

SUMMARY OF THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS: 28 OCTOBER – 4 NOVEMBER 2008

The tenth meeting of the contracting parties (COP 10) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat was held from 28 October - 4 November 2008 at the Changwon Convention Center in Changwon, Republic of Korea under the theme “Healthy Wetlands Healthy People.” More than 2000 participants representing 158 parties as well as international organization partners (IOPs) of the Ramsar Convention, UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. COP 10 adopted 32 resolutions, including on: wetlands and climate change; wetlands and biofuels; wetlands and extractive industries; wetlands and poverty eradication; wetlands and human health and well-being; enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies as wetland systems; and promoting international cooperation on the conservation of waterbird flyways. The COP also adopted the Convention’s budget for 2009-2013 and Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

Most participants expressed satisfaction with the COP 10 outcomes. Many highlighted the public attention that COP 10 received in the host country and the Asian region as an important step towards raising the Convention’s profile. On other issues, reactions were mixed. A number of resolutions provide guidance for further streamlining reporting and monitoring under the Convention as well the Convention’s own operations, however the main issue of institutional reform – the legal status of the Convention’s Secretariat, was deferred to an intersessional working group. While many delegates welcomed the fact that the decisions on wetlands and climate change and on wetlands and biofuels remained focused on aspects relevant to wetland conservation and wise use rather than broadening the issues beyond the Convention’s scope, some felt that COP 10 had missed an opportunity to make the Convention more visible at the global level.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (also known as the Ramsar Convention) was signed in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971, and came into force on 21 December 1975. The Convention provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

CONVENTION OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE: Originally emphasizing the conservation and wise use of wetlands primarily to provide a habitat for waterbirds, the Convention has subsequently broadened its scope to address all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, thereby recognizing the importance of wetlands as ecosystems that contribute to both biodiversity conservation and human well-being. Wetlands cover an estimated nine percent of the Earth’s land surface, and contribute significantly to the global economy in terms of water supply, fisheries, agriculture, forestry and tourism.

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The Convention currently has 158 parties. More than 1800 wetland sites covering 161.3 million hectares are included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Parties to the Convention commit themselves to: designate at least one site that meets the Ramsar Criteria for inclusion in the Ramsar List and ensure maintenance of the ecological character of each Ramsar site; include wetland conservation within national land-use planning in order to promote the wise use of all wetlands within their territory; establish nature reserves on wetlands and promote training in wetland research and management; and consult with other parties about Convention implementation, especially with regard to transboundary wetlands, shared water systems, shared species and development projects affecting wetlands.

Contracting parties meet every three years to assess progress in implementing the Convention and wetland conservation, share knowledge and experience on technical issues, and plan the next triennium. In addition to the COP, the Convention's work is supported by a Standing Committee, a Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), and the Ramsar Bureau, which carries out the functions of a Secretariat.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE COP: There have been nine meetings of the COP since the Convention's entry into force: COP 1 in Cagliari, Italy (November 1980); COP 2 in Groningen, the Netherlands (May 1984); COP 3 in Regina, Canada (May-June 1987); COP 4 in Montreux, Switzerland (June-July 1990); COP 5 in Kushiro, Japan (June 1993); COP 6 in Brisbane, Australia (March 1996); COP 7 in San José, Costa Rica (May 1999); COP 8 in Valencia, Spain (November 2002); and COP 9 in Kampala, Uganda (November 2005).

COP 7: At COP 7, delegates focused on the interrelations between human societies and wetland habitats. They considered the Convention's implementation in each region and adopted 30 resolutions and four recommendations on policy, programme and budgetary issues. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ramsar Bureau and the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

COP 8: COP 8 focused on the role of wetlands in water provision, as well as their cultural and livelihoods aspects. Delegates adopted more than 40 resolutions addressing policy, technical, programme and budgetary matters, including wetlands and agriculture, climate change, cultural issues, mangroves, water allocation and management, and the Report of the World Commission on Dams. Delegates also approved the Convention's budget and Work Plan for 2003-2005 and Strategic Plan for 2003-2008.

COP 9: COP 9, the first Ramsar COP held in Africa, adopted 25 resolutions on a wide range of policy, programme and budgetary matters, including: additional scientific and technical guidance for the implementation of the Ramsar Wise Use Concept; engagement of the Convention in ongoing multilateral processes dealing with water; the Convention's role in natural disaster prevention, mitigation and adaptation; wetlands and poverty reduction; cultural values of wetlands; and the emergence of avian influenza. The COP also adopted the Convention's budget and Work Plan for the 2006-2008 triennium, and reviewed Strategic Plan 2003-2008. An informal

Ministerial Dialogue adopted the Kampala Declaration, which emphasized the role of the Convention in arresting continuing loss and degradation of wetland ecosystems.

COP 10 REPORT

The COP 10 opening ceremony convened on Tuesday evening, 28 October 2008. COP 9 President Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Environment of Uganda, handed over the Ramsar flag to incoming COP President Maanee Lee, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea. Underlining the role of wetlands as an indispensable resource for human well-being, Lee encouraged discussions on their contribution to global issues such as climate change, energy and human health. Taeho Kim, Governor of Gyeongnam Province, Republic of Korea, described the Province's actions and policies for wetland conservation and urged parties to tackle wetland degradation.

Anada Tiéga, Ramsar Secretary-General, encouraged parties to build partnerships to exchange experiences on payments for ecosystem services and the role of wetlands in water management, food and energy security, and climate change. Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea, introduced his country's Green Growth policy, outlining how wetlands can contribute to economic development. He resolved to make the Republic of Korea a model Ramsar party and to increase financial support for implementation in developing countries.

The Little Angels Choir and children from previous COP host countries called for more action and emphasized the protection of wetlands, which represent mankind's connection to the world. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a video message, recalled that the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment sounded an alarm that wetlands are degrading faster than any other ecosystem. Jong Hwan Chung, Minister of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, Republic of Korea, highlighted that wetland conservation is at the core of Korea's Green Growth policy.

Miae Choo, National Assembly Chairperson, Environment and Labor Committee, Republic of Korea, stressed that the Convention could provide long-term strategies to sustainably shaping the future. She said that the harmonization of environment and human well-being should be at the core of the Green Growth policy.

Julia Martin-Lefèvre, IUCN Director-General, delivered a message from the recent IUCN World Conservation Congress, describing biodiversity loss as a silent crisis threatening the well-being of societies and their economies. She said biodiversity should receive the same level of attention as climate change.

David Coates, on behalf of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif, supported an integrated approach on water, wetlands, biodiversity and climate change, and highlighted that CBD COP 9 had endorsed the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner: hailed the role of NGOs and the private sector in the Convention's evolution and implementation; highlighted UNEP's plan for a new global green deal; and underlined the importance of wetland conservation in addressing climate change.

Paul Mafabi, Ramsar Standing Committee Chair, announced the winners of the 2008 Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards: for science, David Pritchard, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and BirdLife International; for management, Denis Landenbergue, WWF International; and for education, Sansanee Choowaew, Mahidol University, Thailand. The Recognition of Excellence Award was presented to Jan Květ, Czech Republic.

The opening ceremony concluded with a signing ceremony for the Danone-Evian Fund for Nature, which addresses water resource management, carbon sequestration capacity and ecosystems.

The following report contains sections on the opening plenary, special presentations, regional group sessions and COP 10 resolutions. The section on COP 10 resolutions is organized according to the agenda of the meeting.

OPENING PLENARY

The opening plenary convened Wednesday morning, 29 October. COP 9 President Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda, handed Ramsar Executive Secretary Anada Tiéga a guide book on the management of Ramsar sites prepared by her ministry.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates adopted the agenda (COP10 Doc.1 Rev.2) and rules of procedure (COP10 Doc.2 Rev.1), after hearing that the rules had been amended to, among other things, provide for the election of an alternate president in addition to the President and Vice-Presidents.

The COP then elected Lee Maanee, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, as COP 10 President. In his opening remarks, President Lee said the Convention's 158 contracting parties and more than 1800 Ramsar sites reflect the strong commitment of parties to the implementation of the Convention and reaffirm the importance and value of wetlands. He said the elaboration and adoption of a new strategic plan by COP 10 will usher in a new stage of the Convention's development, and that the COP will provide an opportunity to assess progress, renew determination for the future, and raise awareness about wetlands. Delegates then elected Kim Chan-woo (Republic of Korea) as Alternate President, and Rejoice Mabudafhasi (South Africa) and Patrick Van Klaveren (Monaco) as Vice-Presidents.

The following were appointed to the Credentials Committee: for Africa, Manichand Puttoo (Mauritius); for Asia, Nirawan Pipitsombat (Thailand); for Europe, Camille Barnetche (France); for the Neotropics, Nancy Cespedes (Chile); for North America, Monika Herzig (Mexico); and for Oceania, Deborah Callister (Australia). Callister was also appointed Credentials Committee Chair, and David Pritchard was asked to serve as the Committee's Secretary.

The COP also agreed to establish a Committee on Finance and Budget to agree on the core budget proposals, chaired by Herb Raffaele (US). The COP then agreed to admit the registered observers (COP10 Doc.39).

REPORTS: Standing Committee Chair Paul Mafabi gave an overview of the Committee's activities for the period 2006-2008 (COP10 Doc.4). The Committee held five meetings during which it: reviewed the Secretariat's work and budget; considered reports on work recommended by the Scientific and Technical

Review Panel (STRP) and the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel; considered approved projects to be funded under the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF) for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use; and considered the draft resolutions and the Changwon Declaration.

Heather MacKay, outgoing STRP Chair, briefed delegates on the Panel's work over the past triennium, highlighting issues and challenges relating to the Convention's implementation, emerging areas and options for future work. She supported addressing issues concerning water, wetlands, biodiversity and climate change as a package rather than as stand alone issues.

Park In-ja, on behalf of the participants of the World Wetlands NGO Conference, held prior to COP 10, presented the Suncheon NGO Declaration, noting agreement to form a World Wetland Network to facilitate and enhance information sharing and transfer of best practices in wetlands management. She urged parties to organize national wetland committees comprised of all relevant stakeholders, and called for enhanced cooperation between parties, International Organization Partners (IOPs), NGOs, and local and indigenous people.

Ramsar Secretary-General Anada Tiéga provided an overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level during the past triennium (COP10 Doc.6). He stressed increasing recognition of the role of wetlands in conservation and sustainable development, particularly relating to biodiversity, climate change, food security, energy, extractive industries, human health, urbanization and water supply. He also highlighted challenges regarding implementation of the Convention.

