

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

**DOC. SC24-23**

Agenda item 13.2

**Request from Ducks Unlimited, Inc., to be recognized as an  
International Organization Partner**

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is requested to note the request of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and take a decision, if it wishes to do so, on the future course of action on this matter.

1. Following COP7 Resolution VII.3 entitled “Partnership with international organizations”, the Bureau received a letter from Ducks Unlimited, Inc., dated 12 October 1999 (copy attached) formally requesting to be recognized as an International Organization Partner of the Convention. The documentation provided by Ducks Unlimited will be at the disposal of Standing Committee members for consultation at the time of the meeting.
2. In his response (copy also attached), the Secretary General indicated that the role of the Standing Committee is to make a recommendation to the Conference of the Parties in 2002 on this matter. Thus, the Committee may take a decision already at its 1999 meeting or at its meetings in 2000 or 2001.
3. Nevertheless, an early decision may facilitate the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Ducks Unlimited and the Ramsar Bureau, as well as the extension of invitations to participate in meetings of the Standing Committee and other bodies, in an observer capacity, subject to a final decision on the status of Ducks Unlimited by Ramsar COP8 in 2002.

DUCKS UNLIMITED INC.

October 12, 1999

Secretary General  
Delmar Blasco  
Ramsar Convention, Mauverney 28  
CH-1 196 Gland, Switzerland

Dear Secretary General:

Based on the Resolution VII.3 on Partnerships with International Organizations adopted by the COP7 in San José (May 1999), Ducks Unlimited, Inc. would like to apply to be considered an International Organization Partner of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. I would be grateful if you could ensure this application is included in the agenda of the next meeting of the Standing Committee, for its consideration.

DU was created in 1937 to "support the habitat needs of North America's waterfowl and other wildlife by protecting, enhancing, restoring and managing important wetlands and associated uplands". It first started to work in Canada, where the sister organization DU Canada was founded in 1938. Later, the organization expanded its geographic scope to México, where DU de México (DUMAC) was established in 1974. Both DU Canada and DUMAC are funded mainly by DU, Inc. Recently, in 1999, we also started to work in Latin America and the Caribbean regions to apply our 60 years of experience in wetland habitat enhancement and restoration, and management of waterfowl populations beyond the North American borders.

The organization's major force is its 800,000 members and volunteers, who through their generosity and passion for waterfowl and wetlands have allowed for many great successes and accomplishments. However, DU's projects not only depend on our grassroots funding, but on extremely fruitful partnerships. These partnerships involve private landowners and farmers, communities, other NGOs, and state and federal agencies, with whom we work towards obtaining conservation easements on their lands, or to manage, enhance or restore habitat both for wildlife and sustainable use.

Another aspect of DU's success is the delivery of services directly on the ground based on sound scientific information and focused on a very clear objective. Some 400 botanists, ecologists, engineers, hydrologists, lawyers, wetland managers and wildlife biologists work throughout the USA, in a totally decentralized manner. While the early history of DU was modest and built with hardly any technology, we now use the latest technology such as GIS and the most up-to-date equipment. Research is essential in the way DU conducts its business, and therefore all our projects are supported by research conducted by the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research (IWWR), established in 1991. Additionally, in the early 1990's DU, Inc., DU Canada and DUMAC formulated the DU Continental Conservation Plan, which directs the organization's activities into the 21st century. The Conservation Plan is being updated at present and will expand beyond North America into Latin America and the Caribbean.

DU also recognizes that it must help recruit and train the best and brightest young conservationists. Toward this end, DU established a conservation internship program. DU provides training and experience for promising young professionals with an interest in wetlands and wildlife. Several DU interns have joined the staff, while others have become professionals with other agencies and institutions.

Finally, a small office in Washington, DC, was established to work directly with Congress, the administration and other organizations on federal policies related to waterfowl and wildlife. These efforts are highly focused and designed to enhance DU's mission, whether supporting, for example, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) or lobbying for approval of appropriations through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This office also is actively involved in the activities of the USA National Ramsar Committee of NGOs.

In summary, let me share with you some relevant figures which together with the enclosed documentation, I hope, will grant Ducks Unlimited, Inc. the Standing Committee's approval as an International Organization Partner of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:

Number of members and volunteers in the USA - 800,000  
Total number of staff in the USA - 500 (250 technical staff)  
Total US\$ raised since 1937 in the USA - 1.3 billion  
Total budget FY99 for DU, Inc. - 118.2 million (82% spent in Conservation; 14% in Fund-raising and Development; 4% in Administration)  
Total number of projects completed since 1937 in the USA - 10,745  
Total number of conservation easements in the USA - 70 (plus 15 in progress)  
Total acres of wetland conserved since 1937 in the USA - 1.62 million acres  
Total acres of wetland conserved since 1937 in North America - 8.85 million acres  
Total acres of wetland habitat conserved in FY99 in the USA - 310,000 acres  
Total acres of wetland habitat conserved in FY99 in North America - 500,000 acres

I look forward to hearing from you very soon and to establishing a closer working relation between our two organizations. Thank you very much for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jack Payne, Ph.D.  
National Director of Conservation

cc: USA Administrative Authority  
Canada and México Administrative Authorities  
Argentina, Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago Administrative Authorities  
USA National Ramsar Committee

Dr Jack Payne  
National Director of Conservation  
Ducks Unlimited Inc.  
One Waterfowl Way  
MEMPHIS. TN 38120-2351  
USA

Gland, 14 October 1999

Dear Dr Payne,

Thank you for your letter of 12 October, applying for the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention for Ducks Unlimited. I am delighted at your initiative, because of the long history of DU's involvement with the Ramsar Convention, but also in view of the potential for further cooperation between the Convention and your organization.

The agenda for the forthcoming Standing Committee meeting was sent out three months in advance of the meeting (i.e. at the end of August), as requested by the Rules of Procedure, and your request will therefore be included under the item "Any other business".

Should the Committee not be able to reach a decision at this meeting, it will consider your application next year. According to Resolution VII.3, the role of the Standing Committee is to receive applications and to make a recommendation to the Conference of the Contracting Parties for final decision. In consequence, the Standing Committee could decide to consider your request at its meeting either in 2000 or 2001, when it will make its recommendations to Ramsar COP8 in 2002.

In the meantime, if the Standing Committee's reaction to your application is positive, as I hope it will be, we could start working on a Memorandum of Cooperation between DU and the Ramsar Bureau, which is required by the Rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention on Wetlands.

I will keep you informed of developments regarding your application.

Yours sincerely,

Delmar Blasco  
Secretary General