

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

30th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 13-16 January 2004

Decisions of the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 4: Report of the Secretary General

Amongst the Secretary General's report on the Ramsar Bureau's work and the progress of the Convention in 2003 (DOC. SC30-02), he suggested two themes for upcoming World Wetlands Days.

Decision SC30-1: The Standing Committee adopted as the themes for upcoming World Wetlands Days: for 2005, "Cultural and biological diversity of wetlands", and for 2006, "Wetlands as a tool in poverty alleviation".

Agenda item 5: The Bureau's Work Plan for 2004

Decision SC30-2: The Standing Committee approved in principle the Bureau's Work Plan for 2004, subject to the additions suggested and with time allocations if feasible, and the amended Plan will be circulated soon after the meeting.

Agenda item 6.1: Report of the Chair of the STRP

Decision SC30-3: The Standing Committee agreed to reiterate the importance of the STRP as a hallmark of Ramsar as a science-based convention; charge the STRP Chair and the Bureau to make concrete proposals for changes in the STRP *modus operandi*; urge the Parties to consider making voluntary contributions for the substantive work of the STRP in this triennium; and encourage the SC Regional Representatives to contact their Parties about appointing their STRP National Focal Points, where necessary.

Agenda item 8: Indicators of effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention

Decision SC30-4: The Standing Committee determined to:

- i) thank the STRP's Working Group 6 for its efforts in bringing forward proposals for ecological 'outcome-oriented' indicators of the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention;
- ii) endorse the approach taken thus far by the Working Group in preparing these proposals, as described in the report annexed to DOC.SC30-7;
- iii) request the STRP Working Group to continue to develop these proposals, taking account of the comments made in the present meeting, and the global-scale indicators recommended by the CBD process;
- iv) instruct the Bureau, with the assistance of the STRP Support Service, to seek appropriate additional expert consultancy assistance to work with the STRP Working Group to refine the detailed indicator descriptions and guidance on the application and use of the proposed indicators;
- v) encourage Contracting Parties willing to assist with pilot-testing the proposed indicators during 2004, in conjunction with their use of the National Planning Tool and National Report Format for COP9, to make their willingness known to the Ramsar Bureau; and

- vi) request the STRP's Working Group, depending upon resources, to prepare a further draft of the proposed indicators for circulation to the Standing Committee for comment prior its 31st meeting.

Agenda item 11: Ramsar sites that cease to meet or never met the Ramsar Criteria

Decision SC30-5: The Standing Committee requested the Bureau, with the assistance of interested Contracting Parties and International Organization Partners as appropriate, to further develop the issues and approaches on Ramsar Site boundary restriction in the form of guidance for Parties, in line with the request in Resolution VIII.22, for circulation to all Parties prior to consideration at its 31st meeting.

Agenda item 9.1: Preparations for Ramsar COP9

Decision SC30-6: The Standing Committee agreed with Uganda's proposal that Ramsar COP9 should be held during the period 7-15 November 2005, subject to Uganda's Cabinet's approval.

Decision SC30-7: The Standing Committee agreed upon the COP9 fundraising priorities of 1) holding the COP itself (both Bureau and in-country costs), 2) supporting at least one sponsored delegate from each eligible Party, and 3) holding regional/subregional preparatory meetings.

Agenda item 9.2: The Ramsar Award / Evian Special Prize

Decision SC30-8: The Standing Committee agreed that the Ramsar Award for COP9 will be given in the categories of management, science, and education and that the Subgroup on COP9 will act as a jury to choose among the Bureau's recommended shortlist. The Committee approved the Criteria and Procedures proposed and gratefully accepted the generous offer of the Danone Group (France) to provide three "Evian Special Prizes" of US\$ 10,000 each to accompany the Awards.

Agenda item 9.3: Regional and subregional meetings

Decision SC30-9: The Standing Committee recognized the value of mid-term meetings of regional groupings of Parties and pre-accession countries and adopted as a goal that there should be at least one intersessional meeting of each regional grouping in each triennium. The SC recommended that proposed meetings should be the responsibility of a country or countries in the regional grouping concerned to organize, with the Bureau, and that the purpose of the meeting and the issues to be discussed be kept flexible so as to meet the priority issues and needs of the countries concerned. Opportunities should be sought to capitalize on other relevant meetings taking place in the region. The Bureau will provide advice to organizing countries and participate in any such meetings as appropriate.

Special presentation on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Decision SC30-10: The Standing Committee

- i) welcomed the progress of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in relation to the needs of the Ramsar Convention;
- ii) urged all Contracting Parties to contribute, as requested, to the review of the MA's full and summary reports;
- iii) strongly encouraged the MA to ensure that its experts contribute, as appropriate, to the work of the STRP and its Working Groups, and expressed

- its gratitude to the United Nations University for its offer of support for this involvement;
- iv) requested the STRP's 12th meeting to review all appropriate MA reports, including the draft Ramsar synthesis report, and to prepare a report and draft COP9 Resolution for consideration by the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee;
 - v) requested the Bureau and the MA to make all MA findings available for consideration by COP9; and
 - vi) thanked the MA for its past and continuing contributions to Ramsar and especially thanked Walt Reid for making his presentation to the SC.

