



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**Asia Regional Workshop on Scientific and Technical Support
for Implementation of the Ramsar Convention**

Changwon Hotel, Changwon, Republic of Korea
7-11 October 2013

Briefing Note for agenda item 10

**Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for
engaging in the global water debate**

Working session 4: Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate

Tuesday 8 October, 13.30 – 17.30

Background

During COP11 (2012), Contracting Parties requested the STRP to develop a strategy for Ramsar to engage fully in the global water debate, focusing on the role of wetlands as natural water infrastructure. This includes specifying aims, mechanisms for engagement and products needed to support the engagement. The STRP identified the need to develop a strategy for Ramsar to engage in the global water debate, focusing on the role of wetlands as natural water infrastructure. This task (Task No. 44 in the 2013-15 STRP work plan) is considered one of the highest priorities for the STRP this triennium, and it is relevant to the development of the objectives of the next Strategic Plan of the Convention, which would likely emphasise the link between water and wetlands.

The Ramsar Convention has recognised within the scope of its mandate the relationship between ecosystems, water, wetlands and people, whilst taking into account that wetlands, like all ecosystems, depend on water. However, there has been difficulty in obtaining an understanding (within the wetland, biodiversity and water sectors) of the key role of wetland as processors and providers of water to people. In this light, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for Water and Wetlands report states that most wetland values are related to water.

Why the need for a strategy to engage in the global water debate? This is in part because recognition of the role of wetlands and implementation of the Convention have not always been picked up by governments as a whole, but mainly by National Focal Points of the Convention. To deliver the mission of the Convention ('wise use'), it is key to engage sectors that depend on wetlands, as well as those driving their loss and deterioration.

Feedback requested from participants

- Provide case studies on good examples of working with the water sectors and/or other sectors (i.e., agriculture, sanitation)
- Identify the bodies, organisations or stakeholders who would be more effective for better engagement

Background documents

1. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for [Water and Wetlands report](#). Executive summaries in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish can be accessed [here](#).
2. Ramsar Handbook 8: [Water-related guidance](#).
3. [UNECE Transboundary Water Convention](#)
4. [UN Convention on Watercourses](#)

Schedule

13.30-13.45 Introduction of the task, purpose of the session and expected outcomes, as well as its relevance to the next Strategic Plan

13.45-14.00 Defining the water sector (who/what) and discussion (participants feedback on what/who they view as the water sector)

14.00-14.20 Identifying the main obstacles impeding engagement of the water sector with other sectors (governmental and non-governmental) at the national/regional/global level

- Related question: Is the water-related guidance adopted by Contracting Parties being used by decision-makers at the national level in the water sector?

14.20-15.00 Break out groups: case studies on good examples (case studies) of working with the water sectors and/or other sectors (i.e., agriculture, sanitation)

15.00-15.20 Coffee break

15.20-15.40 Discussion of case studies

15.40-16.00 determining the appropriate scale for Ramsar to better engage with water issues

- Related questions
 - Should it be at the basin/sub-basin level?
 - Should the Convention focus engagement with global organisations, such as the World Water Council? Or should the Convention focus engagement with river basin commissions or government across national scales? Or with all of them?

16.00-16.20 Exercise: identifying the bodies, organisations or stakeholders who would be more effective for better engagement at the national, regional and/or international level. Participants are to provide a list of stakeholders.

16.20-16.40 Coffee break

16.40-17.00 Discussion: How should Ramsar engage (or what should be its role) with existing international water treaties such as the UNECE Transboundary Water Convention, taking into account that it has been opened to universal membership, and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention, which is not yet in force because it does not have enough member states?

17.00-17.30 Wrap-up and conclusions