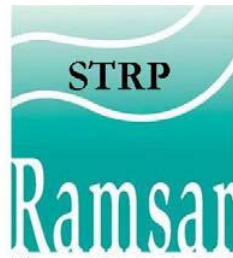


CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)  
14 -18 February 2011, Gland, Switzerland



The Scientific and Technical Review Panel  
Convention on Wetlands

**Report of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

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### Summary Report

#### Note:

In order to maintain the efficiency of the meeting, the order in which later agenda items and sub-items were taken in plenary differs from the sequential number of agenda items.

#### Monday, 14 February 2011

##### Agenda item 1. Welcome, introductions and summary of what is to be achieved in the week

1. **Heather MacKay, STRP Chair**, welcomed all participants: appointed members, International Organization Partners (IOPs) members, invited experts and representatives of Observer Organizations ([See Annex I: List of Participants](#)). She thanked the Panel for the work done and achievements made since the STRP midterm workshops in 2010, and explained that the major focus of the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the STRP will be to advance as far as possible those priority tasks for which COP11 products are expected. Progress with other STRP tasks under the ten Thematic Work Areas (TWAs) will also be reviewed and future STRP priority themes and tasks for the next triennium discussed.
2. **Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General (DSG)**, welcomed everybody and reported that the following STRP members, invited experts, International Organization Partners and Observer organizations could not attend STRP16 and had sent their apologies: Rebecca D'Cruz (STRP vice-chair), Andrej Sirin, Kassim Kulindwa, Cui Lijuan, Teresita Borges, UNESCO-IHE, David Coates from the Secretariat of CBD, GEF-STAP, the Committee on Science and Technology of the UNCCD and the Secretariat of UNFCCC.
3. **Anada Tiega, Secretary General**, welcomed everyone and highlighted the importance of the work of the STRP in providing high level technical guidance to Parties, particularly to assist in Ramsar Advisory Missions. He also urged that more funds to support STRP are needed.
4. **The STRP Chair** asked all participants to briefly introduce themselves.

##### Agenda item 2. Adoption of agenda

5. An annotated agenda with hyperlinks to working documents and relevant background documents to support discussions during the plenary sessions was prepared and circulated to all participants prior the meeting. (See [Annex II: Annotated agenda](#)).

**Decision STRP16-1:** The Agenda was adopted.

### **Agenda item 3. Review of the expected COP11 products – and timelines for their finalization**

6. **The DSG** explained that documents for submission to COP11 include:
  - COP11 Draft Resolutions (COP11 DRs) without annexed scientific and technical guidance;
  - COP11 Draft Resolutions (COP11 DRs) with annexed scientific and technical guidance; and
  - COP11 Information Papers (COP11 DOCs) to support discussions at COP, usually those discussions directly related to DRs.
7. **The DSG** then noted that the STRP16 agenda has been structured to focus first on advancing those STRP tasks for which documents will be submitted to the COP, then secondly to review other ongoing tasks, and thirdly to focus on longer term tasks which are part of the STRP rolling work program as well as on future or emerging issues. The DSG then provided an overview of the timelines for submission of deliverables to the Ramsar's COP11, to be held in Bucharest, Romania, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012: COP11 DRs (and annexed guidelines) should go to the Standing Committee (SC) for their approval to transmit to COP and that SC42 will be from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and SC43 probably from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The STRP should aim at submitting as many as possible of our proposed COP DRs and related supporting material to SC42 to help spread the load and to allow enough time to include any changes in the DRs/guidance requested by the Standing Committee. Documents for SC must be issued one month before the meeting (16<sup>th</sup> April 2011) and therefore 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011 is the Secretariat's deadline for receiving documents for SC42; for the second tranche of documents going to SC43, the deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011. Information papers can be issued up to 1 month before the COP (19<sup>th</sup> May 2012). However if these are background information to support DRs, they should ideally be issued at the same time as the DR (three months prior to COP), and they will also be helpful for discussions in the regional COP11 preparatory meetings.
8. **The STRP Chair** stressed that whatever the meeting does not manage to finish during the week will have to be dealt via e-mail and through the STRP Support Service afterwards. She also urged task leads to ensure where possible that those more complex or potentially contentious DRs are already made available to SC42, and she requested task leads to highlight in their revised task pro formas any work which has budgetary implications for the 2009-2012 cycle. This information will be reported to SC42 highlighting which tasks have core funding allocated and which tasks do not.
9. **The DSG** reminded the meeting that owing to the priority focus on COP11 preparations from now on, the Secretariat will have limited resources to assist with the finalization of any other non COP-related products such the Ramsar Technical Reports.

10. **The STRP Chair** mentioned that the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Chairs of the Subsidiary Advisory Bodies (CSAB) of the biodiversity-related conventions had met on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February and that a number of the items discussed there, including the outcomes of the CBD COP10, were relevant to STRP and will be reported during the week.
10. **María Rivera (Senior Advisor for the Americas)** commented that it is important that all documents that support DRs should be available at least in draft form by the time of the regional COP11 preparatory meetings, as well as some indication of what the STRP priority areas of work for the next triennium will be, in order to facilitate discussions with the Contracting Parties.

**Decision STRP16-2:** The **Panel** requested i) requested task leads to highlight in their revised task pro-formas any work which has budgetary implications for the rest of the 2009-2012 cycle, and ii) requested the Senior Regional Advisers to inform STRP as soon as possible about the priority documents and DRs that need to be ready for the regional COP11 preparatory meetings.

**Agenda item 4.1. Introduction to the STRP Chair's report to COP11 and Draft Resolution on STRP future scientific and technical priorities**

11. The **STRP Chair** informed the meeting that as well as individual scientific and technical DRs, there will be other STRP documents which will need contributions from Panel members and task leads, including:
  - the STRP report to COP, which she will attempt to prepare well ahead of time with assistance from TWA leads and task leads. This is usually an INF document at COP;
  - the list of products completed and delivered in each TWA during this cycle, which will be annexed to the STRP report;
  - a DR on future STRP work priorities for the next triennium, including those tasks continuing from this triennium. This will also need to address where the funds for each task should come from (core budget or through partnerships, etc.), staff time and other resources needed;
  - a DR indicating minor modifications needed for the STRP modus operandi (with inclusion of the list of proposed Observer Organizations to the STRP and proposed thematic work areas for the next triennium).

**Decision STRP16-3:** The **STRP Chair** requested the TWA leads to provide, for the STRP report to COP11, a short summary of the activities undertaken in their work areas, highlighting key issues, what has changed, and recommendations for any additional work and emerging issues. Also the TWA leads to compile a short pro forma for any agreed new tasks, with indication of what they envisage for the next triennium, why, objectives, expected deliverables, and whether there might be budget implications.

12. **The DSG** reminded the Panel that the composition of the Panel's Appointed Members for the next triennium would not necessarily be the same as for this triennium since it would depend on the next set of priority tasks and work areas. The call for nominations for the new Panel will be made in early 2012 and under the current STRP modus operandi

Contracting Parties (Administrative Authorities (AAs) and STRP NFPs), IOPs, the STRP Chair and members, and Observer Organizations can submit nominations.

13. **Mohammed Reda Fishar (invited expert)** pointed out that there seems to be some confusion in the way tasks are clustered under each of the ten TWAs and that there is not yet a specific work area on the economics of wetlands.
14. **Rob McInnes (SWS representative)** reminded the meeting that STRP needs to plan in advance who from the Panel will attend COP11 to provide advice and assistance to Parties with independent expertise in the negotiation process.
15. **Participants** recognized that STRP presence and support at the COP10 was well received by Parties and that similar presence and support would be very valuable at COP11.
16. **The DSG** informed the meeting that for 2012 there should be sufficient funds in the current core budget line to cover the costs of key STRP members to attend COP11, but that in doing so there may not be sufficient core budget funds for a first full meeting of the next Panel to take place later in 2012. For 2011, if the Panel determines that it needs a further meeting to prepare its materials for and participation in COP11, there is little core budget available, so that any such meeting would likely need to be of Appointed Members only in order to keep costs down.
17. **Christine Prietto (Lead for TWA10- Communication, Education, Participation & Awareness)** reminded the Panel that after COP10 STRP had compiled two documents listing lessons learnt for future COPs in relation to STRP engagement. The documents are posted on the Support Service.
18. **Dave Pritchard (Lead for TWA3- Wetland inventory, assessment and indicators)** suggested that for the new cycle the STRP should revisit the structure of the STRP Work Plan. The **STRP Chair** stressed that the task pro-formas are still very useful as an internal tool for managing and tracking STRP work and that they will continue to be used. However, she noted that it would be helpful for communication purposes to front-end the work plan with a more readable summary description of thematic work in simple language. This “front-end” text could be developed using summary descriptions of the thematic work areas as contained in the STRP report to COP as a starting point.

#### **Agenda item 4.2. Wetlands and energy issues (Task 2.4)**

19. **The STRP Chair** pointed out that this task is similar to those on extractive industries and water guidance, in that the STRP is preparing sectoral guidance to help Parties to better interface with other sectors whose activities affect wetlands. She also highlighted the difference between these two (extractive industries and energy) and the other sectors such health, water, and urban sectors which are more closely interdependent with wetlands. In explaining the nature of the guidance being prepared, she noted that it is time to better define the STRP role and how we work on the interface of these sectors to assist Parties without being prescriptive. She noted that, given experience with the discussions at COP10 on Resolution X.26 (extractive industries), the DR on energy sector issues was also likely to generate much discussion amongst the Parties and could be contentious at COP11.

20. The **STRP Chair** explained that the objectives of the energy sector guidance are to:
- a) help Parties to understand how energy policy at national, regional and global levels might influence wetlands;
  - b) assist Ramsar AAs to participate meaningfully in policy debates related to energy policy issues in their country or region, and
  - c) raise the profile of wetlands to ensure they are considered in international energy policy debates.
21. The task deliverables are:
- a DR with annexed guidance, which is likely to cross-reference to many STRP issues including climate change; and
  - a supporting *Ramsar Technical Report* which reviews the energy sector and implications for wetlands.
22. **Aileen Anderson (Invited expert)** provided an overview of the scoping review that she has compiled on the energy sector. The review is a detailed technical report that looks at the energy sector and the interface with wetlands, scenarios and overview of global trends in the energy sector, and impacts on wetlands, with inclusion of case studies. The report will go for peer review and subsequently be produced as a *Ramsar Technical Report* (RTR) in time for COP11. A digest of its information and findings will be provided as a COP11 Information Paper to support the planned DR on Wetlands and Energy.
23. The **STRP Chair** invited participants to provide comments and feedback as well as to suggest relevant people who could be part of the reference group that Aileen and Heather have set up to advise in development of the task products.
24. **Jaime Garcia Moreno (Wetland International)** informed the meeting that in view of the partnership between Wetlands International (WI) and Shell and their current work on looking at overlaps between water and energy, WI would be happy to assist STRP in the task.
25. **Tatiana Minaeva (Wetland International)** suggested Olivia Bragg for the reference group and asked for clarification about the nature of this task in relation to that on extractive industries and the development of guidance. The **STRP Chair** explained that whilst the extractive industries task addressed only the extraction of resources, including those resources which are energy commodities, the energy sector task dealt more broadly with the extraction and use of those resources within the sector. In relation to the question on development of guidance, she noted that STRP should not be in the position of developing detailed technical guidance for sectors where that already exists. For example, in the case of the extractive industries, more than 180 existing guidance resources were identified for the 'guide to guidance' as a tool to help Parties to make better decisions on the ground and make contact and engage more with key partners; the guidance that STRP produces should not be prescriptive to other sectors, but rather help wetland policy makers and managers to engage with those sectors.

26. **Pierre Horwitz (Lead for TWA4- Wetlands and human health )** asked what is the connection between wetlands and the energy sector that would make them realize that wetlands are important, and could the report cover a “who’s who and who’s where” in the energy sector at the national, provincial, community level.
27. **George Lukacs (Lead for TWA9- Wetlands and agriculture)** drew attention to a recent UNEP report on water and energy (Bioenergy and Water), indicating that someone from UNEP (eg Martina Otto) could be invited to be a member of the reference group. He also stressed his involvement with this work has principally been to influence the discussion from water resource management for the energy sector to one that better recognises the ecosystem (i.e., wetlands) which both supplies the water and is impacted by energy development.
28. **Li Lifeng (WWF International)** announced that WWF has just released its Energy Report about renewable energy by 2050 and said that there are many controversial issues in regard to water and energy. Energy will be also a key issue in the next World Water Forum (just prior to COP11). The **STRP Chair** noted that it will be important to track the ongoing international discussions on energy-water linkages, in order to reflect these in STRP materials. The DR on wetlands and the energy sector will be submitted to SC43 with the provision for a revised version to be prepared before COP11, if any additional important information or issues should emerge from other international processes and meetings in the interim.
29. **Senka Barudanovic (CBD SBSTTA Chair)** highlighted that in some countries hydropower is seen as clean development mechanism and asked what the view of STRP is on this. **Elif Okumus** pointed out that hydropower is a key issue in European and Asian countries and suggested that the STRP energy review report could enhance this aspect perhaps through more case studies. **Li Lifeng** reminded that hydropower production and water storage issues should also be integrated into river basin planning. The energy DR should cross-refer to hydropower and water storage issues.
30. The **STRP Chair** reminded that Ramsar has already adopted two important Resolutions on Dams and on Environmental Flows and river basin management and that during discussion later in the agenda in relation to the water resources TWA, STRP should consider and decide whether there is any need of an additional COP11 Draft Resolution on water storage issues.
31. The **DSG** pointed out that SC42 would be a good opportunity to test out with SC members if an additional Resolution on water storage issues is needed.
32. **Denis Landenbergue (WWF International)** stressed that big issues on the energy production chain are transport to the place where the fuel will be used. In some cases this leads to dredging of river beds in coastal wetlands to allow navigation by coal ships or to facilitate the construction of deep sea ports.
33. The **DSG** emphasized that the DR on energy should be generated as quickly as possible to see if any other issues should be included. He also pointed out that the DR should stress the key role of wetlands as natural infrastructure for water supply to the energy sector, to reflect consistently three aspects in the CBD COP10 Decision X/28 on inland waters.

