

**RAMSAR CONVENTION**  
**Yaoundé 26 – 30 November 2007**

**African Regional Preparatory meeting for the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Changwon city, Republic of Korea, from 28 October to 4 November 2008.**

1. As initiated by the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands, also known as the Ramsar Convention, the African regional preparatory meeting for the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 10, to take place in Changwon city, Korea, from 28 October to 4 November 2008, was held in Yaoundé (Cameroon) from 26 to 30 November 2007.

This meeting brought together Contracting Parties (CPs) of the African Region distributed in six (6) sub-regions: Central Africa, East Africa, West Africa, North Africa, South Africa and the Island states. Other special invited participants and technical experts representing partner organisations also took part in the discussions. They are amongst others, the African Water Facility, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IUCN, WWF, Birdlife International, Wetlands International, etc.

Discussions were organized in work groups based on the different sub-regions and the plenary sessions were enriched with discussions and thematic presentations.

2. The objective of the workshops can be summarized in the following three points:
  - (i) To analyze the main problems and concerns which characterize the growth of the Convention in sub-regions;
  - (ii) To examine progress made in the current Strategic work plan of the Convention;
  - (iii) To come up with recommendations to resolve the problems identified and specify future needs.
3. The thematic groups focussed on the five strategic objectives of the Ramsar Convention as identified in the 2003-2008 strategic plan:
  - Wise use of wetlands;
  - Wetlands of International Importance;
  - International co-operation;
  - Implementation capacity;
  - Membership.

Cross cutting issues were equally tackled in the workshops: NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and wetlands, links with the poverty reduction, information sharing and access to information.

4. Discussions were held in connection with the Valence heritage (COP8), the Millennium Development Goals, the general poverty alleviation objective of NEPAD and the management

of wetlands. The participants had to address fundamental questions, given the current situation with regard to the development of Africa.

Thematic group discussions were based on the following crucial points:

5. Wise use of wetlands: The definition and specification of the concept of “Wise use of wetlands” in relation to the fight against poverty and social exclusion (**Recommendation 4.10 and resolution 5.6**).

The effectiveness of implementation in countries/sub-region was assessed through:

- Wetland inventories, evaluation and analysis
  - Evaluation of the interaction between wise use and Public education and sensitization, public participation, legislation, institutions, training, policy development , planning, general decision making;
  - the adapted management of wetlands in the face of the impact of climate change and rising sea levels;
  - the development of sustainable agricultural practices;
  - the restoration and rehabilitation of the many degraded or lost wetlands, as well as their values and functions, meanwhile recognizing that from the ecological, economic and cultural point of view, it is more appropriate to maintain existing wetlands rather than seek to restore damaged ones;
  - the response to the main threats posed by invasive species to the future of wetlands;
  - the stimulation and improvement of existing incentive measures for the conservation and Wise use of wetlands and the mobilization of all efforts to eliminate changes that are incompatible with wise use;
  - the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
  - Determining whether contracting parties are putting in place National wetlands policies that take into consideration other national environmental and developmental plans;
  - Specifying the obstacles faced in the implementation of the concept of wise use.
6. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites): The list of wetlands of international importance (Ramsar list) is one of the convention’s references for the implementation of the treaty. As such, it was relevant to specify:
    - the number of sites identified for designation per country or per sub-region since the last COP,
    - Obstacles faced in the site designation and management. Thus, it was generally agreed to:
      - Observe possible ecological changes of Ramsar sites per country/sub-region;
      - Specify if management plans have been prepared and are being implemented in the current Ramsar sites;
      - Specify the number of sites that are in the Montreux register;
      - Specify transboundary Ramsar sites in the sub-region.
  7. International Co-operation: The purpose of this topic was to verify the implementation of **Article 5** of the Convention which urges contracting parties to consult with each other “**about**

*implementing the obligations arising from the Convention, especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a watershed is shared by Contracting Parties*”, and which also makes provision for joint coordination and support between such parties, of their present and future policies and regulations for the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.

The two concerns behind these discussions included:

- a. Obstacles faced in the implementation of the concept of international co-operation in the country or sub-region;
- b. The level of effectiveness of countries or sub-region in the following concepts:
  - Intensification of international co-operation activities, in particular those related to transboundary fresh waters, coastal wetlands and river basins, as well as to transboundary water resources and shared migratory species depending on the wetlands;
  - Setting up of other joint activities with international and regional conventions (UNCCD, UNCBO, CITES, CMS, UNFCCC, ZITC) and sub-regional economic organizations such as CDEAO, CEEAC, UMA, SADC, EAC, IOC...);
  - Encouraging the development of other regional initiatives on the sustainable use of wetlands;
  - Fostering the sharing of Knowledge and information through by making available better opportunities; twinning and networking of sites;
  - Putting in place the means for increasing international financial resources available to the parties;
  - Encouraging agricultural practices and viable harvests where water wetland plants and animals are marketed at national and international levels;
  - Encouraging wetland related investments in relation to the principles of wise use.

8. Implementation capacity: This objective was generally based on:

- the functioning of the Conference of Parties and the subsidiary bodies and mechanisms of the Ramsar Convention;
- Resources and capacities necessary for the smooth functioning of the Convention.

Discussions on this subject stressed on the necessary resources and capacities required for effective implementation of the convention by each country/sub-region. The main discussion points are as follows:

- The level of support of the Conference of the Parties, subsidiary bodies and other mechanisms of the convention towards the effective implementation of the Convention in the countries/regions;
- Assessment of the setting up of effective and sustainable institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention (national wetland committees, national wetland policies, etc);

- Appreciation of the Secretariat's provision of the financial resources necessary to allow the mechanisms and programmes of the Convention to meet the expectations of parties in terms of expansion;
- Evaluation of the advantages drawn from collaboration with the International Organisation Partners (IOPs) of the Convention (WWF, IUCN, BI, WI and IWMI), their members, networks of experts and other partner organizations;
- Benefit obtained from effective training tools and capacity building, allowing for implementation of the Convention and precision of the major constraints faced at the national and regional levels.

