

Agenda item 8.6

The application of response options from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) within the Ramsar Wise Use Toolkit

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached draft Resolution for consideration by COP10.

Note by the Secretariat

1. When preparing its 2006-2008 work plan, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) realized that following the publication of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment's (MA) full suite of reports during 2005, and in particular because the publication of the MA synthesis report to the Ramsar Convention occurred during the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in late 2005, there has been no opportunity to review the full range of response options recommended in the range of MA's products (including in other synthesis reports and the main volumes of the MA) for their relevance to implementation of the Ramsar Convention.
2. Given the need to undertake such a review whilst the MA publications remain topical, the STRP recommended that its task of reviewing the MA response options for their relevance and utility to Ramsar implementation be elevated to a high priority in its 2006-2008 work plan, so as to be able to provide advice on this matter to Contracting Parties at COP10, and this was approved by Standing Committee Decision SC35-15.
3. The STRP's work on this task was led by its Working Group on wise use and ecological character and by STRP Vice Chair Rebecca D'Cruz. The main product of this work is a review report being prepared during 2008 for publication as a Ramsar Technical Report, and the executive summary of that report will be provided to Contracting Parties at COP10 as an Information Paper. Some key points of the findings of the review report are also included in the attached draft Resolution for COP10
4. Follow-up work to the MA is currently under development, particularly in relation to further subglobal assessment activities, and the Secretariat and STRP will keep a watching brief on further developments and will report to Standing Committee and COP as appropriate.

Draft Resolution X.00

The application of response options from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) within the Ramsar Wise Use Toolkit

Prepared by the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)

1. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) were recognized by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) as key intergovernmental end-users of its findings and advice; and
2. RECALLING that the MA also prepared for the Ramsar Convention the *Ecosystems and Human Well-being. Wetlands and Water, Synthesis* report, with input from members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and Ramsar Secretariat, but FURTHER RECALLING that this report only became available at the time of 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 2005 so that further advice to Parties on its implications and the application of its findings could not be provided at that time;
3. NOTING that, because the MA synthesis report to the Ramsar Convention was prepared at the same time as the full MA reports were also being finalised, it was not possible to review thoroughly all other MA volumes for relevant response options for inclusion in the Synthesis report;
4. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.1 Annex A (2005) the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention have recognized and adopted the MA's Conceptual Framework for ecosystems and human well-being as a framework for the delivery of the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character, and for the application of the Ramsar 'toolkit' of Wise Use Handbooks;
5. AWARE that the STRP recommended that its 2006-2008 task concerning reviewing the MA's response options in relation to Ramsar's current Conceptual Framework for wise use and the wise use responses available in the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks should be a high priority, and that this was approved by Standing Committee Decision Decision SC35-15;
6. ALSO AWARE that, at the request of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP undertook a detailed assessment (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/13) of the use and impact of the MA from the point of view of stakeholders, including national decision makers, which indicated a limited uptake of the concept and findings of the MA among decision makers in the limited time following the publication of the MA reports and completion of the project.
- [7. NOTING that Decision 9/xx of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Bonn, Germany, May 2008) emphasizes the need for priority to be given to promoting the application of the MA framework, methodologies, and findings at national and other subnational levels and recognized that there is an urgent need for capacity building in this regard.]

[Note. This paragraph will updated at SC37 following any relevant decisions taken by CBD COP9 in May 2008.]

8. THANKING the STRP and its Wise Use Working Group for undertaking a comprehensive review of MA response options relevant to the Ramsar Convention, and for the provision of the executive summary of this report to Contracting Parties in COP10 DOC. [x];
9. NOTING the key findings of the STRP review, which include that:
 - i) the Ramsar definition of ‘wetlands’ was not applied consistently across the board in the MA’s work and reports, which has resulted in the terms ‘wetlands’ and ‘inland waters’ being used interchangeably throughout and often in association with other wetland habitat types – e.g., “wetlands and mangroves” and “lakes, rivers, wetlands, and shallow groundwater aquifers”;
 - ii) the MA outputs contained little by way of response options that directly address the wise use of wetlands; and where wetland wise use was treated in the response options, they were largely focused on addressing direct drivers of change (e.g., water abstraction, unsustainable harvest, and resource consumption);
 - iii) there are few relevant response options that address indirect drivers of change (e.g., economic and socio-political drivers) and a limited number that deal with trade-offs in decision-making relating to wetland wise use;
 - iv) the majority of the response options that address direct drivers of change in wetlands are already entirely articulated within Ramsar’s existing toolkit of Wise Use Handbooks or can readily be added to future revisions of this toolkit;
 - v) exceptions to that, however, are response options that are contained within the underlying MA chapters that deal with ecosystem services (e.g., nutrient cycling, food, human health, and climate change and air quality) and some MA chapters that deal with natural and human-made systems (e.g., urban systems, cultivated systems and dryland systems); and
 - vi) some of the MA’s response options additional to responses already covered by Ramsar’s Wise Use Handbooks have already been included in STRP products being considered at COP10 and/or published as Ramsar Technical Reports, such as that on “Wetlands and human health and wellbeing” [see DR X.00]; and
10. FURTHER NOTING that the full report of the STRP’s review of MA response options will be published as a Ramsar Technical Report to serve as a guide to Contracting Parties and others on the application of the MA response options to enhance the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilise, as appropriate, the MA response options relevant to their implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level, as provided in COP10 DOC. [X] and Ramsar Technical Report [xx];
12. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat, with the advice of the STRP, to incorporate information on relevant MA response options, as provided in COP10 DOC. [X] and Ramsar Technical Report [xx], into the appropriate Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks in any revisions and publication of a further edition following COP10; and

13. INSTRUCTS the STRP to prepare further advice for Contracting Parties, as a high priority, concerning how to apply MA response options identified in COP10 DOC. [X] and Ramsar Technical Report [xx] as relevant to the Ramsar Convention, but which address broad implementation themes not currently covered by the toolkit of Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks, including *inter alia* nutrient cycling, food, and climate change.