



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

Wetlands and Water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods

Speke Resort, Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda

8-15 November 2005

Wetlands and Water - Supporting Life, Sustaining Livelihoods

Preparations for Ramsar COP9

Revised provisional agenda and programme

Contracting Parties received the first version of the provisional agenda and programme for the Conference transmitted under Notification 2004/3, dated 22 April 2004. The document has now been revised on the basis of developments during recent months and will be finalised by the Standing Committee at its 31st meeting to be held on 6-11 June 2005. **The current version is enclosed.**

A complete final version of the Provisional Agenda and Programme, with an update on specific details, will be distributed at the time of registration in Kampala.

Ramsar COP9 documents

Attached is the provisional list of documents that will be issued for Ramsar COP9. Official documents will be distributed in hard copy through a diplomatic note to all Parties, with one copy to the Administrative Authority by 7 August 2005 (three months before the opening of the COP, as required by the Rules of Procedure).

In the meantime, the documents are being made available on the Ramsar Web site (www.ramsar.org) in HTML, PDF, and Word formats, via the COP9 “button”, as soon as they become ready in any of the three official languages.

Draft Resolutions and Recommendations

The Standing Committee will discuss and approve a series of draft Resolutions (see the Standing Committee 31 page of the Ramsar Web site) for transmission to the COP for consideration. Contracting Parties will recall that at the request of the COP9 Subgroup, the Secretariat issued a diplomatic note that addressed the approach adopted by Parties in Resolution VIII.45, requesting any Party or Parties wishing to submit a draft Resolution to do so prior to Standing Committee 31 so that it could be considered by SC31 (and, for draft Resolutions with technical content, with the advice of the STRP).

The Ramsar Secretariat urges Contracting Parties, should they wish to submit Resolutions later (up to 60 days before the start of the COP), to give advance consideration to this matter and to submit such draft documents as soon as possible, in order to provide time for possible consultations and/or amalgamation of proposals dealing with the same subject. **It should be**

noted that the Secretariat is obliged to enforce the final deadline of 8 September 2005 without exceptions.

Registration

All participants should register for the COP with the Ramsar Secretariat in Switzerland. Participants are requested to register online by going to <http://www.ramsar.org/> and clicking on “COP9”, using the password when prompted [or, if they have not yet been given the password, requesting an invitation to the COP by submitting the form provided]. Any participant experiencing difficulty in registering online should contact the Secretariat (cop9@ramsar.org) for assistance.

Observers

In addition to the delegates of the Parties, the COP is also open to observers. The Rules of Procedures establish that:

OBSERVERS

Rule 6

1. The Bureau shall notify the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not Party to the Convention, of meetings of the Conference of the Parties so that they may be represented as observers.
2. Such observers may, upon the invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

Rule 7

1. Any body or agency, national or international, whether governmental or non-governmental, qualified in fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, which has informed the Bureau of its wish to be represented at meetings of the Conference of the Parties may be represented at the meeting by observers, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.
2. Bodies or agencies desiring to be represented at the meeting by observers shall submit the names of these observers to the Convention Bureau at least one month prior to the opening of the meeting.
3. Such observers may, upon the invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.
4. Proposals made by observers may be put to the vote if sponsored by a Party.

5. Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any State not a Party, body, or agency be present at a meeting. The Bureau shall notify those concerned of any such limitations in advance of the meeting.

Thus, according to these articles of the Rules of Procedure, observers can be designated by:

- a) States which are not Parties to the Convention;
- b) intergovernmental organizations;
- c) national and international organizations of the governmental or non-governmental sector “qualified in fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands”. Those organizations that do not have a working relation with the Secretariat of the Convention will have to submit, at least one month in advance of the COP, the appropriate documentation demonstrating that they do work in the area of wetland conservation and wise use.

Sponsored delegates from Contracting Parties

The Ramsar Secretariat is making efforts to raise the funds needed to provide assistance to Contracting Party delegates from developing countries and countries in transition. At the end of April 2005, the Secretariat has received contributions and pledges that represent almost 50% of the amount needed.

