

**“Wetlands: water, life, and culture”**

**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties  
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002**

**Ramsar COP8 DOC. 26**  
**Information Paper**  
**[English only]**

## **Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002: Asia**

The National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted on the Ramsar Web site, on [http://ramsar.org/cop8\\_nr\\_natl\\_rpt\\_index.htm](http://ramsar.org/cop8_nr_natl_rpt_index.htm).

### **Contracting Parties in Asia:**

Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

### **Contracting Parties whose National Reports are included in this analysis:**

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Viet Nam

### **Contracting Parties yet to submit National Reports:**

Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are recent accessions to the Convention and are therefore not expected to submit a National Report.

## **1. Main achievements since COP7 and priorities for 2003-2005**

### **1.1 Main achievements since COP7:**

- A1 Five new contracting Parties have joined Convention (Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Lebanon, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).
- A2 Reflecting a growing concern for wetland conservation and wise use, the majority of the Contracting Parties have considered Ramsar obligations in their National Environment Policies and Plans.
- A3 The establishment of wetland centers has been recognised as an important activity and the majority of the Contracting Parties have established wetland centers.
- A4 At COP7 the total number of Ramsar sites in Asia was 74. Since then this total has been doubled, with 76 new sites added to the list of Wetlands of International Importance, with a total area of 8.2 million ha (8% of the global total designated area).
- A5 Zonation in Ramsar sites is being widely applied as a tool in site management and conservation in a number of countries in Asia.
- A6 A significant number of Ramsar sites designated since COP7 had no previous protected area status under the local legislation.

- A6 There is also a significant improvement in the number of Ramsar site designations which include under-represented wetland types.
- A7 Recognition of the importance of the maintenance of the ecological character of Ramsar sites has increased and a majority of the CPs report that they are regularly conducting internal reviews to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of their Ramsar sites.
- A8 Regional cooperation has been identified as a priority issue, concerning joint training, capacity building, and information exchange initiatives.
- A9 There is increasingly active participation in economic valuation of wetlands.

## **1.2 Priorities for 2003-2005:**

- P1 Promote membership in the Middle East subregion, efforts to be made with the support of the CPs of the region.
- P2 Designate further Ramsar sites, with particular attention to be given to under-represented types of wetlands in each subregion. Particular attention should also be given to Ramsar site designation by those CPs which have so far designated few Ramsar sites.
- P3 Promote and encourage the development and effective implementation of a management planning process for all designated Ramsar sites.
- P4 Greatly improve mechanisms for identifying and reporting change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites, through Article 3.2 of the Convention.
- P5 Increase the use of the Montreux Record as a powerful and effective tool for gaining assistance to resolve management planning issues on Ramsar sites facing change in ecological character.
- P6 Encourage CPs to establish bilateral and multilateral cooperative actions for the management of shared wetlands and catchments and consider the designation of transboundary sites.
- P7 Increase efforts to promote the use of economic valuation and its utilization as an effective tool to convince the policy and decision-makers of the countries.
- P8 Promote CEPA activities and encourage CPs to use the wetland centers network for training, exchange of information and expertise on bilateral and multilateral bases.
- P9 Promote use of Ramsar guidelines and ensure that they are taken into account in development of water management policies and plans by the CPs.
- P10 Organize training programmes at subregional level according to the needs of the CPs of the region.
- P11 Encourage the private sector to participate in and contribute to wetland conservation and management activities at regional and subregional level.

## **2. Implementation activities undertaken since COP7**

### **2.1 Inventory and assessment**

#### **A. Wetland inventory [1.1]**

Out of 21 Contracting Parties in the Asia region, 7 (33%) CPs (China, I.R. Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam) report having prepared a comprehensive wetland inventory of their countries; five (23.8%) CPs have partly undertaken a national wetland inventory. The Chinese wetland inventory will be available by the end of this year. Iran has completed its inventory in Persian, and this will soon be available in English on

their Web site. Malaysia is updating their old inventory, which was prepared in 1987. Thailand and Viet Nam report undertaking wetland inventory, but have not mentioned when it will be available. Sri Lanka has developed a comprehensive directory of the important wetlands. Mongolia is preparing a Ramsar site inventory and has plans to include the new sites which they are designating shortly. India has planned to revise its national wetland inventory and include the newly designated Ramsar sites in it. They have planned to prepare directories at district, state and national levels. The Republic of Korea has planned to complete its wetland inventory by the year 2004 – they are working on a coastal wetland inventory that will be finalised by the year 2003. Nepal is preparing wetland inventory of Terai's (low-lying) wetlands. Indonesia already has some data and has plans to develop a database management system. Israel has plans to establish a minimal inventory, following which they will develop comprehensive inventory as next step.

Nine (42.8%) CPs – Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand, and Viet Nam – have reported that they have completed a national wetland database. A further 7 (33%) countries (Bangladesh, India, Israel, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Syria) reported that they have partly completed or are in the process of undertaking an inventory. Five (23.8%) countries have not started any work on national wetland inventory.

China has established an inventory database which is available on CD-ROM and also through their Web site. Japan has prepared an inventory of 500 important wetlands which is available on the Web site of the Ministry of Environment, and will also be available on CD-ROM by the end of 2002. Nepal has its wetland database available on a Web site. Thailand has data for 61 internationally important and 48 nationally important wetlands, which is similarly available on their Web site. Mongolia's data is available from their office, as they do not have a Web site. Cambodia developed a database in 2001, but it is only available through the Ministry of Environment. India has planned to put all the available data for their Ramsar sites on the Web soon; they have also developed a database of 20 wetlands, including 10 urban lakes, 15 mangroves sites, and 4 coral reef sites. Work is an ongoing activity, and once completed the data will be available on their Web site. A Wetland database in Malaysia is available from the University of Science and their Web site is under construction. Philippines is in the process of the development of a wetland database – some data is available about the coastal wetlands but not yet on the Web. Bangladesh is also in the process of preparation of their wetland database; some data is available, but they are trying to prepare a comprehensive database which due to financial constraints has not yet been initiated. Syria has planned to develop a database of all its Ramsar sites. The Republic of Korea has uploaded the report of the National Wetland Survey on the Web. A database of seven wetland sites is also available on their Web site and they have produced CD-ROMs for two wetland sites. The data about the biodiversity of Israel, including GIS maps, is available through Hebrew University. Israel's Nature and Park Authority has also set up an Internet site and all the information about biodiversity is also available through this site.

The five countries which have not yet established a wetland database reported the following: Bahrain has not been able to initiate database development owing to the lack of an overall strategy; Jordan has not reported any plans to develop a database; Lebanon is planning database development through the MedWet Coast project; Pakistan plans to develop such a database as part of a proposed GEF project; and Sri Lanka is seeking financial support to initiate this process.

## **B. Wetland assessment [1.2]**

Out of 21 Contracting Parties in the region, 15 (71.4%) CPs have indicated that they have conducted regular internal reviews to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of Ramsar sites, a higher proportion of Asian countries reporting this than for most other regions, e.g. Europe (57.5%) and Africa (43.8%). Only 5 (23.8%) CPs in Asia have not initiated this task due to various constraints. Although a high proportion of Asia's CPs report that they have undertaken this work, none of the CPs has informed the Bureau about the results of their review.

