

Agenda item 8.1

Action plan for the Convention in promoting IWRM and related themes as part of the Convention's work on the wise use of wetlands

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to discuss and consider approving the proposed action plan.

1. Resolution IX.3, *Engagement of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in ongoing multilateral processes dealing with water*, in part "INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to promote and implement, with Contracting Parties, relevant and key elements of the decision taken at CSD13 on Integrated Water Resources Management, including *inter alia* enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems that provide essential resources and benefits/services for human well-being and economic activity and developing innovative means of financing their protection; protecting and rehabilitating catchment areas for regulating water flows and improving water quality, taking into account the critical role of ecosystems; and supporting more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector; and also INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to report to the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee on an action plan for the Convention in promoting these themes in order for the Standing Committee through the Secretary General to provide input to the CSD report-back session in 2008."
2. This paper provides an initial proposal for such an action plan, although it will also draw on the proposed work plan for the Convention, 2006-2008 (SC34-5). As the Fourth World Water Forum will take place between the time of document preparation and the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee, a verbal update on the paper will be made at Standing Committee to take account of the Forum's conclusions.
3. The 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD13) decided to undertake a follow-up on water and sanitation by devoting, in 2008 and 2012, a separate segment of CSD review sessions to monitoring and following up the implementation of decisions taken at CSD13 on water and sanitation and their interlinkages. The timing of this means that all positions for consideration should be more or less ready by northern autumn 2007.
4. The action plan encompasses the following key features:
 - Providing follow-through from the Fourth World Water Forum (especially its high-level segment) and other relevant global and regional water initiatives which will occur until mid-2007, including the 2nd Intergovernmental Review foreseen for Beijing, October 2006, of the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA).

- Developing an enhanced focus on collaboration amongst Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on the issue of wetland conservation for the wise management of water resources, including impacts on biodiversity.
 - Ensuring that the importance of wetland ecosystem services as elaborated by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is recognized by Parties as a key element to effectively managing water resources whilst maintaining the ecosystem functioning of wetlands.
 - With support from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring that the role of ecosystem services in mitigating against and adapting to climate change is explicitly recognized.
 - Using World Wetlands Day in 2008 to promote this theme widely among civil society.
5. Elements of a Ramsar Convention Action Plan: actions and timelines.

By August 2006:

- Process the outcomes from 4th World Water Forum as an information paper for Ramsar Parties and International Organization Partners to use and implement. This paper will be circulated widely, including through the Web.

By December 2006:

- Elaborate a strategy for promoting the value of ecosystem services from wetlands, in partnership with IOPs and other organizations, for presentation at SC35.

By July 2007:

- Prepare an action paper for Parties on strategies for ensuring that IWRM is part of the national Ramsar approach. (Note that a related High Priority task for the Scientific and Technical Panel (STRP) is to build on the COP9 "*River Basin Management: additional guidance and framework for analysis of case studies*" (Resolution IX.1 Annex C i) to prepare further operational guidance for its "Critical Path" approach, including for the application of CEPA tools.)

By September 2007:

- Develop a proposal for input to the first high-level Evian Encounter, to obtain views from senior figures in the private sector as well as government and civil society.
- Using work to date, develop the inputs for the UN Secretary General's report to CSD in April 2008.

By June 2008:

- Use the World Wetlands Day focus to raise awareness at local level of the importance of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), through promotion and discussion of river basin management.
- Prepare final report and input to COP10 on the outcomes of the work since COP9, including linkages with climate change and actions under the UNFCCC.