

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland
17-19 October 1988

Present

Members:

Canada (H A Clarke) (Vice-Chairman)

Chile (R Schlatter)

Netherlands (N Visser)

Tunisia (S B H Kacem)

Switzerland (A Antonietti)

USA (L Mason)

Permanent Observers:

UK (R Bone, D Langslow, I Muchmore)

IUCN (M Holdgate, M Cockerell, F Droz, P Dugan, H Morgans) (for different agenda items)

IWRB (M Moser)

Contracting Party Observers:

Australia (J Forshaw)

Norway (S Eldoy)

USSR (D Gorin, Z Moulytseva)

Non-governmental Observers:

WWF (E U C Bohlen, J-P Huart, S Lyster, G Shepherd) (for certain agenda items)

Secretariat:

D Navid (Secretary-General)

M Smart (Conservation Coordinator) (rapporteur)

M Katz (Administrative Assistant)

C Samuel (Secretary)

C de Klemm (Consultant to the Bureau and Legal Advisor)

Agenda item 1: Opening and Welcoming Remarks

Agenda item 1 (a) The Vice-Chairman, Mr H A Clarke, opened the meeting at 09h10 on 17 October 1988. He explained that the Chairman Mr A L Rao had been detained in Pakistan for an important Islamic Conference meeting during which he would be promoting the Ramsar Convention. Mr Rao had sent the Standing Committee his best wishes for a successful meeting. The regional representative of Oceania, New Zealand, had also been unable to attend, but had sent a number of written comments, and Australia was present as an observer from the region. Similarly Poland, the regional representative from eastern Europe, had sent apologies, but the

Soviet Union was present as an observer from the eastern Europe region

The Chairman welcomed members of the Standing Committee, observers and non-governmental organizations. He offered his thanks to IUCN and WWF for providing such excellent facilities for the meeting, and to the Swiss authorities for organizing an enjoyable and informative visit to the Swiss Ramsar site of Fanel/Le Chablais and other wetlands on the Lake of Neuchâtel the previous day. He welcomed the presence of the observer from Norway, who was Chairman of the Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use, and expressed the Standing Committee's good wishes to Mr Frans van Rijckevorsel who had previously represented the Netherlands, but was currently in hospital.

Agenda item 1(b) Speaking on behalf of IUCN, Dr Martin Holdgate, Director General of IUCN, extended a warm welcome to participants. He referred the current initiatives for the conservation of biodiversity, expressed in three ways:

- (i) the UNEP Governing Council had emphasized the need for existing conventions to dovetail together;
- (ii) there was a need for closer collaboration between the secretariats of existing Conventions;
- (iii) IUCN's General Assembly had called on the Union to develop a Biodiversity Convention, which would take at least five to ten years.

Since biodiversity was situated to a great extent in developing countries, he noted that Ramsar was uniquely important, as it adopted such a broad definition of wetlands and dealt with wetlands in developing countries, notably mangroves. Wetlands and tropical forests were undoubtedly the two habitats under greatest threat. It should be considered whether further Conventions on forests or coastal zones, or indeed on habitats in general, were necessary.

In the meantime, however, it was important to make logic out of existing Conventions. Ramsar had originally dealt with birds, but had now been broadened and developed, which illustrated how a Convention could be applied and adapted. Dr Holdgate hoped that Ramsar would in future work even more closely with other Conventions, notably the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species. IUCN offered its good offices to promote cooperation with other Conventions, and to organize, as had happened on Saturday 15 October, meetings to discuss cooperation, including co-location, perhaps on a conservation campus which he hoped would be built on the Swiss shores of the Lake of Geneva. Such discussions would hinge on frankness, mutual understanding over arrangements and budgetary matters. In conclusion, Dr Holdgate indicated that he was obliged to be absent for much of the discussion on 17 and 18 October, but would return for the final session on 19 October; in the meantime other IUCN officials would take part.

Agenda item 1(c) Dr Mike Moser, Director of IWRB, noted that many exciting changes were taking place at Slimbridge. A new Director General of The Wildfowl Trust had been appointed, the section of the Ramsar Bureau had been established, and following the retirement of Prof Geoffrey Matthews, he had been appointed with the mandate to review and develop IWRB's programme. IWRB was delighted to be involved with Ramsar and its development, and was anxious to make the Convention even more relevant to developing countries. IWRB's work was

not limited to waterfowl, since it was closely involved in training and wetland inventories and could provide specialist advice through its Research Groups. Dr Moser concluded by expressing support for coordination on programme planning between IWRB and Ramsar.

Agenda item 1(d) The Secretary General welcomed participants on behalf of the Ramsar Bureau, noting that France and Mexico, both Contracting Parties to the Convention, and Burkina-Faso, which had not yet acceded, had indicated that they might send observers to the meeting in the coming days. He recalled that as foreseen in the Rules of Procedures simultaneous interpretation was not being provided, but that consecutive interpretation was available between English and French; if necessary similar facilities would be made available in Spanish. He therefore urged participants to feel free to speak either in English or French, or indeed in Spanish. He pointed out that all documentation was available in English and French. Finally, on behalf of the Bureau, he invited participants to attend a dinner that evening.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Agenda

After thanking the previous speakers for their welcome, the Chairman of the meeting proposed that the draft Agenda, already circulated to members of the Standing Committee under Standing Committee Notification 1988/4, be adopted, with Item 6 considered after Item 3 to take advantage of Dr Holdgate's presence, and that items 13 and 14 be held over until 19 October for the same reason. The agenda was then adopted unanimously.

Agenda item 3: Admission of Observers

The Chairman noted for the record the presence of observers from Australia, Norway and the USSR. In addition he pointed out that the UK was a permanent observer, by virtue of the fact that a section of the Ramsar Bureau was located in UK, as were IUCN and IWRB, with whose headquarters the two sections were situated. The Chairman of the Standing Committee had proposed WWF be invited to provide an observer, given that the meeting was being held at the World Conservation Centre and given the support provided by WWF for the Convention. No negative responses had been received from the Standing Committee and the participants agreed to confirm the admission of WWF as an observer to the Fifth Meeting.

Mr Bohlen of WWF thanked the Standing Committee and said that WWF much appreciated the opportunity to participate in the meeting, the more so as wetlands were one of its three priority areas of activity (the other two being tropical forests and biodiversity).

Agenda Item 4. Matters arising from the minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee not otherwise covered by this Agenda

The Chairman pointed out that the full proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee (held in Costa Rica in January 1988) had been circulated to members on 29 March 1988 and, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee, had been adopted on 29 April 1988. He noted that most of the matters arising from the minutes of the Fourth Meeting were covered elsewhere in the agenda. However, he asked for further details of action taken on the suggestion by Mr Parcells (Fourth Meeting minutes, page 12 paragraph 2 of the Supporting

Documentation in the English version) that the Ramsar Bureau should seek to participate in the World Bank's Critical Ecosystems Task Force. The Secretary General noted that the Bureau's action in respect of Development Assistance Activities was detailed in the Bureau Report on 1988 Activities (Supporting Documentation, page 29, English version), to be discussed under agenda item 5. He added, however, that the Bureau had provided the World Bank with a detailed brief on Mediterranean wetlands, and that he had himself visited the Bank. It had been hoped that Chairman Rao might take part in the work of the Task Force, but this had not proved feasible. The Secretary General emphasized that the task of maintaining full contacts with development agencies was a very large one, which if it were to be carried out intensively, would require extra resources and staff for the Bureau.

In answer to a question about the Bureau's work on promotion of the Convention (Fourth Meeting minutes, page 15 and 16 of the Supporting Documentation, English version), the Secretary General noted that the Bureau had devoted particular attention in promotional work to the Mediterranean. He also reported briefly on his recent visit to Malaysia and Japan, with financial support from the Environmental Agency of Japan. He had been very well received and had high hopes of support from Japan in the form of project funds, secondment and hosting of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. It was also likely that Malaysia and other ASEAN states would be joining the Convention soon. In respect to Central America, the member from the USA who had visited Costa Rica indicated that a decree had recently been signed allowing documents on sites for Ramsar listing to be prepared. The observer from WWF enquired whether the Bureau had a plan for promoting new accessions to the Convention, and offered WWF help in certain key countries. The Chairman requested that this should be discussed under item 7, the Convention's strategy.

The Conservation Coordinator then presented an additional document explaining the Bureau's follow-up action in respect of the IUCN document on "Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Development". He explained that, as requested by the Standing Committee, the Bureau had prepared the text of an insertion into the IUCN document about the Convention, and had made detailed comments on the whole text. He also emphasized that the document, which had been extensively revised, was particularly concerned with wise use of wetlands and would be very helpful to the Bureau and to the Contracting Parties in defining and promoting wise use. He further noted that the document was strategic, covering what should be done, but not how it should be achieved. It was inevitable that the Ramsar Convention would be used to implement the conception of wise use presented.

The member from Tunisia called on the Bureau to maintain involvement with the document so as to ensure it was both useful and usable. He emphasized the need to translate it into languages widely used in developing countries. The Secretary General said he understood IUCN had plans to translate the document and promised to keep the Standing Committee informed.

The observer from Australia remarked upon the difficulties, particularly for distant countries like his own, of understanding how Ramsar related to IUCN's Wetland Programme. The IUCN document under discussion was clearly an important one, and there was a need from the outset for close collaboration between the Ramsar Bureau and the IUCN programme. He also noted that it was important for international programmes to be aware of the multiplicity of regional and

national agencies already active in southeast Asia; such agencies might be more effective in a regional context than international agencies based in Europe

The Chairman concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of informing Contracting Parties of the latest developments in these matters, perhaps through the vehicle of the Newsletter. He noted that the Convention strategy and cooperation with other Conventions and organizations would be covered under agenda items 7, 13 and 17.

