

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
4th meeting of the CEPA Oversight Panel
Kobuleti, Georgia, 1-2 May 2010

4th Meeting of the CEPA Oversight Panel
15.00h-18.00h, 1st May and 09.00h-13.00, 2nd May, 2010

Present: Rafael Gonzalez (Chair), Esther Koopmanschap, Cecilia Gichuki, Amy Lecciones, Melissa Marin Cabral, Christine Prietto, Yasaman Rajabkhah, Nick Davidson (*ex-officio*), Sandra Hails (*ex-officio*)

Apologies: András Bohm, Rebecca D'Cruz, Tiina Nikkonen

1. Welcome and opening remarks

The Chair opened the meeting welcoming this new CEPA Panel to their first meeting for this triennium. He noted that the Panel had inherited an ambitious programme of work and that as a Panel we should be realistic about what we can achieve and set priorities and timelines for our work. He invited each Panel member to introduce him/herself.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Panel adopted the agenda and recorded three items under AOB. The Panel agreed that Chris Prietto would track the tasks agreed upon with clear lead persons and timelines to streamline the work of the Panel.

3. Review of the 3rd meeting report

The Panel briefly reviewed this report but felt no comments were necessary.

4. Review of the Panel's work plan for the period 2009-2012 and development of a deliver plan

The Panel considered all the items on the work plan. It was decided to make a detailed delivery which would be circulated to Panel members and updated as the work progressed. This would be retained as an internal working document. In this official report on the meeting, a brief résumé of the intended delivery plan is shown.

Item 1. *Develop a short advisory document which shows the relationships between Resolutions VII.9 and VIII.31 and Resolution X.8 in order to assist CEPA Focal Points in the ongoing implementation of the CEPA Programme (this is a priority for the Panel as identified in Resolution X.8 para. 10).*

This item has been significantly progressed by the Panel by email before the present meeting.

It was agreed to use the advisory document as it stands with some minor editorial changes for clarity to the heading of the main table; to include the additional explanatory table with some agreed modifications to this to be completed soon after the meeting; to post the document on the

Panel's web page and to circulate it by email to the CEPA NFPs and NFPs; and to include the document as additional material in the 4th edition of the Ramsar CEPA Handbook.

Item 2. *Review CEPA implementation demonstrated through the National Reports submitted to COP10. The Panel should consider whether the National Reports submitted triennially by Parties are an appropriate mechanism for assessing the level and scope of CEPA implementation. An assessment of this, using the COP10 National Reports, should be made by the Panel.*

Following a review of the CEPA implementation report to COP10, the Panel concluded that while some elements of implementation were usefully reported, others, such as the level of CEPA planning, could not be accurately reported with the National Report format available. The Panel felt this could be partly resolved with some re-working of indicators to allow for more information on quantity and quality of implementation. The Panel noted the considerable turnover of the nominated CEPA NFPs evident in the National Reports, particularly from the Government side, and the issue this raises in terms of planning and continuity of implementation.

It was agreed that given the limitations on CEPA implementation reporting to COP10 via the National Reports the Panel would suggest possible improvements for the COP11 format at this meeting and also address the issue of frequent changes of nominated Government CEPA Focal Points (see Item 10 of the work plan).

Item 3. *Review Ramsar Regional Initiative reports to clarify the role they play in delivering objectives under the CEPA programme.*

The Panel recognized the diversity in form and function of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives and felt that this task should be reworded to look more specifically at the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRCs) and their role in CEPA delivery.

It was agreed that the Panel should reword this task to focus on the CEPA delivery of the RRCs in their report to Standing Committee (SC) 42 and should review regular consolidated reports from the newly formed RRC Network to assess and recognize their role in CEPA delivery (see further information on this under AOB item i).

Item 4. *Identify changing priorities and associated issues for the Ramsar CEPA Programme, using the two reviews above in conjunction with the priorities identified by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP).*

It was agreed that this task is rather vague as it currently stands and that the Panel will work on this later in the triennium to clarify the aims and objectives of this task in their report to SC42.

Item 5. *Continue work with the Advisory Board on Capacity Building for the Ramsar Convention on identifying priorities for capacity building for wetland management.*

It was agreed that the Panel would defer any discussion on this until the Advisory Board has met and finalized the Capacity Building Framework under development.

Item 6. *Advise the Convention on the development of some general guidance on CEPA for site managers that could be easily incorporated into site manager training programmes.*

The Panel noted that a simple guide for site managers on management planning was published some time ago with Secretariat and STRP input and included some CEPA materials, and that there are most likely other useful materials already available in many other places. To supplement this, carrying out a basic inventory of what site managers actually do in terms of CEPA would provide valuable information on their further needs and it was felt that this could be carried out relatively simply by the Panel.

It was agreed that as a starting point for this task, the Panel would work on developing a small number of simple questions for Panel members, Advisory Board members, CEPA NFPs, and perhaps others, to find out what they are aware of in terms of the CEPA activities of site managers.

