

Review of implementation of the Changwon Declaration

Action requested. The Standing Committee is invited to note progress with development of an Implementation Plan for the Changwon Declaration, which will be presented in the form of an Information Paper to COP11.

Background

1. The *Changwon Declaration on human-well being and wetlands* (Resolution X.3, 2008) contained messages addressing six important areas of work for sustainable development (i.e., water, climate change, people's livelihoods, human health, land use change, and biodiversity). These areas relate to sectors whose activities involve the management and use of wetlands, and the Declaration requests readers to highlight to their constituents and stakeholders the importance of maintaining healthy wetlands for their work, as well as the need for cooperation with the Ramsar community to address the continuing loss and degradation of wetlands. The Changwon Declaration was also a call to those in the Ramsar community (i.e., Contracting Parties, Ramsar Secretariat, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, International Organization Partners, and others) to reach out to those key sectors and include them in Ramsar's work on wetland conservation and wise use.
2. The Republic of Korea agreed to champion the Declaration, and as a result the Ramsar Regional Centre-East Asia, based in Changwon City (Republic of Korea), organized a series of annual 'Changwon Declaration Network' meetings from 2009 to 2011 to monitor the roll-out and uptake of the Declaration. The results of the meetings in 2009 and 2010 have already been reported to the 41st (DOC. SC41-22) and 42nd meetings of the Standing Committee (DOC. SC42-14). The present document summarizes the findings of the first two meetings and reports on the third meeting, which took place in Changwon on 23-24 August 2011.

Framework for monitoring the roll-out and uptake of the Changwon Declaration

3. The first two Changwon Declaration Network meetings were attended by representatives from Contracting Parties, the STRP, Ramsar Secretariat, the IOPs, the Ramsar Regional Centres and other members of the Ramsar community, who gave presentations on their experience with the roll-out and uptake of the Declaration. However, these case studies were reported to the meetings on an unsystematic and *ad hoc* basis and, as a result, it was recommended that a framework ('Implementation Plan') be developed for compiling the case studies in such a way as to allow for the prioritization of actions which still need to be taken to deliver the Declaration (Document SC42-14).
4. After SC42, Korea's Ministry of Environment provided a generous financial contribution to hire a consultant, who began work in July 2011, to help draft the Implementation Plan, which would be presented to COP11 as an Information Paper.

5. The 3rd Changwon Declaration Network meeting was organized by the RRC-East Asia in Changwon City on 23-24 August 2011 and was attended by a wide range of participants, as in earlier meetings. Presentations were again given on how members of the Ramsar community are engaging with other key wetland and water sectors, and there were workshop sessions in which the consultant discussed the blueprint for the Implementation Plan. These discussions focused on identifying the objectives and benefits of such a Plan, as well as on ways to track and report on implementation.
6. Whilst the details of the Implementation Plan are still under consideration, some observations about it can be made at this point.
 - i) The Changwon Declaration should be seen as a tool to remind members of the Ramsar community of the need to engage with other key wetland and water-related sectors outside of their usual spheres of work, whose engagement would lead to wetlands being conserved and used more wisely, resulting in the Convention being implemented more effectively.
 - ii) The result of this engagement with other key sectors should be that they then begin to appreciate the importance of wetlands and the benefits of cooperation with the Ramsar community.
 - iii) Whilst the Changwon Declaration identified six key sectors, there may well be other sectors, now and in the future, with which the Ramsar community will need to engage.
 - iv) Engagement with these sectors may be on a vertical scale, e.g., from the highest decision makers to the communities living at the wetland site, or it could be horizontal, e.g., the range of wetland users at a wetland site such as rice farmers and fishermen – or indeed, it could be across a range of government departments such as agriculture, energy, and biodiversity conservation.
 - v) When members of the Ramsar community initiate new wetland-related activities, a review should first be made of the range of sectors to include in each activity, in order not to miss those key sectors that might have an important role and with which there may not have been much engagement before. To achieve this would require the breakdown of traditional communication barriers that may exist among the sectors.
 - vi) In terms of monitoring and reporting on the level of engagement with other sectors, the Ramsar Secretariat has already incorporated a number of indicator questions into the National Report Form for COP11, and the Parties' responses to those questions will be analysed separately for inclusion in the COP11 Information Paper.