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40th Meeting of the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee

11 – 15 May 2009

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 40th meeting of the Standing Committee

The Secretariat is pleased to inform that the 40th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC40) will be held in Gland, Switzerland, from 13 to 15 May 2009. SC40 will be preceded by a meeting of the Transition Committee of the Management Working Group, a meeting of the Management Working Group, and a meeting of the Finance Sub-group, as per the attached draft programme. A Draft Agenda and a preliminary programme for the meeting, as well as the lists of voting members of the Standing Committee and the Subgroup members are enclosed.

Contracting Parties that are not members of the Standing Committee are welcome 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 Party members of the Standing Committee and Contracting Parties wishing to attend the meeting as Observers, as well as those non-Contracting Party countries seeking Observer status at the meeting, would notify their intention to participate, together with the names of their delegates, by **6 April 2009**. Working documents will be available soon from the Ramsar Convention Web site (www.ramsar.org/sc/key_sc40_agenda_papers.htm). Registration forms for the 40th 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 on 13-15 May, 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, 17 February 2009

Encls: Draft Agenda & Members lists