

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

30th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 13-16 January 2004

DOC. SC30-3

Agenda item 5

Draft Ramsar Secretariat Work Plan 2004

***Action requested:* The Standing Committee is requested to review the attached draft Secretariat Work Plan 2004, make amendments as appropriate, and approve it for implementation.**

1. This Work Plan is presented in three sections: Section I contains the Secretariat's Global and Regional Policy and Technical Work Plan, which identifies key issues and priorities proposed for these Secretariat activities during 2004. Section II contains the General Administration Work Plan. The Annex to the Work Plan provides a detailed listing of proposed Secretariat activities to respond to the actions concerning the Secretariat called for in the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 (Resolution VIII.25) and other CoP8 Resolutions. This is presented as a tabular list of Secretariat activities under each of the relevant Operational Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.
2. This Annex also provides an achievement report for the work of the Secretariat during 2003, in the form of a note on progress against each of the activities listed. Further information on key areas of 2003 achievements are highlighted in the Report of the Secretary General (DOC. SC30-2).
3. A major part of the Secretariat's work during 2004 will be focused on both substantive and logistical preparations for CoP9, and this will be a high priority for all Secretariat staff. In addition, attention will be paid to securing ways and means of increasing the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver the full range of areas of the work expected of it. Many of the other activities in the Work Plan are ongoing, although it is recognized that the extent to which some can be implemented in 2004 will be limited owing to the focus on CoP9 preparatory work.
4. The Standing Committee is invited to comment on the usefulness of this document and any possible changes for a future reporting format.

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Draft Ramsar Secretariat Work Plan 2004

SECTION I. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POLICY AND TECHNICAL WORK PLAN

GLOBAL ACTIONS

1. The global actions described below are to be undertaken by the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General, the Senior Trade & Development Advisor, and the Communications team, in consultation with the Senior Regional Advisors, the MedWet Coordination Unit, and other staff as appropriate. The delivery of some actions will be achieved by regionally-consistent implementation support to Contracting Parties by the Secretariat's Regional Advisory Teams.
2. The global actions also include much of the work of the Communications Team.
3. Global actions in 2004 will concentrate mainly on the following priorities:
 - a) the preparations for CoP9 (Uganda, 2005);
 - b) the completion and dissemination of a 2nd edition of the Ramsar "Toolkit" of Wise Use Handbooks, comprising 14 Handbooks and a revised and updated 3rd edition of the "Ramsar Convention Manual";
 - c) encouragement to Parties for their completion of the CoP9 National Planning Tool component of the National Report Format and its submission to the Secretariat;
 - d) continuing development of synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and organizations in order to avoid duplication of work at the international and national levels and to establish effective coordination and cooperation among the related MEAs. Synergies may include, where appropriate and in consultation with the Standing Committee, further development and implementation of joint work plans and actions between Ramsar and other MEAs, with contributions to their CoPs and other meetings. This should facilitate the work of the institutions directly responsible for implementation in each country, and at the same time generate the involvement of other key institutions that so far have not been working with the Convention, such as those responsible for water resources management and land use planning;
 - e) continuing engagement in a more wide-ranging dialogue with the development assistance community, so as to generate more funds for wetland-related projects in developing countries and countries in transition, and the provision of support to Parties in their development and fund-raising of wetland projects, including, when possible, through conservation finance mechanisms like carbon projects, bio-rights, debt swaps, fiscal instruments and environmental funds;
 - f) further development of work strengthening the Convention's capacity to respond to socio-economic issues, including through the promotion of environmentally sound trade in wetland-derived plant and animal products as a way to conserve wetlands and

alleviate poverty, wetland incentives and disincentives for wetland conservation and sustainable use, and economic valuation of wetlands;

- g) implementation of the Convention's Programme on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), adopted by Resolution VIII.31, through the provision of materials and information networks for the use of Contracting Parties (in particular the CEPA Focal Points), including the continuing maintenance and development of the Convention's CEPA Web pages and CEPA e-lists, and support to the Wetlands International CEPA Specialist Group as well as the Wetland Link International network of wetland education centres;
- h) further development of the celebration of World Wetlands Day 2004 as a tool to expand the outreach work of the Secretariat and to increase the awareness of the role of wetlands in the hydrological cycle and water security. The World Wetlands Day 2004 theme "From the mountains to the sea: wetlands at work for us" profiles the diverse roles of different types of wetlands throughout hydrological basins;
- i) preparation and dissemination of materials for World Wetlands Day 2005, on a theme related to cultural and biological diversity, and, as an extension to this, development of a wetland education kit on the same theme;
- j) maintenance and further development of the Convention's Web site as a key communication and information dissemination tool and the MedWet Web site as a regional tool for the same purposes;
- k) support for the work of the STRP in its implementation of tasks in the STRP Work Plan 2003-2005 under its *modus operandi* established by Resolution VIII.28, including through the operations of the STRP Support Service and through mid-term expert Working Group workshops proposed for mid-2004, as appropriate; and
- l) assistance to the Regional Advisory teams and the MedWet Coordination Unit in their efforts to encourage and support Contracting Parties, in particular in relation to:
 - i) implementation of actions called for in CoP8 Resolutions;
 - ii) fulfillment of their pledges at CoP8 regarding Ramsar site designations and other aspects of the implementation of the Convention;
 - iii) application of the *Strategic Framework for the development of the Ramsar List*, including issues related to the updating of the holdings of the Ramsar Sites Database; and
 - iv) implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention¹ and the assessment and reporting of the status and trends of wetland ecosystems.

¹ Article 3.2: "Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8."

AFRICA REGION

4. These actions of the Work Plan are to be undertaken mostly by the Senior Advisor for Africa and the Assistant Advisor for Africa, in consultation with the Administrative Authorities and other staff as appropriate. [Note: this Africa Work Plan has been drafted prior to the new Senior Advisor for Africa, Mr Abou Bamba, taking up his post in the Secretariat in December 2003, and any proposed amendments will be tabled for Standing Committee consideration.]

Background and progress

5. The Africa region includes the mainland continent and the island states of Cape Verde, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tome & Principe, and Seychelles, a total of 53 countries.
6. As of November 2003 there are 38 Contracting Parties in Africa: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia.
7. Fifteen African countries have yet to join the Convention: Angola, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sao Tome, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Zimbabwe.
8. The Secretariat continues to work effectively with the International Organization Partners, the Contracting Parties, and other players to facilitate the accession of additional countries to the Ramsar Convention. As a result, Benin, Burundi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the United Republic of Tanzania joined the Convention during the last triennium. Since CoP8, three countries have acceded to the Convention: Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, and Liberia.
9. Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, and Sudan are taking steps for accession. The Secretariat understands that Mozambique has completed its accession papers.
10. Since CoP 8, 19 new Ramsar Sites have been designated and a further 38 Ramsar Information Sheets have been received by the Secretariat and are under review for completion of their Listing.

Issues and priorities

a) General

11. The important role of wetlands in sustainable development needs to be underscored and communicated to policy makers and economic planners in Africa, so that their values and functions are more fully recognized and taken into consideration. It must also be acknowledged that for Ramsar to be effective in Africa it must work in partnership with

the major political and institutional frameworks, especially the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

12. In the framework of NEPAD, there has been an agreement among African Ministers to develop Africa-wide environmental action plans for selected thematic areas, one of which is wetlands. This provides a major opportunity to support Contracting Parties in their delivery of commitments to the Convention, and therefore assisting NEPAD's development and implementation will be a major priority during 2003. A significant area of work for the Africa Regional Advisory Team will be to work with countries, donors and partner organizations to progress the implementation of the NEPAD wetlands action plan, and those concerning transboundary cooperation and invasive species.
13. The hosting by Uganda of CoP9 in 2005, the first time a Ramsar CoP has been held in Africa, provides a major opportunity to raise the profile and understanding of the importance of the sustainable use of Africa's wetlands for biodiversity and poverty alleviation. Work by the Africa Regional Advisory Team during 2004 will also focus on supporting the preparations for CoP9, including through NEPAD wetland strategy implementation.
14. The challenge for Africa is to make the best use of all existing frameworks and emerging opportunities for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources through the adoption and implementation of coherent national action plans for wetlands. Secretariat support will focus on assisting Parties to address the following issues and challenges, through the application of the Ramsar tools and guidelines adopted by CoP8.

b) Knowledge & Capacity-Building (inventories and valuations)

15. Wetland inventories are a priority in Africa. Until national inventories have been established, it is difficult to select and take long-term actions on wetland management initiatives. In this regard, promoting economic valuation of the goods and services that wetlands provide will help us in convincing decision makers of the importance of wetlands. Environmental evaluations, as well as inventories and assessments, are important tools in wetland management.

c) Links to Poverty Eradication

16. Poverty underlies most problems in the wetlands sector and if our efforts are to be successful, we must link our activities to poverty alleviation and find solutions to these root problems. To this end, wetland and water resource management must be integrated with national livelihood policies.
17. Agriculture is important to livelihoods and food security and is one of the primary target activities in poverty reduction strategies. The NEPAD Wetland Strategy should promote livelihoods and food security through sound irrigation schemes, fisheries management, and range-land management including wetlands, protected areas, and agro-forestry in wetland ecosystems. Coordination and consultation among the relevant sectors and proper legal frameworks are crucial for success.

d) Ecosystem Management & Regional Cooperation

18. River lake basins are suitable frameworks for ecosystem management: NEPAD highlights transboundary wetlands as an urgent priority because a number of the problems to be addressed (e.g., eradication of alien species, management of coastal zones, and technology transfer) require regional planning and action.
19. In developing the links between NEPAD and Ramsar, there is a need to expand integrated land and water use plans which would serve as the basis for national and regional cooperation.
20. The development of land-use policies must be integrated with water resources management, and countries will be encouraged to adopt uniform water quality standards at the national and subregional levels.
21. Inland waters and coastal areas should be managed together through integrated water resource management and integrated coastal zones management.

e) Funding

22. Funding for wetland conservation and wise use continues to be severely limited in the region, and there is an urgent need for better flow of resources for a range of implementation activities including inventory, assessment, monitoring of water resources, training, capacity-building, education and public awareness.
23. Funding is also required for the preparation and implementation of wetland management plans for water supply, biodiversity conservation, agriculture, fisheries, range-lands, forestry, and tourism development.

