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The 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and Preparation of National Reports

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of ...and has the honour to refer to the following:

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) entered into force on 21 December 1975. To date, 106 States have become Contracting Parties to the Convention.

At the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, the offer of the Government of Costa Rica to host the 7th Meeting of the Conference was accepted. Following preparatory work by the host country, the Convention Bureau and the Standing Committee, it has been decided that the Conference be held in San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999. On behalf of the Government of Costa Rica, the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands formally invites Contracting Parties, Observer States, and concerned organisations to attend the 7th Meeting of the Conference.

The 7th Meeting of the Conference will provide for an exchange of information on the implementation of the Convention and wetland conservation and wise use, as well as opportunities to participate in several Technical Sessions. It will also review the progress made with implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002 as adopted by the 6th Meeting of the Conference.

A draft agenda for the Conference is attached to this notification. Contracting Parties are welcome to transmit their views over the next few months on the issues included in the agenda, and in particular on the themes of the Technical Sessions, so as to assist the Bureau in preparing the drafts of the Conference papers that will be considered by the Standing Committee at its meeting in October 1998. Registration forms, detailed Conference information, and documentation will be provided in due course.

As this will be the first occasion on which the Ramsar Conference of the Contracting Parties is to take place in a developing country, the Standing Committee and host government wish to advise that consideration is being given to introducing a registration fee to assist with meeting the costs of hosting the Conference. A decision on this matter will be taken at the 21st meeting of the Standing Committee in October 1998. If a registration fee is introduced, this amount will be included as part of the financial assistance package which it is hoped will be available to assist some representatives of developing countries and those with economies in transition to attend the Conference.

National Reports

As has been the practice for previous Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Bureau requests the submission of National Reports from the Contracting Parties concerning their implementation of the Convention. To facilitate this reporting to the 7th Meeting of the Conference (San Jose, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999), an Outline of National Reports is enclosed. It is requested that National Reports be submitted to the Bureau by 1 September 1998.

The format for National Reports for the 7th Conference is based on the format of the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002 adopted by COP6 and includes questions relating to each of the eight General Objectives of the Plan.

National Reports are considered as an official status report by each Contracting Party on its implementation of the Ramsar Convention and Strategic Plan. It is desirable that the National Report be submitted to the Bureau with the authority of the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or the Head of the designated Administrative Authority for the Ramsar Convention.

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands respectfully requests that the content of the present Note be communicated to the competent national authorities and avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Mission of ... the assurance of its highest consideration.

Gland, 23 January 1998

Enclosures:

Draft Agenda and Programme for Ramsar COP7
Format for National Report