

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**26th Meeting of the Standing Committee,
Gland, Switzerland, 3-7 December 2001**

DOC. SC26-22

Agenda item 21 (c)

Requests for International Organization Partner status

Action requested. The Standing Committee is asked to consider two requests for International Organization Partner status and take a decision on them.

1. The Bureau has received requests for International Organization Partner (IOP) status from the Lake Chad Basin Commission and from the Niger Basin Authority.
2. The IOP status was established by Resolution VII.3, which adopted the following “Rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention on Wetlands:
 1. International organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, formally recognized as Partners of the Convention on Wetlands by its Conference of the Contracting Parties will be expected to contribute on a regular basis and to the best of their abilities to the further development of the policies and technical and scientific tools of the Convention and to their application.
 2. Partners shall be invited to participate in an observer capacity and as advisors in all activities of the Convention, including the meetings of the Conference of Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, as well as regional and subregional meetings.
 3. Partners may also be invited, if required, to contribute to the evaluation of project proposals, project implementation, and the evaluation of project results, as well as to participate in the development of policy and technical and/or scientific instruments for the application of the Convention.
 4. Thus, the status of Partner shall be conferred to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations taking into account the following characteristics:
 - 4.1 Have a programme of activities that is global or at least covers many countries in one or more regions of the world.
 - 4.2 Have a statement of purpose that explicitly, or by clear implication, includes the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
 - 4.3 Have a track record of experience in providing support to and/or implementing on-the-ground projects that contribute to wetland conservation and sustainable use.
 - 4.4 Have demonstrated experience in implementing partnership ventures such as training and education, technical and/or scientific expertise, policy

development, and/or evaluation and assessment, particularly where such ventures would bring new and additional benefits to the functioning of the Ramsar partnership.

- 4.5 Have a positive reputation for being willing and able to cooperate with national and international bodies, including both governmental and non-governmental ones.
 - 4.6 Have stated their readiness to actively contribute on a regular basis to the further development of the policies and tools of the Convention on Wetlands and their application on the ground, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.
 - 4.7 Are prepared to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Bureau of the Convention, where the partnership agreement should be spelt out fully.”
3. **Concerning the two applicants**, the Ramsar Bureau has been working in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Member States since 1998, and with the Niger Basin Authority and the Member States since 2000. These partnerships have so far been focused on a number of elements of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002, as listed below.
 4. To progress toward universal membership (General Objective 1): through this collaborative work, Nigeria has acceded to the Ramsar Convention, and Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Sudan are in the process of accession
 5. To raise awareness of wetlands values and functions throughout the world (General Objective 3): the Ramsar Handbooks and other information materials have been disseminated to relevant institutions of the Members States.
 6. To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Ramsar criteria (General Objective 6): Niger has designated three new Ramsar sites, including Niger’s part of Lake Chad. Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad are taking steps to designate more sites, including their parts of Lake Chad, so that it will become a transboundary Ramsar site. Guinea is listing sites in the Niger Basin.
 7. International Cooperation (General Objective 8): continued discussion with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and potential donors (the World Bank, UNDP, GEF and others) concerning projects for the basin. This working relation has also encouraged and facilitated joint actions between conventions in the field (CBD and UNCCD in particular).
 8. The concrete activities that are under way include:
 - Extended partnership on the Lake Chad Basin working closely with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the five Member States on six GEF projects: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. This is done in partnership with WWF International (Living Waters Campaign) and IUCN (Water and Nature Initiative, WANI).
 - Initiation of a joint action on the Niger River Basin working closely with the Niger River Basin Authority: a GEF project is under discussion with input from Ramsar

and WWF International so as to bring added value to the concept and possible ways for implementation with nine Member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria.

9. The formal request and correspondence with the Lake Chad Basin Commission is attached in Annex 1.
10. The formal request of the Niger River Basin Authority is attached in Annex 2. The response of the Authority to the Bureau request for further details will be tabled at the Standing Committee meeting.