34. The **DSG** supported the preparation of a one-page summary with key messages for decision makers and noted that this should be a general feature of all STRP guidance and scientific documents.
35. The **STRP Chair** asked the meeting participants not to circulate the documents beyond the Support Service since the main report (that will become an RTR) will next be peer reviewed and hopefully ready by end of August. The DR and annexed guidance will not be peer reviewed. The second draft of these can be expected in May-June.
36. The **STRP Chair** requested participants to send her any inputs and/or references relevant to the report.

**Decision STRP16-4:** The Panel endorsed the general structure and approach of the energy sector review report and recognized that only a few additional inputs are needed before the draft report is circulated to the reference group for peer review; and endorsed the finalization of a DR and annexed guidance for transmission to SC43.

#### Agenda item 4.3. Wetlands and poverty eradication: a Ramsar framework and indicators (Task 2.6)

37. Task lead **Ritesh Kumar (Wetlands International)** made a presentation on the framework paper on ‘Wetlands & Poverty Eradication’. The paper addresses the concepts, measurements and poverty outcomes and provides a general framework for assessing wetland – poverty interlinkages.
38. **Dave Pritchard** asked whether human well-being is equated with poverty reduction; **Laurent Chazee (Tour du Valat)** highlighted that in the Mediterranean region only three countries out of 37 have indicators and strong policies oriented to poverty eradication. Many stakeholders in developing countries are not aware of the links with wetlands and the livelihood opportunities that they offer. The **STRP Chair** asked how a framework like this would deal with both developed and developing country situations as well as both inside and outside protected areas. **Rob McInnes** stressed that it is crucial to see how wetland ecological character and wise use fit into poverty eradication. **Max Finlayson (Lead for TWA5- Wetlands and Climate Change)** asked how the framework deals with system vulnerability, and **Ritesh Kumar** reminded that the vulnerability happens at local community and landscape levels and that it is linked to community’s ability to participate and their freedom of choice.
39. **Ritesh Kumar** highlighted that the guidance should not push for a definition of “poverty” *per se*, but rather speak about engagement and improve awareness of wetland values and how they contribute to poverty eradication.
40. **Pierre Horwitz** suggested that the framework should be supported by case studies, and **Ritesh Kumar** suggested that further work on this could be addressed in the next triennium, also noting that STRP would need to link up with other organizations involved in poverty eradication work such as OXFAM, DFID, etc.



41. **Ritesh Kumar** requested advice as to whether the framework paper should be annexed to a COP11 DR or whether it would be just provided as a COP11 Information Paper. He also advised that a version of the paper will be prepared for submission to a journal for publication.
42. The **DSG** recommended that the framework paper should be annexed to a COP11 DR to be entitled “Wetlands and poverty eradication: a Ramsar framework and indicators”, for submission to SC43, and requested participants to flag up what further work on aspects such as social vulnerability may need to be addressed as a future priority in the next cycle of the STRP.
43. The **STRP Chair** recommended that a social science expert be considered for appointment to the Panel in the next STRP cycle, in order to help with further socio-economic aspects of the Panel’s work.

**Decision STRP16-5:** The Panel approved the finalization of the wetlands and poverty eradication framework for transmission to SC43 as a COP11 DR.

**Agenda item 4.4. Designating Ramsar Sites: a revised Ramsar Information Sheet and Strategic Framework and Guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Tasks 8.4/4.5/8.3)**

44. Task lead **David Stroud (TWA7- Ramsar Sites)** reported on progress with the redevelopment of the Ramsar Information Sheet and the Strategic Framework, highlighting that the proposed revised RIS format should be easier and clearer for Parties to complete and to update; that it will provide better data for more powerful uses; and that it will be easier to input the RIS information into the Ramsar Sites Database. He also explained that the new Strategic Framework will consolidate all existing guidance within one coherent document and also fully integrate ecological character description within RIS. The whole package will provide enhanced service to Ramsar database users, including those within Contracting Parties, and also a better understanding and overview of the Ramsar Site networks and, for example, of the ecosystem services they provide.
45. Discussion covered outstanding issues including what to recommend as minimum ‘obligatory’ fields in recognition that not all Parties will have data to complete all aspects of the ecological character description, and what to recommend to COP in regard to the timing of ‘entry into force’ of the revised RIS format, in order to give Parties sufficient time following COP11 to move toward using the revised format.
46. The **DSG** suggested clearly explaining the definitions of “obligatory” and “optional” fields in the RIS, and he recommended adding space for a summary text description of the application of each of the Criteria in those RIS fields.
47. In relation to entry into force of the revised RIS, the **STRP Chair** and **DSG** proposed January 2014 as a realistic timeline, allowing 18 months after COP11 as lead-in time.
48. **María Rivera (Senior Adviser for the Americas)** advised that some Parties in the Neotropics region may be reluctant about any the proposal for a revised RIS. **Tatiana Minaeva** mentioned that in Russia they use the RISs as baseline documents with legal

status and that they might be concerned about the implications of changing the RIS format and content.

49. The **STRP Chair** stressed that there is a need for a detailed structured process led by the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties during the transition period from the old to the new RIS format – the process together with a critical change chart that shows timelines for the following six years which should already be available for discussion at the pre-COP regional meetings. She suggested checking whether a Contracting Party might be willing to second a suitably qualified project manager to the Secretariat during summer to help with developing such a plan, or whether a voluntary contribution might be found to contract a project planner/manager.
50. **Roy Gardner (Stetson University)** pointed out that for those Contracting Parties with RISs in need of being updated in the next couple of years, an extension could be given to use the new RIS format. While this might cause some loss of data, it might lead to a smoother transition. **Montserrat Carbonell (Regional Networker for the Neotropics)** also suggested that the new RIS entry could wait until an online system for RIS submission is in place.
51. **David Stroud** reiterated that now is the time to send key messages to Contracting Parties about the purpose and benefits to efficiency, time and cost of RIS completion and data and information handling of the revised RIS format, both to the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat.
52. The **STRP Chair** stressed that whilst there will be a COP11 DR supported by a large package of revised RIS and Strategic Framework, and with an Information Paper providing the rationale for the change to the revised RIS format and the revised Strategic Framework, there is also an important need for the preparation of an Information Paper (also to be used for regional COP11 preparatory meeting discussions) that would set out the implementation strategy and schedule, beginning in 2011 with the preparatory work that is needed (such as investigating the development of online submission forms) and lasting until all RISs are in the new format, which could be 6 to 10 years from adoption. The implementation strategy and schedule should also anticipate possible bottlenecks and critical issues that might come up and provide potential solutions for these. The implementation strategy and schedule should be developed by the Secretariat since much of the input would come from the regional teams, and the STRP members would assist in any way they could to support the Secretariat in developing this strategy and schedule.
53. **David Stroud** reminded that a number of worked examples of Ramsar Information Sheets for Ramsar Sites compiled in both the old and new format should be provided on the Ramsar website as part of the implementation strategy.
54. The **DSG** proposed to place key messages from the rationale about why the change into the revised RIS is needed at the front of the Information Paper.
55. The **STRP Chair** suggested that David Stroud should attend SC42 to explain the task and the proposed revised RIS and Strategic Framework.

56. Participants who had filled out RIS in the past were asked to undertake a test exercise during STRP16 by using the revised RIS format to prepare a new RIS for any Ramsar Site with which they are familiar, in order to help further test the utility of the revised format.

***Decision STRP16-6:*** The Panel:

- i) approved the revised RIS format, with some minor modifications, and the revised Strategic Framework, for finalization, and urged that both be submitted to SC42 for approval for going forward with finalization in order to give as long a period as possible before COP to address any issues from Parties;
- ii) requested that worked RIS examples in the revised format be made available on the Ramsar website and presented at SC42;
- iii) emphasized that these revisions of the RIS and Strategic Framework are essential for future improved and streamlined reporting and management of information about Ramsar Sites within the Convention;
- iv) strongly urged that the Secretariat begin as soon as possible to develop a coherent implementation strategy and schedule to show clearly how the transition processes from the old to the new RIS formats will be managed over an extended implementation timetable. The STRP will support the Secretariat in whatever way it can in developing this strategy and schedule; and
- v) stressed the importance of having key STRP members present at the regional COP11 preparatory meetings to assist Parties in understanding the rationale and importance of the revised RIS and Strategic Framework and the proposed implementation strategy, and urged that resources should be sought to enable STRP participation in these regional meetings.

**Agenda item 4.5. A ‘Framework and guidance for avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for wetland losses’ and information paper on lessons learned from “no net loss” policies, the “urgent national interest” test, and other issues for wetland mitigation and compensation (Task 9.1)**

57. **Royal Gardner** and **Rob McInnes** presented an update of the outcomes of the workshop held in Stetson, Florida, in October 2010 and the “Framework for avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for wetland losses” that is under preparation. As COP11 deliverables for this task, a Draft Resolution on avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for wetland losses is planned, with an Annex to the DR providing the integrated framework. A COP11 Information Paper on ‘no net loss’ policies will also be prepared and possibly expanded into an RTR after COP11.
58. **Denis Landenbergue** pointed out the need for compensation to be established before a site is damaged and to consider off-site compensation options within the guidance; **Ritesh Kumar** reminded that ground level participation and transparency is key to mitigation and compensation provision and success.

***Decision STRP16-7:*** The Panel approved the finalization of a COP11 DR and annexed framework and guidelines for avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for wetland losses, for submission to SC43.

**Tuesday 15 February 2011**

**Agenda item 4.6. Additional guidance on describing the ecological character of wetlands: the use of conceptual models, identifying limits of acceptable change, and worked examples of existing RIS into ecological character format (Task 4.4)**

59. **David Pritchard** and **David Stroud** provided an update of the status of task 4.4 indicating that the further guidance on describing the ecological character of wetlands will now be dealt with under the revised comprehensive Strategic Framework and the RIS format. However, owing to resource limitations, further guidance requested by COP10 under this task has yet to be developed, including on: determining confidence limits and degree of likelihood in cases of “likely” change in the context of Article 3.2; the application of a precautionary approach in the Ramsar Convention; and “limits of acceptable change”, including guidance on defining the range of natural variability of a site. Products for COP11, if resources permit, might include conceptual models and illustrative material, and hands-on “training” experiences can be offered at regional meetings.
60. **Pierre Horwitz** reminded the meeting that the whole concept of limits of acceptable change should consider the human dimension; the **DSG** suggested that, while STRP had already agreed that addressing the issues of limits of acceptable change was important and should be considered more thoroughly in the next triennium, we should at least include some recommendations in the Strategic Framework about understanding the past history of change, and what the projections are for future changes, since these have relevance for Art 3.2 reporting. The ecological character trajectory of the site, past, present and future, should be included in the description of the ecological character; it should be stressed that maintaining the ecological character of a site does not necessarily mean maintaining the character as it was on the date of designation, but rather the ecological character within its natural range of variability. **Dave Pritchard** suggested that there should not be an acceptability threshold to require reporting, but that we could advise Parties to include what they know if the historical trends over time have changed.
61. Concerning conceptual models, **David Pritchard** advised that Australian specialists identified through George Lukacs have been developing some further work on conceptual models and case studies for delivery in spring 2011. **George Lukacs** offered to check if there is enough scope to make the Australian conceptual model applicable for more than Australia or similar countries and to underpin the “instruction” to create those models usable in different circumstances.
62. **Philippe Gerbeaux (Regional Networker for Oceania)** informed that in New Zealand, for example, macrophytes are subject to periods of dryness as part of their natural cycles; Parties should be aware of these characteristics of wetlands and identify what is the tipping point that might affect the natural balance and cycles.
63. **Jaime Garcia Moreno** made a reference to the concept of novel ecosystems, in relation to ecological character trajectories.
64. The **STRP Chair** suggested having a review of different existing approaches to assess limits of acceptable change and that a suitable person to do that might be Harry Biggs of South African National Parks. Such a review would be a foundation for further work on providing guidance on reporting on Article 3.2 cases. **David Stroud** noted that the STRP NFPs could help with the review. **Montserrat Carbonell** recommended that developing

countries should be involved since they might have different experiences and approaches to share.

65. **David Stroud** underlined that the ecological character description is partly captured in the RIS, but that we do not have underpinning guidance on this in the Strategic Framework and that it will be difficult to develop this by the deadline for Strategic Framework submission to SC42. **Sandra Hails (CEPA Officer)** suggested that if there is not enough articulated information for that to go into the Strategic Framework, we could provide Parties with some case studies, a few stories, and some common factors to help.

**Decision STRP16-8:** The **Panel** agreed that, whilst general principles and guidance for the description of the ecological character could be finalized in this triennium, further work is needed for guidance on ‘Limits of Acceptable Change’ (LAC), recognizing that consultancy funding will be needed to work on and review examples of these approaches between now and COP11 so that information can be provided to that COP as an Information Paper. The Panel urged that the issue of LAC should be added to the revised Strategic Framework, at least in principle, until more detailed guidance can be made available.

66. The **STRP Chair** pointed out that the Panel needs to identify someone to lead the LAC review process.

#### **Agenda item 4.7. An updated Ramsar Framework for data and information needs (Task 4.3)**

67. **Dave Pritchard** presented an update on the current status of task 4.3 and explained that the concept of a *Framework for Ramsar data and information needs*, as provided in Resolution X.14, has now evolved into a broader tool for “Enhanced support for the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015”, going beyond just adding additional sections of data and information needs and gap identification to the COP10-adopted material. The approach, whilst currently drafted and tested in ‘flat table’ paper format, would be much more readily usable if it could be developed as an online query-based portal, with end-user entry points through the lenses of the various Strategic Plans’ goals and strategies and accessible through the Ramsar website.
68. **Peter Herkenrath (UNEP-WCMC)** demonstrated that as currently structured the tabular format provides a ‘look-up’ table for each of the Convention’s Strategic Plan Strategies, relevant Key Result Areas (KRAs), National Report indicators, effectiveness indicators, COP Resolutions and Recommendations, available Ramsar guidance, and goals/strategies in the Strategic Plans of other MEAs – notably the CBD COP10-adopted Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, for which all the biodiversity-related MEAs including Ramsar have committed to contribute to its implementation. As an interim arrangement, prior to the development of any online tool, the ease of use of the flat table material could be enhanced through the insertion of hyperlinks to the related materials and sources.
69. **Peter Herkenrath** explained that rather than now undertaking and providing a separate data and information needs gap analysis, as requested by COP10, this support tool can be viewed as providing the starting point for seeing more clearly where any gaps in current Strategic Plan implementation support may lie.

