

Notification 2010/8

Ramsar Advisory Mission to the Humedal Caribe Noreste Ramsar Site, Costa Rica

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:

The Secretariat has become aware that there exists a dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua over territorial issues which also concern Ramsar Sites in the two countries, and takes this opportunity to inform Contracting Parties of the Convention's responsibilities and mandate in this regard.

Contracting Parties will be aware that, under Article 3.2 of the Convention on Wetlands, "Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8 [i.e., the Convention Secretariat]".

In accordance with Article 3.2, the Government of Costa Rica informed the Ramsar Secretariat on 15 and 22 November 2010 of ecological changes in the Humedal Caribe Noreste Ramsar site, which was designated for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance on 20 March 1996, and requested an urgent Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) to evaluate those changes. Like all Ramsar Advisory Missions, this would be carried out under the terms of Recommendation 4.7, which adopted the RAM procedure in 1990 as a technical assistance mechanism to assist the Parties in achieving the conservation and wise use of the wetlands within their territories.

In response to Costa Rica's request, a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) took place from 27 November to 1 December 2010, clearly informing the Government of Costa Rica that the advisory mission would be conducted solely from a technical point of view.

As the Humedal Caribe Noreste Ramsar site in Costa Rica is adjacent to the Refugio de Vida Silvestre Río San Juan Ramsar Site of Nicaragua, the Secretariat informed Nicaragua that a RAM would take place to the Costa Rican site under the competence and role of the Convention. The Secretariat stressed to both Costa Rica and Nicaragua that it could not advise or adjudicate upon any political issues between Contracting Parties.

The Ramsar Secretariat, as part of the Ramsar Advisory Mission process, is presently preparing a technical report to be submitted to Costa Rica for its comments before publication on the Ramsar website with the Convention's previous RAM reports.

The Government of Nicaragua has also requested a Ramsar Advisory Mission, and this will take place as soon as the same experts are available to undertake that Mission.

The Ramsar Secretariat informed the Executive Team of the Standing Committee of the actions related to the Ramsar Advisory Mission that have been undertaken. It is important to recall to the Contracting Parties that under the services the Secretariat provides to the Parties, the Secretariat cannot exceed its mandate which is to provide advice and assistance concerning Convention implementation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

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, 13 December 2010