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### 34th Meeting of the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee (10-13 April 2006)

*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 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee***

As required by Resolution VII.1, the Secretariat is pleased to inform that the 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee will be held at the Secretariat in Gland, Switzerland, from 11-13 April 2006, with a meeting of the Subgroup on Finance scheduled on 10 April. Enclosed is a preliminary Programme for the meeting.

Voting members of the Standing Committee are: Benin, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda (Chair and COP9 Host) for Africa; China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Korea (COP10 Host) and Thailand for Asia; Austria, the Czech Republic, Georgia and Slovenia for Europe; Bahamas (Vice-Chair), Ecuador and El Salvador for the Neotropics; the United States (Chair of the Finance Subgroup) for North America, and Samoa for Oceania. The Netherlands and Switzerland have the status of Permanent Observers. The official International Organization Partners of the Convention (BirdLife International, IUCN, IWMI, 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 Finance Subgroup are: USA (Chair), Benin, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador and Samoa. It is anticipated that the Subgroup on Finance will meet on Monday 10 April 2006.

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 **28 February 2006** so that working papers may be dispatched (by electronic means) when finalised. Working documents will also be available from the Ramsar Convention Web site ([www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)). Registration forms for the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee are available upon request from: [katz@ramsar.org](mailto:katz@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 11-13 April 2006, but not at any Subgroup meetings which may be convened.

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 offer views and opinions, as appropriate, to the Representative(s) from their region, or to transmit them directly to the Secretariat.

*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, 10 January 2006

Encl: preliminary Programme