

Agenda item 13

Update on the status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this report requested for this meeting, to consider the issues listed below, to advise on activities to be undertaken by regional members of the Standing Committee and those Contracting Parties directly concerned, and to instruct the Secretariat on any other specific measures to be taken.

1. In the opening operational paragraph 18 of Resolution X.13, the Contracting Parties reaffirmed their commitment “to implement fully the terms of Article 3.2 [of the Convention] on reporting change and to maintain or restore the ecological character of their Ramsar sites, including employing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as possible the matters for which a site may have been the subject of an Article 3.2 report; and, once those matters have been resolved, to submit a further report, so that both positive influences at sites and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in reporting to meetings of the Conference of the Parties in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar site network;”.
2. The Standing Committee started to monitor this commitment on a regular basis during its meetings following COP9. It formalized this procedure during its 35th meeting (2007) by taking Decision SC35-28, agreeing “that the reporting on the status of Ramsar sites should be an agenda item for every Standing Committee meeting.”
3. This document fulfills the reporting requirements and provides an update on the status of Ramsar sites, based on information received by 30 March 2009. The document specifically refers to changes that have occurred since comparable information was last provided to COP10 through the information document COP10 DOC.7 and subsequently consolidated in Resolution X.13 and its Annexes adopted by COP10 in November 2008.

Changes in the ecological character of specific Ramsar sites (*Resolution X.13, paragraph 27*)

4. Since COP10, the Ramsar Secretariat has received new information listed below referring to the current status of specific Ramsar sites listed in paragraph 27 of Resolution X.13:
 - i) China: Following a visit by staff from the national ‘Convention on Wetlands Management Office’, the planned project to abstract water from the Dalai Lake Ramsar site for mining purposes has been suspended, and a vegetation restoration plan is being formulated for the parts of the site that have been damaged.
 - ii) India: The Administrative Authority stated that they have not received any request from the state government of Andhra Pradesh for a restriction in the boundary of

Kolleru Lake Ramsar site. Should they receive any such requests in future, they will inform the Ramsar Secretariat before any such restriction is considered, undertake fully the procedures set out in Resolution IX.6, and report on the outcomes of this to the Ramsar Secretariat.

- iii) Kenya: The Administrative Authority continues to monitor the changes in the ecological character of Lake Baringo and Lake Naivasha Ramsar sites. They may formally request a Ramsar Advisory Mission for these two sites plus the Tana River Delta (not yet a Ramsar site), which is under threat from being converted into a sugarcane plantation.
 - iv) Malaysia: The Administrative Authority informed the Secretariat that an EIA has been conducted on the development project adjacent to the Sungai Pulai Ramsar site and that they are monitoring the situation. However, in Resolution X.13 the government of Malaysia was requested to provide a report to the Secretary General on the possible impacts of the project to the Pulau Kukup, Sungai Pulai, and Tanjung Pulai Ramsar sites from recent and planned coastal industrial developments. The Secretariat hopes to receive such a report soon.
 - v) Tanzania: The Administrative Authority has provided the Secretary General with updated information in relation to the advice and recommendations of the Ramsar Advisory Mission to the Lake Natron Basin Ramsar site and accepted the Secretariat's offer to assist with the elaboration of an Integrated Management Plan.
5. The Ramsar Secretariat has **not** received any new information since COP10 – and in some cases even since COP9 in 2005 – referring to the current status of the Ramsar sites listed below. Therefore, the following sub-paragraphs are quotations from paragraph 27 of Resolution X.13 that remain valid. The Administrative Authorities in the countries concerned are urged to follow up rapidly on the recommendations expressed by COP10 and, in some cases, by COP9:
- i) “that the government of Australia continue to provide the Secretary General with updates on actions underway to manage the effects of severe water shortages in the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar site and consider the appropriateness of proposing this site for inclusion on the Montreux Record;”
 - ii) “pursuant to the recommendation in Resolution IX.15, paragraph 27. ii), that the government of Germany submit a consolidated report on the compensation measures taken under Article 4.2 and their effectiveness, concerning the Mühlenberger Loch Ramsar site, in line with Resolution VIII.20;”
 - iii) “pursuant to the recommendation in Resolution IX.15, paragraph 27. xi) and the recommendations of previous meetings of the COP, that the government of Greece advise the Secretary General on the general steps being taken to restore the ecological character of the seven Greek Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record with a view to removing these sites from the Record, and further advise the Secretary General of steps taken to maintain the ecological character of the three sites removed from the Montreux Record in 1999;”

