

Notification 2008/9

Invitation to become a member of the Working Group and to participate in the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform (19 January 2009)

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

Introduction

Through Resolution X.5 the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties decided to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform to recommend to Standing Committee efficient and effective measures to improve the capacity and operation of the Secretariat, as outlined in the Terms of Reference annexed to Resolution X.5 (attached).

The Working Group should comprise at least two Party members from each Ramsar region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Neotropics, North America and Oceania). Members of the Working Group should facilitate sharing of information about the work of the Group within their region. In order to minimize costs to the Parties, meetings of the Working Group will take place in Gland, Switzerland. Parties are therefore encouraged to nominate representatives based in their diplomatic missions in Geneva or nearby (ref. Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Working Group, annex to Resolution X.5).

The Terms of Reference lay out a timeframe for the work of the group, stating that it should hold its first meeting before early February 2009 and report on its initial work within six months of its first meeting. If the Working Group considers that any measures may be implemented more quickly than this, it may make an interim report to the 40th meeting of Standing Committee in May 2009. It should report on further work, as specified in the Terms of Reference, within twelve months of its first meeting.

Nomination of Members

Contracting Parties are herewith invited to announce their willingness to participate in the Working Group and to share information about the work of the Group with other Parties within their region to the Secretary General and to nominate their representative in the Working Group as soon as possible. The Secretariat is looking forward to receiving confirmations of participation in the Working Group and nominations of representatives by **12 January 2009** at the latest, in order to prepare for the Group's first meeting. The working language of the Group will be English.

First Meeting of the Working Group

The Secretariat proposes to hold the first meeting of the Working Group at its offices in Gland on **Monday 19 January 2009**. During this meeting, the Group will develop a detailed work-plan in accordance with its Terms of Reference and decide about the desirability of inviting attendance by further Parties, IUCN and other International Organization Partners, UNEP, and other organizations relevant to the fulfillment of its mandate.

Proposed Agenda

First meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform

Ramsar Secretariat, 28 rue Mauverney, 1196 Gland, Switzerland

Monday, 19 January 2009, 10h00-16h00

1. Welcome and Introduction by the Secretary General
2. Election of the chair and possible co-chair
3. Elaboration and adaptation of a detailed work plan
4. Identification of immediate actions to improve the capacity and operation of the Secretariat
5. Decision on additional members to be invited to participate in the Working Group
6. Clarification of the working and reporting procedures
7. Date and time of the next meeting
8. Any other business

Registration for the First Meeting

Contracting Parties are requested to inform the Ramsar Secretariat about their willingness to participate in the Working Group and to provide the contact details of their representative as soon as possible, preferably before 12 January 2009 to loetscher@ramsar.org.

The Secretariat takes the liberty of drawing attention to the provision of the Terms of Reference of the Working Group to the effect that “Members of the Working Group should meet their own costs”, and regrets to inform Contracting Parties that no funding is available to support participation in this meeting.

Hotel bookings: Representatives who may need a hotel room are requested to book their room directly: in Nyon, Hotel des Alpes, Web: <http://www.alpes-nyon.ch/>, tel. +41 22 994 30 00, Hostellerie du XVIIe Siècle, web: <http://www.16eme.com/>, tel. +41 22 994 88 00; or in Geneva through Geneva Tourism (web: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/>, tel. +41 (0)22 909 70 00).

Contracting Parties that may need further information on substantive issues prior to the first meeting of the ad hoc Working Group may contact the Secretary General, Mr Anada Tiega (tiega@ramsar.org).

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands avails itself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of its highest consideration.

Gland, 9 December 2008

Encl: Resolution X.5