Agenda item 5 .Presentation of Report on 1988 Activities by the Convention Bureau

The Secretary General presented the report on pages 27 to 31 of the English version of the Supporting Documentation, pointing out that it was the basis for the Bureau's Annual Report to the Contracting Parties. Recalling that the report had been prepared two months previously, he referred to recent developments: Egypt had become the 49th Contracting Party, while Bolivia and Guatemala had both deposited instruments of accession at Unesco, but had not yet sent maps or descriptions of wetlands of international importance .The list now numbered 412 wetlands with the inclusion of Egypt's two sites, and of an additional site in Ireland .In addition to the Bureau travel mentioned in that report, he had, upon government invitation, visited Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan and USA and would in the near future, given further invitations, be visiting Hungary, Czechoslovakia and India; the Conservation Coordinator had attended the Rennes Conference in France and hoped to visit Spain and Pakistan. On the subject of Development Assistance Agencies, he noted that several contacts had been made. However, the Bureau had many other tasks and as its partners in IUCN, NRDC and WWF were already active in this field, the Bureau felt that it was best to work closely with these bodies in this matter. Indeed, more Bureau staff and funding would be necessary if this activity were to be expanded, and this should be considered in the review of the Convention strategy and the Bureau workplan.

The member from the USA commented that Bureau collaboration with Mr Parcels of NRDC had led to a major success in the adoption of a World Bank policy. The observer from UK congratulated the Bureau on the range of activities carried out, and on the momentum generated .He suggested that in the future an effort should be made to make the format of the annual report conform more closely with the work plan and if possible accounts documents, to permit comparisons to be more easily made .Finally he asked about contacts with Sahelian countries and the EEC .The Secretary General replied that it was hoped to begin a project with Sahel in late 1988 or early 1989 in connection with application of the Monitoring Procedure at the N'daïel Ramsar site in Senegal .The Conservation Coordinator indicated that there had been extensive contacts with EEC in the framework of the EEC Working Group on Mediterranean wetlands. Furthermore he understood that a question had been asked in the European Parliament about the possibility of the Community acceding to the Convention. The Secretary General referred to work done at IUCN's Environmental Law Centre about the Convention and its application in EEC countries, especially France, and to a publication by Mr Koester on the application of the Convention; the latter had appeared in Danish and was to be translated and published by the Bureau in 1989. The observer from UK emphasized the value of practical cooperation with EEC and suggested the Bureau develop links with the CORINE database.

The member from USA offered congratulations to the Bureau on the presentation of the Ramsar

Newsletter, and expressed gratitude to the Canadian Wildlife Service for providing logistic support and finance. The member from Canada noted that help had come not only from Canadian Wildlife Service, but non-government bodies in Canada, notably WWF and Wildlife Habitat Canada and in the USA (WWF-USA).

In answer to a query from the observer from Australia, the Secretary General reported that so far only Japan had accepted the Regina amendments; Pakistan and Switzerland were understood to have made good progress towards acceptance and it was hoped that more Contracting Parties would complete the formalities in the near future

Agenda Item 6: Review of Convention Finances

Agenda item 6(a): 1988 Income

The Chairman invited the Secretary General to introduce this item. Presenting the documents on page 33 (English version) of the Supporting Documentation booklet, the Secretary General recalled that the Standing Committees tasks included supervision of the budget and approval of priorities for expenditure; it also had powers to approve budgetary reallocations, especially in the current triennium in respect of fluctuations in exchange rates. He thanked IUCN's financial services, which had enabled the latest expenditure to be shown in a revised paper submitted to the Committee.

The Secretary General then presented a revised version of the statement of income on pages 35 and 36, showing that further contributions to core budget had as of 14 October 88 been received from Greece, Iceland, Portugal and Switzerland. In addition the Canadian contribution had been received on 15 October 1988. He noted that a large number of Contracting Parties from all over the world had contributed, and that nearly all had paid at the higher exchange rate. The timing of payments had been gratifying and there had been no cash flow problem and hence no imposition either on IUCN or IWRB. Currently about SFr 450,000 had been received, out of a budget figure of SFr 613,000. While this was most encouraging in the first year of operations, the Secretary General noted that, in order to carry out its work in full, the Bureau needed a full budget. The Secretary General then presented an updated version of the entries on project support, noting that the amount received for the Monitoring Procedure had now reached SFr 41,455.60 and that the amount yet to be received should read SFr 21,500. He noted that the very welcome development grant from the USFWS had been used for promotional materials and an expert meeting; the grant for the Monitoring Procedure had come from both governmental and non-governmental sources; he paid special thanks to Canada, the UK and USA for making a special grant for the Regina Proceedings and regretted it had not been possible to finish them in time for distribution at the present meeting. The Secretary General also pointed out that several Contracting Parties had paid more than the amount invoiced. This was the case for Iceland and Denmark, for Netherlands, (which had paid more than double the sum invoiced), and for USA which had been unable at Regina to accept the concept of mandatory contributions, but had in fact made a generous voluntary contribution via project grants. He also noted that there had been major contributions in kind from Canada - which had supported the Newsletter and the data work - and from Switzerland - which had provided tax relief to international staff at Gland, thereby saving money for the Convention.

Summing up, the Secretary General said that the picture was encouraging. He requested the Standing Committee's advice on:

- how best to contact governments to discuss 1988 payment, since the year was not yet over and since in any event he would never wish to imply the idea of a member being in "arrears";
- how to approach governments for project support;
- how to present invoices for 1989; in this context the Secretary General remarked that the early submission of 1988 invoices had in most cases proved effective and that the higher exchange rate had been accepted; for 1989 he also intended to submit invoices the previous autumn, but would welcome advice on how to deal with unpaid 1988 invoices

The WWF observer indicated that a further core grant of 10,000 US dollars, together with a grant of 8,000 US dollars for the Monitoring Procedure, would be made to the Bureau. The member from Switzerland announced that an additional annual voluntary contribution of 100,000 Swiss francs would be made beginning in 1988, probably in December 1988 or January 1989 after acceptance by Switzerland of the Regina amendments. He confirmed that, even if the payment did not arrive until January 1989, it was to be regarded as payment for 1988, and that it was intended to renew it in following years. The principal purpose was for protection of wetlands along flyways of birds migrating from West Africa to West Europe, but in early years, when cash flow problems might arise, it could be used for other matters; thus in 1989 it could be employed for preparation of the Montreux Conference, although Switzerland would be making a full contribution to the costs of the Conference. The Committee expressed its gratitude to WWF and Switzerland for these offers, and for the flexible approach adopted by Switzerland. The Chairman directed that the minutes should record the Standing Committee's appreciation to Contracting Parties for their prompt payment of Bureau invoices and to those governments and agencies which had found creative arrangements to submit funds.

The member from Tunisia said he was agreeably surprised at the financial response in the Bureau's first year. He suggested that invoices for 1989 should be submitted through diplomatic channels: in some cases a brief note on the Convention might be added in case of changes in personnel or administrative methods in the Embassies or administration of Contracting Parties. The member from USA suggested that regional representatives on the Standing Committee might use regional or bilateral opportunities to press in an informal way for payment of invoices

After some discussion it was felt not to be appropriate to emphasize non-payment of invoices, particularly in the first full year of the Bureau's operations; nor was it appropriate, in times of budgetary stringency, to give too much publicity to generous payment. A flexible approach should be adopted, sending reminders or notes of appreciation if appropriate; regional representatives could, where appropriate, contact other Contracting Parties in their region and obtain information on the latest situation from the Bureau. It was agreed that invoices for 1989 should be sent out as soon as possible after the Standing Committee meeting; the Contracting Parties should be informed that the Bureau was delighted to have received so many financial contributions for 1988 already, and hoped to receive any outstanding 1988 contributions.

Summing up, the Chairman expressed satisfaction with the income situation after the first year.

About two-thirds of projected income had been received and the Bureau had shown great managerial competence in making a realistic assessment of expenditure. Even if the outstanding 200,000 Swiss francs were not received, it was clear from the documents provided that funds would not be overspent. Recalling that this was the first year of the financial regime, he emphasized the need to handle the situation delicately, as it took time for arrangements to be put into place.

Agenda item 6 (b): 1988 Expenditure

The Secretary General drew attention to the statement of expenditure included on page 38 of the Supporting Documentation booklet (English version), and presented an updated version, correct to 11 October 1988. He explained that the document had been prepared by IUCN's financial services, and expressed appreciation of this support from IUCN, which enabled Ramsar expenditure to be monitored. He further explained that the figure of some 502,000 Swiss francs had been taken as a preliminary estimate of total expenditure in 1989 and seemed likely to be correct.

On behalf of IUCN, Ms Morgans gave further details of accounting arrangements. Ramsar was a separate cost centre within the IUCN system, which meant that a monthly statement and reconciliation was produced. Expenditure could not be made without the approval of the Secretary General. In the same way, the Ramsar Bureau had a separate bank account and so was informed as income arrived, so that acknowledgement could be made immediately. The Bureau also had control over different expenditure items such as telephone and postage. After the first nine months of 1988 (75% of the year), only 65% of projected expenditures had been made.

The Secretary General pointed out that the IUCN's presentation did not conform exactly to the Ramsar budget, but the final report, to be checked by auditors, would follow Ramsar's budget format. He noted that total expenditure was well within the budget and that the only "line" in which expenditure was over budget was for telephone costs, which was a reflection of the existence of the two sections of the Bureau. The observer from the UK felt that this was not a matter for concern and advocated wider use of telefax and telex. The Bureau had requested all the Contracting Parties to inform it of their telephone, telex and telefax numbers. The Secretary General noted that the overhead charge paid to IUCN as agreed at Regina were covered in the budget lines, "depreciation", "financial administration" and "EDP" (Electronic data-processing); in 1988 this was likely to be about 23% of the salary costs rather than the 24% approved at Regina.