70. The **STRP Chair** asked about the possible implications of a new Strategic Plan being adopted, in relation to the challenge of maintaining such a portal and keeping it updated, and the type of budget and expertise that would be required for its development and ongoing maintenance.
71. **Sandra Hails** congratulated the task team for an incredible piece of work, but expressed concern that if the system cannot be made available online, it could be very daunting for Parties to use in hard copy (flat table) form, although it would still be useful. The **DSG** reminded that it was for the COP to request further work on the update and further development of the Convention's *Framework for Ramsar data and information needs*.
72. **María Rivera** suggested that the Secretariat regional teams identify some Contracting Parties with whom to discuss the concept, prior to the pre-COP11 regional preparatory meetings, and to then have further advice from those meetings.
73. **Dave Pritchard** pointed out that the content developed so far already has utility (if not 'user-friendliness').
74. The **STRP Chair** noted that it might be helpful, in the light of discussions and recommendations at the African STRP NFPs meeting, to include an option in the framework for how and where to find people locally with suitable expertise to assist in implementation. She noted that there are a number of social networking tools now in use to find experts on the ground and that Harry Biggs is already working on that and he could help. She pointed out that what we might want to bring to Parties' attention is a general recommendation for development of better communication tools and this web portal might be one of this. For the COP we might just need to present an example Web front page of what the portal might look like.

**Decision STRP16-9:** The **Panel** recognized the value of the concept of the "Enhanced support for the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015" tool; noted that further work is needed to develop this to a practically useful level as an online system; recommended that this further work should be included in the COP11 Resolution on STRP future priorities and that a mock-up of an online system should be presented as a COP11 Information Paper; and requested the DSG to consider how best to introduce the concept and approach at SC42 to gain a first response from Parties.

#### **Agenda item 4.8. Overarching principles for urban planning and wetlands (Task 2.7)**

75. **Rob McInnes** outlined the progress made since the STRP midterm workshops with Task 2.7 on guidance for planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands. He explained that a framework incorporating policy and practical recommendations has now been developed in combination with a Draft COP11 Resolution and an Information Paper. He pointed out that there is a need to consider further aspects such as target audiences and methods for dissemination as well as budget and resourcing priorities to ensure that the principles are disseminated and embedded widely. He recommended that STRP be pro-active in engaging with stakeholders and investing in the ongoing collaboration on this topic with a range of organizations such the Global Partnership on

Cities and Biodiversity, the UN-HABITAT Sustainable Cities Programme, Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB), and ICLEI.

76. The **STRP Chair** commented on the recommendations for outreach and dissemination of wetland guidance to other sectors, noting that this task, like the other ‘sectoral’ guidance tasks, requires significant engagement with organizations and processes outside the STRP. She asked what balance of the work for the next STRP cycle should comprise this kind of outreach and engagement, building partnerships and ensuring engagement with a wider audience, since this could potentially take up significant STRP time and resources; she asked, too, whether the STRP should have a role in providing technical guidance or small components such as demonstration and how-to projects. She pointed out that there is a need to package the current work and priorities into a communication strategy.
77. **Christine Prietto** suggested prioritizing the partnerships that already exist and identifying possible products with them.
78. **Rob McInnes** explained that we delivered enough information to the “urban” sector to advance importance of wetlands, but that STRP should continue working on services to urban wetlands and educating urban people about how urbanization can create a whole range of issues elsewhere and affect faraway wetlands. He pointed out that working at a local/city level often catalyzes many more positive actions than at government level.
79. **Senka Barudanovic** reminded the meeting about the Plan of Action for local governments.
80. **Rob McInnes** informed the meeting that the Information Paper, open for comments, will be ready by the end of June 2011 and that a budget for activities on scientific work and communication in relation to urban and peri-urban wetlands would be drawn up. The **STRP Chair** suggested including in the DR a clear plan for the future work and identifying a small group of those Contracting Parties interested in taking the work forward in order to avoid having the whole burden of outreach and communication fall upon the STRP.

**Decision STRP16-10:** The **Panel** endorsed finalization of a COP11 DR with annexed principles and guidelines for SC43 consideration (noting that some further resources would be needed between now and COP11 to complete the work and continue the interorganizational engagement process) and the finalization of a supporting COP11 Information Paper.

#### **Agenda item 4.9. A practical guide and manual for managing wetlands and wildlife diseases (Task 2.1)**

81. **Ruth Cromie (WWT)** and **Rebecca Lee (WWT)** reported on the progress made with preparing wildlife disease guidance for wetland managers. They explained the inseparable disease relationship between wildlife, domestic animals and humans, the interlinkages between animal health and livelihoods, and the extent to which effective disease prevention is in the hands of wetland managers. They then provided a thorough overview of the deliverables proposed for COP11: a “one health” Draft Resolution covering wetlands, human health and wildlife diseases (being developed jointly with human health

lead member Pierre Horwitz), with two Annexes: one providing key messages and a summary of the manual on the prevention and control of wildlife disease in wetlands, and the other providing key messages and the executive summary of the *Ramsar Technical Report* being prepared on wetlands and human health interactions

82. Advice was sought from the Panel and Secretariat as to the best way to present and issue the wildlife diseases manual to COP11, recognizing that the manual is a substantial size (c 200 pp) and has been prepared in an attractive layout and format.
83. A small group of participants proposed to meet during lunch time to develop the contents for the operational paragraphs of the DR.
84. The **STRP Chair** and the **DSG** congratulated the task team leads on their impressive efforts and draft manual and thanked the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust for its support for this work.

**Decision STRP16-11:** The **Panel** supported the drafting of a “one health” COP11 DR with its two planned annexes and proposed to refer in that DR to the wildlife diseases manual, which should be issued as a standalone document in its current attractive layout, preferably labeled as a *Ramsar Technical Report*.

#### **Agenda item 4.10. The State of the world’s wetlands and their services to people (Tasks 4.1/4.8)**

85. **Dave Pritchard** provided an overview of the outline approach and structure for the proposed first edition of State of the World’s Wetlands and their Services to People (SoWWS). He explained that the SoWWS concept as defined at the STRP midterm workshops in February 2010 was for a periodic Ramsar “flagship” publication “presenting comprehensive and objective information and analysis on the current global state of coastal and inland wetlands and their capacity to continue to deliver major benefits to people”. He also showed a mock-up of one possible style of presentation of SoWWS findings with headline statements, backed up by simple presentations of evidence, examples etc.s that was prepared by the DSG.
86. The **STRP Chair** congratulated Dave Pritchard and the other contributors who compiled the proposal and the mock up of the SoWWS; she asked whether there is the intention to push the project forward or if it would be sufficient to present only the mock up to the COP this time, using it as a “teaser” for information and would open the doors for something more comprehensive in the next triennium, also building on the ongoing indicators work.
87. Some of the participants expressed concerns about the availability of time to pursue a compilation of the SoWWS just before the COP and also pointed out that it would require significant financial resources that are not currently available. The **DSG** explained that the idea is to produce the first SoWWS very much as a summary booklet pulling together twenty to twenty-five key topics and then ask the COP to mandate STRP to undertake a more comprehensive preparation of a second and subsequent editions. **Dave Pritchard** added that it could be possible to prepare the booklet if we synthesize assessments already existing within our and other MEAs’ and bodies’ work, looking at whatever is available and



without trying to produce the booklet to meet academic standards. **Max Finlayson** reminded the meeting that it was necessary to be cautious about the use of non-peer-reviewed documents.

88. In relation to the SoWWS format, **Vicky Jones (Birdlife International)** recalled that the style and length of those State of the World assessments are determinants for their success and pointed out that the 2008 edition of the State of the World's Birds prepared by BirdLife International was generally considered much better suited for advocacy purposes than the 2004 edition because it was much shorter (25 pages versus 75). She also stressed that the compilation of such products is very time-consuming and that for instance the 25 page 2008 SOWB required approximately 9 months of a person's full time work.
89. **Lew Young (Senior Adviser for Asia and Pacific)** recommended that the STRP should widen the authorship of their publications and reach out other people, for example from the health and social sector.
90. **The DSG** highlighted that there would be two product options for the SoWWS: either to have a first published SoWWS in a very simple format or to wait for resources and prepare a more comprehensive one in the next triennium. He noted that the CBD had stressed the need and value of an SoWWS and that this was reflected in the CBD COP10 Decision X/28 on inland waters. He felt that if resources and capacity could be found quickly, it would still be possible to produce a simple format first edition in time for presentation to COP11, either as an Information Paper or a standalone product. Producing such a first edition edition SoWWS could also be valuable in demonstrating clearly to the IPBES, as it begins developing its work plan in the coming years, what sorts of needs the STRP and the Ramsar Convention have.

**Decision STRP16-12:** The **Panel** recommended that unless resources, capacity and time permit otherwise, an Information Paper should be prepared for COP11 outlining the approach and presenting a mock-up example section of an SoWWS, and that supporting references to the SoWWS should be included in the DR or DRs concerning IPBES and cooperation with other MEAs and processes.

**Agenda item 4.11. Wetlands and climate change - updated issues and considerations for the Ramsar Convention and developing guidance on wetland ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change (Tasks 6.2 & 6.1)**

91. **Max Finlayson** reported on the progress made under the Thematic Work Area on Wetlands & Climate Change. He addressed the challenges with wetland vulnerability assessments, and he informed the meeting that a review of the information relevant to wetlands in the IPCC 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report is being prepared for publication, probably as a Ramsar Technical Report with the option of also producing a journal article as well as a proposed COP information paper, and he noted that work on the implications of REDD+ for wetlands is ongoing. He mentioned that in the following days there will be the opportunity to discuss the concept of novel ecosystems in relation to climate change. He pointed out that the climate change thematic work area currently consisted of a collection of sometimes disparate tasks and would benefit now from a more strategic approach to identifying priorities and development of future work, with an increased emphasis on adaptation.

92. With regard to liaising with the Arctic Council on an assessment of the vulnerability of Arctic wetlands to climate change and the development of guidelines for wise use while taking account of the ongoing Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, **Tatiana Minaeva** informed that Wetlands International has submitted a proposal for activities to boost the collaboration with the Arctic Council and CAFF. On behalf of WI, she asked whether there would be interest in STRP supporting those activities.
93. The **STRP Chair** noted that STRP should consider the request of WI and pin down in its future work plan an Arctic Council liaison, pointing out there could be some issues there for David Stroud to address in the revised RIS. Further discussion identified the following: further collaboration was agreed in principle, but with individuals rather than the STRP having input at this stage, because individuals rather than the STRP were better placed to potentially contribute to ongoing project work, while the Secretariat rather than the STRP was better placed to liaise further with the Council.
94. **Borja Heredia (Convention on Migratory Species)** informed the meeting that the CMS is doing some work on assessing the vulnerability of migratory species and that they would like to be part of any such partnership.

***Decision STRP16-13:*** The **Panel:**

- i) agreed to prepare a COP11 DR on climate change for submission to SC43, covering the specific issues covered by the background technical reports, the DR's title to be "Wetlands and climate change – updated issues and considerations for the Ramsar Convention", accompanied by a COP11 Information Paper providing summaries and key messages of these reports, including the IPCC AR4 and the REDD+ work; and
- ii) recognized that there is a need to take a more strategic approach to cross-cutting climate change issues in its programme, and requested Max Finlayson to address this in preparing proposals for any climate change work in the next triennium, for inclusion in the COP11 DR on future scientific and technical priorities.

**Agenda item 4.12. Wetland restoration – review and proposals for updating and expansion of guidance (Task 9.2)**

95. **Kevin Erwin (Lead for TWA8- Wetland restoration, mitigation & compensation)** provided an overview of the progress made under task 9.2 on the review and proposals for updating and expanding the wetland restoration guidance, referring to the outcomes of the guidance review that was prepared by Rob McInnes. He also informed the meeting about several workshops held since the last STRP meeting in February 2010 that were designed to collect input on available existing guidance for wetland restoration and identify gaps and recommendations for future priorities in the next triennium.
96. **The DSG** reminded that although Rob McInnes's review of the Ramsar guidance highlighted that the Ramsar guidance is generic, it was also never intended to cover all technical methods and approaches for restoring different specific wetland types, but rather to provide the framework supporting the identification and designing of restoration activities. Indeed, the range of practical techniques for restoration is huge, and there is much existing guidance on the "how to" in books and publications.

97. **The STRP Chair** asked for more clarity on what the recommendations are from this task to COP11. What is that we might need adding or modifying in the existing guidance, if anything? She stressed that there is a whole range of possible ways to help practitioners undertake restoration projects on the ground, but noted that this is not the STRP's mandate and that the primary target audience for Ramsar guidance is our Administrative Authorities, who are more "policy and planning" people.
98. The **STRP Chair** noted that a clearer indication would be helpful about how the proposals presented for future STRP work on wetland restoration would fit into STRP's scope and mandate in responding to the COP10 requests under Task 9.2.
99. **Sasha Alexander (Society for Ecological Restoration, SER)** asked about the deadline for a final draft for a COP11 INF paper and was informed that that would be at the end of March 2012. Sasha also reminded the meeting that the STRP is planning to hold a restoration workshop at the SER international conference of SER in Merida, Mexico, in August 2011, and he recommended that a structured process be put in place to meet the task reference.
100. **The STRP Chair** noted that further discussion about future priorities for this task and thematic work areas will be picked up in Friday's agenda.

**Decision STRP16-14:** The **Panel** requested that a briefing note, which could for a COP11 Information Paper, should be prepared to summarise the key messages on wetland restoration needs from practitioners emerging from the workshops held during the past year and during 2011 under this task, including recommendations for appropriate future tasks that STRP could work on or that STRP would encourage other organizations to undertake.

#### **Agenda item 5.2. CSAB meeting report and discussion of collaboration across the MEAs in relation to ecosystem restoration**

101. **The STRP Chair** provided an overview of the outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Chairs of the Subsidiary and Advisory Bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, hosted by the Ramsar Secretariat and the STRP Chair on Sunday, 13 February. She noted that several items discussed at the CSAB meeting were of interest to STRP, including: the outcomes of the CBD COP10 in Nagoya (see Agenda item 5.1); the newly-adopted ABS protocol; collaboration between MEAs in the CSAB group on harmonization of species nomenclature across the MEAs; the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); and the CBD-led process to revise National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
102. The **STRP Chair** particularly highlighted the proposal, which was led by Ramsar, to develop a collaborative programme on ecosystem restoration among the conventions. A draft information paper was submitted by the STRP Chair and Sasha Alexander from SER to initiate discussion at CSAB4. She advised that CSAB agreed to establish an informal working group to provide guidance and inputs to finalize the paper as an Information Note to various MEA processes and to seek resources for a workshop(s) in the near future

to develop the scope and terms of reference, user needs, and target audiences for shared guidance.