The way forward

24. Resolution VIII.44 concerning the role of the Convention in NEPAD provides a strong framework for future actions to secure wetland conservation and wise use in Africa, and during 2004 significant work will focus on supporting and encouraging Parties to implement the terms of this Resolution and supporting development of the NEPAD wetlands component. Notably the Resolution:
 - a) urges Contracting Parties to provide support for the implementation of actions undertaken through the Environment Initiative of NEPAD;
 - b) urges Contracting Parties in the African region to use NEPAD, AMCEN (African Ministerial Conference on Environment) and AMCOW (African Ministerial Conference on Water) to advance the objectives of the Convention, mindful of the need to adopt a multi-sectoral approach to the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
 - c) urges Contracting Parties to pay specific attention to the development and implementation of initiatives with transboundary elements, particularly where these refer to shared river and lake basins, shared wetlands, migratory species and technology transfer;

- d) calls upon the NEPAD development partners to provide support to African Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan, including communication, education and public awareness (CEPA), which is considered an important tool for realising the goals of the programme; and
 - e) directs the Ramsar Secretariat to develop synergies between the implementation of the Convention and NEPAD in Africa.
25. A number of other CoP8 Resolutions and their guidelines for Contracting Parties cover implementation topics which are highly relevant to the priority issues in Africa, including for supporting implementation of the NEPAD initiative, and these will be a focus for Secretariat work in encouraging national implementation of the Convention, in particular, concerning water allocation and management.
26. Resolution VIII.1 will assist Parties in gaining recognition of the vital contribution made by wetlands in Africa to ensure the allocation of water required for human well-being, including food and water security, and in flood control and poverty alleviation, given the increasing demands being placed upon freshwater resources and the threat this poses for maintaining wetland ecosystem functions and their biodiversity in Africa.
27. There is an urgent need for all African Contracting Parties to bring these guidelines to the attention of their national ministries and/or agencies (at different levels of territorial organizations) responsible for water resource management, to encourage these bodies to apply the guidance in order to ensure appropriate allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands in their territory, and to ensure that the principals contained in the Ramsar Guidelines are incorporated into their national policies on water and on wetlands.
28. Parties with wetlands lying in shared river basins will also be encouraged to work cooperatively to apply the *Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands* within the context of the management of water allocations in transboundary basins, making use of the Ramsar *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention* (Resolution VII. 19).
29. The Ramsar Secretariat will work with African Contracting Parties and other interested organizations to develop projects and other activities that promote and demonstrate good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands, to make such good practice examples available to others through the information exchange mechanisms of the Ramsar/CBD River Basin Initiative, and to report to CoP9 on the success achieved and lessons learned from these activities. The approach of South Africa's National Water Act can provide a powerful model which could be transferred to elsewhere in the region.
30. A further major challenge concerning water management is for the Secretariat to seek appropriate ways for increasing dialogue and understanding of the importance of dam management, considering the facts that dams can also affect wetland hydrology, influencing both water quality and quantity, and that diversion of water may be a source of conflicts between users of wetland goods and services in urban and agricultural communities. This sensitive issue should be discussed more and more openly with decision makers and introduced into the NEPAD process. However, currently the focus in

NEPAD on water management issues is on infrastructure development, which poses a difficulty. One way of strengthening understanding could be through increasing Ramsar participation in the UNEP Dams and Development Project in order to promote dialogue on improving decision making, planning and management of dams in Africa.

31. The Africa Regional Advisory unit will also continue to:
 - i) follow up ongoing SGF and Swiss Grant for Africa projects to ensure their timely implementation and reporting;
 - ii) encourage Parties to pay their pending dues to the convention;
 - iii) encourage Parties to designate and update their National STRP and CEPA focal points;
 - iv) support Parties in the further designation of wetlands as Ramsar sites and the development of management planning processes for Ramsar sites; and
 - v) follow up on the request sent to Parties in September 2002 to update the Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar sites.

AMERICAS REGION

32. These actions of the Work Plan are to be undertaken mostly by the Senior Advisor for the Americas and the Assistant Advisor for that Americas, in consultation with the Administrative Authorities and other staff as appropriate.

Background

33. The “Americas” includes two of the Ramsar regions (the Neotropics and North America), with the following twenty-seven Contracting Parties: Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, Suriname, The Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
34. In addition, there are in the region a number of dependent territories of France (French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique), the Netherlands (Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles Federation), the UK (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos), and the USA (Virgin Islands), which require involving those Contracting Parties.
35. There are a further eight mainland and Caribbean Island States which are not yet Parties to the Convention: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Secretariat has been informed that Antigua & Barbuda has submitted its accession papers to UNESCO, which is waiting to receive from that country the information on the Ramsar site designation to complete the accession process.

Issues and priorities

36. Overall, Canada and the USA are well advanced in their implementation of the Convention, while in general the developing nations in the region still require substantial assistance and advice for the effective implementation of the treaty. Capacity building is a priority, in particular for the newest Parties to the Convention, such as Belize, Cuba, El Salvador, St. Lucia, and the Dominican Republic.
37. Eight of the Caribbean Island States have not yet joined the Ramsar Convention despite the efforts made by the Ramsar Secretariat during 2003. There are complex reasons for this, but essentially they come down to capacity and financial implications. It is encouraging that Antigua & Barbuda is about to become a full member and Barbados is working seriously towards accession.
38. As the region hosts 39% of the total area of Ramsar sites worldwide, careful attention and technical and financial support will be given to supporting full implementation of the actions described in Operational Objective 11 of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008: "Management Planning and Monitoring of Ramsar sites".
39. Other key priorities related to the Americas are securing the funding and technical assistance to undertake national inventories and assessment of wetlands, drafting of policy and legislation, and identification and restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands.
40. Countries of the region will continue to be encouraged and to receive technical support for the establishment of National Wetland Committees as well as Ramsar site management committees.
41. The Wetlands for the Future Fund will continue to be used as a vital tool for training and capacity building for developing countries in the region. The guidelines were updated in October 2003 and the new five-year agreement will have to be discussed with the United States in the near future.
42. The Secretariat will assist the Panama Centre in its initiation of activities to support training and capacity building on wetland-related issues, and donors and Parties of the region will be asked to provide financial and technical assistance.
43. The Secretariat and the countries of the region will have to contribute actively in the preparation of the Western Hemisphere Strategy for conservation of migratory species and collaboration on wildlife conservation issues, coordinating with other regional initiatives.
44. The Secretariat will continue to encourage Parties to work towards the removal of sites from the Montreux Record.
45. The Secretariat will encourage and provide assistance for new designations, to increase the geographical coverage of wetlands as well as increase the number of under-represented types.
46. The Americas Regional Advisory team will also continue to:

- i) follow up ongoing SGF and WFF projects to ensure their timely implementation and reporting;
- ii) encourage Parties to pay their pending dues to the convention;
- iii) encourage Parties to designate and update their National STRP and CEPA focal points;
- iv) follow up on the request sent to Parties in September 2003 to update the Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar sites; and
- v) follow up and advise on the implementation of regional strategies (Mesoamerican and South American), as well as on the High Andean Wetland Workgroup, the Participatory Management Group, and initiatives underway related to paramos, mangroves, and peatlands in the region.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

47. These actions of the Work Plan are to be undertaken mostly by the Senior Advisor for the Asia-Pacific and the Assistant Advisor for the Asia-Pacific, in consultation with the Administrative Authorities and other appropriate staff members.

Background & progress

48. The Asia-Pacific covers two Ramsar regions (Asia and Oceania). As of October 2003, and in line with Resolution VIII.42, the Senior Advisor for Asia has assumed the duties also for the Oceania Ramsar region.
49. The Asia-Pacific Region has 29 Contracting Parties (25 in Asia and 4 in Oceania). Contracting Parties in Asia are: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Contracting Parties in Oceania are: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Palau.
50. There are still 17 countries in the Asia region which have yet to accede to the Convention: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Several countries, e.g., Brunei, Lao PDR and Oman, have expressed their interest in joining, but the progress has been generally slow and requires a continuing concerted effort by the Secretariat, particularly in central Asia and the Middle East.
51. Similarly, in the Oceania Region, the Pacific Small Island Developing States remain one of the major gaps in the global membership of the Convention, but several are now progressing towards accession, in large part owing to the efforts of the former Deputy Secretary General (with funding support from Environment Australia and WWF). These include Samoa (intended accession announced at CoP8), Fiji, the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu.

52. Limitations to such progress in the Oceania region are complex, but they relate particularly to the need for capacity building and financial implications. Many of these countries have few professionals dealing full time with environmental management, and they have already made important commitments to other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Joint Work Plans and joint actions with other global conventions, such as that with CBD, are considered to help encourage developing the links with Ramsar.
53. The signing in 2002 of a Memorandum of Cooperation with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and finalization of a Ramsar/SPREP joint work plan provides a valuable advance in Ramsar cooperation in the region and significant opportunities for strengthening Ramsar and wetland conservation and sustainable use there, but current Secretariat capacity to fully support this work remains a limitation.
54. CoP8 has requested that the Secretariat seek to allocate a member of staff to act as Regional Coordinator for Oceania and seek resources for an Oceania intern post. As of October 2003, the Senior Advisor for Asia-Pacific has also assumed that role for Oceania, supported by the Assistant Advisor for Asia-Pacific. However, if, as is anticipated, there is a significant increase in the number of Contracting Parties in the Oceania region, secretariat capacity to fully support the Parties in the region will be limited.
55. CoP8 also requested that the option be explored of funding and establishing a regionally-based Ramsar support officer post for the Pacific Island States, and this will continue to be pursued as a priority during 2004.
56. In the Asia region, most of the Contracting Parties are developing countries, which together in Asia host 60% of the world population, all heavily dependent on water resources for agriculture. With such heavy pressure, maintenance of the functions of wetlands is crucial for Asia but a major and increasing challenge.
57. The Himalaya mountains, the roof of the world, support some of the most important global wetland ecosystems and are the origin of the seven major rivers in Asia, which flow through 11 countries in the region, so that their sustainable management provides a key to securing water and food security for a major part of the region.
58. The issue of drought and unsustainable water resource use in the Central Asian region and countries in the Middle East is placing heavy and increasing pressure on many wetlands, and this has been recognized by CoP8 as amongst the most pressing issues to address in the region.
59. Coastal and marine wetlands are a particularly important feature of countries in East and Southeast Asia, with coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds being particularly important for the maintenance of global biodiversity. Today these areas are experiencing the apparent consequences of the climate change phenomenon such as floods and increased erosion as well as increasing pressure from aquaculture developments.
60. The number of Ramsar sites designated in the Asia-Pacific region is relatively small in comparison with other regions, and a number of countries have designated only one or two sites. However, progress in 2003 is encouraging, with 11 new sites in Asia and two in Oceania already designated, covering 1.1 million hectares, and a further 17 sites (including 12 in India and 5 in Mongolia) expected to be designated by the end of the year; 14 high

mountain wetlands sites in China and the Kyrgyz Republic are being prepared for designation as well, as are 10 mangrove sites in Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

61. The development of regional cooperation initiatives, building upon CoP8 Resolutions, has been a feature of 2003 progress in the region. There has been further progress in the development of a Himalayan Initiative, jointly organized by WWF International, the Ramsar Secretariat, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), with a September 2003 workshop establishing specific targets for the Initiative. Opportunities for establishing an Asia Mangrove Network, following an October 2003 workshop in Brunei Darussalam, will be further explored in 2004. The implementation of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, with input from the Ramsar Secretariat, is continuing.

Issues and priorities

62. In the search for economic prosperity, many wetlands' ecological character continues to be put into jeopardy. The Regional Advisory Unit will continue to urge Parties in the region to secure better recognition by civil society and decision-makers of the many values and functions of wetlands, so that the importance of mainstreaming conservation and wise use of wetlands into national policies and decision-making is better delivered.
63. Capacity for Convention implementation in many Administrative Authorities is weak and the Regional Advisory Unit will encourage Parties to find ways of enhancing capacity.
64. In many countries only one or two Ramsar sites have so far been designated, and there is a lack of strategic approaches to designating a coherent network of sites so as to secure their conservation and sustainable use. However, the progress in this respect has begun to show and many countries have expressed their intention to take a more strategic approach in wetland identification and designation, particularly under the Himalayan Regional Initiative and with the help of the WWF Living Waters Programme. Further support for strengthening regional and transboundary cooperation among CPs will be sought.
65. The importance of international cooperation has been recognized in the region. In addition to the Himalayan Initiative, the Asia/Pacific Migratory Water Bird Conservation Strategy, and the Asia Mangrove Conservation Network under discussion, there are initiatives to set up an Asian Wetland Training Center in Indonesia, a High Mountain Wetland Resource Center in ICIMOD, Nepal, and a Ramsar Center in Iran. However, all these initiatives will require substantial financial and technical support from donor countries if their potential is to be realised.
66. For Oceania, Secretariat work in 2004 will focus on continuing cooperation with SPREP to implement priority areas of activity in the Ramsar/SPREP joint work plan, including assisting in the completion of accessions by Pacific Island States, and seeking ways and means of establishing a regionally-based support post for this work for raising Ramsar awareness in the region.
67. Activities in 2004 by the Asia-Pacific Regional Advisory Unit to support and encourage implementation of the Convention, including the Resolutions adopted by CoP8, will seek to cover:

a) Communication, Education, and Public Awareness

- i) Encouraging Parties to develop communication programmes, especially through World Wetlands Day, and encouraging National Ramsar Committees to consolidate their actions on the national CEPA action/policies;
- ii) Encouraging the development of education materials that attractively illustrate the functions of wetlands;
- iii) Supporting the organization of public awareness campaigns, including extending the experience of WWF China's Wetland Ambassador Action to the whole Mekong River basin, in cooperation with WWF, Mekong River Commission, and Administrative Authorities in the river basin (Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam), with the support from Evian-Danone Ramsar Fund, WWF, and the Mekong River Commission.

