

"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link" 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999



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Note: Annex I shows the draft resolution and recommendation numbers referred to in the Plenary notes alongside their final Resolution and Recommendation numbers after adoption.

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Greece: Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works
Netherlands: Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Costa Rica
Spain: Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), and the Biodiversity Foundation,
Ministry of Environment

Switzerland: Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape United States: Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of Interior), and Department of State

> IUCN-The World Conservation Union The Nature Conservancy World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Banco de Costa Rica Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE)

Conservation and Development Project in Arenal (Costa Rica-Canada Agreement)

COSEFORMA Project

Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT)

EBI of Costa Rica

Esquinas Rainforest Lodge

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National Chamber of Tourism

Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS)

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The National Parks Foundation

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Australia: Ministry of Environment

Austria: Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family

Belgium: Ministry of the Walloon Region

Canada: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Denmark: Danish Cooperation for Environment in Eastern Europe (DANCEE) and Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED), Danish Agency for

Environmental Protection

Finland: Department of Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

France: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Physical Planning and the Environment

Germany: Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Hungary: Ministry for Environment

Italy: Nature Conservation Service, Ministry of Environment

Japan: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Norway: Directorate of Nature Management

Portugal: Nature Conservation Institute, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

Sweden: Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)

Switzerland: Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape

UNESCO: World Heritage Centre

United Kingdom: Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

List of Contracting Parties in attendance at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

Albania Egypt Madagascar

Algeria El Salvador Malaysia

Argentina Estonia Mali

Armenia Finland Malta

Australia France Mauritania

Austria Gabon Mexico

Bahamas Gambia Monaco

Bangladesh Georgia Mongolia

Belgium Germany Morocco

Belize Ghana Namibia

Bolivia Greece Nepal

Botswana Guatemala Netherlands

Brazil Guinea New Zealand

Bulgaria Guinea-Bissau Nicaragua

Burkina Faso Honduras Niger

Canada Hungary Norway

Chad Iceland Pakistan

Chile India Panama

China Indonesia Papua New Guinea

Colombia Iran, Islamic Republic of Paraguay

Comoros Ireland Peru

Congo Israel Philippines

Congo, Democratic Italy Poland

Republic of Jamaica Portugal

Japan Republic of Korea

Côte d'Ivoire Jordan Romania

Croatia Kenya Russian Federation

Czech Republic
Latvia Senegal

Denmark
Lithuania Slovak Republic

Ecuador

Costa Rica

Slovenia

Thailand

South Africa

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Spain

Togo

Sri Lanka

Trinidad & Tobago

Suriname

Tunisia

Sweden Switzerland

Turkey Uganda

Syrian Arab Republic

Ukraine

United Kingdom

United States of America

Uruguay

Venezuela

Viet Nam

Zambia

Notes on the First Plenary Session

10 May 1999, 10.00-18.30

Agenda Items I/II: Opening Ceremony

- 1. Mr. Delmar Blasco, Secretary General of the Convention, welcomed the participants. A message was delivered by Mr Jonathan A. Kusi on behalf of Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director General of UNESCO, the Depositary of the Convention on Wetlands. Dr Maritta R. von Bieberstein Koch-Weser, Director General of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, made a welcoming and policy statement on behalf of the four International NGO Partners of the Convention: BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, and WWF International.
- 2. Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, Second Vice President of the Republic and Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, delivered a welcoming statement.
- 3. The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards were presented by the President of Costa Rica and the Minister of Environment and Energy. The Evian Special Prize that accompanied the Ramsar Award was handed over by the Director General of the Evian Mineral Waters Company, Mr Yves Buchsenschutz. The Awards were presented to:
 - Professor Vitaly G. Krivenko, Russian Federation
 - Sr Victor Pulido, Peru
 - Lake Naivasha Riparian Association, Kenya
 - Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
 - Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Canada
- 4. The 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention was officially opened by Dr Miguel Ángel Rodríguez E., President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Agenda Item III: Adoption of the Agenda

- 5. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee called for a moment of silence for a dear colleague and extraordinary gentlemen, Mr Cyril de Klemm, who passed away on the first of April, 1999. The Chairperson described him as a valued advisor to the Convention for many years who had contributed a great deal to the development of the treaty. He will be remembered as a person of vision and wisdom who will be greatly missed by the Convention.
- 6. The Agenda, circulated as Ramsar COP7 DOC. 1 Rev.2, was adopted by consensus.

Agenda Item IV: Rules of Procedure

7. Following Resolution VI.15 of the 6th COP, the revised Rules of Procedure were circulated as Ramsar COP7 DOC. 2. After comments and proposals for amendments from Brazil,

China, Congo, Egypt, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, the Rules of Procedure were adopted by consensus with Rule 1 and Rule 56 modified as follows:

Rule 1

These rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) convened in accordance with article 6 of the Convention, subject to their adoption by consensus at the start of each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Rule 56

These rules of procedure shall apply immediately after their adoption.

Agenda Item V: Election of the President and Vice-Presidents

- 8. Following the recommendation of the Conference Committee, Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, was elected as President of COP7, and the Hon. Kezimbira Miyingo of Uganda and Mr Veit Koester of Denmark were elected as Vice-Presidents by acclamation.
- 9. **Special Intervention 1:**

Dr Franklin Chang Díaz, American/Costa Rican astronaut, made a special presentation on "Water seen from space".

10. Special Intervention 2:

A new video entitled "The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands" was screened and the Secretary General informed the Contracting Parties that copies in either English, French or Spanish would be sent to them in the coming months.

Agenda Item VI: Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees

11. Following the recommendation of the Conference Committee, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Mongolia, Switzerland, and Togo were elected to the Credentials Committee by consensus.

Agenda Item VII: Admission of Observers

- 12. The observers listed in Annex I of COP7 DOC. 3 were admitted by consensus.
- 13. Argentina requested that its reservation over the admission of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum be minuted.

Agenda Item VIII a): Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee

14. Ms Louis Lakos (Hungary), Chairperson of the Standing Committee, introduced her report on the work of the Standing Committee during the past triennium.

Agenda Item VIII b): Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

15. In the absence of the Chairperson of the STRP, Dr. Yaa Ntiamoa-Baidu, the STRP member for Asia, Dr Makoto Komoda (Japan), presented the report.

16. Special Intervention 3:

Lord Enniskillen, Chairman of the Lake Naivasha Riparian Association (Kenya), presented "People and Wetlands – the vital link".

Agenda Item IX: Report of the Secretary General

17. The Secretary General presented his report on developments under the Convention and on the activities of the Ramsar Bureau, the Convention's Secretariat, during the past triennium.

18. Special Intervention 4:

Ms Yolande Kakabadse, Minister of Environment of Ecuador and President of IUCN – The World Conservation Union, delivered a message from the 13th Global Biodiversity Forum which met on 7-9 May 1999, in San José, immediately preceding Ramsar COP7.

19. Special Intervention 5:

Ms. Melissa Marín C., Amigos de la Tierra (Costa Rica), delivered a message from the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Communities and Indigenous People, which immediately preceded Ramsar COP7 in San José.

Notes on the Second Plenary Session

11 May 1999, 09.30-18.30

20. Special Intervention 6:

Dr Robert T. Watson, Director of the Environment Department at the World Bank, presented "The World Bank's efforts to internalize the environment into the development process, with particular reference to wetland ecosystems".