**Agenda item 5.3. Update on IPBES, possible information note to SC and COP, future STRP tasks associated with IPBES**

103. **Neville Ash, Chief of the Biodiversity Unit in UNEP**, provided a presentation on the establishment of the IPBES, reminding the meeting that the Platform was established to ensure that research is policy-relevant and that science is communicated to policy makers. The IPBES' four main functions would be to 1) identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policymakers and catalyze efforts to generate new knowledge, 2) perform regular and timely assessments (global, regional, subregional and thematic), 3) support policy formulation and implementation by identifying and promoting development of tools and methods, and 4) prioritize key capacity building needs to improve the science-policy interface. He strongly encouraged the STRP and the Ramsar Secretariat to continue to provide inputs into the process, particularly regarding the work programme. Whilst the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment focused on ecosystem services and the TEEB on ecosystem evaluation, IPBES will bring together the different disciplines.
104. The **STRP Chair** thanked Neville Ash for taking the time to attend STRP16 to provide a very informative presentation and for promoting a participatory process in the establishment of the platform. The Chair asked STRP to reflect upon the nature of its engagement in IPBES development and future work, and she inquired whether the STRP needed to put forward a separate DR on IPBES to COP11, and what its content should be.
105. Some questions from the Panel concerned the financial and administrative set-up of the IPBES. **George Lukacs** asked whether the establishment of the Platform was an equitable model that would not stretch STRP's voluntary contributions further? Neville Ash explained that the IPBES would not duplicate existing systems and information, but it is meant to assist the existing bodies.
106. **Dave Pritchard** asked whether the IPBES could perform thematic assessments such a SoWWS: if so, this could be seen as a great opportunity to increase Ramsar's capacity and assist us in reaching out more particularly at policy level. **Neville Ash** pointed out that there could be different models for the IPBES and that the STRP might wish to put forward a request that legitimizes IPBES to undertake a task like producing such a report for the Convention and related processes. Another option could be for the STRP to lead such an assessment and IPBES to partner with it. A co-badged publication was seen as good leverage by the participants. **The DSG** suggested that we could use the State of the World's Wetlands as an opportunity to identify key knowledge gaps in the status and trends of wetlands as a route to agenda-setting for the IPBES to assist in filling those in.
107. **Ritesh Kumar** asked about plans for maintaining the IPBES's scientific independence. **Neville Ash** indicated that the IPBES might synthesize already existing material, both peer reviewed but also non-peer-reviewed, if there is a system in place, but that has yet to be decided.

108. **Denis Landenbergue** noted that one of the purposes of the assessment is to prepare concise, credible, scientific information and to consolidate and communicate this targeted to policy makers.
109. The **STRP Chair** stressed that a Draft Resolution to COP11 would need to flag up a number of issues, such the possible impacts on the STRP budget, and to spell out our recommendations on STRP engagement with IPBES, especially with regard to an interface for thematic reviews and assessments. The STRP should take enough time to highlight the details of our engagement with IPBES and its implications. She noted that at the CSAB4 meeting, it had been mentioned that the CSAB should submit, as a group, an information paper to the first plenary of the IPBES in order to provide inputs and recommendations on mechanisms for development of the IPBES work programme.
110. **The DSG** pointed out that this would be a good opportunity for STRP and Ramsar and that we should highlight what we need from IPBES to assist us and the Parties. The IPBES could play a crucial role in finding where grey literature and literature at national and subnational scales exist, and we should capitalize on that.
111. **Archana Chatterjee (WWF India)** asked whether IPBES will be more reactive or proactive and if literature will be available only in English or in other languages. **Neville Ash** explained that the main syntheses would be available in the UN languages and it is recognized that much of the information on biodiversity and ecosystems sits behind the non-English documents.

**Decision STRP16-15:** The **Panel** agreed, given the STRP engagement to date in the IPBES consultative group, that the STRP Chair should attend the first plenary session of the IPBES.

**Decision STRP16-16:** The **Panel** agreed that it should invite the COP to give the STRP a mandate to go forward and engage with the IPBES in future, and that this should be included in the elements of the COP11 DR on IPBES, and it noted that the Draft Resolution should be prepared for SC42 if possible and that a briefing paper on IPBES should be prepared for SC42. The briefing paper will then form the basis of a COP11 Information Paper with the inclusion of recommendations on Ramsar-IPBES engagement. This draft would then be shared with UNEP (Neville Ash) and the CSAB group in order to assist the group in preparing a CSAB INF paper for the IPBES first plenary.

#### **Agenda item 5.1. Outcomes of CBD COP10 (Nagoya)**

112. **David Duthie (CBD Secretariat)** provided a broad overview of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including its Aichi targets adopted at CBD COP10, and other main Nagoya outcomes. He also explained that CBD will put in place mechanisms to support implementation and noted that GEF-5 has offered support for revision of NBSAPs, but that five months after the call for submissions, no Party has yet made a proposal. He urged STRP to encourage Ramsar focal points to consider mobilizing a group of biodiversity agencies and to submit proposals. He also pointed out that the Government of Japan has set aside resources to support the process.

**Wednesday 16 February 2011**

**Agenda item 5.1. Outcomes of CBD COP10 (Nagoya) and implementation roles for STRP**

113. The **DSG** presented a review of the outcomes of Nagoya, focusing on issues relevant to Ramsar and the work of the STRP, notably in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets (Decision X/3), and Decision X/28 on inland waters biodiversity.
114. Concerning the Strategic Plan, the **DSG** stressed that it is not just a Plan for the CBD, but that all the biodiversity-related Conventions had committed to contributing jointly to its implementation. He noted that the CBD has to date paid scant attention to the issue of water and biodiversity, and that despite a strong recommendation from the preparatory SBSTTA14 meeting that a specific target on water and ecosystems be included in the Strategic Plan, this was largely ignored in the subsequent preparatory and Nagoya negotiations. However, with the support of some Parties a reference to water has been included in Aichi Target 14 on ecosystem services, and in preparing the technical rationale for this target, there is an instruction to include the “paramount importance of water-related services”.
115. The **DSG** outlined the process that is now underway to develop headline indicators for each of the Aichi Targets, including building on the work of the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) indicators, with the development of additional indicators on drivers and on ecosystem services. The GEO-BON network has also been requested to provide an assessment of how ‘observation’ datasets could contribute to potential indicators for the Targets, and a workshop on this, with the DSG’s participation, will take place in early March 2011. This and other work, including that of the 2010 BIP water-related storylines and indicators workshop held in Gland late in 2010, will now feed into a planned expert workshop and Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Aichi Target indicators in late June 2011. Ramsar has nominated Dave Pritchard to represent STRP interests and contributions, and the group of “Real MEAs” Secretariats (Ramsar, CMS, CITES and World Heritage) have jointly nominated the DSG to represent their interests.
116. Decision X/3 also “Invites the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions [...] to address at their future meetings options for enhanced cooperation, inter alia, with regard to work on cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, scientific criteria for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas in need of protection, and invasive alien species”, to which might also valuably be added water. The Decision also “expresses its appreciation to the Ramsar Convention, and its Secretariat and Scientific and Technical Review Panel, for the continued cooperation”.
117. Concerning Decision X/28 on inland waters, the **DSG** recalled that the STRP, working through Dave Pritchard, had provided major Ramsar input into the in-depth review of the inland waters programme of work, which then led to the key issues from that review being reflected in the adopted text of Decision X/28.
118. Decision X/28 includes much of major significance to Ramsar and the future work of the STRP. Importantly it focuses not only on the water needs of inland wetlands, but strongly

on the vital role of ecosystems (including wetlands) for “water security” (although not using that term). Some key bits include “Noting with appreciation the continuing value of national reports of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention [...] in providing key information on the status and trends of inland water biodiversity and drivers of change”, and “expresses its appreciation for the inputs of the Secretariat and Scientific and Technical Review Panel [...] into the in-depth review of the implementation of the programme of work”. The Decision also urges Parties to expand “protected areas and ecological networks for inland water biodiversity and through designating coherent and comprehensive networks of wetland areas within river basins for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance and through international cooperation in the management of inland water resources”.

119. The **DSG** noted that whilst Ramsar’s National Report information has made major inputs to assessing the CBD inland waters programme of work, this has not previously been reciprocated by CBD. So it is valuable that Decision X/28 now requests the CBD in consultation with the STRP to “undertake an analysis of information in the fourth national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to the status and trends of wetlands and drivers of change in wetlands, from all programme areas”, and to inform the planned report on the state of the world’s wetlands.
120. The Decision also recognised the need for improved incorporation of biodiversity and ecosystem-service considerations in water-resources scenario planning and invited the STRP, subject to available resources, to strengthen efforts to contribute to ongoing processes in this regard, including the scenario analysis being undertaken for the Fourth World Water Development Report.
121. Of particular relevance and importance to STRP’s ongoing work on water-related issues is the establishment under Decision X/28 of an “expert working group” to review available information and provide key policy-relevant messages on “maintaining the ability of biodiversity to continue to support the water cycle”. The STRP, with CBD and other relevant partners, is invited to establish this group, building on the relevant core expertise of the STRP. The **DSG** outlined the terms of reference for this group, which are annexed to Decision X/28. He noted that the STRP would need advice from the CBD Secretariat as to the mechanisms for establishing the group and timelines for delivery of its work, and that in relation to this task, and in addressing the STRP’s overall contributions to CBD/Ramsar joint implementation in follow-up to Nagoya Decisions, it was particularly regrettable that David Coates, the SCBD lead officer for this collaboration, had not been able to participate in STRP16.
122. The **DSG** explained that much of the CBD’s attention to Ramsar as its lead implementation partner for wetlands has been, and continues to be, delivered through the CBD inland waters programme, and that it has been an ongoing frustration that for over 10 years the CBD has failed to recognise the relevance and role of Ramsar in others of its programmes of work or to recognise the cross-linkages amongst those various programmes themselves. It is therefore encouraging that at Nagoya in both the inland waters Decision and those on marine and coastal biodiversity (Decision X/29) and protected areas (Decision X/31), there is now some recognition of the cross-linkages and the role of Ramsar and the STRP.

123. **Mike Acreman (Lead for TWA6- Wetlands and water resources)** remarked that the CBD seemed very interested in task 7.5 on guidance for water resources management in dry and sub-humid lands and therefore we could focus on that.
124. **Sasha Alexander** pointed out that Ramsar could still engage with the IUCN WCPA work on best practice guideline for ecological restoration in protected areas.
125. **Dave Pritchard** noted that there seems to be a promising enhancement of the synergies between the two conventions and that we could link those activities with the analysis we're doing on the National Reports. However, there would be a quite substantial amount of work to be done to ensure that Ramsar and wetlands are fully incorporated into the revision of NBSAPs processes. There was no mention of the possibility of supporting national wetland policies under the GEF/NBSAP processes.
126. The **DSG** informed that we are considering contacting our focal points about the NBSAP regional workshops and revision processes, and he sought suggestions about the language for a message from the Secretariat encouraging dialogue about those workshops between Ramsar focal points and CBD focal points, so that NBSAPs can also facilitate other processes such as national wetland policies and their implementation.
127. The **STRP Chair** commented that there is a very good match for the long-term priorities of the two conventions, and that it is a great opportunity for Ramsar to contribute with what we are good at. We need to respond to the CBD with a request for a clear indication of how the expert working group task could roll out, how much it would cost, and when it will need to start.
128. **Li Lifeng** highlighted the need to clarify if the term “water cycle” is intended as the hydro-ecological process, at which scale, global, regional, river basin, catchment. He also commented that the DSG in his presentation referred to “All ecosystems drive the water cycle” but that this might need to be given another thought if “water is the source of life”. Water and ecosystems, which comes first? In fact, there are many ecosystems, especially human-made ecosystems, e.g., some agricultural and urban ecosystems, which pose great threats to water and wetlands. He also requested for more clarification on what is meant by “drive” or “supporting” since some ecosystems like wetlands do play significant roles in terms of water retention and purification.

***Decision STRP16-17:*** The **Panel:**

- i) requested the DSG to circulate the terms of reference and tasks of the planned expert working group on biodiversity and the water cycle, in a format in which they could help identify potential lead persons for the various aspects of the task; and
- ii) requested the DSG to contact David Coates of the SCBD to provide as soon as possible clear advice on the modalities and timelines for the work of this group.
- iii) The Panel noted that this and certain other aspects of the invitations to it in CBD COP10 Decisions would need to be included in its proposals to Ramsar COP11 for future scientific and technical priorities, and stressed that to deliver such work the Panel would need additional resources and would anticipate that such resources should be provided through CBD processes; and
- iv) the Panel recorded its deep regret that David Coates, as the SCBD lead officer for CBD/Ramsar/STRP collaboration, had not been able to participate in STRP16, and



stressed that this had hindered its consideration of CBD COP10 outcomes and in particular its ability to respond to the invitation concerning the planned expert working group in Decision X/28.