b) Ecosystem management & regional cooperation

68. Activities will focus on promoting management of river basins and large shared water bodies, including:

- i) Raising awareness amongst Administrative Authorities of the links between wetland ecosystem services and regional sustainable development, especially water resources, fisheries, etc., and addressing the issues of drought;
- ii) Supporting the Himalayan Initiative and Asian Mangrove Network, as well as Asia/Pacific Migratory Water Basin Conservation Strategy;
- iii) Encouraging the application of a strategic approach to further Ramsar site designations, and improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms for Ramsar sites in relation to Article 3.2 reporting.

c) Institutional Development and Capacity Building

- i) Promoting the establishment of national, regional, and site-specific Ramsar Committees where these do not yet exist;
- ii) Supporting the improvement of training facilities in the region, including:
 - Mai Po training centre in Hong Kong;
 - Ramsar Center for West and Central Asia in Iran;
 - the initiative by the Indonesia government for the development of an Asian Wetlands Training Center; and
 - High Mountain Wetlands Resource Center in ICIMOD, Nepal;
- iii) Seeking opportunities for establishing a Wetland Research and Monitoring Network in Asia, involving national wetland research centers and wetland research laboratories in Asian universities, and for using this network to carry out standardized wetland inventory, monitoring, and information sharing, to facilitate reporting under the Convention.

d) Engaging more countries in wetland conservation and sustainable development

69. The Regional Advisory Unit will continue to work closely with Central Asian, Middle Eastern and Pacific Island countries on their accession to the Convention.
70. The Asia-Pacific Regional Advisory unit will also continue to:
- i) follow up ongoing SGF projects so as to ensure their timely implementation and reporting;
 - ii) encourage Parties to pay any pending dues to the convention;
 - iii) encourage Parties to designate and update their National STRP and CEPA focal points;
 - iv) support Parties in the further designation of wetlands as Ramsar sites and the development of management planning processes for Ramsar sites;
 - v) follow up on the request sent to Parties in September 2002 to update Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar sites;
 - vi) continue to raise matters concerning Article 3.2 of the Convention on change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites when these are brought to its attention; and
 - vi) urge Parties to complete their CoP9 National Planning Tool with national priorities, targets and actions, and submit these to the Secretariat.

EUROPE

71. These actions of the Work Plan are to be supported mostly by the Regional Advisor for Europe and the Assistant Advisor for Europe, in consultation with the Administrative Authorities and other appropriate staff members.
72. European countries often experience great wetland management problems due to high population densities and intensive land-use pressures in their catchment basins. Given the high number of countries and individual Ramsar sites, and the increasing pressures on European wetlands, this region is arguably also the most complex and demanding region to be served by the Ramsar Secretariat.
73. It is therefore of high importance and value that Contracting Parties with more advanced national wetland policies, management structures, and financial capacities increase their efforts to share their experience with countries in economic transition and those in urgent need for external financial support.

Issues and priorities

74. The **wise use of all wetlands** is a long-standing theme in Europe. Despite remarkable achievements, much still needs to be done in many countries to cover adequately the major

issues addressed in Ramsar *Handbook 1*. CoP8 provided Ramsar with a framework for wetland inventory (Resolution VIII.6) and a renewed programme on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) (Resolution VIII.31). Linking agriculture, water resource management and wetlands (Resolution VIII.34) is a European priority, as well as making groundwater management compatible with wetland conservation (Resolution VIII.40).

75. **Wetlands of International Importance** are by far more numerous in Europe (though not by surface area) than in any other Ramsar region. To date (October 2003) the European parties have declared 781 Ramsar sites, out of which 25 figure on the Montreux Record and many more are threatened by possible or ongoing ecological change (152 documented cases in the triennium leading to CoP8, many new ones since). Europe has many problems with the conservation of its Ramsar sites, and appropriate management and monitoring needs to be improved for many of them. The implementation of the Strategic Framework for the development of the Ramsar List (*Handbook 7*) needs to continue (Resolution VIII.10). Progress with the establishment of management and monitoring procedures for an increasing number of sites is anticipated, as well as progress with the designation of new Ramsar sites of under-represented wetland types. Furthermore, a great potential for wetland restoration (Resolution VIII.16) exists in Europe, notably concerning river floodplain wetlands where many local initiatives are already under way. Ramsar site designation of restored sites should subsequently be considered.
76. **International cooperation** is a particular priority (and is essential) for Europe where so many countries exist in a relatively small area. Individual Contracting Parties are encouraged to progress with the management of shared sites, shared water catchments, and species. The Ramsar guidelines for international cooperation (*Handbook 9*) provide the tools for increased collaboration between Ramsar and other global, regional and subregional environmental agreements, as well as for technical support to those countries lacking sufficient resources.
77. **Implementation capacity** to achieve the Convention's mission is reasonably developed in many European countries, albeit often too narrowly focused on traditional species conservation aspects only. Developing inter-ministerial cooperation and the involvement of different stakeholders, already at the planning and policy stage, at national and sub-national levels, is a particular challenge for many Contracting Parties. To strengthen existing institutions, precise training needs and target audiences should be identified. Existing training opportunities should be developed and supported and new initiatives started where they are missing.
78. **Membership** of the Convention is nearly complete in the European region, with 44 Contracting Parties out of a total of 47 states. Andorra is actively preparing its accession, leaving only the micro-states Holy See and San Marino as non-Parties. In addition, during CoP8, Azerbaijan noted its wish to participate in the activities of the European region during the triennium 2003-2005.
79. The European Regional Advisory Unit will also continue to:

- i) encourage and provide assistance for new Ramsar site designations, to increase the geographical coverage of wetlands as well as increase the number of under-represented types;
- ii) encourage and support Parties in working towards the removal of sites from the Montreux Record;
- iii) follow up on SGF projects to ensure their timely implementation and reporting;
- iv) encourage Parties to pay any pending dues to the convention;
- v) encourage Parties to designate and update their National STRP and CEPA focal points; and
- vi) follow up on the requests sent to Parties in September 2002 to update the Ramsar Information Sheets, as necessary, for their Ramsar sites.

THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

80. These activities and projects of the Work Plan are related to the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) and are the responsibility of the outposted MedWet Coordination Unit, established in Athens in mid-2001 with financial support from the Government of Greece, including the MedWet Coordinator, a Policy Advisor (part time), a Communications Officer, a Programme Development Officer, and an Administrative Assistant. It is also supported by the Senior Advisor on Mediterranean Wetlands on a project basis.

Background

81. Following the adoption of Resolution VIII.30 at CoP8, the MedWet Coordination Unit continues its operation for 2003-2005 based in Athens, hosted by the Greek Government and with financial support by the host country, all the Mediterranean CPs, and the Ramsar Convention.
82. The work of the MedWet Unit is supported by four wetland centres:
- i) Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre (EKBY), Thessaloniki (Greece);
 - ii) Sede para el Estudio de los Humedales Mediterráneos (SEHUMED), University of Valencia (Spain), supported financially by the Spanish Government and the Generalitat Valenciana;
 - iii) Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat, Le Sambuc, Arles (France), assisted financially by the French Government; and
 - iv) Centro de Zonas Humidas, Lisbon, Portugal, supported by the Portuguese Ministry of Environment (Nature Conservation Institute)
83. In addition, the newly established North African Wetlands Network (NAWN), with Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia already fully participating, and preparing for the launch of the new EU LIFE 3rd countries MedWet project, form an integral part of the MedWet network. The NAWN is to be extended to include Egypt and Libya.

84. The Mediterranean, an area with characteristic ecological, historical and cultural unity, includes 25 countries belonging officially to three Ramsar regions (Africa, Asia and Europe). Participation in the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), and in the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) which guides it, is broader than that of Ramsar Contracting Parties.
85. MedWet/Com, formally recognized by Resolution VII.22 “as a forum for collaboration on wetland issues in the Mediterranean and as an advisor to the Convention in this region”, is composed of all 25 Ramsar Contracting Parties in the region and the Palestinian Authority, four intergovernmental bodies (European Commission, UNDP, Barcelona and Bern Conventions), and eight non-governmental organizations and wetland centres.
86. The *modus operandi* of MedWet is complementary to that of the Regional Advisory Units of the Ramsar Secretariat. It focuses more on specific activities and projects, which it initiates and develops and for which, in many cases, it manages implementation. This is in addition to MedWet’s catalytic role in encouraging joint action, sharing of knowledge and expertise, and assisting with training and capacity development for policy and management of wetlands.

Issues and priorities

87. In the Mediterranean, a number of social, economic and political issues result in excessive pressures on wetlands and lead to their degradation or destruction. Thus wetland loss in the region during the 20th century is estimated to average 50%. The major issues for the region are: poverty in the south and east of the region with great inequalities throughout, explosive population growth in the poorest countries of the region, increasing and persistent drought especially in the east of the region, strong economic migration trends, and increasing transient population pressure on the coastal zones due to tourism.
88. The resulting major problems include:
- i) demand for space, especially in the coastal zones, often to the detriment of wetlands;
 - ii) water scarcity due to increased demand for irrigated agriculture and tourism, affecting wetlands;
 - iii) serious water pollution from industrial, domestic, and agricultural sources; and
 - iv) unsustainable exploitation of wetland resources, especially fish and game.
89. To confront these problems, the MedWet Initiative has focused on actions at three levels:
- i) at the international level, promoting collaboration, financial and technical assistance, and sharing of experience and know-how;
 - ii) at the national level, encouraging the preparation of national wetland policies, improving legislation, and strengthening the capacity of services concerned with, or having an impact on, wetlands; and
 - iii) on the site level, focusing on catalyzing management actions, with the full involvement of stakeholders.
90. Most of this work is done through methods and tools designed for the Mediterranean context, and through the establishment and strengthening of active partnerships in the region.

91. In order to develop its pivotal role, the MedWet Coordination Unit will take all necessary steps to evolve and maintain its dynamic character during the 2003-2005 triennium and beyond. This encompasses a number of matters of high importance, including:
 - i) identifying the key issues that are of direct relevance to the needs and priorities of the MedWet countries, and establishing and implementing activities and projects at a national or regional level;
 - ii) identifying the strengths and weaknesses in its own capacity, including that of the Coordination Unit, the Technical Network, and all Partners;
 - iii) strengthening the MedWet network by developing its composition and activities; and
 - iv) further developing the MedWet technical tools.

92. It is important for not only MedWet to be a network for the transfer of technical expertise on conservation and management, but also to play a catalytic role for the sustainable use of wetland areas and their resources in the Mediterranean region in order to contribute to the achievement of:
 - i) conservation of habitats and biodiversity;
 - ii) wise use of resources;
 - iii) reinforcement of national capacities;
 - iv) sustainable development (also at a local and regional level); and
 - v) poverty eradication through sustainable economic development.

