

Agenda item 14.1

Summary report from the CEPA Oversight Panel

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the report of the CEPA Oversight Panel and to advise on its future composition, development and operations.

Introduction

1. The CEPA Oversight Panel was formed following the adoption of Resolution IX.18 in Uganda in 2005 and Standing Committee Decision SC34-12.
2. The Panel has met twice during the triennium, in May 2006 and in June 2007, with full reports on these meetings posted on the Convention's Web site (http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_oversight_panel.htm). Between meetings, the Panel has communicated by e-mail.

The work of the Panel

3. This report provides a summary of the establishment of the Panel and the actions towards fulfillment of its terms of reference in this triennium. The report also includes some recommendations on the priority areas for the Panel in the next triennium.
4. The main functions of the Panel as established in Resolution IX.18 are to enable the Standing Committee to have a clearer perspective of the CEPA activities of the Secretariat and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme that was established by Resolution VIII.31 at global and national levels; to advise the Standing Committee on the form and function of the next CEPA Programme for the period 2009-2014; to clarify the roles of the CEPA National Focal Points (NFPs); to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on changing CEPA priorities; and to liaise with the Advisory Board on Capacity Building in identifying gaps between capacity building opportunities and needs for wetland professionals and stakeholders.
5. In determining the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme, the Panel contributed to the development of a set of questions that were incorporated into the National Report format for COP10. These were presented at SC35, and modifications as requested were incorporated in the final National Report format.
6. The Panel clarified the roles of the CEPA NFPs at its first meeting in 2006 and this information has been incorporated into the new draft CEPA Programme.
7. In seeking to deliver a clearer perspective on the CEPA activities of the Secretariat and the progress of CEPA implementation, at its meeting in 2006 the Panel discussed the full range of activities that might fall under a new CEPA Programme. It was agreed that there

was merit in viewing CEPA activities as a continuum of activities that increase awareness of wetlands, improve understanding of values, and/or build capacity to participate. This last group of activities are often referred to as “training activities”. In past Ramsar Strategic Plans, both training and participation have been featured under different work areas. The Panel saw strong synergies among these areas of work and agreed that a single integrated programme that places all activities that improve people’s understanding and skills under one-umbrella has considerable merit. This approach underpins the draft CEPA Programme that the Panel has submitted to this Standing Committee meeting in DOC. SC36-19; the development of this document has formed a key part of the Panel’s work this triennium.

8. The Panel is also charged with liaising with the Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity building. A shared workshop with the Board was held in June 2007 in the Netherlands to clarify the relationship and possible synergies between the brief of the CEPA Oversight Panel and the developing role of the Advisory Board. A report of this workshop is available at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_advisoryboard.htm. Most recently, the Panel has commented on a draft of a *Capacity Building Framework* that is being developed by the Advisory Board.

Membership of the Panel

9. SC DOC. 34-11 established the membership of the Panel, identifying the need for one Government and one NGO CEPA National Focal Point. During SC34, Parties nominated two Government NFPs and one NGO NFP. The STRP CEPA expert was also included as a member and, by chance, this person also happened to be an NGO NFP. Potential changes in the composition of the Panel in the future were discussed at its second meeting, where it was agreed that having this balance of NFPs had proved effective. The Panel recommends that this should be continued in the next triennium. The Panel also recognized the need to have a participatory expert appointed to the Panel and efforts are underway to achieve this.
10. Under the Terms of Reference for the CEPA Oversight Panel (Annex to Resolution IX.18), members were initially appointed for the current (2006-2008) triennium.

Other issues that arose during Panel meetings

11. The Panel would like to express its concern to the Standing Committee about the increasing communications workload within the Secretariat and resultant delays in delivery of materials (e.g., the Wise Use Handbooks and the difficulties with the timely delivery of WWD materials). The Panel was also aware that support for the Panel’s work imposed an additional workload on the Secretariat. Resolution IX.18 recognized the insufficient level of resourcing provided to the CEPA programme and sought to redress this. The Panel requests that the Standing Committee give consideration to adequate staffing within the Secretariat to meet the demands of this expanding area of work.

Future priorities for the CEPA Panel post-COP10

12. The Panel has discussed future priorities for attention once Resolution VIII.31 has been superseded at the end of 2008. The following are the suggested future key roles for the CEPA Panel in the coming triennium:

- Review of CEPA implementation demonstrated through the National Reports submitted to COP 10.
 - Review of Ramsar regional initiative reports to clarify the role they play in delivering objectives under the CEPA programme.
 - Identification of changing priorities and associated issues for the Ramsar CEPA Programme, using the two reviews above in conjunction with the priorities identified by the STRP.
 - Response to any additional advice following the response from Standing Committee and COP10 to the draft CEPA programme.
 - Continuation of work with the Advisory Board on identifying priorities for capacity building for wetland management.
13. In closing this summary report the Panel would like to recognize the value in the opportunity provided to members to focus on the CEPA activities of the Convention at all levels and to collaborate on the development of a new CEPA programme to guide all levels of the Convention.