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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL  
AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Fifth meeting

Montreal, 31 January - 4 February 2000

Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda\*

## COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES

### Proposed joint work plan 2000-2001 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

#### Note by the Executive Secretary

1. The Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the proposed joint work plan for the period 2000-2001 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat.
2. The work plan is being distributed in the languages in which it was received from the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands.

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\* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/1.

**Proposed JOINT WORK PLAN 2000-2001**  
**of the Convention on Biological Diversity**  
**and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands in consultation with the Chair of its Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Chair of its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

for consideration by the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands (December 1999)\* and the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (February 2000)

**Background:**

The preceding Joint Work Plan, for the period 1998-1999, was prepared by the Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in furtherance of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the two Conventions signed in January 1996. The Plan was distributed to the participants at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP4) (Bratislava, Slovak Republic, May 1998), with an explanatory introduction, as document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.8. In its decision IV/15, COP4 endorsed the Joint Work Plan “as a framework for enhanced cooperation between these conventions and encourage[d] its implementation”. It also requested the Executive Secretary to explore the possibility of developing joint work programmes with other institutions and conventions based upon this model. The Joint Work Plan, including the explanatory “review of implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation” that was part of the document submitted to COP4, is reproduced in the publication A Programme for Change, a compilation of COP4 decisions and relevant background documents.

At its 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (San Jose, Costa Rica, May 1999) the Convention on Wetlands, through Resolution VII.4 “ENDORSES the Joint Work Plan with the Convention on Biological Diversity... and instructs the Ramsar Bureau, as resources allow, to give priority to its implementation in the forthcoming triennium.” In the same Resolution, Ramsar COP7 “ENDORSES IN PARTICULAR the proposed collaboration and cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and the CBD in the areas of inland water ecosystems, marine and coastal biodiversity, impact assessment and incentive measures, and DIRECTS the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), in accordance with Resolution VII.2 and the availability of funds and human resources, to exchange information, cooperate and coordinate activities, where appropriate, with the equivalent expert bodies of the CBD, CMS, CCD and relevant regional fora, .....

Accordingly, this Joint Work Plan has been developed by the Secretariats of the two Conventions, in consultation with the current chairs of the respective subsidiary scientific and technical bodies of the two Conventions. This second Joint Work Plan is more target driven and output based than its predecessor and also presents the proposed activities in a different format to that used in the first – namely that it considers and describes joint activities using the various ecosystem and cross-cutting issue themes being addressed by both Conventions. Also, as a new element of this JWP, an effort has been made to identify opportunities under each theme for including collaboration with other global environment conventions and programmes, as appropriate. This is in recognition of the existing, or developing, Memoranda of Understanding or

\* the Standing Committee is the Ramsar Convention’s intersessional governing body which when it met in December 1999 gave its strong support for the JWP with CBD.

Cooperation that both CBD and the Ramsar Convention have in place with these other conventions and programmes.

It is also important to note that this JWP, like its predecessor, does not constitute a new and additional work programme for either convention. Rather, it seeks to identify and describe those issues and areas of work where common interests prevail, and collaborative approaches will lead to better and more effective 'tools' and approaches to implementation.

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## A. Thematic areas:

The Ramsar Convention uses a very broad definition of ‘wetland’ and accordingly it recognizes wetland types (see Appendix I) found within each of the following thematic areas for which programmes of work have been or are to be approved under the Convention on Biological Diversity. As a result of this, Ramsar Contracting Parties are undertaking activities relating to all of these thematic areas, as is the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Convention.

In Sections 1-3 dealing with the thematic areas, consideration has only been given to those actions that are not cross-cutting in nature. Sections 4-16 provide details of joint actions with respect to the cross-cutting areas and institutional links.

1. Inland water ecosystems
2. Marine and coastal ecosystems
3. Other ecosystems that include Ramsar-defined wetlands
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### 1. Inland water ecosystems

**i. Principles for ecosystem management** - CBD’s development of principles for the operationalization of the ecosystem approach will be further considered by SBSTTA5, based on the relevant note by the Executive Secretary of CBD, the preparation of which benefited from a liaison group that met in September 1999 (at which the Ramsar Convention was represented).

**ii. River basin management** - Ramsar’s COP7 adopted *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Resolution VII.18). These Guidelines seek to see operationalized the ecosystem approach to river basin management whereby issues relating to the maintenance of ecosystem integrity are given prominence in decision-making associated with integrated management of water resources (see also vi. below relating to ‘Financing national actions under the inland waters theme’). As a follow-up action to these Guidelines, Ramsar’s STRP has established an Expert Working Group to review the current state of knowledge in the area of allocation and management of water to maintain wetland ecosystem functions (water demand management, decision-making tools etc) and solicit case studies.