93. Issues that are of high importance for the attainment of this goal, and which in 2004 will continue to be the focus of the future work of the MedWet Coordination Unit, are to:
 - i) establish a system for the collection and dissemination of complete and up-to-date information on the distribution, status, importance and conservation state (ecological, socio-economic, cultural) of wetlands of the whole Mediterranean region, by enhancing and applying the MedWet Inventory methodology throughout the region;
 - ii) reinforce this methodology with new components, through the integration of Environmental Remote Sensing tools, thus offering an up-to date tool for the efficient monitoring of the status of Mediterranean wetlands and the human uses in and around them;
 - iii) identify the needs and priorities of all MedWet countries for sustainable development in wetlands, and match them to the capacities of the MedWet network; address those needs by further developing regional or subregional activities, including transboundary collaboration;
 - iv) enhance the active participation of those Partners of the MedWet network that have so far been less active, and promote the active collaboration of NGOs and research institutions; in this sense reinforce and further expand the work and geographical coverage of subregional networks, such as the North African wetlands network, and of thematic networks such as the MedWet/NGOs network and the MedWet/Regions network;

- v) develop further methodologies and technical tools for the social and economic assessment of the wetlands values and functions, and refine the use of specific tools, including incentives (economic, social, cultural) and environmentally sound trade in wetland-derived plant and animal products;
- vi) develop tools and methods for supporting integrated water resources management; special attention is to be paid to the use of water in agriculture and the effects on wetlands, and in particular to developing a regional activity for assisting the countries in developing and implementing sustainable policies and practices;
- vii) continue to put into practice existing (Barcelona Convention, GWP-Med), and initiate new, collaborations with other global or regional conventions, initiatives and expert institutions on issues of mutual interest;
- viii) enlarge the circle of contacts within the MedWet countries with new partners, including in the sectors of water resources management, agriculture, fisheries, development planning and economy, tourism, etc., including building on the outcomes of discussion at MedWet/Com5 in 2003; and
- ix) broaden the contacts and collaboration within regional or national institutions to include important actors for designing or implementing activities (national EU delegations, UNEP and UNDP national offices, bilateral or multi-lateral donor organizations).

SECTION II. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION WORK PLAN

94. The actions described in this Section are mostly to be undertaken by the Administration & Human Resources Team, Communications Team, Budget Team, and the Project Administrator in the Resource Generation Team.
95. General administration work of the Secretariat covers six main areas of activity:
1. General office administration
 2. Core financial administration
 3. Project management and reporting
 4. Documentation and information services
 5. Personnel management
 6. Meeting preparations and logistics

1. General office administration

Ensure an efficient functioning of the office concerning use of space, office supplies and equipment, publications and documents storage and distribution, archives and files maintenance, mail reception and dispatching, etc.

2. Core financial administration

In addition to day-to-day management, monitoring and reporting of the core budget, the following actions will be required for 2004 and beyond.

- a) Preparing financial reports, including audited accounts for 2003 and the 2004 budget (as approved by CoP8) for consideration by the Standing Committee;
- b) Sending reminders of unpaid invoices twice yearly;
- c) Invoicing Parties for 2004 dues.

Monthly:

- Petty Cash
- Long distance telephone calls
- Annual contributions - to date (acknowledge each with a Diplomatic Note)
- Investment of surplus funds

Year-end statements for:

- Core Budget
- Annual Contributions

Standing Committee statements:

- Core Budget
- Annual Contributions
- Secretariat budget for 2005 (following CoP8 approval of budget for 2003-2005)

CoP9

- Preparing budgets for CoP9, working with the host country, including Secretariat costs, delegate support costs and in-country costs;

- Seeking funds through pledges of voluntary contributions from donor countries and other sources to meet the costs of preparing and holding CoP9.

3. Project management and reporting

- Projects – Monthly Income and Expenditures report
- Year-end statements for projects with earmarked contributions
- Standing Committee statements for projects with earmarked contributions.

Small Grants Fund (activities in conjunction with Regional Advisory Teams)

Implement the SGF in accordance with the Operational Guidelines 2003-2005 and the internal system for the SGF projects administration established in early 2000.

Wetlands for the Future, Swiss Grant for Africa, and Evian Projects

During 2004, continue to administer funds provided by the USA for the Wetlands for the Future Initiative and by Switzerland for projects in Africa, as well as the Secretariat's corporate sector partnership with the Danone Group – the Evian project.

Other projects supported or administered by the Secretariat

As required, administer projects supported by either core or external funds, including funds for the MedWet Initiative, for example.

Reporting to donors

Continue the reporting to donors and generally build on the good relations with donors that the Secretariat currently enjoys.

Support the Senior Trade & Development Advisor in relation to his efforts to secure increased funding for the operations and implementation of the Convention.

4. Documentation and information services, ongoing

Preparing agenda papers for meetings

Edit for language & content and format documentation for official Ramsar meetings and, as appropriate, for other meetings with Ramsar participation, in English or in English, French, and Spanish as appropriate.

Reporting on the results of meetings

Edit for language & content and format documents conveying the reports and other results of Ramsar meetings, distribute them to the participants and the Parties and make them available as appropriate to the public.

Informing the public of the Convention's work

Prepare a continuous stream of press materials informing the public and environmental press of the work of the Convention and its partners, and distribute these via the Ramsar Web site, e-mail lists, and other means.

Responding to inquiries from the public

Continue to respond as appropriate to inquiries from officials, academics, journalists, and citizens about background information, documentation, and news of the Convention.

Responding to requests from related agencies

Prepare responses to requests for reports, questionnaire surveys, and other official interaction with other MEA secretariats, academic institutions, research bodies, reference publications, etc.

5. Personnel management

As required, provide general support to the senior managers of the Secretariat with respect to all aspects of staff recruitment and termination of services.

Support necessary personnel management activities as instructed by the Secretary General. This includes but is not limited to:

- maintaining staff files (on current staff, past staff, applicants, and general directives);
- liaising with IUCN's Human Resources Management Division on Ramsar staff issues, including the drawing up of staff contracts as required;
- preparing draft position vacancies;
- preparing letters for staff who have successfully completed their probation period;
- preparing or drafting letters of reference;
- recruiting and interviewing for administrative support positions within the Secretariat;
- writing appointment and rejection letters.

Finalize Secretariat Procedures Manual.

The Internship Programme (4 interns for a period of 12 to 18 months each)

- responding to inquiries;
- receiving and acknowledging applications;
- processing rejection, short list, and final rejection letters;
- assisting interns with their arrival, settling in, and departure arrangements;
- managing the four apartments rented by the Secretariat in Gland to provide accommodation to the interns.

6. Meeting preparations and logistics and general office administration

Preparations for the 30th and 31th meetings of the Standing Committee

Provide organizational and logistical support for the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee, to be held in January 2004, and for the 31th meeting, proposed to be held in January 2005. This will include all general meeting arrangements (travel, accommodation, venue arrangements) as well as the distribution of papers, etc.

CoP9 logistics

Initiate organizational and logistical preparations for CoP9.

ANNEX

RAMSAR SECRETARIAT WORK PLAN 2004:

SPECIFIC POLICY & TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER STRATEGIC PLAN AND CoP8 RESOLUTION ACTIONS

Based on Section II of the Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005 (Resolution VIII.25), and incorporating all relevant Actions called for in Resolutions adopted by the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

1. Only those actions in CoP8 Resolutions which specifically indicate a task for the Secretariat and/or MedWet Coordination Unit are listed below. The Secretariat's four Regional Advisory Units also play a significant role in supporting and assisting Contracting Parties, when requested, in their implementation of the wide range of other actions undertaken at the national level.
2. The code number of the Actions to which the Secretariat activities contribute are shown for each activity in square brackets [...]:
 - a) Actions from the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 are numbered as in the Annex to Resolution VIII.25, in arabic numerals, e.g. 1.1.1, 11.1.15 etc.
 - b) Additional Actions derived from the operational paragraphs of other CoP8 Resolutions are distinguished with a separate coding system, e.g. R1.2.ii, R3.1.iv etc.
 - c) For Actions under Operational Objective 9 (CEPA), all Operational Objectives and Actions are those adopted in the Annex to Resolution VIII.31, which fully incorporate, and expand upon, the fifteen CEPA Actions as listed in the Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008.
3. A brief note of progress during 2003 for each of the Secretariat activity is provided.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1. INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

Operational Objective 1.1: Describe the extent of wetland resources, especially at global and national (or, where appropriate, provincial) scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention and in particular the application of the wise use principle.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Ramsar <i>Framework for Wetland Inventory</i> is available to all those responsible for undertaking or updating wetland inventories. (1.1.1) • Africa: Promote Wetland Inventories in the NEPAD framework. MedWet: further develop and disseminate MedWet inventory methodology for use to Mediterranean CPs. (1.1.1) 	<p>✓ <i>Framework</i> available on Ramsar Web site; sent on request to users; being prepared as <i>Wetland Inventory Handbook</i> in 'Toolkit' 2nd edition</p> <p>The MedWet Inventory methodology continues to be developed and applied through the MedWet/SUDOE project financed by the EU in Portugal and Spain.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, with Wetlands International, a project proposal for <i>Global Review of Wetland Inventory (GRoWI)</i> updating, and seek funding for its implementation. (1.1.5) 	<p>Proposal to be developed by Wetlands International in early 2004</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and assist CPs to prepare and submit inventory projects to the SGF. (1.1.7) 	<p>✓ 4 inventory projects submitted for 2003 cycle</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to STRP's work on application of remote sensing data, low-cost GIS and classification systems in wetland inventory. (R1.1.i) 	Ongoing
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Operational Objective 1.2: Assess and monitor the condition of wetland resources, both globally and nationally (or, where appropriate, provincially), in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention and in particular the application of the wise use principle.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to participate in Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Board and Executive Committee meetings, and contribute to preparation of the MA Ramsar Synthesis Report. (1.2.1) 	✓ SG/DSG participated in MA Board and Executive Committee meetings. Synthesis Report scoping contributed to.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with MA secretariat to establish mechanisms for making widely available relevant MA products. (R1.2.i) 	✓ First MA product (<i>Ecosystems & Human Well-Being</i>) sent to all AAs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an action in the 3rd CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan, make arrangements to ensure that the CBD review of status and trends of inland water biodiversity (being published for CBD CoP7 (Feb 2004) is circulated to all Ramsar Administrative Authorities and other relevant organizations. (R1.2.ii) 	✓ Final draft reviewed and contributed to by Secretariat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As resources permit, maintain and improve contacts with other assessment activities, including through encouraging their participation in STRP working groups. (R1.2.iii) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Secretariat mechanism for holding relevant summarized national (or, where appropriate, provincial) assessments of changes in the status of wetland resources and making it available to STRP, as needed. (1.2.2) • Encourage CPs to provide a copy of relevant summarized national (or, where appropriate, provincial) assessments of changes in the status of wetland resources. (1.2.2) 	Not yet initiated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to contribute to CBD work in the preparation of rapid assessment guidelines for inland waters and marine and coastal ecosystems and indicators. Provide support to STRP's work, including making available the CBD guidelines for review in the Ramsar context. (1.2.3) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to STRP's work on 	Ongoing

<p>assessment of the vulnerability of wetlands to change in ecological character (1.2.4)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC/Secretariat to identify at least 20 Parties willing to undertake vulnerability assessments and report to CoP9. (1.2.5) 	Not yet initiated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold any relevant information on mangrove forest cover and conservation status and levels of use of mangroves supplied by CPs, as part of repository established for Action 1.2.5, and make available to STRP, as needed. (R1.2.v) 	No information yet supplied by CPs. Development of mangrove remote sensed information system under discussion with Japan Space Agency & WI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold any relevant information supplied by CPs the impacts of drought and other natural disasters on the ecological character of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, as part of repository established for Action 1.2.5, and make available to STRP, as needed. (R1.2.vii) 	None yet supplied by CPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support work by STRP on gaps and disharmonies in defining and reporting the ecological character of wetlands through inventory, assessment, monitoring and management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands. (R1.2.viii) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support work by STRP on an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring. (R1.2.ix) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce into MedWet activities actions for the assessment of water quality and quantity, including through the use of methodologies developed by SEHUMED. (1.2.7) 	Through the MedWet/SUDOE project the aspects of water quality as developed by SEHUMED and in relation to the EU Water Framework Directive. In addition Medwet is currently developing a collaboration with ARPAT, the Italian Agency for the Protection of Environment (Tuscany) as a centre of expertise on water quality and management issues.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2. POLICIES AND LEGISLATION, INCLUDING IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND VALUATION

