

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

25th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland: 23- 27 October 2000

DOC. SC25-15

Agenda item 18.2

8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP8):

Proposed COP8 Draft Agenda and Programme

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to receive the advice of the Subgroup on COP8 on this matter and to take a final decision on the COP draft agenda and programme.

1. At its 1999 meeting the Standing Committee established a Subgroup on COP8 Preparations with the following members: Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Spain (Chair), and Togo, and the USA as an observer, plus the STRP Chair, representatives of the International Organization Partners (IOPs) and the Secretary General (*ex officio*). (The representation of Asia and Oceania in the Subgroup were to have been communicated to the Bureau soon after the meeting, but this has not been done.) The SC entrusted the Subgroup to, *inter alia*,
 - a) prepare, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, a proposal concerning the agenda and programme for Ramsar COP8, taking into account the need to maintain the right balance and linkages between the technical component of the COP and its policy and administrative components; and
 - b) prepare recommendations on the appropriate mechanisms to deal with some key issues at COP8, such as budget and the consideration and adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008.
2. In response to these assignments, Spain transmitted on 18 May 2000 to the Subgroup members, plus Australia (SC Chair), India and Japan (Asia region representatives), the USA (observer in the Subgroup), and the IOPs the attached proposal (Annex I) for the agenda and programme for COP8, which includes recommendations on the issues listed in paragraph 1 b) above.
3. The deadline for comments was 8 June 2000. Comments were received within the deadline from Australia. The USA submitted comments on 14 August 2000. In addition, the STRP made suggestions concerning one of the proposed Technical Sessions (TS) at its meeting in June 2000. These inputs are summarized in the following paragraphs.

4. Comments from Australia (see Annex II):
 - a. Concurs with the proposal that the duration of the Conference be maintained at nine days and elaborates on the reasons for this.
 - b. Supports the proposal to establish a Finance and Budget Contact Group on Day 1, establishing a close link with the consideration of the new Strategic Plan and work plan.
 - c. In relation to the Technical Sessions, expresses concern about the substitution of a session on training (suggested at the last SC meeting) by a session on cultural issues (more on this matter below). Suggests that cultural issues be the subject of a keynote paper or be incorporated in other technical sessions.
 - d. Recommends to include CITES and the MAB Program in the discussion about synergies.
 - e. Suggests that the issue of the World Commission on Dams be placed in TS 1.
 - f. Suggests to broaden the scope of the paper in TS 2 on impact assessment to go beyond “potential for collaboration” to focus on results and also on “Strategic Environmental Assessment”.
 - g. Suggests that the STRP work on water allocations for maintaining wetland functions and values be incorporated in the Technical Sessions. The issue is very important and leaving it out seems an oversight.
5. The suggested Technical Session on cultural values was proposed by the Third Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (Djerba, Tunis, 1-5 April 2000) where there was a technical symposium on this subject which revealed the significance of cultural issues related to wetlands, particularly in the Mediterranean region, where COP8 will be held.
6. In addition, D E Pritchard (BirdLife International), after having spent some time working at the Ramsar Bureau analysing the information on cultural aspects contained in the Ramsar Information Sheets of some 600 Ramsar sites, contributed the background paper attached in Annex III.
5. Comments from the USA (see Annex IV):
 - a. The proposal would be appropriate if the decision is made to use the framework of earlier COPs.
 - b. Suggests to modify this framework to address two important issues that the Subgroup was mandated to address: i) the advisability of having during the COP a ministerial or high-level segment; and ii) assessing the duration of the COP.
 - c. Proposes to divide the COP into two parts, the first devoted to technical issues and the second to a high-level meeting of Ramsar authorities to address policy issues.
 - d. Proposes to shorten the COP to six days, the first three devoted to the technical sessions and the other three for the high-level ministerial meeting (to address issues included in days 1, 2, 6, 8 and 9 of the proposal distributed by Spain).
 - e. Argues that the COP could be made shorter without loss of effectiveness, particularly if effort are applied to enhance the products and effectiveness of regional meetings prior to the COP.
6. A revised draft agenda and programme shortening the COP to six days, in line the USA proposal is attached in Annex V. It should be noted that the proposal to have two segments during the COP, one with technical delegations and the other one with high-level

officials, would demand more resources to assist the almost 100 CPs that normally require assistance for travel and subsistence costs.

