



## 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

*“Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”*

**Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005**

### **Ramsar COP9 DOC. 25 Information Paper**

## **Implementation of the Convention’s CEPA Programme for the period 2003-2005**

(see also COP9 DR19 “Establishment of an Oversight Panel for the CEPA activities of the Convention”)

#### **Explanatory note by the Secretariat**

1. The 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee requested “the CEPA Programme Officer to prepare an information paper for COP9 on the implementation of the Convention’s CEPA Programme in the first half of its 2003-2008 period” (Decision SC31-21).
2. Related to this, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat (Decision SC31-20) to prepare a draft proposal (COP9 DR 19) for the establishment of a Standing Committee oversight panel to ensure a strategic approach to the implementation of the CEPA Programme and to ensure that it remains responsive to changing priorities.
3. The CEPA Oversight Panel, if and when established under COP9 DR19, may wish to consider the findings of this report, particularly the provisional key implementation areas identified in section II, in their deliberations.

### **I. Introduction**

1. Ramsar’s current Communications, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) Programme, for 2003-2008, was established by Resolution VIII.31. The Guidelines annexed to that Resolution identify a number of key actors in wetland CEPA – this report focuses specifically on two of these key actors, the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat, whilst acknowledging that there are many CEPA activities in support of wetland wise use carried out by the Convention’s International Organization Partners (IOPs) as well as other national and international NGOs working at the national and local level.
2. The Secretariat has a dual role in the CEPA Programme, for it acts both as a facilitator of the national programmes run by the Contracting Parties and as a direct CEPA actor. This paper reports on the implementation progress under both of these roles. The information

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on implementation progress by Parties comes largely from analysis of 110 COP9 National Reports (NRs), 87 of them full reports, but that is supplemented by information on national activities of which the Secretariat has become aware through direct contact with Parties.

3. In general the statistics from the COP9 NRs show a remarkable consistency among regions and thus the analysis that follows refers mostly to global figures, although significant regional differences are noted where they occur. For comparative purposes, the report considers the Neotropics and North America Ramsar regions as one region, the Americas, in order to eliminate the effects of the small sample size on percentages for North America alone, which has only three Parties. Since the analysis of the Oceania region is based on COP9 National Reports from only two countries, one of these being a very new Contracting Party, the regional comparisons do not include Oceania.
4. In this report, when statistics refer to a 'positive' response, this includes the responses 'Yes', 'Partly', 'Being updated', and 'In progress' in COP9 National Reports..
5. The main sections of this report are organized under the CEPA Programme Operational Objectives as established by Resolution VIII.31.

## **II. Key future CEPA implementation issues**

6. Key issues identified in this analysis which need improvements to future implementation are:
  - nomination of suitably qualified national Government and NGO CEPA Focal Points;
  - strategic rather than ad hoc planning of a national or local CEPA programme through a review of needs and priorities undertaken preferably by a CEPA Task Force, development and implementation of an action plan;
  - improved capacity of the Secretariat or through some other means to continue developing the CEPA Web pages, particularly those in French and Spanish;
  - improvement in CEPA training and capacity building at the national level;
  - increased efforts in incorporating CEPA expertise in multi-stakeholder bodies to guide and inform river basin planning and management;
  - increased support from the Parties for the Wetland Link International (WLI) network, continued development of the WLI Web site;
  - improved efforts at international and national level to develop and use methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of CEPA interventions;
  - improved status of the CEPA Specialist Group within STRP to enable it to more effectively incorporate CEPA into all Ramsar guidance and identify the diverse CEPA tools required in wetland management at all levels.
7. The CEPA Oversight Panel, if and when established under COP9 DR19, may wish to consider these key issues in their deliberations as a focus for establishing and directing future priorities for the Convention's CEPA implementation.

