

Agenda item 12.3

Wetlands and poverty reduction

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note, and advise on, the activities underway to bring further consideration of wetlands and poverty reduction to COP10.

1. Following discussion at the 35th meeting of the Standing Committee concerning challenges identified in attempts to implement aspects of Resolution IX.14 on “Wetlands and poverty reduction”, in Decision SC35-27 the Committee requested the Secretariat to develop a draft Resolution for COP10, in consultation with interested Parties, that provides more specific guidance on wetlands and poverty reduction.
2. Following SC35, the Secretariat has been in liaison with interested partners, including Wetlands International (particularly with their Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Programme and the work of their Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group) and the governments of Benin, Ghana, and Mali, concerning collaboration on drafting a Resolution to be submitted at COP10. The government of Ghana has taken a leadership role in this initiative and has agreed to coordinate the preparation of a new and more “practically practicable” version of Resolution IX.14 for consideration by Standing Committee and COP10.
3. A first meeting among the three Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to plan this work took place in November 2007, in conjunction with the Africa Regional COP10 Preparatory Meeting in Cameroon. In the light of these discussions, a further meeting to work on a draft Resolution is now planned for March 2008 in Accra, Ghana, sponsored and facilitated by the Ramsar Secretariat.
4. Ghana has undertaken some initial redrafting of Resolution IX.14 for consideration by other parties before the planned Accra meeting – this draft is presently at a very early stage, however.
5. Both the Asia and Pan-American regional COP10 preparatory meetings also discussed the wetlands and poverty reduction issue. Some countries considered that a further draft Resolution should highlight indicators to assess poverty reduction.
6. Central American Parties have indicated that it is also important to work on models involving local communities to achieve a sustainable use of natural resources, ensuring that the development of productive activities is favorable both for people and for maintaining the ecological characteristics of wetlands.
7. At their intersessional technical workshops on “Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People” (Changwon, November 2007), the STRP reviewed issues concerning the relationships

between human health and poverty reduction, and such matters will be incorporated into the STRP's "Wetlands and human health" report (see DOC. SC36-9).

8. That workshop considered that more clarity and further consideration is needed on existing gaps in information and guidance, and it encouraged Wetlands International to prepare a note on gaps and new materials available. It also recognized that there is a need to ensure that wetlands and poverty reduction issues are fully considered in the new Strategic Plan 2009-2014.
9. Importantly, the Changwon workshops also recognized the very close interlinkage between issues of human health and poverty reduction, and in the light of STRP14's further development of a draft COP10 Resolution on wetlands and human health, it may be most appropriate to consider consolidation of these issues for COP10 consideration through a single draft COP10 Resolution on "Wetlands, human health, and poverty reduction". This option will also be raised with STRP at its 14th meeting.
10. The various issues outlined above, and the outcomes of STRP14 and SC36 discussions on these matters, will be transmitted to Ghana so that the further drafting work appropriately addresses regional and global issues.