Agenda Item X: Review of the Implementation of the Convention in each region

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the African Region

- 21. The Regional Coordinator for Africa at the Ramsar Bureau presented the overview for the African Region.
- 22. Delegates making interventions congratulated the Government of Costa Rica for its generosity in hosting the COP and thanked the Government for its kind hospitality. They also thanked the Ramsar Bureau for its work in preparing the documents, its assistance in organizing the meeting and for facilitating the funding of certain delegates to the COP. The Regional Coordinator was thanked for his thorough report.
- 23. Interventions were made by Algeria, Austria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Germany (as Regional Representative for Western Europe), Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kalahari Conservation Society, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Wetlands International, WWF, and Zambia, covering

such issues as the designation of new Ramsar sites, the significance of donor support in implementing the Strategic Plan, the importance of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, problems of invasive species, the need for training courses, non-payment of contributions by Contracting Parties, the important impact of socio-political problems on wetlands, and the critical role of NGOs in the region.

24. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Eastern European Region and in the Western European Region

- 25. The Regional Coordinator for Europe at the Ramsar Bureau presented the Overview for Western and Eastern Europe.
- 26. The Deputy Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Secretary General, informed the meeting that the Regional Coordinator for Europe, Mr Tim Jones, will be leaving the Ramsar Bureau soon after the COP; he thanked him for his many years of dedicated work for the Convention.

27. Special Intervention 7:

Mr Bruno Julien, representative of the European Commission, presented "Protection of sensitive areas in the European Union- a contribution to the Ramsar Convention".

- 28. The delegates making interventions congratulated the Government of Costa Rica for its generosity in hosting the COP and thanked the Government for its kind hospitality. They also thanked the Ramsar Bureau for its work in preparing the documents and its assistance in organizing the meeting. Many delegates especially thanked Mr Tim Jones for his outstanding work within the two regions over many years and wished him well in his future career.
- 29. Interventions on the overview were made by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Wetlands International, and WWF, on such issues as new Ramsar sites, wetland restoration commitments, the importance of a more regional approach to development of wetland policies, the significance of bilateral cooperation, development of national strategies, removal of sites from the Montreux Record, and the under-representation of semi-wet grasslands in the Ramsar List.
- 30. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.
- 31. Croatia and Slovenia registered their objection to the inclusion of the National Report of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Overview since it was not yet resolved whether it should be considered a Contracting Party to the Convention.
- 32. Spain informed the meeting that, on May 7, the Spanish Government's Cabinet agreed to offer to host the 8th Conference of the Parties in 2002.

33. The Regional Coordinator for Europe said that he felt honoured and privileged to have worked with the Convention and Contracting Parties over many years and in various capacities. He wished them all the best in their future work on wetland conservation and wise use and thanked them for their kind words.

34. Special Intervention 8:

Dr Geoffrey Howard, Programme Coordinator, IUCN East Africa Regional Office presented "Invasive species and wetlands".

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Neotropical Region

- 35. The Secretary General stated that the Regional Coordinator for the Neotropics, Dr Montserrat Carbonnell, left the Ramsar Bureau at the end of 1998, and he recorded his thanks to her for the fine work she had done for the Convention. He noted that Mr Néstor Windevoxhel had been brought in as a Special Advisor to the Bureau for the COP and that the Bureau was very grateful to his organization, PROARCA/COSTAS, for allowing him to fulfill this function.
- 36. The Special Advisor to the Neotropical Region presented the overview of the Neotropical Region.

37. Special Intervention 9:

Ing. Dimas Arcia, Sub-Administrator General, Panamanian National Authority of the Environment, presented the initiative to establish a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere in Panama.

- 38. Interventions were made by Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Organization of American States, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, and WWF, on a range of issues such as evaluation of National Wetland Plans and their implementation, designation of new Ramsar sites, the role of appropriate legislation in improving wetland management strategies, encouraging full membership of the Convention in the Caribbean, inventoring of invasive species, and the significance of the Wetlands for the Future initiative and the Ramsar SGF in funding wetland conservation in the region.
- 39. Delegates making interventions thanked the Government of Costa Rica for hosting COP7 and the Bureau for its preparation of the documents and role in organizing the conference. Many delegates expressed their great appreciation for the work of Dr. Montserrat Carbonnell in the Region.

40. Special Intervention 10:

Dr Jorge Jiménez Ramón, Organization of Tropical Studies, presented "Wetland conservation and sustainable use in Costa Rica".

41. Special Intervention 11:

Mrs Geke Faber, State Secretary for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, The Netherlands, delivered a statement to the plenary.

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the North American Region

- 42. The Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention presented the overview for the North American region.
- 43. Delegates making interventions thanked the Government of Costa Rica for hosting COP7, the Bureau for its preparation of the documents and role in organizing the conference, and the Deputy Secretary General for his preparation and delivery of the overview.
- 44. Interventions were made by the Bahamas, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Mexico and the United States of America, covering such issues as the important role of NGOs in wetland restoration in the region, funding of wetlands education, funding of coral reef conservation and work on invasive species.

Notes on the First Special Plenary Session

11 May 1999, 19.30-21.45

- 45. The President, Mr Veit Koester, Vice-President of the COP, introduced the Special Plenary Session on the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 concerning regionalization under the Convention.
- 46. Hungary, Chair of the Standing Committee (SC), provided background on previous discussions of the issue, as provided in paragraphs 1-8 of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1, noting that because the regional meetings and the Standing Committee found no consensus on certain sections of the proposal, the SC determined to forward bracketed alternative passages to the COP. She drew attention to the SC's consensus proposals for a regrouping into six regions and a proportional system for representation on the SC, which presently would result in a Committee of 13 members plus the two COP-host Parties. She reported that the majority of SC members supported "Option 1" whilst the Islamic Republic of Iran was putting forward "Option 2".
- 47. Iran stressed the importance of friendly cooperation amongst Contracting Parties, and pointed out that in any solution for regional categorization several parameters such as geographical locations and the concerns of the Parties involved must be taken into account. Iran's Option 2 was based upon a long-standing formula within the United Nations system. Iran still hoped to achieve a consensus resolution to the problem and proposed establishing a Working Group to carry discussions forward.
- 48. The President stated the session's objective as determining whether there were any new proposals that might find a consensus. He first sought discussion of the **unbracketed** passages of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1.

- 49. Uruguay, with support from Brazil and Peru, expressed the Neotropical region's concern that the proposed criteria for SC membership proportions were merely quantitative, and they suggested other criteria (such as biodiversity values, number and relevance of Ramsar sites, potential for new sites) which might be more valuable. It was proposed, without deferring a decision at this COP, that the STRP be asked to study qualitative criteria for establishing regional groupings, with its results to be presented to COP8, thus not affecting the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 at present. It was further proposed that the Neotropical region be accorded an additional alternate's place on the SC, in addition to the proposed two voting members, reflecting its three biogeographical regions.
- 50. Hungary noted that in the last sentence of ¶19 the words "and countries in transition", after "developing countries", had inadvertently been dropped and should be reinstated.
- 51. The President determined that, with the exception of the proposal of the Neotropics to be accorded an additional alternate's place and with no further comments emerging, the unbracketed passages of the draft resolution in DOC 15.1 have a consensus of approval, and he called for discussion of Option 1, i.e. the first alternatives of paragraphs 4 and 5 and Annex I, and Option 2, the second alternatives of paragraphs 4 and 5 and Annex I.
- 52. Germany, Uruguay, and Nicaragua expressed support for Option 1 on grounds of biogeographical criteria for grouping, and the Neotropical region requested that the name of Option 1's group 3 in paragraph 4 be changed back to "Neotropics". Malaysia, Iran, Syria, and Pakistan preferred Option 2 in conformity with UN practice and called for establishment of an open-ended Working Group to pursue the search for a consensus solution. The USA drew attention to two years of resource-consuming discussion with no progress toward consensus and called for a conclusion to the issue. Australia, Canada, and Norway expressed strong preferences for Option 1 on the ground that, though political criteria may serve the UN well, biogeographical, ecosystem, environmental values should be preferred as criteria for the Convention on Wetlands. Slovenia and The FYR of Macedonia also voiced support for Option 1.
- 53. Germany observed that, in order to avoid having to conduct the Convention's first vote, a last attempt at consensus should be tried. The Convention has important work to do and can afford no more time on political issues; the Convention's organization should be on environmental grounds only, and all Parties should be permitted to participate fully in Ramsar's work, with none isolated from full cooperation. Thus Germany tabled amendments to Option 1, ¶5, which might provide grounds for agreement.
- 54. Venezuela said that after two years of debate no further discussion would be fruitful and called for a vote between Options 1 and 2. Canada provided guidance on how such a vote should proceed, based upon Rules of Procedure 41 and 44. Egypt and Bangladesh, noting Rule 40's requirement that all efforts toward consensus should be exhausted before voting, called for informal focus group discussions of Germany's proposed amendment; Argentina, Ireland, and Syria agreed that Germany's proposal merited reflection, and asked for a little more time to see whether a vote could be avoided.
- 55. Iran urged that regional groups should have the right to endorse the requests of countries wishing membership in their regions should be added to the text of the German amendment, and felt that the amendment merited more work. Israel felt that the delegations calling for compromise did not really wish for compromise but rather wished

