeting

The Secretary General mentioned that he listened to the discussions and requests made and that some of them can be answered in the short term, but others must be transmitted to the Standing Committee or the COP11. Regarding the financial aspects as decided by the Standing Committee a diplomatic note has been sent to all Contracting Parties to take volunteers to be part of this process. He also added, it is important that countries include the issue of wetlands in their priorities and work with important areas such as the Amazon wetlands.

On the other hand, he indicated that work is being done on a programmatic approach to wetland management, for conservation, health and sustainable use and that communication is a crosscutting issue.

Mr. Jerome Smith of the Ministry of Housing, Environment and Water of Jamaica thanked all delegates for welcoming Jamaica to host the V Pan American meeting and for their active participation throughout the meeting.

The country delegations appreciated the warm welcome of Jamaica and the excellent organization of the meeting, which was also extended to the Ramsar Secretariat.

On December 10 the participants went to the field trip to the Ramsar Site Palisadoes and Port Royal that also included visits to cultural and historical monuments (see photographic annex).

**V Panamerican Regional Meeting
Kingston, Jamaica.
December 6 to 10, 2011
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Programme

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Irán, 1971)

Ramsar COP11 preparatory meeting

V Pan-American Regional Meeting Kingston, Jamaica 6th -10th of December 2011

MONDAY 05.12.11

Arrival of participants to Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica

Registration in the evening from 16:00 to 19:00 at the Hotel Lobby.

Distinguished delegates that arrive on December 5th, are strongly advised to register during the evening so as to avoid delays during registration on Tuesday morning before the opening of the meeting.

TUESDAY-06.12.11

08:30-09:00 Registration of participants and seat accommodation in Port Antonio Suite

09:00-10:00 **Opening and welcome:** Mr. Peter Knight, J.P

CEO of National Environment and Planning Agency

Welcome address: Mr. Anada Tiega.
Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat

Opening Speech: Hon. Dr. Horace Chang M.P
Minister of Housing, Environment, Water and Local
Government of Jamaica

Opening special

Presentation: Recognition of Ramsar site designations
Special Recognition to Mr. Herb Raffaele for his
outstanding contribution to wetland management

Cultural session: Mico-Practicing Primary and Junior High School

Performance "Voices for Climate Change" Jamaican
Musical ensemble

10:00-10:45 Coffee Break

Panel Sessions as inputs for the 8th and 9th of December

10:45 -1:00 Introduction to Panel sessions.

Panel session I. Ramsar sites and Wetland Management.

1:00 -14:30 Lunch break

14:30 -16:30 Panel session II. Wetlands and Climate Change

16:30 -16:45 Coffee break

16:45 -18:30 Exhibition opening “Wetlands Liquid Asset of the Americas” (Management of sites, WFF, SGF, interpretative centers, wetlands and business sector)

19:00 -21:00 Welcome cocktail Top of the World

WEDNESDAY-7.12.11

Accommodation in Talk of the Town room, floor 17th

08:30 -10:30 **Panel Session III. Wetlands and the Business Sector**

10:30 -10:50 Coffee break

10:50 -13:00 **Panel Session IV. Regional Initiatives**

13:00 -14:30 Lunch break

14:30-16:30 **Special Panel V: Tourism, Wetlands and Recreation**

16:30-16:45 Coffee break

16:45-17:45 Conclusions of the panel sessions

19:00 -21:00 Tourism, Wetlands and Recreation (special dinner)

THURSDAY-08.12.11

Plenary and group sessions of the V Pan-American Meeting

8:30-9:00 Election of chair and vice chair of the meeting

Adoption of the Agenda

Admission of Observers

- 9:00-9:30 Implementation of the Convention 2009-2011
The region's achievements since COP10. Ramsar Secretariat Report on the application of the Convention in the Pan-American region: up-date and progress.
Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas, Ramsar Secretariat
- 9:30-10:00 Plenary discussion
- 10:00-10:15 Coffee break
- 10:15-10:35 Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration and of interest for the region.
Report of the finance subgroup (Draft Resolution on financial and budgetary matters for the 2013-2015 and related). *Standing Committee representative of the Finance sub-group.*
- 10:35-11:00 Administrative Working Group on the Administrative Reform. *Jamaica and Mexico Vice chair of the Ad-Hoc working group.*
- 11:00-11:30 Plenary discussion
- 11:30-12:30 Continue Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration and of interest for the region.
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-15:00 Continue Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration and of interest for the region.
- 15:00-16:30 Sub regional discussion (North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America) on key draft Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration.
- 16:30-16:45 Coffee break
- 16:45-18:45 Sub regional discussion (North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America) on the key draft Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration.