In answer to a question by the member from the Netherlands, Ms Morgans explained that the 24% charge was made not on the basis of actual transactions, but on the numbers and category of people working for Ramsar. If the number of higher category staff was disproportionately high, the charge would go beyond 24%, though IUCN was confident it could remain within Ramsar's budget. Mr Droz pointed out that many of the administration charges were passed on to IUCN from WWF; IUCN was unable to reduce these and thus provide a subsidy to Ramsar. The Secretary General emphasized that the overhead charge was not at present a problem, but needed to be monitored over the three year period.

In answer to a question from the IWRB observer, the Secretary General indicated that a similar but less elaborate financial reporting presentation existed for project expenditure, and would be made available to donors.

Concluding discussion of this item, the Chairman expressed the Standing Committee's appreciation to IUCN for providing financial services and to the Bureau for remaining within the reduced budget it had calculated at the beginning of the year.

Agenda item 6(c): 1989 Income Projections

The Secretary General said that income in 1989 was likely to be similar to 1988, though no assurances could be given. Some 1988 contributions might be received in 1989 and some benefits might accrue to the core budget from projects like the Swiss African project; if this happened, income in 1989 would exceed that for 1988. In 1988, it had been possible to begin operations in January, thanks to IUCN and IWRB, who accepted reimbursement of bills after three months, rather than prepayment. This had overcome any risk of cash flow difficulties, though it would obviously be preferable to have money in the bank. The member from USA enquired whether IUCN and IWRB were willing to continue to accept reimbursement rather than prepayment. Mr Droz indicated that this would depend on IUCN's cash flow situation, but that there was no problem in the current year and he did not expect problems in future. Mr Moser noted that, subject to its own cash flow situation, IWRB was happy to accept reimbursement. In answer to a question by the member from the Netherlands, the Secretary General stated that any excess of income over expenditure could be carried forward from one year to another within the triennium.

Agenda item 6(d): 1989 Priorities for Expenditure

The Secretary General presented pages 41 to 43 of the Supporting Documentation booklet (English version), pointing out that the situation was very much as at the Fourth Meeting in Costa Rica: while it was hoped to implement every item of the budget, it was better to err on the side of caution and to establish priorities. For 1988, a series of priorities costing 422,000 Swiss francs had been drawn up, and this amount had been received. For 1989, income of 450,000 Swiss francs would enable the first six priority items in the budget to be covered.

The Secretary General further explained that, because of exchange rate fluctuations, he was requesting the Standing Committee once again to authorize changes in budget lines, as it was empowered to do and as it had done in Costa Rica. Under Priority 1 Staff Costs, the original budget had been drawn up in dollars at a rate of \$1 = SFr 1.70. The rate utilized in setting the budget was \$1 = SFr 1.5214, which would produce SFr 295,000; expenditure for 1989 was now projected at SFr 313,000, slightly higher than 1988, to take account of a full complement of four staff throughout the year and standard cost of living increases. A transfer of SFr 18,000 was therefore requested from the Contingency Fund (Priority item 10). As a consequence of this change, the amount needed for the 24% overhead charge for IWRB and IUCN Administrative Services would increase by SFr 4,000. It was also proposed to transfer this sum from the Contingency Fund. For the priority items 3 to 6, no increase would be requested to make allowance for the unfavourable rate of exchange, and expenditure would simply be restricted. In

answer to a query, the Secretary General explained that Priority 9 covered minor repairs to office equipment. Normally all equipment was owned by IUCN or IWRB and made available to the Bureau in return for payment of the overhead charge, but at times minor expenditure was necessary.

Summarizing the position, the Chairman noted that while the proposal to cover priorities 1 to 6 was conservative, several major items, particularly numbers 7 and 8, were below the line or second priority items. While project funding might enable these to be covered, it was important for the whole budget to be funded. Recalling that a transfer of amounts between budget lines had already been approved in Costa Rica, and would be necessary until the next Conference of the Parties, when the budget would be both calculated and expressed in Swiss francs, the Chairman asked the Standing Committee for approval to increase Priority item 1 by SFr 18,000 and Priority item 2 by SFr 4,000 and to make a corresponding decrease of SFr 22,000 in item 10. The Standing Committee gave its approval to the proposed adjustments. At the Chairman's request, it also confirmed its previous consensus on the priorities expressed in the budget and on their ranking. The Chairman noted that if income in 1989 should exceed SFr 450,000, then priorities 7 to 10 would be approached.

Agenda item 7. Discussion on scope of Work for the Convention Bureau

The Chairman opened discussion of this item and noted that it was one of the major issues to be addressed by the Standing Committee. He felt it important to distinguish between a Strategy for the Convention and a Strategy for the Bureau. He welcomed Dr Dugan, IUCN Wetland Officer, who had recently joined the meeting. He also referred to written comments received from the member for New Zealand on the circulated papers.

Agenda item 7(a): Review of strategy for Convention activities

The Secretary General introduced the Review of Strategy for Convention Activities included on pages 47-50 of the Supporting Documentation (English version), noting that the Bureau had discussed the question of a Convention strategy with Chairman Rao in June 1988. The document provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Contracting Parties and the services to be carried out by the Bureau. It noted that a strategy for the Convention could involve many partners, since so many bodies were involved in wetland conservation. Implementation of the Convention was a matter for the Contracting Parties, and there was a need to review their activities; the work of the Bureau was defined by the Convention and the Conference of the Parties, but the Standing Committee could guide specific activities.

The Chairman amplified his earlier remarks, noting that the Bureau could help the Contracting Parties in implementation of the Convention, but, in view of the limited resources available, could not do everything. He personally had been confused at the Standing Committee's meeting in Costa Rica, by the lack of clarity in the respective niches of Ramsar, IUCN, IWRB and WWF, all of which the Canadian Wildlife Service supported. It was important to focus energies so as to get value for money, to coordinate the programme and activities of these four bodies, and to work towards a draft paper for discussion in a workshop at Montreux.

The observers from Australia and Norway indicated that they shared the Chairman's concerns. Australia believed firmly in the need for the Convention to promote projects, but not to be yet another project management body. The observer suggested it might be appropriate to employ a consultant to prepare a profile of the different organizations concerned. He noted that in some parts of the world, international bodies based in Europe had limited influence; in south east Asia, for instance, the work of several regional bodies had to be considered. The observer from Norway felt the document presented by the Secretary General was a good starting point, but that there was a need to relate goals to specific activities. The observer from UK emphasized that it was the Bureau's role to put ideas to the Contracting Parties at Conferences; given this privileged access to Contracting Parties, the Bureau had to coordinate its work with other bodies and show what it could do most effectively. The member from Tunisia and the observer from UK emphasized that the question was complex, but that there was a need to progress.

The observers from IUCN and IWRB welcomed this discussion. IWRB was [re]viewing its own programme, and this review, already facilitated by the fact that the Ramsar Bureau was partly located in a neighbouring office, would be even simpler if other bodies' programmes were known. The observer from IUCN suggested the Standing Committee might give guidance not on specifics, but on types of action, on what the Ramsar Bureau was uniquely qualified to do; one obvious example in his view was to promote international linkages between development and wetland conservation, through transfer of funds and expertise.

The observer from WWF referred to his previous suggestion of a strategy for recruiting new Contracting Parties, and proposed that there should be agreement on a list of about eight countries, and then discussion on how to persuade them to join. He suggested, on a basis of success expectancy and of the number of critical wetlands concerned, that the priority countries in Africa should be Botswana, Kenya and Zambia; in southern America, Brazil and Ecuador; and in Asia, China, Malaysia and the Philippines. He emphasized that such an effort did not carry major funding implications, but simply a general, possibly tacit, agreement to use influence wherever possible, such as through letters by WWF's President.

Several speakers supported the WWF initiative but expressed doubts about the wisdom of the Standing Committee adopting such a detailed list, since the final aim was for all countries to join. The observer from WWF emphasized the need to collaborate with aid agencies, which also had country priorities. The Chairman, emphasizing the role of the Canadian International Development Agency, agreed that such efforts should not only be made through non-government bodies, while the observer from Norway commented that several of the countries mentioned were priorities for Norwegian and Swedish aid.

The member from Chile pointed out that there was also a need for coordinated action at regional level. He had tried to promote the Convention within southern America, but had met great difficulties, and he believed that similar problems would arise in Asia and Africa.

The Secretary General suggested that there were two key goals for the Convention - to expand in terms of the number of Contracting Parties and of listed wetlands, and to achieve proper implementation in terms of site management and wise use. The Conservation Coordinator pointed out that several Conference Recommendations had addressed these questions and that

the Standing Committee had already established priority regions for action.

Summarizing the discussion, the Chairman noted the conclusions: clearer direction should be given to the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee and the Bureau on how to promote the Convention and who should do what; a document should be developed, covering such topics as: expansion of the number of Parties and listed sites; implementation; monitoring procedure; priority areas; clearing house for exchange of information; workshops; influencing aid agencies; training. A brief document was then prepared setting out three strategic activities to be completed before the Montreux Conference:

Preparation of a draft strategy for consideration at Montreux;
Directive to the Bureau to adopt formal procedures for coordination of activities with IUCN, IWRB and WWF;
Preparation of a short-term programme for the Bureau until 1990.

The Chairman noted that the last item (short-term programme) was already in hand with the consideration of the Bureau's Work Plan for 1989. The Standing Committee then agreed that concerned bodies (IUCN, IWRB, WWF) should be invited to join with the Bureau in a formal programme consultation process. (NB Formal letters of invitation were sent thereafter by the Chairman and positive responses received from each organization). It remained therefore only to cover the first proposal on a Strategy Document for the triennium after the 1990 Conference. It was agreed that such a document should be prepared to identify the special roles of the Ramsar Convention in promoting wetland conservation. It would identify the niche of the Ramsar Convention vis-à-vis others. The text would be discussed in draft at the 1989 meeting of the Standing Committee, before presentation for discussion at Montreux.