In response to the Secretary-General's report, many parties provided accounts of implementation at the national level and the designation of wetlands as Ramsar Sites. Several parties also commented on or requested clarification regarding issues mentioned in the report, including: biofuels, priority setting, staffing and capacity in the Secretariat, the legal status of the Secretariat, and linkages between climate change and wetlands. The Secretary-General's report was adopted. For summaries of the reports and ensuing discussions, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1727e.html>

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Throughout the meeting, delegates heard several special presentations on issues relating to implementation and emerging issues.

On Wednesday, 29 October, 2008, Kim Ji-Tae, Ministry of Environment, presented on wetland conservation and use in the Republic of Korea. He noted that 7.7 percent of the Republic of Korea's land mass is covered by wetlands including 11 designated Ramsar sites, and described his country's post-COP 10 priorities. On Thursday, 30 October, Batilda Burian, Minister of State for the Environment, Tanzania, presented an extract of "The Crimson Wing," a film about flamingos in the Lake Natron wetlands, and reported on the establishment of the Lake Natron Trust Fund in cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and Disney Nature.

On Friday, 31 October, STRP Vice-Chair Rebecca D'Cruz presented on human health and wetland interactions, highlighting, among other issues, the need for wetland managers to engage actively with the health sector at the local and national levels.

On Monday, 3 November, Max Finlayson, STRP, presented on wetlands and climate change, noting that the draft resolution on wetlands and climate change links climate change to biodiversity, water and land management, and emphasizes the value of restoration and wise use of wetlands. STRP Chair Mackay presented on river basin management and the prospects and challenges for integrated water management during the next decade.

Summaries of these presentations can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1727e.html>; <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1728e.html>; <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1729e.html>; and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1731e.html>.

REGIONAL GROUPS

Regional group sessions were held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, to allow for the coordination of positions on the draft resolutions and to elect new representatives to the Standing Committee. All groups exchanged views about the budget. In addition several groups considered draft resolutions of special importance to members of that particular region. Africa focused on issues relating to climate change adaptation in wetlands and extractive industries. The Americas discussed the legal status of the Secretariat and regional and subregional initiatives. Europe held discussions on wetlands and biofuels, wetlands and climate change, biodiversity in rice paddies, and the legal status of the Secretariat. Members of the Oceania group focused on frequency of COP meetings and funding for regional initiatives and wetlands and climate change. Summaries of the regional group sessions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1728e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol17/enb1729e.html>.

COP 10 RESOLUTIONS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014: The Strategic Plan (COP10 Doc.8 and DR 1) was first addressed in plenary on Thursday, 30 October, and was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Delegates made various interventions concerning the plan. Pointing to the increase in global demand for food commodities, Thailand recommended integrating national wetland policies and instruments with those on agriculture as well. New Zealand noted potential difficulties in achieving some of the strategic plan's objectives given the timeframe. Chile stressed the need to involve all productive sectors, and cautioned against holding the COP every four years.

India, Kenya and Tanzania called for developing quantifiable parameters for monitoring and evaluation of wetland interventions, adequate scientific databases, guidelines on science-based wetland development, and freshwater and risk management. Switzerland suggested that a mid-term review on the Strategic Plan's progress could be held at COP 11. Sudan welcomed the establishment of National Focal Points (NFPs) for CEPA to strengthen implementation. Guatemala emphasized the need to involve indigenous and local communities in dispute settlements.

On the Convention's financial capacity, Japan emphasized maximizing the use of existing financial resources. During consideration of the revised draft text, Thailand proposed text referring to natural disaster effects on coastal areas and the importance of mangroves in protecting the coastline. The EU and Australia also proposed various editorial changes, which delegates agreed to incorporate, and the resolution was adopted.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 1 Rev.2) contains preambular and operative text as well as an annex outlining: the purpose of the Strategic Plan; history of the Ramsar Convention's strategic planning; implementation of the Convention at the national level; Convention implementation achievements and progress during the 2002-2008 period; and key issues for the Convention's future.

In the resolution, the COP urges parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and communicate progress to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee is also requested to assess progress in implementing the Plan and, with the Secretariat, to conduct a mid-term review of progress and propose adjustments, if necessary, to be submitted to COP 11.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS: Delegates first considered this issue (COP10 DR 2 Rev.1) on Thursday, 30 October. A contact group, chaired by Herb Raffaele (US), was established and met throughout the conference to discuss the details of the budget.

The first draft resolution's annex contained four options: zero nominal growth; three percent increase or zero real growth; four percent increase; and 11.75 percent increase, which would include funding for an additional Secretariat staff member to work on partnerships and fundraising, as well as for increasing capacity for regional initiatives. Parties identified Secretariat staffing levels as a key constraint in effective implementation, in light of an increase in the number of parties, Convention work and wetland sites. Many parties, opposed by Japan and the US, supported the four percent growth option, stressing the need for additional regional technical staff and advocating expansion of regional initiatives. The contact group discussed at length the various budget options, as well as the terms of reference for a newly proposed staff position to coordinate partnerships.

Chair Raffaele reported to plenary on Tuesday morning noting that the revised resolution (COP10 DR 2 Rev.2) was not a consensus document but rather reflected majority views, and that the proposed budget provides for an annual increase of four percent over a four-year period. He explained that the budget provides for a Partnership Coordinator position. African countries expressed their willingness to increase their contributions by 100 percent to CHF 2000 each, and urged others to increase their contributions, as appropriate. Many parties insisted that the budget not negatively affect items pertaining to regional initiatives or the STRP's work. The US supported the zero nominal growth option, but said they would not block the consensus. China expressed dissatisfaction with the allocation of the increased budget, but said it would not block consensus. Raffaele clarified that the increase in funding from African countries was earmarked for the African Regional Center and regional initiatives were not part of the core budget.

Final Resolution: The final text (COP10 DR 2 Rev.2) provides for a four percent increase in the budget, as well as a Partnership Coordinator at the Secretariat to enhance work on building partnerships with other relevant organizations and entities to better implement the Convention. It also requests the Secretary-General to review and assess the performance of the new position and report to the Standing Committee regularly, and to report on the status of the Reserve Fund to the Standing Committee. Finally, it requests parties to support, through voluntary contributions, the West and Central Asia Center celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Convention planned for 2011 in Ramsar, Iran.

The resolution contains annexes on the details of the core budget, the job description of the Partnership Coordinator, and annual contributions to be made by countries.

FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COP, AND OF REGIONAL MEETINGS: Delegates first considered COP10 DR 3, which provides for extending the COP cycle from three to four years, on Friday, 31 October. The resolution provides for regionally rotating meetings of the Standing Committee, the STRP and CEPA. The majority of parties opposed extending the COP cycle, however, Switzerland said extending the interval would allow more time for implementation, but emphasized that additional costs should not be incurred, and also cautioned against taking decisions regionally.

New Zealand opposed the devolution of decision making. Barbados, for the Americas, said extending the interval would require two intersessional regional meetings, and would also inhibit the COP's ability to respond to emerging issues. Samoa, for Oceania, and China said a four-year cycle would incur additional costs and administrative burdens, and reduce international visibility, with China noting that it would send a signal that Ramsar is not important.

Japan proposed deleting paragraphs on the regional rotation of meetings, citing high cost implications, while the US pointed to benefits, including exposure to other regions.

Noting overwhelming opposition to extending the COP cycle, the Secretariat said the issue could be revisited at COP 11, if parties wished. Several parties opposed this, stressing that the matter should be considered closed. The Secretariat suggested that the meeting report would note that the resolution was not adopted, and urge parties to consider hosting Standing Committee meetings, resources permitting, which delegates agreed to.

ESTABLISHING A TRANSITION COMMITTEE OF THE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP: This draft resolution (COP10 DR 4) was adopted on Saturday, 1 November, with an amendment proposed by Ecuador, specifying that each International Organization Partner (IOP) would be represented by one representative in the transition committee.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (COP10 DR 4), the COP: reaffirms the establishment of the Management Working Group on permanent basis; adopts the annexed text of Resolution IX.24 which was revised so as to remove time-limited language.

In the annexed Resolution IX.24, which the COP agrees to maintain, the COP establishes a Management Working Group to examine and review the Convention's management structures and to report back to each COP with recommendations on: improving the terms of reference and/or operating procedures of the Standing Committee, the Subgroup on Finance, the STRP, regional meetings, and the Secretariat; establishing new management structures and strengthening linkages between the parties and the IOPs. Resolution IX.24 also determines the composition of the Management Working Group and instructs it to report regularly to the Standing Committee on progress made and to report its findings to each COP.

FACILITATING THE WORK OF THE RAMSAR SECRETARIAT AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL:

Delegates first considered the legal status of the Ramsar Secretariat, which is currently hosted by IUCN, on Thursday, 30 October. A contact group, co-chaired by Luis Vayas (Ecuador) and Tony Slatyer (Australia) met from Thursday to Monday. The final resolution was adopted by the plenary on Monday, 3 November.

Secretary-General Anada Tiéga outlined activities conducted by the Secretariat on the options for the future, as laid out in a study commissioned by the Secretariat (COP10 Doc.20, Doc. 20 Add.1, Doc. 35 and COP10 DR 5). He noted that the study considers three options: maintaining the current arrangement with IUCN; becoming an independent entity; or seeking UN integration and administration by UNEP.

During the discussion in plenary and in the contact group, delegates focused on exploring and understanding the implications of the three options. Many developing countries, in particular from Africa and Asia, supported option three, with some arguing that formal UN status would best reflect the Convention's growing importance. Several donor countries cautioned against the financial implications of this option, which could lead to a 25 percent increase in the Convention's budget, and called for a careful evaluation of the costs and benefits.

In the contact group, delegates heard presentations by a legal expert regarding implications of UN membership and the Secretariat regarding restrictions arising from the current arrangement. After a detailed exchange of views, the contact group agreed that the issue should be further considered by an *ad hoc* intersessional working group on administrative reform. The contact group then turned to elaborating the objective, terms of reference and calendar of this working group, which were reflected in a newly drafted resolution. This resolution was adopted in plenary without further amendment.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 5 Rev.1, the COP recognizes the urgent need to successfully conclude the consultative process initiated by Resolution IX.20 and that a decision should be taken by COP 11. The COP, *inter alia*:

- asks the Executive Director of UNEP to facilitate the participation of Ramsar staff as representatives of an international treaty at meetings of UNEP and MEA governing bodies to which UNEP provides secretariats;
- requests that the Secretariat seek parties' assistance in facilitating participation of Ramsar Secretariat staff;

- establishes an open-ended *ad hoc* working group (AHWG) to evaluate the success of steps taken and recommend ways of improving Secretariat operations and determine whether the Secretariat should be provided by UNEP; and
- directs the Standing Committee to authorize the Secretariat to implement any recommendations of the AHWG with which it agrees and which can be given effect without a COP decision, and to report to COP 11 its recommendations on the conclusions of the AHWG.