**iii. Model river basins** - As a further follow-up action to the Ramsar Guidelines referred to above, the Global Environment Network (based in Malaysia), with the Ramsar and CBD secretariats, is promoting a project entitled the ‘River Basin Initiative’ which seeks to see ‘demonstration sites’ recognized. It is proposed these river basins be nominated as models, which demonstrate the ecosystem approach in practice. Efforts would be made to share the lessons learned and knowledge gained by the managers of these river basins with other sites.

**iv. Restoration and rehabilitation** - Also supporting the Ramsar Convention’s work in the area of ecosystem management is that on rehabilitation and restoration. Ramsar’s COP7 had presented to it an expert paper on this subject and adopted Resolution VII.17 on *Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use*. This Resolution provided criteria to assist Parties consider the costs and benefits to be gained from the rehabilitation or restoration of these ecosystems. Pursuant to this, Ramsar’s STRP has established an Expert Working Group on restoration which aims to develop a glossary of terms, enlarge and link existing bibliographies, prepare an overview of approaches to restoration, identify sources of expertise and training, identify and describe policy instruments and laws that incorporate restoration and identify future steps to be taken. This Expert Working Group will report its findings to Ramsar’s COP8 in 2002.

**v. Identification and management of important sites** - see 8. below relating to 'Important sites, inventory and site management', and vi. below relating to 'Financing national actions under the inland waters theme'.

**vi. Financing national actions under the inland waters theme**

The CBD COP4 (1998) adopted decision IV/4 relating to the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, which encouraged Parties to develop appropriate projects for funding through the Financial Mechanism provided by the Global Environment Facility (see appendix II below). Specific areas referred to as priorities in the decision were the identification of globally important inland water ecosystems in accordance with CBD's Article 7 and Annex 1, and Ramsar's criteria for Wetlands of International Importance (see 8. below), preparing and implementing integrated watershed, catchment and river basin management plans (see ii. And iii. above), and investigations into threats to inland water ecosystems such as pollution and alien invasive species.

**vii. Links with the Desertification and Climate Change Conventions** - In its evolving partnerships with both the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Ramsar Convention is promoting wetland restoration and rehabilitation as a tool to respond to the processes of desertification and as an adaptation strategy for dealing with the impacts of climate change, respectively. Given the close links between desertification and climate change, and Ramsar's role as lead partner for CBD with respect to wetlands, this area of work presents an opportunity for the four conventions to work together.

**Actions to be taken:**

- 1.1 The Ramsar Convention, through its national Administrative Authorities, STRP members and focal points and the Secretariat, will assist, as resources permit, in assessing the status and trends of inland water biological diversity, including its uses and threats, aiming at identifying areas where the lack of information severely limits the quality of assessments (refer decision IV/4, Annex I, part A.2, paragraph 8(a)); and will assist in developing and disseminating regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for different types of inland water ecosystems (see 6. below also) <sup>1</sup>;
- 1.2 The Ramsar Secretariat will continue to assist the CBD Secretariat in the compilation of case studies of watershed, catchment and river basin management experience and best practices (refer decision IV/4, Annex I, part A.2, paragraph 8(c)), and closely related to this, both secretariats will continue to advise and encourage support for the proposed River Basin Initiative for demonstration sites.
- 1.3 On the basis of the request by the Conference of the Parties to CBD, as contained in decision IV/4, Annex I, part B, paragraph 12, the Ramsar Bureau and STRP will work closely with the Executive Secretary of CBD and SBSTTA to promote desirable convergence between approaches on criteria and classification of inland water ecosystems between the two Conventions (see also 11 below relating to the identification and designation of important sites).
- 1.4 CBD's SBSTTA may wish to take into consideration Ramsar's *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Resolution VII.18) relating to promoting and operationalizing the ecosystem approach for inland water ecosystems.
- 1.5 Ramsar's STRP will report its findings in the area of allocations and management of water for maintaining ecosystem functions to SBSTTA at an appropriate future meeting.
- 1.6 Once its work is completed, the Ramsar Expert Working Group on restoration will provide a report to SBSTTA for its consideration and appropriate action. This report will also be provided to the

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<sup>1</sup> The transboundary nature of many inland water ecosystems should be fully taken into account in assessments (ref. decision IV/4, Annex I, part C, paragraph 18).

subsidiary scientific bodies of CCD and UNFCCC as well as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

- 1.7 With respect to financing national actions under the inland waters theme (vi. above), both Secretariats will provide advice as appropriate to their respective Parties to assist their development of suitable projects for consideration by the Financial Mechanism of CBD.
- 1.8 In consultation with an interested national Government, prepare for consideration by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) a project proposal for a pilot demonstration site, possibly in Africa, at which the common interests of CBD, Ramsar, CCD and UNFCCC can be considered and integrated into an on-ground management model.