- iv) “that the government of Iraq consider applying the Montreux Record procedures concerning the anticipated ecological character changes due to natural and human-made impacts on the Hawizeh Marsh Ramsar site;”
- v) “that the government of Nepal consider applying the Montreux Record procedures concerning the recent ecological character changes due to flooding at the Koshi Tappu Ramsar site, and consider requesting a Ramsar Advisory Mission to advise on appropriate actions for the future management of this site;”
- vi) “that the government of the Republic of Korea continue to provide the Secretary General with updated reports of monitoring concerning the ecological impact, especially in relation to population declines in internationally important migratory waterbird populations, of the Saemangeum land-claim, and advise the Ramsar Secretariat of any significant change in the ecological character of those Wetland Protection Areas and Ecosystem Landscape Conservation Areas that are wetlands;
- vii) “pursuant to the recommendation in Resolution IX.15, paragraph 27. iv), that the government of Ukraine provide without delay full and updated information concerning the development of the deep water Bystroe navigation channel in the Danube Delta, including information concerning works undertaken after the adoption of Resolution IX.15, and report on progress of the transboundary cooperation with Romania and Moldova, as suggested by the Ramsar Advisory Mission in July 2008, carried out in the framework of the on-the-spot appraisal visit of the Council of Europe with the participation of other international organizations;”
- viii) “that the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) inform the Secretary General of any further developments in the proposals for canal construction and the rehabilitation of ecological character in the Ras Al Kor Ramsar site;”

Changes in the ecological character of specific Ramsar sites (*Resolution X.13, paragraph 10*)

6. The introductory paragraph 10 of Resolution X.13 lists 22 cases where 18 Parties submitted Article 3.2 reports about ecological change at Ramsar sites to the Secretariat. In addition to the cases that were subsequently taken up in the operative paragraph 27 of Resolution X.13 and addressed above, the Secretariat can report on further developments since COP10 on a number of the cases listed in paragraph 10:
7. Argentina: The Administrative Authority provided the Secretariat with new information on their measures taken for Bahía de Samborombón and Reserva Natural Otamendi Ramsar sites.
8. Colombia: Pursuant to the recommendation by COP9 in Resolution IX.15, paragraph 27.vi), the Ramsar Secretariat has received new information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia reporting on progress in addressing ecological status issues of the Sistema Delta Estuarino del Río Magdalena, Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta Ramsar site. They agreed to keep the Secretariat informed of any further developments in this regard.
9. Denmark: The Secretariat had a meeting in Copenhagen on 16 March 2009 with the National Ramsar Focal Point and the authorities of Greenland about the proposed compensation measures and the monitoring of their success following the establishment of

infrastructures inside the Heden (Jameson Land) Ramsar site to serve a major new molybdenum mining development next to the Ramsar site. A Ramsar Advisory Mission to address this, and also the wider strategic framework for Ramsar sites in Greenland, is foreseen for a later date in 2009.

10. Guatemala: The Administrative Authority urgently requested advice from the Ramsar Secretariat on how to address the causes that create ecological change in the Ramsar site Laguna del Tigre.
11. Mexico: The Administrative Authority informed the Secretariat about progress with water management to avoid negative impacts on the Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna Cuatrociénagas Ramsar site.
12. Peru: The Administrative Authority informed the Secretariat about activities to avoid ecological changes at the Reserva Nacional de Paracas Ramsar site.
13. For a number of additional Article 3.2 cases listed in Resolution X.13, since COP10 no further information was received at the Secretariat; this concerns notably Ramsar sites in the Czech Republic and Austria, Belarus, Honduras, Lebanon, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Secretariat therefore calls on these Contracting Parties to provide updated information on these cases outlined in paragraph 10 of Resolution X.13.
14. Since COP10, the Secretariat was informed about a number of new Article 3.2 cases not yet covered in Resolution X.13, affecting the following Ramsar sites in Argentina (Humedales Chaco), Canada (Malpeque Bay), El Salvador (Complejo Bahía Jiquilisco), Mexico (Laguna Costera El Caymán), Peru (Zona Reservada Los Pantanos de Villa), and the Russian Federation (Berezovye Islands, Gulf of Finland). The Secretariat is currently following up these cases in consultation with the respective Administrative Authorities.
15. The Secretariat also asks the regional members of the Standing Committee to provide their support, e.g. through direct consultations with the Parties concerned, in order that “information on such changes [will] be passed without delay to the [Ramsar Secretariat]”, as stipulated in Article 3.2 of the Convention.

Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record of wetland sites with ecological changes

16. Noting the concern of COP10, expressed in paragraph 9 of Resolution X.13, “that of the 56 Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record as of 4 November 2008 only three sites have been removed from the Record since COP9, but AWARE that requests from five Contracting Parties (Algeria, Germany, Italy, Mauritania and Senegal) for the removal of a further six sites from the Montreux Record are presently under review by the STRP”, the Secretariat can report on the following developments since that date:
 - i) Algeria: The Oasis de Ouled Saïd Ramsar site was included in the Montreux Record on 14 June 2001. Since COP10, consultations on its removal from the Record have been ongoing. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) indicated that “the primary threat [...] namely the encroachment of sand dunes, appears to have been adequately addressed for the time being through the project to stabilize the dunes.” A report is expected from the on-site visit in April 2009 by

WWF International, one of the Ramsar International Organization Partners, in order to support the removal of the site from the Record.

- ii) Italy: Stagno di Cagliari Ramsar site was added to the Montreux Record on 4 July 1990 and successfully removed from the Record on 26 November 2008, after successful remedial efforts to reverse earlier nutrient-enrichment caused by industrial and urban effluents, and the implementation on the ground of the recommendations of a new integrated management plan by the authorities of the nearby regional capital.
 - iii) Senegal: The Djoudj Ramsar site was included in the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. Currently, STRP is looking into the request for its removal. Information contained in the recent IUCN-UNESCO World Heritage Monitoring Mission report led to the removal of the site from the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. This report was forwarded to the STRP in December 2008.
17. No further information has so far been received by the Secretariat concerning progress with the ongoing process of removal from the Montreux Record of the following Ramsar sites:
- i) Algeria: Lac Tonga, added to the Record on 16 June 1993;
 - ii) Germany: Wattenmeer, Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer und Dollart, added on the Record on 4 July 1990;
 - iii) Mauritania: Parc National du Diawling, added on the Record on 28 February 2002.
18. In November 2008, the Administrative Authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that the Alagol, Ulmagol & Ajigol Lakes Ramsar site be removed from the Record. A Ramsar Advisory Mission is being planned to the site in May 2009 to assess its condition and make recommendations concerning its removal.
19. No further information was received concerning the opportunity to remove other Ramsar sites listed on the Montreux Record on the grounds that the causes for their ecological change have been eliminated. The Secretariat also lacks new information concerning sites where the causes creating ecological change need urgently to be addressed and identified. In such cases, the preparation and execution of a Ramsar Advisory Mission could present an efficient way to prepare proposals for sustainable solutions. Ramsar sites listed on the Montreux Record that fall into either of these two categories are listed in Annex I.
20. In view of the situation summarized in Annex I, and making reference to the instruction provided to the Secretariat in paragraph 33 of Resolution X.13, the Secretariat would appreciate the support from Standing Committee, providing its views, and possibly concrete instructions, on how the Secretariat can best assist and encourage Parties in their activities to be undertaken in response to change, or likely change, in the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

Regular updating of Ramsar sites information

21. Out of the list of Contracting Parties from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated Sheets are needed as a matter of priority (Annex 1 of Resolution X.13), only the Bahamas have since COP10 provided this information to the Secretariat. The Secretariat

would like to thank the Bahamas for its rapid reaction to the strong urge expressed in paragraph 31 of Resolution X.13 that “those Parties within whose territories lie designated Ramsar sites for which official descriptions have still not been provided, and/or for which suitable maps have still not yet been submitted, to provide as a matter of the greatest urgency the Ramsar Information Sheets and/or maps in one of the Convention’s official working languages”.

22. The Secretariat will contact those Parties that were not yet able to do so, as instructed in paragraph 31 of Resolution X.13. The Parties concerned are listed in Annex II to this document, which is an update of Annex 1 of Resolution X.13.
23. Finally, Annex 2 of Resolution X.13 lists Ramsar sites in which human-induced negative changes have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur (Article 3.2), as indicated in COP10 National Reports received by 1 October 2008. This Annex lists a number of additional Ramsar sites, not dealt with above, where the Secretariat has not received further information since COP10. This concerns Ramsar sites in Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Comoros, Croatia, Iceland, Iraq, Liberia, Mauritania, Lebanon, Montenegro, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Zambia, as listed in Annex 2 of Resolution X.13. These Parties are therefore requested to pass further information on these sites without delay to the Secretariat.

