

Agenda item 13.1

**Promotion and utilization of the “Changwon Declaration”
(Resolution X.3, Decision SC40-22)**

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the report on the dissemination and uptake of the Changwon Declaration (Resolution X.3) and suggested next steps.

Background

1. An important outcome of Ramsar COP10 (Changwon, Republic of Korea) in 2008 was the adoption of Resolution X.3, the “Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands”. This Declaration aimed to complement the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and to transmit key messages concerning the importance of the role of wetlands for decision-makers and stakeholders in other sectors beyond the Ramsar community, in order to help inform their actions and decision-making regarding the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
2. The Changwon Declaration was drafted specifically to a) speak to audiences other than the usual Ramsar constituency; and b) to help the Ramsar constituency to understand the need to reach out to other sectors (e.g., health, biodiversity, including forests and protected areas, water, including river/lake basin organizations, fisheries, tourism, agriculture, urban development, mining, climate change) within their own country whose business also depends on healthy wetlands and their services, if the conservation and wise use of their wetlands is to be achieved.
3. At COP10, the Republic of Korea as host country made a commitment to champion the dissemination and uptake of the “Changwon Declaration” and, as part of this commitment, provided resources for the Declaration to be translated into a number of national languages. The Declaration is now available in 13 languages on the Ramsar website http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-changwon/main/ramsar/1-31-434_4000_0__. The Ramsar Secretariat has also been promoting greater awareness of the Declaration at various visits to Contracting Parties, conferences and meetings that the Secretariat staff members have been attending since COP10.
4. In November 2009, the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia (RRC-EA), based in Changwon City (R.O. Korea), organized the first of a proposed series of annual meetings before COP11 intended to review progress made in the dissemination and uptake of the “Changwon Declaration”.

Changwon Declaration meeting (17-20 November 2009)

5. The 1st Changwon Declaration meeting was attended by 58 people representing a range of Ramsar stakeholders, including representatives from Contracting Parties, Standing

Committee, STRP, Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Regional Centres, International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other relevant organizations.

6. Presentations were given by a number of participants on the actions that the bodies they represent have taken since COP10 to promote the roll-out and implementation of the Declaration. These showed that many of these bodies were already working towards the wise use of wetlands in the way that the Declaration called for, but in some cases there was still the need to reach out to other stakeholders, e.g., government departments, organizations, and communities that play an important role in wetland wise use but with which there has not been enough engagement so far.
7. Discussions were also held on how best to include indicators in the National Report Format (NRF) for COP11 on how the Declaration has been implemented by the Contracting Parties, without making the NRF longer and more time-consuming to be completed. It was decided that the Ramsar Secretariat would further look into this issue.
8. The Secretariat has been incorporating the set of indicator questions in the Changwon Declaration questionnaire into the draft COP11 National Report Format (see DOC. SC41-24), which will be considered by the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee, so that further assessment of national adoption and implementation of the Declaration can be made from COP11 National Reports and reported to Parties at the next COP.

Questionnaire to Ramsar Administrative Authorities on their implementation of the Changwon Declaration

9. In October 2009, prior to the Changwon Declaration meeting, the Ramsar Secretariat on behalf of the RRC-EA sent a short questionnaire to all 159 Ramsar Administrative Authorities in October 2009 in English, French and Spanish, requesting them to report on their progress on their uptake and implementation of the Changwon Declaration. The questions in the questionnaire were based directly on the operative paragraphs of Resolution X.3 relevant to Contracting Party implementation. It was subsequently discovered that due to technical problems not all Contracting Parties received this questionnaire, and only four completed questionnaires were returned to the Secretariat before the meeting. During the meeting, the Contracting Parties who attended completed another three questionnaires.
10. In order to achieve a higher return rate, the meeting requested the Ramsar Secretariat to resend the questionnaire to all the Ramsar Administrative Authorities. This was done in January 2010. Since then, a further 11 completed questionnaires have been received. Although the return rate for the questionnaire remains low (18 responses representing only 11% of the 159 Contracting Parties), some useful initial insights into patterns of implementation emerge from the returns and these are summarized in Annex 1.
11. The results indicate that whilst some Contracting Parties have been very active in implementing the Declaration, others have taken less action. One Contracting Party even stated that they had not implemented the Declaration at all because their representative who attended COP10 did not inform the relevant officers about the resolutions and actions required on his return to the office.