only to avoid losing a vote, and supported a vote on the German amendment followed by a vote between Options 1 and 2.

Conclusions

- 56. The President reiterated that a resolution of the regionalization issue must be decided at COP7. He determined that no Parties had wished to make further comments on the unbracketed portions of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 and that consensus had been reached on these, except regarding the request by the Neotropics for an additional alternate's place.
- 57. Concerning the bracketed passages, the President noted that, because only those Parties already in favour of Option 2 have requested creation of a formal Working Group to discuss the issues further, he would not establish such a group. Informal discussions were always permitted, and if these should produce any potential new consensus solutions before the morning of Thursday May 13, he should be informed of that.
- 58. The President instructed that the meeting had to conclude its discussion by taking action on regional categorization on Thursday morning. If there was a compromise by the end of Wednesday, the plenary would welcome that. If that was not the case, the plenary would take action on Option 1, with or without the amendment proposed by Germany, and then on Option 2. Following exhaustive discussions prior to the voting, there would be no further discussion of the options prior to the voting.
- 59. The President explained that the main vote, if the efforts for compromise failed, would be between Options 1 and 2. Prior to such a vote, there would be a vote on whether Option 1 should include the German proposed amendment to ¶5, as well as on whether the Neotropical proposal concerning an additional alternate member for that region should be included in ¶6. The President stipulated that the change of the name of item 3 in ¶4 of Option 1 to "Neotropics" would be accepted without a vote.
- 60. The Conference Committee, at its subsequent meeting on 12 May 1999, endorsed the President's instructions to this plenary session.

Notes on the Third Plenary Session

12 May 1999, 09.30-18.30

61. Special Intervention 12:

Ms Deborah Moore, Commissioner, the World Commission on Dams presented "Wetlands Protection in the 21st Century: Ramsar and the World Commission on Dams".

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Oceania Region

- 62. The Deputy Secretary General presented the overview for the Oceania Region and Papua New Guinea was invited to comment on the overview.
- 63. Delegates making interventions on the overview again expressed their gratitude to the Government of Costa Rica for its kind hospitality, to the Ramsar Bureau for the preparation of the conference document and to the Deputy Secretary General for his comprehensive presentation.
- 64. Interventions were made by Australia, the Australian Wetland Alliance, the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and WWF, covering issues such as the designation of new Ramsar sites, the need for further progress to reverse the destruction of wetlands, the concern over the large number of sites in the region which ought to be listed on the Montreux Record, the need for SGF funded projects and other sources of funding to implement the Convention in some countries, the need to promote accession to the Convention of Small Island States, the desirability of establishing regional contacts with the territories administered by some Contracting Parties from outside the region, and the need for management plans for all Ramsar sites.

65. Special Intervention 13:

Ms Barbara Di Giovanni, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, delivered a special message to COP7 from Mr Hamdallah Zedan, Acting Executive Secretary of the CBD.

Overview of the implementation of the Convention in the Asian Region

- 66. The Regional Coordinator for Asia at the Ramsar Bureau presented the overview for the Asian region.
- 67. Delegates making interventions were generous in their thanks to the Government of Costa Rica for hosting and helping to organize COP7. They also recognized the considerable effort of the Ramsar Bureau in their preparations for the COP and broadly congratulated the Regional Coordinator for her comprehensive presentation.
- 68. Interventions were made by Bangladesh, China, Fujimae Association and Japan Wetland Action Network, Indonesia, Institute for Global Environment Strategies, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Wild Bird Society of Japan, and WWF covering such issues as designating more Ramsar sites, the need to recognize the vital ecological and economic importance of intertidal wetlands within the region, the pressure on Asian wetlands from expanding populations and development projects, the vital role NGOs and ordinary people can play in preventing wetland destruction, and the need to reinforce efforts to increase accession to the Convention.
- 69. A number of interventions made reference to the need for minor amendments to the Overview and these comments will be incorporated in the web site version of this document, as well as in any future copies that may be distributed.
- 70. Pakistan and Syria raised their objections to the inclusion of Israel in the overview for the Asia Region since the issue of Israel's inclusion in the Region had not been agreed upon.

- 71. Israel, noting the observation of Pakistan, referred the meeting to Ramsar DOC. 31 and stated that Israel was a member of the Asia Region and would remain so unless a decision to the contrary was taken by the COP.
- 72. The Vice President, Minister Kezimbira Miyingo of Uganda, introduced the afternoon session of the Third Plenary.

73. Special Intervention 14:

Minister Miguel Eduardo Araujo of El Salvador made a special presentation on "Wetlands and Sustainable Development in Central America".

74. Special Intervention 15:

Ms Eva Velasquez presented the "Declaration of Central American People on Wetlands" with recommendations for the Convention.

Agenda Item XI: Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties

75. The Deputy Secretary General introduced DOC. 13.3 and the draft resolution in DOC. 15.12, and there were interventions from Peru, Denmark, Greece, the United Kingdom, Côte d'Ivoire, BirdLife International, WWF, Belgium and Austria. Greece expressed its appreciation for the contribution of the Ramsar Convention and the Montreux Record mechanism towards the significant enhancement of its policy on nature conservation and management.

Agenda Item XII: Introduction of the Convention Work Plan and Bureau budget 2000-2002

- 76. On DOC. 14 Annex 1, the Deputy Secretary General noted that the Work Plan is for the Convention, not just for the Bureau. After analyses of National Reports, the Bureau has suggested goals for implementation by the time of COP8.
- 77. The SG introduced DOC. 14 on the budget 2000-2002 and noted the Standing Committee's proposed increase of 5%, 2%, 2% over 3 years. He pointed to the proposed increase of minimum dues to SFR 1000. He noted that Ramsar may be the only convention whose budget requires the cost of hosting the COP to be borne by the host Party; though Costa Rica has been the first developing country to bravely host a COP, the extreme difficulty of raising the necessary funds has been discouraging for the future. The US\$100 conference fee has helped defray the host's costs, and several Parties and agencies have made voluntary contributions.
- 78. The USA, Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance, listed the painful decisions that had to be made to reach the Standing Committee's proposed budget. Though all Parties would like to see a significantly increased core budget, in these difficult times it will be necessary to seek innovative solutions. He urged adoption of the SC's proposed budget.
- 79. WWF, Norway, BirdLife International, Venezuela, Ghana, The Kalahari Conservation Society, Belgium and the United Kingdom cited the proposed increase as quite low, given the work still remaining to be done.

