

"Wetlands: water, life, and culture"

**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002

Resolution VIII.29

Evaluation of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and establishment of a Ramsar Endowment Fund

1. RECALLING paragraph 16 of Resolution VII.5, which requested the Standing Committee to continue to evaluate the functioning of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and to report on the results to Ramsar COP8;
2. NOTING the excellent work of the Standing Committee in making the SGF more effective, including the adoption of the *Operational Guidelines* for the Ramsar SGF for the period 2000-2002 and its revisions, the application of the principle of geographical equity when allocating the resources at the disposal of the Fund, and the feasibility study of transferring operation of the SGF to another body; and ALSO NOTING the outstanding efforts of the Ramsar Bureau in supporting the work of the Standing Committee in this matter;
3. NOTING that in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the post of Senior Advisor for Environment and Development Cooperation (SAEDC) at the Ramsar Bureau, adopted by the Standing Committee by Decision SC24-24 during its 24th Meeting, the SAEDC has the responsibility to assist the Committee and the Secretary General in relation to fundraising for the Ramsar SGF;
4. EXPRESSING ITS SINCERE APPRECIATION to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) for having made contributions to the Ramsar SGF, or directly funded projects submitted to the Fund, during the period 2000-2002 in the amount of 1.4 million Swiss francs, which has allowed the implementation of 37 projects in 34 developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
5. NOTING ONCE MORE WITH CONCERN that in spite of these generous contributions the level of funding at the disposal of the SGF has not been sufficient to support a considerable number of valuable projects that were submitted by eligible Contracting Parties, and that a renewed effort is required to attract greater financial resources with longer-term guarantees for the Fund;
6. HAVING RECEIVED and debated the discussion paper prepared by the Ramsar Bureau at the request of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee on the *Feasibility of establishing an Endowment Fund to resource the Ramsar Small Grant Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use* (Ramsar COP8 DOC. 17); and

7. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to the Contracting Parties that have submitted their comments in response to the mail consultation carried out on this matter by the Ramsar Bureau through its diplomatic notification 2001/8 of 18 December 2001, and NOTING that many of the comments contain valuable views for further study of the effective functioning of the SGF and for assessing the viability of the proposed Endowment Fund;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. REITERATES its conviction that the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (Ramsar SGF) continues to be an extremely valuable mechanism for facilitating the implementation of the Convention in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
9. RECOGNIZES AT THE SAME TIME that the current SGF can be further improved in its operation, especially in relation to project submission and selection, and in the monitoring and evaluation of their implementation;
10. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, when adopting the *Operational Guidelines* for the Ramsar SGF for the period 2003-2005, to consider improving further the SGF mechanism in the areas identified in the previous paragraph;
11. URGES Contracting Parties and other donors to continue making annual voluntary contributions to the SGF; and REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau, especially the SAEDC, to redouble their efforts to find the sources of funding and to send out a call for contributions every year to the Contracting Parties which might be in a position to provide them, as well as to other potential donors;
12. AGREES TO ESTABLISH a Ramsar Endowment Fund to resource the SGF, which shall become operational when the Standing Committee establishes its *modus operandi* according to paragraph 13 below;
13. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee to establish the *modus operandi* of the Ramsar Endowment Fund, taking into account the views expressed by Contracting Parties during the debate on this matter, and on the basis of the following principles:
 - a) the contributions to the Ramsar Endowment Fund shall be voluntary;
 - b) the operation and management of the Ramsar Endowment Fund shall be under the authority of this Conference of the Parties;
 - c) the Ramsar Endowment Fund shall become operational when the Standing Committee has agreed the Fund's *modus operandi* and when a certain threshold level of capital has been guaranteed;
 - d) there shall be an interim review of the Endowment Fund at COP9 based on recommendations from the Standing Committee, and a comprehensive review at

COP10 where, if the threshold capital has not been guaranteed by that time, the continued existence of the Endowment Fund shall be reexamined; and

- e) the Standing Committee shall create a body of financial experts to manage the finances of the Endowment Fund;
14. AUTHORIZES FURTHER the Standing Committee to start operating the Endowment Fund as soon as the threshold level of capital, as stipulated in the *modus operandi*, has been reached; and
 15. CALLS UPON foundations, non-governmental organizations, businesses and individuals to make contributions to the Ramsar Endowment Fund; and INVITES Contracting Parties to consider making contributions to the Ramsar Endowment Fund when the *modus operandi* of the Endowment Fund has been established.