### III. Analysis of the CEPA responses in the COP9 National Reports and the CEPA activities of the Secretariat

**Operational Objective 1.1** Integrate CEPA processes into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.

#### III.1 Integrating wetland CEPA into wetland and other appropriate sectoral policies, strategies, plans and programmes, such as those for biodiversity conservation, water management, fisheries, etc. (Action 1.1.2)

8. At the global level, 71% of Parties responded positively that this had taken place at least at some level. In their textual responses, Parties frequently noted that wetland CEPA has been integrated into sectoral policies such as National Biodiversity Strategies, National Environmental Plans and Policies, and in Europe policies related to the EU Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000.
9. Focusing on the responses that specifically mentioned National Wetland Policies and CEPA, 11 Parties (Cambodia, China, Colombia, Congo, France, Indonesia, Mali, Poland, Slovakia, Thailand, Turkey, and Uganda) reported that CEPA issues had been incorporated into their National Wetland Policy and a further four, that it is incorporated within their draft policy (Argentina, Russia, Sweden, and Ukraine). With 17 countries reporting that development of their National Wetland Policy is in progress and a further 10 noting that it is being planned, this is a good moment to emphasise that building CEPA effectively into a National Wetland Policy is an essential start to developing an effective CEPA programme. Those 41% of Parties with National Wetland Policies in place should be encouraged to review their existing policies to ensure that wetland CEPA is adequately addressed in them.
10. Importantly, Peru commented that “Without the active operation of a work group specialized in the CEPA subjects, these aspects will not be incorporated into sectorial policies, strategies, plans and programs at national level”, a recognition relevant to all Parties of the importance of appointing appropriately trained CEPA Focal Points and a CEPA Task Force.

#### III.2 Establishing an STRP Expert Working Group on CEPA to undertake a broad programme of work as set out in Annex II of Resolution VIII.31 (Action 1.1.3)

11. At the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee in February 2003 it was decided that:
  - CEPA was formally recognized as a high priority, cross-cutting area of work for the Convention;
  - there should be input by CEPA experts to each STRP Working Group so as to ensure that CEPA issues are fully incorporated in future guidelines;
  - a CEPA Working group should **not** be established within STRP.
12. During STRP 11 it was agreed that a CEPA Specialist Group should be set up under Wetlands International that would serve the needs of both Wetlands International (WI) and the Ramsar Convention, particularly the STRP.

13. This CEPA Specialist Group (SG) was established during 2003 with Christine Prietto, NGO Focal Point for Australia and Board member of WI, as Chair. The Group developed a Work Plan for the period but has been restricted in implementing this due to the lack of financial support. It has been actively involved in some areas of the work of the STRP and there has been a recognition in this triennium of the need to formalise the presence of CEPA expertise in the future work of the Panel; this is further discussed in COP9 DR12 on the revised *modus operandi* of STRP.
14. Additionally, during COP9 some members of the CEPA SG will be meeting with STRP members to further develop the relevant CEPA tools identified as important in implementing certain areas of DR 1 Annex C i. The SG has also played an active role in the development of the “Field Guide for wetland managers” under the work plan of STRP Working Group 5.

**Operational Objective 1.2** Demonstrate that CEPA processes are effective in achieving Ramsar’s wetland wise use objectives at the global, national and local levels.

**III.3 Developing pilot projects to evaluate approaches for applying CEPA in promoting the wise use of wetlands, reviewing existing CEPA programmes and case studies, and identifying and documenting the lessons learned regarding effective approaches** (Actions 1.2.1 and 1.2.2)

15. From the NRs it seems that this area of work has not been given much attention by most Parties: only 13% of Parties noted that pilot projects had been carried out, with 38% reporting that this had been done at least at some level, and 30% noting that at least some progress had been made in documenting lessons learnt.
16. Some Parties did note that such studies have been effectively carried out by other bodies and under other frameworks within their country, and some European Parties drew attention to the documentation of such studies through the EU Water Framework Directive. In many cases the textual responses that were ‘positive’ seemed to be noting projects simply involving CEPA rather than projects that set out specifically to evaluate CEPA approaches. The most useful comments came from several countries that reported working at the site level on this, but it should be noted that effective approaches were identified but rarely documented.
17. Implementing this action was another task set for the CEPA Specialist Group, but lack of funding prevented any progress in this area during the triennium. This area requires further work at the national and international level to provide any effective feedback on CEPA approaches both at the national and global level.

**Operational Objective 2.1** Provide national leadership, networks and cohesive frameworks to support and catalyse CEPA for the wise use of wetlands.