7. The STRP suggested that the following two items should be added under Technical Session 1: “Restoration Challenges and Opportunities” and “Climate Change and Wetlands”.

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ANNEX I

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Ramsar COP8 Provisional Agenda

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| I | Opening of the Meeting |
| II | General statements |
| III | Adoption of the Agenda |
| IV | Adoption of the Rules of Procedure |
| V | Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, and remarks by the Chairperson |
| VI | Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees |
| VII | Admission of Observers |
| VIII | Report of the Chairperson of the Convention Standing Committee |
| IX | Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level, based on the National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties |
| X | Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties |
| XI | The Convention Strategic Plan 2003-2008 |
| XII | The Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005 |
| XIII | Financial report and proposed budget for the triennium 2003-2005 |
| XIV | Consideration of the proposals for Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee |
| XV | Report of the Credentials Committee |
| XVI | Reports and recommendations of the Technical Sessions |
| XVII | Appointment of the members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel |
| XVIII | Adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations |
| XIX | Election of Contracting Parties that will serve on the Standing Committee |
| XX | Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties |
| XXI | Any other business |
| XXII | Adoption of the report of the 8 th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties |
| XXIII | Close of the meeting |

Technical Sessions:

1. Wetlands: major challenges and emerging opportunities in the new century
2. Wetland inventory and assessment
3. Practical steps for applying the Vision for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance
4. Managing wetlands for sustainable use: lessons learned and new perspectives
5. Cultural aspects of wetlands as a tool for their conservation and sustainable use

Ramsar COP8 Annotated Agenda and Programme

Sunday before the day of the opening

09.00 - 17.00	Meeting of the Standing Committee (from now on the Conference Committee)
09.00 - 18.00	Registration of participants
Evening	Free for informal consultations

DAY ONE (Monday)

08.00 - 18.00	Registration (continued)
10.00 - 13.00	Plenary Session

I / II Opening of the Meeting

The Conference will be opened by high level representatives of the Kingdom of Spain and its Government and the Chairperson of the Conference Committee, followed by general statements by the Secretary General and invited guests. The opening ceremony will include the presentation of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards 2002.

Break –

Brief introduction to the Conference procedures and logistics

III Adoption of the Agenda

The Conference will consider document **Ramsar COP8 DOC. 1: Provisional Agenda and Programme**, and adopt the Agenda and Programme for this meeting.

IV Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

The Conference will consider document **Ramsar COP8 DOC. 2: Rules of Procedure** and will adopt the Rules for the 8th Meeting. Note: The Rules have been adopted by Ramsar COP7 and no changes have been proposed, but procedurally Article 6.4 of the Convention provides that the COP “shall adopt rules of procedure for each of its meetings”.

V Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons

Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Conference will elect the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons for the meeting on the basis of proposals made by the Conference Committee.

Remarks by the Chairperson

13.00 - 15.00	Lunch break
15.00 - 18.30	Plenary Session

VI Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees

Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Conference will appoint a Credentials Committee on the basis of proposals made by the Conference Committee, and may establish any other committees necessary to enable the Conference to carry out its functions. The COP may establish a Committee on the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and the Work Plan 2003-2005, and a Committee on Finances and Budget.

VII Admission of Observers

Provisions have always been made for the participation in the Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of international agencies or bodies, and national governmental and non-governmental agencies or bodies, provided the Parties present do not decide otherwise (a COP document with the list of registered observers will be tabled at the meeting).

- VIII Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee
 a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee will introduce his report, highlighting the activities of the Standing Committee during the past triennium, with recommendations, if necessary, for the future work of the Committee.
 b) The Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will introduce his report on the activities of the Panel over the past triennium, with recommendations for the future work of the Panel.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: A special intervention on ... (issue to be defined)
- IX Report of the Secretary General
 The Secretary General will present a report on the implementation of the Convention's Work Plan 2000-2002 and a general overview on the implementation of the Convention, based on the National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties. General discussion.