9. Membership:

- The objective was to confirm that for the effective achievement of the Convention, all States need to become contracting parties. Consequently, recognizing the increase in the number of members, it was necessary to mention of the delay, particularly in certain parts of Africa, the Middle East and developing Island States. It was particularly noted that with regard to Africa, all the sub-regions have countries which are not yet party to the Ramsar Convention.
- This discussion focused on the identification of the needs of non-contracting parties of the sub-regions towards the ratification of the Convention.

10. Considering the numerous questions to be assessed, participants were divided into groups based on sub-regional distribution. This distribution followed the geographical distribution of the African Union, IUCN and the UNO:

- **Central Africa** (Congo Basin): Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Equatorial Guinea.
- **East Africa:** Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania.
- **North Africa:** Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia.
- **Southern Africa:** Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- **West Africa:** Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.
- **Island states of the Indian Ocean:** Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles.

11. Deliberations in the different work groups were structured and led by a facilitator and a reporter appointed by the group members.

12. The role of the facilitator was initiating discussions by introducing the issues to be examined by the working group, and coordinating the participation of all group members.

The reporter was responsible for taking down notes for the group discussions and summarizing at the plenary session (see the list of participants in the appendix)

13. The first day, 26 November 2007, was planned for technical sessions. After registration of the participants, the Secretary General of the Convention, **Mr. Anada Tiéga**, presented the activities of the meeting in his introductory speech. He equally thanked the Cameroonian Government for the measures taken to host the preparatory meeting for COP 10, in South Korea. He then:
  - Pointed out the technical structures which ensure the functioning and implementation of the Ramsar Convention;
  - Redefined the role of implementation organs of the Convention at the national level, in particular the focal points.
  - Condemned the state of inactivity caused either by resignation of focal points or by the departure of people ensuring these responsibilities in the Ministries in charge of environmental issues;
  - Emphasized the need for proper management of Ramsar sites which must be proactive rather than reactive;
  - Underscored the constraints related to financing of the Convention. He thus pointed out that these challenges affect a great number of countries and that there is a real financing problem in the long-run to ensure adequate preparation for COP10 in South Korea
14. The second session was marked by the presentation of the objectives of the Yaoundé meeting by the Senior Advisor for the African region, Mr. Abou Bamba. The three main objectives can be summarized into 5 thematic groups, based on the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan as previously specified.
15. These thematic groups were related to the following fundamental issues:
  - The implementation of the wise use concept;
  - obstacles constraining the implementation of the wise use concept and shared knowledge by country or region;
  - accentuating of new sites since COP9;
  - constraints related to the designation and management of sites;
  - stakes and obstacles to international co-operation;
  - capacity of implementation of the wise use concept: including technical, institutional, legal capacities;
  - The State of adhesion to the Convention; rate of increase in membership per sub-region.
16. Mr. Abou BAMBA finally called on the participants to adopt a common and coherent position for African countries at COP 10 in Korea. Recommendations were consequently expected.
17. In the absence of any objection, the proposed agenda was adopted.
18. This was followed by the presentation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Yaoundé meeting by Mr. Bamba, under the chairmanship of Paul MAFABI, Chair of the Ramsar Standing Committee. These ToRs embodied the following points:

- implementation of the concept of sustainable management of wetlands; adaptation/vulnerability;
- management of wetlands and agricultural activities;
- changes observed in Ramsar sites;
- management plans of Ramsar sites;
- international co-operation activities;
- the relation with sub-regional initiatives;
- synergy between the Ramsar Focal Point and the Focal Point responsible for climate change issues;
- problems of financial resources;
- Implementation capacity (the extent to which available documents have contributed to and/or responded to implementation needs);
- Collaboration with the International Organisation Partners (IUCN, WWF, Birdlife International, Wetlands International and Institute for Integrated Water Management);
- Implementation constraints and the need for capacity building;
- Identification of the non-contracting parties to the Convention and what the Secretariat needs to do in order that these countries adhere to the Convention.

19. Coordination of the working groups was as follows:

West Africa:

- President: SEYDINA Issa (Wetlands International);
- Vice President: AWAISS Aboubakar (WW F West Africa);
- Rapporteur: Camille Alex DAGBA (ABE-Benin).

Central Africa:

- President: Mrs. NANGA Berthe epse OWONO (Cameroon);
- Rapporteur: Célestine MENGUE (WWF-CARPO);

Southern Africa:

- IUCN, Representative of South Africa.

North Africa:

- Representative of Egypt.

East Africa:

- President: Mafabi Paul (Uganda)
- Rapporteur: Wambugu Jane ( KWS, Kenya)

20. The 3rd session involved the presentation by Mrs. Elisabeth Mrema, Principal Legal adviser, Division of Environmental Law and Conventions of UNEP, on the topic "effective national preparation for negotiations" and "effective participation and conduct of multilateral negotiations".

21. The presentation can be summarized into two main points:

- Methods for negotiation;

- The role, attitudes and behaviour of the negotiator before a meeting, during the negotiation sessions and follow-up after the signing of the terms of the agreement.

22. The central theme developed by Mrs. MREMA explained the practical conditions for effective participation in multilateral negotiations. To this end, Mrs. Mrema covered the following seven questions:

- What is effective participation?
- What is the role of networking & how is it done?
- What is the role of coalition groups in negotiations & how are they identified?
- What are negotiation etiquettes?
- How are interventions made (plenary/groups)?
- What is the language used in a negotiating text (brackets, slippery words etc)?
- Finally, who is a good & skilled negotiator?

It is important to point out that the interest and depths of the subject should briefly present the essential part of the points developed. For effective participation, the speaker requires good knowledge of the agenda and priority issues, the expected results, previous decisions, adopted laws and procedures.

It was thus recommended that a negotiator learn to work in collaboration with other colleagues (formal and informal contacts, involvement in working groups and expert groups, stakeholders-NGOs, various communities...); to have a positive/integrative approach and a reactive/distributive approach; to identify negotiation groups, and hence, be able to measure the strength of the parties represented, the interests and regional groups of the UN (Western Europe, group of Latin America countries and the Caribbean (33), Africa group and the Great lakes (55), transition Economies (22) / Eastern Europe, Asia groups (52) / China, Japan, Saudi Arabia; to establish alliances and coalitions for negotiation, and to identify the principal negotiators.

Mrs. Mrema then specified the components of negotiation etiquettes, clarified attitudes to be adopted during plenary sittings or within the contact group, some slippery negotiation words and defined negotiation tools and materials.