## 2. **Marine and coastal ecosystems**

The Ramsar Convention has many areas of common interest with the Jakarta Mandate programme of work of CBD, many of which form part of the cross-cutting issues (alien species and others) addressed in Section B of the present JWP. Other areas where the two Conventions can work together are with respect to integrated marine and coastal area management (IMCAM), the identification of important sites and criteria for establishing and managing protected areas, and coral bleaching. Considering these in more detail:

**i. Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM)** - CBD's work in this area is well advanced, while Ramsar's STRP has recently established an Expert Working Group to review the state of knowledge in this field and develop guidelines for adoption by Ramsar's COP8 in 2002.

**ii. the identification of important sites, criteria for establishing and managing protected areas** - see 8. below. Ramsar's COP7 adopted Resolution VII.21 *Enhancing conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands*, and Recommendation 7.1 *A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands* which are of direct relevance here.

**iii. coral bleaching** – Ramsar's interest in this issue was recognized by CBD COP decision IV/5 and the Expert Consultation on Coral Bleaching reported on in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/7 (annex II) and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/INF/11, and this matter is now seen as one that closely links CBD, Ramsar and the UNFCCC.

### **Actions to be taken:**

- 2.1 The Expert Working Group of Ramsar's STRP is investigating and developing guidance for the Ramsar Parties on IMCAM and will consult with the CBD Secretariat and others as appropriate in preparing this advice. Once the review has been concluded, findings will be made available to SBSTTA for its information and appropriate action.

With regard to operational objective 1.1 of the Jakarta Mandate programme of work ("To review the existing instruments relevant to IMCAM and their implications for the implementation of the Convention"), the Ramsar Secretariat will assist by identifying experts for the implementation of IMCAM at different levels (national, regional and global) through its established Experts Database.

The Ramsar Secretariat will also promote the development and implementation of IMCAM at the local, national and regional level (operational objective 1.2), including: assisting the development of appropriate education and public awareness programmes at all levels – through its Outreach Programme - (activity (g) under the operational objective).

- 2.2 Ramsar's STRP will be asked to review the conclusions of the Expert Consultation on Coral Bleaching within its mandate of work relating to linkages with the Climate Change Convention, and to report to the Standing Committee of the Convention on appropriate follow-up actions. The Ramsar Secretariat,

resources permitting, will assist, as appropriate, in the implementation of activities relating to coral bleaching which may be identified by SBSTTA 5/COP 5.

- 2.3 See 8 below relating to the identification and designation of important sites. This pertains to operational objective 3.2 of the Jakarta Mandate work programme (“To develop criteria for the establishment of, and for management aspects of, marine and coastal protected areas”). Although inventory and management of important sites is dealt with thoroughly in section 8 of this JWP, it is noteworthy that Ramsar’s activities in this area will facilitate the implementation of this operational objective.

### **3. Other ecosystems that include Ramsar-defined wetlands**

#### **3.1 Forest ecosystems**

Given its definition of ‘wetland’, the Ramsar Convention includes in its mandate a range of forested wetlands types (see Appendix I). As of November 1999 there are 296 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Convention, which include wetlands of these types. Ramsar’s COP7 adopted Recommendation 7.1 *A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands* which is of direct relevance here in terms of forested peat swamps especially. Ramsar’s STRP has established an Expert Working Group on Peatlands, which includes Wetlands International (through its Specialist Group), the International Peat Society and the International Mire Conservation Group as co-leaders. Liaison between this Expert Group, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forest (of the Commission on Sustainable Development -CSD), and SBSTTA on matters relating to the conservation and wise use of forested wetlands would be advantageous.

Additionally, these wetland types are not well represented in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, and joint action for addressing this shortcoming would be appropriate for meeting CBD’s objectives also. See 8 below on ‘Important sites’.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

3.1.1 Linkages will be promoted between the IPF, CBD’s Work Programme on forest ecosystems and the forested wetland activities being undertaken and promoted by Ramsar.

3.1.2 See 8 below relating to the identification and designation of important sites.

#### **3.2 Agricultural land ecosystems**

CBD COP4 adopted Decision IV/6 on this thematic area and SBSTTA4 reviewed progress through Doc 4/3.

Wetland conservation and wise use are closely integrated with agricultural activities in most countries and many Ramsar sites include, and are associated with farming activities, including lake bed cropping, grazing etc. The Ramsar Convention promotes sustainable agricultural practices that do not alter the ecological character of these areas.