**III.4 Nomination of Government and NGO Focal Point for CEPA** (Action 2.1.1)

18. The CEPA Focal Points (FPs), both Government and NGO, are the driving force at the national level of the CEPA Programme and the key contacts for CEPA matters both

between the Secretariat and the Parties and between Parties. The nomination of NGO FPs is an innovative one and considered a great strength by other environmental conventions. In Parties in which they have been nominated, all indications are that they bring useful skills, expertise and enthusiasm to the national CEPA Programmes.

19. The National Reports show 64% of Parties with a CEPA Government FPs and 56% with NGO FPs, an improvement on the figures from COP8 of 51% and 44% respectively. At the regional level, the Americas have the highest percentage of Government FPs nominated (76%) while Asia has the highest percentage of NGO FPs (72%). In all regions a higher percentage of Government FPs are nominated than NGO Focal Points and Parties may wish to reflect on the reasons for this. The full list of FPs is maintained online at [http://www.ramsar.org/key\\_nfp\\_cepa.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/key_nfp_cepa.htm).
20. While it is understood that there can be political reasons for the rather frequent changes in nominations of CEPA Focal Points in some Parties, it has to be noted that this is not efficient in terms of ensuring continuity of any CEPA programme of work.

### **III.5 Wetland Task Forces and CEPA Action Planning** (Actions 2.1.2, 2.1.3)

21. The COP8 Guidelines encourage Parties to take a more strategic approach to a national CEPA Programme through developing a CEPA Task Force to undertake a review of CEPA needs, skills, expertise, to set priorities and, from this, develop a national, sub-national, catchment or local wetland CEPA action plan.
22. With 57% of Parties reporting that they had not established a CEPA Task Force, 50% reporting that a review of needs and capacities had not been carried out, and only 10% of Parties reporting that a National CEPA Action Plan has been developed, the statistics on this key area of the CEPA Programme give cause for concern. Adding to this concern is the fact that the number of Parties with a Task Force seems to have dropped by 50% since COP8.
23. While 10 countries reported that they had completed a National CEPA Action Plan, the Secretariat has only been informed of a National CEPA Action Plan from Australia, Germany, Hungary, and Spain. The Secretariat will be following up on the other six.
24. From several comments in the NRs, some Parties note that there are other frameworks effectively dealing with environmental CEPA, for example through the CBD and other MEAs, national environmental communication and education strategies, and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. While this can be a useful indication of key CEPA activities being carried out at national and local levels, it does of course lack the assessment of specific wetland CEPA needs and responses.
25. Yet the situation is not wholly negative. The COP9 analysis does show that 31% of Parties were either in the process of developing an action plan or were planning to do so. From the textual comments included in the National Reports and other information from Parties transmitted directly to the Secretariat, there is evidence that many Parties are indeed moving forward in this area at least at some level.
26. To summarise: while only four National Action Plans have been submitted to the Secretariat:

- At least three countries (Cambodia, Ecuador, UK) have CEPA Plans in a draft stage and Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, and the Philippines have already held preliminary meetings of CEPA actors as the first step in developing an Action Plan. These first steps have proved to be a learning experience in themselves, bringing together a wide range of CEPA actors in a participatory process that will help to ensure implementation in the field.
  - Australia has produced a sub-national action plan covering the 22,000 km<sup>2</sup> Hunter region.
  - Fifteen Parties have asserted that CEPA actions are clearly articulated in their National Wetland Strategies or draft strategies (see III.1), although this is probably an underestimate since this question was not specifically asked in the NRs.
  - At least four Parties (Jordan, Peru, Tanzania and Venezuela) reported that while a National Plan had not been developed, CEPA action plans have been developed, or are being developed, at specific Ramsar sites, and Tanzania has forwarded two such plans (although only one is currently funded) to the Secretariat.
  - One Party (Thailand) has intimated that since CEPA actions are well articulated in their National Wetland Strategy and associated work plan, and they have effectively built CEPA actions into site management plans, there is no need for a CEPA plan at the national level. From the NRs, 59 Parties (69%) recorded that CEPA strategies and actions have been incorporated into the management plans of at least some of their Ramsar sites (Action 3.2.5). A total of 139 sites were identified but since not all countries noted the number of sites involved, the total must be considerably higher.
27. It will be valuable for the Secretariat and/or CEPA Specialist Group to follow up on these diverse approaches to CEPA action planning to document alternative effective approaches that might be considered by Parties. Indeed, during COP9 the CEPA Specialist Group will be organizing a side event to showcase the different approaches to CEPA action planning and initiate discussions on problems and solutions in planning at the national level.
28. Finally, it should be noted that some Neotropical countries have benefitted from Wetlands For the Future funding for developing CEPA plans at Ramsar sites.