FRIDAY -09.12.11

- 08:30-09:00 Draft conclusions of first day discussions.
- 09:00-10:30 Plenary discussion of proposals derived from sub-regional working Groups.
Presentation by: Rapporteurs from each sub-region

10:30-10:45 Coffee break

10:45-11:45 Continue Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration and of interest for the region.

11:45-12:30 Sub regional discussion (North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America) on key draft Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 consideration.

12:30-14:00 Lunch break

14:00-15:00 Continue Sub regional discussion (North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America) on the key draft Resolutions and Recommendations for COP11 submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee.

15:00-16:30 Plenary discussion of proposals derived from sub-regional working Groups.
Presentation by: Rapporteurs from each sub-region

16:30-16:45 Coffee break

16:45-17:30 Presentation and approval of meeting report.

17:30-18:00 Closing ceremony

SATURDAY -10.12.11

9:00-17:30 Field trip to visit Ramsar sites organized by the government of Jamaica

SUNDAY -11.12.11

Departure of participants

Annex I

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands V Pan-American Meeting in Preparation for COP11

The Kingston Declaration to the Ramsar Convention

- 1)The V Pan American meeting held Dec 6-10, 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica discussed topics of regional importance in relation to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and the draft resolutions for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in July 2012 in Bucharest, Romania. During the Pan American Meeting, sub-regional meetings occurred as well. Discussions and relevant recommendations, proposals and suggestions from the plenary meeting and the sub-regional meeting are captured in the meeting summary prepared by the Ramsar Secretariat. The participants decided nevertheless to highlight the following main discussion points.
- 2)The participants at the V Pan American meeting recognize the continued usefulness of cooperation at the regional level through networks and centres for training and capacity building in providing effective support for improved implementation of the objectives and approaches of the Convention. In this respect, the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat need to ensure sufficient funds exist for implementation of the Convention through regional initiatives during the period of 2013 – 2015. The importance of these regional initiatives should be reaffirmed through review and evaluation during the same timeframe.
- 3)The participants recognize that the pillars of the Convention are based on the balance of environmental, social and economic aspects and express their commitment to make all necessary efforts and in all levels to contribute to actions that promote an integrated framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication.
- 4)The participants recognize the efforts by the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to improve communication with, and transmission to the Parties of the necessary information and documents through the implementation of new technologies to ensure active engagement by all Contracting Parties. In this context, they highlighted the need that the Standing Committee documents and information be provided in a timely manner in Spanish, one of the three official languages of the Ramsar Convention. To ensure continued exchange of information between Contracting Parties, the participants also agreed on the need for Regional Representatives on Standing Committees to have an alternate representative.
- 5)The participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Jamaica for the warm hospitality that was extended to them, with a special recognition to the Ministry of Housing, Environment, Water and Local Government.

Annex II
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
PANEL SESSIONS 6 -7 December 2011

General Introduction

In the framework of the V Pan-American Meeting to be held in Kingston, Jamaica, five Panel sessions will be held during days 6th and 7th December 2011, to discuss topics of interest for the Contracting Parties and the region such as: Management of Wetlands, Wetlands and Climate Change, Tourism, Wetlands and Recreation, the Ramsar Program of Regional Initiatives, and Wetlands and the Business Sector.

The panel sessions will be an opportunity to present experiences of the region under different perspectives for the discussions of the Resolutions on the 8th and 9th of December that will be brought to the COP11 for consideration, as well as for the establishment of priorities for the next triennium.

Under the previous scheme it is expected to have a broad participation of actors such as the Contracting Parties (decision makers, managers of Ramsar sites) and other government actors (regional and local authorities), international organizations, NGOs, Academia, communities and the business sector.

Each panel will have a duration of two hours. During each session, 3 to 4 keynote presentations of approximately 20 minutes. After the presentations, the moderator will invite the panelists to the main table to open the discussion session where they will answer questions from the audience. The moderators will prepare the main conclusions of each panel session, and will be presented to plenary on December 7th.