Recognizing the common use of drylands, grasslands and savannahs for agricultural activities, there are clear links here between CBD, CCD and the Ramsar Convention, with each seeking to promote sustainable use and the conservation of biological diversity. See section 3.3 following.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

3.2.1 The Ramsar Convention (with the support of Wetlands International) will identify those Ramsar sites where agricultural practices are being undertaken either within, or in close association with, Ramsar sites, and provide this advice to the CBD Secretariat. Management guidelines developed for these agricultural ecosystems will also be sought by the Ramsar Secretariat, and provided to CBD and CCD.

### 3.3 Dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems

SBSTTA4 reviewed this thematic area, recommended that the COP should consider adopting a programme of work on biological diversity of the ecosystems concerned and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a draft programme of work to be presented to SBSTTA5 for its consideration. The decision from SBSTTA (IV/3) notes the need to work closely with the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) in developing the work programme for this thematic area, and invites input from other conventions and bodies.

Under its Memorandum of Cooperation with CCD, the Ramsar Convention has agreed to work collaboratively in several areas of common interest – such as the identification of important wetland areas, traditional knowledge, and benchmarks and indicators for monitoring. These are all considered in the following section on cross-cutting areas.

Under the aegis of the Ramsar Convention there is also the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) involving the 25 countries surrounding the Mediterranean. This programme of actions supports inventory, training and capacity building, management planning, important site identification, communications and public awareness. Central to the activities under MedWet are Wetland Centres in Spain, France and Greece with another to be established in one of the north African countries during 2000.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

- 3.3.1 It is proposed that, in the programme of work on this thematic area submitted to CBD COP5, the joint activities being undertaken by CCD and the Ramsar Convention might be appropriately incorporated, and special reference made to the proposed joint demonstration project referred to under 1.8 above involving CCD, CBD, Ramsar and UNFCCC.
- 3.3.2 It is further suggested that, in the programme of work on this thematic area submitted to CBD COP5, the activities under the Ramsar Convention's MedWet Initiative might be considered and appropriately incorporated.

### 3.4 Mountain ecosystems

CBD SBSTTA is scheduled to consider mountain ecosystems at its meeting in 2002. The IUCN- the World Conservation Union has signalled its keen interest, and a desire to provide input and expertise to CBD's activities under this theme.

As with forest ecosystems, the Ramsar definition of 'wetland' includes in its mandate a range of wetlands types found at higher elevations (see appendix I below). However, these wetland types are not well represented in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, and joint action for addressing this shortcoming would be appropriate for meeting both Ramsar and CBD's objectives. See 8 below on 'Important sites'.

In addition, through its *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (Resolution VII.18) the Ramsar Convention has recognized the importance of mountain headwaters, and the conservation of these ecosystems, for the long-term sustainability of downstream wetlands and habitats.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

- 3.4.1 The Ramsar Bureau will collaborate with the IUCN- the World Conservation Union in providing input to the appropriate CBD documents relating to the development of this programme of work.

## **B. Cross-cutting areas:**

#### 4. Alien species

Alien species impacts on biological diversity were considered at CBD COP4 and decision IV/1 C of that meeting requested SBSTTA to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species, and to report on this to COP5. SBSTTA4 requested the Executive Secretary of CBD to develop such guiding principles, in cooperation with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), taking into account, *inter alia*, the draft IUCN Guidelines for the Prevention of Biological Diversity Loss Due to Biological Invasions, for consideration by SBSTTA5. In addition, CBD COP5 is expected to invite GISP and others to develop standard terminology in this area for consideration by SBSTTA6.

Ramsar's COP7 had presented to it an expert paper on invasive species and pursuant to this adopted Resolution VII.14 on *Invasive species and wetlands*. Ramsar's STRP has established an Expert Working Group on Invasive Species which has as part of its Terms of Reference to review the IUCN Guidelines referred to above, and the CBD's guiding principles, in order to establish if they provide appropriate guidance for Ramsar Parties in dealing with alien species problems.

In partnership with IUCN and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Ramsar Secretariat is at present developing a communication and awareness-raising project about invasive species in wetlands in Africa. This will gather information on the incidence and approaches to dealing with invasives in the African context, and disseminate advice, based on best practices, throughout the continent.

#### Actions to be taken:

- 4.1 Ramsar's STRP will complete its review of the IUCN Guidelines and the CBD Guiding Principles once they are finalized and report on their value for application by Ramsar Parties.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the relevant CBD bodies should take into account the work of the Ramsar Expert Working Group on Invasive Species for input to the development of a common terminology in this area.
- 4.3 Ramsar's Expert Working Group will also provide to the CBD Secretariat information pertaining to marine and coastal alien species and genotypes, including any available incident list (refer Jakarta Mandate programme of work - operational objectives 5.1 and 5.3).

