

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

25th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 23- 27 October 2000

DOC. SC25-4

Agenda item 8

Report and analysis concerning the National Planning Tool and National Report format for COP8

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to receive the update on this matter by the Bureau and make recommendations, as appropriate.

1. Paragraph 13 of Resolution VII.27 “ REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 24th meeting, to review the National Report format used for COP7 and to introduce appropriate changes with a view to making the Ramsar COP8 format available in early 2000, so that Contracting Parties wishing to apply this framework can establish and maintain at the earliest opportunity an ongoing record of implementation for national planning and reporting purposes.”
2. In response to this, the Standing Committee discussed at its 1999 meeting a draft National Report format and requested the Chair to approve the final version once the required changes had been introduced. This was done and the new format for National Reports was distributed to all Contracting Parties under cover of a diplomatic note on 10 March 2000, with copy to the Administrative Authority (including an electronic version of the National Report format, with instructions for its use).
3. The introduction to the National Report format urges Parties to begin using it as soon as received, as a national planning tool for the implementation of the Convention, as indicated in Resolution VII.27. It was also noted that this action by the Standing Committee indicates a significant shift in the purpose of the national reporting process – from the previous one-off preparation every three years of a mere description of actions taken to the dual function of providing a dynamic and ongoing framework for strategic planning and action by national governments, which also meets the obligation to provide a National Report for each meeting of the COP.
4. All Contracting Parties were also urged to use the format to identify gaps and areas of highest priority for action against the Convention’s Work Plan 2000-2002. This should include the setting of realistic national targets on the basis of the global targets established in the Convention’s Work Plan.
5. The Bureau is concerned about the very little feedback that it has received from Contracting Parties on this issue in the six months since the distribution of this tool. The Regional Coordinators have been approaching their daily contacts in the Administrative Authorities inviting them to indicate if they have received the National Report document

and if they are using it as the planning tool that it is intended to be. Responses so far have been not forthcoming.

6. The Bureau invites Standing Committee members to debate and share their own experiences with the official National Report format and to advise the Bureau on ways and means by which it could encourage the effective use of this tool and provide assistance in doing so.