

**Agenda item 10.2**

**Report on training activities and capacity building from the  
Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity Building**

**Action requested:** The Secretariat suggests that the Standing Committee:

- note the Rules of Procedure for the Advisory Board,
- empower the Chair of the Standing Committee to respond positively to the letter from the Government of the Netherlands,
- give due consideration to the request to appoint a member of the Advisory board to the CEPA Oversight Panel; and
- request the Advisory Board to provide a plan of activities, complementary to the Convention's work plan for 2006-2008.

1. The Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity Building, based on its first meeting, 2 February 2006, gives the following advice to the Ramsar Standing Committee:

**Status and role of the board**

2. The Advisory Board suggests that the Standing Committee:
  - note that the Advisory Board has adopted the annexed Rules of Procedure for the Advisory Board on Capacity Building (annex 1);
  - respond formally to the letter from the Government of the Netherlands sent last year (annex 2) concerning the Advisory Board with respect to appointing the members, including a representative of Tour du Valat because of its involvement in capacity building activities especially in the francophone world;
  - appoint, in addition from the Ramsar Secretary General, someone who is member of the Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity Building to the CEPA Oversight Panel, so as to ensure good communication between the two bodies.

**Plan 2006-2008**

3. The Advisory Board suggests that the Standing Committee:
  - after agreeing on the Convention's work plan, request a plan of activities from the Advisory Board that complements the Convention's work plan in areas of capacity building. This plan should be discussed by the CEPA Oversight Panel and used as a guide for capacity-building exercises over the next three years.

## Annex 1

### Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Chair Ramsar Standing Committee  
Ms. Gordana Beltram  
c/o Ramsar Secretariat  
Rue Mauverney 28  
1196 GLAND  
Switzerland

May 17, 2005

Re: Capacity building for wetland management and restoration

Dear Ms Beltram,

One very important aim of the Ramsar Convention is capacity building for wetland management and restoration, and international cooperation in this area.

Over the last decade, the Dutch Government has actively contributed to the realisation of this aim by organising international wetland courses at the RIZA Institute in Lelystad, here in the Netherlands, and by supporting the course participants. Of the large number of people who have followed these courses since they started in 1994, many are now active in wetland management, or in designing and implementing wetland policy in the participating countries. Feedback and evaluation of these courses show that the training is highly regarded and seen to be efficient and effective in its organisation and composition.

The RIZA course has always been closely linked to the Ramsar Convention and operated on its behalf. It had a RIZA Advisory Board, chaired by the Secretary General of Ramsar and composed of delegates from the Dutch Ministries, Institutes, WWF and Wetlands International. I greatly value the active involvement of the Secretary General, which ensured that the courses closely reflected Ramsar priorities and needs.

In recent years, the thinking about capacity building has moved on, and within Ramsar increasing emphasis is rightly being placed on a regional approach. Capacity building is being developed within the regions with exchange of knowledge and experience taking place directly among the participants. This tailor-made approach is expressed in the establishment of several regional training activities in East Africa, Ramsar (Iran), Panama, Indonesia and so on.

This experience led the RIZA Advisory Board last year to decide on a new approach to accommodate the changes in Ramsar. This has led to the following course of action:

- A new 3-week training course for trainers has been set up in the Netherlands. The aim is to train participants to initiate and organise their own national or regional courses, in Panama or East Africa for instance, where these initiatives have been developed and there is a need for substantive support. The Training of Trainers course will be organised once a year by the IAC in Wageningen, in collaboration with RIZA, UNESCO-IHE, ITC and Wetlands International, and will replace the RIZA wetland management course. After a pilot course

in September 2004, the first fully-fledged course took place in April 2005 in Wageningen with 22 participants and was a great success.