#### 5. Incentive measures

Incentive measures are to be given in-depth consideration by CBD COP5 and in anticipation of that the Convention has called for case studies to be submitted by Parties. The Executive Secretary has also been requested through Decision IV/10 A to work with OECD and IUCN to prepare a detailed background paper on incentives for COP5 to consider.

With the assistance of IUCN and others, Ramsar COP7 reviewed developments in this field also and adopted Resolution VII.15 on *Incentive measures to encourage the application of the Wise Use principles*, which seeks various actions and closer collaboration and partnership with CBD, in this important area of common work. Ramsar's STRP has established an Expert Working Group (which includes IUCN as a member) to further develop the existing Internet-based Resource Kit on incentives maintained by IUCN, to support CBD's efforts as appropriate and, post-CBD COP5, to review the status of development in this area for consideration by Ramsar COP8.

#### Actions to be taken:

- 5.1 In the preparation of the COP5 background paper on incentives, the CBD Executive Secretary may wish to invite input from the Expert Working Group of the Ramsar STRP.
- 5.2 Given its dual role with both CBD COP5 and Ramsar STRP activities in this area, IUCN could facilitate linkages between the Internet-based Resource Kit they maintain and the information and case studies submitted to CBD in response to Decision IV/10 A.

- 5.3 Following CBD COP5, the Ramsar STRP will review the outputs and adjust its programme of work in this area accordingly, so that it is complementary.

## **6. Indicators for biological diversity, monitoring and early warning systems**

CBD has initiated a two-track work programme in response to Decision IV/1 to develop biodiversity, sustainable use and response indicators to assist national monitoring. SBSTTA5 will consider the recommendations contained in the corresponding note by the Executive Secretary of CBD.

Ramsar's COP7 adopted a *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10) which goes together with its previously adopted guidance in the areas of management planning and the establishment of monitoring programmes, to provide a comprehensive assessment package. Ramsar COP7 also adopted Resolution VII.25 on *Measuring environmental quality in wetlands* and Resolution VII.18 on *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management*. These request, respectively, that the STRP develop guidance for Parties relating to indicators and functional and biological assessment methodologies. At its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in September 1999, the STRP decided to await the outputs from the CBD liaison group on this subject before deciding on an appropriate course of action to pursue.

### **Actions to be taken:**

- 6.1 Following SBSTTA5, Ramsar's STRP will review the outputs and decisions under this theme and decide on an appropriate, complementary course of action to take.
- 6.2 CBD to invite a suitable representative of Ramsar's STRP to attend any future meetings of the CBD liaison group. This same liaison group will be invited to consider in its future deliberations the existing tools in this area that the Ramsar Convention has developed, especially its early warning system framework and monitoring frameworks.

## **7. Traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles**

Ramsar COP7 adopted, through Resolution VII.8, *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands*. While these comprehensive guidelines are drawn from case-studies and experiences relating to wetland management, they contain much of direct interest and relevance to all of CBD's thematic areas of work and are recommended to CBD for appropriate consideration and promotion. The CBD Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions may wish to take particular note of these Guidelines.

It is also noted that the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) and possibly others, are activating processes to examine traditional practices and knowledge.

### **Action to be undertaken:**

- 7.1 CBD's Working Group on Article 8(j) may wish to consider the Ramsar *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* and supporting case studies and resource materials in their work, and to consult with other environment conventions about developing a multi-convention approach to examining this cross-cutting area.

## **8. Important sites, inventory and site management**

- i. **"Important" sites** - The Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance includes 1007 sites (as at December 1999). Of these, nearly 50% of sites include at least some marine and coastal components, around 80% have inland water wetland types included and about 30% include some form of human-made wetland types.

At Ramsar's COP7 the Convention adopted a *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11), which also modernized its site designation criteria. This 'tool' for Contracting Parties is of direct relevance to CBD as it provides detailed guidance on how to take a systematic approach to future site designations under the Convention in order to achieve the vision of "an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the ecological and hydrological functions they perform". The Ramsar Convention has set itself the short-term target of reaching 2000 sites included on its List of Wetlands of International Importance by COP9 in 2005. Also adopted at COP7 were *Guidelines for identifying and designating karst and other subterranean hydrological systems as Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.13).

Within this Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List, Parties have agreed to give priority to designating under-represented wetland types, which include coral reefs, seagrass communities, mangroves, saltmarshes, tidal mudflats, wet grasslands and peatlands. An Expert Working Group of Ramsar's STRP is at present developing specific guidance to assist Parties with identifying and designating peatland, wet grassland, mangrove and coral reef wetland types as Ramsar sites.

Ramsar COP7 adopted *Guidelines for International Cooperation under the Convention* (Resolution VII.19) included in which is an expectation that there will be collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) with respect to identifying and designating as Ramsar sites those areas of importance for migratory species. Under a Joint Work Plan between Ramsar and CMS the two conventions will work together to achieve the designation of site networks for the conservation of migratory birds and marine turtles. The conservation of such biota may present an opportunity for the three Conventions to work together in this area.