She finally presented the techniques of national preparation for multilateral negotiations outlined thus: stages and phases in the negotiation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA), system, processes and mechanics of MEA Negotiation, summary of the programme, identification of issues, networking with colleagues, inter-ministerial coordination, preliminary questions to ask, selection of national delegations and preparation of a negotiation template-brief.

“Failing to prepare is preparing to fail” concluded Mrs. Mrema. This conclusion explains the need for Africa to be organized in presenting itself as a harmonised region at COP 10 in Korea.

23. There followed short discussions geared towards specifications of good negotiation methods and strategies.

24. References were provided to enable participants to further work on the points developed ([http://www.unep.org/law/Publications\\_multimedia/index.asp](http://www.unep.org/law/Publications_multimedia/index.asp)). For execution and implementation of negotiations: CDs containing the key points developed by UNEP were distributed.
25. The Ramsar focal points were reminded that the National reports were to be submitted latest 31 March 2008.
26. Role distributions for group discussions then followed, with instructions on the methodology. This was based on responding to questions and presentations by the countries on the problems and hazards of the Convention implementation in the African sub-regions.
27. The plenary session for summarization of the group activities took place in the afternoon of 26 November 2007, followed by discussions.
28. Deliberations of the Central African group (Gabon, Congo, CAR, Cameroon, DRC, and Equatorial Guinea), were reported by Mrs. Celestine Mengue of WWF CARPO. The topics discussed concerned: the sustainable management of wetlands, wetlands of international importance, implementation capacity and progress in the adhesion of members.
29. The **Indian Ocean and Island States** (Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros and Madagascar) were recognized as being the most exposed to natural disasters, particularly the rising sea levels.
  - Concerning sustainable management of wetlands, all countries of the Indian Ocean group were very pleased having carried out activities on exhaustive inventory of Ramsar sites and carrying out various surveys. These comprised World Wetlands day celebration, planned for one week of activities in February 2008, including sensitization of the population. All the countries concerned conducted environmental impact assessments based on environmental protection laws
  - On the issues of climate change, Seychelles distinguished itself with the 50 metres conservation zone starting from the coast, for all projects. All the countries conduct mangrove restoration.
  - The laws on carbon have been adopted, in particular by Mauritius in the same way as natural manures were recommended rather than artificial fertilisers. Measures are being taken for river basin protection (Seychelles), as well as the development of group activities, development of different phases of the fight against invasive species, the application of ecotourism and the involvement of the private sector (Comoros), the reinforcement of international co-operation through the development of environmental networks, the design and implementation of management plans.
  - One of the problems faced by the Indian Ocean States as concerns transboundary international co-operation is that of natural difficulties directly resulting from the lack of maximization of relations and the negative effects on investments.
  - The other difficulties faced by the Islands and Indian Ocean countries are: the lack of qualified staff, inadequate capacities for the implementation of the Convention due to problems related to the mechanisms of the Standing Committee and insufficient financial assistance, and limitations in the use of the use of existing laws.



- However, inventories were started, thanks to the involvement of the private sector. Thus, as concerns wetlands, Madagascar has 12, Comoros 3, Mauritius Island 2, and Seychelles 1; concerning management plans, Madagascar has 2 operational and 3 being developed and Seychelles 1 being developed.
- Countries of the Indian Ocean while asserting their status as contracting parties, hoping for assistance from the Secretariat, were determined to develop ecotourism projects around wetlands while taking into account the wetlands (Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros), strengthen regional co-operation between States through networking of regional projects based on the Indian Ocean Commission for Marine Protection, by resorting to various forms of supports such as NGOs, MWF Seychelles, Nature Seychelles, Wetland International...

30. The **Southern Africa group** was made up of 8 countries. All in all, it was recognized that this sub-region had witnessed specific progress and is affected by problem of climate change.

Concerning invasive species, biological control was introduced and studies have been devoted to this. Incentive measures have been taken in relation to the issue of sustainable hunting of game. The private sector has been involved in the drafting of environmental agreements, especially in relation to potential transboundary sites.

31. The **North Africa group** criticized overlapping between ministries, the absence of a legal framework and the need for wetland laws.

For this group, the difficulties in achieving the application of the concept of sustainable wetland management were due to the absence of financial support and lack of suitable equipment for work on the Ramsar sites.

32. Deliberations of the **West Africa group** were presented by Camille Alex DAGBA of Benin Environment Agency (ABE).

Discussing the effective implementation of the concept of wise use of wetlands, most of the countries pointed out significant progress manifested by:

- the existence of partial wetland inventories in most of the countries
- development and implementation of national wetland policies and strategies in at least 1/3 of the countries
- Development, organisation and operationnalisation of control and monitoring bodies and structures for wetlands
- Efforts towards information, education and communication geared towards school and University managers and the general public.

The major obstacles faced in the implementation of this concept were outlined as follows:

- the problem of planning
- inexistence of a coherent regulatory and legal framework
- insufficient financial resources
- lack of political will

- inappropriate technical skills in the wetland domain
- Lack of participation from the civil society and lack of commitment by private companies to finance wetland management activities.

Concerning wetlands of international importance, the West African region has registered over ten sites since the last COP. It was reported that the ecological character of some sites was threatened (the case of Senegal, Niger and Guinea) induced by both human and natural factors.

The principal challenges faced with site designation and management were: insufficient financial resources, changes in the Ramsar contact persons and changes in the Focal Point supervisory authorities.

Concerning international co-operation, the West Africa sub-region had established a number of regional initiatives including: WacoWet, NigerWet, and ChadWet. The collaboration frameworks defined for these initiatives promote production and dissemination of information, as well as the capitalization of regional expertise. The development of these regional initiatives has encouraged better support from the Technical and Financial Partners (PTF) who preferably finance regional projects.

There were 3 levels of challenges related to International cooperation:

- Lack of financial resources to fund the different aspects of sustainable wetlands management
- Sociological shortcomings which constitute the main stumbling block for change in attitude by the wetland beneficiaries
- Lack of technical skills to effectively manage wetlands

As concerns implementation capacity, it was concluded that despite the commendable efforts, the West African region continued to face difficulties. A major achievement for the sub-region is that most of the countries are Contracting Parties to the Convention. National and local Wetlands Committees have been created and they play a supervisory role.