The annexed terms of reference specify the AHWG's objective, work required, work plan, timeframe, composition and funding. The Group is expected to hold its first meeting within three months following COP 10 and to report to the Standing Committee on all work required within 12 months after its first meeting.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES 2009-2012 IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION: Herb Raffaele, Chair of the Standing Committee's Subgroup on Finance, introduced this item (COP10 DR 6), in plenary on Friday, 31 October, observing that regional initiatives present an opportunity to expand the Convention's reach and to work more effectively within regions. A revised draft resolution was adopted on Monday, 3 November.

On political and financial support from contracting parties and other relevant governments in a region, delegates debated specific language and agreed to meet informally to produce revised text. Tanzania and Cameroon stressed the need for a fundraising mechanism to seek funding for regional initiatives in addition to core funding. Australia and Switzerland proposed a standardized reporting format. Samoa and Australia called for a balanced distribution of regional initiatives, and advocated additional funding to support regional initiatives. Several South American parties underlined the need for continuing support for ongoing initiatives in the new triennium.

After informal consultations, facilitated by Hungary, delegates agreed on a revised text authorizing the Standing Committee to examine and approve, in between COP meetings, new initiatives selected from those that fully meet the operational guidelines. Text on the need for support by a host country or intergovernmental organization in order to establish a professional coordinating body or mechanism was also approved, as was a periodic assessment and review process to be coordinated by the Secretariat.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 6, Rev.2, the COP adopts the annexed operational guidelines for regional initiatives and authorizes the Standing Committee to examine and approve selected initiatives that fully meet the operational guidelines listed in the annex. The COP instructs the Secretariat to develop standard formats for annual, financial, and workplan reporting required from the coordinating bodies of regional initiatives under the annexed operational criteria.

The annex consists of operational guidelines 2009-2012 for regional initiatives in the Convention framework on wetlands. The annex outlines: the aim of regional initiatives; coordination between regional initiatives and the Secretariat; governance of initiatives; substantive elements of initiatives; financial and other support; and reporting and evaluation.

OPTIMIZING THE RAMSAR SMALL GRANTS FUND (SGF) DURING THE PERIOD 2009-2012: This issue (COP10 DR 7) was first addressed on Friday, 31 October, and adopted on Monday, 3 November. Delegates emphasized the obligation of developed country parties to make voluntary donations to the SGF, the needs of small island developing states, and monitoring and evaluating projects approved by the SGF. The Republic of Korea committed to donate US\$100,000 to the SGF, and said that contributions to the Ramsar Carbon Offset Fund will finance wetland management in developing countries. Brazil requested that Ramsar Signature Initiatives, once developed, be submitted to COP for approval. Japan called for reference to other international financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which could be an avenue for SGF funding. The draft resolution was adopted in light of the proposed amendments.

Final Resolution: The resolution (COP10 DR 7 Rev.1) calls for more voluntary contributions from developed country parties and an increase in the resource level to CHF 1 million annually. The special case of small island developing states was recognized.

The COP, *inter alia*:

- calls for unfunded project proposals approved for SGF funding to be packaged and made available, including by placing the portfolio on the website;
- encourages all donors unable to make unrestricted voluntary contributions to the SGF to fund specific projects described in the Ramsar Small Projects Portfolio; and
- urges continued development of the Ramsar Signature Initiatives as a mechanism for facilitating regional funding support.

THE CONVENTION'S PROGRAMME ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS (CEPA) 2009-2014: On Friday, 31 October, parties considered the draft resolution on the Convention's Programme on CEPA 2009-2014. Austria suggested a reference to the incorporation of previous CEPA work. On integrating CEPA action plans into policy instruments and programmes, Uganda suggested additional reference to poverty eradication. On Monday, the COP considered and adopted the revised draft resolution with minor amendments.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 8 Rev.1, the COP adopts its third CEPA Programme, which will operate for a six-year period and provide guidance, in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, to parties, the Secretariat, IOPs, other NGOs, community-based organizations, local stakeholders to support the implementation of the Convention at the international, regional, national and local levels.

The resolution: reaffirms the call to parties that have not done so, to nominate Government and NGO Focal Points for wetland CEPA. It also calls upon parties: to formulate, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of their Wetland CEPA Action Plans; to continue or begin to use World Wetlands Day to attract attention to wetland conservation and wise use; and to support the development of established or proposed wetland education centers and related facilities. The resolution instructs the Secretariat to strengthen collaboration with the Biodiversity

Liaison Group, and the CBD's Informal Advisory Committee. The resolution provides an explanation of the terms used in Appendix 1; the roles and responsibilities of the CEPA NFPs in Appendix 2; tracking key actors and implementation of the CEPA Programme in Appendix 3; and possible target groups and stakeholders of the CEPA Programme in Appendix 4.

REFINEMENTS TO THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP):

On Friday, 31 October, STRP Chair Heather MacKay briefed delegates on the proposed refinements to the STRP *modus operandi* (COP10 DR 9). A revised draft resolution was adopted in plenary on Tuesday, 4 November. Revisions were introduced to accommodate requests made by Indonesia, to include experts on socioeconomic issues; and by Brazil, to involve parties directly in STRP decisions on adding emerging issues to its work programme. Australia asked to reflect, in the COP 10 report, its reservation regarding the inclusion of the Antarctic Treaty in the list of STRP observers.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 9 Rev.1, the COP: confirms that the existing STRP *modus operandi* shall, with the annexed refinements, apply for the 2009-2012 period and for subsequent periods unless further amended by COP decisions; agrees that thematic expert members shall be appointed by the STRP Oversight Committee for the STRP's priority areas; agrees that in other areas, the Panel seek additional expertise through various means, including through collaboration with the scientific bodies of other international conventions and agencies; and revises the list of potential STRP observers to include, among many others, the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty; and urges parties to ensure that STRP National Focal Points are appropriately qualified as defined in the appended Terms of Reference.

The annex contains the STRP *modus operandi*, which address, among other issues, key objectives of the *modus operandi*, and establishment and responsibilities of the STRP Oversight Committee.

The appended NFP terms of reference address, among other issues, appointment, function, responsibilities, and obligations of STRP NFPs, including an STRP NFP expertise, skills and capacity profile.

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION:

Draft resolution COP10 DR 10 was first considered in plenary on Friday, 31 October. Plenary adopted a revised draft resolution on Tuesday, 4 November. The discussion focused on the selection of high priority tasks for STRP work. Delegates highlighted tasks relating to guidance for describing wetland ecological character, wetlands and urbanization, poverty reduction, and wetlands and tourism as high priority tasks. The EU proposed reflecting the importance of voluntary contributions in language urging parties, donors, intergovernmental agencies, IOPs and others to use the programme to prioritize their support. Brazil proposed deleting references to tasks on wetlands and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and on biofuels and wetlands.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 10 Rev.1, the COP: approves the high priority actions for STRP work for the 2009-2012 period contained in Annex I as well as the list of tasks contained in Annex II as basis for the STRP's work; urges parties, donors,

intergovernmental agencies, IOPs, national NGOs and others to use the programme, including the costed programme for high priority STRP actions in Annex I, in deciding their priorities for financial and other support towards Ramsar implementation; and urges parties to make voluntary contributions to support the STRP's work programme, particularly for high priority tasks.

Annex I contains a list of high priority tasks for STRP work for the 2009-2012 period, including estimated costs for their delivery. The list consists of 28 tasks, the costs of which are estimated to be CHF 635,000.

Annex II contains a full list of tasks for STRP, which are divided into:

- ongoing STRP functions;
- general wise use of wetlands;
- wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and reporting;
- wetlands and human health;
- wetlands and climate change;
- wetlands and water resource management;
- wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites); and
- wetland management – restoration, mitigation and compensation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND SYNERGIES WITH MEAS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS:

Resolution COP10 DR 11 was first addressed in plenary on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted on Monday, 3 November. During the initial debate, the EU and Australia suggested referring to improved harmonization of reporting requirements.

During Saturday's discussion of the revised text, Australia proposed that evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention should occur at least once during every reporting cycle. The resolution was adopted, subject to the incorporation of accepted amendments.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 11 Rev.1), *inter alia*, addresses: cooperation with relevant conventions and continuing involvement in the Biodiversity Liaison Group; continued collaborating with the CBD; streamlining the 4th Joint Work Programme with the Convention on Migratory Species and the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement; establishing and strengthening partnerships to develop closer working relations with intergovernmental regional groups; and developing closer relationships with financial institutions, such as the GEF, and other funding organizations, such as the European Commission and its relevant divisions.

The resolution further:

- encourages IOP representatives to help increase awareness of the Convention;
- calls for making a special effort to contribute to the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010;
- requests the Secretariat and the STRP to continue cooperating with the CBD, UNEP and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Center in developing a framework for harmonized reporting on implementation on inland waters;
- urges the Secretariat to support the STRP's work in implementing Resolution VIII.26 on developing biological indicators on the results of the Convention's activities, so that the effectiveness of the Convention is evaluated at least once in each reporting cycle; and

- requests that collaboration between the Secretariat and other conventions include a provision for harmonizing reporting needs.

PRINCIPLES FOR PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE RAMSAR CONVENTION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR:

This resolution (COP10 DR 12) was discussed on Friday, 31 October, and on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted in plenary on Tuesday, 4 November. During the discussions, Germany, for the EU, proposed adding reference to the Business and Biodiversity Initiative launched at CBD COP 9. Tanzania called for tripartite partnerships, with the Secretariat providing technical support, and including access and benefit-sharing measures. Delegates also emphasized ensuring proper consultation with parties, the shared responsibility of the business sector in maintaining and managing water resources, and the relationship between tourism development and coastal wetlands.

Regarding the revised text, Germany proposed language inviting concerned business enterprises to consider joining the Business and Biodiversity Initiative. Noting the resolution was too restrictive on business practices, New Zealand, supported by Australia, proposed deleting reference to supplier contracts in preambular text. Brazil proposed adding text on using the background information from the STRP assessment to a paragraph encouraging the business sector to calculate its water footprint and reduce impacts where water is scarce. The resolution was adopted, with amendments.

Final Resolution: This resolution (COP10 DR 12 Rev.2) welcomes the Business and Biodiversity Initiative launched at CBD COP 9, and recognizes the role the business sector plays in managing water resources and reducing the risk of unsustainable environmental management. The resolution further:

- encourages the business sector to understand the linkages between their activities and wetlands ecosystems, to assess the status and trends of wetland conservation, and to understand and appreciate the values of ecosystem services and products on which they rely;
- encourages decision makers to develop and adopt policies, strategies and approaches, according to existing national and international guidelines and standards for ecosystem management, including wetlands that avoid, remedy or offset adverse impacts on wetland ecosystems, including considering benefits that could be derived from the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme and outputs from the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity initiative;
- supports efforts between the Ramsar structures and partners and the business sector in building alliances with scientific and research organizations;
- encourages private and public companies to develop alliances with relevant stakeholders to implement collective agreements and economic incentives, such as payment for those environmental services that contribute to the conservation of wetlands and resources; and
- requests the STRP to assess guidelines, such as those of the Water Footprint Network, that have been developed to support companies assess their water footprint as a part of corporate environmental and social responsibility programmes.