**ii. Inventory** - The Ramsar Convention encourages all Contracting Parties to prepare National Wetland Inventories, and then to use these for planning and management as well as the identification of nationally and internationally important wetlands. At Ramsar's COP7 Wetlands International reported the findings of Phase I of the project 'Global Review of Wetland Resources'. Resolution VII.20 on *Priorities for wetland inventory* was a product of the consideration of this report (which is now available in CD-Rom format upon request) and it recognized the poor state of wetland inventory globally and recommended a range of priority actions to rectify this problem. In response, Ramsar's STRP has established an Expert Working Group to develop globally-applicable protocols for wetland inventory including recommended approaches for different purposes, spatial scale selection, wetland classification, and status and trends reporting.

**iii. Site management** – Under the Ramsar Convention, Parties are urged to prepare management plans for all of their designated Ramsar sites. The Convention has set the short-term target of having such plans in place, or under preparation for at least three-quarters of the Ramsar sites in each Party by Ramsar COP8 in 2002. Through the National Reports prepared by Ramsar Parties for COP7, management plans are in place, or under preparation for approximately 40% of sites at present. At its COP5 the Ramsar Convention adopted guidelines for the preparation of management plans and these were reviewed by the STRP in the lead up to COP7. As a result the STRP has been requested to prepare supplementary guidance in this area for adoption at COP8. An Expert Working Group has been established for this purpose and it will consult suitable expert bodies and organizations, including the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, in developing this additional guidance.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

- 8.1 Ramsar and CBD will jointly promote the application of the *Strategic Framework for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, recognizing that in so doing they are working to serve the common interest of identifying areas of global importance for biodiversity conservation found in all of the thematic areas for which programmes of work have been, or are planned to be approved, under the CBD. .

- 8.2 Once the Ramsar STRP completes the preparation of its detailed guidance for identifying and designating peatland, wet grassland, mangrove and coral reef Ramsar sites, this will be provided to SBSTTA and all CBD Focal Points.
- 8.3 As the Ramsar and Migratory Species Conventions collaborate in their efforts to build site networks for migratory birds and marine turtles, SBSTTA will be kept informed so that this can be factored into the appropriate thematic work programmes.
- 8.4 When the Ramsar STRP Expert Working Group on inventory completes the preparation of its guidance in this area, this will also be provided to SBSTTA and all CBD Focal Points, as well Ramsar Administrative Authorities and national STRP Focal Points.
- 8.5 Also, when the STRP Expert Working Group on management planning completes the preparation of its additional guidance in this area, this will be provided to the CBD Secretariat for its consideration.

## 9. Impact assessment and minimizing adverse impacts

The incorporation of biological diversity considerations into impact assessment was considered by SBSTTA4 and recommendations prepared for consideration by CBD COP5. One of these recommendations is that the COP should request SBSTTA to develop further guidelines on the incorporation of biodiversity-related issues into legislation and/or processes on environment impact assessment in collaboration with various bodies and organizations including Ramsar's STRP, IUCN and the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA).

The area of impact assessment was considered by Ramsar COP7 through the presentation of a review of developments in this field by IUCN. Resolution VII.16 on *The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment* was adopted by the COP; it seeks closer collaboration and partnership with CBD in this important area of work. Ramsar's STRP has established an Expert Working Group (under the leadership of IUCN) to further develop and diversify the existing Internet-based Resource Kit on impact assessment maintained by IUCN. In addition, IAIA is to be invited to assist the Ramsar Expert Working Group

### Actions to be taken:

- 9.1 Following CBD COP5, both SBSTTA and STRP may wish to review their respective programmes of work in consultation with IUCN, IAIA and others and seek closer cooperation in taking this area of work forward.
- 9.2 Given its dual role with both CBD SBSTTA and Ramsar STRP activities in this area, IUCN will be requested to facilitate linkages between the Internet-based Resource Kit they maintain and related information submitted to CBD. IAIA will also be invited to assist with the development of this Resource Kit.

## 10. National strategies, policies, laws and plans

The development of appropriate policy and legislative instruments at the national level is a very high priority for both Conventions. For the long-term sustainability of inland water, marine and coastal, forest, agricultural, dryland and mountain ecosystems, there must be cross-sectoral approaches taken for the development of national policy instruments which integrate biodiversity and wetland conservation considerations into broader frameworks.

