

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

24th Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 29 November – 2 December 1999

DOC. SC24-14

Agenda item 9.2.vii

Issues arising from COP7 requiring action by the Standing Committee – Working Partnerships with other conventions and organizations

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to review the following latest information and proposals regarding working partnerships with other Conventions and organizations, and to decide on the appropriate actions to be taken by either the Bureau or the Standing Committee itself.

Background

1. The Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 as adopted by Resolution VII.27 (Actions 7.2.1-7.2.9) identifies a range of actions to be taken under the theme of 'working partnerships'. This includes developing or further strengthening cooperation with the Convention to Combat Desertification, CBD, World Heritage, the Man and the Biosphere Programme, CMS, CITES, UNFCCC, EC, SPREP, etc. Under this Agenda Item, it is also proposed that Standing Committee consider the Ramsar presence in the Rio+10 process.
2. The targets adopted for these actions under the Work Plan 2000-2002 are indicated below. Actions taken so far are reported in each case.
3. **Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD).** Target: a Joint Work Plan which seeks cooperative implementation of both conventions at the international, national and local levels.

The Deputy Secretary General visited the CCD secretariat in late September for further discussions on joint actions, and the Secretary General proposes to attend CCD's COP3 in Brazil in November 1999. At the Standing Committee meeting, the Bureau will provide the Standing Committee with an update on these activities.

4. **Convention on Biological Diversity.** Target: A Joint Work Plan implemented in full and resulting in cooperative implementation of both conventions at the international, national and local levels.

The current Joint Work Plan expires on 31 December 1999. Following the 8th STRP meeting (refer to Agenda Item 8 of this meeting), the Bureau is to prepare a revised draft of the JWP which will be tabled at the Standing Committee meeting.

5. **UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) and the World Heritage Convention.** Target: a Memorandum of Cooperation with MAB, leading to Joint Work Plans with the MAB Programme and with the **World Heritage Convention** which establish cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.

The Memorandum of Cooperation with the World Heritage Centre was signed at COP7, specifying actions and cooperation that will take place. The Bureau has been approached by the Man and the Biosphere Programme seeking discussions on closer cooperation. The Bureau has expressed interest in cooperative actions, especially in relation to site management and planning.

6. **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).** Target: a Joint Work Plan which seeks cooperative implementation of both conventions at the international, regional, national, and local levels.

Discussions on this are planned with the CMS secretariat in late September 1999, and a report on the outcomes of these talks will be provided to the Standing Committee. The Regional Coordinator for Africa will represent the Bureau at the COP of CMS in South Africa in November 1999, as well as at the first Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) under CMS, which will precede the COP.

7. **CITES.** Target: A Memorandum of Cooperation, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the conventions, which aims towards cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.

The Bureau believes that before pursuing such an initiative it will be important to identify with some care the areas of potential cooperation and synergy (as is being undertaken with respect to UNFCCC – see below). This will require a thorough review and the development of a discussion paper to underpin discussions between the secretariats. Due to resource constraints the Bureau is suggesting in its Draft Work Plan 2000 (Agenda Item 7.1) that this activity be deferred for reconsideration in 2001.

8. **UNFCCC.** Target: a Memorandum of Cooperation, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the conventions, which aims towards cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.

The Ramsar Bureau has engaged IUCN to develop a discussion paper on the areas of cooperation and possible synergy between the two conventions. The first draft was reviewed by the UNFCCC secretariat and the Ramsar Bureau and submitted for comments to the STRP at its 8th meeting in September. The plan is to table the document at the UNFCCC COP in late October, early November in Germany. The Bureau will report on the outcomes of these actions at the Standing Committee meeting.

9. **European Commission.** Target: a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Commission as such or with the appropriate Directorate(s) General.

Exploration of the possibilities have not yet started. Since the text of the Convention does not allow that the Commission becomes a Contracting Party (an amendment in this direction could take years to come into force, as is the case with CITES), the Bureau

should explore what other formal arrangement could be established, to be recognized formally by a Resolution at COP8.

10. **South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).** Target: a Memorandum of Cooperation, leading to the preparation and implementation of a Joint Work Plan. No progress in this direction has been made.
11. **Eurosite, the network of organizations managing Europe's natural heritage.** The Bureau has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurosite, establishing the basis for closer cooperation in the area of Ramsar sites management in Europe and East and West Africa. (Copy attached)
12. In addition, paragraph 18 of Resolution VII.4 "ALSO REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to explore developing partnerships, including joint work plans if appropriate, with the Apia Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific and the subsequent Noumea Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific, and the Cartagena Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean, to extend participation in the Ramsar Convention by small island developing states."