Annex I

Ramsar sites listed on the Montreux Record (as of 31 March 2009)

Contracting Parties	Ramsar sites with ongoing removal process from the MR	Ramsar sites where the change in ecological character is actively being addressed	Ramsar sites in need of clarification if they should be removed, or if the causes of their ecological change still need to be addressed
Algeria	Lac Tonga, Oasis de Ouled Saïd		
Argentina		Laguna de Llanquanelo	
Austria			Donau-March-Auen
Azerbaijan			Kirov Bays
Belgium			De Ijzerbroeken te Diksmuide en Lo-Renige, Schorren van de Beneden Schelde
Bulgaria			Durankulal Lake, Srebarna
Chile		Carlos Anwandter Sanctuary	
Costa Rica		Palo Verde	
Croatia			Kopački Rit

Czech Republic			Litovelske Pomoravi, floodplain of lower Dyje River, Poodri, Trebon fishponds
Democratic Republic of Congo			Parc national des Mangroves
Denmark			Ringkobing Fjord
Egypt			Lake Bardawil, Lake Burullus
Germany	Wattenmeer, Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart		
Greece			Amvrakikos gulf, Axios Ludias Aliakmon delta, Kotychi laggons, Lake vistonis Porto Lagos Lake Ismaris & adjoining lagoons, Lakes volvi & Koronia, Messolonghi lagoons, Nestos delta & adjoining lagoons
Guatemala			Laguna del Tigre
India			Koleado national Park, Loktak Lake
Iran, Islamic Republic of			Alagol Ulmagol & Ajigol Lakes, Anzali Mordab complex, Hamun-e-Puzak south end, Hamun-e-Saberi & Hamun-e-Helmand, Neyriz Lakes & Kamjan Marshes, Shadegan Marshes & Mudflats of Khor-al Amaya & Khor Musa, Shurgol Yadegarlu & Dorgeh Sangi Lakes
Jordan			Azraq Oasis
Kazakhstan			Lakes of the lower Turgay & Irgyz
Kyrgyz Republic			Isyk-Kul State Reserve with the Lake Isyk-Kul
Mauritania	Parc national du Diawling		
Nicaragua			Sistema de Humedales de la Bahia de Bluefields
Senegal	Djoudj		Bassin du Ndiael
South Africa			Blesbokspruit, Orange River Mouth

Spain			Doñana, Las Tablas de Daimiel
Tunisia			Ichkeul
Uganda			Lake George
United Kingdom			The Dee Estuary, Ouse Washes
USA			Everglades
Uruguay			Bañados del Este y Franja Costera

Annex II

List of Contracting Parties from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated Sheets are needed as a matter of priority (as of 31 March 2009)

ALBANIA	DJIBOUTI	LIBYAN ARAB
ALGERIA	ECUADOR	JAMAHIRIYA
ARGENTINA	EGYPT	LIECHTENSTEIN
ARMENIA	EL SALVADOR	LITHUANIA
AUSTRALIA	ESTONIA	LUXEMBOURG
AZERBAIJAN	FIJI	MACEDONIA, THE
BAHRAIN	FRANCE	F.Y.R. OF
BANGLADESH	GABON	MADAGASCAR
BELARUS	GAMBIA	MALAWI
BELGIUM	GERMANY	MALAYSIA
BELIZE	GHANA	MALTA
BENIN	GREECE	MAURITANIA
BOLIVIA	GUATEMALA	MAURITIUS
BOSNIA &	GUINEA	MEXICO
HERZEGOVINA	GUINEA-BISSAU	MOLDOVA
BRAZIL	HONDURAS	MONGOLIA
BULGARIA	ICELAND	MONTENEGRO
BURKINA FASO	INDIA	MYANMAR
CANADA	INDONESIA	NEPAL
CAPE VERDE	IRAN, I. R. OF	NETHERLANDS
CENTRAL AFRICAN	IRAQ	NEW ZEALAND
REPUBLIC	IRELAND	NICARAGUA
CHAD	ISRAEL	NIGER
CHILE	JAMAICA	NIGERIA
COLOMBIA	JAPAN	NORWAY
COMOROS	JORDAN	PAKISTAN
CONGO	KAZAKHSTAN	PALAU
CONGO, D.R. OF	KENYA	PANAMA
CROATIA	KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
CUBA	KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	PARAGUAY
CZECH REPUBLIC	LEBANON	PERU
DENMARK		PHILIPPINES

PORTUGAL
ROMANIA
RUSSIAN FED.
RWANDA
SAMOA
SAO TOME &
PRINCIPE
SENEGAL
SERBIA
SIERRA LEONE
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
SLOVENIA

SOUTH AFRICA
SPAIN
SRI LANKA
SURINAME
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
SYRIAN ARAB REP
TAJIKISTAN
TANZANIA, UNITED
REPUBLIC OF
THAILAND
TOGO

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
TUNISIA
UGANDA
UKRAINE
UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA
URUGUAY
VENEZUELA
VIET NAM