

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
6th Meeting of the CEPA Oversight Panel
Gland, Switzerland, April 2013

Report of the 6th Meeting of the CEPA Oversight Panel Gland, 12-14 April 2013

Present:

Members: Sari Airas; Esther Koopmanschap; Christine Prietto; Malta Qwathekana (Chair); Chris Rostron; Suh Seung-Oh; Stanley Tshitwamulomoni; *Ex-officio:* Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General; Sandra Hails, CEPA Programme Officer

Observer: Edward Netshithothole

Apologies: James Clarke; Elizabeth Roberts; Nunia Thomas

1. Welcome and introductory remarks.

Ms Malta Qwathekana, as Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel, opened the meeting and welcomed the members and observers. In her introductory remarks she noted that there was often a link missing between scientists and local communities and that CEPA tools and activities had a key role in helping to bridge this gap. She also identified the key challenge facing the Convention's CEPA programme and indeed the CEPA Panel, in that CEPA activities are still not recognised by many Parties as important in the world of wetland conservation and that the Panel and the Convention's CEPA Programme have a key role in resolving this situation.

2. Adoption of agenda.

The Panel adopted the agenda

3. Introduction of members and observers

The Chair introduced herself and invited all present to briefly introduce themselves.

4. Brief review of the role and operation of the CEPA Oversight Panel

The Chair invited the CEPA Programme Officer to give a brief powerpoint presentation explaining the origins, membership and current operation of the CEPA Oversight Panel. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that the Panel is both reactive, responding to the needs expressed by the Convention and its bodies, and proactive in identifying future CEPA priorities for the Convention.

Brief review of the CEPA Panel's report to Standing Committee (SC) 46 and discussion of any matters arising

5. The Chair invited the CEPA Programme Officer to present some feedback on the report from the CEPA Panel delivered to Standing Committee (SC) 46, noting that:

- (a) the Panel report was very well received and was fully endorsed by SC;
- (b) following the discussion on the Panel's work on the reviewing of the participatory management guidelines, some SC participants noted that guidelines on participation in wetland management were very useful for the promotion of wise use;
- (c) an International Organization Partner (IOP) participant noted that there was great value in wetland centres for their role in raising the visibility of the Convention;

- (d) another IOP launched a discussion on the acronym CEPA suggesting that changing the 'P' to participation has created some confusion for some people and that the Panel should consider using the acronym CEPPA in the new CEPA programme to be adopted at COP12.
6. The panel spent a short time discussing the acronym and whether there was some grounds for reviewing CEPA as a title for the programme. One panel member suggested that CEPA as an acronym was not broadly meaningful for non 'Ramsar' people and a more useful way of referring to the programme should be sought, such as 'Engagement programme'. The Panel committed to further discussion as the new CEPA Programme is developed.

Review of the Panel's tasks and planning for task delivery during the triennium

7. The Chair noted that during this meeting the Panel would be planning how to deliver the tasks on the draft work plan summary, now endorsed by SC46. Following a brief introduction of each task the Panel worked through the various tasks. The key points and decisions on each item are recorded below.

Task 1: CEPA indicators in the draft National Reports (NRs) to COP12.

8. The Deputy Secretary General (DSG) briefed the Panel on the National Reporting system, noting that the aim is always to keep simplicity and continuity over the triennia so that the Convention can track progress and trends in implementation over time. The indicators in the NRs are based on the six-year Strategic Plan and thus the NR for COP12 reflects the Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2015.
9. The DSG confirmed that the NRs have to be submitted by the Administrative Authority and noted, in response to a Panel member's question, that the Convention cannot force Contracting Parties to involve NGOs and others in preparing their report although it is broadly recognized that this is often beneficial in gathering additional implementation information. It was agreed to edit paragraph 27 of the explanatory note at the start of the NR to say "It is not expected that the NRF will usually be filled in by one person alone - *for* many indicators it would seem best for the principal compiler to consult with colleagues in the same and other agencies within the government *and, as appropriate with relevant NGOs and other stakeholders* who might have better knowledge of aspects of the Party's overall implementation of the Convention."
10. The DSG noted that SC46 had endorsed the draft for COP12 reporting, including the indicators in Strategy 4.1 specifically on CEPA but that some suggested changes to the CEPA Strategy were received from Japan immediately after SC46. The following changes, including those responding to the request from Japan in indicators 4.1.2, 4.1.5, were agreed. New text is shown in italics and deleted text shown as 'strikethrough'. The full draft of the NR as considered by SC46 is *available here* :
- Indicator 4.1.1 Additional information (if "Yes" or "In progress" to one *or more* of the four questions above, *for each* please describe the mechanism, *who is responsible* and identify if it has involved CEPA NFPs):
 - Indicator 4.1.2 How many centres (visitor/interpretation/education) have been established at *(a) Ramsar Sites and (b) at other wetlands*
 - Indicator 4.1.3 (a) promote ~~public stakeholder~~ participation in decision-making"
 - Indicator 4.1.3 Additional information (if 'yes' or 'partly' please provide additional information about the ways in which ~~local communities~~ *stakeholders* are involved"
 - Indicator 4.1.5 How many opportunities for wetland site manager training have been provided since COP11 for *(a) Ramsar Sites and (b) at other wetlands*