The resolution contains an annex outlining principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.

STATUS OF SITES IN THE RAMSAR LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE:

This issue (COP10 DR 13) was first discussed on Monday, 3 November, and adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. China and Costa Rica requested to be deleted from Annex I, which lists countries from which information sheets or updated sheets are needed as a matter of priority. A number of countries raised issues related to listings of transboundary sites, with some opposing references to bilateral disputes in the report. On Tuesday, delegates discussed a revised text. On the subparagraph addressing the Saemangeum land-claim, the Republic of Korea, in consultation with Korean NGOs, requested that text be added to reflect that the Secretariat be advised of any significant change in the ecological character in the Wetland Protection and Ecosystem Conservation Areas. With this and other amendments, the resolution was adopted.

Final Resolution: The final text (COP10 DR 13 Rev.3) congratulates parties on designating approximately 250 new Ramsar sites since COP 9, and indicates specific sites for which reports have been submitted, noting that steps are being taken to restore the ecological character of these Ramsar sites. The resolution also encourages establishing an International Wetlands Restoration Award to encourage parties to restore degraded wetlands by recognizing and disseminating best practices.

The resolution further, *inter alia*, requests the Secretariat, in conjunction with the STRP's task on redesigning the Montreux Record questionnaire, to consider frequencies of progress reporting by parties, and to allow the Record to be updated before each COP, and requests specific information from individual parties on specific sites regarding changes in ecological character. The resolution also calls for using the most up-to-date format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) in designating new sites, and extending and updating existing sites; and strongly urges parties whose territories contain designated Ramsar sites for which official descriptions still have not been provided, to provide, as a matter of the greatest urgency, RIS and/or maps.

The resolution contains annexes listing: parties from which one or more RIS are needed as a matter of priority; and Ramsar sites in which human-induced negative changes have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur, as indicated in COP 10 national reports.

UPDATED AND STREAMLINED GUIDANCE FOR DATA AND INFORMATION NEEDS; DESCRIBING WETLAND ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER; AND DETECTING, REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE IN WETLAND ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER:

On Saturday, 1 November, delegates considered the three draft resolutions on: updated and streamlined reporting: a framework for data information needs (COP10 DR 14); describing the ecological character of wetlands, and data needs and formats for core inventory: harmonized scientific and technical guidance (COP10 DR 15); and a framework for processes of detecting,

reporting and responding to change in wetland ecological character (COP10 DR 16). Revised draft resolutions were adopted in plenary on Monday, 3 November.

Many parties suggested harmonizing reporting formats with the CBD and Agenda 21, while some countries asked for a simplified format to accommodate limited country capacity and continuity of data collection and analysis. Japan said reporting should not lead to additional financial burdens. The IOPs proposed references to the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool and urged parties to provide funding for continuing the International Waterbirds Census.

Final Resolutions: Resolution COP10 DR 14 Rev.1 provides a framework for Ramsar data and information needs. COP10 DR 15 Rev.1 provides a summary framework of data and information for core inventory, ecological character description, Ramsar site designation and Article 3.2 reporting (reporting change in wetland ecological character). The Framework, proposed in COP10 DR 16 Rev.1, provides detailed instructions for the STRP on developing guidance on mitigation and compensation for losses of wetland areas and wetland issues; and addressed preparation of proposals for updating and expanding existing Ramsar guidance on restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: UPDATED SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:

On Saturday, 1 November, delegates adopted COP10 DR 17, subject to the inclusion of two amendments: one by Africa to include a reference to capacity building; and one by Turkey requesting that parties be “invited” rather than “urged” to include guidance in sustainable development frameworks.

Final Resolution: In this resolution (COP10 DR 17), the COP:

- welcomes the annexed Guidelines on Biodiversity-Inclusive Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Impact Assessment;
- invites parties to use them, as appropriate, including within the frameworks of existing regional initiatives and commitments and in the context of sustainable development;
- urges parties to draw these guidelines to the attention of all relevant stakeholders; and
- instructs the Ramsar Secretariat to disseminate the guidelines, including through amendment and updating of the Ramsar Toolkit of Wise Use Handbooks.

The annex contains the CBD’s Voluntary Guidelines on Biodiversity-Inclusive Environmental Impact Assessment, as adopted by CBD Decision VI/7 (Identification, monitoring, indicators and assessments, 2006), with additional annotations prepared by the Ramsar STRP on specific aspects relating to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.

APPLICATION OF RESPONSE OPTIONS FROM THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT (MA) WITHIN THE RAMSAR WISE USE TOOLKIT: COP10 DR 18 was introduced in plenary on Saturday, 1 November. A revised draft resolution, including additional references to international processes and assessments on biodiversity, was adopted in plenary on Monday, 3 November.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 18 Rev.1, the COP: notes that Decision IX/15 of the CBD COP (Follow-up to the MA) emphasizes the importance of promoting the application of the MA framework, methodologies and findings at national and subnational levels, as appropriate; emphasizes the urgent need for capacity building in this regard; and expresses its awareness of the discussions concerning the establishment of an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services and the International Mechanism for Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity process.

The COP:

- encourages parties to utilize, as appropriate, the MA response options relevant to their implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level;
- encourages the Ramsar Secretariat and parties to collaborate with other MEA secretariats and NFPs in pursuing implementation actions based on the MA outputs and the STRP review of MA response options;
- requests the Secretariat to make the STRP review available to the subsidiary bodies of those MEAs;
- requests the Secretariat, with the advice of the STRP, to incorporate information relevant to MA response options into the appropriate Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks; and
- instructs the STRP, in the context of Resolution VIII.34 (Agriculture wetlands and water resources management), to prepare further advice to parties on the interrelated International Water Management Institute and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture and the UNEP Global Environmental Outlook.

WETLANDS AND RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT: CONSOLIDATED SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:

Delegates first considered this issue (COP10 DR 19) on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted the resolution on Tuesday, 4 November. Debate mainly centered on, among other issues, reference to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention and the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses; including reference to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in valuation and payment for ecosystem services; and whether to use “transboundary” or “shared” in the context of river basins.

On the UNECE Water Convention, the EU proposed disseminating the scientific and guidance to other relevant agreements and the UNECE Water Convention. Switzerland, opposed by Brazil, proposed language inviting the Secretariat to further cooperate with the UNECE Water Convention. Turkey and Brazil, opposed by Germany, requested deleting reference to the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, since it has not yet entered into force. Iraq said this Convention would provide a basis for dispute resolution. During consideration of the revised text, Turkey objected to referring to this Convention where it was cited indirectly and asked for elimination of these references.

On valuation and payment for ecosystem services, Argentina requested language consistent with WTO provisions, while Switzerland clarified that these services do not fall under

WTO provisions. When a revised draft was considered, Costa Rica, supported by Mexico and Switzerland, proposed deleting reference to the WTO. Argentina, supported by Paraguay, proposed reverting to previously accepted language “in accordance with the Convention and other relevant international obligations.” This was opposed by Japan, Germany, Norway and the Russian Federation. The US maintained that it could not support a resolution with embedded references to the WTO. Parties agreed to remove reference to the WTO throughout the resolution. Other reservations will be recorded in the meeting’s report.

The revised draft includes an explanatory note stating that the terms “shared river basins” and “transboundary river basins” are both in wide usage in different parts of the world and used interchangeably to refer to river basins in which groundwater and surface water flows across or between two or more countries. Turkey said it could not accept the explanatory note or reference to the World Commission of Dams report, maintaining that the findings had not been widely accepted.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (COP10 DR 19, Rev.1), the COP invites parties to make use of the consolidated guidance, adapting it to suit national conditions and circumstances; and instructs the STRP to, among other things, review the operative paragraphs of all adopted resolutions concerning water and wetlands interactions and to make recommendations concerning consolidation.

The annex consists of consolidated guidance for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management.

BIOGEOGRAPHIC REGIONALIZATION IN THE APPLICATION OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE: SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:

This resolution (COP10 DR 20) was discussed in plenary on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Indonesia requested that information be made available on all relevant ecosystems and not only on marine ecosystems. The UK, citing issues over references to the Malvinas/Falklands, asked for deletion of the annexed table. The resolution was adopted with this deletion.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 20 Rev.1) requests the STRP, *inter alia*:

- with the Secretariat and Wetlands International, to make available through the Ramsar Sites Information Service digital versions of the Marine Ecoregions of the World biogeographic regionalization schemes, as well as digital versions of relevant terrestrial biogeographic regionalization schemes;
- in collaboration with scientific institutes and conservation organizations, to further investigate the usefulness of existing terrestrial and inland biogeographical regionalization schemes, and to advise parties of any additional bioregionalization schemes that they may apply; and
- to develop methods for assessing the representativeness of wetlands, and to develop guidelines on the identification and designation of Transboundary Ramsar Sites.

The resolution also calls for disseminating the annexed guidelines, which include supplementary guidance on the application of biogeographic regionalization schemes.

GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO THE CONTINUED SPREAD OF HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA H5N1:

This resolution (COP10 DR 21) was first discussed on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted in plenary on Monday, 3 November. During the discussions, Japan proposed language on: disclosing relevant information and information exchange between countries; and strengthening surveillance of waterbirds in their habitats. The EU said such surveillance should be within normal legal frameworks and should minimize impacts on the populations concerned. The US proposed reference to lessons learned and the better management of response practices. Africa asked for language reflecting that avian influenza is not directly caused by waterbirds. Wetlands International, supported by the UK, requested language: stating that wild birds are not automatically assumed to be the source of infection; and on appropriate management responses when infection is confirmed in wetlands.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 21 Rev.1), *inter alia*:

- stresses that surveillance of wild birds should be undertaken within the context of normal legal regulations regarding wildlife and should have minimal impact on the populations concerned;
- strongly encourages parties and other governments to establish emergency response measures involving scientific experts including ornithologists;
- urges national and international governments to work with parties to further develop information for decision makers since collecting and synthesizing data and information on waterbirds and wetlands is critical in preparing risk assessments;
- stresses the need for poultry surveillance programmes to follow international scientific guidance;
- emphasizes the need for improving capacity for surveillance and response strategies where such capacity is not adequate;
- advocates developing integrated communication programmes aimed at promoting balanced understanding and awareness of actual risks and appropriate responses;
- strongly encourages continuing work, resources permitting, of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, identifying issues that lack guidance and collating and synthesizing lessons learned past and current outbreaks; and
- requests the STRP to: determine whether lessons learned from responses have implications for guidance relating to wetlands and their wise use; and consider how best to develop practical guidance on preventing and controlling other diseases of either domestic or wild animals in wetlands.

