

Notification 2001 / 8

Consultation on “Proposal to establish a Ramsar Trust Fund to resource the Small Grants Fund”

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:

At its last meeting held from 3-7 December 2001, the Standing Committee of the Convention considered a proposal from the Ramsar Bureau to establish a "*Ramsar Trust Fund to Resource the Convention's Small Grants Mechanisms for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use*".

The Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee considered the proposal and in its report to the Committee, stated, *inter alia*, that:

"The Subgroup discussed at length the question of resourcing the SGF [Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use] and received further information, in addition to that contained in the report of the Secretary General, concerning the work of the Senior Advisor on Environment and Development.

The Subgroup reiterated the importance of the SGF as a funding mechanism for small projects and noted the Bureau's explanation that the uncertainty of funding constitutes a source of disappointment and frustration, both for the recipient countries and for the Ramsar Bureau staff who invest considerable effort on this every year for few results.

Nevertheless, it was also noted that the SGF should be seen as a complement to Bureau efforts to generate funding for much more substantial projects. In this sense, the question remains whether the Senior Advisor should continue to devote a lot of energy to generating resources for the SGF, to the detriment of providing assistance with fewer but more substantial projects that can "make the difference".

The Bureau explained that it is more and more difficult to fundraise from government sources for environment/conservation projects that do not have a clear sustainable development component, and more specifically a poverty alleviation component.

The Bureau also explained that so far it has not been possible to identify sources of funding willing to commit to providing regular support to the SGF. The Bureau also explained that the proposed Ramsar Trust Fund may be one of the few options left, if not the only one, to try to create a sustainable funding mechanism for the SGF.

Apart from a number of questions related to the proposed *modus operandi* of the proposed Trust Fund, the Subgroup considered that since this proposal was submitted to the Standing

Committee only a few weeks ago, it requires more time for consideration not only by Standing Committee members but by all Contracting Parties."

After discussing the report of its Subgroup on Finance, the Standing Committee adopted the following:

Decision SC26-39: The Standing Committee requested the Bureau to circulate the document "Proposal to establish a Trust Fund to resource the SGF" to all Parties and other appropriate institutions by 14 December 2001 inviting comments by 15 March 2002, and to prepare a report based upon these comments, including the prospects and risks involved in establishing such a Trust Fund, to be considered by the Subgroup on Finance at a meeting to be held on 15 May 2002 in conjunction with that of the Subgroup on COP8. The Committee authorized the Subgroup on Finance to submit a recommendation to Ramsar COP8, if considered appropriate after the consultation with Contracting Parties, on establishing a Ramsar Trust Fund to resource the SGF.

Consequently, the Ramsar Bureau is pleased to attach the Standing Committee document on the matter and invites Contracting Parties, both donors to the Ramsar SGF and recipients of Ramsar grants, to send their comments on this proposal **by 15 March 2002**, in the hope that Parties will share the Bureau's view that such a Trust Fund could constitute a useful tool for resourcing the SGF in the long term.

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, 18 December 2001

Encl: Doc. SC26-12