Although at face value these responses imply that most Ramsar sites in the region are in good condition and are not facing significant ecological problems, this is most unlikely to be true given the reports received by the Bureau concerning change in ecological character (see also section 2.11). There are three possibilities here: CPs may have not fully understood the question, CPs may not wish to indicate that those wetlands are facing ecological problems, or CPs may not know how to proceed with this issue, or any combination of these.

Only 4 (19%) CPs report having completed an assessment of their wetlands and identified their priority sites for restoration or rehabilitation, but they have not provided further details. India only mentioned that a survey has been completed for the whole country and an inventory of 147 sites has been developed, but they have not mentioned the names of priority sites for restoration. Israel has mentioned that they have prepared a list of 20 priority sites, including 2 Ramsar sites, for restoration and rehabilitation. They are also taking measures for water supply and restoration of rivers. I.R. Iran has also prioritised 6 Ramsar sites for restoration and rehabilitation. Twelve (57%) CPs have partly completed this assessment, but they have prioritised their wetlands for restoration and rehabilitation, Bangladesh 3 sites (2 Ramsar sites), China 3 Ramsar sites, Japan 3 sites (1 Ramsar site), Lebanon 4 Ramsar sites, Mongolia 2 river basins, Nepal 10 sites, Pakistan 2 sites (1 Ramsar site), Philippines 5 sites, Republic of Korea 3 sites (1 Ramsar site), Syria 1 Ramsar site, Bahrain, Cambodia, Jordan and Malaysia have not initiated this activity due to lack of capacity and some internal problems, while Viet Nam did not provide an answer to this question.

## **2.2 Policies and legislation, including impact assessment and valuation**

### **A. Policy instruments for wetland wise use [2.1]**

Out of 21 Contracting Parties, 8 (38%) CPs (China, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) have completed their National Wetland Policy or similar instrument but China, Israel, Japan, Mongolia and Viet Nam have not provided any details about their instrument. The number of CPs that have completed this task is slightly increased since COP7. Indonesia has mentioned that they are updating their current wetland policies and this new document will be available by the 2003. Philippines have planned to update their national Wetland Action Plan soon. Thailand reported that it was working on a five year plan which will be completed in 2002. Nepal is in the process and expects completion within 12 months. The Republic of Korea is also in the process and has planned to complete the coastal wetland plan by 2004, with its inland wetland plan to follow by 2005. Pakistan also has a Wetland Action Plan, and they are implementing it with

a two-year programme. Bangladesh has prepared draft wetland policy and plans to revise it once again before approval. I.R. Iran, Sri Lanka, and Syria have not yet prepared any policy document due to many reasons, including lack of capacity and no clear guidelines. Cambodia, Jordan, and Lebanon expressed their intention to do so but are facing problems (funding and coordination). Malaysia drafted its first wetland policy in 1996 and plans to review it to take into account recent developments. Similarly India also highlighted many hurdles due to which they are unable to develop their wetland policy, but they have planned to complete it within 2-3 years.

## **B. Development, review and amendment of policies, legislation, institutions and practices [2.2]**

Six (23.8%) CPs (China, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Philippines and Republic of Korea) have mentioned in their country reports that they have reviewed their laws and institutions related to wetlands and made some amendments according to their needs and requirements. China has developed 18 laws and administrative regulations related to wetland use. Israel has made amendments in their fisheries laws and prepared a draft on water laws, including allocation of water for nature protection. Japan has made river laws in 1997. Their basic law for food, agriculture and rural areas also covers nature conservation and they have included environmental issues in their port law. Land improvement, fisheries and forest and forestry laws was also amended in 2001. Philippines has improved its coastal management laws. Republic of Korea has mentioned that it is in the process of review and a new act has been submitted to the national assembly for approval – it is said to be a more wetland-friendly act which will improve wetland conservation in Korea. Jordan has not provided any details for the improvement of their existing laws.

Six (28.5%) CPs (Bahrain, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand) said that they are still in the process of reviewing their laws and institutions, and according to Bahrain it will take one more year, whereas Thailand's was to have been completed by mid-2002, Cambodia is targeting for next 5 years, and India is expecting to finalise them by 2003. Japan has also partly completed this review but have not provided any target for completing this task. Jordan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Syria will hopefully have reached completion in 1-2 years. Bangladesh, I.R. Iran, and Malaysia have not provided specific targets to complete this task but they recognise the need for this revision and have plans to initiate it. Only Viet Nam has not addressed this point and not provided any information.

Out of 21, 8 (38%) CPs have completed the review of all government plans and policies which may impact wetlands. But Cambodia, China, Israel, Jordan, Nepal, and Viet Nam have not provided any further details. Pakistan is the only country that has mentioned that it is in the process and will be ready by 2003. 12 other CPs have not initiated it.

Ten (47%) CPs (Cambodia, China, India, I.R. Iran, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam) report having completed the review of national institutions related to wetlands to ensure that the resources are available to implement the Convention. Bangladesh mentioned that they have done so partly but have not provided further information in this regard. Philippines has also partly completed the review; their task force is monitoring and hopefully soon they will complete it. Bahrain has not taken such steps due to lack of strategy; Indonesia has plan to take them near future. Jordan has not addressed it due to staff changes. Lebanon and Syria are still new CPs and the proper

implementation of the Convention will take time. Nepal and Pakistan have not done it yet due to lack of resources.

All the CPs recognise the importance of EIA and out of 21 CPs, 16 (76%) CPs (Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Viet Nam) report that EIA is required in their country for any action that can potentially affect any wetland, but further information has not been provided about its implementation. Only India has provided some details about their implementation, including in the coastal areas. In Thailand EIA is only required when any development activity will affect a nationally or internationally important wetland. In Malaysia EIA is dealt with on a case by case basis. In Japan EIA is carried out in the cases where a proposed development project is larger than a certain scale and might cause serious impact to the environment. In the Republic of Korea, EIA is applied only to the large development projects, and Ministry of Environment intervenes in all projects that could negatively impact on wetlands. Philippines is the only country which did not address this question.

Out of 21 CPs, 8 (38%) CPs (Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, I.R. Iran, Jordan, Sri Lanka) have conducted EIAs where they thought there is a change in ecological character in Ramsar site. In most of the cases, information/results of such studies have not been provided to the Ramsar Bureau. Only China has provided some cases. Mongolia and Viet Nam have partly conducted EIAs and in Mongolia EIA is also given due consideration to the full range of environment, social and economic valuation of wetlands. EIA have not been carried out in the other 11 CPs, and these CPs have also not used EIA as tool to evaluate the full range of environment, social and economic values of wetland.

Only 9 (42.8%) CPs (Bahrain, Cambodia, I.R. Iran, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) report having considered economic valuation of wetland as a part of EIA but they have not provided any detail/information about its application. Syria is in the process of including this issue and reports that it will take 1-2 years to make the economic valuation a part of EIA. Six (28.5%) CPs including Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan have partly implemented this but they have planned to make it as part of EIA within two years' time. China considers that they need 10 years to achieve this target across the country.

