

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

8th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform

Environment House, Geneva, Switzerland, 6 June 2011

Report of the 8th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform

Contracting Parties present: Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Switzerland, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela

Observers: Secretariat of Ramsar: Anada Tiega, Secretary General, Claudia Fenerol, Anna Goodwin

1. The meeting was convened and the representative from Chile introduced the two items on the agenda, stemming from Ramsar Standing Committee Decision SC42-30 – reproduced below (note this was referred to as draft decision SC42-32 in the agenda and discussion):

The agenda items were:

- a) handover to a new chairperson or co-chairs; and
 - b) next steps in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG)
2. USA – Recommended a Chair and Vice Chair structure, and nominated Indonesia and Mexico respectively.

Korea supported this structure.

Netherlands reported that it had expected that the Australian Co-Chair would have opened up the process for nominations immediately after SC42. Japan stated that they had tried to make contact with Australia and get this process started. Other members confirmed that in fact no process for seeking nominees or further information had commenced.

3. Japan stated that they had proposed Australia as Co-chair 3 years ago, and were now happy to accept the proposal of Indonesia and Mexico as Chair and Vice Chair.

After Indonesia and Mexico invited parties to provide further names/thoughts on the Chairmanship, Netherlands explained that they had received an offer from a Standing Committee representative, Mr. Ainsley Henry, Jamaica, to join the Group and help get it to the necessary conclusions. Members generally thought this a helpful offer, as long as the logistics and cost of having a member outside of Geneva would not hamper the process. Also, it was noted by Netherlands that Mr. Henry had not at this point confirmed his governments' approval of this form of participation.

USA recognized the challenges with this nomination but agreed Mr. Henry as a second (possibly remote) Vice Chair could be valuable. Switzerland, Netherlands and Canada, among others, concurred.

4. Brazil and Switzerland supported Indonesia as Chair and 2 Vice Chairs (Mexico and Jamaica) and Japan expressed that it did not object. Indonesia (Mr. Koba) accepted the Group's nomination and took over the Chairmanship of the Group and this meeting forthwith. Mexico (Ms. Romero) accepted the Vice Chair nomination. Jamaica's acceptance will be sought, and the mechanics of his remote participation agreed, by the new Chair. Brazil congratulated and thanked the new Chair and Vice Chairs and requested full transparency forthwith. Brazil was looking forward to having a process back on track. Others concurred and look forward to hearing the Chair's plan for the Group for the period to 31 August 2011.
5. USA and Switzerland expressed their desire to see AHWG work recommence by the end of this month, as directed by Decision SC42-30. Switzerland believed that the majority of base information is now on the web, and that a draft resolution needs crafting from that.
6. Canada and Netherlands were keen to ensure that a thorough but pragmatic approach was adopted in response to the fourth bullet of the decision, inviting IUCN, UNEP and the Ramsar Secretariat to provide any additional information they believe useful. After some debate it was agreed that all three parties should be requested to provide any further information that it saw relevant, and a deadline for this was agreed - **Monday 20th June. The Chair will send out a request with this deadline immediately.** Chair will then disseminate anything he receives to the group for consideration at the next meeting.
7. In relation to 6 above, some members were concerned that IUCN may not have had the opportunity to respond to the UNEP report. Switzerland reminded the group that IUCN had presented information at the beginning of this process on an equivalent basis to UNEP (see http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/mtg/mtg_adhoc_wg_ar3-03.pdf which was considered at the 3rd meeting of the AHWG in December 2009), and has had a continuous opportunity to intervene since as the recent UNEP report has been drafted and considered. Canada and Netherlands also wondered if there was really anything more that IUCN wanted to say. USA requested any further relevant information from the Secretariat, and Japan requested that the previously distributed Secretariat formal position be discussed by the group at the next meeting, with a specific request that this be on the agenda.
8. The Group discussed how the Secretariat or the Chair could synthesize all the current evidence that the WG has. Costa Rica believed that many members were keen to see the **comparison/synthesis, and requested the Chair to undertake this as well as distributing any additional information received** as soon as possible and well prior to the next meeting. Costa Rica offered to assist the Chair/Vice Chairs in the preparation of this comparison/synthesis.
9. The date of next meeting was set – 29 June 2011. Venue will be Geneva (**Secretariat and Chair to liaise on whether it will be Environment House or Palais**). **Japan asked for formal notification by the Secretariat as soon as possible.**

Annex

Standing Committee Meeting Decision SC42-30 (* see below)

The Standing Committee:

- noted with deep concern the absence of a draft Resolution by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform as mandated by Decision SC41-4;
- expressed appreciation for the commitment of the departing Co-Chairs to facilitate a smooth transition of leadership of the WG, and requested that informal consultations with representatives of the Contracting Parties be conducted in order to appoint a chairperson or co-chairs and that they convene a meeting of the WG to appoint the new leadership by 6 June 2011;
- urged the Working Group to reconvene its work as mandated in Resolution X.5 and Decision SC41-4 as soon as possible after the appointment of new officer(s) and not later than 30 June 2011;
- invited IUCN, the Ramsar Secretariat, and UNEP to provide to the WG and Secretariat any additional information they believe would be useful to inform the decision making of the Parties and, due to the urgency of this matter, requested the Secretariat to make available immediately on the Ramsar website any such materials received;
- due to the importance of this matter to the Convention, encouraged all Contracting Parties to actively participate in the deliberations of the WG;
- further urged the WG to report on a consensus position on the matter, or, if that were not possible, to report on the main positions within the WG with clear, precise, complete and comparable information;
- requested the WG to submit its results by 31 August 2011, so that the 43rd meeting of the SC may consider those results in reporting to Ramsar COP11; and
- requested the Secretariat to provide all necessary support for the WG to complete its task and to participate in the meetings as appropriate.

* This was referred to on the meeting agenda as “Draft decision SC42-32”