

Agenda item 9.9

Wetlands and poverty reduction

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to consider and approve the attached draft Resolution for consideration by COP9.

Note by the Ramsar Secretariat

1. Issues related to wetlands and poverty reduction were extensively discussed at the Ramsar African Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 4-8 April 2005, where the Parties requested the development of a draft Resolution on these matters for consideration by Ramsar COP9.
2. The attached draft Resolution has been prepared by the Secretariat based upon material provided by Ghana and others at the Arusha meeting.

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COP9 DR15

Wetlands and poverty reduction

1. EMPHASIZING the relevance to poverty reduction of a number of decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, including Resolution 5.6 on the Wise use of wetlands, VII.8 on Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands, VIII.23 on Incentive measures as tools for achieving the wise use of wetlands, and VIII.36 on Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands, and ALSO EMPHASIZING the relevance of Decision IV/4 of the Convention on Biological Diversity concerning the Status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use;
2. NOTING the relevance of the Ramsar Convention to the delivery of many of the Millennium Development Goals; and
3. FURTHER NOTING the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, in particular its key messages to the effect that:
 - wetland ecosystems deliver a wide range of critical services for human well-being;
 - the projected continued loss and degradation of wetlands will result in further reduction in human health and well-being, especially for vulnerable people in less developed countries;
 - maintaining the natural functioning of wetlands, however, will enable them to continue to deliver their services to humans;
 - a cross-sectoral focus is urgently needed from policy- and decision-makers that emphasizes securing wetland ecosystem services in the context of achieving sustainable development;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

4. URGES Parties, whether nationally within developing countries or as donors, to take action to reduce poverty, especially in the following areas:
 - human life and safety: measures to protect against impacts such as cyclones, storm surges, saline intrusions, droughts and floods;
 - access to resources: measures to improve access, on a sustainable basis, to land, water and wetland resources such as fish;
 - ecological sustainability: measures to enhance the priority given to sustainability in all relevant mainstream policy sectors, including ecosystem restoration measures;

- governance: measures to improve the empowerment of the poor in decision-making processes and management institutions, including a gender-balanced approach;
 - economies: measures to improve, on an ecologically sustainable basis, the productivity of natural resources, and to regulate prices and labour costs to benefit the poor;
5. FURTHER URGES Parties, whether nationally within developing countries or as donors, to take or support action to:
- implement Programme Area 2, on wetlands, of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
 - raise awareness of the links between wetland degradation and poverty;
 - create new partnerships between local communities, developers and conservationists;
 - promote new sustainable financing mechanisms for wetland management and poverty reduction;
 - ensure that gender equality is taken into account in sustainable wetland management strategies; and
6. ENCOURAGES Parties to work with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, the Ramsar International Organization Partners, national and international NGOs and others to:
- undertake assessments of the economic, social, cultural and existence values of individual wetlands and wetlands in general and the services they deliver, with a view to enhancing sustainable livelihoods utilizing a wise use approach; and
 - build capacity within communities and relevant advisory services to enhance the empowerment of communities in relation to activities designed to increase food security, diversify economies, and add value to wetland products.