## **2.3 Integration of wetland wise use into sustainable development**

### **A. Methodologies for wetland conservation and wise use [3.1]**

Only 4 (19%) CPs (India, Israel, Lebanon and Thailand) have reviewed the resource material relating to wetland management policies and practices. Nepal is in the process of reviewing the resource such material. Japan has partly done this task, but 13 (61%) CPs have not initiated such a review due to various reasons. Republic of Korea and Viet Nam have not provided any answer of this question.

### **B. Peatlands [3.2]**

Six (28.5%) CPs in Asia report having designated 13 peatland areas as Ramsar sites and many other countries report plans to designate more peatland sites, some of them high altitude peatlands.

**C. Recognition of wetland values and functions [3.3]**

One of the indicators of the recognition of wetland values and function is the establishment of wetland centres. During the past triennium almost every country in Asia reports having established wetland centres. A main purpose of these centres is to create awareness and provide education about the values and function of wetland ecosystem. They have also provided recreational facilities in these centres.

**D. Integration of wetland policies into broader planning and management from local to national scales [3.4]**

Out of 21 CPs only 5 (23%) CPs (Cambodia, I.R. Iran, Syria, Thailand and Viet Nam) replied that they are implementing integrated management approaches in river basin and coastal zone management. Thirteen (61%) partly apply this approach in their territory. Only 3 CPs report not having adopted this approach at all.

**2.4 Restoration and rehabilitation [4.1]**

Out of 21 CPs, 4 (19%) contracting Parties (India, I.R. Iran, Israel and Thailand) have completed the assessment to identify wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation. India has completed this assessment for the whole country. I.R. Iran has completed this assessment for all major wetland sites. Israel has completed the assessment of 160 wetland habitats, about 100 of which have been facing problems of shortage of water or over-exploitation, and they are taking measures to overcome this problem. Thailand has also completed this assessment but they have not provided details. Twelve (57%) CPs have partly completed the assessment (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Syria). Vietnam has not provided any information. Bangladesh has completed this assessment for their major wetlands and has planned to use this assessment for future restoration plans through their site management process. China has also covered their major wetland system of the Yantgze River, Dongting lake basin (including three Ramsar sites), Wauliang Su hai, Inner Mongolia, Taihi lake basin. Indonesia has also surveyed 270 sites; they are working on a mangrove restoration programme in many provinces. Japan has initiated a pilot project for restoration/rehabilitation at Kushiro river, Ara-kawa River, and Shimanto river. Lebanon has identified a few sites for restoration and currently they are seeking funds for their restoration programme. Mongolia has completed some assessment for the Tuul river basin, Ongiin river basin, and some other parts of the country. Nepal also identified 10 sites for their future restoration programme. Pakistan identified one site, Haleji Lake in the Indus river basin, for restoration and rehabilitation. Philippines identified Pasing River, Las Pinas River, Laguna de Bay, La Mesa Dam and Manila Bay for rehabilitation or restoration. Republic of Korea is conducting a comprehensive survey to identify sites for restoration and rehabilitation, which will be completed in 2004-5. Currently they have proceeded with restoration plans for the Yongneup of Mt Daeam Ramsar site. They have also surveyed two coastal sites, Chollaanamdo and Chollabuk-do, for future restoration programme. Sri Lanka has surveyed all the river basins except in the northern part and some Eastern parts of the country and identified some potential sites. Syria could not undertake a comprehensive survey due to the lack of technical manpower and financial constraints.

Ten (47%) CPs have mentioned that they have collected resource information on wetland restoration but this information has not been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau. Only India, Israel, and Japan have provided some information in the country report, and nine CPs have not collected this information. Republic of Korea has initiated the process but not yet completed it. Viet Nam has not answered this question.

## 2.5 Invasive alien species [5.1]

Out of 21 CPs only 6 (29%) CPs have reported that they have resource information on invasive species. Israel has provided this information to the Secretariat of the CBD. Republic of Korea has also gathered the data of the invasive species and their impacts on natural ecosystems. Cambodia, Jordan, Sri Lanka and Thailand have not provided details. The I.R. Iran has information on aquatic plant species and they are working on it.

## 2.6 Local communities, indigenous people, and cultural values [6.1]

Out of 21 CPs, 17 (81%) replied that they are actively promoting the involvement of local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands. Only 3 (14%) CPs (Bahrain, Jordan and Syria) are not using this practices, but Syria has a programme to involve the local communities. Cambodia has involved local communities and site managers in management activities – communities are managing fisheries resources and there is a programme to involve them in management issues later. China is offering them the opportunities of training or trade and wetland managers and communities are involved in monitoring the ecological character of the Ramsar sites. In India, local communities are involved in demonstration projects and there are said to be different capacity building opportunities for the local communities.

In general, CPs reported that they support the monitoring of the ecological character of wetlands, and that wetland managers of the Ramsar sites are involved in monitoring the ecological conditions of the sites. Indonesia has also reported the involvement of the communities and site managers in monitoring the condition of the wetland protected areas. I.R. Iran mentioned a few projects where local communities are participating in the management of fish, and wetland managers are also given support in the monitoring process. Israel has reported the participation of the local communities' conservation related activities; students are taking part in restoration and research activities. Japan usually calls for public comments on the management and conservation plans of wetlands. They also involve NGOs in joint work such as information exchange and restoration projects in river areas. Wetland managers are also responsible for the implementation of the management plans, including monitoring and supporting site managers to monitor the condition of the wetland. Lebanon has involved communities in the management committee of the 2 Ramsar sites and provided training to the site managers for monitoring.

Malaysia consults local communities in all projects that affect the individual communities. Mongolia involved the communities in eco-tourism activities in the Ramsar sites. Nepal has also reported the involvement of the local communities, especially women, in wetland conservation activities. Pakistan has reported that the local communities are involved in wetland management planning and implementation, and their knowledge is also used in the wetland conservation and site managers are also involved in monitoring of the condition of wetlands. Philippines is also actively promoting the involvement of the local communities,



and representatives of the communities are present in the management Board of the protected areas; they also been involved in the preparation of the management plans of the protected areas and monitoring of the biodiversity. Republic of Korea has involved local individuals as honorary guides for wetlands, and they also involve in the monitoring of the condition of wetlands, eco-tourism and awareness related activities. Sri Lanka consulted with the local people living around the wetland in the management planning process. Thailand is preparing an Action Plan for participation of the local communities in management and conservation activities. Viet Nam has not mentioned any related activity. Bangladesh has mentioned that they do not have any policy on indigenous people; they have planned to involve local communities in the management of one Ramsar site.

In most of the countries, it appears that local communities have not been involved in the monitoring of the ecological character of wetlands because they are not fully aware of the process and methodology. In some cases Ramsar sites are very remote and there is no local community living in the area. In the Asia region, it will take time to fully involve the local communities in the monitoring of the ecological characters of the Ramsar sites.