The resolution contains an annex on Ramsar guidance on responding to the continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, and three appendices on: a scientific summary of HPAI H5N1 and wildlife and conservation considerations; the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds; and terminology.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WATERBIRD FLYWAYS:

Delegates first considered the draft resolution (COP10 DR 22) on Saturday, 1 November, 2008. The revised draft resolution

COP10 DR 22 Rev.1 was adopted on Monday, 3 November, 2008. Several parties proposed reference to the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Waterbirds, while some delegates proposed annexing, to the resolution, the outcome of the International Symposium on East Asian Coastal Wetlands. Africa proposed language on taking into account people's livelihoods and mainstreaming waterbirds into national environmental reporting.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 22 Rev.1) requests the COP to: strongly encourage parties and other governments to actively support and participate in relevant international plans and programmes for the conservation of shared migratory waterbirds and their habitats; urges parties to identify and designate as Ramsar sites all internationally important wetlands for waterbirds on migratory flyways; urges parties, other governments and relevant organizations urgently to enhance their efforts to address the root causes of the continuing decline in waterbird status; and urges the governing bodies of flyway initiatives to share knowledge and expertise on best practices in the development and implementation of flyway-scale waterbird conservation policies and practices.

The annex contains the Edinburgh Declaration, which was adopted at an international conference on waterbirds, their conservation and sustainable use, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 3-8 April 2004. A subsequent annex includes the conclusions from the International Symposium on East Asian Coastal wetlands, held in Changwon, the Republic of Korea on 27 October 2008 on the Importance of Conserving Intertidal Wetlands in the Yellow Sea Ecoregion.

WETLANDS AND HUMAN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: Delegates first considered this issue (COP10 DR 23) on Monday, 3 November. The resolution was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. The EU suggested deleting a disease list arguing that such a list could never be comprehensive. Brazil proposed amending the resolution's title to include sustainable development.

When the revised text was considered, delegates accepted language on information on the scientifically proven contributions that naturally-functioning wetland ecosystems make to good health and well-being, proposed by Ecuador, urging relevant stakeholders to support new and ongoing research on the correlation between wetlands and health.

Parties also accepted additional language on collaborating in assessing the consequences of wetland management measures linked with human health. On links to wetlands and health and actions by the STRP, Venezuela proposed language on conducting studies to reduce pressure on wetlands and assessing the impact on the health of wetlands. The resolution was adopted, incorporating the amendments by Ecuador and Venezuela.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (COP10 DR 23), the COP:

- calls on parties and all those responsible for wetland management to take action to improve the health and well-being of people in harmony with wetland conservation objectives;

- calls upon all those responsible for wetland management to address the causes of declining human health linked with wetlands by maintaining or enhancing existing ecosystem services that can contribute to the prevention of such declines, and to ensure that any disease eradication measures in or around wetlands are undertaken in ways that do not jeopardize the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetlands and their ecosystem services, for example by reducing and more precisely targeting the use of pesticides;
- urges parties to encourage all concerned to strengthen collaboration between the sectors concerned with wetland conservation, within and between governments, NGOs, and the private sector;
- urges parties and development sectors, including mining, other extractive industries, infrastructure development and others, to take all possible steps to avoid direct or indirect effects of their activities on wetlands that would impact negatively on those services of wetlands that support human health and well-being;
- further urges parties to make the interrelationship between wetland ecosystems and human health a key component of national and international policies, plans and strategies;
- encourages those concerned with wetland conservation and management to bring information on the scientifically proven contributions that naturally-functioning wetland ecosystems make to good health and well-being to the attention of national ministries and agencies responsible for health, sanitation, and water supply;
- urges parties, the human health sector, and all relevant stakeholders to collaborate in assessing the consequences of wetland management measures linked with human health, including the identification of appropriate trade-offs in decision-making;
- urges parties to ensure that decision making on co-managing wetlands and human health issues takes into account current understanding of climate change-induced increases in health and disease risk and maintains the capacity of wetlands to adapt to climate change and continue to provide their ecosystem services;
- also urges the wetland authorities in contracting parties, working with their health sector counterparts and others, to be vigilant for the emergence or reemergence of wetland-linked diseases; and
- instructs the STRP, as a high priority, to further investigate the links between wetlands and health.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WETLANDS: Delegates first considered this issue (COP10 DR 24) in plenary on Saturday, 1 November, and in informal discussions chaired by Max Finlayson. The resolution was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Extensive debate centered on the inclusion of references to mitigation and adaptation, prejudging matters currently under consideration in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations, such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of wetlands in mitigating climate change.

The EU suggested reference to: the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation by providing connectivity, corridors and flyways; payments for ecosystem services; and the CBD *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Argentina, Ecuador, China and Brazil requested deleting reference to: maintaining wetland ecological character in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies; and policies for reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries. Extensive debate over references to the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation also continued during informal discussions. One delegate stressed that references to mitigation and adaptation must be consistent with language used in other processes, particularly with regard to respecting the principle of “common by differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” of developed and developing countries. Several delegates also emphasized synergies with other processes, such as the CBD and UNFCCC, and using language already agreed to in these processes. A revised text was then prepared including several options on references to the role of wetlands in mitigation, as well as to land-use change and reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries.

When delegates considered the revised text, Brazil, India, the Philippines and others preferred to delete references to mitigation but to retain those referring to adaptation. El Salvador supported retaining references to mitigation and adaptation, supported by Cuba. Australia maintained that references to mitigation and adaptation in the resolution were appropriate and should therefore be retained.

On the issue of how wetlands deliver a range of services, language was amended to accommodate reference to mitigation and adaptation, as part of the services provided by wetlands rather than standalone options; regarding action by parties on reducing wetland degradation, wise use management of mitigation and adaptation activities was found to be a good compromise, rather than simply mitigation and/or adaptation; coordinating national policies on integrated management, the text was adjusted to reflect mitigation and adaptation as described in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and MA assessment reports.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (COP10 DR 24 Rev.2), the COP:

- calls upon parties to manage wetlands in such a way as to remove existing pressures on them and increase their resilience to climate change and extreme climatic events, and to reduce the impact of flooding and drought in vulnerable countries by promoting wetland and watershed protection and restoration;
- urges parties to ensure that the necessary safeguards and mechanisms are in place to maintain the ecological character of wetlands, particularly with respect to water allocations for wetland ecosystems, in the face of climate driven changes;
- urges parties to take action to minimize degradation, as well as promote restoration, and improve management practices of peatlands and other wetland types that are significant carbon stores, or that have the ability to sequester carbon, and increase the adaptive capacity of society to respond to the changes in these ecosystems due to climate change;

- instructs the Secretariat, the STRP and the Committee for Global Action on Peatlands to strengthen synergies between the Ramsar Convention, UNFCCC and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) with respect to peatland and other wetland conservation and wise use;
- calls on Ramsar Administrative Authorities to provide expert guidance and support, where appropriate, to their respective UNFCCC focal points, within the context of UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.13;
- reaffirms the need for parties to make every effort in the implementation of the UNFCCC and, as appropriate, its Kyoto Protocol, to consider the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands in national climate change mitigation and adaptation policies;
- invites the Executive Secretary of the CBD to include relevant considerations and activities in relation to wetlands, water, biodiversity and climate change as a high priority in the Joint Work Plan (2002-2010) between the CBD and the Ramsar Conventions;
- requests the Ramsar Secretariat and the STRP to work together with relevant international conventions and agencies, including CBD, UNCCD, UNEP, UNDP, FAO and the World Bank, and especially UNFCCC and IPCC, to develop a working partnership to investigate the potential contribution of wetland ecosystems to climate change mitigation and adaptation, in particular for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience to climate change;
- also requests the Secretariat and the STRP to use appropriate mechanisms to work with the UNFCCC and other relevant bodies, recognizing the distinct mandates and independent legal status of each Convention and the need to avoid duplication and promote cost savings, to develop guidance for the development of climate change related activities;
- urges parties and others to make full use of the existing Ramsar guidance on wise use of wetlands (Wise Use Handbooks), much of which is applicable to many of the threats and impacts on wetlands arising from climate change, in developing their policy and management responses relating to climate change; and
- strongly urges STRP National Focal Points to engage in and contribute to this work in order to bring in national and regional issues and expertise from their in-country networks of wetland scientists and other experts.

WETLANDS AND BIOFUELS: Delegates considered COP10 DR 25 in plenary on Saturday, 1 November. An informal group met from 1-4 November, and a revised draft resolution was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November.

Delegates debated references to the positive impacts of biofuels, carbon balances and impacts on carbon storage capacity, and criteria for the sustainable production of biofuels. Over the course of the meeting, the discussion became more focused on the aspects most relevant to wetlands, such as drainage of wetlands for biofuel production and biofuel production on peatlands. After arduous discussions, delegates eventually reached agreement and adopted a resolution that focuses on the wetland-related aspects of biofuel production and places a strong emphasis on further study of benefits and costs

as well as on impacts of biofuel production on different types of wetlands. The text also included compiling and disseminating existing information in this regard.

The initial discussion in plenary addressed, among other issues: referencing the CBD decision on agriculture, biofuels and biodiversity; reducing negative impacts of biofuel production on indigenous communities; reducing production of biofuels that require peatland drainage; sharing responsibility for water management for high-value conservation; and formulating appropriate land-use policies taking into account negative impacts on wetlands.

Australia cautioned against policies for sustainable biofuel production and use that could also constitute artificial trade barriers. Malaysia requested deleting reference to the conversion of peat swamp forests to palm oil production in Southeast Asia. The US proposed deleting language reflecting the food versus biofuel debate, and instead suggested text stating that the growing global demand for food and fuel may lead to pressure to convert wetlands and other threatened ecosystems. Wetlands International advocated taking a precautionary approach toward wetland conversion. An informal working group was established to continue discussions on this issue.

The debate continued in the informal working group, where delegates discussed the draft resolutions paragraph by paragraph. When the discussion was resumed in plenary, views still differed regarding adequate references to: negative impacts, with Brazil requesting deletion of “indirect negative impacts;” drainage and offset measures through wetland restoration; and socioeconomic impacts, with Australia requesting deletion of a reference in that regard. Many interventions were aimed at narrowing the resolution’s scope on aspects relevant to wetland conservation and wise use, and on making references coherent with language used in other processes, such as the UNFCCC and the CBD.