Ramsar's COP7 adopted *Guidelines for the development and implementation of National Wetland Policies* (Resolution VII.6) and *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands* (Resolution VII.7). Both sets of guidance recognize the importance of such policies, laws and institutional arrangements

being harmonized with, or forming integrated components of, broader measures for biodiversity conservation promoted by other conventions and CBD in particular. These forms of guidance adopted by the Ramsar Convention are elements of the so-called Ramsar 'toolkit' (see Appendix III) which is now available as a series of nine handbooks, which include background resource papers and case study summaries.

**Actions to be taken:**

- 10.1 Both secretariats may wish to actively promote to their respective focal points the Ramsar 'toolkit' as well as the CBD handbook and, in the context of national strategies, policies, laws and plans, continue to encourage integrated approaches being taken to ensure wetland conservation and wise use are factored into national biodiversity conservation instruments.

**11. Small island developing States**

The CBD recognizes the special significance and circumstances of the Small island developing States, as does the Ramsar Convention in its Work Plan 2000-2002.

Ramsar's COP7 adopted Recommendation 7.2 on *Small Island Developing States, island wetland ecosystems, and the Ramsar Convention*. This Recommendation calls on the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with a view to identifying priority actions for the Convention with respect to island wetland ecosystems; both freshwater and coastal/marine.

In addition, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat is seeking to establish a small island developing State internship position to provide first hand advice on how best to meet the needs of these countries, and to offer an ongoing training opportunity for professionals coming from SIDS.

See also 2. above relating to marine and coastal biological diversity and coral bleaching.

**Actions to be taken:**

- 11.1 During 2000, the Ramsar Convention's Standing Committee (its inter-sessional governing body) will identify priority areas for the Convention, taking into consideration the Barbados Programme of Action. It will also continue to seek the resources for a SIDS internship within the Secretariat.
- 11.2 Both secretariats may wish to make the other aware of and, as appropriate, invite the other to attend meetings, workshops and similar events that are considering the special environmental management issues of the SIDS.
- 11.3 Resources permitting, the STRP and the Ramsar Secretariat will contribute to the work of SBSTTA and the CBD Secretariat in the development of rapid-assessment methodologies for small island States and states suffering from ecological disasters (refer decision IV/4, Annex I, part A.1, paragraphs 6 and 7).

**12. Sustainable tourism**

Sustainable tourism is gaining considerable attention from the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission on Sustainable Development and CBD, and at CBD's COP5 it will be one of three topics for in-depth consideration. SBSTTA is preparing information in anticipation of this in-depth review, including case studies and best practice advice. Ramsar's COP8 in 2002 will also look at this issue of sustainable tourism and possibly consider guidelines in this area for addition to the Ramsar 'toolkit'.

**Action to be taken:**

- 12.1 Following consideration of the subject at CBD COP5, the CBD Secretariat may wish to provide the Ramsar Secretariat with appropriate information, decisions and other guidance to assist with the preparation of appropriate guidelines for consideration at Ramsar COP8.

### 13. Sustainable use of components of biological diversity

The Ramsar Convention promotes as its central tenet the wise (sustainable) use of wetlands and their resources. As such it provides, through its 'toolkit' (Appendix III) a ready-made mechanism through which CBD can also promote the sustainable use of components of biological diversity.

Ramsar's 1997 publication *Economic Valuation of Wetlands: a Guide for Policy Makers and Planners* provides useful information on wetland valuation techniques. If resources can be identified, Ramsar is seeking to collaborate with the Global Wetlands Economists Network in moving ahead on issues such as recognizing and valuing wetland functions and services and measuring the social impacts resulting from the degradation of water resources.

#### Action to be taken:

- 13.1 As indicated under 10 above, both secretariats may wish to actively promote to their respective focal points the Ramsar 'toolkit' as well as the CBD handbook and, in this context, promote the principles and guidance given therein for promoting the Ramsar Wise Use concept.
- 13.2 Ramsar's handbook *Economic Valuation of Wetlands: a Guide for Policy Makers and Planners* will be promoted to all CBD Focal Points through the Clearing House Mechanism and other appropriate avenues. Reciprocally, the Ramsar Secretariat will promote the CBD Handbook on the Operations of the Convention on Biological Diversity to its Administrative Authorities and focal points.

### C. Institutional links:

#### 14. Between subsidiary scientific bodies and focal points

Both Conventions have expert advisory groups, SBSTTA for CBD and the STRP for the Ramsar Convention. Even though the two bodies are different in composition and *modus operandi*, regular dialogue and a flow of information between these expert bodies is seen as advantageous.

Ramsar's COP7 approved Resolution VII.2 relating to the *Composition and modus operandi of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)*. This Resolution includes recognition of the desirability of there being observer status at meeting of the STRP for the chairs of the equivalent expert bodies of other Conventions, including CBD's SBSTTA.