19.30 - 22.30 Welcoming function hosted by the Government of Spain

DAY 2 (Tuesday)

08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.30 - 13.00 Plenary Session

- X Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties:
 a) Interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention
OTHER ISSUES TO BE IDENTIFIED
Special presentation on wetland conservation and sustainable use in Spain
- XI The Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008. Introduction and first general discussion.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: a special intervention by an invited speaker.
- XII The Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005. Introduction and first general discussion.

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 18.00 Plenary Session

- XIII Financial report by the Chairperson of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee and proposed budget for the triennium 2003-2005. General discussion.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: A special intervention by an invited speaker

XIV Consideration of the proposals for resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee

A COP document will contain the proposals approved by the Standing Committee at its 26th Meeting (September? 2001) for consideration by Ramsar COP8, as well as the proposals submitted by Contracting Parties at least 60 days before the opening of Ramsar COP8 (by ?????). In this Plenary Session there will be a first discussion of the proposals, so as to receive suggestions for amendments and to allow the search for consensus to begin before the final drafts of the decisions come for approval in the last day of the Conference. (Note: Contracting Parties shall be able to submit new proposals during the meeting to the Conference Committee, provided that those new proposals deal with: a) urgent issues resulting from the debates during the meeting; and/or b) new developments that it was not possible to foresee in advance.)

19.00 – 21.00 Meetings of the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan, and the Committee on Finances and Budget (if established)

DAY 3 (Wednesday)

08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.30 – 12.30 Regional Meetings to review further the implementation of the Convention in each region, the proposals submitted to the Conference, and the subjects for discussion at Technical Sessions (A separate agenda will be prepared for each one of the six Ramsar Regions, according to requirements.)

12.30 - 15.00 Lunch break

13.30 - 15.00 If required, Meetings of the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan, and the Committee on Finances and Budget (if established)

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The Technical Sessions during Ramsar COPs are an integral part of the programme of the Conference, but, unlike the Plenary Sessions, they do not constitute a formal sitting of the Conference in the sense that all participants, delegates of Contracting Parties and observers, participate in the discussions on an equal basis. The Technical Sessions, as the title indicates, are intended to deal with issues of great significance to the Convention from a technical perspective. The Technical Sessions discuss proposals concerning the theme under debate and may propose amendments that are then considered by the Plenary and may be adopted as part of the Conference decisions.

15.00 - 19.00 Technical Session 1: Wetlands: major challenges and emerging opportunities in the new century

- 1.1. Wetlands and management of surface and ground water: Ramsar and the water management agencies
- 1.2. Opportunities and limitations for synergy with other Conventions and institutions in the areas of biodiversity, desertification, climate change, migratory species, and protected areas

15.00 - 16.30 Panel presentations by invited experts in the plenary hall

17.00 - 19.00 Discussion of the themes of this Technical Session and review of the proposals concerning each topic. This discussion will take place in four regionally-based groups (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe), but all groups will be open to any participant who wants to participate in them.

DAY 4 (Thursday)

08.00 - 08.45 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.00 - 13.00 Technical Session 2: Wetland inventory and assessment

- 2.1 A “Ramsar System for Wetland Inventory”
- 2.2 Impact assessment: the results and potential of collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Association of Impact Assessment
- 2.3 Tools for rapid assessment of wetland functions and biodiversity for decision-makers

09.00 - 10.30 Panel presentations by invited experts in the plenary hall.

11.00 - 13.00 Discussion of the themes of this Technical Session and review of the proposals concerning each topic. This discussion will take place in four regionally-based groups (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe), but all groups will be open to any participant who wants to participate in them.

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 19.00 Technical Session 3: Practical steps for applying the Vision for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

- 3.1 Lessons learnt in the implementation of the of the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List (Resolution VII.11)
- 3.2 Additional guidance for inclusion in the Ramsar List of mangroves, peatlands, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and soft bottom communities
- 3.3 The Global Action Plan for Peatlands: from planning to action
- 3.4 Making Ramsar sites information accessible: the Ramsar Sites Database and Ramsar Data Gateway

15.00 - 16.30 Panel presentations by invited experts in the plenary hall.