The Secretary General noted that Ramsar was an intergovernmental organization dealing with wetlands. It therefore had to define how it related to other intergovernmental organizations, and to other bodies working on wetlands. The member from Switzerland considered that Ramsar was an umbrella and should operate through other bodies working on wetlands, such as IUCN or IWRB. The observer from Norway agreed with the umbrella principle, but said that a goal-orientated document was required. The Chairman pointed out that some people might not accept the umbrella principle so the Convention had to demonstrate it by showing leadership. It was important to coordinate operations and take advantage of the synergy created.

The observer from Australia saw a problem in selecting the author for the proposed document. The Bureau and Standing Committee were too close to the problem; it might be preferable to ask an outsider to set the scene for a well focused technical workshop at Montreux. He added that he had difficulty in reconciling the two problems to be addressed: the need to recruit more Contracting Parties, particularly in southeast Asia, and the need to coordinate operations with bodies like IUCN and IWRB, both of which were less active in this region than the Asian Wetland Bureau or the South Pacific Commission.

On the subject of regional activities, the member from Netherlands emphasized the need to involve the European Commission. The member from Chile commented that IUCN was recognized in his region, but that IWRB, which had recently closed its regional office risked

being forgotten: its efforts had not yet produced many new Contracting Parties, but it had been initiating projects and censuses and had been talking of regional meetings. It was important to continue activities within the region, visit key people and organize activities like training programmes. The member from Tunisia noted that IUCN was presently active in Africa, but that there were also regional organizations. It was prudent to adopt a complementary approach to the problems through both types of body.

The Chairman commented that all the issues raised could be incorporated into the strategy. He was doubtful about the possibility of recruiting a consultant for whom funds were not available. In his view the Bureau should prepare a preliminary draft for consideration by the Standing Committee. The Secretary General pointed out that a strategy was also necessary for development of the Bureau itself, given the size and capabilities of the present staff. He did not consider that a vast staff would be necessary, but some growth was required as present staffing was inadequate to fulfil all tasks. In the short run, secondments should be pursued, but in the longer term a response was required to the Director General of IUCN on the need for space in co-location with other secretariats and organizations. In addition, he believed that, in connection with the possible co-location with other secretariats, Ramsar's own operations would be made more efficient with the unification of the Bureau. During this first year the split Bureau had provided benefits, but was difficult to administer. This matter required careful analysis. The member from Switzerland emphasized that the proposed strategy document should serve after 1990, and that it therefore had to define the needs of the Bureau and the role of the Standing Committee. It might well provide justification for the Contracting Parties to strengthen the Bureau and to provide extra funding.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the Bureau should draw up, by the end of 1988, a framework for a strategy with a series of headings. This should be further reviewed by a sub-committee of the Standing Committee made up of Netherlands, Switzerland and UK, with the Bureau as rapporteur in late February/early March 1989. A further meeting of this sub-committee could be held in the Netherlands on the occasion of the wetlands conference at Leiden in early June, at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee should also be present. The member for the Netherlands offered to provide facilities for such a meeting in June 1989. The Chairman concluded the discussion by expressing his satisfaction that a plan of action had been agreed on this important topic.

Agenda item 7 (b) - Review of the data requirements of the Convention

At the Chairman's invitation, the Conservation Coordinator presented the paper on pages 51 to 63 of the Supporting Documentation (English version) on 17 October. He emphasized the valuable work already done by WCMC, the availability of extensive but uncoordinated data on the wetlands of the world, the purposes for which the Bureau needed data, the value of the "Directory of Wetlands of International Importance" and the desirability of implementing a modest action plan. The Secretary General recalled that the convention budget included \$8000 for data requirements, but that this sum had not been classed as a priority; if it became available, this sum would be used for preparing data sheets for new sites and issuing updated lists. No funds were currently available, either for preparation of a new version of the Directory, or for initiating work on the Action Plan.

The member from the USA agreed with the needs identified, but felt that they should be covered on a priority basis. He agreed that the advice of a systems analyst would be valuable. The observers from UK and Norway both emphasized that establishment of a world database was a major undertaking, and that the Convention's data requirements should be seen in the light of the strategy document. The observer from Australia drew attention to the written comments from the member for New Zealand, supporting in the long term the establishment of a world wetland database, and suggesting the Bureau might guide Contracting Parties in preparation of national wetland inventories.

The observer from Australia supported preparation of a new version of the Directory, since Australia valued the possibility of seeing its own Ramsar wetlands in a world context.

The member from Switzerland said that the difficulties of establishing a world database should not be underestimated, but that, on the other hand, such a database was a priority requirement; it would be a departure point for strategy and implementation, for definition of approaches to Contracting Parties and for recruitment of new Parties. He suggested that the possibilities should be investigated in cooperation with other interested bodies. The Secretary General emphasized that the Action Plan was not seeking any very complicated machinery: information was currently stored on files with WCMC, and it would be valuable for the data sheets to be prepared with a retrieval capacity. A programme of low-level activity could be maintained, enabling updating of data sheets on Ramsar sites and publication of updates of the Directory.

The Chairman, recalling that Canada had been cooperating with the Bureau to define the Convention's data needs, said that the CWS data expert, Dr Ian Crain, had advised that the data system could be updated and improved [as] an element in a larger programme. Hardware costs (about 6000 Canadian dollars) were already covered since Slimbridge and Gland already had the necessary equipment. Software costs might be 2000 Canadian dollars; a systems consultant for two months might cost 5000 Canadian dollars; recruitment of a wetland expert for data interpretation and update might cost 50,000 Canadian dollars; some further funds might be needed for data entry and for development of a mapping system.

Reopening discussion of this item on the morning of 18 October, the Chairman said he was convinced there was consensus of the need for action on data requirements at the present meeting of the Standing Committee. The Convention could not afford to lose a year. Participants indicated their agreement on the need to proceed with a minimum action plan in terms of maintaining the List. The Chairman then suggested that, to maintain credibility as a world convention, selective retrieval capacity from the data base was needed, together with development of a definitive simple data sheet. He emphasized that this activity should not be regarded as an item for the Convention budget, whether priority or otherwise. Self-help was required, in the form of pledges from Contracting Parties. Canada would be willing to provide a data analyst for a week or two and a wetland expert to advise the consultant producing the data sheet. Canada would also arrange for digitizing of maps in Canada if the necessary supporting data were provided.

The outstanding requirements were therefore: purchase of software at about 2000 Canadian

dollars; recruitment of an expert for the data sheet work; inputting of data; and production of an updated Directory for the next Conference. He hoped that some of the Swiss funds pledged the previous day might be used to cover initial expenditure. He asked the observer delegation from UK - where the data would be stored and the inputting carried out - to seek ways of meeting these needs. The UK observer agreed to do so.

At the Chairman's request, the Standing Committee confirmed its agreement that the Bureau should proceed with this strategy of improving and updating the database on Ramsar sites and on preparing a new Directory. It was agreed that this work could prove a basis for a world database and a shadow list, but that these matters should be addressed later.

Agenda item 7 (c) : Review of involvement in training programmes

The Chairman noted that the question of training programmes for wetland managers was frequently raised at Ramsar meetings. The Bureau had therefore been requested to prepare a background paper which appeared on pages 65-65 of the Supporting Documentation (English version). He noted that the Convention's proposed strategy document would need to cover training. He drew attention to the four options at the end of the paper, which were not mutually exclusive. The first option - an overall role at world level in training - appeared unrealistic though it might be carried out at regional level, for example in the Mediterranean; alternatively the Convention might operate via IWRB if that organization wished to take a leading role. In general he felt the Convention should aim to carry out the other three options, though they would all require funding.

The Secretary General indicated that following an opportunity identified by Mr de Klemm, the Bureau wished to cooperate with the Council of Europe/Berne Convention to organize a Mediterranean training course in Spain in November 1989 - The Berne Convention would provide interpretation facilities and funding for some European participants, while Ramsar - thanks to a grant from the USFWS and the Swiss grant for Africa - could now fund participants from North Africa. Consultations had already been held with the Spanish authorities, who were extremely supportive and had offered logistical support.

The member from Chile emphasized that training was a key issue for developing countries. The Convention needed to be aware that such countries did not always give high priority to environmental issues. The member from Tunisia agreed, and suggested that offers to train technical field staff would be a strong attraction to potential new Contracting Parties. He congratulated the Bureau on the initiative already taken in the Mediterranean. The observer from Australia drew attention to the written comment from New Zealand, giving support for the third option in the paper - action as a clearing-house for training courses.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairman reiterated that training should be a major component of the Convention strategy, and noted the Standing Committee's approval of the proposed Mediterranean course. He also pointed out that courses had been held under the auspices of Canadian Wildlife Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in southern America, where there was also much opportunity for further action.

Agenda Item 8: Review of Convention projects

The Chairman presented the paper on pages 71 to 75 of the Supporting Documentation (English version), emphasizing that there were both general and site-specific projects. He pointed out that the site-specific projects were not so much a lower priority, as stated at the top of page 73, as an activity for which funds were not readily available. The Secretary General tabled a 115-page document on Asian projects which he had presented to the Japanese authorities during his recent visit. He emphasized that this kind of brokerage role could be taken by the Bureau in respect of projects to be carried out by other bodies such as IWRB or the Asian Wetlands Bureau. The Conservation Coordinator recalled that the Bureau had operated in a similar fashion in submitting southern American projects to the Conservation Treaty Support Fund.