## **Agenda item 6. Other STRP current tasks and initiatives with likely COP11 materials or products**

### **Agenda item 6.1. Task 7.4 Wetlands and water resource storage**

129. **Mike Acreman** presented an overview of the information paper he had prepared for task 7.4 on wetlands and water storage. He highlighted that groundwater currently provides the majority of water storage used in the world and is the largest store of unfrozen fresh water, and that energy production, population growth and climate change are some of main factors that will have an impact on the availability of groundwater in future. With the continuing increase of oil prices, the hydropower demand is increasing as well as the demand of water for agriculture.
130. With case studies, **Mike Acreman** illustrated the pros and cons of dams, pointing out that too often there are unnecessary social and environmental impacts. He then talked about the role of wetlands in carbon sequestration, water quality, sewage treatment, water storage, flood control and local climate regulation. The last part of his presentation focused on identifying the decision makers: he reminded the Panel that the World Bank nowadays contributes only about five per cent of the funds that go into dam constructions and that the rest of the funds now come mainly from private banks. He remarked that we need to learn the “language” of the sectors we’re speaking to with our publications, and he suggested that a more rigorous review of wetland functions and ecosystem services in relation to water storage options, where every figure is backed up by scientific publication, would be very useful.
131. A lively discussion took place among participants in relation to the value of dams and their sustainability; it was said that dams should be constructed taking into account environmental flows, but that often countries or private investors do not require the development of any environmental standard or protocol. It was said that it is difficult to find good successful river basin commissions in large basins, although there are relatively successful examples at smaller scales.
132. **Ritesh Kumar** pointed out that it would be important to give careful thought to whether small solutions for water storage could be preferable to large centralized options. While for small scale solutions, the applications of consistent guidelines and control would be more difficult, these would allow a bottom-up approach and involvement of local people.
133. **Matthew McCartney (IWMI)** pointed out that, however short-sighted, in many developing countries EIAs are regarded as extremely time consuming and costly and as such a “luxury” that they cannot afford. This is why funders who do not require as stringent safeguards as say many of the development banks are currently popular.
134. **Denis Landenbergue** reminded that Ramsar Advisory Missions are very valuable tools to assist Parties in addressing this type of problem and that a budget line in the Ramsar core budget should be created to enable continued support. He also reminded the meeting that

River Basin Organizations are important partners of the Convention and that the Ramsar Secretariat should engage as much as possible with them. He asked whether it would be appropriate to prepare a Draft COP11 Resolution on groundwater, water storage and dams.

135. **Li Lifeng** explained that water storage and hydropower issues such as planning, siting, design and management need to be dealt with in the river basin context, for which the Ramsar Guidelines on river basin management should be the agreed framework for these issues. He pointed out that the major Chinese banks investing in dams in China and abroad are state-owned banks, and not private banks as mentioned in Mike's presentation. WWF has been working with Exim Bank (China Export and Import Invest Bank) to help them understand and endorse the international principles on sustainable investment and related guidelines. The work is progressing well, and meanwhile a few major hydropower companies, e.g., the China Three Gorges Project Corporation, Huanneng, have endorsed or are in the process of endorsing the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocols, as well as learning good lessons from the West such Green Hydropower and Low Impacts Hydropower.
136. **Li Lifeng** further pointed out that in many countries, though many dams have been built for hydropower and water storage purposes, these countries are still facing huge challenges of water insecurity. For instance, despite over 45,000 large dams built in China, currently half of China is facing severe drought. In many places that large dams have been built in, there is a significant lack of water delivery facilities that provide water to the end users, especially the poor. So there are lessons that should be learned in this regard, though in some areas such as in Africa improved infrastructures would be needed. Water, food, and energy security are the priorities for the external world, which the traditional water sector would use as rationale and opportunities to build more infrastructures. Adapting to climate change will be an additional rationale for doing so, and we need to work with society to avoid mal-adaptation. **Li Lifeng** also recalled that the Convention at COP8 had already adopted a Resolution on the findings of the World Commission on Dams; and that the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocols recently were revised and endorsed by IHA members; these would be a useful tool for wetland managers and wetland national authorities. He asked whether STRP should consider an information paper for the COP on water storage issues.
137. **The STRP Chair** asked whether such a COP11 Information Paper and/or a separate DR should be brought to COP or included in the DR on wetlands and energy issues. The Panel agreed that a separate DR on water storage and wetlands, supported by an INF paper, should be submitted to COP11. She encouraged Mike Acreman to help identifying key messages for decision makers to be annexed to the DR and to also include some graphs to make it more attractive and illustrative; the Chair also noted that despite some clear linkages with the STRP energy review report under preparation, it would be more advisable to have two separate documents with cross-references between them and with the climate change Information Paper.
138. **The DSG** commented that the significant issues relevant to policy makers in relation to water storage would justify a short Resolution and would also respond to CBD and issues identified in its Decision X/28. The Draft Resolution could open the door for further consolidated guidance, if that was considered useful by Parties.

139. **Lew Young** suggested that the operative paragraphs of the Draft Resolution have separate sections with key specific messages for each of the targeted audiences.

***Decision STRP16-18:*** The **Panel** agreed that a COP11 DR with annexed key messages on wetlands and water storage, supported by an Information Paper, should be transmitted to SC43 for COP11 consideration.

#### **Agenda item 6.2. Response options from the MA and their relevance to the Ramsar Convention**

140. The **STRP Chair** reported that the Panel has been unable to progress this task further.

***Decision STRP16-19:*** The **Panel** determined that, given that a substantial amount of time has now passed since the MA publication and that there are now other more recent assessments, no further work on this task should be undertaken.

#### **Agenda item 6.3. Task 8.9 Transboundary Ramsar Sites and wetland management: a synthesis of case studies**

141. **Roy Gardner** provided an update on the progress made with task 8.9 aimed at reviewing a selection of case studies drawn from the Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRS) initiative, in order to summarize the existing range of options regarding the designation and management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRS). He reminded the meeting that the case studies included both TRS and non-TRS transboundary wetlands and address the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks for managing these areas and the development of day-to-day operations. He pointed out that the evaluated TRSs were largely in Europe and that it would be good to enlarge the analysis to other regions as well. He informed that an information paper on “Cooperative approaches regarding management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRSs) and transboundary wetlands” would be produced for COP11 and provided to the Secretariat before March 2012.
142. **The STRP Chair** and the **DSG** suggested that the Information Paper could then be further elaborated as a Ramsar Technical Report.
143. **Vicky Jones** mentioned that Birdlife International could help finding good additional case studies.
144. **Archana Chatterjee** suggested that it would be useful to highlight in the report also those sites with great potential for transboundary cooperation, but where there is no official designation yet.
145. **Dave Pritchard** reminded there is some existing guidance from which it could be possible to merge some of those points about what works and what does not in managing transboundary wetlands and Ramsar Sites.
146. **Tatiana Minaeva** suggested that Ramsar should capitalize on the work already being done by the UNECE Water Convention. Tatiana also proposed that a lake in Russia where there

is a high level intergovernmental treaty from 1996 would be a good case study. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN-WCPA could also help.

147. There was a general agreement that the formal designation by Contracting Parties of TRSs provides a good tool to support collaboration between neighboring countries and the profile of the Ramsar Site(s) in the media.

**Decision STRP16-20:** The **Panel** agreed that an Information Paper on “Cooperative approaches regarding management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRSs) and transboundary wetlands” would be prepared for COP11.

#### **Agenda item 6.4. Task 8.new: Using wetland classifications for Ramsar conservation and wise use implementation**

148. The **DSG** briefly recalled that discussion on wetland classifications and their purposes and application under Ramsar re-emerged during the 2010 midterm workshops, and that at that time, as he started compiling an information note summarizing currently available and adopted classifications and their purposes, he sought input from others on the range of other such classifications in use for different purposes and in different parts of the world. He reported that it had not been possible to make any further progress on this as yet, but that if some STRP16 participants were willing to help, he would be happy to continue further work on the document.
149. The **STRP Chair** mentioned that the STRP NFPs Workshop in Johannesburg showed that many African countries have good wetland classification systems for various purposes and that there is a need to share knowledge and application of different systems. She highlighted the presentation by South Africa at the Johannesburg meeting as an example of the application of wetland classification in inventory and strategic planning. She urged that since the earlier proposal for a complex hydrogeomorphic system (Semeniuk and Semeniuk paper) was reviewed and considered not entirely suitable for Ramsar purposes, it is now time to raise the profile on this issue again and consider prioritizing STRP work on wetland classification systems, with perhaps a Draft Resolution on this issue in the future.

**Decision STRP16-21:** The **Panel** established a task group on wetland classifications, to include the DSG, STRP Chair, Mike Acreman, Philippe Gerbeaux, and David Stroud, to look into how to further develop this issue within the future STRP work plan, including through a possible COP11 Information Paper.

#### **Agenda item 6.5. Task 2.3 Wetlands and extractive industries**

150. The **STRP Chair** reported back on the two components built into task 2.3. She informed the Panel that the working model to identify hotspots for mineral resources that overlay with information on site/wetland distributions is now ready and has been pilot tested for the Africa region and lesser flamingo flyway. This low cost flyway-scale methodology for identifying wetlands likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of extractive industries would be prepared as an RTR and hopefully published in time for COP11.
151. Regarding the review of available technical guidance on assessing, avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on wetlands, the

**STRP Chair** reported that the review was undertaken and about 150-180 technical guidance documents were sourced and reviewed for potential suitability from all regions and in several languages.

152. In relation to preparing the guide to guidance, participants were reminded that much of the information could become outdated in a couple of years and that therefore it is important to provide the sources of links from which to find updated information. However, this is also a reason why the task leads are recommending providing the guide to guidance as a COP Information Paper or STRP briefing note, rather than as a Ramsar Technical Report.
153. The **STRP Chair** reminded the meeting that all the relevant documents and materials are being prepared in collaboration with, and co-badged with, the AEWA Technical Committee, and that delivery of key documents would also have to meet AEWA's submission deadlines for meetings and review.
154. The review of available guidance has highlighted the fact that there does not appear to be a lack of guidance, but rather a need for implementation support, to know where to find wetland information and guidance and how to use them. This was discussed also at the African STRP NFPs meeting in Johannesburg. She noted that the task leads recommended, as a priority, focused training sessions for wetlands people on interactions between wetlands and the extractive industries sector and on technical aspects of extractive industries, as well as support for Ramsar Advisory Missions for individual extractives projects and for national policy development and implementation. The role of STRP could be to seek for partnerships to assist at local level and to help in developing outlines for training programmes and materials and reviewing these, rather than providing this training and support entirely from within the STRP. **The STRP Chair** reiterated that STRP members should join the Ramsar Advisory Missions and training courses on the ground wherever possible to help the people in doing their job and that this could be made a requirement for future RAMs, but that it requires funding and depends on the availability of individual STRP members.
155. The **STRP Chair** also suggested the establishment of a trust fund for implementation support and Ramsar Advisory Missions as a potential solution to provide more resources for these sorts of activities, in order to save the STRP core budget for priority scientific and technical development work, and asked the STRP to advise who the key players are in the mining industries and companies in order that they might be approached to support such a trust fund.
156. The **STRP Chair** sought advice from participants as to whether there should be a DR for COP11 with generic recommendations on implementation support for activities related to other sectors such as extractive industries, energy, water, urban management, etc., or simply to address this topic in the STRP report to COP as a strategic sectoral issue. The **STRP Chair** stressed that rather than a shotgun approach with separate efforts for each sector in this way, Ramsar should consider a generic sectoral strategy. In this regard, **María Rivera** informed that at the Pan-American meeting in December there will be a side event with the private sector.

157. **María Rivera** stressed that Parties are waiting for examples on the ground. She also informed that a workshop that brought together mining companies and the private sector involved in wetland management was held in Chile and brought a lot of visibility at international and national level. In relation to RAMs she reported on her two recent missions to Costa Rica and Nicaragua in relation to adjacent Ramsar Sites and border issues, and explained that the International Court of Justice had recently made a ruling on the issue, in which the Ramsar Convention's role was recognized in helping appropriately to advise the Parties concerned. She pointed out that the Americas have a lot of experience and information to share about extractive industries.
158. Concerning whether there should be a follow-up resolution to Resolution X.26 on extractive industries, whilst there does not seem to be any major new information or recommendations that are not already covered in Resolution X.26, it is clear that many Parties remain very concerned about ongoing rapid expansion of extractive industries and potential impacts on wetlands. A set of recommendations on implementation support for Resolution X.26 could be taken up in the STRP Chairs report to COP or in a short generic DR on engagements with the other sectors.

**Decision STRP16-22:** The **Panel** requested the STRP Chair to seek the Committee's advice at SC42 as to whether the extractives issues should be covered in her Report to COP11 or if a COP11 DR is warranted. The Panel also requested the STRP Chair to raise the issue of whether a DR providing generic recommendations for cross-sectoral engagement and implementation support might be an option for consideration by COP11.

#### Agenda item 6.6. Novel ecosystems

159. **Max Finlayson** presented the concept of "novel ecosystems", explaining that they are ecosystems that have been significantly altered or completely transformed and yet remain self-sustaining and characterized by different species assemblages (often involving invasive alien species), distributions, and abundances that change or modify the traditional or historical structure and functions of ecosystems. Max proposed developing an STRP Information Note summarizing the possible implications for the Ramsar Convention, particularly in the light of changes in ecosystems related to climate change.
160. **Dave Pritchard** wondered how we were going to decide in any given scenario whether it was wiser to consider that we were discovering a system that was genuinely "novel", or whether it was wiser to consider that our original understanding of the ecosystem concerned had been too narrow and needed revising.
161. The **STRP Chair** noted that she had been invited to represent Ramsar at an upcoming specialist workshop on novel ecosystems in British Columbia in late May 2011 and to provide inputs on possible policy implications of recognizing and managing novel ecosystems. These inputs would be based on the STRP Information Note. **Max Finlayson** replied that he expected the note to be ready in draft before that workshop.

#### Agenda item 6.7. WOW Waterbird Critical Sites Network Tool and harmonisation of species nomenclature between MEAs and IOPs

162. **Vicky Jones** provided an overview of the “Wings over Wetlands” (WOW) African-Eurasian Waterbird Flyways GEF project designed to support and build capacity for countries for implementing the Ramsar Convention and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). She explained that this searchable web-based tool brings together data and information from the World Bird Database, the International Waterbird Census and Waterbird Population Estimates databases, the World Database on Protected Areas, and the Ramsar Site Information System. She highlighted its functionalities and products.
163. **STRP members** were invited to review the tool and provide their comments on whether it should be endorsed by Ramsar STRP by 25 February 2011. Endorsement from both Ramsar and AEWA is required as part of the WOW project’s Monitoring & Evaluation framework.
164. While there was a general positive response about the relevance to this tool for assisting Contracting Parties, some concern was expressed about the capacity to maintain and update the underlying datasets, and also how to link in the future to the revised and online RIS format. **Vicky Jones** explained that the tool had been designed with sustainability in mind, so was not a stand-alone website, but fed from the databases of BirdLife International, Wetlands International and Ramsar. These organisations have a continuing commitment to keep their data up-to-date so the sustainability of the tool is ensured. **Dave Pritchard** also commented that this is a subset of the Ramsar Sites in the African-Eurasian region since it identifies only those of relevance to waterbird Criteria.