Operational Objective 2.1: Specify the most appropriate policy instrument(s) to be used in each country to ensure the wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add relevant information on best practice examples of integration and harmonisation of policies and legislation provided by CPs to the Ramsar Wise Use Resource Centre, and make available to STRP, as needed. (2.1.3) • Africa: encourage up to three CPs to review 	<p>None provided by CPs in 2003.</p> <p>The MedWet/Coast project is implementing a module on national wetland policies, and a seminar will be held in Lebanon in February 2004.</p>

national legislation in line with updated policies and promote legislative reviews through NEPAD.	
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Operational Objective 2.2: Develop, review, amend when necessary, and implement national or supra-national policies, legislation, institutions and practices, including impact assessment and valuation, in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Convention, and especially the wise use principle, is being fully applied.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available relevant materials on impact assessment, including case studies indicating lessons learned, guidelines, sources of advice, provided by CPs for inclusion in the IUCN Biodiversity Economics Web site and STRP, as needed. Support any work by STRP on these matters. (R2.2.vii) 	Contributed to IAIA biodiversity & impact assessment project development, to compile such information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on these matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a synthesis of lessons learned from those case studies submitted by Contracting Parties (see R2.2.vii) above (R2.2.viii) - review of references to impact assessment in Ramsar CoP decisions, guidelines and other Ramsar publications (R2.2.ix) - the continuing development, wide dissemination and application of methodologies to undertake valuations of the economic, social and environmental benefits and functions of wetlands. (2.2.4) 	IA work developed through IAIA biodiversity & impact assessment project development. STRP valuation methodologies work ongoing.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3. INTEGRATION OF WETLAND WISE USE INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Operational objective 3.1: Develop and disseminate methodologies to achieve the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on advice, methods and best practice studies for the wise use of wetlands, including the application of the ecosystem approach (3.1.2) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs and others in the wide dissemination of existing wise use guidance. STDA: Help define and disseminate the wise use concept amongst the donor community and Ramsar supporters, through paper preparation, meetings and workshops. 	Ongoing

(3.1.4)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support input to the work on mountains being developed by other MEAs. (R3.1.i) Asia: initiate development of platform for the sharing of information, expertise and experience especially for Himalayan wetlands. Europe: Review opportunities for collaboration with the Alpine Convention. (R3.1.i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ input made through SBSTTA to CBD mountains programme of work development. ✓ Himalayan Initiative further developed through 2003 workshop and 2004 technical workshop in planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americas: Organize and attend joint meeting of the Flamingos High Andean Group and the Paramos Group and develop agreed work plan for drafting strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of High Andean wetlands. (R3.1.ii) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Several ad-hoc meetings took place during 2003 to discuss arrangements and procedures between various interested parties. A working meeting is planned for the first semester of 2004, funds permitting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to contribute to joint work with ITTO and the UNFF on initiatives concerning the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems, including through assisting in identification of key players, and participation in UNFF meetings. (R3.1.iv) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Initiative regional workshop (Nicaragua, March 2003) and UNFF (Geneva, May/June 2003) attended.

Operational Objective 3.2: Ensure the conservation and wise use of peatlands as a demonstration of the ecosystem-based approach under the Convention.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish, resources permitting, a <i>modus operandi</i> for the Coordinating Committee for Global Action on Peatlands. (R3.2.i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinating Committee 1st meeting held (Secretariat chairing), October 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to CoP9 on the progress in implementing the Guidelines for global action on peatlands (Resolution VIII.17). (3.2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action needed during 2003.

Operational Objective 3.3: Increase recognition of the significance of wetlands for reasons of water supply, coastal protection, flood defense, food security, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and scientific research.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree mechanism with Wetlands International for the analysis of information on values and functions of Ramsar sites in the Ramsar Sites Database, through its contractual work on behalf of the Convention. (3.3.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IOPs and FAO to develop work reviewing agriculture and wetland knowledge. (R3.3.i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant progress by IOPs on review. ✓ MedWet/Com5 (Turkey 2003) held technical workshop to identify priorities for future work on

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MedWet: Further advance the MedWet work on agriculture, water and environment through the GWP-Med initiative. (R3.3.i) 	<p>the topic. As a next step, a regional workshop on ‘Agriculture, water and wetlands’ will be held by MedWet in Tunis (Jan. 2004) with financial support by GWP-Med and Inwent (German donor institution) in order to identify the priorities and next steps towards a full scale regional project on this theme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage CPs and others to develop wetland programmes and projects supporting poverty alleviation objectives. (3.3.4) 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americas: Provide necessary support to the establishment of the Panama Regional Center. MedWet: Develop new activities, modules and methodologies in the existing MedWet Technical Network, and establish new partnerships with research centres and institutes. (3.3.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Panama Centre development supported. ✓ New activities developed in collaboration with: UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan on Habitats typology and the Med. Biodiversity Strategic Plan; GWP-Mediterranean on Water, Food and Environment; IWMI-International Water Management Institute on Agriculture and Wetlands; CEDARE (Egypt) on groundwater.

Operational Objective 3.4: Integrate policies on the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties, and in decision-making processes at national, regional, provincial and local levels, particularly concerning territorial management, groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and marine zone planning, and responses to climate change.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage CPs and others to participate in and contribute information through the River Basin Initiative and its Web-based information portal. Provide input to LakeNet’s lake basin management project implementation, so as to support the WSSD agreement to increase understanding of the sustainable use, protection and management of water resources. (3.4.2) • Africa: Continue collaborative work with river/lake management organizations, including for Lake Chad and Niger River. (3.4.2) 	<p>Ongoing. In Africa, 2002 memoranda with Lake Chad and Niger River organizations implementation initiated.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support any work by STRP on review, from case studies and other materials compiled through the CBD/Ramsar River Basin Initiative, lessons learnt and good practice experience of river basin management, and report this to CoP9, including the preparation of additional guidance, as appropriate, on integrating wetlands, biodiversity and river basin management. (3.4.3) 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage CPs and others in ensuring that due attention is given to the role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contributed to development of CBD’s mountain ecosystems programme of work.

<p>of mountain and high-altitude wetlands, and the importance of their conservation and wise use, in the preparation and implementation of river basin management plans. (R3.4.i)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on preparing guidance on assessment of impact of large dams on wetlands and river systems. (3.4.4) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on preparing a report for CoP9 on environmental flow methodologies so as to assist in the management of dam related impacts. (R3.4.v) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage CPs to provide case studies of good practice in the integration of wetlands into ICZM, and support any work by STRP on these matters. (R3.4.vi) MedWet: Promote the application of sustainable management of habitats and species in the Med region through the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Biodiversity [for the Mediterranean region] (SAP-Bio). (R3.4.vi) 	<p>Not yet undertaken</p> <p>MedWet has participated in the drafting of the SAP-BIO by drafting the section on wetlands, and served as a member of the Advisory Committee of the project. It is expected that Medwet will be the main partner of UNEP/MAP for the implementation of the SAP, to be funded by GEF.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the request of CPs or partners, help develop projects that demonstrate good practice in water allocation and management.. (R3.4.ix) Encourage CPs and others to contribute information on good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands through the River Basin Initiative and its Web-based information portal. (R3.4.ix) 	<p>✓ Done in Brazil (Pantanal) and China (Yangtze River)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP, if established as a priority for the STRP's work in 2003-2005, on review of Resolutions VIII.1 and VIII.2 and prepare further guidance, if it is required. (3.4.7) 	STRP Work Plan defers work to next triennium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on guidelines on the sustainable use of groundwater resources to maintain wetland ecosystem functions and the maintenance of the groundwater component of the hydrological cycle. (3.4.7) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on reviewing the role of wetlands in groundwater recharge and storage and of groundwater in maintaining the ecological character of wetlands and the groundwater component of the hydrological cycle, as well as the impacts of groundwater abstraction on wetlands. (R3.4.xiii) 	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with IPCC secretariat opportunities for addressing, and support any work by STRP on, promotion of the management of wetlands in relation to adaptive management and mitigation of the impacts of climate change, particularly in the context of land use, land use change and rising sea levels, forestry, peatlands and agriculture. (3.4.8) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request IPCC to prepare a Technical Paper on the relationship between wetlands and climate change, in time for consideration at the second STRP meeting prior to CoP9, and support any work by STRP on these matters. (R3.4.xxi) 	Discussions underway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve input to the Dialogue on Water, Food and the Environment, including securing Secretariat representation. (R3.4.xxiii) MedWet: contribute to the development of the Dialogue and an Associated Programme by MedWet for GWP-Med. (R3.4.xxiii) 	Under discussion. ✓ MedWet has held a project on Water, Food and Environment in the N. Africa / M. East subregion, funded by GWP-Med and Inwent (Germany). The project will be completed with a regional workshop on this theme in Jan. 2004, where countries and partners are expected to agree on the priorities and next steps for a full scale programme on Agriculture, water and wetlands in the region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add relevant information supplied on wetlands and agriculture to the Wise Use Resource Centre. (R3.4.xxiv) 	Ongoing

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4. RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

Operational Objective 4.1: Identify priority wetlands where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs in their restoration work. MedWet: Further advance and disseminate the methodology developed within the MedWet Technical Network, and promote its use by the Mediterranean CPs, by identifying appropriate cases for action. [4.1.2] 	Ongoing No progress on Medwet issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain, and add new case studies and methods for the restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands to the Ramsar wetland restoration Web site. [4.1.3 & R4.1.ix] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MedWet: Support and encourage inclusion of the cultural dimension in all appropriate restoration activities in the Med region. [R4.1.v] 	✓ SEHUMED has produced a methodological tool on Cultural Aspects of Wetlands and currently MedWet is in the process of coordinating their implementation by the different projects and partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wetlands International in further 	Advice on further development of Initiative

developing and resourcing the Ramsar Wetland Training Initiative, to include wetland restoration training [R4.1.vi]	provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MedWet: Work with local populations, and promote the use of traditional practices in planning wetland restoration. Develop specific guidance modules for salinas restoration. [R4.1.viii] 	Involvement of local populations and traditional practices is included in the new MedWet (LIFE 3 rd countries) project for Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Also the (informal) Medwet/Regions network is considering the development of an SGF proposal including restoration and traditional practices modules.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on further develop tools and guidance on wetland restoration. [R4.1.xi] 	(Not defined as an STRP 2003-2005 priority.)