The member from Tunisia expressed appreciation at the progress made under this item and the Chairman noted the general consensus that, both as regards general and site-specific projects, the situation was very satisfactory. The observer from UK offered to promote contacts with the European Commission in relation to wetland projects carried out under the Lomé Convention; he was convinced there was scope for further work here.

Agenda item 9: Bureau Work Plan for 1989.

The Secretary General 1 presented the document included in pages 79 to 81 of the Supporting Documentation (English version), noting that format and amount of detail were as in previous documents of this kind but recalling the cogent comment from the UK on the desirability of presenting the Bureau Work Plan, the Convention Budget and the Annual Report in the same form. The Convention strategy would clearly affect the work plan. However he did not believe anything could be removed from this proposal, although some items might be given different priorities. The principal point to be retained for 1989 was that the Bureau would already be engaged in much preparatory work for the 1990 Conference of the Parties at Montreux. The Secretary General also pointed out two amendments to the text of section (f), which had been drafted two months previously: the regional training course in Spain would be held not in March but in November 1989, while the Polish meeting would be likely to be held in the autumn rather than May 1989. The latter offered possibilities both in the field of training and management, and for eastern European regional discussions and coordination before the Montreux Conference.

The Chairman commented favorably on the “diplomatic” presentation of the document, which rather than speaking of targets or priorities, referred to items “which should be given special emphasis” or used adverbs like “notably”. The observer from IWRB suggested that the formal consultation procedure between the Bureau, IWRB, IUCN and WWF -mentioned during the discussion on Convention strategy - should be added to the Work Plan.

The Chairman commented that under the item “Publications”, Canada would continue to support production of the Newsletter, but perhaps on a four-monthly rather than a quarterly basis. He added that following earlier discussion on data needs (section (e) of the Work Plan)) some tightening had been agreed, and a clear course of action defined, with less importance given to the shadow list. The observer from UK suggested that a similar sharpening of focus might be operated with respect to other items so that goals to be reached in one year’s time could be

defined.

The Chairman agreed that this would be helpful and suggested that major items in the Work Plan might be marked with an asterisk. The Secretary General pointed out that all the items listed under sections (a) Administration of the Convention and (c) Publications had to be carried out, though priorities could be added for (d) Conservation Activities. The Standing Committee agreed that under this heading high priority should be given to the Monitoring Procedure and to training.

Finally the member from USA called on all members and observers on the Standing Committee to ensure that the Bureau was kept fully informed of major forthcoming events, such as the Wetland Congress to be held in Mexico in 1989.

Agenda item 10: Review of progress made by the Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use

The Conservation Coordinator presented the paper included on pages 85 to 87 of the Supporting Documentation (English version). He recalled that the Regina Conference had established the Working Group which had met in Costa Rica, thanks to financial support from the Contracting Parties, notably the USA. Mr Eldoy of Norway had been elected Chairman and was attending the current meeting of the Standing Committee. A draft report had been circulated to members of the Group and to Technical Advisors. Many valuable comments had been received, but because of postal delays and pressure of time, it had not been possible to produce a final version of the report in time for the Standing Committee's meeting. The report would be completed, in English and French, by the end of 1988, in line with the Regina Recommendations.

The observer from Norway, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Working Group, explained that the draft report contained an activities report and three annexes, one on criteria, the second on designation and subsequent action, the third on wise use. Initial comments had led him to believe no major changes were necessary, but discussion during the present meeting of the Standing Committee had convinced him that the formulation of the draft would cause difficulties for certain Contracting Parties. In the draft produced after the meeting in Costa Rica, the five guidelines agreed at Regina had been included in the Criteria, and the socio-economic guideline (e) had been formulated as a new Criterion. Following recent discussions he felt it more appropriate to return the socio-economic question to the guidelines. The draft for Annex III had been generally welcomed, but the presentation needed further work. The observer from Norway expressed his conviction that the text of the criteria should be finally agreed at the Montreux Conference, while the document on wise use would need revision in the light of further experience. He requested guidance from the Standing Committee on further action.

The Chairman pointed out that four of the seven Contracting Parties which were members of the Working Group (Australia, Chile, Norway and USA) were attending the current meeting of the Standing Committee, so that there was an excellent opportunity for further exchanges. The observer from Australia emphasized that the criteria had a very strong procedural and administrative standing in his country. Australia therefore had very little room for manoeuvre and could not accept the socio-economic argument as a criterion for listing. He paid tribute to the work of the Working Group, and particularly to its Chairman and the Conservation Coordinator, and indicated that the revised draft with socio-economic issues included in the guidelines was

acceptable. In this way the socio-economic guideline provided guidance and orientation, which a Contracting Party was free to accept or reject as it chose. The observer from Australia expressed the hope that the current formulation would be accepted, so that the Convention could settle the matter and proceed to other issues.

The observer from WWF asked the Secretary General whether he thought that the current draft would be acceptable to developing countries. The Secretary General said that each Contracting Party was free to adopt its own interpretation, though guidance from the Conference of the Parties would be valuable. In his personal opinion, he thought that few Contracting Parties would distinguish, as Australia did, between criteria and guidelines, and most would take criteria and guidelines as a package. He considered the current draft to be a good solution, and felt that it would be a disservice to Contracting Parties to try to force through a version which caused problems.

The observer from UK expressed agreement with the Australian position, and felt that his country would have difficulties with socio-economic criteria. The proposed solution was elegant and simply needed drafting in appropriate language. He also felt that the criteria question should be resolved at Montreux, after which more importance should be given to wise use. The observer from IUCN indicated his agreement with the compromise proposed and felt that continuing discussion of the criteria would become a distraction. It was much more important to talk about how to attract developing countries to join the Convention; this issue had been raised on several occasions, but had not been properly resolved and should be a major pillar of the strategy document. The Conservation Coordinator expressed his belief that the Annex to the Regina Recommendations, which had for the first time summarized the Convention's stand on criteria and presented guidelines on wise use, was an important step in this direction.

The member from USA said that he was very comfortable with the proposed solution. The observer from Norway agreed, although he noted that his country did not make a distinction between the criteria and guidelines as did Australia, UK and USA. It was agreed that the Contracting Parties should have some flexibility in application.

Summarizing the discussion, the Chairman commended the efforts of the Working Group and the proposed solution. The Standing Committee was strongly of the opinion that the Montreux Conference should take a firm decision on criteria, which could then be removed from the agenda; this point of view should be expressed in the Working Group report, perhaps in the form of a covering letter. A workshop on Wise Use should be organized at the Montreux Conference and consideration given to ways of attracting further Contracting Parties from among developing countries.

Agenda item 11: Conservation of Listed Wetlands.

Agenda item 11(a): Review of the Ramsar List.

The Chairman referred participants to the latest version of the Ramsar List, covering 409 sites in 48 Contracting Parties, which figured on pages 91 to 103 of the Supporting Documentation (English version). He noted that one further site had been designated by Ireland in early

September, and two by Egypt on accession on 9 September 1988. He expressed appreciation at the designation by the USA, on the occasion of the Standing Committee meeting, of Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas, and thanked the member from USA for the slide presentation on this new Ramsar wetland made during the lunch break on 18 October.

Agenda item 11(b): Discussion on “Monitoring Procedure”

At the Chairman’s request, the Conservation Coordinator presented the report on this subject figuring on pages 105 to 108 of the Supporting Documentation (English version). He recalled that following Recommendation 3.9 of the Regina Conference and a meeting of non-government organizations hosted by WWF in November 1987, the Standing Committee had adopted the “Monitoring Procedure” at its meeting in Costa Rica in January 1988. The Monitoring Procedure enabled the Bureau to make contact with a Contracting Party on receipt of a report of potential or actual change in ecological character at a listed Ramsar site, pending formal notification under Article 3.2 of the Convention. The Monitoring Procedure made it possible for the Bureau or its consultants to consult with Contracting Parties, to visit sites and make recommendations. In the early part of the year, the Bureau had applied the Monitoring Procedure as opportunities arose in the course of its normal travel; later, thanks to funding both from government and non-government sources, special missions using consultants had been possible. The Conservation Coordinator emphasized that the Procedure was carried out in the closest possible cooperation with Contracting Parties, who had welcomed the initiative. He circulated copies of the reports so far produced on sites in Belgium, Spain, Tunisia and Sweden, and indicated that the Bureau would welcome reaction from the Contracting Parties concerned.

The member from Tunisia said there was little to add about Ichkeul. Detailed studies over three years had recommended building of a sluice to control inflow of sea water and outflow of fresh water at the lake’s exit point; the sluice should be completed in a few months and should help to control salinity in the lake, despite the construction of dams on feeder rivers.

The member from Netherlands commented that at Galgenschuur, Belgium had fulfilled its obligations under the Convention; it had compensated for deletion of part of the Galgenschuur site by listing 2000 hectares at Blankaart. The Monitoring report had referred to the possibility of the Netherlands listing the Verdronkene Land van Saeftinge, just across the border from Galgenschuur. He assured the Standing Committee that while this site had not yet been listed under Ramsar, it enjoyed the highest conservation status under national legislation in the Netherlands as a Nature Monument. Ramsar listing in the Netherlands was intended but took time because of an earlier arrangement between Belgium and Netherlands. He suggested it would be helpful if the Standing Committee could pronounce itself in favour of listing. The Standing Committee therefore requested the Secretary General to send a letter on this issue to the Netherlands Government.

The member from USA said that he had had an opportunity to discuss the Monitoring Procedure with the Spanish authorities, and felt that it had got off to an excellent start. The technical guidance given was much appreciated. The Secretary General commented that the procedure had often demonstrated surprising linkages - between Sweden and Spain, for example, which were both undertaking major wetland restoration projects at Ramsar sites. IUCN’s President had

recently visited the Spanish site of Tablas de Daimiel, and had suggested links between this site and Kashmir wetlands. The Conservation Coordinator also commented on links between Sweden and Tunisia, both of which were establishing major educational centres at Ramsar sites; another linkage existed between North Bull in Ireland and Molentargius in Italy, both of which were Ramsar sites in close proximity to a large city.