12. In response to the question on whether the Declaration had been brought to the attention of various sectors of society, more than 70% of the Contracting Parties replied that the Declaration had not been promoted to their parliament (72%) or the private sector (78%). However, approximately half of the respondents said that the Declaration had been brought to the attention of their head of state (45%) and civil society (50%).
13. Some 67% of the respondents replied that they had encouraged the government sectors responsible for water management as well as for climate change to respond to the call for action for wetlands as called for in the Declaration. This is an encouragingly high response rate. However, the response rate was lower for other government sectors such as human health (39%), poverty reduction (28%), and spatial planning (44%).
14. Whilst 56% of the respondents said that they had used the Declaration to inform national policies and decision-making, only 33% said that they had done the same to inform the positions of their national delegations to other external processes, such as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and the World Water Forum. Again, this shows the need to reach out to other processes outside of those with which the Ramsar constituency normally works.
15. Although 78% of the respondents said that they had not translated the Declaration into their local language, this may be because one of the three Ramsar Convention languages is frequently used in the country and/or the translations available in 10 other languages may have met this need. Therefore, the high negative response rate may not be of particular concern.

Results of the Changwon Declaration meeting

16. A number of issues were identified by the November 2009 Changwon Declaration meeting, and in summary these were:
 - i) *Implementing the Changwon Declaration:* We should endeavor to develop mechanisms to reach out to as wide a range of relevant stakeholders as possible outside of the usual Ramsar community, in order to ensure the wise use of wetlands and the implementation of the actions outlined in the Declaration. Such stakeholders would include the government sectors responsible for health, education, water management, planning, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, urban development, forestry and protected areas, and climate change, as well as NGOs, the private sector, and local communities. The importance of having broad-based National Wetland Committees and National Wetland Strategies was also highlighted as an effective mechanism for implementing the Declaration.
 - ii) *Raising awareness of the Changwon Declaration:* There is a need to promote greater awareness of the Declaration at all levels, such as by organizing side events during meetings and producing articles in newsletters or other materials. During the meeting, there was a suggestion that the Secretariat should send a letter to the Mayor of Changwon City requesting his help in disseminating the Changwon Declaration to his network of mayors amongst the cities around the world. This letter was duly sent by the Secretary General to Mr. Wan Su Park, the Changwon City mayor.

- iii) During the meeting, there was also a call for the sharing of case studies of activities or programmes that have been carried out which were in the spirit of implementing the Declaration. It was further suggested that a website should be set up where such information could be placed.

Annex 1

Summary of the results from the 18 completed questionnaires returned by Administrative Authorities on the uptake and implementation of the Changwon Declaration.

Question 1:

Have you brought the “Changwon Declaration” to the attention of your:	% Yes	% No
a. head of state	45	56
b. parliament	28	72
c. private sector	22	78
d. civil society	50	50

Question 2:

Have you encouraged other government sectors to respond to the call for action for wetlands embodied in the “Changwon Declaration”:	% Yes	% No
a. water management	67	33
b. human health	39	61
c. climate change	67	33
d. poverty reduction	28	72
e. spatial planning	44	56

Question 3:

Has the “Changwon Declaration” been used to inform:	% Yes	% No
a. your national policies and decision-making	56	44
b. the positions of your national delegations to other external processes*	33	67

*such as: the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and the World Water Forum

Question 4:

Have you translated and disseminated the “Changwon Declaration” into local languages relevant for your country?	% Yes	% No
	22	78

Question 5:

Note: These points are taken directly from the responses to Question 5 in the questionnaire.

Do you have any other comments on your experiences so far in using and disseminating the “Changwon Declaration”:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting the importance of collaboration and partnerships between governments and local communities for the conservation and wise use of wetland as well as the responsibility of both governments and local communities to be shared in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, the Declaration has encouraged the parliament, private sector, civil society and some government sectors and agencies responsible for activities affecting wetlands, especially in order to respond to the call for wetlands embodied in the Declaration to uptake of this Declaration in future. The

Declaration significantly contributed to show that destruction and damage of wetlands contributes to climate changes as well as make clear that effects of climate changes, such as floods, droughts, and famine, weaken human beings. The policy makers and wide public sector in B&H now are order to cope with climate changes, to restore wetlands, maintain waters' hydrological circulation, and intelligently use and preserve wetlands.

- It is a good support to promote and highlight central themes of the Ramsar Convention and its relation with other Conventions and pending tasks.
- The work that [country] has been doing in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their benefits with the principles contained in the Declaration, has been recognized, both on the national and international level.
- We do not know the Changwon Declaration.
- Most of the components of this declaration are part of our Management process and are in operation in almost all the identified wetlands under the National Wetland Conservation Programme.
- Many of the aspects were already being done but the National Ramsar Committee (NRC) is a valuable tool for the further integration of the call for action in additional areas/sectors
- All the participant in COP10, Changwon Korea should receive the declaration in electronic and if possible a published hard copy
- We have not done anything due to the economic situation but I do hope to see soon some light appearing at the end of the tunnel!
- Our response is rather embarrassing as we have not done any of the activities listed. This is mainly due to non-communication by [...] who attended the Changwon COP and didn't inform us about the resolutions and actions required.
- While the [country] endorses the messages contained in the declaration, it has not taken any action to disseminate the declaration further, given that we have a number of well established policies and procedures that echo its principles (e.g. national biodiversity strategies and statutory obligations under relevant EU Directives).