Final Resolution: In COP10 DR 25 Rev.2, the COP:

- acknowledges CBD Decision IX/2 (Agricultural biodiversity: biofuels and biodiversity);
- recognizes the potential contribution of sustainable production and use of biofuels to sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but expresses awareness of potential negative environmental and socioeconomic impacts from unsustainable biofuel production and use;
- recognizes that energy security, economic development and greenhouse gas emissions reduction are urgent global priorities;
- recognizes that the potential positive and negative impacts of biofuel production and use on biodiversity depend, *inter alia*, on the feedstocks used, the mode and place of production, the agricultural practices involved and relevant policies in place; and
- expresses concern that with rising global demand for food and fuel production, potential competing demands for land for food and fuel production may lead to pressure for the conversion of wetlands, wetland conversion risks releasing high levels of greenhouse gases, and wetland conversion driven by biofuel production may not necessarily take into account the full range of ecosystem services provided by wetlands.

The COP also:

- recognizes that biofuel production should be sustainable in relation to wetlands;
- calls upon parties to assess potential impacts, benefits and risks, including drainage, of proposed biofuel crop production schemes affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands; and to seek to avoid negative impacts, and, where such avoidance is not feasible, to apply as far as possible appropriate mitigation and/or compensation/offset actions, for example wetland restoration;
- urges parties to consider formulating appropriate land use policies for the sustainable production of biofuels;
- urges parties to promote sustainable biofuels production and use through strengthened development cooperation, the transfer of technologies and information exchange;
- strongly urges parties to ensure that any policy for biofuel crop production consider the full range and value of ecosystem services and livelihoods provided by wetlands, and the biodiversity they support and to consider trade-offs between these services alongside cost-benefit analysis; and
- instructs the STRP, among other activities, to: review the global distribution of biofuel production in relation to impacts on wetlands; review and collate existing best management practices guidance and social and environmental sustainability appraisals for growing biofuel feedstocks in relation to wetlands, and, where appropriate, develop such guidance and appraisals in collaboration with other international organizations, and work with relevant international bodies dealing with biofuels.

WETLANDS AND EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES: This resolution (COP10 DR 26) was first addressed on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Throughout the conference, informal consultations were held on this issue. On COP10 DR 16, Argentina proposed reference to consistency of wetland ecosystem services evaluation with WTO regulations, but others opposed this reference. On the increasing global demand for resources, Africa suggested distinguishing renewable and non-renewable resources. Regarding a paragraph on engaging the private sector on establishing and/or strengthening corporate social responsibility programmes, and impacts of extractive industries on biodiversity and indigenous peoples and other local communities, the US, supported by New Zealand and Australia, requested inserting language on ensuring accordance with applicable national legislation, and deleting bracketed text on ensuring benefits arising from extractive industrial activities are fairly and equitably shared. With this and other minor amendments, this resolution was adopted.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 26 Rev.2) notes Gabon’s offer to host a regional meeting related to extractive industries in or near wetlands.

The resolution includes paragraphs on:

- ensuring that the full spectrum of activities associated with extractive industries and their impacts on wetlands are adequately addressed;
- considering valuation at an early stage in environmental impact assessments, in a manner consistent and in harmony with the Convention, internationally agreed development

goals and other relevant international obligations, to ensure that the full range of ecosystem services is considered in cost-benefit analyses related to relevant phases of extractive industrial activities;

- ensuring that potential upstream and downstream impacts in river basins are fully considered through ecosystem approaches (including that of the Convention on Biological Diversity);
- reviewing and revising regulatory and permitting procedures to ensure that impacts on wetland ecosystems and their ecosystem services are avoided, remedied or mitigated, and that any unavoidable impacts are sufficiently compensated for in accordance with national legislation;
- considering a precautionary approach when any substantial or irreversible loss of wetland ecosystem services is predicted, and considering compensation in accordance with national legislation;
- taking appropriate measures/actions, including directing extractive activities to already drained peatlands, in order to reduce the environmental impacts of extractive activities on pristine peatlands;
- ensuring that extractive industrial development projects address the need to avoid, remedy or mitigate their impacts, and compensating, in accordance with any applicable national legislation, for the loss of livelihoods that may result from impacts on wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- completing national wetland inventories and collecting baseline information, and seeking ways to ensure early notification of potential new extractive industrial projects, especially those which could affect Ramsar sites;
- avoiding, remedying or mitigating the impacts of extractive industries on biodiversity and indigenous peoples and other local communities associated with wetlands, and ensuring the participation of indigenous and other local communities in consultations related to extractive industrial activities in or near wetland ecosystems on which these communities depend for their livelihoods;
- considering the creation of new wetlands or the improvement of existing wetlands in the post-closure phases of extractive industrial activities; and
- addressing the potential linkages with programmes, projects or directives derived from the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC.

WETLANDS AND URBANIZATION: Delegates discussed and adopted this resolution (COP10 DR 27) in plenary on Saturday, 1 November. Thailand suggested making reference to capacity building and resource mobilization. Venezuela proposed CEPA as a tool for enhancing community participation. The resolution was adopted incorporating these changes.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (COP10 DR 27, Rev.1) the COP: recognizes the role of capacity building in enabling local governments, including municipalities, to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands in urban and peri-urban areas; and emphasizes the value of Ramsar site designations in the vicinity of urban centers as a key contribution to safeguarding important ecosystems against inappropriate urban encroachment.

The COP: urges all parties to pay due attention to the importance of their wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments; urges parties to review the state of their urban and peri-urban wetlands and, where needed, put in place schemes for their restoration and rehabilitation so they can deliver their full range of ecosystem services to people and biodiversity; further urges parties to formulate and implement their land-use planning and management so as to minimize future impacts on urban wetlands and on those currently in peri-urban or rural situations that are vulnerable to urban encroachment; and to support the role of CEPA as a mechanism to involve communities in the sustainable management and conservation of urban and peri-urban wetlands.

The COP also: invites the Ramsar Secretariat to explore ways and means of establishing collaborative links with the UN human settlements programme (UN-HABITAT) concerning the promotion of social and environmental sustainability of towns and cities in relation to wetlands and water; requests parties, through their appointed STRP NFPs, to advise the STRP on issues concerning urban and peri-urban wetlands that would benefit from additional scientific and technical guidance; and instructs the STRP, in the light of this advice, to consider the preparation of guidance for parties on issues specific to urban and peri-urban wetlands.

WETLANDS AND POVERTY ERADICATION: This resolution (COP10 DR 28), initially titled “Wetlands and Poverty Reduction,” was first addressed on Saturday, 1 November, and adopted on Monday, 3 November. Brazil suggested replacing reference to poverty reduction with poverty eradication for consistency with the Millennium Development Goals. Africa proposed including reference to payment for ecosystem services. Japan said establishing early warning systems and contingency plans for disaster risk reduction are beyond the Convention’s scope. The resolution was adopted on Saturday in plenary.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (COP10 DR 28 Rev.1) outlines the: implementation of the framework for action on wetlands and poverty reduction, adopted in Resolution IX.14, and reporting on successes, challenges, constraints and opportunities in achieving action on integrating wetland conservation and poverty eradication, including on the trade-offs that are often necessary in such implementation; and providing examples demonstrating that the wise use of wetland resources by local communities can provide a significant contribution to poverty eradication.

It further urges parties to, *inter alia*:

- integrate wetland wise use and management into relevant national and regional policies;
- respect and incorporate traditional knowledge and practices and local perspectives into national wetland management and sustainable livelihood initiatives;
- ensure that early warning systems and contingency plans established to safeguard people against natural disasters include the use of wetland management and, as appropriate, restoration measures to protect against impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and saline intrusion;
- encourage the introduction of payments for ecosystem services to raise funds for poverty eradication programmes,

including through avoided deforestation and avoided wetland degradation, as well as through private sector partnerships for access and benefit sharing; and

- consider wetland services as economic goods so their use may be included in tax-based economic mechanisms such as user pays, and so that these contribute to national poverty eradication programmes and investment in sustainable wetland management.

The resolution also includes the development of specific guidance on implementing relevant resolutions, including: developing an integrated framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication; identifying and developing indicators relating wetland wise use to livelihoods and poverty eradication; and collating and reviewing examples of how wetland degradation affects people's livelihoods and how maintenance or restoration of the ecological character of wetlands can contribute to poverty alleviation.

CLARIFYING THE FUNCTIONS OF AGENCIES AND RELATED BODIES IMPLEMENTING THE CONVENTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

This resolution (COP10 DR 29) was first addressed on Saturday, 1 November, and was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Brazil, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia proposed text on the interrelationship of responsibilities among different entities at the national level and the Convention's bodies. Africa emphasized capacity-building initiatives in developing tools for NFPs. WWF, on behalf of IOPs, stressed institutional capacity building at the subnational level. The resolution was adopted with minor editorial amendments.

Final Resolution: The final text (COP10 DR 29 Rev.1):

- invites parties to follow the elements provided in the annex, which present different possible areas for implementing the Convention at the national level;
- urges parties for whom implementation occurs significantly through provincial, state or other subnational governments to establish or strengthen mechanisms for involving subnational agencies in the implementation;
- recommends that National Ramsar or National Wetland Committees should include participation by the nominated NFPs for CEPA and for the STRP; and
- encourages the Secretariat in its efforts to develop the necessary tools for the strengthening of NFPs, and welcomes interested donors to support those efforts, especially in developing countries.

The resolution also contains an annex summarizing the general functions of national implementing agencies and related bodies.

SMALL ISLAND STATES AND THE RAMSAR CONVENTION:

On Saturday, 1 November, the COP considered and adopted the draft resolution (COP10 DR 30). The resolution was submitted by the Bahamas, on behalf of the Caribbean countries. In the ensuing discussions, Mauritius proposed reflecting the effects of ecotourism development on coastal wetlands. The resolution received broad support and was adopted without any amendment.

Final Resolution: In the resolution (COP10 DR 30), the COP requests the Secretariat to consider the eligibility of projects in small island states for funding under the SGF, the vulnerability of such states to climate change and loss of wetlands, and to treat such states in a similar manner to small island developing states. The resolution urges contracting parties and proponents or funders of development activities in small island areas to consider their environmental vulnerability through application of the Convention's guidance on vulnerability assessment.

ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY IN RICE PADDIES AS WETLAND SYSTEMS: This draft resolution (COP10 DR 32), submitted by the Republic of Korea and Japan was first considered by delegates on Saturday, 1 November. It was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. Norway and Switzerland, opposed by Brazil, Australia and Paraguay, suggested deleting reference stating that the resolution is not intended to support agricultural policies that are inconsistent with trade-related agreements.

The EU and the International Water Management Institute proposed referencing negative impacts of inappropriate expansion and development of rice paddies on wetland habitats. Thailand suggested that the STRP investigate the impacts of the recent increase in global demand for food commodities. Regarding wise use, Ecuador and Venezuela proposed language on reducing the use of agrochemicals and pesticides, while Australia cautioned against introducing such language. An informal group facilitated by Japan was convened to reach consensus on language.