Though not considered as a remedy by most of the countries, suitable policies and strategies were being developed. Most of the countries had benefited from collaboration with the IOPs. Nevertheless, additional efforts were pertinent with regards to capacity building.

The West Africa sub-region proposed the following draft resolution in relation to promoting joint activities between the Ramsar Convention and other Conventions of the Rio declaration (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, CITES, etc.) and other similar initiatives in the African region: " the Pan African Preparatory meeting for the 10th Conference of the Parties meeting in Yaoundé (Cameroon) from 26 to 30 November 2007, aware of the importance of the added value of joint implementation of the activities of the Rio declaration, Ramsar Convention and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements:

*Recommends that the 10th Conference of the Parties take the necessary measures to accomplish the implementation of joint projects for training, research and invest in actions as specified by the African Contracting Parties.*

33. Deliberations of the **East Africa group** were chaired by Mr. Mafabi Paul of and reported by Miss. Wambugu Jane (Kenya Wildlife Service).

Basically, it was clear that the challenges faced with the implementation of the concept of sustainable management of wetlands were due to conflicts between States, internal in-country conflicts between the various government departments and the unequipped state of local communities. In addition, there was the absence of wetlands management polices, except for the case of Uganda that was the first African country to own a stand alone wetlands policy. Consequently, the delegates recommended that Focal Points should have access to this and be provided with a suitable environment and the necessary means for the implementation of the concept of sustainable wetlands management in the sub-region.

As concerns wetlands inventory, some countries of the sub-region had scattered data. The countries thus recommended the creation of a central database for all the countries of the sub-region. These countries equally acknowledged the urgent need for capacity building while drawing on the example of Kenya.

In order to encourage awareness, the East African delegates proposed the introduction of environmental education in schools and Universities.

Due to lack of harmonization in existing activities, there was a marked lack of consistent data on climate change. Only Kenya had made any efforts towards the implementation of programmes for the conservation of Ramsar sites. Uganda and Kenya had developed wetlands management plans, notably around Lakes Naivasha, Nakuru, and Bogoria in Kenya among others. Similarly, training programmes (such as the Wetlands management course offered at Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute (KWSTI) in Kenya in collaboration with Wetlands International and the African Anglophone Wetlands Practitioners course hosted at Uganda Wildlife Education Centre in collaboration with KWSTI and Wetlands International) and infrastructural updating have been developed.

34. The 2nd day was marked by the official opening ceremony, graced by the presence of the Prime Minister, Head of the Cameroonian Government, Chief Ephraim INONI.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister was accompanied, amongst others, by the Minister of Environment and Nature Protection (MINEP), Mr. HELE Pierre, the Minister Delegate for MINEP, Mr. Nana Aboubakar DJALLOH, about 15 other Government representatives amongst which were two Deputy Prime Ministers. The strong institutional presence conferred a unique glimmer to the occasion and confirmed the involvement of the high level authorities in Cameroon in environmental issues.

In his speech, the Prime Minister confirmed the Cameroonian Governments' concerns in considering the environment as a priority sector, which was manifested by the remarkable presence of the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA, at the United Nations summit on climate change (September 2007 in New York) where he announced the creation of the National observatory board for climate change in Cameroon.

This ceremony was interspersed with other speeches, notably that of the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, Mr. Anada TIEGA and the Ramsar Administrative Authority in Cameroon, MINEP.

35. The 2nd session which followed the official opening ceremony focused on a short summary of conclusions and discussions of the activities of the previous day, 26 November 2007.

The discussions, led by delegates from Algeria, Morocco, Niger, and Birdlife International, focused on the role and permanence of Focal Points. Suggestions were made to proceed with the necessary training for Focal Points in strategic management tools (e.g. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), EES, EIA, environmental audit). Another alternative suggested was to strengthen the participatory ability of Focal Points, avoid personal correspondences while encouraging correspondences with institutions and improve communication.

The main rapporteur for the plenary discussions, EBA EBE Gabriel, criticized the fact that the environment was being regarded as a secondary priority by African States.

36. The 3rd session was marked by Mr. Bamba's presentation on the problems and challenges faced in the implementation of the Convention in the Africa region.

He elaborated on 3 levels of problems impeding the Convention's implementation:

- Institutional problems: Ministerial anchoring of the Administrative Authority of the convention, malfunctioning of National Ramsar/wetlands committees, devotion of daily contacts, lack of a budget for the convention implementation;
- Human, financial and technical capacities: lack of training programs and guidance for focal points, high turn over in national focal points appointments, understaffing of the Secretariat, lack of funding mechanisms;
- Political will: lack of political will, inappropriate institutional setup, lack of appropriate wetland policies

At the policy level, the efforts by the Cameroon Government through enhanced political will towards developing an environmental policy was particularly appreciated.

Mr. Bamba criticized the low level of integration of wetlands management in the poverty reduction strategy, the low level of the countries' contribution to the core budget of the Convention, the methods of site designation and overall management of wetlands.

37. Delegates concluded that wetlands management could only be effective if different stakeholders are taken into account (e.g. the World Tourism Organisation) and with the setting up of an administrative and technical committee dealing with the implementation of the Convention at the local level.

The delegate from Morocco stressed on the need for definition of the role of the Focal Point and the delegate from Algeria, acknowledging the ambiguities, proposed that the designation of the Focal Point remain with institutional structures rather than physical persons and that collaboration be established with government departments in charge of agriculture. Due to lack

of follow up on site designations, this same delegate proposed the creation a Regional Focal Point position.

The delegate from Gabon raised the issue of funding and its allocation following clear criteria as well as health issues related to wetlands which require reliable partners to face the challenges of persistent diseases. He finally stressed the need for information sharing by setting up of an adequate structure to facilitate information sharing.

The delegate from Mauritius, praised the increase in the number of parties and criticized the static state of the Ramsar Secretariat, stressing the urgent need for an increase in the number of personnel, consistent with the effect of an increased budget

WWF contributed on the implementation of the Convention and applauded the designation of new sites but criticised the absence of appropriate management plans.