### **III.6 Communicating and sharing information effectively on wetland issues between relevant ministries, departments and agencies (Action 2.1.5)**

29. As integrated water resources management and management at the river basin level have become fully integrated into the work of the Convention, effective communication cross-sectorally has become an essential skill. From the NRs, an encouraging 78% of Parties responded positively that they had taken actions on communicating and sharing information on wetland issues between relevant ministries, departments and agencies at least at some level. While the action in the guidelines did make reference to paying attention to the efficiency and effectiveness of such communications, this was not included in the NR question, and it is to be hoped that Parties do recognize the importance of assessing the effectiveness of their cross-sectoral communications.

### **III.7 Collaborating globally and nationally to encourage synergy with the CEPA activities under other international conventions and programmes (Action 2.1.6)**

30. This action is directed at both the Secretariat and the Parties, and the implementation to date would indicate that this is equally challenging for both actors. Globally, 40% of Parties responded positively to the NR question on this action (which does not compare favourably with the general question on synergies with MEAs in the NR with an 81% positive response). A small number of Parties noted particular success in this area since the same government departments are acting as the Focal Points for more than one of the environmental conventions. Others reported on effective synergies that were occurring sub-nationally through projects in specific wetland locations.
31. It is pleasing to note the National CEPA Action Plan recently produced by Spain has taken specific account of the CBD's Decision VI/19 on Communication, education and public awareness in the development of the Plan.
32. At the Secretariat level, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Work Plan with the CBD includes several CEPA actions, and some of these have been implemented: the Ramsar CEPA Programme Officer and the Senior Programme Officer for the CBD have discussed their respective programmes, and keep each other informed of recent developments; information has been sent via the Ramsar CEPA e-lists concerning the CBD's CEPA Programme and the availability of CEPA resource materials on the CBD Web site. More substantive work remains to be done, with time being the main limiting factor.

<b>Operational Objective 2.2</b> Transfer, exchange and share CEPA information and expertise that promotes and results in the wise use of wetlands.
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### **III.8 Sharing information through the Convention's Web site and the CEPA mini-web site (Action 2.2.1)**

33. Parties will be aware that the Convention's Web site and the CEPA mini-web site within it are updated on a regular basis. The main Web pages are maintained by the Convention's Communication Officer, while the CEPA pages are maintained by the CEPA Programme Officer.
34. The main Web pages act as the repository for all official Convention documents which are made available in English, French and Spanish, but the site includes many other sections that keep visitors up-to-date with the most recent activities of the Convention, as well as making available a broad range of other resource materials on the work of the Convention.
35. The visitation rates of the Convention's Web site continue to rise, and during this triennium daily visitation rates have increased from an average of 2,000 users to 3,500-4,000 users per day, an indication of its utility to the Parties, wetland-related institutions, and NGOs, as well as the general public.
36. The CEPA Web pages, available in English, French and Spanish, aim to make resource materials for implementing the CEPA Programme available to all interested users. While every effort is made to develop these pages, this has so far been achieved only in English

at a reasonable level given the time constraints, and there are significant problems in effectively maintaining the French and Spanish pages. The Secretariat is currently investigating the possibility of some assistance in this area for Spanish with the CREHO Ramsar Centre in Panama, although funding has yet to be identified for this.

37. During the triennium the MedWet Coordination Unit, based in Athens, undertook a major redesign and redevelopment of the MedWet Initiative Web site.