Participants who seek to receive financial assistance from Ramsar MUST register on-line. Subsequently the Ramsar Secretariat will confirm whether financial assistance is available.

If you receive sponsorship, MKI Conference Management will make all necessary travel and hotel arrangements for you. Arrangements have been made to accommodate all sponsored delegates in hotels which provide adequate facilities at an affordable price. Hotel accommodation, including breakfast, will be paid directly to the hotel by MKI. Sponsored delegates will receive an adequate amount of cash to cover meals and incidentals and will receive reimbursement for hotel expenses incurred, if any, on the way to and/or from Kampala.

Past experience indicates that delays by Contracting Parties in designating the delegates who should receive assistance from Ramsar have created problems for making their travel and visa arrangements, and have forced MKI to buy tickets at higher fares. Parties concerned should take this into account and try to designate their delegates well in advance, preferably by 30 September 2005. After this date it will not be possible to guarantee sponsorship.

Hotel bookings

As with its previous COPs, the Ramsar Secretariat has contracted **Algonquin Travel & MKI Conference Management in Ottawa, Canada**, to handle all hotel bookings for the Conference. Information concerning hotels and an on-line booking system is available on the MKI Web site at <http://www.mkitravel.com/>. Delegates should check this Web site periodically as MKI are finalising hotel bookings and updating their Web site regularly.

Visas

Attached is a note explaining the visa requirements for entering Uganda. It is the responsibility of participants to obtain the necessary Ugandan and transit visas and delegates are urged to obtain such visas at their earliest convenience.

Credentials

Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (adopted by Ramsar COP7, San José, Costa Rica, 1999) explains the Credentials procedure. Reflecting paragraph one of Rule 18, the Ramsar Secretariat would be obliged if Contracting Party delegations submit a copy of their credentials statement to the Secretariat before the COP, **but the original should be brought to the Conference and presented upon registration.**

1. The original of the statement of credentials of the head of delegation and other representatives, alternate representatives, and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary General of the Convention or to his/her designated representative if possible not later than twenty-four hours after the opening of the meeting. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to Secretary General or the representative of the Secretary General.
2. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or his/her equivalent. If other authorities in a Contracting Party are entitled to issue credentials for international meetings, this should have been notified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary General in advance of the meeting.
3. The credentials must bear a full signature of the appropriate authority or else be sealed and initialed by that authority. The seal and/or letter heading should clearly indicate that the credentials have been issued by the appropriate authority.
4. A representative may not exercise the right to vote unless his/her name is clearly and unambiguously listed in the credentials.
5. If credentials are submitted in a language other than one of the official languages of the Convention (English, French and Spanish), they shall be accompanied by a suitable translation into one of these three languages to permit efficient validations of the credentials by the Credentials Committee.

Exhibition space

It is expected that exhibition space will be available at the Conference venue and advice on the conditions and related costs for making use of it will be posted on the Ramsar Web site soon.

Side Events

It is expected that venues for side events will be available at the Conference centre and advice on the conditions and related costs for making use of it will be posted on the Ramsar Web site soon. Enquiries about side events should be addressed to side-events@ramsar.org.

Excursions on Sunday, 13 November (free day)

As in all Ramsar COPs, one day is left free to allow the Secretariat time to prepare and distribute the final draft versions of documents for adoption. Information on the seven excursions which will be organized and offered free of charge by the host country on Sunday, 13 November, is attached. A registration form will be available on the Uganda National Wetlands Programme Web site: <http://www.ugandawetlands.org/>.

Internet Access

The Speke Resort has a business centre with a limited number of computers available. However, wireless connection to the internet (“Wi-fi”) is available throughout the site. Delegates are therefore advised to bring a laptop computer equipped with wi-fi card or “centrino” chip.

Web sites

Everything that you want to know about Ramsar COP9 can be found in the three official languages on the COP9 pages of our Web site at: www.ramsar.org. These will be updated regularly, so please visit to check the latest status.

Additional information on wetlands in Uganda and logistics for the COP is also available in the dedicated web page of the Uganda National Wetlands Programme:

<http://www.ugandawetlands.org/>

For all questions on COP9, please contact COP9@ramsar.org