The delegate from Uganda called on the involvement of governments in defining the role of Focal Points. He also recommended the decentralization of institutions responsible for wetlands management

The delegate from Algeria explained the direct relationship between wetlands and the spread of the avian flu based on the migratory lifestyle of birds.

38. Delegates agreed on the need for good scientific knowledge on the environment, the different wetland types and their roles, assign wetland management to a given institution and jointly coordinate all activities for sustainable wetlands management.

Similarly, the economic value of wetlands needed to be investigated through scientific studies. Thus, they called on the need for the organisation of an International inter-parliamentary Conference on wetlands, aimed at a better understanding of wetlands and their values by the parliamentarians; the main idea being to enlighten political decision makers on the role of wetlands as a socio-economic and development asset.

Despite the concerns of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel on the avian flu, it was necessary to clarify that wetlands are not main means of spread of disease.

In summary, the presentation on wetlands helped in clarifying the role and importance or wetlands and the risk of degraded wetlands. It also helped in advocating for the designation of someone responsible for addressing communication problems with the Administrative Authorities.

39. The work plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) was also presented by Edgar Kaeslin, the scientific and technical adviser at the Ramsar Secretariat. This session dwelt on thematic discussions on regional, scientific and technical priorities. In addition to Mr. Kaeslin's presentation, Mr. Bamba presented status of the region and the main problems faced and Mr. Kaeslin made proposals geared towards reorganizing and motivating the STRP contacts in the region.

Mr. Kaeslin then presented the 2006-2008 work plan of the STRP, stressing on the priority actions for the panel and the SRTP national focal points. He also elaborated on the priorities, challenges, opportunities and shortcomings of the priority work plan for the 2006-2008 period.

40. This was followed by a presentation by Wetlands International (WI) the problems of wetlands and poverty reduction under the “Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project” which is financed by the Netherlands Government.

Mr. Seydina Issa Sylla pointed out that WI, being an IOP of the Convention, was indispensable in its involvement in wetlands management, especially in the light of human wellbeing.

The relation between wetlands and poverty was discussed. The relevance of the debate was emphasized by the fast approaching 2005 to 2008 deadline for integrating wetlands issues into poverty reduction activities. The problem of how to combat poverty was raised. Mr. Sylla described the activities of the project and explained the allocation of resources as follows:

- Capacity building in the order of 1.3 million Euros
- Financing of pilot projects: 2.7 million Euros

Capacity building in Africa was a major concern, particularly due to the frequent changes of Focal Point appointments. This required the establishment of a curriculum relating to:

- Setting up of funding mechanisms aimed at training 20 % of the French and English speaking contacts. As a result, in 2007, 120 people working at policy level and 150 field workers were covered
- Setting up an African training board;
- Establishment of a facilitation fund and demonstration projects in collaboration with National or regional organizations. Examples cited included the case of Kenya with the *African Wildlife Foundation*, Mali with the support of WI, Malawi and Zambia with the help of *Wetland Action and Harvest*, Indonesia in partnership with *Bina Swadaya*

41. Presentations and thematic discussions followed on policy, advocacy and partnerships. The Ramsar COP 9 Resolution IX.14 on wetlands and poverty reduction was highlighted and the need for making it more practical in order to influence policies on poverty reduction.

To this end, the experience of UNDP Benin was quite exemplary. It was noted that several activities geared towards the fight against poverty had been carried out, especially those based on the relationship between wetlands and poverty reduction. It was observed that 33 % of the population of Benin live below the poverty line, noted that there was massive migration towards wetlands and revealed that 50 % could be considered as having good living conditions, thanks to large scale agricultural exploitation or leasing activities.

The representative of UNDP recommended the updating of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with the assistance of various NGOs such as DDC and the setting up of instruments such as the CDMT aimed at producing a reference document and guide.

The Benin experience raised the problem of “land”, the development of arid zones as sources of pressure and the support of seed programmes, particularly rice. It made mention of micro

credits granted to farmers in Southern Benin with the support of the Moroccan authorities and the technical assistance to Parliament for legislative expenses.

42. Mr. Tiéga proposed that Wetlands International integrate the relation between wetlands and democracy in its activities and programmes. The problem of oil palm in relation to environmental protection was raised.

As concerns research, Uganda supported the idea of the Ministry for Finance setting up a budget line for triennial wetland management program, meanwhile acknowledging the difficulty in evaluating the outcomes.

Zimbabwe stressed on the need for raising public awareness on wetlands facts.

Colonel Sylla finally confirmed the possibility of submitting project proposals for funding by WI within the framework of the WPRP project.

The UNDP representative stressed on the pertinence of assistance for wetlands promotion. Thus the need to make the environment the object of the development process in order to highlight the ecological importance of wetlands, to develop projects depending on rural areas, clarify the definition of wetlands as a system while taking into account, amongst others, rivers, streams and high altitude wetlands without restriction on the depth and finally educate the public on the concept of sustainable wetlands management.

43. The afternoon session began with the session on the problems and challenges of the implementation of the Convention in Africa since COP9. This started with a presentation of regional initiatives; NigerWet, ChadWet, WacoWet, RAMCEA and CongoWet.
44. Nigerwet: This initiative was presented by Jean A. COMPAORE of the Niger Basin Authority (NBA). The presentation focused on the state of implementation of the initiative since the COP9. It was stated that initiative was hosted at the Niger Observatory, that it confirmed the political context of 2002 (promotion of a sub-regional co-operation). A memorandum of understanding was concluded with the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), and in 2003 a joint agreement was concluded on the 12 priority fields which were determined beforehand.

As concerns the implementation, the speaker stressed that an observatory board was created in 2005, an information system was set up funding had been mobilized.

At the level of governance, a joint workshop with ChadWet was held in Ouagadougou in July 2007, lobbying activities carried out, a sustainable development work plan developed, wetland management in the Niger basin assured and the ecosystems conserved.

Future prospects included promotional activities and the publication of specialized works.

This presentation was concluded by the projection of the documentary on ChadWet, partner of NigerWet.

45. Congowet: This initiative was presented by Albert PANDI of the International Commission for the Congo Oubangui Sangha Basin (CICOS).

It was specified that the Congo river basin covers 3700000 km<sup>2</sup> and is shared by eight (8) countries (November 6, 1999).

