

Agenda item 9

## **Additional guidelines for the Convention's national implementing agencies**

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached draft Resolution submitted by France and advise about what might be needed to finalise and submit it for COP10 consideration.

### **Rationale and aims**

1. Over the past few years, the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat have experienced a number of difficulties in implementing the Convention. The Secretariat ascribes great interest to this draft Resolution and all its staff members are keen on supporting and contributing to the draft.
2. An in-depth effort to define capacity building tools for national daily contacts and National Ramsar Committees led to the conclusion that substantial progress could have been made in the implementation of the Convention at the national level by a better definition of guidelines for national implementing agencies.
3. The work that France carried out, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention, highlighted the need to recognize and reaffirm the stability provided by the administrative authority appointed by the Contracting Party, on the one hand, and that progress should be made in professionalizing the national daily contacts, on the other. Professionalization requires a better definition of the process of appointment, a greater formalization of these people's tasks, and the availability of capacity building tools.
4. To ensure optimal implementation at the national level, and based on previous Resolutions and recommendations, it appears necessary to:
  - i) clearly identify the operational procedures of the Convention;
  - ii) formalize the designations of the various stakeholders involved; and
  - iii) provide support to national implementation agencies.
5. Thus, the draft Resolution shall aim at:
  - i) clearly indicating the roles and duties of the various key entities / stakeholders by:
    - a) formalizing and institutionalizing some of the tools developed by the Convention (e.g., the STRP booklet on "Delivering the Ramsar Convention in your country");

- b) streamlining the Convention's text with its practice, which would entail the reviewing of the Ramsar Convention Handbook; and
  - c) harmonizing the Convention's texts with those of other relevant international conventions (the United Nations' conventions in particular); and
- ii) indicating the various levels of organization in the country (minimum option: Administrative Authority + national focal point; optimal option: Administrative Authority + national focal point + National Ramsar/Wetland Committee ideally including representatives of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements).
6. The gradual setting-up of National Ramsar or Wetland Committees, and the experiences of both centralized and decentralized countries, have proved the relevance and efficiency of such committees. Initial documents (Recommendation 5.7 of 1993) should be further considered and integrated in a Resolution.
7. This draft Resolution will also indicate the tools and other means of support that the Secretariat may provide to national agencies.
8. This draft Resolution is based on relatively technical elements with little political impact, if any. The main thrust will be set out in a technical annex so as to guide the discussion on the substantive items of the Resolution.
9. The publishing by the STRP of a booklet on "Delivering the Ramsar Convention in your country" was met with general satisfaction.

## **Draft resolution X.00**

### **Additional guidelines for the implementing agencies of the Convention at the national level**

#### **Submitted by France**

1. RECALLING the Convention's provisions in respect to the Administrative Authority;
2. RECALLING AND REAFFIRMING the terms of Recommendation 5.7 (2003) which encourage the Contracting Parties to establish or recognize national committees, according to the specific needs of each Party, for the purpose of implementing the Convention at the national level;
3. REFERRING to Resolution VII.4 (2002) relating to partnership and cooperation with other relevant conventions and, in particular, the harmonization of information management infrastructure;
4. REFERRING to Recommendation 4.5 (1990) on the critical role of education and training in the mobilization of human resources for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands;

5. WELCOMING the efforts of Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel to clarify the roles of national agencies;
6. REFERRING to the conclusions of the preparatory meeting for the African Region for the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, which invited the Secretariat to clarify the terms of reference of the competent administration's structure as well as those of the focal points with the view to harmonizing their activities;
7. RECOGNIZING the importance for the Convention of the efforts made by the Contracting Parties to coordinate the implementation of the Convention at the national level; and
8. ANXIOUS to clarify and harmonize the roles and duties of the main Ramsar stakeholders with those of other relevant conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. REAFFIRMS the principal role of the Administrative Authority in ensuring the continuous representation of the State Party to the Secretariat of the Convention and to other State Parties and in order to implement the Convention at the national level;
10. DECIDES to change the name of "national correspondent" or "daily contact" to "National Focal Point";
11. INVITES the Contracting Parties to follow the elements annexed hereto which present different possible levels of implementation of the Convention at the national level;
12. RECOMMENDS that the Ramsar National Committee be led, in so far as is feasible, by the National Focal Point of the Contracting Party;
13. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat in its efforts to develop the necessary tools for the strengthening of capacities of both the National Focal Points and of the National Ramsar Committees; and
14. INVITES the Secretariat to allocate a specific space for exchange and communication between National Focal Points and National Ramsar Committees, in the three working languages of the Convention.