80. Canada and Germany noted that increases to international organizations often mean cutbacks to national programmes. Brazil and Austria supported the SC proposal.

Agenda Item XIII: Consideration of draft resolutions and recommendations not covered by the Technical Sessions

81. The plenary reviewed the draft resolutions and recommendations contained in DOCS. 15.2 to 15.5, DOCS. 15.12, 15.14, 15.18 and DOCS. 15.22 to 15.24 and, established the level of consensus for each, and received proposed amendments.

Agenda Item XIV: Report of the Credentials Committee

82. The Report was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Guatemala (Mr Oscar Lara), and approved by the plenary (see page 27). The late submission of credentials from Belgium and El Salvador were noted by Australia and accepted by the plenary.

Notes on the Second Special Plenary Session

13 May 1999, 09.00-13.00

- 83. The President, Mr Veit Koester, introduced the second plenary discussion of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 on regionalization and recalled that at the First Special Plenary Session on Tuesday 11 May it was determined that consensus had been reached on the unbracketed paragraphs, with the understanding that the change of name in item 3 of ¶4 was acceptable to all. The only exception was the proposal of the Neotropics to amend ¶6. The plenary also determined that a formal Working Group should not be established, since no potential consensus proposals were in play, but it would welcome any consensus that should emerge prior to today's session. It was decided that action should be taken on Options 1 and 2, the proposed German amendment to Option 1 and the Neotropical proposal for paragraph 6, and that there would not be any further substantive discussion of the issue today.
- 84. He announced that the Neotropical proposal for ¶6 has been withdrawn. Since no consensus had been reached on the bracketed passages, the vote would proceed, and the President detailed the procedure that would be followed according to the Rules of Procedure. Votes would be taken as necessary in the order of (1) the German proposal for Option 1, (2) Option 1 with or without the German amendment, and (3) Option 2. He recalled that Option 1 included the first bracketed alternatives of ¶4, ¶5, and Annex 1, while Option 2 consisted of the second alternatives of ¶4, ¶5, and the Iranian proposal for Annex 1.
- 85. The President noted that 106 Contracting Parties have had their credentials approved for voting in this COP7, and the necessary quorum was present. Prior to each vote, two minutes will be allowed to each delegation that wishes to explain its voting intentions, with no discussion of issues permitted, and there will be no interruption of the voting once it has begun except on points of order on the voting itself.

- 86. This procedure, including the order of the voting, has been endorsed by the Conference Committee in its meeting of 13 May.
- 87. Syria requested to know what has become of its proposed amendment to Option 1, which was conveyed to the secretariat earlier the same morning, and he asked that more than 2 minutes be granted to explain each Party's voting intentions.
- 88. The President replied that Syria's proposal had been considered by the Conference Committee but that since it carried no consensus with it, it was decided, in conformity with the decision of the First Special Plenary, not to add it to the issues to be considered and voted upon. He offered to be flexible in allowing delegations to make cogent explanations of their voting intentions, but would retain the right to move the process along expeditiously if necessary.
- 89. The President offered to read Syria's proposal aloud to the meeting or project it by overheads in order to save the expense of distribution, though the decision that it not be considered would stand. Syria insisted that the proposed Syrian amendment should be distributed for consideration by all participants, who should be given enough time to digest it.
- 90. Venezuela, Iran, and Algeria voiced a preference for full consideration of Syria's proposal and questioned the President's ruling that it should not be considered. The President then ruled that the meeting would be suspended and asked the Secretariat to copy and distribute the proposal to all delegations. The President suspended the session for 15 minutes to do so.
- 91. The session resumed and Syria introduced its proposal by presenting it as an attempt to reach a compromise solution to what was described as a mistake by the Standing Committee and the Bureau that should now be corrected. The continued presence of Israel in the Asian region would paralyze that region's implementation of the Convention. Syria asked that its proposal be considered on an equal footing with other proposals already in process. Syria's proposal included the removal of Israel from the list of countries in the Asian region, and its placement in the European region, within the Annex of Option 1.
- 92. The President reiterated the plenary's decision on Tuesday that no further proposals would be considered unless consensus had been achieved. Malaysia, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Indonesia, Venezuela, Jordan, Niger and Iran asked that the Syrian proposal should be considered, whilst Germany and Canada requested that the President abide by the decision of the plenary on Tuesday night. The President determined that a vote should be taken to learn whether the plenary wished to alter its decision in the case of Syria's proposal.
- 93. The President began the voting procedure on whether to consider Syria's proposal. In a point of order Syria called for a secret ballot in accordance with Rule 46. The President conducted a vote on whether or not a secret balloting should be conducted. As a result of the vote, 37 Parties voted in favour, 53 Parties against, and 10 Parties abstained.
- 94. The President resumed the voting procedure on whether or not to consider Syria's proposal and opened the floor for brief explanations of voting intentions. Malaysia observed that avenues of reaching consensus had not been exhausted and that the imposition of a decision on this issue by the COP7 was inappropriate, would create a

dangerous precedent and would not only be a divisive action but would make it impossible for the Asian region to meet. The representative of Syria said that the procedure being followed by the Convention was a mistake and was forcing the Convention to an impasse. He noted that the results of a vote would not count. It was the fact of having a vote at all that would be divisive, in which event the entire Convention would be the loser.

- 95. The President again resumed the voting procedure. In a point of order Syria called for a roll call vote. A roll call vote was taken in alphabetical English order, beginning with Belgium drawn by lot. Result of the vote on whether to consider Syria's proposal: 22 Parties voted in favour, 46 Parties voted against, 35 Parties abstained and 3 Parties did not participate. Therefore, the President concluded that the plenary would not consider Syria's proposal. He expressed his thanks to all delegations including Syria for their cooperation and understanding.
- 96. The Iranian delegate said that in order to facilitate the proceedings, he withdrew alternative ¶5.
- 97. The President called for taking action on ¶5 of Option 1 proposed by Germany on Tuesday. Since there was no objection, the amendments were adopted by consensus.
- 98. The President inquired whether it was possible to take a decision by consensus on Option 1 as amended.
- 99. Iran informed the meeting of its recent efforts, particularly with Germany and Syria, to reach a compromise solution and added that a compromise had been found. But all endeavors were blocked by one Contracting Party, thus causing disruption in the Ramsar family. He expressed that his delegation realized the fact that many Parties, as noted during Tuesday's Special Plenary Session, preferred Option 1. While thanking all Parties which supported Option 2, he withdrew alternative ¶4 and the alternative annex and explained that he did so in order to expedite the work of the Plenary. He also thanked the Parties which were involved in consultations and expressed regret that the Convention could not proceed with that solution.
- 100. The President announced that the draft resolution contained in DOC. 15.1, as amended, was adopted by consensus and the issue would not be reconsidered during COP7. He went on to say that on Monday 17 May and Tuesday 18 May the remaining draft resolutions would be presented for adoption by the COP7. The President thanked Iran for its cooperative gesture and called upon all Parties to continue to cooperate fully in the future. He called for final statements.
- 101. The Iranian delegate expressed that his delegation did not make objection to Option 1 in order to not break consensus. He also expressed regret that the issue had been concluded in this way and expressed that the COP7 had imposed one Party's membership to a regional group in a way that was unprecedented in other organizations. Iran felt that Israel had been assigned to the Asian region in a big mistake by the secretariat, thus transferring the Middle Eastern crisis into the Convention. That impaired the success of the Asian Regional Meeting held in February 1999, and Iran predicted many future problems as a result, including the paralysis of future meetings and programmes relating to the Asian region. He noted that this imposition had created a precedent which may later affect other regional groupings as well. Because of the political implications of Israel's presence in the Asian group, the Convention hereafter would face big challenges in that region.