CICOS was defined as an intergovernmental organization responsible for managing inland waterways and promoting and ensuring the integrated management of water resources in the Congo-Oubangui Sangha basin. It recognizes Ramsar principles on wetland management.

The CongoWet initiative was conceived in March 2006 following an agreement signed between Ramsar and CICOS in relation to emphasizing the state of wetlands.

46. WacoWet: Created on 22 July 2007, this initiative was still at its early stages. It covers the coastal zone of West Africa: Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mauritania, with its characteristic diversity of ecosystems and high population densities in wetlands areas where several industries are equally located.

Its main objectives are to establish methods and means to avoid the degradation of coastal wetlands and to ensure integrated management of transboundary marine and coastal wetlands.

47. Proposed NileWet: This initiative was brought to discussion after the presentation by Dr. Khalid M. Riak, representative of the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP). It brings together 9 countries of the Nile Basin (Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, with Eritrea as an observer) and aims at ensuring biodiversity conservation in the area. In 2006, wetlands were identified under motivation from National initiatives. At the same time, activities of national training groups on capacity building were established. This presentation stressed on the priority actions for NTEAP which included: institutionalization, wetland inventorying, enact laws and regulations on protected wetlands, development of wetlands actions and management plans, capacity building, development of programs related to wise use of wetlands and establishment of wetland data bases. Furthermore, it pointed out the priority actions of WBCC in relation to COP10 (Wetland and Biodiversity Component of the Nile Basin Initiative); this included support for the NileWet initiative proposed by Sudan and the proposal of establishing transboundary (TB) Ramsar sites within the basin, while listing the following potential TB sites for designation:

- Kagera Sub-basin (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania)
- Sio – Malaba (Kenya and Uganda)
- Mara (Kenya and Tanzania)
- Dinder Aletash (Sunda and Ethiopia)
- Lake Nasser (Egypt and Sudan).
- Lake Albert (DRC-Uganda)
- Cyohoha sub-basin (Burundi and Rwanda)

Preliminary activities were started since March 2007, when a platform for discussion was set up, aimed at proceeding with the launching of the initiative.



48. Activities of 28 November 2007 started with a summary of the conclusions on the previous day's discussions. Questions and discussions were coordinated by Mr. Paul Mafabi. The WWF representative intervened on the NigerWet initiative and its objectives with respect to COP 10. He proposed the organisation of a session for sub-regional initiatives and the preparation of a draft Resolution on wetlands and water quality.
- The Ramsar Focal Point for Cameroon, Mr. Serge Herve Ondoua, questioned the compatibility between African regional initiatives and the activities of the various basin commissions (CICOS, NBA, LCBC, etc.)
  - The Delegate from Benin raised the problem of financial constraints, difficulties in implementing the initiatives and their effective functioning. He suggested that faced with such difficulties and considering the synergy between the NBA and NigerWet, there was need to simplify the operation of the latter. However, there was still the need to specify the outcome of initiatives without supporting organizations as in the case of NBA in the framework of NigerWet;
  - The Delegate from Gabon requested clarification on the relation between CICOS and CongoWet
  - The Delegate from Kenya suggested that countries of the Nile Basin further take into account transboundary wetlands and develop regional initiatives
  - The Delegate from Zambia criticized the low level of funding of regional initiatives and their dependence on external funding. He suggested the need to ensure the possibility of self-financing of these initiatives before endorsing them
  - The Delegate from Ghana, drawing on the WacoWet experience, suggested an evaluation of the participation of the countries in the region and their level of contribution to the local financing

In response to the WacoWet case, Mr. Bamba drew special attention to Mauritania and Nigeria, as well as all the coastal countries of the sub-region. As regards the Basin countries, there were commissions which could better operate in jointly. He recommended extending CICOS to include all countries with tributaries to the Congo River and world-wide exploration of several funding sources for the operation of regional initiatives.

49. The presentation of the draft recommendations by Mr. Mafabi followed these discussions. This document reflected the expression of the political will of States, relationship between wetlands and poverty, relevance of regional initiatives, increasing concerns of the Contracting Parties and the need for a common policy line for the African countries at COP10.
50. Mr. Bamba then made a presentation on "wetlands and human health". He first illustrated the strong correlation between sustainable management of wetlands and human health and then referred to the problems of sanitation and the relationship between wetlands and urbanization. He stressed that natural wetlands did not have the same impact on health as did artificial wetlands. He demonstrated that proper management of wetlands would lead to elimination of water borne diseases. He justified the relationship between the Ramsar Convention and WHO and urged the States to link up with National WHO representations in their country for the celebration of 2008 World Wetlands Day.

Mr. Bamba emphasized the effects of good wetland management: water retention enhances filtration and reduces the problems of pollution and thus incidence of diseases. There are, however, limitations, with the example of the municipal lake in Yaoundé which has exceeded its carrying and filtering capacities. Good wetland management will lead to good food, viable traditional medicine and general sustainable wellbeing.

In conclusion, well managed wetlands are a reflection of the conservation of good health and sustainable wellbeing.

51. In addition to Mr. Bamba's presentation, Mr. Dave Pritchard presented the STRP report on the constituent points to be raised at COP 10. He equally indicated the economic value of health, trends in climate change, the Ramsar Convention and its role in activities related to human health.
52. This presentation was followed by questions and discussions:
  - The four (4) countries that make up the CICOS maintained the need to take into account their concerns expressed at the beginning of the discussions. The close link between CongoWet and CICOS was confirmed, with Angola as observer;
  - WWF inquired about the countries involved in the regional initiatives the NBA and Cameroon, on the collaboration network of Focal Points of the Basins, the Ramsar Focal Points and the Secretariats of Conventions;
  - The UNDP representative requested clarification on the differences between "wetlands" and "wetlands ecosystems";
  - The Delegate from Niger was inspired by the confused understanding of the STRP report/ climate change, health, wetlands; and raised the problem of ecological characteristics for analysis;
  - The Delegate from Cameroon requested that the CongoWet initiative should not be considered within the framework of CICOS. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to harmonize subjects and views, given that the CICOS declaration of 21 November 2005 in Brazzaville expressed the firm need to develop an initiative known as CongoWet;
  - The Delegate from Uganda questioned the links between the Ramsar Convention and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the role of National Committees in the Ministry responsible for health issues, the link with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the connection with urban development plans;
  - The representative of WWF presented the efforts made by his organization in the area of health (particularly in Middle Niger), the emphasis laid on disabling diseases which have a negative effect on National productivity (statistics available);
  - IUCN, acknowledging the relevance of the theme "wetlands and human health", insisted on the need to consider to health activities which affect wetlands ( giving the example of the Zambezi Basin) and raised the issue of the impact on fish and aquatic fauna due to the distribution of impregnated mosquito nets which are used as fishing nets
  - The Delegate from Benin stressed on the need for collaboration between the different organizations which in one way or another are involved in the issue of sustainable management of wetlands and health. He praised the activities of WHO, such as the case of 'onchocercosis', and proposed collaborative working of these organizations on joint projects. This was retained as a recommendation;