- Indicator 4.1.6 Additional information (If “Yes”, indicate a) its membership; b) *number of meetings since COP11*; and c) what responsibilities the Committee has)
- Indicator 4.1.7 a. ~~relevant~~ other ministries, departments and agencies?
- Indicator 4.1.8 Have *Ramsar –branded* World Wetlands Day activities (*whether on 2 February or another time of year*) been carried out since COP11etc.
- 4.1.9 Additional information (if these ~~including if support has been provided for the delivery of these~~ and other CEPA activities *have been undertaken* by other organisations, please indicate this).

Task 3: Advisory Board on Capacity Building for the Ramsar Convention.

11. The CEPA Programme Officer briefly reviewed the background and history of the Advisory Board and confirmed that the Secretariat is still waiting for the final confirmation of the dissolution of the Board, but noted that this now seems very likely. Panel member Esther Koopmanschap was invited to inform the Panel of the Board’s final product – *Enhancing the Wise Use of Wetlands: A Framework for Capacity Development* - which was launched at COP11. She noted that the publication’s key aim was to motivate people to look at the steps that are involved in developing capacity at various levels within the country-level. It provides links to many capacity building tools and is *currently available in English* and in the future likely in Chinese, Turkish and Portuguese.

Task 2: Ramsar Regional Centres and their capacity building needs

12. After a brief introduction to the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRCs) and their role, Mr Suh Seung-Oh from the RRC – East Asia was invited to report to the Panel on a brief meeting on the fringes of SC46 with representatives from the RRC – East Africa and the RRC - Central & West Asia (also with input from Sandra Hails and Lew Young of the Secretariat). Mr Suh briefly mentioned the language challenge faced by all three centres, noting for example, that the RRC-East Asia works with 17 countries with different languages. Centres are also challenged in finding trainers who are not only familiar with wetland management but also very familiar with the Convention and how it works. To resolve this all three centres have agreed on some key training materials needed by the centres that can be readily translated for broad use. The list included video lectures or Power Point Presentations of:

PPTs (or videos where possible)

- Ramsar Handbooks – perhaps 2 screens for each handbook on what is in each and who is the key target.
- Ramsar Handbooks – more detailed PPTs on selected handbooks (such as Ramsar Site designation and criteria; wetland management; river basin management; CEPA Programme etc.)
- Generic PPT on the Convention: Contracting Party commitments, how the Convention operates etc.
- Role and value of wetlands. Based on standard roles and examples in the TEEB report on wetland ecosystem services and their economic value
- Roles of Focal Points (National Focal Point as well as CEPA and STRP Focal Points)

Videos:

- Updating Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) – available now in English and soon in French and Spanish. Make available to the RRCs for translation into other languages
- The Ramsar video: make available for translation (master video and English script)

13. It was agreed that Panel member Sari Airas would extend this list adding a 'wish list' of other materials.
14. Following broader discussion on the RRCs and their role, the Chair noted that there is a need for improved, more regular networking of the RRCs and it was agreed that the RRCs should try to move forward with this.

Capacity building and the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)

15. Associated with the capacity building materials and the RRCs, Panel member and CEPA expert on the STRP, Chris Prietto briefed the Panel on the recent discussions within STRP of the need for a focus on implementation rather than simply creating more guidance. With the identification of a need for more targeted materials, a key challenge in this triennium is to support capacity building at the national and local level with products that are accessible, easy to use and translate. This training platform has only just begun within the STRP and it was agreed that the CEPA and STRP Panels should cooperate in this work. Chris Prietto is currently preparing a set of guiding principles for the development of the capacity building materials (such as ability to customise; easy to deliver; easy to download and share etc.) applicable to both Panels.
16. In discussing the cost implications, it was noted that there may be some funding within the CEPA budget to help fund the development of some of these materials. The Chair noted that if this was not sufficient there would be a need for fund-raising. The Panel discussed the need to identify a location for these materials as well as a system for control of updates. It was additionally agreed that the Panel should develop a 'wish' list of other desirable materials to supplement the list in paragraph 12; Sari Airas agreed to lead on this.