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5. INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Operational Objective 5.1: Develop guidance and promote protocols and actions to prevent, control or eradicate invasive alien species in wetland systems.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transmit Article 3.2 reports on invasive alien species in Ramsar sites to Wetlands International for inclusion in the Ramsar Sites Database, and make available to CBD any information provided by CPs. [R5.1.iv] Africa: continue to take an active part in contributing to the development by NEPAD of work on invasive species. [R5.1.iv] 	<p>No reports provided by CPs in 2003.</p> <p>NEPAD input ongoing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work of the STRP on practical guidance on invasive species. [5.1.2] 	Not an STRP 2003-2005 priority – discussion underway with GISP to develop such guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify additional information sources on invasive species and make available to CPs. [R5.1.vi] Africa: Communicate to GISP the outcomes of the African projects on invasive species. [R5.1.vi] 	Not progressed. Africa: ✓ done.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to contribute to the CBD/GISP work. on the assessment of the impact of invasive species on inland waters, including on islands, and make available the results of this review to Contracting Parties and wetland managers. [R5.1.vii] 	✓ Participated in GISP workshop on inland water invasives – output available 2004.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate information products on African wetland invasives, and review opportunity for developing similar projects for other regions. [R5.1.viii] 	✓ Information products on African invasives widely disseminated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs in ensure that national and, where necessary, international action plans for the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species fully incorporate wetland issues. [5.1.3] 	Ongoing

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 6. LOCAL COMMUNITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AND CULTURAL VALUES

Operational Objective 6.1: Encourage active and informed participation of local communities and indigenous people, in particular women and youth, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

• Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage implementation work by CPs applying the <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 5. [6.1.1]) 	Ongoing
<p>MedWet: Work with local populations, and promote the inclusion of traditional practices and structures in management procedures (especially for North Africa, Prespa, and Neretva). [6.1.2]</p>	<p>✓ The MedWet projects: - LIFE 3rd Countries for the Maghreb region; - Prespa and - Dialogue on Water, Food and Environment all include strong components of local people participation and use of traditional practices on management.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue supporting the Participatory Management Clearinghouse, including the provision of new materials when available. [6.1.3] 	<p>✓ support, including development of redeveloped Web-site, continued.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CBD on the development and further elaboration of joint guidelines based on the <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 5). [6.1.5] 	<p>✓ through collaboration with CBD secretariat, multi-convention approach to guidelines development being proposed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage provision by CPs and others of case studies on social and cultural values of wetlands, and disseminate through Ramsar Web site, as appropriate. [6.1.6] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa: Disseminate and promote the application of the new guidelines on management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, especially through NEPAD. MedWet: Incorporate the aspect of cultural values in all management planning and development activities undertaken through MedWet. [6.1.7] 	<p>Africa: ongoing MedWet is coordinating the inclusion of cultural aspects in all its activities, including Prespa, MedWet/Coast, salinas, Neretva and LIFE 3rd countries-Maghreb.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mechanism for the revision and preparation of CoP8 materials on cultural aspects of wetlands for publication. [R6.1.vii] 	Under consideration.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 7. PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Operational Objective 7.1: Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

• Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve the private sector in wetland wise use projects under development, including in Ecuador, Peru, Malawi, and provide support to IOPs in this endeavor. [7.1.1] 	Although the Secretariat (in close collaboration with WI) tried hard to involve the private sector, very little progress has been made so far.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs to involve other stakeholders, including the private sector, national science academies, universities and other professional, scientific, and technical societies of recognized merit in wetland-related decision-making. Africa: Continue working with private sector in the “W” wetland complex and seek to establish other links with the private sector for African wetlands. [7.1.2] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide assistance to IOPs in the setting up of a “Friends of Wetlands” forum. [7.1.3] 	WI tried to do so but with no success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs in establishing national and local private-sector “Friends of Wetlands” forums where major companies can seek advice on applying wise use practices in their business activities. [7.1.4] 	Contacted more than 30 companies but there is no interest for the Forum unless the Secretariat pays all expenses

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 8. INCENTIVES

Operational Objective 8.1: Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use principle, and the removal of perverse incentives.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work undertaken by STRP to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> develop and improve upon the Internet-based resource kit on positive incentives, prepared and maintained by IUCN—the World Conservation Union, including making available information supplied by CPs on the relevance, quality, and accessibility of the information provided and further needs regarding information on incentive measures . [8.1.2 & R8.1.iii] report to CoP9 on progress in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of positive incentive measures and the identification and removal of perverse incentives, including those relating to agriculture. [8.1.3] investigate linkages between incentives and related topics including financial mechanisms, trade, impact assessment and valuation. [R8.1.iv] 	Ongoing, as required – lower priority STRP work area.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 9. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (CEPA)

Operational Objective R9.i: Integrate CEPA processes into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on integrating CEPA into all Convention work programmes, including joint work plans with other conventions and organizations, and review all joint work plans to ensure full coverage of CEPA. [R9.i.i] MedWet: align the communications strategy of Medwet with the Convention's CEPA programme. [R9.i.i] 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The MedWet-CEPA strategy 2003-2005 adapting the Ramsar CEPA strategy to the Mediterranean region was approved at MedWet/Com5 in June 2003, and its implementation is already in progress.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work of the STRP expert Working Group on CEPA to undertake a programme of work on CEPA as set out in Annex II of Resolution VIII.31. [R9.i.iii] 	<p>Ongoing – as agreed by STRP11, Wetlands International's revitalised CEPA Specialist Group has developed a draft programme of work in response to both the Convention's CEPA programme (Resolution VIII.31) and Wetland International's Capacity Building Programme.</p>

Operational Objective 9.ii Demonstrate that CEPA processes are effective in achieving Ramsar's wetland wise use objectives at the global, national and local levels.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available any work by STRP on reviews of CEPA programs and case studies, and pilot projects evaluating different CEPA approaches. [R9.ii.iii] 	<p>Awaiting implementation work by CEPA Specialist Group</p>

Operational Objective 9.iii: Provide national leadership, networks and cohesive frameworks to support and catalyse CEPA for the wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage synergies on CEPA with other conventions and programmes, including contributing, as appropriate, to any work they undertake. [R9.iii.vi] 	<p>Opportunity to contribute directly to CBD development of CEPA limited by Secretariat capacity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an on-line searchable listing of expertise in CEPA and of the CEPA Focal Points, which can be accessed to assist CEPA at national and international levels, and promote this service to assist CEPA programmes and activities through Ramsar's CEPA mini-Web site. [R9.iii.vii] 	<p>✓ Web-based system established in 2003</p>

Operational Objective 9.iv: Transfer, exchange and share CEPA information and expertise that promotes and results in the wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop and maintain Ramsar's CEPA mini-Web site. [R9.iv.i] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IOPs to make available additional CEPA resource materials through the CEPA mini-Web site. [R9.iv.ii] 	<p>Ongoing, although the limited Secretariat resources for this seriously limit progress in this, particularly in French and Spanish</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare further Ramsar CEPA materials, as appropriate, and make them available, including through Ramsar's CEPA mini-Web site. [R9.iv.iii] 	World Wetlands Day 2003 and 2004 materials prepared and disseminated, and made web-accessible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support establishment of further CEPA e-mail networks, as needed. [R9.iv.iv] 	No need has been identified as yet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support efforts to resource coordination of the Wetland Link International (WLI) programme. [R9.iv.v] 	✓WLI relaunched in 2003 with new Web-site, linked to Ramsar CEPA mini-web site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review requirements, options and costs of establishing a Ramsar photolibrary. [R9.iv.vii] 	Not progressed – but many of the images used in the Ramsar CoP8 wetlands book now potentially available to the Secretariat for onward use (although for each use permission has to be sought, and in some cases payment needed).

Operational Objective 9.v: Improve the individual and collective capacity and opportunities of people to participate in and contribute to using wetlands wisely, through the recognition of the values of wetland resources.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage IOPs to identify sources of expert information and training opportunities in wetland CEPA in order to facilitate the sharing of expertise and knowledge at the local, national, regional and global levels. [R9.v.ii] 	Not progressed

Operational Objective 9.vi: Foster sustained national campaigns, programmes and projects to raise community awareness of the important ecosystem services provided by wetlands as well as their social, economic and cultural values.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and distribute materials for World Wetlands Day 2004 and 2005. [R9.vi.ii] 	✓ 2003 and 2004 WWD materials distributed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As opportunities arise, work with the media on wetland stories and issues, providing information as and when requested. [R9.vi.iii] 	Ongoing

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 10. DESIGNATION OF RAMSAR SITES

Operational Objective 10.1: Apply the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Handbook 7).

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage CPs to establish a strategy, priority and targets for Ramsar site designation and to provide these to the Secretariat and CoP. Promote and encourage designation as Ramsar sites of already existing Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites. Support WWF's initiative on designation of coral reefs as Ramsar sites. [R10.1.i] 	Ongoing – targets for establishing such strategies will be identified from CoP9 National Planning Tools, once submitted to the Secretariat.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include work on investigate methods for defining targets for representation of wetland types in the Ramsar List in the context of the Strategic Framework in the Ramsar Sites Database contract with Wetlands International, resources permitting; and support any input from STRP to this work though interpretation of the term ‘under-represented type’. [R10.1.iii] 	<p>Covered by current Ramsar Sites Database contract, and joint opportunities with other partners to develop analyses being pursued.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to the Standing Committee, as and when any information on Ramsar site boundary revisions and accompanying documentation provided in response to Resolution VIII.21, paragraph 9. is provided by CPs. [R10.1.ix] 	<p>Any cases provided to the Secretariat will be included in the SC30 paper on boundary change options</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the work by STRP on additional Criteria and guidelines for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites concerning their socio-economic and cultural values and functions that are relevant to biological diversity, as listed in Annex 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). [R10.1.xi] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support any work by STRP and Wetlands International on harmonizing of the layout and information fields of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) and the core data fields recommended in the Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory. [R10.1.xiii] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that work on protocols for the electronic submission of RISs forms part of the Ramsar Sites Database contract with Wetlands International, and make protocols available to CPs once developed. [R10.1.xvi] 	<p>✓ Included in Ramsar Sites Database contract, protocols under development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support any work by STRP on reviewing the ecological roles played by reservoirs and other human-made wetlands, including their use by aquatic and other water-dependent biota, and preparation of guidance for Contracting Parties concerning the identification and designation of such wetlands. [R10.1.xviii] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage provision of analyses and information to help Parties to apply the Strategic Framework to identify and designate Ramsar sites, including further identification of under-represented wetland types, including through the Ramsar Sites Database contract with Wetlands International. [10.1.7] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage work by IOPs on 	<p>Ongoing. STRP’s WG4 is evaluating opportunities</p>

updating for each CoP of the 1% thresholds for waterbird populations for the application of Criterion 6 for Ramsar site designation; and seek to provide such population information for other wetland-dependent taxa . [10.1.8]	for providing information on other wetland-dependent taxa.
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Operational Objective 10.2: Maintain the Ramsar Sites Database and constantly update it with the best available information, and use the database as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review and finalise for listing all Ramsar Information Sheets and maps provided by CPs. [10.2.1] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to urge all CPs to update Ramsar Information Sheets, and ensure that Wetlands International provides regular updates on which sites require updating. [10.2.4] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the work of Wetlands International on the Ramsar Sites Database development and management. 	Ongoing, through Ramsar Sites Database contract.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to supply Wetlands International with all RIS and related data supplied by Contracting Parties, for inclusion in the Ramsar Sites Database for public availability. [10.2.6] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include links in the Ramsar Sites Database to other relevant data on Ramsar sites, including that supplied by Contracting Parties in addition to the RIS, so that this data can be made publicly available, subject to consultation with the Contracting Party concerned. [R10.2.i] 	✓ Part of the Ramsar Sites Database contract – links to International Waterbird Census data under consideration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a mechanism for the maintenance of Article 3.2 information reported by Contracting Parties as part of the Ramsar Sites Database; and prepare and circulate to all Contracting Parties a simple format for this reporting. [R10.2.ii] 	Ongoing – Article 3.2 reporting format in draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the continued development of the Ramsar Sites Database so as to reflect the information as provided in the RIS as revised by Resolution VIII.13, and linked to relevant supplementary data, and make arrangements for the Ramsar Sites Database to be accessible through the World Wide Web. [R10.2.iii] 	✓ Undertaken through Ramsar Sites Database contract. On-line searchable sites database is now publicly available via WI's Web-site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support establishment of arrangements to hold digital maps as part of the Ramsar Sites Database, and to make available, as appropriate and taking account of copyright issues and national regulations, such maps for inclusion, <i>inter alia</i>, in the further development of the Web presentation of the Ramsar Sites Database by Wetlands International, the 	Ongoing

Ramsar Wetland Data Gateway maintained by CIESIN, and the Global Database of Protected Areas maintained by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). [R10.2.iv]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to prepare an <i>Annotated List text for all new and updated Ramsar sites</i>, and make available through the Ramsar Web site; and support preparation of a fully up-to-date version of the <i>Directory of Wetlands of International Importance</i> in electronic format, for CoP9. [10.2.6] 	Ongoing, as part of Secretariat work (<i>Annotated List</i>) and Ramsar Sites Database contract (<i>Directory</i>)

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 11. MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND MONITORING OF RAMSAR SITES

Operational Objective 11.1: Maintain the ecological character of all Ramsar sites.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work by STRP on developing a field guide for the practical application of the guidelines on management planning adopted by Resolution VIII.14. [R11.1.viii] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request information from CPs on agriculture-related management practices developed for areas that include Ramsar sites to support any work by STRP and IOPs on the preparation of guidelines. [R11.1.x] 	Awaiting formulation of information request from IOPs tasked to compile reporting on these matters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate San José Record for the promotion of wetland management, if resources permit. [11.1.3] 	No resources yet provided by CPs to permit establishment of the Record.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage CPs to prepare nominations for submission to the San José Record, once procedures established. [R11.1.xii] 	Awaits establishment of the Record.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on further guidance on zonation and monitoring programmes and methodologies for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, including indicators and rapid assessment methodologies and the use of remote sensing. [R11.1.xiii] 	Ongoing

Operational Objective 11.2: Monitor the condition of Ramsar sites, notify the Ramsar Secretariat without delay of changes affecting Ramsar sites as required by Article 3.2, and apply the Montreux Record and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available to STRP, as needed, any 	No reports yet provided by CPs.