17.00 - 19.00 Discussion of the theme of this Technical Session and review of the proposals concerning the topic. This discussion will take place in four regionally-based groups (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe), but all groups will be open to any participant who wants to participate in them.

21.00 - 22.30 Regional meetings to agree on recommendations to the Plenary Session on Contracting Parties to be elected to serve on the Standing Committee

DAY 5 (Friday)

08.00 - 08.45 Meeting of the Conference Committee

- 09.00 - 13.00** **Technical Session 4: Managing wetlands for sustainable use: lessons learned and new perspectives**
- 4.1 Guidelines for integrated coastal zone management: the state of the art
 - 4.2 Further guidance on management planning and implementation
 - 4.3 The Report of the World Commission on Dams and its relevance for the Ramsar Convention
 - 4.4 Guidelines on incentive for wetlands conservation and wise use
 - 4.5 Guidelines on invasive species in wetlands
- 09.00 - 10.30 Panel presentations by invited experts in the plenary hall.
- 11.00 - 13.00 Discussion of the themes of this Technical Session and review of the proposals concerning each topic. This discussion will take place in four regionally-based groups (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe), but all groups will be open to any participant who wants to participate in them.
- 13.00 - 15.00** Lunch break
- 15.00 - 19.00** **Technical Session 5: Cultural aspects of wetlands as a tool for their conservation and sustainable use**
- 5.1 Guiding principles on the cultural aspects of wetlands: examples from around the world
 - 5.2 Guidelines for incorporating the cultural dimensions in economic valuations and wetland assessment in general
 - 5.3 Incorporating the social sciences and the arts in public awareness and education campaigns concerning wetlands
- 15.00 - 16.30 Panel presentations by invited experts in the plenary hall.
- 17.00 - 19.00 Discussion of the themes of this Technical Session and review of the proposals concerning each topic. This discussion will take place in four regionally-based groups (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe), but all groups will be open to any participant who wants to participate in them.

DAY 6 (Saturday)

08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.30 - 13.00 **Plenary Session**

- XV Report of the Credentials Committee (a Ramsar COP8 document will be tabled at the meeting). As on past occasions, the Credentials Committee will require that the credentials of the delegates of Contracting Parties be presented in English, French or Spanish, on the appropriate letterhead, and be signed by the Head of State or Government and/or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or by an official legally empowered by the State concerned to accredit representatives at international meetings.

Key issues in the work of the Convention: a special intervention by an invited speaker.

XI, XII, XIII	Report on the discussions in the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan and in the Committee on Finances and Budget. Discussion and consensus building.
XVI	<u>Reports and recommendations of the Technical Sessions</u> The rapporteurs of the four regionally-based discussion groups will have prepared a brief consolidated report on the conclusions regarding each one of the topics discussed in the five Technical Sessions. This will be the opportunity to address any major divergence that may have arisen, with a view to build consensus for the preparation of the final draft of the Resolutions and Recommendations to be adopted by Ramsar COP8.
13.00 - 15.00	Lunch break
15.00 - 18.00	Plenary Session
XI, XII	Discussion of particular aspects of the Strategic Plan and Work Plan (to be identified) that required further debate and consensus building.
DAY 7 (Sunday)	
FREE FOR EXCURSIONS, ALLOWING THE SECRETARIAT TO PREPARE THE FINAL VERSIONS OF THE PROPOSALS TO BE CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE	
DAY 8 (Monday)	
08.00 - 09.00	Meeting of the Conference Committee
09.30 - 13.00	Plenary Session
XVII	<u>Appointment of the members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP).</u> This document will contain the proposal of the Standing Committee for the appointment of technical experts and scientists who will serve in their personal capacity in the STRP during the period between the close of COP8 and the close of COP9. The Standing Committee will prepare its proposal on the basis of the candidates advanced by the Contracting Parties by the deadline of ??? 2001.
XVIII	<u>Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations</u>
13.00 - 15.00	Lunch break
15.00 - 19.00	Plenary Session
XVIII	<u>Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations</u> (continued)
Evening	Farewell party
DAY 9 (Tuesday)	
08.00 - 09.00	Meeting of the Conference Committee
09.30 - 13.00	Plenary Session

XVIII Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations (continued)

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 17.00 Plenary SessionXIX Election of the Contracting Parties that will serve on the Standing Committee.