The Conservation Coordinator commented that operation of the Monitoring Procedure had also drawn attention to the value of establishing national Ramsar Committees. Such committees already existed in Spain and UK, where they discussed the status of existing sites, progress in listing new sites and preparation of the national report for the Conference of the Parties. He knew that some other Contracting Parties (notably Austria, Federal Republic of Germany and Italy) were interested in the concept, and suggested it was of particular interest in states with a federal system.

The member from USA said that there was less of a need for a national committee in the US given current consultative procedures. The Chairman indicated that in Canada there were informal contacts on Ramsar matters between the federal government and the provinces. The observer from Australia explained the system already operating in his country: he emphasized that the original initiative came from the states, which proposed sites for designation to a technical working group established by CONCOM, the Council of Environment Ministers. The Working Group checked that the proposed site met the criteria and gave its comments. The state concerned then made a formal proposal to the Commonwealth of Australia which was responsible for designation. If there was a risk of change in ecological character, the Commonwealth could refuse to forward a notification, thereby nullifying the risk of change. He emphasized the importance of the criteria in this procedure.

The Secretary General said that further operation of the Monitoring Procedure in 1988/89 was planned in Greece, India, Italy, Mexico and Uruguay. The Chairman concluded discussion with the observation that the Procedure appeared to be working satisfactorily. He insisted on the need to continue working closely with Contracting Parties, and felt that the Procedure should be given considerable exposure at the Montreux Conference.

Agenda item 12: Interpretation of the Convention.

Agenda item 12(a): Proposals of Resolutions for consideration at the next Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Secretary General recalled that the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee in Costa Rica had identified one issue requiring interpretation by the Conference of the Parties. As noted in pages 111 and 112 of the Supporting Documentation (English version), some states had deposited instruments of ratification or accession with Unesco, but had not provided a map and description of the wetlands designated for the List at the same time. Unesco considered that a country was not a Contracting Party until the map and description had been deposited. On the other hand, the Secretary General understood that according to the terms of the Convention once a country had deposited its instrument of ratification or accession, it should be considered a Contracting Party and could provide the detailed information on its wetland designation later.

The differing interpretations had delayed the accession of both Egypt and Mali, and Bolivia and Guatemala were currently in the same position.

The member from USA felt it was very important to resolve this matter in line with the Secretary General's views. One of the reasons for the delay in Egypt's case had been the difficulty on security grounds of providing detailed maps. The Conservation Coordinator commented that the maps and descriptions recently provided by Egypt showed a number of possible changes in ecological character, and an opportunity to apply the Monitoring Procedure.

Mr de Klemm remarked that this was a question of definition, on which the Conference of the Parties should decide. The Convention included a single requirement: to list a wetland; the text did not stipulate that the map and description had to be provided at the same time as the instrument of accession or ratification. It was difficult to tell a country that, although it had provided an instrument, it was not a Contracting Party. It should be clarified that the real requirement was to list a site and that the map could be provided later.

The Standing Committee expressed its approval of the draft Recommendation on this subject included on page 114 of the Supporting Documentation and agreed it should be circulated for consideration by Contracting Parties.

At the Chairman's invitation, Mr de Klemm presented several other issues which could be clarified by interpretation:

- Article 4.2 referred to compensation for any loss of wetland resources by protection of an adequate portion of the original habitat. No guidance was however given on compensation measures which would be appropriate nor on the definition of an "adequate portion".
- There was a discrepancy between the English text of Article 4.2 and the French and Spanish texts. It was possible that similar discrepancies might exist elsewhere in the Convention.
- Article 5 stated that Contracting Parties should consult about implementation of the Convention, especially (but not exclusively) in the case of shared wetlands or water systems. Such consultation could apply to other issues, which opened considerable potential for the future. This matter had been given very little consideration in the past and merited further study.

The observer from USSR commented that questions of interpretation of the Convention were of significant and fundamental importance. As a result the USSR drew attention to the danger that, through interpretation of individual concepts and terminology in the Convention, its fundamental positions and content could be subjected to real revision or in any case to substantial change. He urged that the matter should be discussed at the next Conference of the Parties in 1990. After some discussion of the comment made by the observer from USSR, the Chairman suggested that closer liaison was required between the Bureau and the Soviet Union to consider these matters further. The observer from USSR indicated that a visit to the Soviet Union by Bureau staff would be particularly welcome.

After further discussion of the three issues raised by Mr de Klemm, it was agreed that the Bureau

should be requested to produce for the next meeting of the Standing Committee a study of the interpretation of Article 4.2 and discrepancy between language versions. It was agreed that the question of consultations under Article 5 was potentially a far-ranging issue, which needed more detailed consideration, and that it should therefore be more fully covered under the Convention strategy. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman emphasized that the main thing was to avoid any further amendments and on behalf of the Committee addressed warm thanks to Mr de Klemm.

Agenda item 12(b): Guide for adherence to the Convention.

The Secretary General drew attention to the Guide for adherence to the Convention which had been prepared to explain procedures to prospective Contracting Parties, and which figured on pages 115 to 124 of the Supporting Documentation (English version). It had been drawn up in an attempt to demonstrate an instrument of accession and the need for maps and descriptions of sites. The meeting indicated its approval of the document. The Chairman felt it would be valuable in promotional work, and welcomed the written comment from New Zealand that a sample data sheet might be appended when the Convention's data base had been established.

Agenda item 12(c): Guide for listing of sites under the Convention.

The Secretary General explained that this document, which figured on pages 125 to 143 of the Supporting Documentation (English version) had also been produced as an aid, intended mainly for Contracting Parties that wished to designate additional sites.

The observer from Norway suggested that the title of the document be changed. To call it a "guide" carried the risk of confusion with criteria. It should simply be called "Procedure for listing". The observer from UK offered a clarification of point 3 on page 125: the UK Nature Conservancy Council had prepared a list of sites meeting the criteria, but no decision had been taken by the Ministry of the Environment on designation. The observer from Australia noted that in arid regions it was often difficult to define precise boundaries for wetlands, which varied from year to year with rainfall. One solution to this problem used in Australia had been to designate "all wetlands within the boundaries of a given national park or protected area". He suggested that this concept might be incorporated into the text.

With these amendments, the Standing Committee approved the document.

Agenda item 13: Discussion on cooperation with other Nature Conservation Conventions.

Introducing the document, the Chairman emphasized that discussion should cover cooperation not only with other Conventions, but with organizations as well. He pointed out that there was already considerable cooperation with other Conventions: the Ramsar Bureau had prepared two documents for the recent Bonn Convention conference (reproduced on pages 14, to 152 of the Supporting Documentation); regular meetings were held with the CITES secretariat; there was collaboration with Unesco, which was not only the depositary of the Ramsar Convention but provided the secretariat of the World Heritage Convention. Furthermore the present meeting had heard of plans to work with the Berne Convention on organization of a training workshop in

Spain in November 1989.

The Chairman recalled that Convention secretariats and IUCN and WWF had met at IUCN's invitation on 15 October to discuss matters of common concern, notably biodiversity and co-location, and that IUCN's Director General had given details of this meeting in his welcoming remarks under Agenda item 1. The Standing Committee had had lively discussions under Agenda item 7 and had decided to produce a Strategy Paper and establish a formal consultation procedure on wetlands between the Convention, IUCN, IWRB, WWF and possibly other regional wetland organizations. He emphasized that the purpose of these consultations was to avoid duplication of effort and to seek opportunities [for] synergy.

IUCN's Director General said that the UNEP Governing Council suggestion of amalgamating existing Conventions appeared impracticable; meanwhile IUCN would continue to investigate the possibility of a new biodiversity convention, which might prove difficult, indeed impossible. There was however general agreement on the need for greater cooperation between conventions and organizations; contributing governments were reassured by cooperation which gave them value for money. He suggested four kinds of cooperation:

- cross-representation: position papers like those prepared by the Ramsar Bureau for the Bonn Convention meeting; an annual get-together for exchange of information and review of activities
- common approach to mutual needs: common format for national reports or questionnaires; common review of data needs and facilities
- common definition of shared terms such as "habitat" or "migratory species"
- co-location: the Swiss offer to provide IUCN with a headquarters had sparked this idea. The offer of course included the Ramsar Bureau and could involve other Convention secretariats.

IUCN's Director General added that IUCN was willing to act as convenor of annual get-togethers. He also suggested that governments should be informed about the ongoing coordination, since it would be discussed at the next Governing Council of UNEP. He offered to produce a position paper at IUCN and to circulate it to governments by February 1989.

The member from Chile expressed satisfaction with the position and programme of IUCN, which were very important for developing countries. He hoped that in future developing countries would pay less and receive more. The member from USA also welcomed the comments; there was a real risk of balkanization of international conventions; contact had existed in the past, but was now formalized between honoured and equal partners. The member from Switzerland noted that existing contacts at Standing Committee level could perhaps be strengthened, and extended to Bureau level. The member from Tunisia expressed satisfaction at cooperation between Ramsar and other conventions. A start had been made and the position should improve when the different secretariats were located together on the same campus.

The Chairman recalled that at the meeting on 15 October, IUCN had been encouraged to take the

lead in promoting the concept of a campus. IUCN's Director General said that the various Standing Committees and the Swiss authorities would have to state their views on the subject; IUCN would then present a paper indicating the benefits of co-location. The member from Switzerland indicated that the local authorities were willing to provide facilities to house IUCN and Ramsar, and possibly other secretariats. The advantages and disadvantages of the various locations had to be presented objectively. Switzerland did not wish to give the idea that it wanted to kidnap all the Conventions.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairman expressed the Convention's thanks to IUCN for housing Ramsar, and for taking the lead in promoting closer cooperation with other bodies. He welcomed the proposal to produce a paper for governments by February 1989 and said the Bureau would maintain close contact with IUCN over co-location.