- 102. Ireland expressed special gratitude to the President for his fair, patient, professional, and good-humored handling of this contentious issue and said that the COP7 had been very lucky to have him.
- 103. Egypt stated for the record that this outcome should not be seen as a precedent for other fora and applied only to this Convention. Egypt also emphasized its conviction that the composition of any regional group should be with the full consent of the members of this group.
- 104. The representative of Israel said that it would not comment on statements made by Iran and Syria and read a statement for the record: "Israel wishes to notify the Conference of the Parties formally, on the basis of ¶5 of the resolution just adopted, of its request to participate temporarily within the alternative region of Europe, as defined in Annex 1, whilst remaining a member of its geographical region of Asia, as defined in the same Annex. If accepted, Israel preferred to direct its conservation energies within the European framework".
- 105. Syria foresaw that the COP7's decision would prove to be a further complication of the problem instead of a solution to it. Syria characterized the proceedings as an attempt to impose something against the will of others and wished to dissociate itself from the consensus decision, saying that consensus does not mean unanimity. Syria held the secretariat responsible for creating and continuing this mistake that started when the secretariat invited Israel to attend the Pan-Asian meeting in Manila in February 1999.
- 106. The President, while noting the blaming of the Bureau in some statements, observed that secretariat staff also had a right to be treated with respect. Then, he offered the Secretary General a possibility to respond. The Secretary General said that secretariat staff are also human and can make mistakes. The assignment of Israel to the Asian region was done for administrative purposes and on geographic rather than political grounds, and perhaps the Bureau should have consulted the Standing Committee extraordinarily in this case before doing so. The Secretary General apologized and acknowledged that maybe a mistake was committed and noted that the Bureau could have been blamed by one Party or another whatever it had done.
- 107. The President summarized by announcing that the draft resolution in DOC. 15.1 as amended had now been adopted in full by consensus. [Note: this resolution is being published as Resolution VII.1]

Notes on the Fourth Plenary Session

17 May 1999, 09.30-18.00

Agenda Item XV: Reports and recommendations of the Technical Sessions

108. The Deputy Secretary General reported on the five technical sessions undertaken on May 13, 14 and 15 which considered 13 of the 32 draft resolutions distributed to Contracting Parties in advance of the Conference.

Agenda Item XVI: Appointment of the members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

- 109. The Plenary reviewed the draft resolution in DOC. 15.2 Rev. 1. Amendments were proposed by Uruguay (speaking on behalf of the Neotropical region), Norway and Canada.
- 110. The President, Mr Veit Koester invited discussion on the appointment of the Chair of STRP and it was agreed by consensus, with interventions from Venezuela, Sweden and Argentina, that the Chair should be elected by the STRP members.
- 111. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.2 Rev. 1 was adopted by consensus as amended.

Agenda Item XVII: Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations

- 112. The President asked the meeting to consider the draft resolution in DOC. 15.33 and the related DOC. 14 on the Work Plan. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.33 was adopted by consensus.
- 113. The Secretary General introduced the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 on the budget. He reminded delegates of the informal Contact Group on budgetary matters set up during the Conference at the suggestion of Kenya and chaired by Ireland. There was an intervention by Ireland, who delivered a plea to the meeting to consider the proposal in the Discussion Document put forward by the majority of the members of the Contact Group representing an increase of 5% per year over the next three years. The President asked for, and received, confirmation from Ireland that the Discussion Document was a formal proposal.
- 114. There was an intervention from Uruguay, on behalf of the Neotropical Region, supporting the minimum annual contribution of SFR 1,000 suggested in the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 and the President noted a consensus agreement on this matter from the meeting.
- 115. There were interventions giving support to the Contact Group proposal from Sweden, UK, Spain, Kenya, Belgium, Greece, Switzerland, Egypt, Philippines, Slovenia and Denmark.
- 116. There were interventions giving support to the Standing Committee proposal contained in DOC. 14 and the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 from Germany, Uruguay (speaking on behalf of the Neotropical region), Syria, Netherlands, Canada, Brazil and the USA.
- 117. Australia asked for clarification on several matters of the budget and noted that it was still considering its support for the Standing Committee proposal. Austria's intervention concerning the effects of the Irish proposal on SGF was considered neutral.
- 118. Syria supported the minimum contribution proposal but expressed concern over the selective use of the UN system as a reference in DOC. 14. Since objection to the use of the UN system as a reference to Ramsar's documents related to Regional Categorization had been raised and supported by some delegations earlier in the proceedings, Syria considered that a double standard was being applied.

119. The President, following a suggestion from an intervention by Venezuela, recommended a period of time to help arrive at a consensus on the budget. He proposed an open-ended Contact Group over lunchtime, chaired by Ireland and with the presence of Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Philippines, and Slovenia, representing good coverage regionally as well as reflecting the breadth of opinions expressed during the interventions. He emphasized, however, that any Contracting Party was welcome to attend.

120. Special Intervention 16:

Madame Dominique Voynet, Minister of Physical Planning and the Environment, France, delivered a statement to the plenary.

- 121. Ireland, reporting on the meeting of the contact group during the lunch period, said that though there was support for the 5-5-5% increase formula there was also significant opposition, and the following compromise had been reached based on the 5-2-2% increase option: the contribution of each Contracting Party to this budget will be in accordance with the scale of assessments for the contribution of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly for 2000 (Annex II) and yet to be approved for the years 2001 and 2002, except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale, would make annual contributions to the Convention Budget of less than SFR 1,000, in which case the annual contribution shall be this amount. For these Contracting Parties the difference between the assessed contribution according to the UN scale and the minimum threshold of SFR 1,000 shall be allocated toward funding the position of Development Assistance Officer (DAO) in the Ramsar Bureau; all other Contracting Parties will continue to be assessed in accordance with the UN scale of contributions as also indicated in Annex II. The Bureau, as human and financial resources allow, will endeavour to secure the additional resources needed in order to establish the post of Development Assistance Officer within the Secretariat, with the aim of mobilising resources to facilitate implementation of the Convention by developing countries and those with economies in transition.
- 122. Syria raised questions about the use of Convention funds for bureaucratic purposes rather than in the regions, and the Secretary General explained the purpose of the core budget for maintenance of the secretariat, and additional project funding in some detail. WWF raised questions about the relative change in the budget for the developing versus the developed countries.
- 123. The Secretary General welcomed the compromise solution but wished to record that the Bureau could not guarantee recruitment of a DAO for the amounts of money being discussed. Uganda suggested that the Bureau be instructed rather than urged to recruit a DAO.
- 124. Kenya wished to record its feeling that requiring further payments, because of the newly-adopted 1000SFr minimum, from Parties that have prepaid dues for several years could create problems for them, but agreed to do so for the good of the Convention.
- 125. Adoption of the draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 was postponed so that the Secretary General could supply text on the Irish 5-2-2 compromise and suggestions concerning recruitment of a DAO, but the other parts of the draft resolution were agreed to.