The US voiced objection to the use of "internationally agreed development goals" in the text affirming the enhancement and maintenance of the ecological and cultural role of rice paddies consistent with internationally accepted development goals.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (COP10 DR 31), the preamble affirms that the focus of the resolution is on the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological and cultural role and value of appropriate rice paddies as wetland systems, consistent and in harmony with the Convention, internationally agreed development goals and other relevant obligations. The COP:

- encourages parties to promote further research on flora, fauna and ecological functions in rice paddies and on the cultures that have evolved within rice-farming communities that have maintained the ecological value of rice paddies as wetland systems, in order to identify sustainable rice paddy farming practices that reinforce wetland conservation objectives and provide ecosystem services;
- invites parties to consider offering recognition and/or protection to such sites through, for example, their designation as Wetlands of International Importance and through mechanisms such as the FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems Programme; and
- further invites parties to disseminate and exchange information on these practices and sites among governments, farmers and conservation agencies, in order to support improvement of sustainable rice farming practices and water management.

The COP calls upon parties to: identify challenges and opportunities associated with managing rice paddies as wetland systems in the context of the wise use of wetlands; and ensure that planning, farming practices and water management are implemented.

THE CHANGWON DECLARATION ON HUMAN WELL-BEING AND WETLANDS: The Republic of Korea presented the Changwon Declaration (COP10 DR 32) in plenary on Saturday, 1 November. The resolution was adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. The EU suggested deleting reference to water as a source of energy production. Africa stressed that the declaration should go beyond transmitting information and translate policies into action. The US proposed to “welcome” or “take note” of the declaration, rather than “adopt” it. The Secretariat confirmed that it would harmonize language to ensure that it is consistent with language agreed in other resolutions.

Final Resolution: In the final declaration (COP10 DR 32 Rev.2), the COP:

- welcomes the “Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands,” as annexed to the resolution;
- strongly urges parties and other governments to bring the Changwon Declaration to the attention of their heads of state, parliaments, private sector and civil society, and to encourage them, and all the government sectors and agencies responsible for activities affecting wetlands to respond to the call for action for wetlands embodied in the Declaration;
- strongly urges parties and other governments to utilize the Changwon Declaration to inform their national policies and decision making, including in the positions of their national delegations to other external processes, and through specific opportunities at local, national and international levels where the Ramsar Convention and other processes have good potential for mutual assistance and collaboration, including, *inter alia*, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, UN agencies, MEAs, and the World Water Forum, and requests the Secretariat to prepare advice on relevant action opportunities in support of this;
- further urges the Standing Committee, the STRP, the Ramsar Secretariat, CEPA NFPs, regional initiatives, the IOPs and others to utilize the Changwon Declaration in their future work and establishment of priorities and actively to promote the Declaration;
- instructs the Ramsar Secretariat and Standing Committee to develop and include indicators in the National Report Format for COP 11 concerning the dissemination, uptake and impact of the Changwon Declaration and to report on this to parties and others, noting that in some cases, indicators related to the Strategic Plan may also be relevant as indicators for the Changwon Declaration; and
- requests the Standing Committee, the STRP, CEPA NFPs, regional initiatives, the IOPs, and other interested parties to advise the Secretariat on their experiences of the uptake of the Declaration and inform COP11.

The Declaration contains an annex that explains where the Declaration comes from, and what it means in practice.

THANKS TO THE HOST COUNTRY, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: This resolution (COP10 DR 33) was introduced and adopted on Tuesday, 4 November. The resolution, *inter alia*, expresses gratitude to His Excellency Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea, for his outstanding commitment to and support for wetland conservation, and thanks: the Korean Government, in particular the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, for its preparations; the Gyeongnam Province for its hospitality; the mayor and people of Changwon City; and the many volunteers. It furthermore commends the Republic of Korea’s support for the Ramsar Convention and wetland conservation and wise use, and welcomes the plan to inaugurate the Ramsar Regional Center for East Asia.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary convened at 5:50 pm on Tuesday, 4 November. Delegates elected the following parties as regional representatives to serve on the Standing Committee for three years: Nigeria, Cameroon, Tanzania, Mauritius and Tunisia, for Africa; China, Lebanon and Thailand, for Asia; Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland and Georgia, for Europe; Jamaica, Panama and Paraguay, for the Neotropics; Mexico, for North America; and the Marshall Islands, for Oceania. Tunisia was elected provisionally for Africa pending the accession of Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia and Zimbabwe to the Convention. The Committee will be chaired by the Republic of Korea, holding the COP 10 presidency. Tanzania and Paraguay were elected as Vice Presidents.

The UK announced that it was contributing CHF 25,000 to support a joint project between the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and Ramsar to review the impacts of extractive industries on wetlands and prepare best practice guidance to the extractive industries sector. He also said another CHF 25,000 is expected to be contributed to the proposed STRP project to look at indicators of effectiveness of the Convention. Hungary announced a CHF 10,000 contribution to support the SGF.

Romania offered to host COP 11 in the first half of 2012, which was approved by acclamation. Uruguay signaled its intention to host COP 12, saying that no COP has ever been held in South America. Many countries and regions expressed their gratitude and paid tribute to the Republic of Korea and the city of Changwon for hosting COP 10.

Wetlands International, speaking for the IOPs, welcomed the Republic of Korea’s efforts to conserve intertidal wetlands as well as the flyway resolution, but expressed concern over ongoing reclamation in the Yellow Sea. She said the focus on water, human health and poverty would be important during the next triennium. She expressed concern that some resolutions were weakened in order to reach consensus, particularly on climate change, noting this does not represent an integrated cross-sectoral approach to solving problems or in helping to ensure that wetlands are at the heart of UNFCCC negotiations. Morocco, on behalf of Arabic speaking countries, proposed establishing a working group aimed at ensuring inclusion of Arabic as an official Ramsar working language for COP 11.

The Korean Ramsar NGO Network noted the role of smaller NGOs, in particular, in achieving the wise use of wetlands, despite lack of support and resources. Noting their underrepresentation in the Ramsar process, he said a World Wetlands Network would be established as a communication tool aimed at: facilitating and coordinating prior to COPs; creating an international platform; facilitating technical information exchange; and establishing a working group on specific issues related to the wise use of wetlands. He said he hoped that this network would allow NGOs to have a stronger voice in the COPs and on wetlands issues in general.

Secretary-General Anada Tiéga presented Clayton Rubec, Canada, with a certificate designating him as a “Wetland Person of International Importance” for his long standing service to the Convention. Delegates then adopted the meeting report, subject to the incorporation of editorial amendments.

COP10 President Lee Maanee, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, noted that all 32 resolutions were adopted during COP 10. He reminded participants that a great deal of effort had been put into drafting, negotiating and agreeing on the adopted resolutions, and stressed that greater and concerted efforts will be needed to implement the Strategic Plan 2009-2012.

COP10 President Lee Maanee congratulated participants on a successful COP, noting that the Republic of Korea will continue to support the development of the Convention, including increasing funding during the next triennium, and called upon all parties and IOPs to implement the Changwon Declaration. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 7:06 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF RAMSAR COP 10

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”, the main theme of COP 10 brought to the discussion table the vital link between wetlands, livelihoods and the well-being of people. Since its adoption 37 years ago, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, its official name, has undergone remarkable changes in scope and scale. From a narrowly focused Convention on the conservation and wise use of wetlands primarily as a habitat for waterbirds to a more comprehensive one, the Convention has broadened its scope of implementation to cover a broad range of wetland-related issues, including not only human health, but also climate change, biofuels and poverty reduction – issues that figure high on the global agenda and have recently led to controversial discussions in related processes, such as the CBD and the UNFCCC. Managing growth – in focus and scale – must be done in such a way that does not lose focus of the Convention’s core and does not push too far into the mandate of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and fora.

During the last triennium, membership of the Convention has increased from 146 contracting parties to 158, and the number of Ramsar sites has increased more than 1800. COP 10, the second COP held in Asia, was the largest Ramsar Convention meeting ever with over 2000 environment experts and policy makers from 165 countries, international bodies, NGOs and media participating.

Not surprisingly, the growth in scope and scale is leading to “growing pains” as the Convention outgrows its institutional structure, confronting parties with a number of key decisions that will determine the Convention’s future development. This brief analysis focuses on the challenges that have arisen at COP10, most notably connected to issues of institutional reform and emerging issues such as climate change, biofuels, food security and human well-being.

SCALING UP AND BRANCHING OUT

In his opening statement via video, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that the Ramsar Convention has never been more important, referring to its role in safeguarding the provision of ecosystem services and goods for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As the Convention scales up, maintaining the existing global consensus on wetland-related issues will require greater effort and guidance from the Convention’s Standing Committee and its Scientific and Technical Review Panel, as well as engagement from the Ramsar national Administrative Authorities in building partnerships at local, national and regional levels. This will add pressure on the existing limited human capacity and financial resources of the Secretariat to support implementation of the Convention.

Throughout COP 10, Secretary-General Ananda Tiéga did not shy away from stressing that wetlands in the world still receive less attention than they deserve. Although many would not dispute the need to enhance the Convention’s profile, there was a patent uneasiness expressed by parties in scaling up too quickly and branching out into areas under the mandate of other biodiversity-related conventions or the UNFCCC. In its third Strategic Plan (2009-2014), adopted at COP10, the five general objectives relating to wise use of wetlands, development of the Ramsar List, international cooperation, implementation capacity and membership in the Convention, are now more tightly focused – across 26 priority strategies – compared to the previous triennium.

Given the fact that existing Secretariat arrangements are not ideal to deal with the increasing number of Ramsar sites and that the profile of the Convention needs to be raised, the first few days of COP10 were permeated by discussions on the legal status of the Secretariat with considerations on whether to upgrade from the current situation with IUCN and the Swiss host government, to become an independent international organization, or to become a secretariat administered by a UN organization/body, in particular UNEP. In the coming months, parties, through the open-ended *ad hoc* working group established at COP10, will have to evaluate the legal and financial implications of each option. In changing the Convention’s status, flexibility and independence may be at risk. Often, UN conventions are tied up to rigid rules and guidelines that need to be respected. For instance, the unique relationship with the International Organization Partners will have to be reexamined under the proposed legal and administrative reform, since under the current structure IOPs are considered to be full partners in all aspects of the Convention’s work. Potential financial implications from changing the legal status of the Secretariat will also be scrutinized by many parties, in particular

major donors such as Japan, the US and the EU, who foresee that their contributions would go up. On other hand, developing countries favored integration into the UN system.