On the basis of the proposals presented by the six Ramsar Regions, the Conference will elect the countries that will serve on the Standing Committee from the close of the 8th Meeting of the COP until the close of the 9th Meeting. (The new Standing Committee will meet immediately after the close of Ramsar COP8 and, on the basis of the Rules of Procedure, will designate the countries that will act as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, as well as the countries that will serve on its Subgroup on Finance and any other subgroup that may have been established.)

XX Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Conference will take a decision on the timing and venue of the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties that in principle should be held in 2005, on the basis of invitations received from Contracting Parties to host the meeting.XXI Any other businessXXII Adoption of the report of the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting PartiesXXIII Close of the meeting

The closing ceremony will include brief interventions by the regional groups, the Secretary General, the representatives of NGOs and possibly of other sectors, and by a representative of the Government of Spain, who will formally close the Conference.

ANNEX III

CULTURAL VALUES OF WETLANDS, AND THE INFORMATION SUBMITTED TO DATE BY CONTRACTING PARTIES

Background note by D E Pritchard

1. Many wetland areas are highly valued by local communities and others for cultural and historical reasons, including religious beliefs and creation myths, as well as for their ecological functions or biodiversity conservation reasons. This facet of the values which are represented in the Ramsar List has not been given very full attention in the past, and the proposed COP Technical Session should help the Convention develop a more explicit picture of the importance of listed sites in this respect.
2. As well as offering better recognition of the full range of benefits offered by the Convention, this question is important in a policy/legal sense, too, in two respects.
3. Firstly the relationships between assessments of importance and vulnerability under Ramsar, and under the World Heritage Convention or the Man & the Biosphere Programme, need to be understood in relation to situations where their respective designations overlap.
4. Secondly, scientific, technical and utilitarian assessments of value and function used for judging adequacy of mitigation or compensation (including under Article 4.2 of the Convention) may often miss the aspect of a site's being valued for its cultural and historical associations, such that replacement elsewhere of its ecosystem functions or wildlife populations will not mitigate or compensate as completely as might be assumed (i.e., people value the site for where it is, as well as for what is on it). On an "ecological science only" approach, therefore, what may appear as maintenance of the favourable status of the site network may mask a progressive decline in the more unacknowledged (cultural/aesthetic) value-set.
5. Further, defending sites against threat only on an ecological science basis often does not fully explain the limits of acceptable change which conservationists, ecologists included, are really working to, since the cultural value-set plays a role as well. But because the cultural value-set is usually not explicit in policy, it tends to be defeated in adversarial decision-making arenas.
6. It is important to emphasise that what is said above relates to the appreciation, conservation and management of sites which have already been listed – it does not refer to the basis for listing, which under Article 2.2 of the Convention must be based only on significance in terms of botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology.
7. As a practical step towards preparing for an examination of these issues in the Convention, a preliminary investigation has been made of the information already transmitted to the Bureau by Contracting Parties in the relevant section of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS).
8. As the Standing Committee has discussed in the past, the form, quality and completeness of the RIS information-set is much more variable than would be desired. This investigation

provided an illuminating case-experience of trawling the data-set with a focus on just one issue. As a by-product of the study, an inventory of the status of the RIS collection in Gland has been produced, with action-points to be followed up separately. This limited the extent of what could be covered in the time available (4 days) to just over 600 of the more than 1030 sites on the List as of 25 July 2000. Nevertheless this is sufficient to produce broad conclusions on what Parties are already recording through Ramsar channels on the cultural values of listed wetlands. More analysis may be done later.