<p>relevant information provided by CPs on the impacts of drought in areas where it is not normally experienced, and other natural disasters, on the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (under Article 3.2) and other wetlands and on the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous peoples dependent on these wetlands within their territory. Africa: Encourage NEPAD to consider monitoring and assessment of the impacts of droughts and other natural disasters so as to seek ways for mitigating these impacts on African wetlands. [R11.2.i]</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on consolidated guidance on the overall process of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character. [R11.2.ii] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to urge CPs to make timely Article 3.2 reports, and request such reports from Administrative Authorities when advised by third parties of human-induced threats to Ramsar sites. [11.2.4] 	Ongoing – very few reports have been received directly from Administrative Authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and undertake Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs), as required and requested by CPs. [11.2.5] 	✓ Two RAMs undertaken involving Secretariat staff during 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the removal, as appropriate, of sites on the Montreux Record, including in consultation with STRP. [11.2.6] 	✓ Removal of three Ramsar sites facilitated by Secretariat staff during 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support any work by STRP on analysis and reporting of the status and trends in the ecological character of sites in the Ramsar List, setting, as far as possible, the status and trends of Ramsar sites within the wider context of the status and trends of marine, coastal and inland wetlands. [R11.2.ix] 	Ongoing

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 12. MANAGEMENT OF SHARED WATER RESOURCES, WETLANDS AND WETLAND SPECIES

Operational Objective 12.1: Promote inventory and integrated management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek the resources to fully operationalise the River Basin Initiative. [12.1.4] 	Project further revised with key partners, in light of CoP8 and WSSD outcomes and revised UNDP medium-sized project brief anticipated for submission at end of 2003.

Operational Objective 12.2: Promote cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support CPs in identifying appropriate sites for waterbird flyway networks, including through input of expertise from CMS and AEWA, and continue to contribute to the development and implementation of the GEF AEWA flyways project. Asia: Continue to participate in the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy. [12.2.3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued collaboration with AEWA on development of UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian flyways project, being considered for approval by GEF Council in November 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage IOPs and others to provide information on the population dynamics and sustainable harvesting of wetland dependent species, especially migratory waterbirds, for dissemination to CPs. [12.2.4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information yet provided – it is anticipated that new materials will be discussed at Global Flyways Conference (April 2003), and through work under the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support CPs in ensuring that national hunting legislation is consistent with the wise use principle for migratory waterbird and other wetland-dependent species. [12.2.5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not progressed as a specific issue.

Operational Objective 12.3: Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to manage and implement the work of the MedWet Initiative and develop and disseminate a full and coherent programme of its activities. [12.3.1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to the Standing Committee on the establishment and implementation of the MoU with the Greek Government on specific financial and institutional arrangement of the MedWet Coordination Unit in Athens for years 2003-2005. [R12.3.i] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MoU completed and being implemented.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support CPs in developing regional initiatives, including proactively, by developing contacts with interested CPs. Asia: continue exploring with CPs opportunities for developing a Himalayan mountain wetlands initiative. MedWet: provide expertise and advice on the MedWet Initiative experience to requests for the establishment of new regional initiatives, and participate in the process as resources permit. [12.3.2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. ✓ good progress with development of Himalayan Initiative, and establishment of Panama Regional Centre.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 13. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Operation Objective 13.1: Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other agencies.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and keep under review Joint Work Plans with other MEAs and, as resources permit, develop further joint activities with MEAs, including participating in the Joint Liaison Group with UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. MedWet: continue to develop contact with the EU concerning wetland activities. [13.1.1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ significant collaboration with CBD continued, including through SBSITTA and participation in expert groups, especially on inland waters, marine and coastal, indicators and assessment, ecosystem approach, sustainable use, participatory management and incentives. Progress report CBD-Ramsar 3rd JWP being prepared for CBD CoP7 (Feb. 2004). ✓ Joint Work Plan with CMS and AEWA completed ✓ Contributed to UNFCCC synergies workshops ✓ Participated in Rio conventions' Joint Liaison Group ✓ MedWet has further developed collaboration with the EU, and especially the LIFE and INTERREG programmes (3 projects funded in 2003) and the SMAP secretariat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep under review joint work with other MEAs, including note of successes and constraints during 2003. [R13.1.i] 	Ongoing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the secretariats of other MEAs and programmes to ensure that new Ramsar guidance is fully available to their CPs. [R13.1.ii] 	Secretariats advised that CoP8 guidance available via the Ramsar Web-site. The 2 nd edition of Ramsar 'Toolkit' of Wise Use Handbooks, once prepared, will be circulated widely to convention focal points.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite IPCC and UNFCCC to undertake wetland related work, and support the involvement of S'IRP, as appropriate. [R13.1.iv] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek to expand cooperation with UNESCO, including through implementation of the Programme of Joint Work with MAB and through the Ramsar CEPA programme. [13.1.2] 	✓ Joint CEPA work products with MAB/ UNESCO being prepared for 2004.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue regional level collaborations with MEAs through Memoranda and joint work plans. Africa: Give priority to the implementation of the MoCs with the Lake Chad basin Commission and the Niger Basin authority. Americas: Maintain contact with the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Regional Sea Programme for the Caribbean in Jamaica, to agree plan of joint activities. Asia: initiate 	Ongoing.

discussions on collaboration with ROPME. [13.1.3]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As capacity permits, identify topics of common interest to Ramsar and CITES as basis of establishing improved links. [13.1.4] 	✓ dialogue maintained, concerning especially wetland products and marine/coastal matters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As capacity permits, identify topics of common interest to Ramsar as a basis for establishing improved regional links with regional bodies and programmes. Americas: continue to identify key joint actions with OAS. MedWet: continue to develop contact with the EU concerning wetland activities. [13.1.5] 	<p>Ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Close links established with UNDP in Central America and the EU. ✓ MedWet has had three projects on wetlands approved for funding by the EU in 2003: LIFE 3rd countries – Maghreb: 1,2 Million EUR INTERREG – MedWet/Regions: 2,3 Million EUR INTERREG - MedWet/SUDOE: 700k EUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa: Continue to support and contribute to the development and implementation of the Strategy and Plan of Action of NEPAD on wetlands. [13.1.6] 	Ongoing. Proposal to establish Secretariat support for a regionally-based NEPAD wetlands project officer awaiting confirmation from government of Kenya.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support implementation by making Ramsar's guidelines and handbooks available to SIDS. [13.1.7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ramsar Handbooks provided to support projects in Pacific Islands on implementation; 2nd edition will be made available to SIDS. ✓ A training session on Ramsar issues was provided to the representatives of the UK Overseas Territories in the Americas in November 2003. ✓ Technical advice was provided to the Caribbean Island States upon request.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement priority actions in the Ramsar/SPREP Joint Work Plan, and review plan in light of CoP8 decisions, as Secretariat capacity to support Oceania work permits. [13.1.8] 	Limited progress, owing to limited Secretariat capacity in 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support further review by SC, if deemed appropriate, on the advantages and disadvantages and feasibility of regional economic integration or similar organizations/ institutions gaining Contracting Party status under the Convention, including the possibility of amending the Convention to that effect if necessary. [13.1.9] 	Not addressed in 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue developing partnerships with UN agencies and committees. [13.1.10] 	✓ contact on common issues arising from CoP8 established with FAO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As capacity permits, continue contacts with water and coastal organizations and initiatives, <i>inter alia</i>, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), the World Water Council, the Global Water Partnership, and the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), using the vehicle of the RBI once fully operational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ continued participation in ICRI meetings. ✓ participation at the Iberoamerican River Basin Congress to spread Ramsar's message and guidelines. ✓ MedWet has furthered its collaboration with a number of regional / expert institutions including: - UNEP/MAP; - GWP-Med; - IWMI

[13.1.11]	Limited progress on water-related issues pending full initiation of RBI and filling of Secretariat water issues officer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and report on experience of UNEP harmonization of national reporting pilot projects, once available. [13.1.12] 	Report from UNEP not yet received
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with UNEP and its agencies, and participating in the Environmental Management Group. [R13.1.v] 	✓ continued participation in UNEP Environmental Management Group meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with UNEP to secure full involvement of Ramsar Administrative Authorities in convention compliance work. [R13.1.vii] 	Not progressed in 2003.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 14. SHARING OF EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION

Operational Objective 14.1: Promote the sharing of expertise and information.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the sharing of knowledge (traditional, indigenous, and more recently derived technologies and methods) at the global, regional, and national levels, through the CEPA Programme. [14.1.1] – see Operational Objective 9 	Ongoing. ✓ Contribution to ITTO/UNFF mangrove technology transfer methodologies work continued.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs and IOPs to make available and share training opportunities. Africa: Help develop and implement training courses within the NEPAD framework. [14.1.2] 	Ongoing. ✓ Continued contribution to Netherlands RIZA-WATC training courses on wetlands management, including Board chairing. Continued support to development by WI of Ramsar Training Service proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage CPs, IOPs and others to establish site twinning mechanisms, and seek to ensure that those established are reported to the Secretariat. [14.1.3] 	Ongoing. Opportunities for regional site networks being examined through workshops funded under the Ramsar-Danone project. The UNDP-GEF flyways project, approved by GEF Council in November 2003, will develop flyway-scale Ramsar site networks managed for migratory waterbirds in 2004/5.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain existing Ramsar Web site and its topical mini-Web sites, and explore with IUCN the continuation of its biodiversity economics Web site, for knowledge and information sharing. [14.1.4] 	Ongoing. ✓ New materials, links and information have been added to the main Ramsar Web-site, the CEPA and restoration mini-Web sites. No progress on the IUCN biodiversity economics web-site. ✓ The MedWet Web site has been completely restructured and is constantly updated and enriched, also achieving very good visitation rates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the Convention's Wetland Expert Database, through the work of the 	✓ Wetland Expert Database now updated and on-line accessible to Secretariat staff via STRP Support