**Decision STRP16-23:** The **Panel** will provide any further comments on the WOW CSN Tool on the STRP Support Service, and the STRP Chair will then collate and provide a formal response to the WOW project team shortly after the 25 February 2011 deadline.

Response sent on 17.03.2011

For attention: Mr Szabolcs Nagy, Critical Site Network Coordinator, Wings Over Wetlands Project, Wetlands International

Dear Szabolcs

With reference to earlier communications from yourself, Oliver Nasirwa and Vicky Jones, I am writing to advise you that the Critical Sites Network Tool was presented and discussed at the recent meeting of Ramsar’s African STRP National Focal Points (Johannesburg, December 2010) and at the 16th meeting of Ramsar’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel (Gland, February 2011). Comments and discussion have been noted in the reports of both of these meetings, and additional comments were received in response to a request to STRP members for review of the CSN Tool via the STRP Support Service in February 2011.

On the basis of the discussions and comments received, I am pleased to advise you that the STRP endorses the CSN Tool and wishes to congratulate the project team on a very useful product. We are excited about its potential to enable access to valuable information and datasets on wetlands and waterbirds. We look forward to making good use of the CSN Tool in STRP work, and will bring it to the attention of our NFPs in other regions, and of our Contracting Parties.

With best wishes

Heather MacKay

Chair, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

165. In relation to the importance of supporting continued maintenance and updating the underlying databases used in the WOW CSN Tool, the **DSG** advised that Wetlands International was currently facing a severe financial crisis over continued funding for its waterbird monitoring programme (including the International Waterbird Census), which *inter alia* delivers 1% population thresholds for the application of Ramsar Criterion 6. The issue was discussed at a meeting of interested partners in Den Haag in April 2010, and it will be further discussed at a meeting in Edinburgh in early March 2011, in which the DSG and David Stroud will participate. The Panel prepared the following statement and instructed that it be placed in the record of the meeting:

**STRP16 Statement on Wetlands International’s global waterbird monitoring programme**

“At its recent, sixteenth meeting Ramsar’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel learnt with concern of the current adverse financial situation which threatens the viability of Wetlands International’s waterbird monitoring programme (including the International Waterbird Census).

Ramsar’s Conference of Parties has repeatedly stressed the significant policy-relevance of the data and information generated by this programme, not just in the assessment of wetlands against Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the *Strategic Framework and Guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, but more recently in the development of global indicators on the status of wetland biodiversity. The Ramsar COP has also previously strongly urged the expansion of the geographic scope of internationally coordinated waterbird monitoring in regions that are currently poorly covered, notably Southern and Central America, the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Asia.

STRP is concerned that the future of the programme (as a flagship international monitoring programme for wetland biodiversity) seems now to be some doubt. The Panel recognizes Wetlands International’s recent and ongoing efforts to continue further maintenance and development of the programme, and strongly urges interested parties, including countries, non-governmental organisations and multilateral environmental agreements, to continue to work with Wetlands International to urgently seek solutions to current problems, and offers the Panel’s assistance to that end.”

Gland, Switzerland  
18 February 2011

166. With regard to the harmonization of species nomenclature between MEAs and IOPs, the STRP Chair drew the attention of the meeting to the discussion on this issue at the CSAB4 meeting on 13 February 2011, where it was agreed that CITES would take the lead on advising CSAB on this issue. In order to promote harmonization, Ramsar would follow nomenclature recommended by CITES.

**Decision STRP16-24:** The **Panel** requested David Stroud to keep the issue of harmonization of species nomenclature between MEAs and IOPs under review, and provide inputs as needed at each meeting of the CSAB.

**Agenda item 7. Other STRP products**



**Agenda item 7.1. STRP Technical Advisory Notes/Briefing Notes/RTRs/ other products not already covered in previous agenda items**

167. **The DSG, STRP Chair, and TWA leads** briefly reviewed the list of expected products emerging from the task discussions under Agenda items to date. The DSG will continue, through the rest of the meeting, to further compile this tabular listing, which will be consolidated and circulated with the report of the meeting. It will cover the full list of STRP products currently in preparation, including those with COP11-associated deadlines in this triennium, and those which are to be completed as and when time and resources allow. ([Annex III – List of Products](#))

**Thursday 17 February 2011**

On Thursday 17 February the Panel had a highly successful working day out at the Champ-Pittet centre on the shores of Lake Neuchatel, Switzerland, generously hosted by ProNatura. Between the morning and afternoon work sessions, the participants had the opportunity to visit the Rive sud du lac de Neuchâtel Ramsar Site – the largest area of lacustrine marshes in Switzerland.

**Agenda item 8. Report from each Thematic Work Area (TWA) lead on progress to date, focusing on other tasks not covered in agenda items above, process and resources needed to complete these, and future work priorities for each TWA.**

**Agenda item 8.1. TWA1: Regional networking (*Regional Networkers*)**

168. In the absence of the Vice-Chair and TWA1 lead Rebecca D’Cruz, **Rebecca Lee** reported on what has been achieved during the past year to continue to strengthen the role and participation of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) in the work of the Panel, particularly in relation to identifying specific tasks in the STRP work programme for which STRP NFPs are asked to provide input and/or identify experts in-country. The TWA1 team recommended that to make it clearer and easier for them to work with STRP NFPs on such tasks, a) an additional field should be added to the STRP work plan task *pro-forma* to specify the ‘task inputs’ needed from STRP NFPs, and b) a simple “task input request *pro-forma*” be prepared which would then be completed and provided by each of the TWA/task leads for any such requests.
169. **Rebecca Lee** also provided an overview of the prototype STRP web portal that is being developed and illustrated proposed next steps from now to COP11 and beyond to establish it.
170. **Stanley Liphadzi** and **Monica Zavagli** reported back on the positive outcomes of the 3-day Ramsar Workshop for STRP African Focal Points held in Johannesburg from 30 November to 2 December 2010. The workshop was attended by some 50 participants from STRP National Focal Points in Africa, STRP, Ramsar Secretariat, IOPs, South African Administrative Authority, the Water Research Commission, and other organizations. It was explained that the workshop offered a unique opportunity to meet face to face with the STRP Focal Points and other experts to discuss wetland issues across the region, specific STRP tasks, and future priorities, and to seek a better understanding of STRP and convention processes. The four sets of recommendations on 1) capacity building and resourcing, 2) communication, 3) actions for the African STRP NFPs, and 4)

scientific and technical priorities that emerged from the workshop were outlined as well as participants' feedback. Participants were informed that the Report of STRP African NFP meeting is now available in English as a [Water Research Commission's report series](#) and a French version is under preparation. Monica stressed that more thought and coordination should go into the work plan for TWA1 in the next triennium in order to reflect some of the recommendations from the Johannesburg meeting and to build on the successes of that meeting.

171. The **STRP Chair**, who attended the workshop in Johannesburg, expressed her appreciation to the sponsors of the workshop, namely the Governments of Switzerland (through the "Swiss Grant for Africa" programme), Norway, Tanzania, and South Africa, the Water Research Commission of RSA, the Ramsar Secretariat and the Convention's partnership with Star Alliance/Biosphere Connections, and she noted the invaluable French/English translation services and skilled interpreters provided during those three days. She highlighted the value of having interpretation available, since it allowed the group to gain good information on scientific work being carried out on wetlands in both Anglophone and Francophone Africa. She particularly thanked Stanley Liphadzi for his efforts in organizing the workshop and those in the Secretariat who made personal phone contacts in inviting and making arrangements for participants.
172. The **STRP Chair** stressed that the workshop had raised many expectations and that STRP should now invest in the follow-up actions by keeping in contact and engagement with the STRP NFPs. She also reminded that there are untapped resources in the regions to which STRP should reach out.
173. **Denis Landenbergue**, who also attended the workshop representing WWF, congratulated the organizers for the very inspiring meeting and encouraged that the experience be repeated in every region.
174. **Laurent Chazee** from Tour de Valat reinforced that face to face opportunities were also perceived as the main communication tool in the Mediterranean region. **Max Finlayson** commented that these types of meetings are immensely valuable.
175. **Philippe Gerbeaux** provided an overview of outcomes of the Oceania Regional Workshop held in Noumea, New Caledonia, in August 2010, where he had the opportunity to share experiences and information on national issues, challenges and priorities as well as to briefly discuss STRP activities. The meeting's main focus was to review the implementation of the 1999 Oceania Wetlands Action Plan and to develop a new one. Tourism is among the big issues for the Pacific Islands. Philippe commented that it could be more fruitful to use the funds devoted to his participation at STRP annual meetings in Gland to rather spend more effort working with the STRP NFPs in the region.
176. **Sandra Hails** stressed that one of the challenges for the STRP core members is to get communications and information out to the STRP NFPs and that the regional pre-COP preparatory meetings are key forums for getting all the focal points there to discuss current and future STRP work priorities.
177. **The DSG** noted that many of the high priority areas of work recommended by the Johannesburg workshop are already being addressed or are planned for attention by the

Panel and that we should ensure that we bring in available information from the regions and NFPs. He also stressed that due to limited resources the budget proposal for the next cycle to COP should have not only budget lines with core fund allocations to specific priority tasks, but should also indicate those currently unfunded tasks and types of STRP work and support where we need resources (funds or in-kind support) from donors. We should send strong messages on this to the regional meetings. He also mentioned that it might be appropriate to propose in the budget that the STRP Chair and members receive an honorarium to facilitate their frequently major time and efforts which they provide *pro bono*.

**Decision STRP16-25:** The **Panel** requested that if TWA1 members consider that there is a need for any adjustments to the current STRP *modus operandi* concerning working with STRP NFPs they should advise the STRP Chair and Secretariat as soon as possible, for possible inclusion in the STRP Chair's Report to COP11 and/or a DR on *modus operandi* adjustments. The Panel noted that these might include further detail or recommendations on the roles and functions of STRP NFPs, as well as a list of "frequently asked questions" about STRP and STRP NFPs.

**Decision STRP16-26:** The **Panel** advised that, to enhance working together between STRP regional network members and STRP NFPs, for the next triennium the STRP work plan task *pro-forma* should have an additional field to specify the 'task inputs' needed from STRP NFPs, and that a simple "task input request *pro-forma*" should be prepared which would then be completed and provided by each of the TWA/task leads for any such requests.

### Agenda item 8.2. TWA3: Wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and reporting (including indicators)

178. **Dave Pritchard** provided an overview on the status of the tasks under TWA3. He remarked that the work that STRP is undertaking on the indicators of effectiveness is a good example of how rather than spending Ramsar money for producing new Ramsar guidance, we are instead using it to contribute to other processes (e.g., the 2020 BIP indicator for water are largely being delivered through broader collaborative processes).
179. The **STRP Chair** asked at what point monitoring of indicators for biodiversity, status and trends of wetlands, as well as for implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan, becomes institutionalized in daily working procedures of the Convention, rather than being an STRP task. Is it an ongoing core function of the STRP to regularly provide feedback to Parties based on monitoring, or is the STRP's work done once the monitoring indicators have been developed, tested and demonstrated?
180. The **DSG** responded that this is an important point, especially concerning ongoing or periodic updated reporting processes. Clearly the STRP has a role in developing the scientific and technical mechanisms and methods for indicators and monitoring; the expert technical assessment of the effectiveness indicators (as for the 2010 BIP work) could not have been done by Secretariats and has depended on the expertise of the STRP network and partners. But whether it is STRP's role to deliver periodic re-assessments of such monitoring and indicators does need some further consideration. This is likely to revolve at least in part around funding such work, and it may be hard to get such funding included

in core budget allocations, whether it would go directly under an STRP task line or become a funded responsibility of the Secretariat. Inevitably, however, the work one way or another would likely come back to the indicator assessment experts in the Ramsar family. Other periodic assessment of Convention implementation, such as analyzing and reporting on process implementation from National Reports to each COP, is a clear Secretariat responsibility embedded in the Convention text.

181. The **STRP Chair** noted that it was important to clarify roles and responsibilities, as STRP members should not be undertaking tasks that are properly Ramsar staff responsibilities.
182. **Marc Paganini (European Space Agency)** provided an overview of the European Space Agency GlobWetland II project.
183. The **STRP Chair** thanked Marc Paganini for the very informative presentation and commented that it is very encouraging and exciting to see that the project is moving forward despite the challenges. She noted that the regional scale monitoring, inventory and mapping techniques developed in this project should become very good tools for the Convention. She also pointed out that the next phase of work might entail scaling up the techniques to include other regions.

#### **Agenda item 8.3. TWA4: Wetlands and human health**

184. **Pierre Horwitz** reported on the progress made under TWA4 illustrating the status of the expected products, processes and collaborations suggested for this thematic Work Area. In relation to the almost finalized peer-reviewed Ramsar Technical Report on *Healthy wetlands, healthy people: A review of wetlands and human health interactions*, Pierre advised that it has been agreed that this will be co-badged with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and that an MoU with them is under development for this joint publication. He sought advice from the participants on how to further develop the working relationship with WHO and with people related to the health sector, stressing that there is a need to produce something that they like and that can be helpful to them. In his presentation Pierre Horwitz also addressed recommendations for the future work on Wetlands and Human Health in the next triennium.
185. **The STRP Chair** suggested looking at where and how Human Health is dealt with by the other main MEAs and to seek for collaboration across this group in partnership with WHO. **Pierre Horwitz** responded that he is currently working on just such an analysis with WHO, and the **STRP Chair** recommended that it be brought onto the CSAB future agenda as a CSAB cross-cutting issue.
186. **Pierre Horwitz** also pointed out that the Millennium Development Goals Report issued in 2010 raised an opportunity for STRP, and he suggested preparation of a report on how wetland ecosystem services contribute to human health and the MDGs. He noted that all of the MDGs are relevant for Ramsar and wetlands, not just the goal related to the environment.
187. **Lucilla Spini (Global Environmental Change and Human Health)** pointed out that this type of report (on wetlands and MDGs) is one of the products that the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health discussed at a meeting last year to link with the work that Ramsar does and in which Pierre Horwitz participated.

**Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum (WHO)** commented that those who try to push ecosystem services into the “MDG mainstream” should rather aim for the beginning of the MDGs discussions, noting that the MDGs process will end in 2015. He urged that if we want to play ahead of the game, there is a need to engage early in any MDG follow-on process and could focus on the Rio+20 event. **Lucilla Spini** pointed out that, although the Rio +20 will not be held until June 2012, its preparatory regional meetings will start earlier than that. It was suggested that the forthcoming meeting in Iran for the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Anniversary could develop issues to be taken into the Rio+20 agenda.