#### Status of wetland site management Committee in Asian CPs

CP	Committees	No. of Ramsar sites	No. of Committees	No. of Committees at Ramsar sites	Stakeholder participation in Ramsar site committee	Women's group participation in Ramsar site committee
Cambodia	Yes (Done)	3	2	1	-	-
China	Yes (Done)	21	12	10	10	10
India	Yes (Done)	8	8	8	-	-
Indonesia	Yes (Done)	2	3	2	2	2
Israel	Yes (Done)	2	1	-	-	-
Japan	Yes (Done)	11	7	6	6	-
Jordan	Yes (Done)	1	1	1	1	1
Lebanon	Yes (Done)	4	2	2	2	2
Malaysia	Yes (Done)	1	1	1	-	-
Mongolia	Yes (Done)	6	5	5	4	1
Nepal	Yes (Done)	1	4	1	1	1
Pakistan	Yes (Done)	16	1	1	1	1
Philippines	Yes (Done)	4	30	3	3	
Thailand	Yes (Done)	6	2	1	1	1
Viet Nam	No answer	1				
Bahrain	No (Not yet)	2				
Bangladesh	No (Not yet)	2				
Islamic Republic of Iran	No (Not yet)	21				
Republic of Korea	No (Not yet)	2				
Sri Lanka	No (Not yet)	2				
Syrian Arab Republic	No (Not yet)	1				
		<b>117</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>

The extent of the establishment of site management committees varies greatly between countries in Asia. For example, Pakistan has 16 Ramsar sites but has only one site management committee established. In contrast, the Philippines have 4 Ramsar sites but report that they established more than 30 site management committees, 3 at the Ramsar sites and 27 on other wetland sites. Israel has established one site management committee but not for either of its two Ramsar sites.

Out of 21 CPs, 11 (52.3%) have mentioned that they are providing support for the application of traditional knowledge and management practices. China employed most of the local people as wetland managers and they are integrating government's management guidelines into traditional practices of wetland management. Japan is also using many traditional ways for lake water management. India is also applying traditional knowledge for harvesting of aquatic weed and maintains the drainage system in many wetlands. Lebanon is using local knowledge in farming and water management. Syria is using this knowledge in fish management in salt lake. Other countries are also using traditional knowledge in different ways.

## **2.7 Private sector involvement [7.1]**

During recent years the private sector has been increasingly recognised as an important partner in wetland conservation. Out of 21 CPs in Asia, 16 (76%) have made efforts to encourage private sector entities and get their support for wetland conservation. I.R. Iran has prepared guidelines for their involvement, Cambodia has involved them in awareness activity, and India is expecting their involvement in eco-tourism activities and sustainable development. Japan has widely involved the private sector through awareness activities and the private sector is supporting them in the construction of wetland centres at major Ramsar sites. In Lebanon one of the Ramsar sites is on the private land and, through the efforts of the government, conservation activities are supported by the owner. In Nepal the government is providing incentives in tax and other forms for landowners if they contribute to conservation activities. In Pakistan many conservation-related projects are sponsored by the private sector. Republic of Korea organizes many activities to encourage private sector to get involve in conservation activities. Sri Lanka also get support from private sector in many projects. Thailand has involved them in eco-tourism activities. Viet Nam mentioned the involvement of private sector in tourism and seafood production. Israel has obtained support from the private sector in a river restoration project and also such support for the establishment of a small bird watching centre and establishment of a park.

The question about the encouragement of the private sector in the monitoring of the ecological character of the wetlands was not fully understood by many CPs. Only 7 CPs provided some information. For example, in Indonesia one of its steel companies is highly dependent on water and is willing to undertake in monitoring and conservation activities. In Lebanon the private land owner of a Ramsar site would like to be involved in the monitoring process. In Pakistan those private organizations supporting the wetland-related projects are also interested in site monitoring processes.

## **2.8 Incentives [8.1]**

The question “What actions have been taken to introduce incentive measures designed to encourage the wise use of wetlands, and to identify and remove perverse incentive where they exist?” (COP7 Resolution VII.15) was not fully understood by the majority of CPs. Out of 21 CPs 11 replied that they have not reviewed it. 5 (23%) CPs (China, India, Japan, Lebanon and Syria) mentioned that they have applied incentive measures. China is developing wetland laws through which reclamation of wetlands is prohibited, and they are also restoring wetlands through the conversion of paddy and pasture land. India is supporting communities through the promotion of eco-tourism activities; they are also exploring other ways through the involvement of private sector. Japan has established a fund called Global Environment Subsidy, through which they establish a mechanism in which if a landowner requests, a government organization may purchase land. Indonesia mentioned that they are in the process of developing basic laws and policies on incentives. Japan has partly reviewed incentive measures and is gathering information for comprehensive review. Four CPs did not provided an answer of the question.

## 2.9 Communication, education, and public awareness [9.1]

Out of 21 CPs, 9 (43%) replied that they have identified regional EPA needs and established priorities for resource development. India, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam have completed this task. Syria is in process and Pakistan has reported that they have partly completed this task. Jordan and Republic of Korea have not provided an answer of this question. India has developed a lot of material for different levels and also set up a few interpretation centres at different wetland sites. Indonesia has produced some material for extension and exhibitions. I.R. Iran has also initiated some activities and they have planned to launch a comprehensive EPA programme. Israel has organized a few joint events/programme with Jordan and other countries; they are also working with NGOs in Dead Sea and have published some related material. Japan has organized an International Workshop on EPA in 1999. Malaysia has organized a symposium with other partner organizations and the outcome of the workshop is available on the Web site of the University of Science Malaysia. Sri Lanka has organized many programmes for different levels, especially on the Ramsar site. Thailand has also organized programmes and exhibitions and developed some education material. Viet Nam has not provided details of their initiatives related to EPA.

Seven (33%) Contracting Parties have reported that they have developed CEPA resource materials in support of a national EPA programme. Thirteen (61%) CPs have not done so and only one CP (Sri Lanka) mentioned that they are in the process. India has developed resource material on Chilika Lake and other wetlands, an education and awareness kit, and some other material. They also set up a Centre of Excellence to develop resource material and generate awareness. I.R. Iran has also developed material in Persian and distributed it. Japan has published a book on wetlands and material on migratory birds in Japanese. Malaysia has published some material through the University of Science, Malaysia. Thailand has developed some material in English and Thai language. Viet Nam has not provided details about the material they have published.

Out of 21 CPs in Asia, 11 (52%) have supported international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills among wetland education centers and educators. Bangladesh has developed a training guide with the support of the Ramsar SGF. India is also working with other organizations on some projects and developing a wetland conservation programme for the neighbouring countries. Israel reports working with

Wetland Link International and Global River Environment Education Network. Japan is supporting and working with Wetlands International. Lebanon is working with Wetlands International and BirdLife in a wetland education project. Malaysia is also working with Japan on the training of their staff. Mongolia is working on the Anatidae and Crane site network and information exchange. Nepal is sharing information through transboundary meetings with neighbouring countries. Pakistan is also working with neighbouring countries and has conducted some joint activities. Thailand is working with the Ramsar IOPs.

