

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

DOC. SC26-28

Agenda item 12.3 (m)

**Report of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Ramsar's
Strategic Plan 2003-2008**

1. The Subgroup on the *modus operandi* of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel met during the afternoon of Tuesday, 4 December 2001, and completed its review of the STRP *modus operandi*.
2. Members of the Subgroup were: Algeria, Australia, Japan, Slovak Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda (Chair), and USA, plus the STRP Chair, representatives of the International Organization Partners, and the Deputy Secretary General (*ex officio*).
3. The Subgroup introduced some amendments to the draft Resolution, and a revised draft Resolution is attached to this report.
4. Concerning Section I of the Strategic Plan the Subgroup considered that restructuring and simplification of this section was necessary so as to make the Plan easier for Contracting Parties to use. The Subgroup felt that the explanatory text sections concerning the role and achievements of the Convention, the purpose and structure of the Plan and using the Strategic Plan would be helpful to many Contracting Parties but that these sections could be reorganised and shortened so as not to obscure the strategy itself. The Subgroup recommends that as part of this restructuring part 6 "Using the Strategic Plan" should be moved to form an Annex to Section III Implementation Plan.
5. The Subgroup considered that, with such restructuring, the addition of a short Executive Summary as proposed by the Bureau was unnecessary and that the creation of two versions of the Plan (the full Plan and a summary Plan) would create confusion.
6. The Subgroup expressed concern that the identification of 18 areas of activity to receive increased priority (paragraph 18 of the Strategic Plan) would be hard for Parties to fully address, and proposed that these activities should be identified as those needing urgently to be addressed rather than as priorities. The Subgroup recommends that priorities for attention could be better established as part of the national target setting process proposed by the Bureau for developing the Convention's Work Plan.
7. The Subgroup recommends that the issue of agriculture should feature more strongly in the Plan and have identified locations in each Section of the Plan where such text should be introduced.
8. Concerning Section II, the Subgroup recommends simplifying the presentation of part 7 "General Objective of the Strategic Plan", and that the "Rationale for the General Objectives" could be reduced in length.

9. In Section III Implementation Plan, the Subgroup recommends modified wording for a number of Operational Objectives and Actions. The Subgroup noted that certain Operational Objectives and Actions included specific targets and that these should be deleted from the Strategic Plan and incorporated as appropriate in the Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005.
10. The Subgroup recommends that Theme 1. Inventory and Assessment should be restructured, and that further Actions concerning monitoring and indicators should be included since these topics are not well covered by the existing Actions.
10. In view of the substantial modifications to the Plan structure and content, particularly of Sections I and II, the Subgroup recommends that these changes are introduced by the Bureau by the end of December 2001 and that a revised fifth draft be circulated for comment to the Subgroup on the Strategic Plan by mid January 2002.
11. The Subgroup recommends that the Bureau's proposal to prepare a revised version of the Strategic Plan in an attractive format for circulation in March 2002 to all Contracting Parties, along with a table inviting Contracting Parties to establish their national targets for implementation in 2003-2005 should be implemented.
12. The proposed revised structure of the Plan is:

SECTION I

1. Introduction
 - purpose and content of the Strategic Plan
 - role and achievements of the Ramsar Convention
2. Challenges for wetland conservation and wise use in the future

SECTION II

3. Mission Statement
4. General Objectives of the Strategic Plan
5. Rationale for the General Objectives

SECTION III

Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008:
Themes, Operational Objectives and Actions

Annex: Using the Strategic Plan

Draft Resolution VIII.[xx] Revision 1

The Strategic Plan 2003-2008

1. RECALLING that in Resolution VI.14 the Conference of the Contracting Parties adopted the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention;
2. RECOGNIZING that the implementation by Contracting Parties and others of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 has permitted a more coherent and effective implementation of the Convention; but AWARE that there remain many and increasing challenges to achieving globally consistent delivery of wetland conservation and wise use;
3. AWARE of the need to ensure a more fully integrated approach to wetland conservation and sustainable development, notably in relation to poverty eradication, food and water security, integrated approaches to water management, climate change and its predicted impacts, increasing globalization of trade, the increasing role of the private sector, and the increasing influence of development banks and international development agencies;
4. FURTHER AWARE of a number of issues that still require urgent attention in order to achieve wetland wise use under the Convention, including *inter alia*: inventory, assessment and monitoring; institutional frameworks and laws; integration of wetland wise use into local, national and international planning and decision-making; the role of wetlands, their values and functions in supporting human well-being and poverty alleviation; restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands; invasive alien species; agricultural influence and impacts, management by local communities and indigenous people; involvement of the private sector; incentive measures, communication, education and public awareness, strategic designation of Wetlands of International Importance, strengthening joint activities between multilateral environmental agreements; catalyzing funding for wetland work; collaboration with the Convention's partner organizations, scientific networks and other stakeholder groups; training and capacity-building, and universal membership of the Convention; and
5. AWARE ALSO that the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 has been prepared by the Standing Committee through a wide consultative process with Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners and other partners, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. APPROVES the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention;
7. URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Bureau, and the Convention's International Organization Partners to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 through the targets established by the Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005 (Resolution VIII.xx);

8. INVITES other multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations, scientific academies and research institutions, professional scientific and technical bodies, the donor community, and the private sector to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008; and
9. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau to prepare a finalized text of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 so as to take into account the Resolutions adopted by this Conference.