9. For the sample of 600 sites, information on cultural values has been transcribed from the official site descriptions submitted by the Administrative Authority – usually an RIS, but sometimes taking other forms. The latest version of the RIS format asks, under item 19, (formerly 21) for information on “Social and cultural values (e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site, etc.)”.
10. Instances where reference is made to important productive uses of the site (fishing, agriculture, etc.) were not included, unless the site is said to be, for example, an especially indicative example of a traditional or otherwise notable practice. Instances where reference is made to educational or recreational value of the site have also not been included, unless the site is regarded as particularly special in this respect compared with other areas (e.g., noted long history of use as a popular reference baseline/indicator site). In relation to historical value, in many cases Parties have answered question 19(/21) simply by referring to what is known about the history of the area. Such instances have generally not been included unless it is clear that these historical aspects are a specially valued attribute of the site relative to other areas.
11. Hence editorial judgements were applied in transcribing aspects of what has been submitted under question 19(/21). The priority instances for inclusion in the collation were those where archaeological, historical, cultural, religious, mythological or artistic/creative significance is recorded. Often this interest will occur on the site simply through coincidence of location (e.g., an archaeological site) – these have been included nevertheless. More noteworthy, however, are instances where the cultural interest is intimately bound up with the existence of the wetland system itself – its animals, plants, ecological processes, its setting in the landscape, seasonal cycles, etc. These should be the most promising types of case to pursue in further developing this work.
12. The information recorded is very incomplete for several reasons. Firstly, the RIS collection itself, as noted already, is incomplete, and there are even sites for which no formal description of any kind has been submitted. Secondly, even where an up-to-date RIS exists, the “cultural values” question is often unanswered. This is not necessarily because there is nothing to report: often the Administrative Authority for Ramsar is a different agency or Ministry from that with responsibility for cultural or historic matters, and input from the latter has not been secured. Thirdly, as described above, the cultural values question on the RIS is a combined question: answers describing social/productive use values may have been regarded as “completion” of this section, without its other components being distinguished.
13. Of roughly 600 sites, information for 185 (31%) mentioned cultural issues, in the sense of the “filtered” parameters described above. Although this is a minority, on an anecdotal basis it is felt to be a higher proportion than might have been expected.

14. A clear impression was of the “luck” involved in recording the information – full accounts of cultural issues seemed to have been offered in cases where knowledgeable individuals happen to have been associated with the process of compiling the RIS or its equivalent. In some countries a systematic approach has been taken to dealing with this issue, in others this has not been the case.
15. The information is recorded in an anecdotal free style, and “analysis” as such will therefore be qualitative. As mentioned above, some of the interests recorded are connected with the wetland character of the site, while in other cases there is simply a geographical coincidence. For the Convention’s purposes this is probably an important distinction to bear in mind in any further analysis.
16. The majority of entries relate to archaeological, anthropological or other historical interest. Some relate to sacred, mythological, or other ceremonial/symbolic significance. A number of entries are rather cryptic and need further probing to confirm what they signify. None so far have noted sites being a focus for artistic creativity (e.g., painting, writing) based on the site or its attributes. Some World Heritage Sites are mentioned as such, while others are not.
17. The Standing Committee may wish to consider the best way for this issue to be taken forward at COP8, and the nature of any Recommendations to be made to Parties.

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ANNEX V

Ramsar COP8

Annotated Agenda and Programme **SHORTENED TO SIX DAYS**Sunday before the day of the opening

09.00 - 17.00	Meeting of the Standing Committee (from now on the Conference Committee)
09.00 - 18.00	Registration of participants
Evening	Free for informal consultations

DAY ONE (Monday)

