

THE RAMSAR-DANONE PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Since 1998, Groupe DANONE has supported the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty for the protection of wetlands placed under the aegis of UNESCO. Since 1971, Ramsar has designated and protected nearly 1,400 remarkable sites in terms of their biodiversity, i.e. more than 100 million hectares worldwide.

Wetlands (marsh, peatland, deltas, etc...) are natural reservoirs that play a fundamental role in the preservation of water resources because they filter rainwater, purify and replenish the water table. More than half of these areas have disappeared from the planet in the course of the 20th century and have been degraded by pollution.

In 2002, the Group set up the DANONE-Evian Fund for Water Resources. The Fund's main objectives are:

- ➔ Raising awareness of the importance of water resources with decision-makers and the general public;
- ➔ Making local populations, especially children, aware of water management through teaching materials;
- ➔ Bringing outstanding initiatives to the spotlight. Since 1999, DANONE has awarded a special prize to the winners of the 3 Ramsar Awards, given every three years to individuals, organizations or public bodies that have made major contributions to education, science and management of wetlands in one of the areas throughout the world;
- ➔ Sharing best practices in managing natural sites. The aim is to create a network for all Group experts involved in managing and protecting water resources.

Water resources for men and biodiversity

Taking action, from the mountains to the sea for wise use of water resources and maintaining their quality.



Ramsar is developing a program for the protection of water from the mountains to the sea. Its slogan: What do you do for water today ?

COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

Participation in the World Wetlands Day (February 2 nd).

For this occasion, public information documents (posters, stickers, etc.) are widely distributed by Ramsar correspondents worldwide. Ramsar offers specific software enabling countries to edit and reproduce these documents in their language.

Communication of the Ramsar action program

Ramsar takes part in various international events, teaching about the implications of wetlands protection and raising the awareness of decision makers: United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development in New York, the IUCN Congress, etc.

Educational project developed in cooperation with UNESCO

A board game about wetlands and water, aimed at educating children ages 7, was developed and tested in schools from the associated UNESCO school network. The game is intended to raise children's awareness on the rational use of water with simple daily routines.

World Wetlands Day



Every year, the Funds support the World Wetlands Day financing the communication tools disseminated by the Ramsar Secretariat in over 150 countries

Every year, for the World Wetlands Day on February 2nd, the Ramsar Bureau sends out a poster to schools all over the world.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WWF INTERNATIONAL

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Ramsar are institutional partners. Both have signed a 2004 protocol in Paris intended to establish the foundations for a collaboration between Ramsar, WWF International and Groupe DANONE aimed at implementing cross-border cooperation efforts.

The "Living Waters" program run by WWF International is in charge of implementing four pilot projects under Ramsar management and in coordination with the DANONE- Evian Fund, as part of the "From Mountains to the Seas" program on protecting water resources and quality:

In South America: the Paramos region in the Northern Andes (sites in Peru, Colombia, Equator and Venezuela),

In Western Africa: the Niger River Basin (sites in Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Chad and Cameroon),

In Central Asia: the Himalaya region (sites in India, China, Bhoutan, Pakistan and Nepal),

In South East Asia: the Mekong river basin (sites in China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia)

SCIENTIFIC AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: RAMSAR SITE NETWORKS

Ramsar organizes special workshops for Ramsar site representatives and managers from different countries. This program covers more than fifty countries and approximately two hundred sites in the six major regions of the world. They can be divided into 3 types of geographic and theme-based networks:

- The Ramsar network for biodiversity: water and birds (North East Asia, the Andes cordillera and Europe)

- The Ramsar network of great rivers: water for sharing (the Niger basin, the Mekong river)
- The Ramsar mountain network: at the sources of water (Himalaya, Paramos in the Andes)

A LOCAL EFFORT IN CAMBODIA

A special effort was organized in Cambodia to provide drinking water and raise awareness of water management in the population of the Siem Reap province. Conducted by UICN France with the on-site help of a hydrogeologist, the effort has helped build 34 wells in four years, expected to benefit a population of about 8,000 inhabitants.

The initiative is today completed, after a local development association was set up for the management of the wells ("water for everybody"). It is also in charge of advising the locals on growing fruit and vegetable crops near the wells.

RECOGNIZING REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

What is the condition of water resources in the world? How to reduce poverty thanks to rational water management? These were the questions asked at the Ninth Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, held in Uganda, in November 2005. For this occasion, Groupe DANONE, presented three Awards in support of the Convention:

RAMSAR AWARD – MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Dr. SH.A. Nezami Baloochi (Iran) was awarded in the "management" category for his major and pivotal role in the establishment of an effective conservation and wise use scheme for the Anzali Wetland Ramsar site. Throughout his career, Dr. SH.A. Nezami Baloochi has been highly instrumental in the creation of a number of protected areas, education and public awareness-raising initiatives.

Ramsar Award –Science category

Prof. Shuming Cai, from the Chinese Academy of Science, was awarded in the "science" category for his research studies on the Yangtze River. Prof. Cai also insists on the importance of wetlands for sustainable economic development and human well-being.

Ramsar Award –Education Category (ex-aequo)

Ms. Reiko Nakamura (Japan) was recognized for promoting wetland conservation and the Ramsar Convention in Asia for more than 15 years, through communication, education and public awareness activities, research and projects

Ramsar Award –Education Category (ex-aequo)

The Wetlands Center Australia was awarded for its efforts to promote wetlands conservation through its activities of communication, education and public awareness, with the conviction that in the future it will be necessary "to more clearly promote the role wetlands play in the story of water supply for both the environment and people"

The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award was established in 1996 in order to recognize and honor the contributions of individuals, organizations and governments around the world towards promoting the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

→ For more information go to www.ramsar.org