PANEL I. Ramsar Sites and Wetland Management
6 December 2011, 10:45 – 13:00, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston

General objective

Create a space for the exchange of experiences that illustrate some of the most important issues in terms of Ramsar sites and wetland management in the Americas such as inventory, designation of Ramsar sites, national wetland committees and environmental impact.

Moderator: Royal Gardner

Invited panelists: Montserrat Carbonell, David Stroud, Marcela Bonells, Manuel Contreras

Conclusions

1) The issues of inventory, Ramsar National Committees and Environmental Impact Assessment, still remain as key thematic issues for the Contracting Parties in the region as well as for other Ramsar stakeholders.

2) Regarding wetlands inventory the region present different level of progress so is relevant to continue making efforts to complement them at least at the national level but also for the benefit that they represent for types of inventories (taxonomic groups, Ramsar data base and regional and global inventories) as well as for the identification of priority sites for management actions including their designation as protected areas or wetlands of international importance.

3) The wetland inventory for the Neotropical region could be updated. An interactive map portal would be the most useful way to provide data.

4) In the issue of Ramsar Site designation the STRP is proposing a revised of the Ramsar Information Sheet. With this new proposal is expected to be helpful for a range of Convention processes at national and international scales- especially the ability for wetland site managers and others to place individual wetlands within their wider contexts. It will also offer synergistic opportunities with other international environmental processes.

5) National Ramsar Committees (NRCs) are among the tools to help Ramsar Contracting Parties (CPs) implement the Ramsar Convention at the national level. Many CPs have created NRCs, which vary in structure, composition, and scope from country to country. NRCs have been instrumental in helping deliver the goals and objectives of the Convention.

6) The Environmental Impact Assessment is a relevant tool to support the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar Sites.

7) The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) evaluates wetland impacts based on the presence/absence of aquatic flora and fauna. They do not consider aspects of the functions in

aquatic ecosystem processes. This approach does not allow for a quantitative identification of wetland impacts.

PANEL II. Wetlands and Climate Change
6 December 2011, 14:30 – 16:30, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston

General objective

Presentation of the Ramsar framework in relation to climate change and the main decisions of other environmental agreements such as the Convention on Climate Change, Biodiversity and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Moderator: Manuel Contreras

Invited panelists: Max Finlayson, Varun Vats, Kimberly Stephenson

Conclusions

- 1) Climate change is already occurring on a global scale, seen in changes in the temperature regime, rainfall and sea level (physical factors).
- 2) Changes in physical factors have an elevated spatial and temporal variability at the territorial level.
- 3) Among the phenomena associated with such changes likely changes in the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts stand out, as well as the decrease in the water level of rivers and lower volume accumulated in reservoirs.
- 4) Wetlands exhibit differential vulnerability to climate change (physical and ecological), the response is not necessarily linear and some can even grow considering their previous condition.
- 5) It is necessary to identify and study the impact on wetlands, particularly on those which are more vulnerable, along with the impact on the society.
- 6) Reforestation is a mechanism used to fight Climate Change, particularly the mangrove swamps since they capture 50% more carbon than forests and also provide numerous ecosystem services. Successful examples can be found in India and Senegal. In order to evaluate the net effect of reforestation on the carbon balance, we must consider the condition prior to reforestation.
- 7) Wetlands have differential capacities for capturing carbon, it is necessary to know their capacity in order to manage them adequately. In the same way it is necessary to know their ability to adapt and their importance in the global carbon cycle.

- 8) Among the mechanisms used to fight Climate Change, specifically regarding wetlands, are clean development mechanisms (CDM), reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+) and payment for ecosystem services. Regarding this final aspect it is recommended that pilot models applying such a mechanism be studied (Peru). However, it is important to highlight that the Contracting Parties have different positions about these issues in the region.
- 9) Increasing collaboration between conventions in order to prioritize work related to wetlands and Climate Change.
- 10) Regarding the business sector, developing studies of the vulnerability of wetlands to Climate Change would constitute a competitive advantage, as it is considered a future risk to business.
- 10) The lack of specific scientific knowledge about the ecological rights of wetlands could be rectified through comparative analysis with other wetlands. Ramsar should promote a platform for sharing scientific knowledge on wetlands.
- 11) The study of signs of the response of wetlands to Climate Change should be promoted (Peru).
- 12) Peatlands should be included as prioritized wetlands in the framework of ecosystems sensitive to climate change (Chile).