### **III.9 Producing, distributing and sharing resource materials to support wetland CEPA actions** (Action 2.2.3)

38. Not surprisingly, the response to the question on whether materials in support of wetland CEPA had been produced and distributed were rather good, with 72% of responses positive and only 15 Parties responding negatively, 10 of them in Africa, undoubtedly reflecting the lack of funds available for such activities.
39. The range of materials produced was extensive, ranging through posters, booklets, exhibitions, pamphlets, calendars, billboards, videos, newsletters, radio broadcast materials, CDs, VCDs, etc.
40. In terms of sharing such materials, there are still too many excellent materials produced by the Parties that are not available electronically, thus diminishing the possibility of sharing these resources. For example, there have been many excellent CEPA materials developed with Wetlands For the Future funding that have not been made available electronically.
41. Since COP8 the Secretariat has produced several publications in addition to World Wetlands Day materials, including:
- the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Ramsar Handbook series (14 Volumes), produced on CD-ROM and in limited quantities in hard copy;
  - a Ramsar sites leaflet with global coverage and another produced for Africa only;
  - a video on the work of the Ramsar Convention;
  - a leaflet “What’s in Water?” produced for the Commission on Sustainable Development’s 12<sup>th</sup> meeting; and
  - an educational wetland game aimed at 5-12 year-olds, currently in a test phase in conjunction with UNESCO.
42. In the planning stage are:
- a partnership in the final stages of being developed between the world-renowned jeweller Gilbert Albert and the Secretariat. A certain percentage of the sale of a range of jewellery, designed with a nature theme, will go to support specific projects jointly identified by the Secretariat and M. Albert;
  - the production of an animated film by Pixar Animation Studios on a water and wetlands theme, presently under discussion between the Secretariat and Pixar studio, which will carry no direct costs to the Secretariat;



- the production of a documentary film on a joint Ramsar-Danone/Evian project on water provision at a location in Cambodia, currently under discussion with a French filmmaker;
- the development of a media event “Three visions” involving the photographs of three photographers working at one specific location resulting in an exhibition to be held in three cities. This project still requires basic seed funding to proceed.

### III.10 Communicating through Ramsar’s global e-mail networks and national e-mail networks (Action 2.2.4)

43. The Secretariat manages a number of e-mail lists to improve communication and information-sharing within the Convention:
- Ramsar Wetlands Forum: an open, unmoderated list for news, views and queries on any wetland issue. Membership is currently around 800, and more than 2,000 messages have been exchanged since its inception in 1997.
  - Ramsar Exchange (in English, French and Spanish): closed list for members of the Administrative Authorities, with announcements of all new Ramsar sites and Parties
  - Standing Committee
  - STRP
  - STRP National Focal Points: although this closed list has not been active during the last triennium, the Secretariat intends to make full use of this in the coming period.
  - CEPA e-lists (in English, French and Spanish): open, unmoderated lists that include all the CEPA Focal Points (if they have functional e-mail addresses) as well as many others with an interest in wetland CEPA. The English list includes over 400 members, with Spanish and French at 120 and 90 respectively. Messages posted since March 2004 are available online in the CEPA Web pages at [http://www.ramsar.org/outreach\\_news.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_news.htm).
44. Locating a suitable diversity of CEPA resource materials to populate the lists is time consuming, especially in three languages, and approximately two to three times more messages are posted by the Secretariat to the English list than to the Spanish or French lists, reflecting both time and language limitations. In the long term it is hoped that, funding permitting, the Panama Centre will again be able to play a positive role in gathering and disseminating useful CEPA materials in Spanish through the list.
45. From the NRs, while 51% of Parties responded positively that national CEPA e-mail networks had been established, from the textual responses it would appear that only Ghana, Slovakia, and South Africa have national CEPA e-mail networks, while others reported on the existence of wetland networks and other more general environmental networks which deal with CEPA issues from time to time. There were significant regional differences in responses, with the Americas recording the highest level with 65% positive responses and Africa the lowest at 30% of positive responses.

