

Agenda item 14.4

**Review and assessment of World Wetlands Day and themes
for 2009-2010**

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this proposal by the Ramsar Secretariat and instruct the Secretariat on specific measures to be taken.

Review and assessment of World Wetlands Day

1. World Wetlands Day (WWD) was first launched by Standing Committee in 1997. It has grown since then to be a key focus for the Convention each year, the only point in the year that unites the whole Ramsar extended family. In response to the evident enthusiasm from the Ramsar community over the years, the Secretariat staff has invested progressively more time in identifying themes, producing a package of materials intended to help WWD actors in planning their activities for WWD, encouraging the customisation of the materials for national and local use, and reporting on activities on the Convention's Web site (http://www.ramsar.org/wwd/wwd_index.htm).
2. After 11 years of this investment of time and resources by both the Secretariat and the WWD actors, the Secretariat felt it appropriate to have an objective assessment of WWD and its overall impact for three key reasons:
 - With increasing demands being made on staff time in many other areas of the Convention's work, it has become essential to assess the value to WWD actors of the materials produced and to assess their needs and expectations, in order to assist the Secretariat, Standing Committee, and the COP in making decisions on the future of WWD and the support for it from the Convention.
 - A quantitative and qualitative assessment will allow the Secretariat to identify any gaps in the contact list of WWD actors and the respective target groups and activities, and assist in the expansion of the sphere of influence of WWD, if that is identified as the appropriate thing to do.
 - Such an analysis will demonstrate and publicise the growing success and outcomes of WWD as the campaign day in the year for the Ramsar family at the local, national and global levels to recognise the value of wetlands, draw attention to wetland issues, and stimulate action for wetland wise use.
3. A consultant has been contracted to carry out the assessment and the work began in January 2008. An interim report on the first stage of the analysis, including an assessment of actors, targets and activities from 2003-2007, will be completed by the end of January. The full assessment will include, in addition to the above, an analysis of the utility of the

Secretariat's materials, relevance of the WWD themes to regional, national and institutional interests, and, if possible, the impact of activities on wetland conservation. The final report will be completed by mid-May 2008.

World Wetlands Day themes 2009-2010

4. The Secretariat suggests the following themes for WWD 2009-2010:
 - Although SC34 set the theme for WWD 2008 as *Wetlands and River Basin Management*, this was overturned by SC35 in favour of the COP theme *Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People*. The Secretariat suggests that the **WWD 2009** theme should be the one originally planned for 2008, ***Wetlands and River Basin Management***. Always a key challenging area for the Convention, this is a particularly relevant theme for 2009 given the work on river basin management being prepared by STRP for COP10.
 - It is suggested that the **WWD 2010** theme should be ***Wetlands and Climate Change***, another area that is of major concern to most Parties. STRP is currently preparing advice and information on the subject for COP10.