

Agenda item 9.10b

Implementation of the Convention's Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) Programme in 2006-2008

Developing the Convention's corporate image and communications strategy 2006-2008 – A note for discussion on the future directions for the Convention's corporate image

Action requested: Standing Committee may wish to consider this information note and advise on how the members would wish the Secretariat to proceed with this matter.

1. An organisation's corporate image is critical to its presentation and projection. These days, the logo is a key element of that presentation and projection. The original logo was adopted in 1989, though by administrative fiat, rather than by Standing Committee endorsement. SC21 in 1998 agreed to change to the present logo.
2. It is worth quoting the minutes in full from SC21, with italic emphases added by the current Secretariat:
 91. **The Secretary General** described the background to the search for a new graphic identity to express the expansion of the Convention's concerns from waterfowl habitat to the broader issues of sustainable use of wetland resources. *This wider approach has been occasioned in large part by the Convention's expansion to the developing countries, where wetland issues frequently involve questions of people's livelihood.* SC20 had requested the preservation of the original logo in any new attempt, but that proved to be impossible. The Bureau commissioned five professional design agencies to suggest concepts and chose to pursue the concept presented by Saatchi and Saatchi, with a focus on the distinctive name "Ramsar" rather than upon any pictorial elements that would not be adaptable to small sizes.
 92. **Saatchi and Saatchi, design firm**, made a PowerPoint presentation of the evolution of the search for a new graphical identity and explanation of the conceptual and artistic reasoning behind the proposed new logo, and its flexibility in use.
 93. **Canada, Chair of the Subgroup**, thanked Saatchi and Saatchi for its work and recommended the proposed logo as excellent for promoting the Convention's new identity, to attract government and corporate interest. *The downside is the loss of 25 years of tradition, with a logo that is in use around the world, but examples of other logo changes show that it can be done smoothly and with great effect.* The Subgroup was "reasonably happy" with the proposed logo and recommended that the SC adopt it.

94. **Michael Moser, Wetlands International**, was invited to speak about Wetlands International's change of logo and noted that in that case there was no option of staying with the old logo. *The key is that logos cannot be decided by committee, and Ramsar has taken the sensible route of seeking expert advice; he urged that it not be left for everyone to tweak the proposed logo, that it be accepted at one go or rejected outright.* He urged that the transition to the new logo be made swiftly and cleanly.
95. **The Secretary General** suggested that the new logo be accepted and be launched as of 1 January. He foresaw no significant financial implications to the changeover.
3. Despite all the efforts and hopes described above, the current logo is not well perceived, even by the client community of the Convention. In some ways it has impeded, not promoted, the Convention by focusing on the Ramsar word rather than a visual image. The current logo does not convey any real image of the Convention's activities and aims. As it simply does not work to the wider public, it is a major impediment to effective and efficient communication.
 4. Additionally, the current logo does not reproduce well in black and white, and so has a "smeary" image when photocopied or faxed. Thus, even though it has been in use for only six years, professional advice is that it would be better to change now.
 5. Consequently, the Secretariat sought to develop alternative design concepts, without using core funds, in order to see whether the present logo could be developed further. It could not. The Secretariat then engaged in a process of circulating two new prospective logos to Standing Committee members and seeking comments at various times. The two logos were trialed at the Subgroup meetings in March, using a straw poll approach.
 6. One logo was chosen by the majority of participants during an informal vote at the COP9 Subgroup meeting. In a mailing to Standing Committee after that meeting, the two possible logos were also included for comment. Results from that mailing resulted in only two replies, which both favoured Logo 2.
 7. The Secretariat will present the two logos to the Standing Committee under Agenda item 9.10b.
 8. While the points made by Wetlands International in SC21 are indeed valid, there is no need to have a "Big Bang" approach to using the new logo, especially as COP9 makes an ideal time to "formally" launch any new logo. In this way expenditure of core funds on the logo replacement will be reduced to Secretariat funds which would be expended in any case on renewing office supplies. The logo design and finishing would be covered from extra-budgetary funding.
 9. During and after COP9 the Secretariat will undertake a strong corporate image development and revised communications strategy, so as to ensure that an optimal efficiency is in place for all communications and public image-related projects, including promotional materials and communication materials, such as common PowerPoint backgrounds for all Ramsar presentations, ensuring a common design for publications,

linking publication design to the Web design, major communications and visual projects, etc., on our own and with partnership from our NGO and corporate partners, as well as with Contracting Parties themselves.

10. The one key message is that a strong corporate image of the Convention is necessary, and it derives from ownership by all who take part in Ramsar processes.