<p><b>Operational Objective 2.3</b></p>	<p>Improve the individual and collective capacity and opportunities of people to participate in and contribute to using wetlands wisely, through the recognition of the values of wetland resources.</p>
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**III.11 Working in collaboration with Ramsar's International Organization Partners to identify sources of expert information and training opportunities in wetland CEPA (Action 2.3.2)**

46. At the global level, the Secretariat has long been involved with the international wetland training courses run by the RIZA Institute in the Netherlands, and the RIZA Board has been chaired by the Ramsar Secretary General for many years. More recently a greater emphasis has been placed on regional training, and RIZA has assisted in the training of trainers for such courses. There is now considerably more emphasis being placed on training managers in the social aspects of wetland management, with training on identifying and working with stakeholders, public participation and conflict management now recognized as important elements of manager training. Future developments include the desire of the RIZA to move the Board into a broader global role, still under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General
47. Recently the Secretariat has been in communication with an Austrian university in their development of their Masters course in the management of protected areas, and one Ramsar staff member is a member of the management board for this course. CEPA skills are included in this course.
48. Online interactive training is now becoming more readily available for wetland management, and the Secretariat is making every effort to keep Parties informed through the CEPA lists and the Ramsar Wetlands Forum of this and other kinds of training opportunities. Recently the Secretariat has been working with IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication on their development of online CEPA training modules to identify training needs for wetland managers.
49. The Parties will undoubtedly benefit from the recent launching of WetCap, a partnership of organizations based in Netherlands with broad expertise in various aspects of capacity building. Network members include: Wetlands International (WI), Rijkswaterstaat RIZA, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), International Network for Capacity Building in Integrated Water Resources Management (Cap-Net/UNDP), and Wageningen University and Research center, represented by International Agricultural Centre (IAC) & ALTERRA. This network will focus on the development and running of training courses for water and wetland management and restoration and development of an advisory service, amongst other things.
50. From the NRs, 48% of Parties responded positively to having identified sources of expert information and training opportunities in wetland CEPA, identifying a range of courses from universities, research institutions, NGOs, etc. Ramsar's IOPs were mentioned frequently, particularly with respect to the provision of training opportunities. But with 41% responded negatively to this question, much remains to be done at the national level in this area.

**III.12 Reviewing of formal educational curricula and incorporating wetland-related issues as necessary (Action 2.3.4)**

51. Thirty-five percent of Parties reported positively that a review has been carried out and 37% noted that positive progress was being made in incorporating wetland-related changes into the curriculum. It is acknowledged that this is a particularly difficult area for the Ramsar Administrative Authorities, requiring strong working links with their Ministry of Education. It also reinforces the value of having a broad membership of any CEPA Task Force. Regional differences were quite strong, with Asia and Africa reporting significantly more positively than Europe or the Americas.
52. While a small number of outstanding successes at the national and international level have been reported, it would seem from textual responses that broader success has been achieved with initiatives at a local level, focused on teachers and children in areas near Ramsar sites. This is particularly successful at primary level and most effective when curriculum and teacher training are combined. These initiatives have often been carried out with the assistance of national and international NGOs or through the work of consultants.
53. Whenever possible such suitable resource materials are shared on the Secretariat's CEPA Web pages and through the CEPA e-lists.

**Operational Objective 3.1** Foster sustained national campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness of the important ecosystem services provided by wetlands as well as their social, economic and cultural values.

### **III.13 Undertaking national campaigns, programmes or projects to raise awareness, build community support, and promote stewardship of wetlands (Action 3.1.1)**

54. On a global scale, 75% of Parties responded positively to this question and only 11% of countries responded negatively.
55. Many countries reported on a diversity of campaigns undertaken at national, regional and local levels, sometimes with very specific target audiences, and usually aimed at specific wetland issues. As one might expect these were sometimes carried out directly by the Ramsar Administrative Authority, sometimes in collaboration with NGOs, and sometimes by other government departments.

### **III.14 Celebrating World Wetlands Day/Week at national and local events to raise awareness of wetland values and functions (Action 3.1.2)**

56. World Wetlands Day (WWD) (2 February, in recognition of the date of agreement of the Convention text in 1971) was first celebrated in 1997 and since that time has grown immensely in importance becoming, for many countries, a definitive moment in the year to target different sectors of society and celebrate wetlands and their values at national and local levels. The Secretariat produces a theme each year, endorsed by Standing Committee, and provides WWD materials on this theme (posters, stickers, leaflets, etc.) to all Parties as well as to non-Contracting Parties upon request. The Secretariat has been fortunate since the first WWD to enjoy the financial support of the Danone/Evian Group for the production of these materials: without this support WWD would not be the success that it is.