Concerning the nomination of two CEPA focal points (one from the government and one from the local NGO). The following table summarises the current situation .:

**Asia CEPA Focal Points:** (as at 4 October 2002)

Country	Government FP	NGO FP
BAHRAIN	Yes	No
BANGLADESH	No	Yes
CAMBODIA	Yes	yes
CHINA	Yes	No
INDIA	Yes	Yes
INDONESIA	Yes	Yes
I. R. IRAN	Yes	No
ISRAEL	Yes	Yes
JAPAN	Yes	Yes
JORDAN	Yes	No
LEBANON	Yes	Yes
MALAYSIA	Yes	Yes
MONGOLIA	Yes	Yes
NEPAL	Yes	Yes
PAKISTAN	Yes	Yes
PHILIPPINES	Yes	Yes
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Yes	No
SRI LANKA	Yes	Yes
SYRIA	Yes	Yes
THAILAND	Yes	Yes
VIET NAM	Yes	Yes
<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>

All but one CP (Bangladesh) has a currently nominated government CEPA Focal Point, but fewer (16) have nominated an NGO Focal Point. China, I.R. Iran, Jordan, and the Republic of Korea have yet to nominate their NGO focal points.

In response to the question of “establishment of task force to undertake a review of national need, capacity and opportunities in the field of wetland CEPA and, formulation of National CEPA Action Plan for priorities activities which consider the national, international and local needs,” COP7 Resolution VII.9), only 4 (19%) CPs replied positively: India, Japan, Thailand and Sri Lanka. The National Wetland Committee of India has reviewed this issue and is preparing a project for it. Although they have not yet developed any Action Plan they have a programme to initiate this soon. Japan has established a multidisciplinary team and they are in the process of formulation of a CEPA

Action Plan. Thailand has also established a task force and prepared CEPA Action Plan but it was not forwarded to the Bureau. Sri Lanka has developed a CEPA Action Plan without establishing a task force and report implementing CEPA in schools, but the plan has not yet been forwarded to the Bureau. Indonesia, I. R. Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh have partly initiated this activity. Cambodia, China, Lebanon, Philippines and Syria have not done any activity in this regard. Viet Nam, Jordan and Mongolia did not reply this question. Israel has not formulated a task force, and are partly working on an Action Plan, but they report having initiated many CEPA related activities and are running these activities/programmes successfully.

The following table summarises the status of wetland centres in Asian CPs. For further analysis concerning wetland centres, see section 2.3 C.

Contracting Party	No. of Centres in Place	Centres being established	Centres planned
China	9	1	10
India	3	2	5
Indonesia	1	-	1
Islamic Republic of Iran	7	2	1
Israel	10	-	-
Japan	15	2	-
Jordan	1	-	-
Lebanon	-	-	3
Malaysia	2	-	-
Mongolia	2	-	1
Nepal	-	1	-
Pakistan	4	-	1
Philippines	-	-	-
Republic of Korea	5	2	4
Sri Lanka	3	1	-
Thailand	9	2	2
Bangladesh	-	2	-
Bahrain	-	-	-
Viet Nam	-	-	-
Cambodia	-	-	-
Syrian Arab Republic	-	-	-
	<b>71</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>

Out of 21 CPs in Asia, only 5 (23.8%) CPs have reported that they developed exhibits and programmes that support non-formal EPA on wetlands in all facilities. Of these only 2 or 3 have developed exhibits and a programme separately for wetlands: most examples provided concern the use of zoos and museums. Those CPs which have done so only in some facilities also provided the examples of museums, botanic gardens, wetlands centers. None of the CP has developed exhibits and programme separately that support informal EPA on wetlands.

Only 3 (14.2%) CPs report, without providing any details, that wetland issues are incorporated into curricula. However, 9 (42%) CPs said wetland issues are partly

incorporated into curricula, with most examples cited being at the university level. Japan has prepared some material on migratory birds for elementary schools. India has developed material related to wetlands particularly for the south Asian users. However, none of these education materials have not been forwarded to the Bureau.

There is a generally low level of Internet access for wetland site managers: Out of 21 CPs in Asia, no wetland site managers have Internet access in 11 (52.3%) CPs. Only 9 CPs have provided such facilities but not always yet to all site managers. However, Japan has provided this facility to all (11 Ramsar sites) site managers, as has China for all its Ramsar site managers (21 Ramsar sites), and Israel for managers at its two Ramsar sites. Ramsar site managers in India have Internet facilities at three of their 8 Ramsar sites. Lebanon has done so for three of its four Ramsar sites. Malaysia has one Ramsar site and this site is also has Internet facilities.

## 2.10 Designation of Ramsar sites

### A. Application of the Strategic Framework [10.1]

Thirteen (61.9%) CPs in Asia have completed a directory of potential Ramsar sites with national coverage. I.R. Iran completed this task in 2001 and has listed 54 potential Ramsar sites. Jordan has also completed a survey but did not provide any figures or data on the potential sites. Malaysia completed this task in 1996 and identified 6 wetlands as potential Ramsar sites. Sri Lanka has prepared this list and identified 10 potential sites. China has identified 262 potential sites that can be designated as Ramsar sites, but further details were not provided in their National Report. India has identified 93 potential wetlands through a survey completed in 1989. In 1999 Israel identified five wetlands with potential for designation as Ramsar sites. Japan prepared the list in 2001 and has identified 500 sites as potential Ramsar sites. Lebanon prepared its directory in 2001 and identified 2 more sites as potential Ramsar sites. Mongolia has identified 10 more sites. Philippines reports having completed a list of potential Ramsar sites, but did not provide the number of potential sites. Thailand has completed the directory in 1999 and identified 61 sites as potential Ramsar sites. Viet Nam has prepared the list in 1999-2000 and identified 2 potential wetlands. Nepal has identified 10 sites. Work on a directory of potential Ramsar sites is under way in Pakistan. The Republic of Korea has not finalised the directory of potential Ramsar sites but they have so far identified 13 wetlands, including 9 coastal wetlands. Bahrain, Cambodia, Indonesia and Syria have not provided any details. Bangladesh is planning to initiate work on a directory during 2003-2005.

In total, there are now (as at September 2002) 130 designated Ramsar sites, covering 8.2 million ha, in Asia. Although this is a significant increase in the number of sites, with more than a doubling of the 74 sites which had been designated before COP7, the total area designated in Asia is still considerably less than, for example, in Africa (27.4 million ha) or the Neotropics (26.4 million ha).

Out of 21 CPs, 14 (66.7%) report having adopted a systematic approach to identifying and designating wetland sites at national level. However, it is not clear from the information in the National Reports whether the answers to this question fully refer to the systematic approach in the way it is established in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11). From the information provided by CPs, it would appear that responses chiefly concern the intention

to designate further Ramsar sites, but this alone does not necessarily indicate that a programme and priorities for future designations is part of a strategic approach to establishing the coherent national networks of Ramsar sites which reflect the range and values of different wetland types in each country, as the Conference of the Parties called for in Resolution VII.11.

Planned designations of further Ramsar sites were reported by China, Israel, Japan (to double the number of Ramsar sites by COP9), India (including designation of 13 new sites to be designated before COP8), I.R.Iran, Malaysia (5 more sites), Nepal (7 more sites), Pakistan (3 more sites by COP8), Republic of Korea (9 coastal wetlands designated by 2005), Sri Lanka (4 more sites), Syria (2 more sites), and Thailand (20 more sites in the next 5 years), with Philippines in the process of identifying more sites for designation.