- 126. The session continued with the COP7 President in the chair. The following draft resolutions and recommendations were adopted by consensus: DOC. 15.3 concerning partnerships; DOC. 15.4 concerning synergies with other conventions; DOC. 15.5 on the Small Grants Fund; DOC. 15.6 on National Wetland Policies; DOC. 15.7 on laws and institutions; DOC. 15.9 on the Outreach Programme; DOC. 15.10 on Wetland Risk Assessment; and DOC. 15.11 on the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.8 on local communities and indigenous people was adopted by consensus, noting the statement by Chile, concerning paragraphs 4 and 12, that the participation of local communities and indigenous people in the activities developed at national level, should be inscribed within the framework of the National Wetlands Strategy, given priority to their insertion in the National Wetlands Committee.
- 127. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.12 on Ramsar sites was introduced by the Bureau.
- 128. A total of 17 countries announced further Ramsar site designations, which were incorporated in the draft resolution.
- 129. Chile questioned the goal in paragraph 19 of 75% of Ramsar sites with management plans and suggested that 50% might be more realistic, and it was urged that since the present figure was 44%, and the adopted Work Plan also urged 75%, the target figure should be retained. Chile agreed with the original proposal but wished its reservations to be recorded.
- 130. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.12, including DOC. 15.12.1, was adopted by consensus. Greece provided background on its recent efforts to fulfill earlier recommendations of the COP concerning its Montreux Record sites, three of which were proposed for removal by DOC. 15.12.1. BirdLife International and WWF International applauded the Greek government's openness and constructive use of the Montreux Record.
- 131. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.14 was adopted by consensus, as amended by IUCN with sponsorship from Australia and Norway and amendments from USA, Spain, and Venezuela.
- 132. WWF offered to contribute SFR 30,000 over the triennium and bilaterally support other SGF projects that fulfilled the objectives of its Living Waters Campaign.

Notes on the Fifth Plenary Session

18 May 1999, 09.30-18.00

133. Special Intervention 17:

Ms Ivonne Higuero delivered a statement on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Agenda Item XVII (continued):

- 134. The Plenary reviewed the draft resolutions and recommendations contained in DOCS. 15.15 to 15.19, 15.21 to 15.25, 15.28 to 15.30, and 15.32 and these were adopted by consensus, with amendments in certain cases. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.34 on budget was adopted by consensus including the proposal by Mauritania, seconded by Algeria, that the funds which would normally go into the SGF should now be re-allocated to help fund the DAO position. The draft resolution DOC. 15.35, thanking the host country, was adopted by acclamation.
- 135. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.20 was adopted by consensus, with amendments proposed by New Zealand, India, GEF, Philippines and Ecuador. Turkey requested that the following statement be included in the record:

"Since its accession to the Ramsar Convention, Turkey has given due regard to the application of the principles of conservation and wise use of wetlands. Turkey has also paid attention to the realisation of international cooperation in her deliberations regarding the implementation of the Convention.

However, the Turkish Delegation would kindly like to draw the attention of the distinguished delegations taking part in this august house to our intervention, a written copy of which has already been sent to the Secretariat, regarding the documents COP7 DOC. 15.20, and the references made to COP7 DOCS. 20.1 and 20.2 in the former document. In this context, the issues stated in the last part of paragraph 8 of the preamble and in Annex 1 sections 1.1(b), 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and items 2 and 3, together with the title of the box on page 10, in which the afore-mentioned items are placed, related to transboundary river basins and/ or transboundary watercourses, are both irrelevant and controversial in respect to the context and obligations of the Ramsar Convention.

Furthermore, the Turkish Delegation could not be able to understand how come some certain assumptions regarding 1.1 (b) on page 6 of DOC. 15.20 have been made without bringing those assumptions to the attention of all Contracting Parties in order to fully discuss the issues under question. Consequently the Resolution number 20 will not constitute a legally binding document for Turkey as far as the above-mentioned points are concerned.

The Turkish Delegation requests for the Secretariat that this statement of understanding be put into the records and the reservations expressed in it be duly reflected in all of the relevant documents of the 7th Conference of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention."

- India fully associated itself with the Turkish statement.
- 136. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.26, now merged with DOC. 15.27, was adopted by consensus as amended. As a consequence of these amendments, the draft resolution in DOC. 15.12 was further amended and the amendments adopted by consensus.
- 137. The draft resolution in DOC. 15.36, on the "Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention", was adopted by consensus, with the clarification that Uruguay was no longer a sponsor of the resolution and Nicaragua had joined as a new sponsor. Noting the absence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from this Conference, the Russian Federation, India, China and Armenia recorded their dissociation from the decision which they said had no practical utility and was politically motivated. Along with Zambia and Algeria, they noted that they would abstain in the event of a vote on the decision.

Agenda Item XVIII: Election of the Contracting Parties that will serve on the Standing Committee

138. Ghana, Malaysia, Hungary, Germany, USA, Uruguay and Papua New Guinea, reporting on behalf of their regions, proposed Togo, Algeria, Uganda, India, Japan, Norway, Sweden, France, Armenia, Mexico, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, and Australia for election to the Standing Committee for the next triennium and they were elected by acclamation, along with Costa Rica as Past Host of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda Item XIX: Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

139. Following DOC. 22 and the formal offer by Spain to host COP8 issued during the Plenary on May 11, and noting that no other formal invitations had been made, the meeting accepted Spain's offer by acclamation. The President noted that Spain would now be a voting member of the Standing Committee in its capacity as Next Host of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda Item XX: Any other business

140. No other business items were introduced.

Agenda Item XXI: Adoption of the Report of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

141. The Secretary General presented the Conference Report, noting the decision by the Conference Committee to produce an abbreviated Report in comparison with previous Conferences. The Report was adopted by consensus as amended.

142. Special Intervention 18:

IUCN presented two murals, painted during the Conference, by six traditional painters from Lake Nicaragua. The painters were presented with Certificates of Appreciation by the President.

Agenda Item XXII: Close of Meeting

143. Closing remarks were made by the Secretary General and also by Australia, USA, Morocco, Malaysia, Austria, and Uruguay on behalf of the regions, BirdLife International on behalf of the International Organization Partners, Japan Wetlands Action Network on behalf of the national NGOs, and Louise Lakos as out-going Chair of the Standing Committee. The President, Lic. Elizabeth Odio Benito, closed the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties with a statement on behalf of the Government of Costa Rica.

Report of the Credentials Committee

(adopted by the 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties, 12 May 1999)

- 1. Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure provides for a Credentials Committee composed of one Party from each of the Ramsar regions, elected at the first session of each ordinary meeting on the basis of a proposal from the Conference Committee, which shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the Conference of the Parties for approval.
- 2. The Conference elected the following members to the Credentials Committee: Australia (Mr Daniel Tehan), Canada (Mr Ed Wiken), Czech Republic (Mr Petr Roth), Guatemala (Mr Oscar Lara), Mongolia (Mr Bandiin Ganbaatar), Switzerland (Amb. Beat Nobs), Togo (Mr Abdou-Kerim Moumouni), naming Guatemala as Chair.
- 3. The Committee referred to Rule 18.1 of the Rules of Procedure, which provides that "the original of the statement of credentials of the head of delegation and other representatives, alternate representatives, and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary General of the Convention or to his/her designated representative if possible not later than twenty-four hours after the opening of the meeting. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to the Secretary General or the representative of the Secretary General. Moreover, the Committee referred to Rule 18.4 of the Rules of Procedure which provides that "a representative may not exercise the right to vote unless his/her name is clearly and unambiguously listed in the credentials.
- 4. In accordance with these requirements, the Committee confirms the credentials submitted by delegates of 104 Contracting Parties:

Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo Democratic Republic, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia.

The Committee appreciated the efforts that were made by the Contracting Parties in preparing their credentials. There were very few problems encountered.

