

Agenda item 14

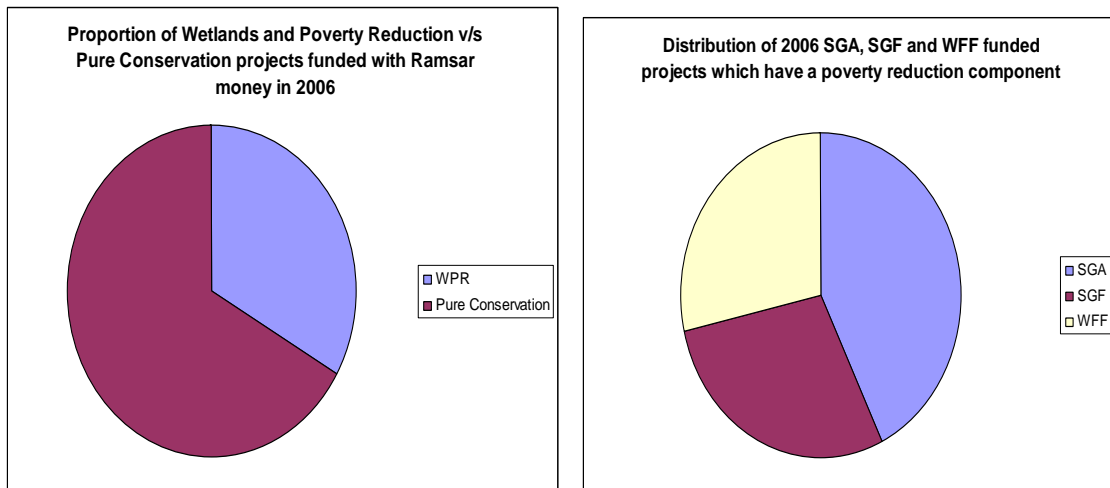
**Resolution IX.14: Wetlands and poverty reduction**

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is invited to consider and advise on the options for further implementation of Resolution IX.14, *inter alia*:

- the extent to which the Secretariat should pursue actions with Wetlands International and other International Organization Partners, UN agencies, etc., and
- the desirability of developing a follow-up draft Resolution for COP10, to assist in implementation amongst Contracting Parties.

**Actions undertaken pursuant to Resolution IX.14**

1. In Resolution IX.14, the Contracting Parties (CPs) urged the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to develop guidelines for its implementation. However, this task was identified in Resolution IX.2 as one of the lower priority tasks for the Panel during 2006-2008, and it is therefore unlikely to be carried forward before 2008. Nevertheless, during its 13<sup>th</sup> meeting the STRP considered the task and both the STRP and the Secretariat recognized the importance of the issue and the need to assist Parties in the implementation of this Resolution. The Panel also felt that the task as set out in Resolution IX.14 was potentially very broad and undefined, and it would be helpful to have clarified on what particular issues and aspects of wetlands and poverty reduction such guidance might focus.
2. As part of the allocation of lead responsibilities amongst Secretariat staff for supporting the implementation of COP9 Resolutions, the Senior Advisor for Africa has lead responsibility for assisting Parties and others in the overall implementation of Resolution IX.14.
3. In 2006 the Secretariat has emphasized the need for the projects funded under the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF), Wetlands for the Future Fund (WFF), and Swiss Grant for Africa (SGA) to have some poverty reduction and livelihood components and assist in the implementation of the Resolution at the national level where poverty is an issue. Three of the five SGA projects, seven of the ten WFF and two of the six SGFs funded and implemented in 2006 cycle have a focus on wetland management and poverty reduction.



4. Through the Swiss Grant for Africa, the Secretariat has also provided financial support to the government of Ghana in the development of its National Wetland Policy (NWP) and associated Action Plan, which also addresses poverty reduction issues. The objective of our support to Ghana is to be able to develop a standard framework for the development of NWPs that also address poverty reduction issues in order to inspire other Contracting Parties in the implementation of paragraph 8 of Resolution IX.14.
5. Although the Resolution did not require any specific actions from the Secretariat but called for the active involvement of Contracting Parties in its implementation, we have, in our facilitating role, initiated a series of consultations with the International Organization Partners (IOPs) to discuss the implementation of this Resolution.
6. We have begun collaboration with Wetlands International under its “Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project” (WPRP) and are cooperating in the policy and outreach and awareness components of the project. We have provided advice on the planned development of a toolkit (tools and awareness materials) for outreach and use in development, assessment and evaluation of poverty reduction programmes in wetland areas. This is one of the awareness and outreach activities envisaged by the WPRP and could assist in implementing Resolution IX.14 in Parties where poverty is an issue.
7. In December 2006 a presentation on the Resolution was given by the Secretariat’s Assistant Advisor for Africa at the Training of Trainers workshop on Wetlands and Poverty Reduction which was held under the capacity building component of the WPRP. Twenty-two trainees from different sectors and countries in east and west Africa participated in an interactive session during which they discussed the clarity of the Resolution and suggested some ways in which the areas identified in paragraph 7 (human life and safety, access to resources, ecological sustainability, governance, and economies) could be implemented. They also identified some tools Parties would need in order to be able to implement the resolution.
8. Although the group of trainees was not fully representative of the overall Ramsar constituency or of its different geographical regions, they agreed that the Resolution is rather vague and that the way it is phrased does not give clear indications of what Parties should and could do. This could suggest there may be the need to have a follow-up Resolution at COP10. A number of suggestions were also put forward regarding activities

that Parties could carry out to implement the different areas identified in paragraph 7. These could be addressed in Wetland International's toolkit in order to aid Parties with the implementation of the Resolution.

9. Moreover, the funding opportunities that exist for wetlands and poverty reduction projects from international organizations and other development partners will also be made available through a document to be prepared to assist Ramsar focal points and national wetlands committees, and Africa Parties will be assisted for the implementation of programme area 2 on wetlands of the Environment Action Plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (paragraph 9 of the Resolution).
10. The Secretariat's planned next steps will be to clarify our working relationship with WI on their WPRP project and to continue the discussions with the other IOPs and UN agencies to see how their poverty reduction and livelihood programs could also be used in the implementation of the Resolution (paragraph 10 of the Resolution).
11. Finally, it's important to emphasise, as indicated above, that some of the terms of the Resolution are not sufficiently clear and need to be reworded and narrowed down more precisely to assist Parties in overcoming the non-satisfaction of basic needs and services such as food, drinking water, housing, health, education, employment, sanitation, energy, etc., as poverty is defined. The socially unacceptable living conditions in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America represent a real challenge for Resolution IX.14 if it remains as it is now.