Agenda item 14: Preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Chairman recalled that a decision had already been taken in Regina to accept the Swiss invitation to hold the Fourth Conference at Montreux in 1990. The present meeting offered the Standing Committee an opportunity to guide the Bureau in making arrangements and designing the Conference programme. The Secretary General noted that considerable progress had already been made in contacts at federal and cantonal level in Switzerland, and a working group had been established to oversee arrangements. At the Secretary General's suggestion the Bureau's Administrative Assistant, who had played a leading role for the Bureau in the Working Group, provided further information on arrangements made so far for the Montreux Conference. She presented a plan for the Conference centre and indicated that the facilities available were extremely well organized. Plans for renting equipment and for hiring staff were under way. The Conference Centre offered a very professional service.

The member from Switzerland explained that the Canton of Vaud had felt Montreux was preferable to Lausanne and he agreed that this decision was valid. The Montreux Conference centre, which the Committee would be visiting that afternoon, had excellent facilities and there was a range of accommodation possibilities in the city. There would be no difficulties in Switzerland over issue of visas. The Swiss members of the working party were the Federal Foreign Ministry, the federal and cantonal conservation authorities, the director of the Montreux Conference centre and the Swiss non-government bodies active in wetland and particularly waterfowl conservation. The Ramsar Bureau was responsible for content and production of conference documents, and the Swiss non-government organizations for excursion documents and the exhibition. The conference budget would be established by the end of 1988 or early 1989 and submitted for approval to the federal government in April 1989, so that it could be included in the 1990 federal budget. The member from Switzerland emphasized the importance of the exchange of letters between the Swiss authorities and the Ramsar Convention; the matter was being handled by the federal Foreign Ministry. In his view the letter, to be signed on the Swiss side by the Swiss Confederation and the Canton of Vaud, should be simple and uncomplicated, but should include an outline of the Conference budget; for this reason the exchange could not be completed until early 1989.

The Secretary General proposed that the letter of understanding should be signed for Ramsar by the Chairman of the Standing Committee and the Director General of IUCN. This was because the Standing Committee had no legal authority in Switzerland, whereas IUCN did. For previous conferences before the establishment of the independent Bureau, the Director General had also signed. The Director General of IUCN indicated that, while he still wished to take legal advice, he saw no problem in this procedure. Both the Bureau and the member from Switzerland expressed their confidence that the matter could be speedily resolved.

At the Chairman's request the Secretary General introduced the subject of the Conference Programme. The Secretary General noted that the Montreux Conference would be shorter than that held at Regina, since there would not again be an Extraordinary Conference. It was therefore important to make good use of the time available. He presented a new paper outlining a suggested programme which, he explained, had not yet been seen by the Swiss hosts. This programme envisaged a first day on Wednesday 27 June when the basic documents would be tabled. From Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 June the Conference could divide into two workshops, one of which would deal with operational matters, the other with conservation issues. Several of the issues discussed in the Standing Committee's current meeting, notably the Strategy, would need to be added. On Monday 2 July the two workshops would report back to the plenary session with proposals for the budget and scientific recommendations. Tuesday 3 July could be a special Swiss Alpine or Central European day, similar to the North American day at Regina. On the last day, the final documents would be presented for approval, and there would be an offer to host the fifth meeting. Confirmation of this offer should be received well in advance, by the 1989 meeting of the Standing Committee. The programme outlined would leave time for the secretariat to carry out the necessary work and should take into account various social events and planned, the possibility of showing films or audio-visual presentations, for which extensive facilities were available. The Secretary General emphasized that the Bureau needed guidance from the Standing Committee on the programme, since advance notification had to be sent out through diplomatic channels in the near future.

The member from USA complimented the Bureau on providing the major part of the programme structure. He asked whether two points covered by the Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use should not be incorporated into the workshops; these were how to develop a wetland policy and how to implement Wise use. The observer from UK said the general structure proposed was good, but he wondered whether the division of workshops into operational matters and conservation issues was entirely appropriate; he also emphasized that, since this would be the first Conference since the establishment of the Bureau, the Bureau itself should play a visible leading role in plenary sessions. The member from Netherlands said that the discussion of major items in workshops implied two-person delegations. He thought that the subjects of discussion might be split differently, and that the brainstorming sessions over strategy could help clarify the issue.

The observer from IUCN underlined the need to use the workshops to broaden the appeal of the Convention to developing countries. He suggested three topics:

- wise use: the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) should help promote synergy on this issue;

- north/south collaboration: this should deal not only with migratory species but also with development aid. Delegations of Contracting Parties should perhaps include representatives of development aid administrations as well as Ministries of Environment or Conservation;
- the integration of waterfowl conservation issues into broader wetland conservation.

The observer from Norway pointed out that the suggested programme already gave considerable emphasis to wise use. He warned against over emphasis on criteria.

The observer from UK felt that the problem was not so much subject matter as format. The Regina Conference could have been more useful if there had been less reading of circulated reports. Mr de Klemm commented that this was an eternal problem, which arose at many of the conferences where he had served as an interpreter. The best solution he had seen was for a summary report to be circulated and for this to be open for questioning with no reading of reports.

Concluding the discussion the Standing Committee advised the Bureau to send in the near future the invitations for the 1990 Conference with a rough outline of the programme for the Conference. The actual programme document should be refined further for review by the Standing Committee in the light of the comments made, giving special emphasis to wise use, follow up to WCED and sustainable development.

Agenda item 15: Promotional activities.

The Secretary General presented a general introduction of this item. He remarked that much progress had been made in promotional activities, notably through publication of the first issue of the Newsletter and through wide use of the logo which had been adopted by the Standing Committee in Costa Rica.

Agenda item 15(a): Newsletter

The Secretary General thanked the Canadian Wildlife Service, which had not only arranged for design and printing of the first Newsletter but had also arranged distribution of 4000 copies in three language versions - English, French and Spanish. It was being distributed free both because of the administrative problems of collecting payment and the difficulty for some readers of obtaining foreign currency. The format was for the four outside pages to be of general interest, and for the four page central section to cover a particular region. The focus for the first issue had been North America, for the second it would be Asia, and the third the Bureau proposed Africa; he looked forward to discussing the third issue with the member from Tunisia. The other regions would be covered in subsequent issues, and in 1990, to coincide with the 1990 Conference in Montreux, there would be a regional section on Western Europe. In conclusion, the Secretary General paid tribute to the Administrative Assistant, who had been responsible for coordinating the production of the Newsletter.

The member from Canada circulated a proof copy of the second issue, which he said was

currently at the printers and would be distributed in the near future. His original intention in offering to produce the document had been to offer something cheap but attractive; however the designers of the original issue had produced an expensive version! Number two would have only two colours, but would remain attractive. He once again paid tribute to support from non-governmental organizations in Canada and the USA, and promised that Canada would continue to support production costs until the next Conference of the Parties in Montreux. He hoped to produce a document of which the Convention could be proud, but which would not discourage another Contracting Party from volunteering to support after Montreux; it might also be possible to persuade national non-governmental bodies to support the Newsletter after Montreux.

The observer from IWRB informed the Committee that his organization was to relaunch its Bulletin. There was little or no risk of overlap in content with the Ramsar Newsletter, since the IWRB Bulletin would be more scientific in tone, but the readership might well overlap, and joint circulation could be considered.

The Standing Committee concluded discussion of this item by confirming its appreciation for the Newsletter, and its thanks to Canada.

Agenda item 15(b): Site diplomas.

The Secretary General recalled to the Committee the proposal he made at the Costa Rica meeting to produce diplomas for Ramsar sites. These would take the form of a certificate which could be hung at a prominent place in an office responsible for the Ramsar site. Presentation of the diploma could form part of a ceremony to mark designation of a site. He presented two draft designs incorporating the Ramsar logo, and after some discussion of the design and wording, the Standing Committee approved a definitive format. The Secretary General indicated that funding for production of diplomas was available in the budget, and that diplomas would be prepared and distributed as soon as possible.

Agenda item 15 (c): Site plaques

The Secretary General recalled that the Standing Committee, at its previous meeting in Costa Rica, had been in favour of the idea of a plaque to be erected at Ramsar sites to inform visitors about the Convention and about the listing of the site. He recalled the recent visit made by the Standing Committee to the Swiss Ramsar site where a plaque would have been appropriate. Design of a plaque, which needed to be weatherproof, and its production was much more difficult than for a diploma. The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, where the UK section of the Bureau was located, had a suitable process for producing such plaques, and he circulated photographs of the plaques.

The Chairman suggested that The Wildfowl Trust might be requested to design a specimen plaque for the Slimbridge Ramsar site, which the Standing Committee could review at its next meeting. The observer from Norway felt there was room for flexibility in design of the plaques; different countries might wish to use different presentations, but there should be agreement at least on use of the logo and some basic data. The observer from UK said that the Nature Conservancy Council had recently commissioned five different types of signs for different

national nature reserves. He offered to let the Convention have the benefit of NCC's experience. Concluding the discussion the Chairman asked the Bureau to produce a specimen plaque in collaboration with The Wildfowl Trust and NCC. He did not feel these plaques could be provided free to Contracting Parties because of the expense involved, but a standard design could be suggested.

Agenda item 15 (d): Brochure

The Secretary General pointed out that the Convention brochure needed revision and updating, and that the Bureau had very few copies left. He reported that a new version would be prepared in 1989, thanks to financial support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and from Unesco.