Contracting Parties in Asia generally reported giving special attention in designation of suitable sites which include under-represented wetland types. Out of 21 CPs, 17 (80.9%) have given this and report planning future designations of sites which include under-represented types of wetlands.

Similarly, in recent years CPs in Asia have been designating sites which were previously not protected and are affording this issue further attention. In some countries this designation is helping to deliver the wise use concept. It should be kept in mind that many Asian countries have legislation for protected areas which does not allow public access and also not allow harvesting any natural resources from the protected area. So Ramsar site designation will help to increase understanding of the wise use concept so that people can observe the benefits of sustainable utilisation of natural resources. Some CPs gave details about designation of sites which are not previously protected – Bangladesh 1 site, I. R. Iran 5 sites, Pakistan 5 sites, Syria 1 site, Thailand 2 sites. Sri Lanka is planning to designate 4 new sites which currently have no protection.

Designation as a Ramsar site of shared wetlands or transboundary wetlands is reported as a priority issue. Out of 21 CPs, 3 (14%) (Indonesia, I. R. Iran, and Viet Nam) report that they have designated all suitable transboundary sites. India and Nepal are exploring the possibilities of designating transboundary sites. India shares many important wetland with its neighbouring countries and these wetlands are potential Ramsar sites. Such sites include the Sundarban with Bangladesh, Pangong high mountain wetland with China, Rann of Kutch bordered with Pakistan, and Koshi Barrage with Nepal. India is in the process of negotiation with all its neighbours for joint designations. Similarly Nepal is also agreed for the joint designation. China has a programme to designate a transboundary site in 2002. Israel reports plans to designate a marine park in the Gulf of Aqaba in Dead Sea with Jordan. Bangladesh plans to designate some transboundary rivers in the Haor Basin and Brahmaputra-Tista river with India. Thailand shares some wetlands with Myanmar and Lao PDR but neither of these countries is yet a Party to the Convention. Transboundary designations do not apply to a number of island countries such as Japan, Philippines and Sri Lanka. Bahrain, Cambodia, Lebanon, Pakistan and Republic of Korea did not provide an answer to this question.

## **B. Maintenance and use of the Ramsar Sites Database [10.2]**

In recognition of the need to maintain accurate and up-to-date information about all designated Ramsar sites, including in the Ramsar Sites Database maintained for the

Convention by Wetlands International, COP6 and COP7 adopted Resolutions requesting all CPs to provide information in the correct Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) format, in an official language of the Convention, with an adequate map. CPs were also requested to update the RIS on all designated Ramsar sites at not longer than six-year intervals. During the triennium, the Bureau has advised all CPs with designated sites whose information is not adequate or has not been updated, and has urged all concerned Parties to rectify this situation.

Although some CPs have responded, and for example India and the I.R. Iran are in the process of updating their RIS information, according to the Bureau's records there remain a significant number of CPs which have not yet provided adequate or updated information on their Ramsar sites to the Bureau These are as follows:

**RIS not in correct format:** Azerbaijan: 2 sites; Bangladesh: 2 sites; India: 6 sites; Indonesia: 2 sites; Japan: 2 sites; Lebanon: 3 sites; Pakistan: 5 sites; and Tajikistan: 5 sites.

**RIS not in official language:** Azerbaijan: 2 sites (in Russian).

**Map not adequate:** Bahrain 1 site; India: 5 sites; Jordan: 1 site; Lebanon: 2 sites; and Pakistan: 5 sites.

**RIS/map not updated for more than 6 years:** Bangladesh: 1 site; India: 6 sites; Indonesia: 2 sites; Japan: 3 sites; Nepal: 1 site; Pakistan: 7 sites; Philippines: 1 site; and Viet Nam: 1 site

## 2.11 Management planning and monitoring of Ramsar sites

### A. Maintainance of the ecological character of all Ramsar sites [11.1]

In reply to the question "Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites been documented", out of 21 CPs 16 (76%) replied yes, 2 (9.5%) replied partly, and 3 (14%) replied No. However, no CP who replied "yes" provided any details of what steps have been taken to document these measures, so it is not possible to clearly assess the true extent of implementation. Japan reports that currently a part of those measures have been documented, and they are working to include such measures in the management plans of their designated sites.

Replies to the questions in the National Report Format concerning the status of management plans for Ramsar sites have proved very difficult to interpret accurately. However, for the Asia region it appears that of the 117 Ramsar sites for which assessment was possible from the National Reports, management plans are in place for only 39 (33%), with management plans reported as being in preparation for a further 30 (26%) of sites. This implies that for the high proportion of 41% of designated Ramsar sites in Asia no management planning process has yet been initiated.

Despite this apparent lack of management planning process for many Ramsar sites in the region, 15 CPs (71.4%) reported that they have established zoning measures to regulate the activities in different parts of a wetland. Most of the parties reported that this is an effective management tool. Bangladesh uses zonation in Sunderban and plans to apply it to other wetlands. China's experience in Mai Po has been very successful. Indonesia used it



successfully in one Ramsar site and in 2 other wetlands. I. R. Iran utilised it in 4 Ramsar sites. Israel has tried this concept with a relatively small wetland and found it very useful. Japan has adopted zonation in all of its Ramsar sites. Jordan also finds it a good tool. Similarly other countries like Lebanon, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, India, Mongolia and Nepal report finding zonation an effective and helpful tool in management.

Out of 21 CPs, 14 (66.7%) have adopted strict protection measures to regulate activities in those wetlands where it is warranted. Bangladesh has adopted this strategy in both of their Ramsar sites, China has applied it in 4 Ramsar sites, India has also adopted it in the management of 4 Ramsar sites, Indonesia has used it in 2 Ramsar sites, I.R. Iran has also used it in 2 Ramsar sites, Israel has adopted it for both the Ramsar sites, Japan has applied it into one Ramsar site, Jordan used it for its only Ramsar site, Lebanon has also reported to have applied it in two of its Ramsar sites, Nepal has applied it in 2 sites including one Ramsar site, Philippines used it in two sites, Republic of Korea has applied it in 7 sites including 2 Ramsar sites, Sri Lanka and Thailand have applied for one site each.

**B. Monitoring the condition of Ramsar sites, including application of Article 3.2 and Montreux Record) [11.2]**

Under Article 3.2 of the Convention, CPs should have in place a mechanism to be informed of change or likely change to the ecological character of Ramsar sites, and to report this without delay to the Bureau. Although 15 CPs (71.4%) state in their National Reports that they are conducting internal reviews to identify the factors affecting the ecological condition of their Ramsar sites, none have provided any information about their procedures, time frames or the results of the reviews. Furthermore, it is the experience of the Bureau that few if any CPs in the region report change in ecological character, in line with Article 3.2. Rather, the Bureau receives such information about developmental and other activities which may be impacting or altering the ecological character of Ramsar sites from NGOs and other interested organizations and individuals.