PANEL III. Wetlands and the Business Sector

7 December 2011, 8:30 – 10:30, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston

General objective

Create a space for the exchange of experiences that illustrate the management activities of some business sectors in wetlands or Ramsar sites in the region, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, that contribute to their conservation and wise use.

Moderator: Carlos Garcia

Invited panelists: Business Sector Chile, Zoraida Fajardo, Denis Landenbergue

Conclusions

- 1) The involvement of the business sector in conservation and wise use of wetlands is possible under an appropriate regulation framework.

2) The social responsibility of the companies and their involvement with the local communities is essential for the management and wise use of wetlands.

3) A policy as well as a real conviction is needed from the business sector in order that these partnership be effective in the long term.

4) The business sector has realized that a wise use of the water is needed as without it there is not more business.

It was also discussed to have “a water footprint” for any of the activities and key products in each country.

Actions at the river basin level is relevant as it involves all stakeholders and creates a sense of “Stewardship” as well as “Governance”.

Panel IV. Regional Initiatives
7 December 2011, 10:50 – 13:00, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston

General objective

Exchange experiences between Ramsar Regional Initiatives in the Americas on lessons learned, challenges and opportunities in their implementation.

Moderator: Ramsar Secretariat

Invited panelists: Ainsley Henry, Sergio Lasso, Arturo Peña, Rafael Gonzalez

Conclusions

1) Regional initiatives are very important for the Contracting Parties of the region as they highlight the importance of different types of wetlands allowing an integrated management considering taking into account the impacts and threats that wetlands are subject to an implementing actions on the ground.

2) Among the major challenges that regional initiatives face, are the increase of political support, the improvement of communication mechanisms and the effective involvement of regional and local stakeholders.

3) Advances are evident in the process of consolidation through the governance structures.

4) The initiatives have advanced in their visibility and dissemination (logos, videos, brochures, publications, etc.).

5) The importance of the regional initiatives is related to the opportunity to share conservation experiences with other countries.

- 6) Brazil highlighted the importance of the Regional Initiative of Mangroves and Coral Reefs, and the La Plata Basin Initiative, as they are useful tools for the promotion and recognition of the importance of conserving these wetlands.
- 7) There are common threats such as shrimp farming in the Mangroves and Coral Reefs Initiative and hydroelectric power stations in La Plata Basin Initiative and common solutions should be found.

Tourism, Wetlands and Recreation
7 December 2011, 14:30 – 16:30, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston

General objective

Present the framework of the Ramsar Convention about wetlands and tourism, as well as experiences in Ramsar Sites and wetlands in general.

Moderator: Montserrat Carbonell

Invited panelists: Ramsar Secretariat, Carlos García, Richard Wishart

Special session: Carla Ann Ahern, Creston Valley, Alba Gamez and Gloria Santana

Conclusions

- 1) Designating wetlands as Ramsar Site attracts attention which might be an opportunity to benefit education and carry out adequate ecotourism activities
- 2) People are both the problem and the solution, therefore we need to attract them so we can educate them while they pay for programs.
- 3) Use the Visitor/Use Management Process to reduce impact on wetland resources,
- 4) Monitoring and identifying local/regional issues is important.
- 5) Partnerships, social networking, media involvement and web are important to spread the Word
- 6) Combining education and entertainment enhances engagement, and
- 7) It could be an opportunity for the private sector to demonstrate through tourism activities that conservation and private sector activities are compatible.

Annex III

Priorities for the Triennium 2012-2015

1. The development or implementation of a national wetland policy
2. Planning or management of Ramsar sites
3. Wetland inventory
4. Formation or reinforcement of national wetland committees
5. Public awareness raising
6. Ramsar site designations
7. Restoration of priority wetlands
8. Consolidation of Regional Initiatives

During the Pan American meeting held in Kingston, Jamaica in December 2011 the Contracting Parties through the Kingston Declaration recognized the continued usefulness of cooperation at the regional level through regional initiatives as networks and centers for training and capacity building in providing effective support for improved implementation of the objectives and approaches of the Convention.

The participants recognize that the pillars of the Convention are based on the balance of environmental, social and economic aspects and express their commitment to make all necessary efforts and in all levels to contribute to actions that promote an integrated framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication.

Photographic Annex