Agenda item 15 (e): Slide presentation

The Secretary General reminded the Committee of the presentation on the Convention which they had viewed the first day of the meeting. He noted that it had been widely used by Bureau staff for promotional purposes, and said it could be made available to the Standing Committee or to Contracting Parties. He asked for advice on whether there might be marketing opportunities. He also appealed for more slides illustrating Ramsar sites. The Member from the USA presented the Bureau with the slides on the Cheyenne Bottoms sites which he had shown to the Committee the previous day.

Agenda item 15(f): Articles/promotional lectures by Bureau staff

The Secretary General reported that Bureau staff had prepared a number of articles about the Convention, and were regularly requested, in the course of Bureau travel, to give lectures. Texts were available in several languages. Several radio addresses and press conferences had also been given. Mr de Klemm reported that he had been involved with Unesco's MAB programme in making a series of six films for French television. One, lasting 56 minutes, dealt with wetlands and made extensive reference to Ramsar.

Agenda item 15(g): Stickers and pins

The Secretary General also provided copies of a Convention sticker, currently available in English, and showed a sample of a Convention badge, designed by the Administrative Assistant, which was being produced in bulk. He added that he was investigating the possibility of developing a Convention flag, which could fly outside the World Conservation Centre alongside those of IUCN and WWF. A number of promotional items were being considered in association with the Montreux Conference, including posters and perhaps a special Swatch watch.

The member from Netherlands asked whether a special Swiss postage stamp might be issued for the Montreux Conference; the Secretary General indicated that a request had been made and an answer was promised for early 1989. The member from Netherlands also suggested that an etching of the logo might be made and sold as an objet d'art in a limited edition. He offered to enquire into commercial possibilities. The member from Tunisia suggested production of ties, T-shirts or scarves bearing the logo. It was recommended that the Bureau should ensure it owned

the logo and the right to reproduce it.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairman expressed the Standing Committee's satisfaction with the promotional work achieved.

Agenda item 16: Next meeting of the Standing Committee

The Secretary General recalled that there needed to be at least one meeting of the Standing Committee each year, and suggested that autumn 1989 would be most appropriate for the next session, since the next meeting would have to review papers prepared for the Montreux Conference in June 1990. Recalling earlier discussions on the need to coordinate meetings of Conventions, he pointed out that a Conference of the Parties to CITES would be held in Lausanne from 9 to 20 October 1989, and suggested that the Ramsar Standing Committee should be held immediately before or afterwards in Gland, Switzerland.

It was agreed that the meeting should be held after the CITES conference, partly to avoid a clash with IWRB's Executive Board meeting in the first week of October, partly because CITES participants would need time before their Conference for preparatory work. The Chairman suggested that two and a half days would again be necessary, and the dates of 23 to 25 October 1989 at the World Conservation Centre in Gland were therefore agreed.

The Secretary General emphasized the value to the Bureau of having consultations with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman between meetings of the Standing Committee, and suggested this be done on the occasion of the meeting at Leiden in the Netherlands from 6 to 9 June 1989, when the Strategy sub-committee was to meet. This was agreed.

The observer from IWRB said that the IWRB Standing Committee would be happy for the Ramsar Standing Committee to meet sometime in the future at Slimbridge. The Committee noted his invitation with thanks.

Agenda item 17: Any other business.

The Chairman noted that the Bureau wished to raise two items: details of cooperation with IUCN and IWRB, the host organizations; and production of the Regina Proceedings.

a) Cooperation with IUCN/IWRB

The Chairman said he wished to acknowledge publicly the support given to the Convention, its Standing Committee and Bureau by both IUCN and IWRB. He was delighted at the close cooperation established, the more so as there was friction in any marriage. He said he understood that IUCN was suffering from shortage of space and expressed appreciation for the impressive facilities made available to the Bureau. While the Ramsar Bureau would in the foreseeable future have restricted funding and personnel, it was likely even so to expand, perhaps by secondments, so that it would need more space. The observer from IUCN commented that the situation at Gland was like a small congested tent in the rain, which was irksome for the Ramsar Bureau, IUCN and for WWF. It would be difficult to accommodate any rapid growth of the Ramsar

Bureau, but he took very seriously a letter received from the Secretary General pointing out the Bureau requirements. The observer from IWRB said that IWRB was also pleased with the close collaboration and could offer value for money. He also expressed enthusiasm about the arrangements made at the present meeting for closer programme coordination.

b) Production of Proceedings Volumes from Meetings of the Conference of the Parties

The Secretary General emphasized that production of the Regina Proceedings was a policy question, as well as a practical matter. Proceedings were very important as a legislative basis for future action, and detailed reports of previous Conferences of the Parties had therefore been produced. The Bureau had produced full Proceedings of the Extraordinary Conference and preliminary Proceedings of the Regina Conference in English and French in November 1987. Funding for production of the full proceedings had been provided by Canadian federal and provincial government agencies, by the UK and by non-government bodies in Canada and USA. The Bureau was extremely grateful for this extra funding. However, the work involved in producing the full proceedings by a small operation like the Bureau was very considerable. Despite the extra funding, costs were such that the Bureau had to produce camera ready copy for an economical publication, and the necessary editing, retyping, translating and checking meant a heavy burden on a small secretariat which faced many other priority activities. There had not been time to complete the Proceedings for the current meeting of the Standing Committee, as had been hoped.

Full Proceedings (including all conference documents, national reports, workshop reports and expert presentations) would be produced and distributed in 1989. Given the situation, the Secretary General requested guidance on policy for proceedings of future meetings: would simply the preliminary proceedings be sufficient, or were full proceedings required? In the latter case, extra personnel and funding would be necessary.

The member from Switzerland felt it was important to have a full document and suggested either that the country hosting the Conference might find the necessary finance, or that the Convention budget could be increased for the next triennium to include full costs for proceedings. The Conservation Coordinator pointed out that Contracting Parties went to considerable trouble to produce national reports, and would be unwilling to do so if the reports were not published; the reports also contained pledges of future action, which it was important to document. The member from Chile agreed that national reports were important, but suggested they might be published as a separate document, a suggestion supported by the observer from WWF. The member from Switzerland commented that the interest of scientific and technical documents diminished with time. In response to a query from the Chairman, the Secretary General outlined the action taken by other Conventions: the nearest parallel was with CITES which met every two years and, although it did not have national reports, published technical documents. The Proceedings of the 1985 Bonn Convention Conference had only recently appeared. In his view, the Ramsar performance compared well.

The member from USA and the observer from IUCN both felt that the first priority was to publish recommendations, resolutions and agreed documents detailing obligations. They applauded the decision taken to publish the "preliminary proceedings" in 1987. The member

from USA wondered whether the full proceedings might be kept on a database, rather than being published. The observer from IUCN suggested that, where national reports were important, each country could circulate its own. Alternatively a commercial publisher might be found if the product was attractive. The observer from Norway suggested that the issue of Proceedings might be covered as part of the strategy discussion; the question of whether Proceedings were of value in the future had to be addressed; if they were only of historical interest, their value diminished.

Summarizing the discussion the Chairman emphasized that full Regina Proceedings would in any event be published in 1989. It had been important to discuss the future situation and to avoid stumbling into an ad hoc approach. He requested the Bureau to prepare an action plan on this item for the Standing Committee's next meeting, and emphasized the reminder from the Conservation Coordinator that national reports for Montreux should be submitted six months in advance – i.e., by December 1989.

c) Other Matters

The member from the Netherlands raised one other item. He understood that Japan was considering secondment of a staff member to the Bureau, and added that Netherlands might also be prepared to do so. He enquired whether the Bureau had the support of the Standing Committee to continue with negotiations on this issue. The Secretary General thanked the member from the Netherlands for raising this important point; the Bureau was very anxious to have an expression of the Committee's support and agreement. The observer from UK emphasised the importance of clarifying the tasks to be carried out by such personnel. Summarizing the general consensus of the Standing Committee on this issue, the Chairman said that the Committee was strongly in favour of secondments and encouraged the Bureau to pursue the issue assertively and to keep the Committee, IUCN and IWRB (for whom there were implications in finding office space) fully informed.

Agenda item 18: Closing remarks

Before making his closing remarks, the Chairman gave the floor to the Administrative Assistant, who had just received an important message from the Depositary, Unesco.

She announced that Vietnam had deposited its instrument of accession with Unesco on 20 September 1988 and had designated the Red River Estuary for the List. Malta had deposited its instrument of accession on 30 September 1988 and had designated Ghadira for the List. Vietnam and Malta were therefore the 50th and 51st Contracting Parties. In addition, Pakistan had on 20 September 1982 become the second Contracting Party to accept the Regina amendments. Finally Unesco reported that Saudi Arabia was considering becoming a Contracting Party.

The Chairman said he was delighted that the meeting should be concluded on such an encouraging note. He thanked participants for accepting his "arbitrary and militaristic" style of chairmanship, and expressed gratitude to members and observers for their active participation. He recalled that some participants had made pledges of support for the Convention: Canada would support the Newsletter, Switzerland would provide special funds for Africa; the UK had promised to investigate the possibility of support for database work, and both Canada and

Switzerland were also interested in supporting this aspect and encouraged UK to contribute. The Chairman offered thanks to Contracting Parties like USA and to non-government organizations which had provided extra finance. He specially thanked IUCN and IWRB, the two host bodies without whom the Bureau could not exist. He paid tribute to the presence of the observers from Australia, Norway and USSR and recalled the decision to maintain closer links in the future with USSR. Finally he thanked Mr de Klemm both for his legal input and for his efficient interpretation. He closed the meeting with a tribute to the efficient Bureau which was working to advance the cause of Ramsar. The meeting was closed at 12:15 on 19 October 1983. (A visit was made thereafter to the Montreux Conference Centre for an inspection of the facilities for the 1990 Conference).