On receipt of such third-party information, the Bureau writes to the concerned CP to request further information and clarification of the situation. In the current triennium the Bureau has requested such clarification from the following CPs:

China: Long Valley Wetland area Hong Kong  
 Bangladesh: Sundarbans Ramsar site Bangladesh  
 Japan: Isahaya Bay and Tidal Flats area  
 China: The Macau's intertidal marsh Wetlands  
 Republic of Korea: The Saemangeum Mud Flats area  
 Sri Lanka: Bundala Ramsar Site  
 Japan: Awase Tidal Flat

There has been little change during the triennium in the numbers and status of Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record. Ten Asian sites are included in the Record: 2 sites in India, 7 sites in I.R. Iran, and 1 site in Jordan. However, in 2001 India requested a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) to consider the removal of Chilika Lake from the Montreux Record. The RAM, involving the Regional Coordinator for Asia, STRP member for Oceania Dr Max Finlayson, and representatives of Ramsar IOPs and government took place in December 2001, and its report and recommendations are being finalised. It is

anticipated that India will have requested removal of Chilika Lake from the Montreux Record prior to COP8.

The use of the Montreux Record and its effectiveness were discussed in the subregional Ramsar meetings and it was recognised that it is not being fully employed as a positive and effective tool for resolving difficult management planning issues on Ramsar sites, and in focusing potential donor assistance for addressing issues of change in ecological character at Ramsar site.

In March 2002 Bangladesh requested inclusion in the Montreux Record of Tangur Hor at the time of its designation because of recognised adverse change in its ecological character. The Bureau is awaiting completion and receipt of the Montreux Record-Questionnaire so as to fully include the site on the Record.

As part of the development of a UNDP-GEF wetlands project in I.R. Iran, it has been recognised that four Ramsar sites being considered for inclusion in this project should be included on the Montreux Record in recognition of the significant changes occurring in their ecological character. A formal request for their inclusion on the Record is awaited.

## **2.12 Management of shared water resources, wetlands and wetland species**

### **A. Inventory and integrated management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins [12.1]**

Only five CPs in Asia (23%) (Cambodia, I.R. Iran, Syria, Thailand and Viet Nam) reported that they have implemented an integrated management approach in river basin and coastal zone management. Cambodia is implementing it in Stung Treng Ramsar site bordering with Lao PDR and in the Lower Mekong basin. Syria has applied an integrated approach in the seven basins which cover the whole country. Thailand has initiated a pilot project in Songkhla Lake basin. I.R. Iran did not provide any further information on their approach.

Thirteen (61%) CPs report having partly implemented this approach and 3 (14%) CPs, Bahrain, Bangladesh and Jordan, have not adopted this approach. In Pakistan they are working only for water management in the Indus river basin. India mentioned its work in many river basin and associated lakes and wetland systems. Indonesia has adopted an integrated approach in coastal zone and island management. Israel has adopted it in its Mediterranean coast and territorial waters, Lake Kinnerat, river basins and gulf of Eilat. Japan has applied an integrated approach in 2% of their river basins, for Tsurumi, Shin-kashi river and Kushiro river. Lebanon has applied it in 20% of the coastal zone. Malaysia has applied it in Penang, Sabah and Sarawak. Mongolia has used it in the management of Har Us Lake, Uvs Lake river basin, Hubsugul and Terkhiin lake basins. Philippines and Republic of Korea have also applied integrated coastal zone management. Sri Lanka has applied integrated management approaches in the Mahaweli river basin and southwestern coastal area. Nepal has applied this approach in river basin management covering approximately 15% of the country's area. Although not mentioned in COP8 National Reports, a major initiative in the region for management of transboundary rivers is the Mekong River Commission, which is addressing water resource management in this major basin shared by five countries.

Only 3 CPs (14%) (China, Indonesia and Viet Nam) mentioned that they have some mechanism for cooperation of shared wetlands, but no details were provided.

**B. Cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species [12.2]**

Out of 21 CPs, 15 (71%) are gathering waterbird population data regularly and nine (Bangladesh, India, I.R. Iran, Israel, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand). In addition, Cambodia, China, Jordan and Pakistan report that they are also collecting bird data, but they have not sent it to Wetlands International. In Sri Lanka, Ceylon Bird Club and Department of Wildlife are collecting waterbird monitoring data, but have not yet made this available to Wetlands International. Syria does not have a regular programme but some researchers and university students gather bird data. Bahrain, Indonesia, Lebanon and Nepal do not have any bird data collection programme. Viet Name did not provide an answer to this question.

Concerning the cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species, the work undertaken to implement the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy is significant in the region. The Bureau has supported this initiative through its membership of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee, and has contributed to the formulation of “Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 2001-2005”. A key element of this Strategy is to provide safe route to the migratory waterbirds during their cyclic migration and to establish an effective network of the important sites for waterbirds using this flyway. The full contribution of the designation of national and international networks of Ramsar sites for these species, in implementation by all CPs in the region of the objectives of Resolutions VII.11 and VII.19, can be significant in relation to implementation of this regional Strategy.

**C. Support and promotion of regional arrangements under the Convention [12.3]**

No specific questions relevant to the Asia region were included in the COP8 National Report Format. However, the experience of holding subregional COP8 preparatory meetings in the region (in Thailand, I. R. Iran, and Lebanon) has indicated that there is support from CPs in the region for further developing such subregional collaborative approaches to supporting Convention implementation. In this respect, I.R. Iran’s proposals to develop a regional training and research centre in the city of Ramsar will contribute to regional coordination.

**2.13 Collaboration with other multilateral environmental agreements and institutions [13.1]**

Eleven (52%) CPs mentioned that they have mechanisms at national level to coordinate/integrate implementation of international/regional convention/treaties. In India, the Ministry of Environment and Forest is the focal agency for several conventions. In I.R. Iran, the National Committee on Sustainable Development coordinates the programme and information with Ramsar and other related conventions, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the focal ministry for all the Conventions. Israel has a department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is responsible for coordination with all the Conventions. In Lebanon, coordination is done jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs and the concerned Ministry. Philippines has a Subcommittee on Biodiversity under the Philippines council for Sustainable Development which deals with the Biodiversity

related Conventions. Thailand also has mechanism but they have not explained it. In China, the leading group is called the **Wetland Action Plan**, which includes 17 ministries at national level and acts as the coordinating body for biodiversity-related conventions and treaties. The State Forestry Administration is responsible for implementation of the Ramsar Convention. Bahrain has a Steering Committee on Biodiversity. In Nepal, the Environment Protection Council, National Biodiversity Unit Steering Committee and National Coordination Committee are responsible for all the conventions. Syria also has a mechanism but they have not provided any detail. In Japan, the Global Environment Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as political authority has jurisdiction over all multilateral environment conventions and agreements. The Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee is responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy on Biological Diversity under CBD. Japan has some coordination mechanisms through the Global Environment Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which as the political authority has jurisdiction over all multilateral environment convention agreements. In addition Japan also has an inter-ministerial coordinating committee for the implementation of National strategy for Biological Diversity under CBD. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka reported that they do not have any coordination mechanism. Cambodia did not provide sufficient information to assess this question.