[Note: The Committee noted the late submission of credentials by Belgium and El Salvador; their credentials were accepted by the plenary (see Conference Report paragraph 82)]

Annex I

List of Ramsar COP7 Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the 7th Conference of the Contracting Parties

New Document Number	Document title	Old Document Number
	D 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	
Resolution VII.1	Regional categorization of countries under the Convention, and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including tasks of Standing Committee members	COP7 DOC. 15.1
Resolution VII.2	Composition and <i>modus operandi</i> of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)	COP7 DOC. 15.2
Resolution VII.3	Partnerships with international organizations	COP7 DOC. 15.3
Resolution VII.4	Partnerships and cooperation with other Conventions, including harmonized information management infrastructures	COP7 DOC. 15.4
Resolution VII.5	Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and its future operations	COP7 DOC. 15.5
Resolution VII.6	Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies	COP7 DOC. 15.6
Resolution VII.7	Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.7
Resolution VII.8	Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.8
Resolution VII.9	The Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002	COP7 DOC. 15.9
Resolution VII.10	Wetland Risk Assessment Framework	COP7 DOC. 15.10
Resolution VII.11	Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance	COP7 DOC. 15.11
Resolution VII.12	The sites in the Ramsar List: official descriptions, conservation status and management planning, including the situation of particular sites in the territory of specific Contracting Parties	COP7 DOC. 15.12
Resolution VII.13	Guidelines for identifying and designating karst and other subterranean hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance	COP7 DOC. 15.13
Resolution VII.14	Invasive species and wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.14
Resolution VII.15	Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Wise Use Principles	COP7 DOC. 15.15
Resolution VII.16	The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental and social	COP7 DOC. 15.16
Resolution VII.17	Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use	COP7 DOC. 15.17
Resolution VII.18	Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management	COP7 DOC. 15.19
Resolution VII.19	Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention	COP7 DOC. 15.20

Resolution VII.20	Priorities for wetland inventory	COP7 DOC. 15.21
Resolution VII.21	Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal	COP7 DOC. 15.22
	wetlands	
Resolution VII.22	Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.23
Resolution VII.23	Defining Ramsar site boundaries	COP7 DOC. 15.26
	Merged into Resolution VII.23	COP7 DOC. 15.27
Resolution VII.24	Compensation for lost wetland habitats and other	COP7 DOC. 15.28
	functions	
Resolution VII.25	Measuring environmental quality in wetlands	COP7 DOC. 15.29
Resolution VII.26	Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and	COP7 DOC. 15.30
	Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere	
	Merged into Resolution VII.12	COP7 DOC. 15.31
Resolution VII.27	Work Plan	COP7 DOC. 15.33
Resolution VII.28	Financial and Budgetary Matters	COP7 DOC. 15.34
Resolution VII.29	Thanks to the host	COP7 DOC. 15.35
Resolution VII.30	Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention	COP7 DOC. 15.36
Recommendation 7.1	A global action plan for the wise use and management of	COP7 DOC. 15.18
	peatlands	
Recommendation 7.2	Small Island Developing States, island wetland	COP7 DOC. 15.24
	ecosystems, and the Ramsar Convention	
Recommendation 7.3	Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of	COP7 DOC. 15.25
	migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region	
Recommendation 7.4	The Wetlands for the Future Initiative	COP7 DOC. 15.32

Annex II

List of Observer States and Observer Organizations represented at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting the Parties

Observer States

Belarus Mauritius
Benin Moldova
Bosnia-Herzegovina Nigeria
Cambodia Palau
Cuba Rwanda
Cyprus Tanzania
Djibouti Zimbabwe
Kiribati

Government Agency Observers

Australia

Brisbane City Council Northern Land Council

Canada

The Nature Trust of British Columbia Wildlife Habitat Canada

Costa Rica

Area de Conservación Amistad Caribe

Area de Conservación Arenal

Area de Conservación Arenal Huetar Norte

Area de Conservación Cordillera Volcánica

Central

Area de Conservación Guanacaste

Area de Conservación La Amistad

Area de Conservación Osa

Area de Conservación Pacífico Central

Area de Conservación Tempisque

Area de Conservación Tortuguero

Areas de Conservación Isla del Coco

Areas Silvestres Protegidas - MINAE

Asociación Intituto RCM

Centro para la Investigación de las Tortugas

Marinas

Compañia Nacional de Fuerza y Luz. S.A.

COSEFORMA

EBI de Costa Rica

Escuela Ciencias Ambientales, UNA

Fundación pro Zoológicos

GTL

INCOPESCA

Instituto Costarricense de Turismo Instituto Geográfico Nacional Instituto Nacional de la Mujeres

Oficina de Cooperación Internacional - MINAE

Oficina de Desarrollo, MINAE

Parque Nacional Chirripo

Parque Nacional Marino Ballenas Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas

Parque Nacional Palo Verde

Procuraduría General de la República

Proyecto Arenal

Proyecto Manejo de las Cuencas del Río

Tempisque

Refugio Caño Negro

Sistema Nacional Areas de Conservación Universidad Cooperación Internacional

France

Agence de l'eau Rhône-Méditerranée

India

Punjab State Council for Science & Technology

Japan

City of Narashino Kushiro City Netherlands

Wetland Advisory and Training Centre / WATC - RIZA

Intergovernmental Organizations

Autoridad Binacional Bolivia-Peru del Lago

Titicaca

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

Convention on Biological Diversity

Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and

Flora (CITES)

Convention on Migratory Species

European Commission

European Environment Agency

Food and Agriculture Organization of the

United Nations (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Organization of American States (OAS)

The World Bank

United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP)

World Heritage Centre

International Non-Governmental Organizations

Asociación de Cooperación Rural en África y

América Latina

BirdLife International

Caribbean Conservation Association

Center for International Earth Science

Information Network

Ducks Unlimited

Environmental Law Centre, IUCN

Forest Peoples Programme

Global Environment Centre

International Environmental Protection

Association

International Peat Society

International Shrimp Action Network (1SA Net)

IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique occidental -

OMPO

Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat

The Earth Council

Wetlands International

World Commission on Dams

World Conservation Monitoring Centre

World Water Council, World Water Vision Unit

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

National Non-Governmental Organizations

Argentina

Fundación Ecoturismo Argentina (FUNECO)

Fundación PROTEGER

Fundación RIE - Red Informática Ecologista

BirdLife Austria

Belize

Belize Audubon Society

Botswana

Kalahari Conservation Society

Bulgaria

Foundation "Le Balkan"

Chile

Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora

Australia

Australian Marine Conservation Society Australian Wetlands Alliance

Shortland Wetlands Centre

Wildlife Preservation Society (Capricornia Branch)

Austria

Indígena

Colombia

Instituto de Investigaciones Ambientales del Pacífico

Ecuador

FUNDECOL

France

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature (SNPN)

Greece

Society for the Protection of Prespa

India

Centre for Built Environment Indian Environmental Society

Japan

Ecosystem Conservation Society - Kochi
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
International Conference for Country Life
Japanese Association for Wild Geese Protection
Japanese Wetlands Action Network
Kabukuri Wetlands Club
Kushiro International Wetland Centre
Kyushu-Ryukyu Wetlands Action Network in
Japan
Miyagi Prefectural Izunuma-Uchinuma

Environmental Foundation Nakaikemi Marsh Trust Japan (NMTJ-JAWAN) Ramsar Center Japan Save Fujimae Association Save Isahaya Tidal Flat

Kazakhstan

Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Committee Public Centre on Biodiversity in Kazakhstan

Kenya

Lake Naivasha Riparian Association

Mexico

Biocenosis, A.C.