57. Reporting to the Secretariat on WWD activities has always been strongly encouraged and in 2003 over 250 activities from 85 countries were reported on the Convention's Web site; results from WWD 2004 are still being received. It is clear that the activities organized by the Administrative Authorities are considerably supplemented by the activities of many other wetland stakeholders, including national and international NGOs, schools and community groups, and wetland site managers.
58. Since 2003 the Secretariat has been making the design files for the poster and stickers available in various formats to encourage countries to customise the posters, making the images and/or text more directly relevant to the national or local situation and translating the text in national or local languages. It also affords countries the opportunity to produce much larger quantities of materials than the Secretariat would be able to supply. Success in this area has grown each year and in 2005 13 countries used the design files to produce their own posters (these can be viewed at [http://www.ramsar.org/outreach\\_materials\\_translations4.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_materials_translations4.htm)). China has customized, printed, and distributed nationally large numbers of posters for each of the three years this has been possible, the only country to do so.
59. To ease the burden on the Secretariat in terms of human resources needed for distributing WWD materials, last year the Secretariat changed from dispatching materials directly to individuals who have sent requests to distributing large numbers of materials to the Ramsar Administrative Authorities instead, who could then distribute the materials to individuals within their countries. This has brought advantages to the countries in that they now have more contact with some of the key actors in wetland conservation within their country, and it also sets the scene for the development of a more coordinated approach to WWD within the country. The same process will be used for WWD 2006 and so far only two Parties have declined to take part in this.
60. The response from the NRs on whether WWD activities had been carried out produced the most affirmative response to any of the CEPA questions with 89% responding positively. Only 7% of Parties responded negatively. The Americas topped the list with 100% positive replies.
61. It was noted at the European regional meeting in December 2004 and again in the NRs that there is frustration in countries in the northern part of the northern hemisphere with the timing of WWD in the middle of winter when snow and ice discourage participation.

**III.15 Collaborating with the media to inform decision-makers and the broader society about the values and benefits of wetlands (Action 3.1.3)**

62. The media offers great opportunities to highlight the value of wetlands and draw attention to threats at particular sites. The Secretariat makes every effort to engage with the international press to raise awareness of important events in the wetland calendar and to ongoing issues in wetland conservation, but, realistically, the most effective interactions with the press on wetland issues take place at the national and regional level.
63. The responses to the question in the NRs on this were quite encouraging with 84% of Parties giving a positive response, many noting that this takes place on a regular basis and that NGOs play an important role. Four countries (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and

Senegal) particularly noted they had held workshops for journalists to ensure that they were well informed about wetland values and threats.

**Operational Objective 3.2** Support and develop mechanisms to ensure that CEPA processes are incorporated into participatory, multi-stakeholder wetland management.

### III.16 Participatory management and CEPA

64. Guidance on participatory management has been developed through Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.36 and it is evident from communication with many Parties that the participation of local stakeholders, at least at some level, is considered a prerequisite for successful development and implementation of a wetland management plan. Building effective partnerships, dealing with conflict, etc., require CEPA skills, thus emphasising the clear links between the CEPA and participatory management guidelines.
65. In the recently developed National CEPA Action Plan from Spain, CEPA has been defined as Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness in recognition of the inseparable links between the two.
66. The evolving approach within the Convention to include community and other stakeholder participation at some level in wetland management planning and implementation has significant implications for the development of particular CEPA skills within the Parties. The discussion under section III.2 in this report indicates the progress that is being made in this area in wetland manager training. In the NRs, 87% of Parties reported positively that public participation in decision-making on wetlands has been promoted and 67% reported positively that local stakeholders have been involved in wider issues related to water resources management at the basin level. In both cases, the Americas reported more positively than the other regions. The CEPA e-lists and Web pages include many references to useful participatory resource materials, and this is an area that will be further developed.
67. The importance of participatory management and the CEPA skills that underlie it for some Parties is perhaps best exemplified by the overall goal in Nepal's National Wetlands Policy published in 2003: "The primary goal . . . is to conserve and manage wetland resources wisely and in a sustainable way with local people's participation".