- The establishment of a “wetland professionals platform”, a virtual community of people involved with wetlands: managers, researchers, trainers and policy-makers. This platform will improve the exchange of important information. It will be maintained by various wetland institutes.
- The RIZA Advisory Board has been changed to the Ramsar Capacity Building Advisory Board. The Dutch Government is pleased to continue its active support of Ramsar by hosting this new Capacity Building Advisory Board. In this respect it is important that the Advisory Board, under the leadership of the Secretary General, supports capacity building developments within Ramsar. A Rules of Procedure has therefore been drawn up in consultation with partners involved and the composition and duties of the new Board have been determined. The Capacity Building Advisory Board is an advisory body, and not a governing body. It will draw up recommendations on how to address global needs. To ensure a more active regional participation in the Advisory Board, it is proposed that you, as Chair of the Ramsar Standing Committee, together with the Dutch Government, will invite the parties to join the Board, to be made up as follows:
  - Chair: Secretary General of Ramsar
  - Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
  - Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management
  - Wetlands International
  - WWF
  - Representative of Training of Trainers course on wetland management
  - Representative of a Regional Capacity Building Programme (on a rotary basis, by invitation, depending on activities in the regions).
  - Representative of Medwet (capacity building institute)
  - Representative of Wetland Professionals Platform

Our aim, under the leadership of the Secretary General of Ramsar, is to create an effective platform to advise and strengthen the various wetlands capacity building initiatives and programmes. We hope that you will support this new approach by the Advisory Board and the Dutch Government.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Cees Veerman,  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,  
NATURE AND FOOD QUALITY

## Annex 2

### **RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE ADVISORY BOARD ON CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS 02-02-2006**

#### **Article 1. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

1. The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world (Ramsar COP8, 2002).
2. In order to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention identifies *inter alia* the need to:
  - a) develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands, and
  - b) identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, and implement appropriate responses.
3. With capacity building is meant the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives (UNDP 1997), in this case related to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Capacity building is facilitated through the provision of technical support activities, including coaching, training, specific technical assistance and resource networking.

#### **Article 2. The Advisory Board**

1. The Ramsar Convention is assisted in the achievement of 1.2a and 1.2b by an Advisory Board on Capacity Building.
2. This Advisory Board is organised and hosted by the Netherlands Government as part of its contribution to the Ramsar Convention.
3. The task of the Advisory Board is to report and to provide advice to the Ramsar Convention, through the Secretary General, on:
  - a) general policy matters that relate to the development of capacity building activities, including training opportunities for wetland professionals;
  - b) cooperation with and between governments, institutions, organizations and agencies that are engaged in these activities;
  - c) identification and development of new initiatives;

- d) prioritization of activities, given emerging issues and available resources;
- e) engagement of regional initiatives in a global capacity building programme;
- f) funding needed for capacity building.

### **Article 3. Membership of the Advisory Board**

1. The members of the Advisory Board are persons that either are appointed on the basis of their personal qualifications or because of the function they hold in the organisations they represent.
2. The members are appointed by the Netherlands Government, in conjunction with the chair of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention upon proposal by the Advisory Board.
- 3) The Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention will be chair of the Advisory Board. Rijkswaterstaat RIZA of the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management will hold the secretariat of the Advisory Board.
4. The composition of the Advisory Board should be reflective of governments, institutions, organisations and agencies that have a demonstrated track record in wetland-related capacity building activities.
5. Membership of the Advisory Board is for a period of three years. Re-appointment after this period is possible.
6. Membership terminates when:
  - a) the term mentioned in point 5 expires;
  - b) the member formally resigns;
  - c) there are other good reasons, such as a change in position on the basis of which the member is appointed, or absence at board meetings and other board functions for a period of more than one year.
7. When necessary, observers can be invited by the chair.

### **Article 4. Meetings of the Advisory Board**

1. Normally, the board meets two times a year.
2. Proceedings of each Board meeting shall be made as minutes.
3. The Board's report and advice to the Ramsar Convention, through its Standing Committee, shall be prepared after each Board meeting.