Item 7. *Advise the Convention on improving the performance of the CEPA NFPs, including the need for training workshops in using the new CEPA planning tool launched at COP10.*

The Secretariat reported on the CEPA NFP workshops that have been carried out from 2009 to the present and the plans for further workshops, in some cases with significant involvement of the RRCs. The Panel discussed the issue of countries not sending the nominated Government CEPA NFP to the workshops but rather a replacement person, noting that this was not helpful in terms of raising the capacity of the NFP to perform the NFP role in CEPA implementation. The Panel also discussed the mandate in Resolution X.8 regarding the inclusion of CEPA NFPs in National Ramsar/Wetland Committees and the utility of looking at the COP10 National Reports to gather any information available on this.

It was agreed that the Panel will discuss some appropriate wording in its report to SC42 on a general principal regarding the funding of NFPs to attend the CEPA workshops to discourage the frequent sending of replacement persons. The Panel will also note to SC42 the role of the RRCs in delivering these workshops.

Item 8. *Advise the Secretariat on how regular Convention meetings and Ramsar-related meetings can be used to help raise the profile of the Convention and the performance of the Secretariat, e.g. Georgia's offer to host a Standing Committee meeting.*

The Panel felt it was not able to comment on the 'performance' of the Secretariat but discussed at some length likely positive effects in raising the profile of the Convention in Georgia as well as the positive and negative impacts on the Secretariat staff.

It was agreed to summarise the positive and negative impacts on the hosts and the Secretariat of SC41 being held in Georgia in a brief document and to seek further input both from the Secretariat and the Georgian organizers before finalizing a report to SC42 on this.

Item 9. *Identify what the Secretariat does well that can be shared with Parties, e.g. using the Secretariat experience with Danone/Evian to share knowledge and know-how on working with the private sector. Perhaps successful experiences from the IOPs in working with the private sector could be identified. All this advice should be delivered to the Parties through the Standing Committee.*

It was agreed that the Panel has not the capacity, appropriate mechanism or remit to deliver this task and that it should be removed from the work plan.

Item 10. *Advise the Secretariat on the indicators included in the draft National Reporting format that assess the implementation of the CEPA component of the Strategic Plan.*

Following a detailed discussion on the CEPA indicators in the draft National Report form for COP11, the Panel advised the Secretariat on a number of suggested modifications to the indicators to improve reporting on CEPA implementation both quantitatively and qualitatively.

5. **Reporting to Standing Committee 42**

It was agreed that the Panel will report on this meeting on the web, as with other Panel meetings, and then prepare a separate report from the Panel to SC42 on what the Panel has done in the triennium, what it plans to do before the end of the triennium, and what it would like SC to take note of.

6. **Any other business**

i. The representative of the Ramsar Regional Centres on the Panel noted that in the side lines of SC41, an informal Ramsar Regional Centre Network was formed between the three centres present (Central and West Asia, East Asia, and CREHO) and that they would work to involve the RRC in Africa. She read out the following statement from the 3 RRCs:

“On behalf of the Ramsar Regional Centres, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Standing Committee for establishing such an important Panel. The Ramsar Regional Centers acknowledge the importance of networking among the Centres to achieve our mission, which is to enhance the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the region through training, research, advocacy and public awareness programmes.

We also believe developing tools, which include best practice of Centers’ training activities, could be useful for regions.

To establish such a network the Centres will meet once a year and will be in regular e-mail communication. “

ii. Panel member Tunde Ojei, who was not able to be present, suggested that the Panel should consider a method of making available a calendar of wetland training opportunities, possibly on the Ramsar web site which is where people would be likely to look for such information. The Panel noted the utility of this, considered the challenges (regular updating and particularly the issue of quality control) and decided to consider this further.

Tunde also suggested that the Panel should consider making a case to the Convention for funding for capacity building. The Panel considered the value of suggesting a special fund but felt that this has not worked before and was not a realistic option. The Panel also noted that there is capacity building funding available through other sources such as the Wetlands for the Future Fund and the RRCs.

It was agreed that the Panel should consider the practicalities of providing a calendar on wetland training opportunities.

iii. Panel member Christine Prietto, the STRP CEPA expert, briefly presented to Panel members the key STRP issues of relevance to CEPA, noting their work on profiling 'wetland managers' since they are key target for Ramsar's technical guidance. She will share with Panel members the work so far and noted that she would appreciate any feedback from them.

iv. The Panel discussed the two Convention Resolutions relevant to participation, Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.36, and whether there is a need to review the two resolutions with a view to consolidation of the content into one resolution.

It was agreed to consider this further with a view to making a suggestion for the future to SC42 as appropriate.

7. Closing remarks: the Chair thanked all Panel members for the energy we have put into this meeting. He noted that there is the potential for developing suggestions and advice that may be really difficult to implement at the Contracting Party level. He reminded Panel members that there are many challenges in implementation and the Panel must consider how our work can assist in this implementation.