Task 5. Review the content and implementation of the current CEPA Resolution, X.8, and prepare a draft CEPA Resolution and programme for the period 2016-2022

17. Panel member Chris Prietto introduced the Panel to the major components of the current CEPA Programme noting that 'participation' is too focussed on the participation of local communities and that the role of participation in wetland management needs to be more broadly interpreted in the next CEPA Programme. The Convention's participatory guidance documents are the subject of further discussion under Task 4. Further discussions on the CEPA Programme and its redevelopment broadly noted:
 - The need for Panel members to become more familiar with the current CEPA Programme (Resolution X.8), the National Report indicators for CEPA (NR Strategy 4.1) for assessing implementation, as well as the COP 11 CEPA implementation report prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Panel. Familiarity with these documents and their inter-linkages will be essential for the next steps in the preparation of the next CEPA Programme. These documents will be made available to Panel members.
 - Following a suggestion by the Panel, the Secretariat will make the CEPA implementation reports prepared for each COP available on the Panel's web page.
 - With only two CEPA Focal Points appointed for each country, some Panel members felt that this was quite challenging in terms of national implementation and that perhaps in-country CEPA networks would support better implementation.
 - Wetland centres can and perhaps should play a more significant role in CEPA implementation.
 - The re-drafting of the Convention's Strategic Plan and the CEPA Programme concurrently for adoption at COP12 is quite challenging since they need to be aligned, but this seems unavoidable. Both plans will be valid for six years.

18. To ensure the drafting process moves forward rapidly the Panel agreed that Chris Prietto and Esther Koopmanschap would produce a scoping paper to describe the process that will be followed, help to consolidate the thinking of the Panel members, and ensure that Panel members are well prepared for a focussed drafting meeting to be held early in 2014. A detailed timeline will be included so that the draft is ready for a first review by SC47 to ensure that the draft Resolution aligns with SC meetings for approval. The scoping paper will be made available on Dropbox for Panel review and further development.
19. Three possible locations for the drafting meeting were discussed: Gland, Slimbridge in the United Kingdom, and Istanbul in Turkey. Chris Rostron and Esther Koopmanschap were requested to provide more detailed information to the Secretariat as soon as possible on accommodation and meeting room costs for the UK and Turkey, respectively.

Task 4. Review the two Convention Resolutions relevant to participation, Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.36, and advise the Convention on whether there is value in consolidating their contents into one Resolution

20. The two participation resolutions VII.8 *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* and VIII.36 *Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands* were adopted in 1999 and 2002 respectively. Since this task was agreed by the Panel, the task has evolved into looking more broadly at the relevance and utility of both Resolutions in today's world as well as an assessment of the relationship between the two. The CEPA Programme Officer reported that a small number of questions had been prepared to help in this assessment and given to selected members of STRP and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication to gather their views. The questions were:

1. What is the relationship between Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.36.
2. Do we need both?
3. Do we need just VII.8?
4. Do we need just VIII.36?

Specific questions on Resolution VII.8

5. Is the guidance current or does it need re-thinking?
6. Is the guidance too 'top down' in its approach?
7. Is the guidance too patronising towards local and indigenous communities?
8. Are the case studies really too old to be credible today?

21. The consolidated results were presented to the Panel and a lengthy discussion followed on the responses. It was agreed that while there was not a complete consensus, there were many comments that suggested that the VII.8 guidance was not presented in a way compatible with today's approaches to local community participation in wetland management and that many saw the 'top-down' approach as inappropriate. There was recognition in the responses that the case studies needed to be replaced or updated and that if the latter there was a need to look at, among other things, the acceptable language today in referring to 'local' and 'indigenous' people(s) with a suggestion that the Panel looks at how IPBES and CBD handle such terms. It was also suggested that from the two Resolutions perhaps it would be possible to extract some 'guiding principles on participation' for use in the CEPA programme and then retire the two Resolutions at COP12. Finally, given the complex workings of the Convention, there was an inconclusive discussion on the capacity of the Convention to 'retire' or 'supercede' Resolutions that requires further elucidation before any further steps are taken.

22. Given the complexity of this task and the need to further assess the two Resolutions, it was agreed that the Panel should move ahead in the first instance with elaborating participation in the new CEPA Programme before coming back to making a final decision on Task 4.
23. The full meeting finished on Saturday 13th at 18.00 hours leaving two smaller groups to continue working on Sunday morning on the scoping document and associated timelines, as well as the wish list of CEPA materials.