

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**26th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 3-7 December 2001**

DOC. SC26-6 (a)

Agenda item 10 (a)

**Ramsar's participation in the implementation of UNEP GC
Decision 21/21 on International Environmental Governance (IEG)**

Action requested: The Standing Committee is requested to consider ways and means in which CPs could support the Bureau's action in these processes.

**The implementation of UNEP GC Decision 21/21 on International Environmental
Governance (IEG)**

1. The UNEP Governing Council, at its meeting in February 2001, established an Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance in order to prepare inputs on this issue for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Group is dealing with the future of the arrangement at the international level to deal with environmental issues, including, of course, the future of UNEP. Should UNEP become a Specialized Agency of the UN system? Should it be replaced by a World Environment Organization, in parallel with the World Trade Organization?
2. In addition, one other important issue in the agenda of the Open-ended Group is the question of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including issues related to their status; strengths and weaknesses; financing; and issues and options concerning clustering of MEAs, scientific and technical cooperation, coordination at the national level, colocation of MEA secretariats, and collaboration and coordination among MEAs.
3. The Ramsar Bureau has been actively involved in this process since its inception, in particular in the meetings of and consultations with MEA secretariats that led to the preparation of the UNEP paper entitled "*International Environmental Cooperation: Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)*". (A copy, without the annexes, is attached to this document as Annex 1).
4. This UNEP paper is considered to be an "evolving document" and has been discussed, and subsequently amended, at the meetings of the Open-ended Group of Ministers or their Representatives held in New York (April), Bonn (July) and Algiers (September). Ramsar was represented at the last two meetings.
5. The next meeting of the Group will be held in Montreal on 1-2 December. For this meeting UNEP is preparing, in relation to the MEAs, the following documents, to which the Bureau is also making contributions:
 - i) a paper on possible overlaps and inconsistencies of decisions taken by MEAs;

- ii) a paper on the clustering approach, with recommendations, including questions related to what kind of clustering, what kind of mechanisms for clustering, what type of activities, and issues related to colocation of secretariats, umbrella conventions for some MEA clusters, and joint organization of meetings;
 - iii) a consolidated paper on the concept of a chemicals and waste cluster;
 - iv) an inventory of memoranda of understanding among MEAs; and
 - v) a paper on recommendations for enhancing coordination among MEAs at the scientific and technical level.
6. The Standing Committee may wish to provide guidance to the Bureau for its participation in this process, and to raise issues for the attention of the Ministers participating in the Open-ended Group in relation to the Ramsar Convention and its future.