

Notification 2005 / 3

Agenda for the 31st Meeting of the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee (6-10 June 2005) and procedures for the submission of draft COP9 Resolutions

The Secretariat 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:

Preparations for the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee

As required by Resolution VII.1, the Secretariat is pleased to inform that the 31st Meeting of the Standing Committee will be held at the Secretariat in Gland, Switzerland, from 8 - 10 June 2005. Enclosed is the Draft Agenda and Programme for the meeting.

Voting members of the Standing Committee are: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Botswana, Canada, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran (Vice Chair), Japan, Morocco, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Slovenia (Chair), Spain, and Uganda. The Netherlands and Switzerland have the status of Permanent Observers. The official International Organization Partners of the Convention (BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, and WWF International) are also invited to attend, as is the Chair of the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP).

Members of the COP9 Subgroup are: Uganda (Chair), Ghana, Japan, Spain, Nicaragua, USA, Papua New Guinea, International Organizations Partners representatives, and the Secretary General (*ex officio*). Members of the Finance Subgroup are: Canada (Chair), Argentina, Ghana, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Romania.

All other Contracting Parties are entitled to attend as observers, and, as indicated by COP7 Resolution VII.1 (paragraph 13), "countries which are not Contracting Parties but have expressed an interest in joining the Convention may be also admitted as observers".

The Secretariat would be grateful if Contracting Parties wishing to attend the meeting as Observers and those non-Contracting Party countries seeking Observer status at the meeting would notify their intention to participate in that capacity **by 15 April 2005** so that working papers may be dispatched (by electronic means) when finalised. Working documents will also be available from the Web site from early May, at: http://ramsar.org/key_sc31_doc01_agenda_e.htm Registration forms for the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee are available upon request from: loetscher@ramsar.org or fax no. +41 22 999 0169.

It should be noted that, due to financial constraints, the working papers for the Standing Committee, with the exception of the draft agenda and programme, are produced in English only. Simultaneous interpretation in the three official languages (English, French and Spanish) will be provided during the plenary sessions from 8-10 June 2005, but not at any Subgroup meetings which may be convened on Monday 6 June and Tuesday 7 June 2005.

Likewise, financial constraints prevent the Secretariat from providing financial support to assist Observer states in attending. Such support can only be offered to one delegate from eligible voting members of the Standing Committee, upon request.

Contracting Parties unable to attend the meeting as Observers are invited to note the enclosed Agenda and, as appropriate, offer views and opinions on the issues and matters for discussion to the Representative(s) from their region, or to transmit them directly to the Secretariat.

Proposals for Regional Initiatives to be considered by COP9

One issue which will be considered by the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee will be the development of Regional Initiatives within the framework of the Convention, in line with Resolution VIII.30. In accordance with Decision SG COP9-11 of the recent meeting of the Standing Committee's Subgroup on COP9, any Contracting Party wishing to submit a proposal for a regional initiative to be considered by COP9 for endorsement within the framework of the Convention is requested to complete the attached pro-forma and to submit it to the Secretariat by 30 April 2005, so that all such proposals can be prepared for discussion at SC31.

Any initiative considering a request to COP9 for financial support through the establishment of core budget lines for the 2006-2008 triennium should also provide the Standing Committee with additional budgetary information indicating the amount sought from core, and the amounts (in Swiss franc (CHF) equivalent) available or pledged from other sources.

Draft COP9 Resolutions being prepared for submission by Contracting Parties

In Decision SG COP9-2, the Subgroup on COP9, working on the advice of the material provided by the Subgroup on Resolution VIII.45, decided that the procedure for handling draft Resolutions for COP9 should be as follows: "... the Secretariat send a diplomatic notification to the Parties (*this present one*) requesting them to submit all draft Resolutions for COP9 to the Standing Committee in advance of its 31st meeting, and the Secretariat to circulate all such draft Resolutions with technical content to the STRP for review and advice for the SC and COP."

This procedure is designed to respond to the expectations of Resolution VIII.45 concerning streamlining the consideration and adoption processes for COP9 Resolutions. In accordance with this instruction, this diplomatic note therefore requests that all Parties intending to propose draft Resolutions to COP9 should provide them to the Secretariat **by 30 April 2005**.

Given the tight nature of the timetable and the likely limited availability of meeting spaces at COP9 compared to previous COPs, Parties are urged to assist this process by advising the Secretariat as early as possible of any proposed Resolutions they may wish to submit for COP9 consideration.

The Secretariat 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, 21 March 2005

Encl: SC31 Draft Agenda and Programme
Regional Initiative pro forma