STRP Support Service.	Service Web site.
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OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 15. FINANCING THE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Operational Objective 15.1: Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise CPs and partners on how and where to find funding for wetland projects, when requested. [15.1.1] 	Ongoing. Many contacts established and support provided in all parts of the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage donors to assign priorities to wetland projects, including through discussions with DANIDA, AECI, DFID, DDC FFEM, UNEP & UNDP, and urge these donors to ensure that the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands and production potential of wetlands is fully addressed in the design, planning and implementation of river basin and water resource management projects. Africa: Contribute to the identification of priority projects, including wetland inventories, to be submitted to bilateral and multilateral donors through NEPAD. [R15.1.i] 	<p>✓ Good contact and collaboration established with many donor agencies as well as UNEP, UNDP, GEF, World Bank, FFEM, etc. Work and joint projects going on in different parts of the world. Training for OECD/DAC members being organized by the German International Academy for the Environment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise CPs and partners on how and where to find funding for wetland projects, when requested, and encourage donors to consider providing such funding. Use the Conservation Finance Alliance as leverage to promote sustainable finance mechanism for wetland conservation. Help CPs and partners to prepare good project proposals. Continue support to the Comoros to establish an environmental fund. Participate in training and workshops for partners and donor agencies, attend training arranged by the CFA. Ensure the Conservation Finance guide is made fully available to all CPs. [15.1.2] 	<p>Ongoing, through the Conservation Finance Alliance (5000 CDs of the CFA conservation finance guide distributed so far).</p> <p>Several training sessions provided for both CPs and donor agencies.</p> <p>Several project proposals reviewed or prepared.</p> <p>Work in the Comoros suspended due to political instability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Secretariat input to the EU Water Initiative Multistakeholder forum, as capacity permits, so as to encourage maintenance of wetlands and their role in maintaining the quality and quantity of water, including at the basin scale.. [R15.1.ii] 	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and advice to CPs, as requested, in their working with their bilateral development assistance agencies. [15.1.3] 	<p>No request directly received from CPs, but many request received from NGOs and partners.</p> <p>✓ MedWet has mobilised support by bilateral donors for a number of projects including: Prespa (donors: German GTZ and KfW), Neretva (donor: Monaco), and Turkish small lakes (donor: Greece)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Parties through visits to development banks and donors to exchange views and ideas on how to best support the Convention so as to ensure that wetland conservation and wise use is afforded due attention and priority. [15.1.5] 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on decisions by the SC on the future of the Small Grants Fund, visit donors and seek to convince them to increase their support to the SGF. [15.1.6] 	<p>Standing Committee will consider SGF future at its 30th meeting (January 2004)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and advise on efforts of Parties, as requested, to develop wetland training and education centres at Ramsar sites and the training of wetland educators in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.. Americas: Provide necessary support to the establishment of the Panama Regional Center. [15.1.7] 	<p>✓ support provided to progress Panama Regional Centre establishment. 2003 revitalisation of Wetland Link International (WLI) will support this activity globally.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with at least five countries during 2003 in GEF wetland conservation and wise use project preparation, and in Africa project preparation for submission through NEPAD. MedWet: support development of appropriate projects in Mediterranean Basin countries. [15.1.9] 	<p>✓ Work underway on a GEF project in Nepal and Peru. Comoros proposal failed.</p> <p>✓ In the Prespa project of MedWet the implementation of the PDF-B project has already started, expected to lead to a full GEF project. The GEF-funded MedWet/Coast project is again picking up speed after the appointment of the new Regional Coordinator. MedWet is also in contact with GEF regarding potential collaboration on the Agriculture, Water and Wetlands project.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Regional Development Banks, the World Bank, the EC and other potential UN partners to seek support to the Convention. Also seek support amongst the US international environment NGOs. Africa: Continue to work closely with the World Bank, UNEP, UNDP, the African development Bank, and the European Commission through NEPAD. [15.1.10] 	<p>No time and resources available to visit Regional Development Banks and UN, but regular visits to EC and donors' field representations.</p> <p>✓ for NEPAD, participated in NEPAD environment action plan donors conference (December 2003).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to seek support for Ramsar to be invited to all GEF Council meetings as an observer organization. [R15.1.v] 	<p>✓ Secretariat attended GEF Council meeting (November 2003) as invited observer organization.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide assistance, when requested, to CPs and donors in developing, screening and evaluating wetland projects, as capacity permits. [15.1.11] 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek contact with appropriate private sector organizations to identify opportunities for private sector funding of wetland projects under Ramsar. Africa: Continue to work with Point Afrique and seek opportunities to work with other private operators on tourism development. 	Not progressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue review of effective mechanisms for environmentally sound trade in wetland-derived plant and animal products as basis of advice to Parties. 	Ongoing. Several initiatives underway including in South Africa, Central America, Indonesia, China, Peru, Ecuador, and Argentina.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate consideration of a <i>modus operandi</i> for a voluntary “Ramsar Label” for wetland products and services that are provided in both environmentally sound and socially equitable manners. [15.1.14] 	Under discussion

Operational Objective 15.2: Ensure that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support CPs in to ensuring that proposed grants, loans, and development projects include environmental safeguards and environmental assessments of possible impacts upon wetlands. [15.2.1] 	Ongoing, as requested.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 16. FINANCING OF THE CONVENTION

Operational Objective 16.1: Provide the financial resources required for the Convention’s governance mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on SC decisions on a Ramsar Endowment Fund, support the SC in putting in place Fund mechanisms. [R16.1.i] 	Dependent on decision by 30 th meeting of SC (January 2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all relevant CPs and other potential funding organizations to provide voluntary funding to the SGF, its Endowment Fund, the Voluntary Fund for the Convention’s CEPA Programme, STRP work and other Convention initiatives. Africa: Swiss Grant Fund for Africa: prepare a report on 2003 project 	✓ Requests made to CPs and others for SGF2003, CEPA programme, and STRP work. Swiss Grant Fund for Africa: implementation report for 2002 prepared.

implementation, and submit new proposal for 2004 project funding to the Swiss government. [16.1.2]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue exploration of opportunities to establish full-time Water Officer and CEPA Programme Officer posts prior to CoP9 through voluntary contributions or secondments. [16.1.4] 	Ongoing. Elements of Water Officer work being incorporated into revised RBI project proposal. Some support for CEPA work in 2004 will come from a generous secondment from Andorra.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 17. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS OF THE CONVENTION

Operational Objective 17.1: Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Ramsar Secretariat are operating at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness to support implementation of this Strategic Plan.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support SC review of CoP procedures and development of CoP9 Agenda, in implementation of Resolution VIII.45. (17.1.2) 	Ongoing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with SPREP and WWF and others to agree a mechanism for establishing regionally-based Oceania post. (R17.1.vii) 	Ongoing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop CoP9 National Report Format for SC approval. (17.1.3) 	✓ 2003. CPs reminded to complete and submit to Secretariat CoP9 National Planning Tool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STRP Support Service established and operational under Secretariat contract, with approval of SC. (R17.1.v) 	✓ 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that STRP's ongoing priorities are reflected in advice from the SC on STRP's 2003-2005 work plan priorities.(17.1.5) 	✓ achieved 2003 through STRP11's establishment of 2003-2005 Work Plan approved by SC members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Secretariat 2004 Work Plan prepared for SC approval. (17.1.7) 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare 2005 Secretariat Work Plan, including indicating anticipated staff time allocation for each work area based on review, as far as possible, of time spent on tasks during 2004. (17.1.7) 	2004 task for 31 st meeting of Standing Committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign the role of Regional Coordinator for Oceania to an officer of the Secretariat, and, as an interim arrangement, identify the resources to support a position of intern for the Oceania Region (R17.1.viii) 	✓ As of November 2003, Senior Advisor for Asia has assumed Oceania role, to become Senior Advisory for Asia-Pacific. Pursuing resources for Oceania intern will await outcome of seeking establishment of a regionally-based Pacific Island officer.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and make recommendations to the SC for consideration by CoP regarding the staffing and budget requirements of the Ramsar Secretariat (17.1.8) 	Ongoing
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OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 18. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

Operational Objective 18.1: Develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a report on the establishment and running of National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees. (18.1.2) Advise and encourage CPs in their establishment and running of National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees. (18.1.2) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek ways of simplifying and harmonising the activities and requirements of the Ramsar Convention, and continue actively to seek to harmonise the requirements of the Convention with all other environment-related international instruments (R18.1.ii) 	<p>In part, this is being delivered through the revision and updating of the Ramsar ‘toolkit’ of Wise Use Handbooks, and of a Convention Manual (updating the 1997 Ramsar Convention Manual), as resources permit.</p> <p>✓ Collaboration with other MEAs including through joint work plans so as to deliver harmonised guidance to countries has continued to be actively pursued, in 2003 especially through joint development with CBD of inland waters revised programme of work, rapid assessment methodologies and harmonised 2010 wetland biodiversity targets and indicators.</p>

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 19. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTNERS AND OTHERS

Operational Objective 19.1: Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention’s International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request each IOP to review Strategic Plan actions and prepare a draft programme of joint work for Convention support, covering global and national activities. (19.1.1) 	Ongoing. Memorandum of Cooperation on technical support issues signed with IUCN in September 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the contribution of networks of experts of the International Partner Organizations and other collaborating organizations to the work of the STRP and the Convention, will be achieved as part of the STRP Support Service (see Action R17.1.v). (19.1.2) 	STRP Support Service has made limited progress to date in engaging IOP’s expert networks in strengthening convention support.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review and, as necessary, update formal agreements, including Memoranda of Cooperation / Understanding with IOPs. (19.1.3) 	<p>Ongoing. MedWet has prepared a MoC between Ramsar and IWMI (International Water Management Institute) to be signed soon. It is also updating the MoC between the Convention and UNEP/MAP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise SC on any requests received from eligible organizations for IOP status. (19.1.4) 	<p>None requested in 2003</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss existing memoranda of cooperation with other bodies with these organizations, and others appointed as observers to STRP, establishing formal memoranda and joint programmes of work as appropriate. (19.1.5) Americas: continue to maintain contacts on joint work with TNC and Ducks Unlimited. (19.1.5) 	<p>Memorandum of Cooperation with LakeNet signed April 2003. Final draft Memorandum with International Water Management Institute IWMI) prepared. Owing to the restructuring of TNC, the discussions on specific joint work in the Americas have been postponed to a later date. TNC input to STRP indicators work under discussion. Ducks Unlimited has continued to provide specific support to carry out waterfowl surveys, aiming at identifying wetlands of international importance for waterfowl, in the Caribbean and Latin America, in particular. It is also providing support for the restoration of the Nariva Ramsar site and the establishment of a conservation database for Pantanal.</p>

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 20. TRAINING

Operational Objective 20.1: Identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, and implement appropriate responses.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support ongoing efforts by Wetlands International to secure funding for full implementation of the Convention's Wetland Training Service. (20.1.1) 	<p>Ongoing – revised proposal focussing on support to donor countries and Parties in identifying priorities and gaps for training development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify at national, provincial, and local levels the needs and target audiences for training (20.1.2) Americas: Undertake training needs assessment through the Panama Regional Center, once established. (20.1.2) 	<p>This will be largely dependent on operationalising the Wetland Training Service under Action 20.1.1 above.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate, when received, information about training for the conservation and wise use of wetlands through the CEPA Programme and Ramsar Web site. (20.1.9) 	<p>Ongoing</p>

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 21. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION

Operational Objective 21.1: Secure the universal membership of the Convention.

Secretariat 2004 activities	2003 progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available general accession kit information notes through Ramsar Web-site (21.1.1) • The Secretariat's Regional Advisory Units will continue to establish contact and work with non-Parties to secure their accession, with a focus on the Middle East and Central Asia, Caribbean, and Pacific Island States. (21.1.1) • Europe: continue working with Andorra • Africa: continue to support Ethiopia, Lesotho, Sudan, and the Seychelles with accession preparations. • Americas: continue contacts with Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and initiate contacts with Diplomatic Channels in London of Dominica and St. Kitts & Nevis. • Asia-Pacific: continue working with Lao PDR, Brunei Darussalem, central Asian countries and Pacific Island States for accession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accession kit posted on Web-site ✓ Work with countries has led to accession by a further 5 CPs during 2003 to date.