With a modest budget compared to other MEAs, some delegates still struggled with the threat that regional initiatives under the Convention may suffer if voluntary contributions are not forthcoming. The decision of African parties to voluntarily increase their annual contributions by 100 percent, earmarked under African Regional Initiatives, was welcomed as a positive signal of the growing relevance of the Convention, even if symbolically.

Given its financial limitations, it is clear that the Convention is actively exploring innovative ideas to attract additional funding, including the designation of a partnership coordinator. Many expect that the restructuring of the Small Grants Fund (SGF) will broaden the current spectrum of potential donors, since they will now be allowed to select projects under the Small Projects Portfolio on the Convention's website, which was not possible before.

WETLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION: AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH?

The final two days of COP 10 were marked by protracted and difficult negotiations in the informal groups on the issues of wetlands and climate change, and wetlands and biofuels.

The COP 10 resolution on climate change was drafted in line with the findings of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. Some parties resisted the draft resolution, leading some delegates to ponder whether a discussion on climate change and biofuels would be possible without getting bogged down over questions of "duplication" between the Ramsar Convention, the UNFCCC and the CBD. Suggestions to references to climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, including policies for reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries were not well received by some parties, who stressed that the issue is currently being dealt under the UNFCCC and any decision could prejudice the decisions in that forum. Developing countries maintained their solidarity, ensuring that any compromise did not jeopardize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Due to their high vulnerability to climate change risk factors, small island states strove to maintain explicit references to adaptation and mitigation. One delegate lamented the lost opportunity to make the Convention more visible and effective at the global level, noting that, in the coming years, parties will reflect on the missed opportunity in Changwon to ensure that wetlands are at the heart of the UNFCCC deliberations.

Despite developments achieved during the past triennium in the understanding of climate change impacts and the roles of wetlands in climate mitigation and adaptation, COP 10 reflected the eternal debate about the role of wetlands in mitigation and its inconvenient truth, as some parties disputed the mitigation potential of peatlands restoration, indicating that the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report is inconclusive. One delegate noted that "we need to avoid ill-advised climate mitigation measures on peatlands." In the end, the resolution calls for additional research and information sharing, and to utilize peatlands to showcase

communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) activities for implementation of the Convention in the context of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Nevertheless, the relevance of peatlands in water resource management is not denied, with its occurrence in 180 countries, covering 400 million hectares or three percent of the world's surface. Research concluded by the global Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change demonstrates that reducing emissions through wetland protection and restoration may potentially become the next major issue and will potentially elevate the profile of these neglected ecosystems. This assessment concludes that degradation of peatlands, through drainage, fire and unsustainable exploitation, is a major and growing source of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and estimated to be more than 10 percent of the global fossil fuel emissions.

Despite setbacks, the debate on wetlands and biofuels acknowledged that biofuel crops may increase water scarcity and pressure on wetlands and biodiversity. The debate on wetlands and biofuels resembled previous debates on biofuels in other processes with parties clashing over references to: positive impacts of biofuels, carbon balances and impacts on carbon storage capacity, and criteria for the sustainable production of biofuels.

Broad recognition that the hasty development of wetlands can cause even more environmental and financial damage to people's livelihoods is a significant advance. Interestingly, keeping a narrow focus on wetlands allowed the COP to adopt a resolution with specific references to the impacts of biofuels and the potential of wise use of wetlands to food security, human health and poverty, which even exceed those adopted under the CBD, for example. As the Convention delves into more controversial issues, the possibility of avoiding red tape, as witnessed in other processes, and of not becoming politicized is reduced.

ON THE ROAD TO ROMANIA

While the Convention's membership and number of Ramsar sites are increasing, the Secretariat's capacity to respond to the emerging demand is not growing at the same pace. In the next triennium, the Convention and its parties should focus on the development of partnerships, public awareness, capacity building and collaboration with other MEAs, which are instrumental for effective implementation.

Ramsar's principles for partnerships with the business sector will allow the development of further mutually beneficial partnerships. The partnership with the Danone and Evian Group, for instance, has contributed to the outreach work of the Convention during the past ten years and the partnership with the Star Alliance network promises to grow.

Looking ahead to Romania, one of the biggest challenges will be to ensure that parties put in place the appropriate mechanisms to effectively implement the Convention at the national level. Currently, only four parties have developed CEPA Action Plans, while 80 percent of parties have designated their Government CEPA National Focal Points. In addition, the newly adopted CEPA programme is expected to reinforce regional and joint-initiatives by allowing the exchange of information and best

practices on wetland management, adequate monitoring of the Convention and identification of priorities at the national level. Joint initiatives on climate change and wetlands mitigation and adaptation are the best option available to establish a formal link between the Ramsar Convention and relevant international conventions and agencies, such as the UNFCCC and the IPCC, the biodiversity-related Conventions, UNDP, FAO and the World Bank.

Prior to COP11 in Romania, other international fora such as the Climate Change Conferences in Poznan 2008 and Copenhagen 2009, and the CBD COP 10 in Japan in 2010, when the 2010 target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss will be reexamined, should be watched closely as their deliberations will have a significant impact on the future of the Ramsar Convention.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO TEHRAN CONVENTION: This meeting will be held from 10-12 November 2008, in Tehran, Iran. For more information, contact: Caspian Sea Environment; tel: +98-21-22059574; 9821-22042285; fax: +98-21-22051850; e-mail: cep.pcu@undp.org; internet: <http://www.caspianenvironment.org/Newsite/Calendar.htm>

SECOND INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON WATER AND FOOD 2008: This forum will be held from 10-14 November 2008, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. For more information contact: Challenge Program on Water and Food Secretariat; tel: +94-11-278-4083, 288-0000 (General); e-mail: cpwfsecretariat@cgiar.org; internet: <http://www.ifwf2.org/>

FIRST MEETING OF THE CBD AHTEG ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: This meeting will be held from 17-21 November 2008, in London, England. This meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change is being organized by the CBD Secretariat. It will address scientific and technical matters concerning the links between biodiversity and climate change with regards to identifying risks and vulnerabilities, and impacts and opportunities from climate change mitigation. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-BDCC-01>

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE WATER-ENERGY NEXUS: This symposium will be held from 26-28 November 2008, in Paris, France. This symposium is being held within the framework of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, in collaboration with UNESCO's Renewable Energy Programme, and is being organized by the non-profit association RED-Ethique. The meeting is also a preparatory event to the Fifth World Water Forum, which will take place in Istanbul in March 2009. For more information, contact: Symposium Secretariat; tel: +33(0)1-42-19-14-77; fax: +33(0)1-42-19-13-34; e-mail: valerie-anne.kodjovi@developpement-durable.gouv.fr; internet: <http://www.ancold.org.au/images/Pre%20registration%20paris%20november%202008.pdf>

GEO TUNIS 2008: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE WITH GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS, SCIENCE AND SPACE TECHNOLOGIES: This meeting will be held from 26-28 November 2008, in Tunis, Tunisia. This symposium will consider, *inter alia*, water resources sustainability, particularly the collection, storage and management of rainwater and tributaries; optimization of implantation sites for construction of dams; process hydrological modeling and spatial technologies; and sustainability of water resources in arid environments. For more information, contact: Mohamed Ayari; tel: +216-71-341-814; fax: +216-71-341-814; e-mail: atigeo_num@yahoo.fr; internet: http://www.geotunis.org/version_ang/index.php

NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS COP 9): This meeting will be held from 1-5 December 2008, in Rome, Italy. COP 9 will be preceded by the 15th meeting of the CMS Scientific Council (27-28 November), a meeting of the Steering Committee of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (28-30 November), the first Meeting of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement (29 November), a meeting on arid land mammals (30 November) and the 34th meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (30 November). The second meeting on international cooperation on migratory sharks will be held from 6-8 December 2008, immediately following the COP. For more information, contact: CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2426; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: secretariat@cms.int; internet: http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9_meeting_docs.htm

FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC (COP 14) AND FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (COP/MOP 4): UNFCCC COP 14 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 4 are scheduled to take place from 1-12 December 2008 in Poznan, Poland. These meetings will coincide with the 29th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies and the fourth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the resumed sixth session of the AWG on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol (AWG-KP). For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://unfccc.int>

FAO HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WATER FOR AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY IN AFRICA: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE: This meeting will take place from 15-17 December 2008, in Sirte, Libya. The purpose of this conference will be to address the availability of water resources in Africa under the circumstances of increased demand by the agricultural and energy sectors and in the context of changing climatic conditions. The conference will analyze the present situation and needs, in terms of water for agriculture and energy, and the potential, the costs and the sources of financing, with a view to proposing to Heads of State and Government, the policies, strategies and programmes for effective use and management of water resources. For more information, contact:

FAO Water; tel: +39-06-57051; fax: +39-06-570-53152;
e-mail: Sirtewater-Secretariat@fao.org; internet: <http://www.sirtewaterandenergy.org/>

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE: GLOBAL RISKS, CHALLENGES AND DECISIONS: The meeting will be held from 10-12 March 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark, and will include a session on "Adapting Coastal Zone and Marine Recourses to Climate Change." The Congress is being organized by the University of Copenhagen in cooperation with the partners in the International Alliance of Research Universities. As part of the run-up to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009, it aims to provide a synthesis of existing and emerging scientific knowledge necessary in order to make decisions concerning the application of mitigation and adaptation strategies in response to climate change. For more information, contact: Torben Mandrup Timmermann; tel: +45-35324106; e-mail: tmti@adm.ku.dk; internet: <http://climatecongress.ku.dk/>

FIFTH WORLD WATER FORUM: This forum will be held from 15-22 March 2009, in Istanbul, Turkey. Organized every three years by the World Water Council, in collaboration with the authorities of the host country, this is the largest international event in the field of water. The main theme of the fifth forum will be "Bridging Divides for Water." For more information, contact: World Water Council Secretariat; tel: +33-4-91-99-41-00; fax: +33-4-91-99-41-01; e-mail: m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org; internet: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=6>

FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: This meeting will be held from 30 November - 11 December 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark. These meetings will coincide with the 31st meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. Under the "roadmap" agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, COP 15 and COP/MOP 5 are expected to finalize an agreement on a framework for combating climate change post-2012 (when the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period ends). For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://unfccc.int/>

CBD COP 10: This meeting will be held from 18-29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is expected to assess achievement of the 2010 target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss, adopt an international regime on access and benefit-sharing and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010. The High-level Segment will be held from 27-29 October. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

RAMSAR COP 11: Ramsar COP 11 will be held in Romania during the first half of 2012. For more information, please contact: Ramsar Secretariat; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax: +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org; internet: <http://www.ramsar.org>

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEPA	Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IOPS	International Organization Partners
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
NFP	National Focal Point
RIS	Ramsar Information Services
SGF	Small Grants Fund
STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WTO	World Trade Organization