- The Delegate from Madagascar raised the problem of wetlands from the locust control perspective, by expressing strong reservations on the use of pesticides in protected zones due to the adverse effects.

In response, Mr. Pritchard reiterated the objective of the meeting on the issue of wetlands. He made the distinction between several types of wetlands, taking into account the various reliefs. He pointed out that climate change had an impact on the spread of diseases and research and recommended the use of various means of collaboration with WHO.

Mr. Abou BAMBA clarified in its context the conventional relationship between WHO and the Ramsar Convention and showed the involvement of WHO in wetlands issues. He stressed that 47 African countries were Contracting Parties, thus working towards wetlands conservation with the commitment to discuss crucial points in Korea and wished that the position of African countries no longer be contradictory per sub-region.

Generally, it was admitted that the relationship between wetland management and human health should no doubt lead to positive impacts, that it was necessary to take into account and collaborate with local committees that combat poverty, and monitor the activities of mining and extraction industries.

53. During the third session, Mr. Bamba made a presentation on “Article 3.2 of the Convention and changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in Africa”

This presentation helped in specifying that correspondences had been sent to the Secretariat by some, that problems had been raised particularly in the case of Algeria, Congo and Kenya in different areas (sugarcane factories, threats to birds), Mauritania (oil exploitation), Morocco (hotel constructions), Nigeria (invasion of sites), South Africa (on the Orange River, where 60 % of the river was devoted to oil exploitation), Sudan (internal oil activities), Tanzania (establishment of a soda ash exploitation facility on Lake Natron), Zambia (Bagweulu Swamps and Kasanka National Park/threats on hunting and fishing in the site), Niger (hunting in the site).

The representatives from Algeria and Morocco indicated that with regard to the sites in question there was no particular problem.

54. The representative of Birdlife International specified that the mechanisms for the preparation of Article 3.2 reports had been standardized and that a reporting format will be made available to the States in order to harmonize terminologies and structure, to detect the characteristics of ecological changes, to explain the different steps in the process and the possibilities of restoring damaged areas.
55. Concerning measures to be taken as regards the implementation of article 3.2 of the Convention text, specific tasks had been given to the STRP. Thus, STRP will soon produce the document on the description of environmental and ecological character of Ramsar sites.

In addition, STRP is responsible for gathering documents and Ramsar information sheets and updating the data in order to proceed with the evaluation of article 3.2. For this, STRP was

ensuring coherence in the structure of information and of Ramsar information sheets, on the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

STRP was carrying out an analysis of wetlands sites in connection with the work done in Australia on the design of information sheets, the concept of common format for reporting of data, comparison with existing inventories and the harmonization of processes using tools.

The 2nd responsibility was based on detecting ecological changes within the framework of article 3.2 and the related responses. It was decided that new elements and the reference document which reflects the site management plans and the definition of the goal of Ramsar site evaluations be attached.

56. During the question/answer session the delegate from Mauritania informed participants that the oil exploration project in the Ramsar site was presently abandoned.

The Delegate from Niger requested that the sites in Middle Niger and the WWF Park be added to the list of sites under investigation.

The Delegate from Algeria shared his concerns on the project of a highway construction in the wetlands and National park. He welcomed the Ramsar Convention to undertake a field in the area. Concerning the records on the Montreux Register, in June 2003, Algeria had requested that its two sites registered on this list be withdrawn, but without success so far.

57. In response to the delegates' main concerns, it was recognised that the process had to link Article 3.2 and the procedure for informing governments, who are free to consider the problems presented. It was decided that there were many threatened, poorly managed sites and consequently the urgent need to for a dynamic mechanism to find solutions find solutions to the threats faced by these sites.
58. Thematic discussion focused on "wetlands and climate change". The presentation dwelt on 5 points: extension of the climate change issue, the role of wetlands in climate change, case studies and statistics, solutions and finally, recommendations and conclusions.
59. The vulnerability of wetlands in some African States in with regards to climate change is related to desertification, rise in the sea level, the spread of water borne diseases, problems of the Islands of the Indian Ocean, food security and the drop in water availability, particular fresh water reserves, deforestation and destruction of wetlands and finally the taking into account the relationship between water and agricultural production.
60. An analysis of the links with wetland ecosystems helped to clarify the role of wetlands in climate change issues in Africa. Thus, response actions were decided in 3 areas:
- good management of wetlands;
  - wetlands and flood control and protection against storms
  - Combating climate change (carbon sequestration).

An illustration of the effect of climate change was shown by the loss of 80 % of Lake Chad's surface area and the disappearance of some plant and animal species.