For the Apia and Noumea Convention (the SPREP Convention, as it more commonly known), it is recommended that this matter be further considered once the Standing Committee has reviewed the Barbados Programme of Action and established how best to proceed in working cooperatively with these regional conventions. See also the agenda paper for Item 9.2.vii regarding the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Concerning the Cartagena Convention, the Bureau is initiating dialogue with the secretariat with the view to identify areas of common interest and possible joint action.

13. Resolution VII.19, in Section C2, requests the development of a formal Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and the United Nations. The Bureau plans to approach the Legal Department of the UN to explore ways and means to develop such MOU.
14. In addition, the Convention and its Contracting Parties should prepare their input to the Rio+10 process, so that Ramsar's contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21 will be recognized and further encouraged. The Bureau has not been able to obtain information on the preparations of the Rio+10 analysis and events, but the Convention should remain attentive, so as not to be ignored, in spite of being a pre-Rio instrument.

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (adopted at Ramsar, Iran, 1971), hereinafter referred to as the “Ramsar Convention”, represented by its Secretary General, Mr Delmar Blasco

and

EUROSITE, the network of European natural heritage management bodies, represented by its President, Mr E. T. Idle

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Background

The Convention on Wetlands, adopted in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran, is an intergovernmental treaty for the protection and wise use of wetlands.

Considering the issues at stake and the importance of conserving wetlands, one hundred and sixteen countries have thus far joined the Ramsar Convention and have registered more than 1000 sites world-wide on the List of wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites), including a large number of sites in the European geographical region.

The 6th Session of the Conference of Contracting Parties held in March 1996 in Brisbane, Australia, adopted a Strategic Plan for the period 1997-2002. Among the objectives of the Strategic Plan, one specific field of action deserves particular attention, namely the promotion of wetland management skills and their transfer through bilateral and multilateral technical exchange (Objective 4 of the Strategic Plan).

Eurosite is an international NGO member of IUCN, established on 23 November 1989, whose aims are to provide nature managers with a cooperative structure for bilateral and multilateral scientific and technical exchange, and to identify and disseminate best practices in land and water conservation management. Eurosite comprises more than 70 conservation bodies, most of which manage protected areas inside Ramsar sites in Europe.

Throughout Europe, many bodies share a common day-to-day responsibility: managing wetlands to preserve water resources and biodiversity. Success in this important, yet difficult task depends on the know-how, experience and professional skills of managers. They wish to share their questions, their discoveries and their vision of a brighter future for the exceptional heritage constituted by wetlands.

Since 1998, Eurosite has been involved in a programme of action supported by Groupe Danone and the Société des Eaux d'Evian to protect water resources and quality. Action is aimed at developing two biogeographical networks of twinned Ramsar sites: one covers the deltas of the Mediterranean, Black and Caspian seas, the other covers the shores of the Eastern Atlantic. Many of Eurosite's member bodies participate in the work of these networks under the leadership of the Tour du Valat and the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux.

Partnership Programme

The two parties have decided to intensify their partnership through a programme of action of several years' duration to strengthen the application of the Ramsar Convention in Europe.

1. Bilateral technical exchanges

Eurosite undertakes to promote technical exchanges between managers of European Ramsar sites by making available its information and communications network, and by providing technical assistance for the preparation of twinning or bilateral cooperation agreements between Ramsar sites, particularly those in Central and Eastern Europe, and with Ramsar sites in Western and East Africa.

2. Multilateral technical exchanges

Eurosite undertakes to ensure the participation of managers of European Ramsar sites in multilateral technical workshops which deal with wetland management issues. These workshops shall be open for participation by Ramsar site managers from Central and Eastern Europe.

Ramsar shall provide Eurosite with a list of Ramsar site managers in the geographical region concerned.

3. Ramsar site management: assessment and evaluation

At the request of the Ramsar Convention Bureau, Eurosite shall carry out management evaluations or prepare draft management plans.

Eurosite shall make available to the Ramsar Convention Bureau the expert services of its network of specialists on scientific and technical issues related to wetlands management.

Technical and financial conditions for implementation

Under the present Memorandum of Understanding, Eurosite shall call upon its members for the provision of technical services to carry out the above-mentioned actions.

In order to implement these actions Eurosite is empowered to seek private and/or public funding to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Ramsar Convention Bureau.

Duration of partnership

The present Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into force for a period of three years from the date of signature. After two years have elapsed, an evaluation of the partnership shall be effected and an agreement on the extension of the Memorandum shall be prepared. This Memorandum may be denounced at any time by either party upon submission of six months prior notification in writing.

Delmar BLASCO
Secretary General
of the Ramsar Convention

E. T. IDLE
President of Eurosite

Done at Steenwijk, Netherlands, Friday 24 September 1999