Twenty-one CPs (38%) (India, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Nepal, Syria, Thailand and Viet Nam) provided information about reviewing and establishing priorities for cooperative national implementation of Ramsar and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in relation to the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan. India identified integration of wetlands, water and biodiversity in river basin management and marine biodiversity. Japan has identified important wetland areas, inventory and wetland management, National Strategy, law and institution. Lebanon has completed the review but they have not developed a common work plan. Nepal's answer is not clear. Syria has only mentioned the cooperation in wetland-related issues. Thailand identified wetlands and protected areas as the areas of priority for cooperative implementation of these Convention. Viet Nam has also not provided clear information about the priority areas for cooperation. Indonesia is in the process of reviewing and the outcome will be integrated into the Indonesian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Ten CPs have not conducted such a review for their countries and two CPs provided no answer to this question.

#### **2.14 Sharing of expertise and information [14.1]**

Activities such as exchange of information, technical assistance and expertise with reference to South-South cooperation have been undertaken by 4 (19%) CPs (India, Japan, Nepal and Philippines), with some activity reported also by Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. Japan has done some activities under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy. Nepal has mentioned its regular transboundary meetings with neighbouring countries. Philippines have mentioned some joint activities with other neighbouring countries in South China Sea and Seas of East Asia. Malaysia has conducted some courses on Environmental Planning and universities offered courses on wetlands that have been subsidised for neighbouring countries. The Republic of Korea has organized a symposium on tidal wetlands and speakers were invited from the neighbouring countries. Information provided by India was not clear concerning this question.

Very few CPs in the Asia Region reported developing twinning arrangements between Ramsar sites. Indonesia had twinned one – the Ramsar site Wasur National Park with

Tonda Reserve in Papua New Guinea and Kakadu National Park, Australia. Japan made two twinning arrangements, Kushiro-shitsugen, Akkeshi-ko, Bekambeushi-shitsugen, Kiritappu-shitsugen (Japan) with Koorangang and associated wetlands (Australia).

## **2.15 Financing the conservation and wise use of wetlands**

### **A. Promoting international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands [15.1]**

In Asia, most of the CPs except Japan are developing countries or countries with economies in transition. All these countries are making efforts to access the sources of donor funding so as to increase their capacity for wetland conservation and wise use. 17 (80%) CPs in Asia have submitted project proposals to different funding agencies which were intended to assist Ramsar implementation. Only 7 CP governments in Asia are represented in the governing bodies or scientific advisory bodies of multilateral donors such as the GEF.

### **B. Environmental safeguards and assessments as part of all development projects (including foreign and domestic investments) affecting wetlands [15.2]**

Out of 21 CPs in Asia, 16 (76%) have mentioned that EIA is mandatory for any action that can potentially affect any wetland. Only 5 (23%) CPs Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and Republic of Korea have mentioned that it is partly required. In Thailand EIA is required if any development project is affecting internationally or nationally important wetlands. Malaysia is dealing with this issue on a case by case basis, depending on the location of the proposed project and its impact on the wetland. Japan only carries out the EIA where proposed development project is larger than a certain scale and predicted to cause serious impacts on environment. In the Republic of Korea, an Act on EIAs requires that the EIA be applied to large development projects, and regulations require that the developer analyse and suggest measures to prevent damage. The Republic of Korea's Ministry of the Environment has the mandate to intervene in all projects that affect wetlands.

## **2.16 Financing of the Convention [16.1]**

Nine (42.8%) CPs (Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Syria, Thailand and Viet Nam) have fully paid their annual contributions to the Convention up to 2002. A further eight (38%) CPs (China, Israel, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines) have paid their contributions up to the year 2001, Cambodia and Mongolia have paid up to the year 2000 and only 2 CPs (9.5%), I.R. Iran and Sri Lanka, have paid their contributions only up to the year 1999.

## **2.17 Institutional mechanisms of the Convention [17.1]**

No questions relevant to Contracting Parties were included in the COP8 National Report concerning this matter.

## **2.18 Institutional and financial capacity of Contracting Parties [18.1]**

Out of 21 CPs in Asia, 10 (48%) CPs report that they have reviewed their national institutions related to wetlands to ensure that resources are available to implement the

Convention. However, most of the information they have provided was not related to this particular question, which may have been misinterpreted. Some relevant information was provided by the India, Israel and Japan on these reviews. Malaysia reported having evaluated the capacity of the administrative authority, and the Philippines has partly conducted a review.

Fourteen (66.6%) CPs in Asia report that they have constituted National Ramsar Committees or they have similar types of structure in their countries. Two further CPs (Republic of Korea and Israel) indicated that they have partly established such a mechanism. Bangladesh mentioned that their committee is cross sectoral, and a further 10 CPs (China, Japan Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, India, I.R.Iran and Thailand) report that their committees have some cross sectoral involvement. Information from Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam was not sufficient to be clear about the cross sectoral nature of their committees. Lebanon has mentioned that they are in the process of formulation of this committee. Bahrain, Cambodia, Jordan and Syria have not initiated the process of establishing a national committee.

Sixteen CPs reported they allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands. Mostly funds have been allocated to the relevant ministry and then department; in general such funds are allocated for the overall conservation of nature and natural resources, rather than specifically to wetlands. Wetland conservation activities receive funds from this allocated pool. In general the portion of funds allocated for wetland conservation is relatively small and is also dependent on the priorities afforded to wetlands by the country and the concerned ministry/department.

## **2.19 Working with International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others [19.1]**

Many IOPs are involved directly in the implementation of wetland-related projects or through SGF projects. Under the Wetlands International's site network programmes for shorebirds and cranes as part of the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, 48 sites have been designated, of which 23 are Ramsar sites, designated by Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea, Japan, Philippines and Indonesia.

## **2.20 Training [20.1]**

Ten (48%) of Asian CPs reported that they have analysed training needs for implementing wise use guidelines, but some of them did not provide details on this subject. China completed its training need analyses in 2000 with the support of the Ramsar SGF. India has also completed the analyses and identified the priority areas of training. Sri Lanka has completed this analysis for their Administrative Authority staff only. Thailand has completed this analyses and the results have been used to develop training issues in the National Policy and Action Plan for 2003-2008. Japan has not completed comprehensive analyses but they have identified training needs in several areas related to wetland and biodiversity conservation.

Only 5 (23%) CPs have completed a review of training opportunities. In India it is carried by the National Committee on Wetlands. The Wildlife Institute of India is one of the leading institutes which provides training in wildlife and wetland conservation. Israel has a programme to start new courses at the university level. Sri Lanka found many opportunities and initiated some activities with partner organizations. Thailand has

received the guidance for its 5-year training programme. Japan is utilising the results in planning of different training programmes.

China, Philippines, Mongolia, Thailand, India and Viet Nam have developed training modules and initiated activities in wetland management, control of invasive species, GPS and GIS, monitoring, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, waterbird identification and tourism. These training programmes have been conducted for the wildlife managers and wildlife & wetland management staff.

#### **2.21 Membership of the Convention [21.1]**

As regional Standing Committee representatives India and Japan have made some efforts to encourage accession by non-Parties. India has approached Myanmar and Bhutan through their diplomatic channels and encouraged them to join the Convention. Japan has conducted a national wetland inventory project in Myanmar and is encouraging the government of Myanmar to join the convention.