188. The **STRP Chair** suggested that the model used for the urban wetlands task, in terms of engagement with another sector, could be a good approach for ensuring that wetlands information gets included in the guidance, products and processes that the other sector produces. This could be applied to the Human Health sector too.

***Decision STRP16-27:*** The **Panel** recommended that an STRP technical advisory note be prepared by the TWA4 team to address the links between wetlands, the MDGs and health. This could be provided for use in the Rio+20 process and its preparations and as a possible COP11 Information Paper. The issue could also be reflected in the planned poverty reduction COP11 DR.

#### **Agenda item 8.5. TWA5: Wetlands and climate change**

189. **Max Finlayson** provided a brief overview of the suggested areas of work for the coming triennium, including preparation of guidance with case studies on adaptation to climate change, incorporation of social vulnerability (sensitivity to change and coping capacity) into the wetland vulnerability assessment, involvement with REDD+, and opportunities related to carbon sequestration for wetlands. Max highlighted that having a climate change Work Area would be useful since it would provide a clear indication of what STRP is working on in relation to climate change, but that essentially climate change issues are crosscutting to almost all of the other issues dealt with by STRP in other TWAs.
190. The **STRP Chair** asked whether we have a clear idea of what the Parties need as guidance for climate change issues and suggested that we need to take a bottom-up approach in working with Parties through the regional teams to identify those priorities. **Maria Rivera** indicated that it would be useful to have guidance on identification of the main types of wetlands vulnerable to climate change along with adaptation measures and carbon sequestration potential, because there are not too many examples available.
191. The **STRP Chair** reminded the meeting that the concept of “adaptation” means different things to many different players, depending on whether it is intended as ecosystem adaptation or people adaptation. **Archana Chatterjee** added that adaptation is very site-specific and felt that it should be used with reference to people.
192. **Christine Prietto** suggested that rather than placing climate change into a focus area, it is worth thinking about all other areas. It would be good to reset the conversation on climate change by saying that STRP is not intended to provide solutions, but that climate change provides good reasons to focus on many other things like restoration and to put wetlands on the agenda again. **Lars Dinesen (STRP NFP for Denmark)**, added that there could be a focus on restoration as a measure to look at climate change, e.g., how do you store carbon and contribute to restoration at the same time?

193. **Li Lifeng** commented that when developing guidelines, Parties' needs should be indeed first understood, perhaps through a survey. He suggested two main target user groups, namely national wetland authorities and site managers. National wetland authorities may need guidance on how to influence the national strategies on adaptation in various sectors, so as to ensure that the adaptation efforts of others will not pose more threats to wetlands, by for example more infrastructures, dams, levees, etc., and site managers may need specific guidance on how to protect, restore, and manage the sites in climate-smart ways.
194. **Philippe Gerbeaux** suggested looking more at regional level rather than at global scale when addressing priorities.
195. The **STRP Chair** urged that the pre-COP11 regional preparatory meetings should be used to identify what guidance Parties need. **Sandra Hails** suggested that a SurveyMonkey questionnaire could be useful to assess Parties' priorities and needs for guidance related to climate change. STRP NFPs could be the channel for the survey; the Secretariat can provide translations. The survey results could be discussed at the regional preparatory meetings and then used to develop the future work programme.

**Decision STRP16-28:** The **Panel** requested the STRP climate change and CEPA teams to prepare a SurveyMonkey questionnaire to assess Parties' priorities and needs for guidance related to climate change, with results to be made available to COP11 regional preparatory meetings.

### Friday 18 February 2011

**Decision STRP16-29:** The **Panel** recorded its deep appreciation to the local organizers from Pro Natura, the Centre Champ-Pittet and the Groupe d'étude et de gestion de la Grande Cariçaie for hosting the Panel's sessions on Thursday 17 February, providing excellent meeting facilities and a most welcoming atmosphere.

### Agenda item 8.4. TWA6: Wetlands and water resources management (*Mike Acreman*)

196. **Mike Acreman** reported back on the progress made with the tasks under TWA6.
197. On wetlands and water storage, the Panel reaffirmed that as per Decision STRP16-18 (Agenda item 6.1), there will be a short DR supported by an Information Paper, with Mike Acreman to lead on drafting them.
198. The **STRP Chair** pointed out that in relation to a possible DR on sectoral strategies, water should be built into that, and she invited Mike Acreman to join that drafting group. She also reminded the Panel that, as noted in the River Basin Management Resolution (Resolution X.19), there is still a need to further consolidate the package of water-related decisions, resolutions and guidances, and that this should be considered this again for the next triennium.
199. In relation to task 7.3 on the draft RTR on wetlands and water quality, it was decided that the draft Ramsar Technical Report prepared by Jos Verhoven will not be advanced further as an RTR due to lack of resources, but that the STRP should keep "water quality" on its agenda since there is still a gap in the suite of guidance on this issue. **Philippe Gerbeaux** noted that the information contained in the Verhoven draft RTR remains useful and

offered to look at the report and advise as to what is needed to finalize it perhaps as technical advisory note, without the need for peer review.

200. In relation to the long-standing task to develop an RTR on methods for determining environmental water requirements for non-riverine wetlands, **Mike Acreman** advised that following initial review there is insufficient information on such methods in the literature to warrant preparation of an RTR, and that instead he planned to issue a call for identification of methods and then collate these into an annotated bibliography.
201. Concerning the overall number of outstanding draft Ramsar Technical Reports awaiting completion, **Monica Zavagli** stressed that although STRP members can already benefit from the much valuable information produced and contained in these draft reports, no one else can until the reports are finalized and made available to the public. There is a need to find ways and means to progress these to more rapid finalization.

**Decision STRP16-30:** The **Panel** agreed that a strategy for better resourcing the preparation, production and release of Ramsar Technical Reports should be developed for implementation in the next triennium.

202. The **Panel** once again regretted that David Coates from CBD could not attend STRP16 to help to pin down joint future plans for implementation of task 7.5 on Water resources management in dry and sub-humid lands (in relation also to the CBD's programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands), and also to further develop a response to the CBD decision X/28 for an expert working group on water and biodiversity. The **Panel** asked the DSG to follow-up with David Coates regarding progressing the expert working group task, perhaps by bringing together a small group session including several STRP experts, possibly to be helped on the sidelines of the anticipated additional STRP members meeting in late June/early July 2011.

#### **Agenda item 8.6. TWA7: Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)**

203. **David Stroud** provided an overview of the issues arising from the introduction of the revised RIS format and Strategic Framework, such as some still existing structural problems to be resolved during the week, the need to have the Secretariat and a number of Parties to advocate for its adoption, and a strategic implementation process to be outlined to assist Parties in the transition phase from the existing RIS. He also recalled task 4.6 on guidance on detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character and task 4.4 on further guidance for describing ecological character and their future priorities.
204. It was highlighted that funds are needed to collate and review information on existing approaches to the determination of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), as indicated in the earlier discussion on this issue under Agenda item 4.6.
205. The **Panel** reaffirmed the need for the Secretariat to develop a roll-out strategy for the transition phase of handling the old and the revised RIS formats. The Secretariat should indicate how STRP can assist in that. The **Panel** recommended that an initial design for the implementation plan should be ready for SC42 for discussion and for Standing Committee endorsement and advice on further developing the plan.

206. **Montserrat Carbonell** reminded the meeting that we will have to work especially with the Administrative Authorities, rather than STRP NFPs, that in the Americas there might be some countries who do not support the change, and that this will be discussed during the regional COP11 preparatory meeting in December. **María Rivera** added that Parties are worried about the potential administrative burden associated with this proposed change in the RIS format. The **DSG** noted that Parties are always nervous about any proposals to amend the RIS format, particularly in relation to any perceptions of increased burden. He commented that his sense from the discussions and the trialling of the revised format with certain Parties is that overall the administrative burden, as well as the efficiency of each step in the Ramsar Site designation process, will actually prove to be not more and likely less than at present, both for Parties and for the Secretariat, but that it will be particularly important to be able to demonstrate this to all Parties.
207. **David Stroud** urged that a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) type of exercise should be included in the implementation plan, responding to likely questions such as “what do I do if I need to submit a RIS six months before the new format comes into force...?”
208. In relation to the outstanding task on Invasive Species and Wetlands, **David Stroud** advised that the guidance material for wetland managers originally prepared by the STRP for potential COP8 consideration is still available and is still relevant and useful, but there have not been the resources to develop it further and bring forward a DR on this topic again.

**Decision STRP16-31:** The **Panel** agreed that the existing guidance material on invasive species could fairly readily be updated and made available as a technical advisory note, and that this should be included as a task for the next triennium in STRP’s work plan.

#### Agenda item 8.8. TWA9: Wetlands and agriculture

209. In his presentation, **George Lukacs** provided an overview of the progress made with the tasks included in TWA9 and particularly on task 2.14: Agriculture and wetlands – Rice paddy biodiversity and management. He informed the meeting that the workshop on sustainable rice farming held last year in Takashima produced a number of very interesting case studies on sustainable rice paddies practices, and that together with the outcomes of another two upcoming workshops in 2011 these processes could help provide the STRP response to Resolution X.31. A DR related to the use of pesticides in rice paddies is likely to be proposed for COP11. George also highlighted additional requirements to address task 6.3 on review and guidance on biofuels and wetlands.
210. **George Lukacs** noted that global assessments of agriculture which include wetland issues are ever present and ongoing. The **Panel** agreed that task 2.2 on providing advice on assessments for Agriculture and wetlands is no longer a high priority, but that the STRP should continue monitoring with a watching brief. The **DSG** suggested and the meeting agreed that the preparation of a short note to list all of the agriculture assessments relevant to wetlands and Ramsar, with a one-paragraph description of each that is currently available, should be prepared by George and made available to COP11, perhaps as an Information paper.

**Decision STRP16-32:** The **Panel** requested George Lukacs to draft a briefing note on relevant available agriculture-related assessments, with a summary paragraph on the scope,



coverage and relevance to Ramsar of each, to be made available to COP11, possibly as an Information Paper.

**Decision STRP16-33:** The **Panel** agreed that a COP11 DR on issues of pesticides and rice farming should be prepared for SC43 consideration. The Panel requested George Lukacs to prepare a short note on the issue for the STRP Chair's use in briefing SC42 on this topic.

211. In relation to task 6.3 on biofuels, the **STRP Chair** pointed out that biofuels will be referenced in the COP11 DR on wetlands and energy and felt that the STRP should engage strategically with FAO on this topic, too. **George Lukacs** noted that in pursuing sectoral engagement with the agriculture sector, it will be more productive to work on commodity-based guidance rather than generic agriculture-wetlands guidance. He offered to provide some recommendations and background on what such a strategy could entail, but also highlighted that we do need a number of Contracting Parties to take the lead and give their support if the STRP is to take this further.
212. **Li Lifeng** mentioned that aquaculture and fish-farming are rapidly growing issues. **George Lukacs** indicated that there is not a specific Resolution on aquaculture, but COP9 Resolution IX.4 on Ramsar and fisheries already addresses some aspects of aquaculture.

**Decision STRP16-34:** The **Panel** noted that aquaculture and wetlands may be an increasingly important issue for Parties to address and requested Li Lifeng, in consultation with George Lukacs, to prepare a briefing note on aquaculture issues to help inform any priority-setting on this topic for the next triennium.

#### **Agenda item 8.7. TWA8: Wetland management-restoration, mitigation, compensation**

213. **Kevin Erwin** reported back on progress with tasks in this TWA and proposed future priorities. He referred to the discussion already held on Monday 14 February under Agenda item 4.5 with respect to the draft framework for guidance on avoidance, mitigation and compensation for impacts on wetlands (task 9.1). He further outlined the approach taken by the TWA in addressing task 9.2 (see also discussion and decision under Agenda item 4.12).
214. **Li Lifeng** pointed out that a landscape approach is important for restoration: based on examples such as Doñana and the Murray Darling river basin, if there is not a river basin-scale approach it is difficult to safeguard and restore wetlands.
215. The **STRP Chair** pointed out that the primary target audience for STRP guidance on wetland restoration is Administrative Authorities and focal points and that in reviewing and considering the needs for repackaging and revising Ramsar's existing restoration guidance we should focus on providing any recommendations for this target audience first.
216. In response to a query from the STRP Chair, **Rob McInnes** noted that the review of the existing restoration guidance that he prepared showed that while the guidance is generally "of a good pedigree" and useful particularly at national or regional governmental planning levels, its utility is somewhat undermined because whilst there is a separate or "free standing" wetland restoration guidance document, it draws upon many other guidance documents adopted by Ramsar which are relevant to one or other stage in the restoration process. These related guidance elements are distributed in several different documents.

There is a need to bring together a “guide to the existing guidance” relevant to wetland restoration, which is a relatively small and concise task, part of which has already been undertaken in the review process.

217. **Randy Milton** pointed out that restoration projects are driven by different entities in different parts of the world, mentioning that in Canada restoration is nationally driven but in Africa and Asia it is often undertaken by donors or project proponents, and many projects struggle to find funds.
218. The **Panel** then discussed the value of a “functional” approach to restoration for, e.g., carbon sequestration, for carbon offsets, for maintaining waterbird populations, or other specific purposes. It was suggested that Ramsar guidance could highlight some of the problems that can be associated with restoration for specific functions only, as well as approaches to restoration after disasters and for economic incentives. **Rob McInnes** pointed out that these points are currently poorly addressed by the current guidance.
219. The **Panel** further discussed whether there is a need to develop some guidelines on how to plan prioritization of restoration at a more strategic level. **Archana Chatterjee** suggested that a checklist on how best to restore could be useful. She felt that Ramsar Administrative Authorities do not have sufficient guidance to be able to advise their ministers about which wetlands should be selected for restoration, and why. The **STRP Chair** remarked that the STRP NFPs Johannesburg workshop had provided a very useful presentation on planning and prioritization of wetland conservation areas.

**Decision STRP16-35:** The **Panel** determined that the restoration-related products from TWA8 should be:

- i) a guide to the existing Ramsar guidance targeted to the AAs and NFPs;
- ii) a set of recommendations drawn out of the various wetland restoration workshops on the needs of wetland restoration practitioners and site managers, with case studies, presented as a STRP briefing note or technical advisory note (see also Decision STRP16-14);
- iii) terms of reference and a suggested approach to developing a web-based restoration guidance portal or Wikipedia-type facility in partnership with SER and other relevant organizations, which would have value through putting wetland restoration into the context of whole-ecosystem restoration. The Panel requested SER to consider helping to provide such a service; and
- iv) higher level policy and planning guidance on ecological restoration, developed through a collaboration with the CSAB group process, coordinated by the STRP Chair and Sasha Alexander from SER.