08.00 - 18.00	Registration (continued)
10.00 - 13.00	Plenary Session (NOTE. THE STARTING TIME WOULD HAVE TO BE 09.00 TO ACCOMMODATE THE ISSUES BROUGHT FROM THE AFTERNOON SESSION INTO THIS ONE.)
I / II	<u>Opening of the Meeting</u> The Conference will be opened by high level representatives of the Kingdom of Spain and its Government and the Chairperson of the Conference Committee, followed by general statements by the Secretary General and invited guests. The opening ceremony will include the presentation of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards 2002. Break – <u>Brief introduction to the Conference procedures and logistics</u>
III	<u>Adoption of the Agenda</u> The Conference will consider document Ramsar COP8 DOC. 1: Provisional Agenda and Programme , and adopt the Agenda and Programme for this meeting.
IV	<u>Adoption of the Rules of Procedure</u> The Conference will consider document Ramsar COP8 DOC. 2: Rules of Procedure and will adopt the Rules for the 8th Meeting. Note: The Rules have been adopted by Ramsar COP7 and no changes have been proposed, but procedurally Article 6.4 of the Convention provides that the COP “shall adopt rules of procedure for each of its meetings”.
V	<u>Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons</u> Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Conference will elect the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons for the meeting on the basis of proposals made by the Conference Committee. <u>Remarks by the Chairperson</u>
VI	<u>Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees</u> Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Conference will appoint a Credentials Committee on the basis of proposals made by the Conference Committee, and may establish any other committees necessary to enable the Conference to carry out its functions. The COP may establish a Committee on the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and the Work Plan 2003-2005, and a Committee on Finances and Budget.
VII	<u>Admission of Observers</u> Provisions have always been made for the participation in the Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of international agencies or

bodies, and national governmental and non-governmental agencies or bodies, provided the Parties present do not decide otherwise (a COP document with the list of registered observers will be tabled at the meeting).

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 18.30 Technical Session I

19.30 - 22.30 Welcoming function hosted by the Government of Spain

DAY 2 (Tuesday)

08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.30 - 13.00 Technical Session II

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 18.00 Technical Session III

19.00 – 21.00 Meetings of the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan, and the Committee on Finances and Budget (if established)

DAY 3 (Wednesday)

08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.30 – 12.30 THERE WILL NOT BE TIME TO DEVOTE THIS HALF DAY TO REGIONAL MEETINGS AS IN THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

Technical Session IV

12.30 - 15.00 Lunch break

13.30 - 15.00 If required, Meetings of the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan, and the Committee on Finances and Budget (if established)

15.00 - 19.00 Technical Session V

DAY 4 (Thursday)

08.00 - 08.45 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.00 - 13.00 Plenary Session (NOTE: MOST OF THE ISSUES IN THIS SESSION SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COP, TO PUT THE COP'S DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORK DONE IN THE PAST TRIENNium. THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORK PLAN 2003-2005 SHOULD ALSO BE INTRODUCED BEFORE

THE TECHNICAL SESSIONS. THE FIRST PLENARY SESSION ON DAY 1 IS ALREADY OVERCHARGED AND MORE ISSUES COULD NOT BE ADDED TO IT. THE INTERVENTIONS ON “KEY ISSUES” MAY HAVE TO BE CANCELLED BECAUSE LACK OF TIME.)

- VIII Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee
 a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee will introduce his report, highlighting the activities of the Standing Committee during the past triennium, with recommendations, if necessary, for the future work of the Committee.
 b) The Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will introduce his report on the activities of the Panel over the past triennium, with recommendations for the future work of the Panel.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: A special intervention on ... (issue to be defined)
- IX Report of the Secretary General
 The Secretary General will present a report on the implementation of the Convention's Work Plan 2000-2002 and a general overview on the implementation of the Convention, based on the National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties. General discussion.
- X Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties:
 a) Interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention
OTHER ISSUES TO BE IDENTIFIED
Special presentation on wetland conservation and sustainable use in Spain
- XI The Convention's Strategic Plan 2003-2008. Introduction and first general discussion.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: a special intervention by an invited speaker.
- XII The Convention's Work Plan 2003-2005. Introduction and first general discussion.
- 13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 - 19.00 **Plenary Session (NOTE: THE TWO ISSUES IN THIS SESSION ALSO SHOULD BE INTRODUCED EARLIER IN THE COP TO GIVE TIME TO DELEGATIONS FOR CONSULTATIONS AND ANALYSIS.)**
- XIII Financial report by the Chairperson of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee and proposed budget for the triennium 2003-2005. General discussion.
Key issues in the work of the Convention: A special intervention by an invited speaker
- XIV Consideration of the proposals for resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee
 A COP document will contain the proposals approved by the Standing Committee at its 26th Meeting (September? 2001) for consideration by

Ramsar COP8, as well as the proposals submitted by Contracting Parties at least 60 days before the opening of Ramsar COP8 (by ???). In this Plenary Session there will be a first discussion of the proposals, so as to receive suggestions for amendments and to allow the search for consensus to begin before the final drafts of the decisions come for approval in the last day of the Conference. (Note: Contracting Parties shall be able to submit new proposals during the meeting to the Conference Committee, provided that those new proposals deal with: a) urgent issues resulting from the debates during the meeting; and/or b) new developments that it was not possible to foresee in advance.)

