

Agenda item 9.4

**Proposals for Regional Initiatives within the framework of the
Convention**

Note by the Secretariat

1. Subsequent to the issuing of DOC. SC31-21 Additional Addendum 2, the Secretariat has received on 6 June 2005 a further proposal for a regional initiative ("RAMCEA") submitted by Uganda.
2. The proposal forms as submitted are attached to this note.
3. Owing to its late receipt, the Secretariat has not had an opportunity to review this proposals and make a recommendation for consideration by the Standing Committee.

AFRICA

Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA)

Countries involved: **Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania**

Proposal submitted by: **The Republic of Uganda**

COP8 Resolution VIII.30 <i>Guidance</i>	Proposed regional initiative
AIM	
1. The overall aim of regional initiatives should be to promote the objectives of the Convention in general and to implement the Ramsar Strategic Plan in particular, through regional and subregional cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern.	The overall aim is to support the African Countries to effectively implement the Convention through the training of Administrative Authorities, developing an a network of wetland professionals, practitioners and managers. This initiative will build on Uganda's 15 years experience in wetland management. This will provide an opportunity to disseminate lessons learnt from Uganda's experience to other country in the sub-region and ultimately to the whole of Africa.
SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS	
2. Regional and sub-regional initiatives should be based on a bottom-up approach. As a matter of priority, the involvement of as many as possible Contracting Parties of the region or sub-region(s) covered by the new initiative should be sought from the start.	This initiative was discussed at the African Regional Meeting in Arusha in April and endorsed for consideration by the SC31.
3. Each initiative should entail the participation, from the start, not only of the Administrative Authorities responsible for the application of the Convention in the Contracting Parties involved, but also of all other relevant stakeholders with an interest in and directly or indirectly responsible for wetland issues, including the ministries responsible for the environment and water issues , intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academia, and economic actors.	The initiative will build on the on-going eastern Regional Wetlands Task Force comprised of representatives from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. This task is coordinated by IUCN-the World Conservation Union. The task force has developed in country networks comprised of representatives from line ministries, research and academic institutions and NGOs.
4. A regional initiative should base its operation on the development of networks of collaboration established upon clearly defined terms of reference, thus creating an enabling environment for the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels.	Uganda has provided leadership in wetland management and the Regional Wetlands Task Force. Uganda is also a key player in the International Course on African Wetland Management and has been involved in establishing several wetland networks in collaboration with UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education and RIZA of the Netherlands

<p>5. At an early stage, a regional initiative should seek collaboration with other intergovernmental or international partners operating in its region, by establishing complementary and non-duplicative activities.</p>	<p>It is proposed to continue the established links with IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office, WWF, Birdlife International African Partnership which is currently chaired by a Ugandan NGO, Wetlands International, UNESCO-IHE training programmes. Uganda is also proposed to host the Pan African Ornithological Congress offices. In addition Uganda is host for the Nile Basin Initiative which a relevance to wetlands. NBI is in process of implementing a Wetlands Component which would provide an important link to the Centre.</p>
<p>6. The operation of a regional initiative should be based upon strong scientific and technical backing, provided by relevant institutions which should be recognized as partners in the initiative.</p>	<p>The Centre will be initially based in the Wetlands Inspection Division which receives technical backstopping from IUCN and has links with UNESCO-IHE and Makerere Institute of Environment and Natural Resources</p>
<p>7. The strategic and operational targets of a regional initiative should be fully aligned with the Strategic Plan of the Convention by means of policy and site technical work and activities.</p>	<p>A Ramsar centre for Eastern will focus on strategic objective of build capacity for implementation of the Convention in Africa. RACEA will focus on institutional structure to deal with the general implementation of the Convention in Africa.</p>
FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT	
<p>8. A regional initiative requires both political and financial support from Contracting Parties and other partners from the region. A substantial support from the host country is especially important if a regional office is to be established.</p>	<p>Uganda has a 10-year Wetland Sector Strategic Plan, which receives financial support from the Government of Uganda and development partners including the Belgium Government among others.</p> <p><i>More importantly the Center will be legacy left behind by Uganda's hosting of COP9. This is an important monument, which is supported by the Government of Uganda.</i></p>
<p>9. The launching of a regional or subregional initiative should rely upon secured start-up funding for planned activities and projects.</p>	<p>Uganda is already implementing several regional wetland programmes including the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project, the Eastern Africa Regional Wetlands Programme coordinated by IUCN. These will be scaled up and transformed to support the Centre as the long term framework.</p>
<p>10. Financial support from the Convention's core budget, should the Conference of the Parties so decide, will be provided for a pre-determined period of time – in principle not more than three years? After such a period, the support should be phased out. A regional initiative should generate its own resources and should become financially self-sufficient in the long term. When deciding financial support from the Convention's core budget, geographically equitable distribution should be taken into account.</p>	<p>It is proposed to seek seed funding to the tune of \$ 100,000 from the Ramsar Convention budget support to regional initiatives. In the long run it is proposed to set up a trust fund for wetland conservation or such similar financial mechanism.</p>
GOVERNANCE	

<p>11. Regional initiatives should establish their own advisory mechanisms, involving all the stakeholders, in order to provide guidance and insight. The Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee shall receive, through the Ramsar Bureau, reports on their activities and shall oversee their general policies relating to the implementation of the Convention.</p>	<p>The Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa will be managed by an Advisory Board comprised of representatives from Each of the participating countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania), IOPs based in the region, NGOs and representatives of development partners and the private sector. Each country will strengthen/establish a National Ramsar Committee</p>
<p>12. Specific arrangements as to the coordination between a regional initiative and the Convention should be worked out by the Ramsar Bureau under the guidance of the Standing Committee, and such arrangements should ultimately be approved by the Conference of the Parties.</p>	<p>This initiative as discussed at the African Regional meeting in Arusha in April 2005. The initiative was endorsed in principles and recommended for consideration by the Standing Committee in June 2005. Depending on the outcome of the SC this will be presented for approval by COP9 in November 2005. It is expected that the Centre will be established by mid 2006.</p>