

Agenda item 9

Draft Resolution on enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached draft Resolution and advise about finalising it for submission for COP10 consideration.

Note from the Secretariat

1. In the short period of time between submission of this draft Resolution and the distribution of Standing Committee documents to the Parties, the Secretariat has not yet had the opportunity to review the text closely and consult with Japan and the Republic of Korea about it as appropriate.
2. Because it was felt that the content of the draft Resolution includes material of a scientific and technical nature, as indicated in Resolution VIII.45 the draft is being circulated to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel as well, and any commentary received from the STRP will be communicated to the Standing Committee at its 37th meeting.

Draft Resolution X.00

Enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies

Submitted by Japan and the Republic of Korea

1. RECOGNIZING that rice is grown in at least 114 countries and, as the staple diet for over half the world's population, has contributed to about 20% of the total calorie supply in the world;
2. ALSO RECOGNIZING that rice paddies, a typical agricultural landscape for rice cultivation, have provided vast areas of open water for centuries through water management by farmers in regions with a variety of rice-growing cultures, comprising an important component of wetland ecosystems the services of which include but are not limited to groundwater replenishment, climate moderation, flood and erosion control, landslide prevention, and conservation of biodiversity, aside from producing rice, especially providing other animal and/or plant food sources and medicinal plants, thus sustaining livelihoods and human well-being in the region;
3. AWARE that rice paddies in many parts of the world serve as the habitat for organisms such as fishes, amphibians and insects, and play a vital role in supporting waterbird populations as one of the apexes of the ecological pyramid;

4. NOTING that some approaches, such as the flooding of rice paddies when they are not used, have been adopted to increase the biodiversity of rice paddies, thus providing suitable habitat for wintering migratory birds and controlling weeds and pest insects;
5. CONSCIOUS that the ecological function and value of rice paddies as a human-made wetland could be enhanced or degraded depending on the farming practices and water management, thereby creating a significant potential for the development of policies to increase the environmental sustainability of rice farming;
6. RECALLING that Resolution VIII.34 urged Contracting Parties to devise measures to promote conservation and sustainable use of wetlands including sustainable agricultural systems, and that that Resolution established a development procedure for wetland-type specific management guidelines in relation to agriculture;
7. MINDFUL that the government authorities which have jurisdiction over rice farming are different from the Administrative Authorities for the Ramsar Convention in many of the Contracting Parties and thus the present Resolution is distinct from the existing Resolutions which have been dealt with mainly by the Administrative Authorities;
8. AFFIRMING that this Resolution is intended to focus specifically on the enhancement of the ecological value of rice paddies and not intended to be used to support agricultural policies that are inconsistent with trade-related agreements; and
9. ALSO AFFIRMING that this Resolution is not intended to justify converting existing natural wetlands into human-made wetlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote further research on the fauna and flora in rice paddies and on the cultures that evolved within rice-farming communities that have maintained the ecological value of rice paddies;
11. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to assess and promote the functions of rice paddies to serve for groundwater replenishment, climate moderation, flood and erosion control, landslide prevention, and conservation of biodiversity and to enhance awareness of the ecological and environmental values of rice paddies;
12. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to provide the data collected through the above research and assessment to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for compilation as an Information Paper for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and
13. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to:
 - a) identify challenges to managing the rice paddies as a human-made wetland in the context of the wise use principle;
 - b) identify farming practices and water management in rice paddies that would enhance the biodiversity, ecosystem services, and sustainability of rice paddies;

- c) ensure that such farming practices and water management are implemented wherever applicable, while being conscious of the productivity and the interests of the local communities; and
- d) exchange information about such farming practices and water management with other rice-farming Parties, with a view to disseminating and possibly improving such farming practices and water management.