21.00 - 22.30 Regional meetings to agree on recommendations to the Plenary Session on Contracting Parties to be elected to serve on the Standing Committee

DAY 5 (Friday)

08.00 - 08.45 Meeting of the Conference Committee

09.00 - 13.00 Plenary Session

XV Report of the Credentials Committee (a Ramsar COP8 document will be tabled at the meeting). As on past occasions, the Credentials Committee will require that the credentials of the delegates of Contracting Parties be presented in English, French or Spanish, on the appropriate letterhead, and be **signed by the Head of State or Government and/or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or by an official legally empowered by the State concerned to accredit representatives at international meetings.**

Key issues in the work of the Convention: a special intervention by an invited speaker (NOTE: THIS IS TOO LATE IN THE PROCEEDINGS TO PLAY THE ROLE OF A KEYNOTE ADDRESS, WHICH IS TO RAISE IMPORTANT ISSUES NOT FORMALLY INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA THAT THE COP MAY TAKE ON BOARD AND INCORPORATE IN THE CONVENTION'S PROCESSES FOR FUTURE COPs OR STRP/STANDING COMMITTEE WORK.)

XI, XII, XIII Report on the discussions in the Committee on the Strategic Plan and Work Plan and in the Committee on Finances and Budget. Discussion and consensus building.

XVI Reports and recommendations of the Technical Sessions
The rapporteurs of the four regionally-based discussion groups will have prepared a brief consolidated report on the conclusions regarding each one of the topics discussed in the five Technical Sessions. This will be the opportunity to address any major divergence that may have arisen, with a view to build consensus for the preparation of the final draft of the Resolutions and Recommendations to be adopted by Ramsar COP8.

13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 - 19.00 Plenary Session

- XI, XII Discussion of particular aspects of the Strategic Plan and Work Plan (to be identified) that required further debate and consensus building.
- XVII Appointment of the members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). This document will contain the proposal of the Standing Committee for the appointment of technical experts and scientists who will serve in their personal capacity in the STRP during the period between the close of COP8 and the close of COP9. The Standing Committee will prepare its proposal on the basis of the candidates advanced by the Contracting Parties by the deadline of ??? 2001.

DAY 6 (Saturday)

- 08.00 - 09.00 Meeting of the Conference Committee
- 09.30 - 13.00 **Plenary Session (NOTE: BY ELIMINATING THE FREE DAY BEFORE ENTERING INTO THE ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT TO PRODUCE REVISED DRAFTS FOR FORMAL ADOPTION. IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO ADOPT RESOLUTIONS WITHOUT HAVING THE FINAL DRAFTS IN THE THREE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ON THE TABLE.)**
- XVIII Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations
- 13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 - 18.00 **Plenary Session**
- XVIII Adoption of Conference Resolutions and Recommendations (continued)
- XIX Election of the Contracting Parties that will serve on the Standing Committee.
On the basis of the proposals presented by the six Ramsar Regions, the Conference will elect the countries that will serve on the Standing Committee from the close of the 8th Meeting of the COP until the close of the 9th Meeting. (The new Standing Committee will meet immediately after the close of Ramsar COP8 and, on the basis of the Rules of Procedure, will designate the countries that will act as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, as well as the countries that will serve on its Subgroup on Finance and any other subgroup that may have been established.)
- XX Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Conference will take a decision on the timing and venue of the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties that in principle should be held in 2005, on the basis of invitations received from Contracting Parties to host the meeting.
- XXI Any other business
- XXII Adoption of the report of the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
- XXIII Close of the meeting

The closing ceremony will include brief interventions by the regional groups, the Secretary General, the representatives of NGOs and possibly of other sectors, and by a representative of the Government of Spain, who will formally close the Conference.