

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

DOC. SC25-13

Agenda item 17

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: significance for the Convention and Ramsar involvement

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to note the status of the Millennium Assessment Project and to provide advice to the Ramsar representatives on its Board and Executive Committee

1. Ramsar COP7 in May last year received information on the proposed Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) project, and as a consequence, in Resolution VII.20 the COP noted “the scope of the proposed Millennium Assessment of the World’s Ecosystems, currently under development, to deliver valuable related information of relevance to the application of the Convention”.
2. Considerable progress has been made during the past year in further defining the scope of the project, creating the project mechanism, and raising a considerable amount of resources. The MA is described in the attached document which contains the Project Summary. As stated in the subtitle of the project, the MA’s main objective is to “Strengthening Capacity to Manage Ecosystems Sustainably for Human Well-Being”, and it is undertaken to satisfy some of the information needs of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Convention on Wetlands.
3. As also stated in the Project Summary, “The primary audience for the global findings of the MA will be the parties to the ecosystem-related conventions. A ‘Summary for Policymakers’ will be prepared for these conventions, approved by the MA Board, and then submitted to the conventions’ scientific bodies. Parties to the conventions will then determine which findings will be formally accepted into the individual convention process, based on their specific information needs.”
4. UNEP will announce soon the vacancy of Director of the project (a high level UN post, D-1,) to be located in one of the MA supporting institutions in a developing country. In the meantime, the interim secretariat has sent to Ramsar Administrative Authorities among others a message inviting nominations of experts to contribute to the work of the various working groups that will actually carry out the assessment.
5. In the past six months the Ramsar Bureau has played an active role in the development of the MA process. As will be noted in the Project Summary, the Conventions are represented on the Board by the chief executive in each secretariat and the chairs of their scientific bodies. The Board also includes a large number of “at large” members, several of

whom belong to the “extended Ramsar family”. The executive officers of the Convention secretariats are also members of the Executive Committee of the project.

6. Contracting Parties will be kept informed of developments of the project, and their contributions to the global assessment, as well to the pilot local, national and regional assessments, as appropriate, will be actively thought.