### Annex to the draft Resolution

#### Summary and clarification of the roles and duties of the agencies

1. The annex below clarifies additional guidelines for agencies/key stakeholders in connection with the implementation of the Convention at the national level.

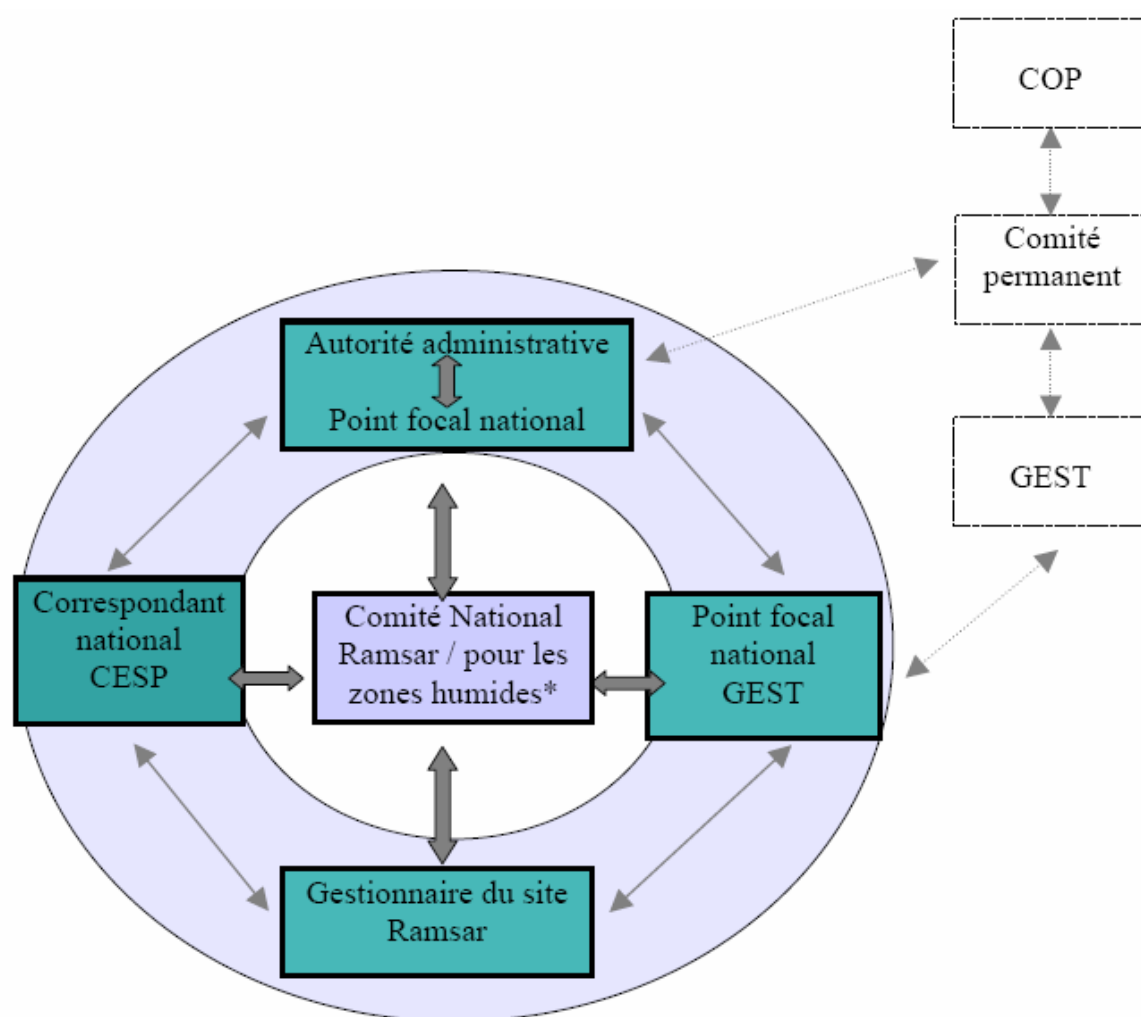
Agency / Key stakeholder	Role, duties and tasks	Reference and support material/documents
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Administrative authority	<p>The administrative authority is the Government agency of each Contracting Party entrusted with the implementation of the Convention. The authority is in charge of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ensuring the continuous</b> representation of the State Party to the Secretariat of the Convention.</li> <li>• <b>ensuring the continuous</b> representation to other State Parties.</li> <li>• <b>implementing the Convention by, <i>inter alia</i>:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i°) designating wetlands in accordance with the List,</li> <li>ii°) organizing their appropriate management,</li> <li>iii°) applying a national policy for wetlands,</li> <li>iv°) promoting Ramsar values at the national level.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In addition, the administrative authority should also liaise with other competent government agencies interested in wetlands and water issues, with a view to strengthening the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.</p> <p>It also liaises with national focal points and other multilateral environmental agreements.</p> <p>The administrative authority generally appoints a person as a <b>National Focal Point for the Convention</b>.</p> <p>Under its direct authority, the National Focal Point represents the State Party. The focal point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>liaises regularly between the State Party and the Secretariat of the Convention;</b></li> <li>• <b>Coordinates the implementation of the Convention at the national level.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Texts of the Convention</p> <p>Task statement and roadmap of the National Focal Point</p>
National focal point for STRP	<p>The national focal point for STRP (Scientific and Technical Review Panel) is the recognized and committed technical expert in wetlands of the government or of another entity, appointed by the Administrative Authority. STRP focal points liaise between regional members of the Panel and national networks of other competent experts.</p>	<p>Resolutions V.5 and VII.2</p>
National focal points for CEPA	<p>The national focal points for CEPA are recognized experts in communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) working in government entities or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Together, they are the lead, at the national level, for the development and implementation of national CEPA programs or action plans on specific wetland areas.</p>	
National Ramsar Committee	<p>The National Ramsar Committee (NRC) or national wetland committee is entrusted with disseminating the spirit of the Convention well beyond individuals and</p>	<p>Recommendation 5.7</p>