#### **Agenda item 8.9. TWA10: CEPA**

220. **Christine Prietto** reported back on the progress, challenges, and future priorities of the work under TWA10, highlighting some key recommendations for STRP participation and role at COP11 to increase visibility and assistance to Parties. Christine urged using the next triennium to focus on completing the large number of unfinished STRP reports and materials, rather than planning to prepare a wealth of further new materials.
221. In relation to planning for COP11, **Sandra Hails** informed the meeting that STRP members will have an office at the COP, as well as appropriate space in plenary, and that

for the first time the Secretariat has a Communication Officer to liaise with someone in STRP to deal with communication of contentious scientific and technical DRs, etc.

222. There was discussion on how the Panel could better reach “wetland managers”, both in terms of helping them to understand how best to utilize available guidance and of how to get input from them on their scientific and technical support needs.
223. The **STRP Chair** suggested that a poster of the drawings from the various “who is a wetland manager” exercises could be put up at COP11.
224. **Dave Pritchard** reflected on whether we were striking the right balance in STRP in allocating our time, funding and resources between the dual roles of (i) ongoing advice, support and guidance to Parties (including at the practical on-the-ground level for national level implementation) and (ii) working on strategic and emerging issues. He, and the **DSG**, felt that the roles of, and expectations for, the work of the Panel have been and are continuing to evolve and expand at strategic level in particular, and that this is putting increased demands on the time (often provided pro bono) of individual members and experts. At the same time, some Parties and others believe that the Panel should be focusing more on helping Parties to implement existing guidance, even though new topics continue to come on to the Convention’s agenda.

**Decision STRP16-36:** The Panel requested **Sandra Hails** and **Christine Prietto** to develop for STRP some recommendations on how to better reach out to wetland managers (in all their different guises).

### **Signing of the Ramsar-WHO Memorandum of Understanding**

225. The meeting welcomed **Robert Bos** from the World Health Organisation. Robert Bos outlined the developing collaboration and the potential opportunities for developing further collaboration between WHO and Ramsar. The initial phase of collaboration specifically concerns an agreement to publish jointly the upcoming major Ramsar Technical Report on wetlands and human health interactions. A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed to cover the terms of this publication. On behalf of the Ramsar Secretariat, the **DSG** signed the Memorandum, to applause.

### **Agenda item 9.1. STRP editorial & review policy and redevelopment of the Support Service**

226. **Heather MacKay**, **Monica Zavagli** and **Rebecca Lee** provided an overview of the progress to date and timelines for implementation of task 2.14 that aims at:
- establishing a robust platform for communication and sharing of information within STRP and between STRP and the “outside”,
  - integrated with a simple but reliable system for STRP document management, tracking and archival, and
  - a clear and consistent review, editorial and publication policy covering all types of STRP products.

227. A summary of the survey results concerning needs for the redevelopment of the Support STRP Service, conducted last August, was presented as well as an illustration of the prototype new “STRP Portal” structure and functions, developed by **Rebecca Lee**.
228. The **STRP Chair** remarked that it is essential to have transparent, consistent and documented procedures in place for ensuring the quality, credibility and independence of STRP work. She proposed that within this task, STRP should prepare a working policy document on these issues and seek endorsement from the STRP Oversight Committee for this policy. **David Stroud** suggested that the recent review of IPCC’s own review processes could provide useful insights and noted especially the recommendations therein for a register of members’ interests.

**Decision STRP16-37:** The **Panel** agreed that guidelines for STRP editorial policy and related matters should be developed with inputs from the Panel, submitted intersessionally to the STRP Oversight Committee for endorsement, and then annexed to the STRP Chair’s report to COP11.

**Decision STRP16-38:** The **Panel:**

- i) requested Monica Zavagli to undertake a review and develop a proposal for communication and sharing information inside and outside the STRP, including looking at options and costs and the advantages and disadvantages of available off-the-shelf software. A specification sheet that will be used to identify the underlying architecture of the new STRP work space should be produced and shared with STRP by April 2011;
- ii) recognized that funds additional to those available in the core budget would be required for redevelopment and implementation of the new STRP portal to replace the outdated STRP Support Service;
- iii) urged that the new system should be fully operational by COP11, in order to ensure a smooth and rapid transition before new Panel members join in the next triennium; and
- iv) affirmed that the prototype STRP Portal design developed by Rebecca Lee was very attractive and useful and should be integrated into the redeveloped Support Service portal to serve as the “front end” of the portal and provide a means for communication between STRP and external persons/groups.

## **Agenda item 9.2. Ongoing, emerging and new issues**

229. The **STRP Chair** explained that in addition to working through the number of other ongoing and emerging issues already listed for the STRP watching brief or other actions in the TWA2 work plan, she had asked for some preparation prior to STRP16 to inform discussions on two issues specifically: wetlands and economics (Ritesh Kumar) and wetlands and disaster response and risk management (Rob McInnes).

### **Agenda item 9.2.1. Wetlands and the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (TEEB)**

230. **Ritesh Kumar** provided a short presentation on the work and findings of the TEEB, drawing attention to the economic significance of loss of global biodiversity and summarizing TEEB’s approach and processes. He also presented the objectives that would support the establishment of a new TWA on Economics and Ecosystem Services. He

proposed that a number of useful products could be prepared building on TEEB and MA information, namely: 1) an Information Paper for the Contracting Parties by March 2012, 2) a TEEB publication focused on wetlands that highlights the “costs of inaction”, incentives and other market linkages, and 3) an update of the RTR on wetland valuation methods, since the current one does not address the connection between values and actions.

231. The **STRP Chair** stressed that a critical starting point for a new TWA on economics would be to have a wetland synthesis coming out of TEEB. In this regard, the **DSG** informed the Panel that informal discussions had been held with members of the TEEB project team and that they were in principle supportive of the idea of a TEEB wetlands and water synthesis report, since wetlands already feature significantly in the main TEEB reports. The **Panel** asked Ritesh Kumar to help in liaising with TEEB. Alternatively, if a specific wetland TEEB report cannot be produced, then a short summary with key wetlands-related messages from the TEEB could be pulled together.

**Decision STRP16-39:** The **Panel** requested Ritesh Kumar to lead on following up with the TEEB team to formally request them to develop a TEEB water and wetlands synthesis report, to be available by the time of, and be presented at, COP11, noting that additional resources would need to be found for the preparation and publication of such a report.

**Decision STRP16-40:** The **Panel** confirmed that its proposals for future scientific and technical priorities for the next triennium should include a TWA on Wetlands, Economics and Ecosystem Services and invited Ritesh Kumar to develop proposals for specific tasks under such a TWA.

#### Agenda item 9.2.2. Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

232. **Rob McInnes** provided an overview of the role that wetlands play in disaster risk reduction and in building resilience. He pointed out that STRP could play a role in providing guidance on how the management, wise use and restoration of wetlands can reduce risks posed by both natural and human-induced disasters.
233. **David Stroud** suggested that the STRP could build a dialogue with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) unit to ensure that wetlands are reflected in their frameworks, and **Ritesh Kumar** reminded the meeting that the changes should happen on the disaster agencies' side, that STRP is only advisory and should try to advance this wetland approach for implementation by existing responsible agencies.
234. The **DSG** suggested that UN/ISDR might be invited to set the current scene on disaster risk reduction in relation to the roles of wetlands through a presentation to COP11, and possibly also to invite them to prepare an information paper outlining current strategies and approaches to the issue.
235. The **STRP Chair** invited the Panel to consider if it was appropriate to propose a new TWA or specific tasks on disaster risk reduction. **Philippe Gerbeaux** pointed out that, if it is agreed that this might be a priority in future work plans, then disaster risk reduction should rather be a cross-cutting issue among the other TWAs.

236. **David Stroud** mentioned that there is an upcoming meeting in May of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction aiming at *inter alia* harmonizing disaster reduction in policies for poverty reduction. **Mark Smith (IUCN)** noted that the intergovernmental platforms which deal with climate change and disaster risk reduction are very different from one another and often quite separate powerful entities, so STRP should ensure that it speaks to the most appropriate constituency. **Mike Acreman** suggested that the STRP could start taking a “reactive” role, such that when a disaster happens, it could then better communicate the relevance value of wetlands in engaging with the disaster risk reduction community.

**Decision STRP16-41:** The **Panel** agreed that:

- i) Rob McInnes should be requested to prepare a one to two-page briefing note based on his presentation, for inclusion in the STRP Chair’s report to COP11, with inputs from Ritesh Kumar and Dave Pritchard to help identify, clarify and scope issues, especially those related to risk management and economics;
- ii) the IOPs should be requested to lead on this issue, since several are already involved in initiatives and other global discussions related to disasters and risk management;
- iii) the STRP should maintain a watching brief on this issue with inputs and advice from the IOPs and from the regional teams in the Secretariat, to identify new information or needs for guidance in future; and
- iv) a suitable agency or organization currently leading in the disaster risk reduction field should be considered for an invitation to make a special presentation to the COP11 plenary.

### Agenda item 9.2.3. Ongoing and emerging issues

237. The **STRP Chair** provided an overview of the ongoing advisory and collaborative activities, including those with CSAB, CBD and IPBES, presented the current list of emerging issues being watched in this cycle, and gave an update on the individual tasks under TWA2.
238. The **STRP Chair** pointed out that, though the concept of a corporate water footprint (and methods for its determination) are gaining lot of attention externally, STRP does not have the resources to advance this task, and she recommended that it be dropped from the Panel’s work plan.
239. The **STRP Chair** also informed the meeting that the STRP has received a request from CBD SBSTTA to contribute to recommendations to SBSTTA on emerging issues of potential concern/interest to CBD, and that she would respond to this with assistance from the DSG.

### Agenda item 9.3. STRP future work priorities and TWAs

240. The **STRP Chair** briefly discussed the content of the needed COP11 DR on future STRP work priorities and TWAs. Given that there had proved to be insufficient time during the STRP16 week to prepare a first draft of this DR, the development of the DR would continue with inputs from Panel members through the STRP Support Service and possibly at another Panel meeting if one is possible before SC43.

**Decision STRP16-42:** The **Panel** requested all TWA leads to:

- i) update the work plan pro-formas for the tasks in their TWAs and return those to Monica Zavagli as soon as possible after STRP16;
- ii) build a list of journal papers, materials, and other products produced, to be compiled and annexed to the STRP Chair's Report to COP11, as was done for COP10; and
- iii) develop abridged pro-formas for possible new tasks in their TWAs, including a descriptive title for each recommended new task, objectives, expected products and target audience if known, and an indication of whether funds might be necessary to advance the task.

241. The **STRP Chair** and **Dave Pritchard** suggested that amongst new tasks to propose should be STRP involvement in and input to the IPBES science-policy interface developments, and the **STRP Chair** offered to develop a pro-forma for this.

#### **Agenda item 10. STRP process leading up and beyond to COP11**

242. The **DSG**, with input from the **STRP Chair**, **TWA leads** and **task leads** worked through the initial tabular compilation of the anticipated STRP products for COP11, and other products compiled from the agenda item discussions during the week.

**Decision STRP16-43:** The **Panel** requested the **DSG** to finalise and circulate an updated listing of agreed STRP products and their current state of finalization.

243. In relation to the STRP modus operandi DR for COP11, the **DSG** recalled that the way in which the COP Resolution was structured was to remove any time-limited issues from the annexed modus operandi itself, but that it would be necessary to have a COP11 DR to update the list of invited observer organizations and composition of the Panel membership, and he sought suggestions for the list of such observer organizations to be proposed.

244. **Lucilla Spini** advised that UNU-INWEH and GECHH would like to strengthen cooperation with STRP on wetlands and human health and related issues and that therefore she suggested adding them as Observers. In view of the earlier discussion, **Dave Pritchard** proposed that CAFF be contacted for possible inclusion in the list. **Lew Young** pointed out that those organizations and networks operating in the framework of the Convention such as regional initiatives should also be invited, but that many of these did not need to be specifically mentioned in the DR. **Monica Zavagli** suggested UN-HABITAT, GEF STAP and ICLEI to be included. **Dave Stroud** suggested identifying someone from the disaster management agencies.

245. The **DSG** advised the Panel that the Ramsar Secretariat has agreed to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

246. The **STRP Chair** reminded the meeting that the list of invited observers in the DR should include only those organizations whose expertise and interests reflected the broader mandate and scope of the STRP work plan as a whole; if additional organizations or experts are required to assist with specific tasks and projects, these organizations or people

can be invited to join STRP meetings and workshops at any time, by invitation of the STRP Chair.

**Decision STRP16-44:** The **Panel** requested that:

- i) STRP members and other participants send to Monica Zavagli contact details of organizations and contact points proposed for addition to the list of STRP invited observer organizations for inclusion in the COP11 STRP modus operandi DR; and
- ii) the Secretariat contact all observer organizations listed in COP10 Resolution X.9 and those organizations being newly proposed, to confirm whether or not they are willing to continue or accept such an invitation; and
- iii) the Secretariat contact the UNCCD Secretariat to request that STRP is granted observer status to the UNCCD-CST meetings.

#### **Agenda item 11. Any other business (AoB)**

247. The Panel requested, if sufficient resources could be found, to have an additional, core members only, meeting before the COP to focus on developing the STRP future work priorities DR for COP11, finalizing tasks with deliverables for COP11, and agreeing the strategy for STRP members' participation at COP11.
248. **Mike Acreman** offered to host a three-day meeting at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, in Wallingford, UK, in late June/early July 2011.

#### **Agenda item 12. Close of the meeting**

249. The **STRP Chair** and the **DSG** thanked the whole Ramsar Secretariat and the cafeteria staff for their support, and all STRP members, IOP members, invited experts and Observer Organization representatives for their very hard work and collaboration in making the meeting extremely fruitful. The STRP Chair again highlighted the most enjoyable day out and excursion, expressing appreciation to Monica Zavagli and Denis Landenbergue for initiating this and making the arrangements, and expressed her hope that this could be repeated at other STRP meetings.