### III.17 Ensuring that multi-stakeholder bodies are in place to guide and inform catchment/river basin and local wetland-related planning and management, and that these bodies include appropriate expertise in CEPA (Action 3.2.3)

68. In the NRs, the question posed concerned the incorporation of CEPA expertise into river basin planning and management tools but did not request information on the existence of multi-stakeholder bodies. Only 14% of Parties responded 'Yes' to this question, indicating that many Parties have much to do in ensuring that CEPA expertise is fully incorporated in basin planning and management tools. Yet 45% of Parties did respond that this was taking place at least in some of their river basins and a further 12% noted that this was being planned. Both Europe and the Americas recorded a more positive result than Asia and Africa in this regard. Several respondents in Europe commented on the effectiveness

of the Water Framework Directive and the Birds and Habitat Directive in facilitating this area of work.

69. The need for effective CEPA tools in the river basin management cycle has been clearly articulated in COP9 DR 1 Annex C i, as mentioned earlier, and members of the CEPA SG will be working closely with STRP experts to identify specific tools that could assist Parties in this important area of work.

**Operational Objective 3.3** Promote and support the role of wetland and other education centres as focal points for global, national and local CEPA efforts.

**III.18 Wetland Education Centres as focal points for global, national and local CEPA efforts: the WLI network; twinning of centres between developing and developed countries; establishing new centres; and reviewing the information provided at centres** (Actions 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2)

70. The Guidelines encourage Parties to ensure that existing and future centres participate in the Wetland Link International (WLI) network of wetland education centres and, further, for Parties to seek to resource WLI. A programme of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, UK, WLI was re-launched in early 2003 and now has an e-list (in English only), a Web site with an online searchable database of members, and a developing online Resource Pool for WLI members to share and exchange examples, materials and case studies relating to all aspects of CEPA programmes based at or emanating from wetland centres.
71. The membership of the network has risen to over 300 centres. Despite the call for financial support from the Convention for the resourcing of WLI, this has not been forthcoming in the last triennium, and WLI has been fortunate to receive financial support from the HSBC Bank.
72. WLI encourages the establishment of national and regional networks within the global network, and WLI-Australia (with 18 centres) and WLI-UK (with 60 centres) are two such national networks, launched in 2002 and 2004 respectively. The first regional network – WLI-Asia – was launched in June of this year. Further information on these initiatives is available from the CEPA Web pages.
73. The Secretariat has supported the WLI network by publicising its existence through the CEPA e-lists and the CEPA Web pages on several occasions, and by translating some of the introductory materials on the WLI Web site into French and Spanish. Despite this, the response from the Parties has been rather poor. From the NRs, the recording of only 9% ‘yes’ and 15% ‘positive’ responses from Parties that their wetland centres are part of the WLI network certainly suggests that Parties are not connecting effectively with that network. Part of the problem may be one of language, since all communications and much of the WLI Web site are in English. Perhaps feedback on the developing national networks to the Parties would help showcase the value of WLI, and better resourcing of WLI to extend its language capacity would encourage more support for the network from the Parties.
74. At the global level, 35% of Parties recorded that they had established wetland centres during the last triennium and a further 22% reported some progress in this area. From this

and the textual responses there is a strong indication that Parties are aware of the value of centres in raising awareness about wetland values, but that the financial challenges in developing new centres are significant. It was unfortunately not possible from the information submitted to determine exactly how many new centres had been established in the last triennium, but it is evident, consistent with the reporting on centres from COP8, that Europe is very much further ahead in this area than the other regions.

75. With only 6% of Parties responding that they had promoted and sought resourcing for the twinning of wetland education centres, and 21% responding positively, this is clearly not viewed with much enthusiasm by Parties in the developed world.

### **General conclusion**

76. In addition to the future CEPA implementation issues listed in paragraph 6 above, it is fair to conclude in general, based on the National Reports for COP9 and other sources, that, one, there is a great deal of promising CEPA activity going on within the Parties and within the Convention as a whole, and, two, there is a continuing strong need for better strategic coordination among the Convention's constituents and their CEPA work.