	<p>government services in charge of implementation. To act in the most efficient manner, national committees should welcome within their fold the largest number of representatives from environmental and other sectors.</p> <p>NRCs are led by the National Focal Points.</p> <p>The composition and structure of NRCs may differ from one State Party to another. Generally, it is made up of representatives of institutions and entities in charge of wetlands. Scientific and technical entities, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the private sector may be represented within NRCs.</p> <p>To better take into account cross-cutting issues, it is recommended to integrate, within the NRC structure, the national focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements as well as the representatives of financial backers.</p> <p>An annual workplan may also be drafted taking into account the calendar of activities of the Convention.</p>	
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### **Relations between the various stakeholders**

2. Depending on the organization and options of the Contracting Parties, the setting-up of various agencies and entities for the implementation of the Convention, at the national level, may be carried out step by step.
3. As a minimum, the Contracting Party appoints an Administrative Authority, a National Focal Point, and focal points for STRP and CEPA.
4. Countries are encouraged to set up national committees. Depending on the specific needs of countries, such national committees may have various configurations as detailed below and emanating from the works of the STRP.



\* Not all Contracting Parties have set up a National Ramsar Committee / for Wetlands.

### Support tools

4. To assist the Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention at the national level, the Secretariat could produce a useful “Memorandum for the National Focal Point” as well as examples of the composition and operation of National Ramsar Committees.
5. Also, a platform specifically designed for exchange and communication between National Focal Points may be developed on the Web site of the Secretariat.
6. Finally, the development of tools to be shared by the Ramsar Convention and other relevant conventions is to be encouraged.