Agenda item 10: Financial matters

Decision SC30-11: The Standing Committee determined to

- i) reject the option of continuing a deficit into future years;
- ii) reduce the deficit by increased fundraising for the Bureau (by redirecting the Senior Advisor's terms of reference and studying how other conventions deal with unpaid dues);
- iii) reduce expenditures on operating costs and communications by CHF 12,000 and 60,000 respectively;
- iv) reduce the STRP Support Service by no greater than 50% in 2004 and 2005 and maintain the support as high as possible by fundraising for additional contributions;
- v) instruct the Bureau to report to the Subgroup on Finance in a year's time and seek further direction; and
- vi) request the Subgroup on Finance to develop guidance for COP9 on how to budget for interest income.

Agenda item 10.2: Approval of Small Grants Fund projects for 2003

Decision SC30-12: The Standing Committee approved Small Grants Fund allocations to the A1 list found in DOC. SC30-11 addendum 1, ¶5, and agreed to fund the A2 list (¶6, with Mali listed second and Zambia removed) if additional resources should become available.

Decision SC30-13: The Standing Committee decided that 1) the Bureau will be authorized to cancel, following consultation with the Chairs of the SC and the Subgroup on Finance, an SGF project that has not complied satisfactorily with reporting requirements within three years of the date of signing the project contract and for which the Bureau has received no indication that the project is being implemented to completion; 2) the proposed modifications to Section B 'Request for Funding' should be made in the SGF Operational Guidelines; 3) the proposed modifications to the Project Proposal Assessment Form should also be made; but 4) a separate Emergency Assistance Fund should not be established within the Small Grants Fund, as emergencies should be dealt with on an ad hoc basis; and 5) the Bureau is requested to prepare revised Operational Guidelines as soon as possible and post them on the Web site for the 2004 cycle.

Agenda item 10.3 and 10.4: The Ramsar Endowment Fund and fundraising

Decision SC30-14: The Standing Committee directed the Ramsar Bureau to analyze and document issues that precluded consensus on the Ramsar Endowment Fund *modus operandi* and endorsed the establishment of a working group to identify further options to resource the Small Grants Fund and other fundraising needs of the Bureau for SC consideration. The objective of this group would be to identify fundraising opportunities

and inform the Bureau; it would also be to support the Bureau when needed: introductions to private companies, development cooperation agencies, etc.

Agenda item 7: Matters arising from Resolution VIII.45

Decision SC30-15: The Standing Committee requested the Bureau, working with the STRP and the Subgroup on Resolution VIII.45, to explore the most practical approaches to addressing Resolution VIII.45, and it took note of the questionnaire concerning the Resolution's paragraph 10 that will be circulated by the Subgroup to the Administrative Authorities in the near future.

African support group for COP9

Decision SC30-16: The Standing Committee welcomed and endorsed the proposal to form an African Support Group to assist Uganda in its preparations for Ramsar COP9 and asked the Secretary General to invite Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa to make up that group.

Agenda item 9.1 (continued): Preparations for COP9

Decision SC30-17: The Standing Committee welcomed and endorsed the Subgroup on COP9's proposal that the theme of Ramsar COP9 should be "Wetlands and water – sustaining life, supporting livelihoods".

Agenda item 12: Progress with the establishment of the Ramsar Centre in Panama

Decision SC30-18: The Standing Committee welcomed the new developments in bringing the 'Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere' to life and expressed gratitude for the gestures of support from the USA, Spain and others for its continuing work. The Committee acknowledged with thanks the great efforts that Panama has made to achieve these results.

Agenda item 13: Progress with the Ramsar/CBD Joint Work Plan (JWP) and CBD COP7 issues

Decision SC30-19: The Standing Committee

- i) noted the progress in implementing the Ramsar/CBD Joint Work Plan and welcomed the work of the Bureau, the STRP, and the CBD Secretariat in furthering this collaboration;
- ii) urged the Contracting Parties to ensure that the importance of wetland issues and the collaborative role of the Ramsar Convention are fully reflected in the decisions made by CBD's COP7;
- iii) urged that participants in the CBD COP7 recognize the Ramsar Convention's role in marine and coastal and other ecosystem programmes of work, and in the cross-cutting issues, in the relevant decisions made by that COP, in line with the CBD/Ramsar Joint Work Plan 2002-2006;
- iv) urged that participants in CBD COP7 take account of existing global mechanisms when planning the CBD's work on protected areas.
- v) if appropriate, following CBD COP7 discussions on invasive alien species, requested the STRP to update as necessary and bring forward to Ramsar COP9 the draft guidance on invasive alien species that was prepared by the STRP in advance of COP8;
- vi) welcomed the full participation of the Secretary General and the Chair of the Standing Committee in the CBD COP7 process; and

- vii) requested the Standing Committee members and other Ramsar Administrative Authorities to bring this decision to the attention of their delegations to CBD COP7.

Agenda item 14: Date of the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee

Decision SC30-20: The Standing Committee determined that the dates of its next full meeting, SC31, will be the week of 6-10 June 2005. The Subgroups may be convened early in 2005 to assess progress and prepare decisions for SC31. In particular, the Standing Committee delegated the Subgroup on Finance to make selections for the 2004 cycle of Small Grants Fund project proposals, based upon comments offered by SC members following circulation by the Bureau of the nomination materials.

Agenda item 15: Report of the meeting

Decision SC30-21: The Standing Committee approved the first two days of the report of its 30th meeting and will have one week to comment on the draft of the third day's report following its circulation to all participants in the next few days, following which the Chair will approve the final report and it will be released for the public.