Patronato de la Reserva Estatal de El Palmar

Nigeria

Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF)

Pakistan

The Scientific & Cultural Society of Pakistan

Panama

Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento

Peru

Centro de Datos para la Conservación - CDC-UNALM

Comité de Vecinos en Defensa de las Áreas Verdes de la Urbización

Museo de Historia Natural

PRODENA, Arequipa

Programa de Humedales del Perú

Republic of Korea

Chonbuk Korean Federation for Environmental

Green Korea United

Institute of East Cholla Province Community
Studies

Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements

Korean Wetland Center

Korean Wetlands Alliance

Masan-changwon Korean Federation For Environmental Movement

Mokpo Korean Federation for Environmental Movement

Pusan Korean Federation for Environmental Movement

The Korea Wetlands Conservation Society Tidal Flat Conservation Committee - KFEM South Africa

Wildlife Environment Society of South Africa

Spain

Sede para el Estudio de las Zonas Húmedas Mediterráneas (SEHUMED) SEO/BirdLife España

Thailand

Yadfon (Raindrop) Association

Turkey

Society for the Protection of Nature

Uganda

The East Africa Natural History Society

United Kingdom

British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

United States of America

Caddo Lake Institute, Inc.
Conservation Treaty Support Fund
Earth Island Institute
Montana State University, The Watercourse

Program Sierra Club

Terrene Institute World Resources Institute

Annex III

List of documents distributed to Contracting Parties and observers in advance of the Conference and tabled at the Conference

Documents distributed in advance of the Conference

DOC. 0	Official text of the Convention
DOC. 00	List of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention at 31 March 1999
DOC. 000	Corrigenda and crosslinks between Ramsar COP7 proposals and supporting documents
DOC. 1Rev 1	Revised Annotated Agenda and Programme
DOC. 2	Rules of Procedure for Ramsar COPs
DOC. 4	Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee
DOC. 4 Annex 1	Report of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
DOC. 5	Report of the Secretary General
DOC. 6	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in
	the Neotropics
DOC. 7	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in
	North America
DOC. 8	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in Africa
DOC. 9	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in
DOC 10	Eastern Europe
DOC. 10	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in Western Europe
DOC. 11	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in Oceania
DOC. 12	Regional Overview of implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in
	Asia
DOC. 13	Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties -Note by the Secretary General
DOC. 13.1	Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the
	Conference of the Contracting Parties -Resolution VI.11: Consolidation of resolutions and recommendations of the previous Ramsar COPs
DOC. 13.2	Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the
DOC. 13.2	Conference of the Contracting Parties -Resolution VI.18: The Ramsar Wetland Conservation
DOC 100	Awards
DOC. 13.3	Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the
	Conference of the Contracting Parties: Review of the official descriptions, conservation
	status, and management planning for Ramsar sites, including the situation of particular sites in the territory of specific Contracting Parties
DOC. 14	The Convention's Work Plan and the Ramsar Bureau Budget 2000-2002
DOC. 14 DOC. 14 Add 1	The Ramsar Convention Work Plan 2000-2002
DOC. 14 /Add 1 DOC. 15.1	
DOC. 15.1	Draft Resolution on Regional categorization of countries under the Convention, and
	composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including tasks of Standing Committee members
DOC. 15.2	Draft Resolution on Composition and modus operandi of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
DOC. 15.3	Draft Resolution on Partnerships with international organizations
DOC. 15.4	Draft Resolution on Partnerships and cooperation with other Conventions, including
DOG. 13.7	
	harmonized information management infrastructures

DOC. 15.5	Draft Resolution on Critical evaluation of the Convention's Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and its future operations
DOC. 15.6	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
DOC. 15.0 DOC. 15.7	
DOC. 13.7	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
DOC 15.0	
DOC. 15.8	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for establishing participatory processes to involve local
DOC 15.0	communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands
DOC. 15.9 DOC. 15.10	Draft Resolution on The Ramsar Convention's Outreach Programme, 1999-2002 Draft Resolution on Wetland Risk Assessment Framework
DOC. 15.10 DOC. 15.11	
DOC. 13.11	Draft Resolution on Strategic framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 15.12	Draft Resolution on The sites in the Ramsar List: official descriptions, conservation status and
200.10.12	management planning, including the situation of particular sites in the territory of specific
	Contracting Parties
DOC. 15.13	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for identifying and designating karst and other subterranean
B 0 0. 15.15	hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 15.14	Draft Resolution on Invasive species and wetlands
DOC. 15.15	Draft Resolution on Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Wise Use
D 0 0. 15.15	Principles
DOC. 15.16	Draft Resolution on The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment: strategic, environmental
200.10.10	and social
DOC. 15.17	Draft Resolution on Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation
200.1011	and wise use
DOC. 15.18	Draft Resolution on A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands
DOC. 15.19	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river
_ 0 0,	basin management
DOC. 15.20	Draft Resolution on Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention
DOC. 15.21	Draft Resolution on Priorities for wetland inventory
DOC. 15.22	Draft Resolution on Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands
DOC. 15.23	Draft Resolution on Collaborative structure for Mediterranean wetlands
DOC. 15.24	Draft Resolution on Small Island Developing States and the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 15.25	Draft Resolution on Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in
	the Asia-Pacific region
DOC. 15.26	Draft Resolution on Defining Ramsar site boundaries
DOC. 15.27	Draft Resolution on Interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention
DOC. 15.28	Draft Resolution on Compensation on wetland habitats
DOC. 15.29	Draft Resolution on Measuring water quality in wetlands
DOC. 15.30	Draft Resolution on Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on
	Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere
DOC. 15.31	Draft Resolution on Greek Ramsar sites
DOC. 15.32	Draft Resolution on The Wetlands for the Future Initiative
DOC. 16.2	Integrating wetlands conservation and wise use into river basin management [See DOC.
	15.19]
DOC. 16.4	Defining Ramsar's role in the response to the global water crisis
DOC. 17.1	Taking a more systematic approach to identifying Wetlands of International Importance
DOC. 17.2	Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
DOC. 17.3	Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
DOC. 17.4	Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use
DOC. 18.1	Participatory processes to involve local communities and indigenous people in the
	management of wetlands
DOC. 18.2	Promoting participatory wetland and river basin management through education and
	understanding
DOC. 18.3	Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Ramsar Convention's wise use
	principles
DOC. 19.1	The Ramsar Convention and Impact Assessment

DOC. 19.2	Wetland Risk Assessment Framework
DOC. 19.3	Global review of wetland resources, and priorities for wetland inventory
DOC. 19.4	Applications of a user-friendly GIS to wetland conservation at the site level
DOC. 20.1	Shared wetlands and river basins of the world
DOC. 20.2	International cooperation through River Basin Commissions
DOC. 20.3	Guidelines for international cooperation under the Convention - Part I: Shared wetlands, river
	basins, and species
DOC. 20.4	International cooperation under the Convention - Part II: Mobilising financial support from
	bilateral and multilateral donors for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 21	Membership of the next Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
DOC. 22	Date and venue of the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties
DOC. 23	The Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 24	Invasive species and wetlands
DOC. 25	The tools for implementing the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 26	Status of projects managed by the Ramsar Bureau in the period 1 January 1996 - 31 December
	1998
DOC. 28	Payment of Contracting Parties' contributions to the core budget at 31 March 1999
DOC. 29	Programme and operations of the Technical Sessions
DOC. 30	The inclusion of Israel in the Asia Region under the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 31	Letter from the Permanent Mission of Israel

Documents tabled at the Conference

DOC. 1 Rev. 2	Revised Annotated Agenda and Programme
DOC. 3	Admission of Observers
DOC. 15.6 Add. to	Update-to-date statistics concerning the status of preparation and implementation of
the Annex	National Wetland Policies, as reflected in National Reports
DOC. 15.33	Draft Resolution on The Convention Work Plan 2000-2002
DOC. 15.34	Draft Resolution on Financial and Budgetary Matters
DOC. 15.35	Draft Resolution on Thanks to the Host Country
DOC. 15.36	Draft Resolution on the Status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention
DOC. 16.1	The roles of wetlands in the water cycle
DOC. 16.3	Wetlands and National Water Policy formulation
DOC. 16.5	Measures for China's wetland rehabilitation after flooding in 1998
DOC. 27	Descriptive List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List)
DOC. 32	Small Grants Fund – 1999