61. The need for urgent action could be explained by the impact on present agricultural production which is on the decrease, the rise in the sea level, drought and its negative effects on the Southern African countries and the uncomfortable position of Island states and countries of the Indian Ocean.
62. The assembly returned to the topic of the meeting of experts, jointly organised by the Secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands, CBD and UNFCCC on March 23 and 24, 2007, at the Secretariat of the Convention in Gland, aimed at reviewing the state of affairs and proposing solutions on issue of "wetlands and climate change".
  - The Delegate from Uganda insisted on the need for the Ramsar Convention to work with all other conventions working on sustainable management of wetlands and biodiversity
  - The Delegate from Mauritius noted that climate change was a global problem and wetlands were just one aspect of it. He recommended an international policy with triple actions to improve situation, for example prohibiting all products containing CFCs and other non-degradable plastic materials and the institution of a specific tax on products whose impact on climate changes has been proven;
  - Dr. Amougou (Cameroon) admitted that the vulnerability of wetlands was a concern related to the rise in the sea level, that wetlands were an indication of climate change and that prolonged droughts were leading to the search for pastures in wetlands. In Cameroon for example, the vulnerability of coastal zones was leading to the destruction of the habitat for small fish and even contributing to social instability due to destruction of mangroves.
63. Consequently, it becomes imperative to establish a global strategy sustainable management of wetlands and support the efforts of countries which conserve forests through attractive counterpart funds.
64. The 2nd element related to the Congo Basin, considered as the world's 2nd forest lung. It was agreed that the international community supported the efforts of Central Africa: wetlands and climate change are a couple that must evolve together.
65. The delegate from Kenya recommended the exploration of wetlands valuation to give weight to cases of threats facing wetlands in Africa for inclusion in the objectives of the next Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali in December 2007.
66. The IUCN representative raised the problem of the shrinking of Lake Chad Basin as an obvious indicator of climate change in Africa.

The WWF representative proposed the integration of wetlands into programmes of adaptation to climate change. He equally requested information on the level of involvement of the Convention at the Bali meeting on climate change, considering the absence of Ramsar Focal Points at the meeting.

67. In response, Mr. Bamba recommended that countries of the region develop a common strategy on the issue of “wetlands and climate change” within the framework of COP 10 in Korea. He also stressed the need for the Secretariat to encourage synergy with UNFCCC and establish collaboration between Ramsar Focal Points and UNFCCC Focal Points.
68. The thematic discussions on wetlands and climate change were followed by the priorities for the triennium 2008-2011, where it was recommended that complaints on mining be taken into account.
69. Preparations for COP10 were then presented by Mr. Anada Tiéga, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention. He focused on the presentation of the draft programme for COP 10 and the new format for the National report.

The main points developed by the Secretary General basically focused on national objectives. He also presented the 2009-2014 draft strategic plan of the Convention.

The main points developed concerned the future of wetlands by 2014 (the problem of evaluation and management of water level), the evaluation of 227 main rivers (given that 37 % of basins are highly affected, 23 % moderately affected and 40 % unaffected), urban development which has severe constraints on water resources (with 50 % of water being polluted and 20 % of the population having no access to clean water) and the context in which the strategic plan was prepared.

70. To achieve these goals according to the terms of the Ramsar Convention, the following were recommended: to adopt and use appropriate tools, carry out a sustainable management of Ramsar sites, conduct exhaustive evaluations for better understanding of certain parameters, use policy as a tool through legislative, regulatory and institutional measures.
71. Mr. Tiéga insisted on the need for improving communication with the contracting parties, appropriate management of human resources and admitting to everyone that wetlands are a development asset.
  - On the issue of the strategic plan, there was the decision to: conduct wetlands inventory and monitoring, develop policies and adopt legislations, increase knowledge on wetlands and their role in the effects of climate change, analyse the link with poverty reduction, develop scientific research and proceed with restoration of degraded wetlands and encourage the involvement of local communities and the private sector in the above processes.
  - The development of a specific structure centred on partnership was also recommended. This will, for example, require someone in charge of partnership with the Evian/Danone Company which supports the Secretariat in its communication activities, as well as another person who will be in charge of partnership with other structures.
72. Concerning the designation of Ramsar sites, the objective is to have 2500 Ramsar sites by 2010 covering a surface area of 250 million ha, and to ensure that all Ramsar sites are well managed.

73. The afternoon began with discussions on priorities for the 2008-2011 triennium. These focused on the presentation on “mining and extractive industries; threats and challenges for African wetlands”.
74. There was a first presentation by Mr. Bilong of TOTAL Exploration-Cameroon. His presentation focused on the measures taken to ensure environmental conservation during offshore oil exploitation. He emphasized on the measures taken by TOTAL in Cameroon and elsewhere (Asia) to reduce the adverse effects of petroleum activities on the environment. These included:
- control of flaring on RdR
  - decrease of the hydrocarbon content in waste water
  - waste management plan
  - emergency plans with all dreaded scenarios;
  - antipollution plan
  - Accounting for biodiversity during activities in sensitive tropical zones
75. Thereafter, Dr. EFENDENE of the Cameroon Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, made a presentation on the regulatory aspects required for mining and extractive activities in Cameroon. He dwelt on the Decree on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and environmental audit for all projects which allow for public participation in the validation of these studies.
76. The 3rd presentation, made by Mr. Fred Brown (the United States), which focused on economic trends in the mining sector and the implications in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. This presentation dwelt on:
- Mining cycles;
  - Mining sectors;
  - Catch up with economic drivers in the mining sector

He took the opportunity to deplore the lack of information which hinders impact assessment of mining activities on wetlands. He concluded by suggesting the following response guides:

- Decision making regarding wetlands protection
  - Information needs for different situations
  - The need for decision making on urgent actions to be undertaken
77. Thursday 29 November was devoted to a field visit to Ebogo, located in ‘*Nyong et So'o*’ Division in the Centre Province of Cameroon, 60 km from the capital city, Yaoundé. This thoroughly prepared was sponsored by administrative and traditional authorities.
- This went beyond the touristic aspects presented by the environmental wealth, to include observation of the mangrove and dense forest, typical of a Ramsar site.
78. Friday 30 November 2007 began with the formulation of recommendations which were discussed before their final adoption. These recommendations were proposed and presented

by the general reporter, Dr. Eba Ebe Gabriel, in the presence of the Cameroon Minister for Environment and Nature Protection, Mr. Hele Pierre.

79. Following the declaration referred to as the “Yaoundé declaration”, the Secretary General of the Convention, Mr. Tiéga, delivered a speech of thanks to all participants as well as to the government and the people of Cameroon. The Minister of Environment and Nature Protection Mr. Hele Pierre, then delivered the closing speech in which he reiterated the commitments of his country with regard to sustainable wetlands management
80. In a highly cordial and friendly note, the delegates officially ended the Yaoundé meeting on 30 November 2007 at 5 p.m.



## APPENDICES

- i) Programme of Yaoundé meeting;
- ii) Terms of reference of the sub-regional working groups;
- iii) The Yaoundé declaration
- iv) List of participants