As alluded to under several of the foregoing themes, the Ramsar STRP has established a number of Expert Working Groups (ten in total) from among its appointed members and observers and with some additional invited experts. These Working Groups are responsible for taking the lead on undertaking specified activities under their respective themes, and delivering advice and guidance for each to Ramsar COP8 in 2002. Appendix IV gives the details of the leaders for each of the ten STRP Expert Working Groups. The full STRP Work Programme, including the Terms of Reference for each Expert Working Group is available through the Ramsar Convention web site at <http://ramsar.org/>

See also the proposed actions under 15 below for promoting national-level collaboration between the SBSTTA and STRP members and Focal Points, and also with those of other conventions.

#### Action to be taken:

- 14.1 The Chair of SBSTTA now has permanent observer status on Ramsar's STRP. It is proposed that SBSTTA may wish to consider an appropriate reciprocal status for the Chair of STRP, possibly as a permanent observer to the CBD's Bureau.

### 15. National focal points and rosters of experts

Under the CBD, there is a Focal Point designated within each Party for both general implementation and matters relating to the work of the SBSTTA. The Ramsar Convention has designated Administrative Authorities to coordinate overall implementation as well as national Focal Points for the work of the STRP and for its Outreach Programme (both Government and non-Government focal points).

In addition, CBD has its Roster of Experts and Ramsar has an Experts Database as well as the extended network through its International Organization Partners (BirdLife International, WWF, IUCN and Wetlands International) and the Society of Wetland Scientists, with which it also has a Memorandum of Cooperation.

It is also recognized that all other international and regional environmental conventions have focal points, and in some cases rosters of experts, and that assisting linkages between these individuals is desirable.

**Activities to be taken:**

- 15.1 The CBD and Ramsar Secretariats may wish to prepare by June 2000 a country-by-country register of focal points and experts. This will be distributed to all of their respective Parties and the individuals included therein, as well as posted on the web sites of the two in order to promote national-level linkages and collaboration.
- 15.2 In conjunction with this, the CBD and Ramsar Secretariats may wish to continue linking with similar endeavours carried out by other relevant international and regional environmental conventions and bodies, in order to further promote international and national level synergy.

**16. National reporting**

Following the project finalized by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in 1998 entitled "*Feasibility study for a harmonized information management infrastructure for the biodiversity-related treaties*" the same five convention secretariats involved in this initiative have since acted to establish a common entry point and search engine for their respective sites on the World Wide Web. Ramsar COP7 Resolution VII.4 on *Partnerships and cooperation with other Conventions, including harmonized information management infrastructures*, supports the continuing implementation of the recommendations from the WCMC Report, including collaboration with respect to national reporting processes under the conventions.

The Ramsar Convention has developed its National Report format into a national strategic planning and target-setting tool that operates interactively on personal computers. Ramsar's National Report format also mirrors that of its Strategic Plan to assist the monitoring of progress and the identification of priorities.

**Actions to be taken:**

- 16.1. During 2000, the secretariats may wish to investigate the feasibility of the Ramsar National Report format meeting the reporting obligations of Parties to both Conventions with respect to certain elements of the CBD programmes of work. Such a step would move toward the modular approach to national reporting advocated by the WCMC Report. A report on the outcome of this investigation could be presented to SBSTTA6.

## Appendix I

## Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type

**Marine/Coastal Wetlands**

- A -- **Permanent shallow marine waters** in most cases less than six metres deep at low tide; includes sea bays and straits.
- B -- **Marine subtidal aquatic beds**; includes kelp beds, sea-grass beds, tropical marine meadows.
- C -- **Coral reefs**.
- D -- **Rocky marine shores**; includes rocky offshore islands, sea cliffs.
- E -- **Sand, shingle or pebble shores**; includes sand bars, spits and sandy islets; includes dune systems and humid dune slacks.
- F -- **Estuarine waters**; permanent water of estuaries and estuarine systems of deltas.
- G -- **Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats**.
- H -- **Intertidal marshes**; includes salt marshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised salt marshes; includes tidal brackish and freshwater marshes.
- I -- **Intertidal forested wetlands**; includes mangrove swamps, nipah swamps and tidal freshwater swamp forests.
- J -- **Coastal brackish/saline lagoons**; brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea.
- K -- **Coastal freshwater lagoons**; includes freshwater delta lagoons.
- Zk(a) – **Subterranean karst and cave hydrological systems**, marine/coastal

**Inland Wetlands**

- L -- **Permanent inland deltas**.
- M -- **Permanent rivers/streams/creeks**; includes waterfalls.
- N -- **Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams/creeks**.
- O -- **Permanent freshwater lakes** (over 8 ha); includes large oxbow lakes.
- P -- **Seasonal/intermittent freshwater lakes** (over 8 ha); includes floodplain lakes.
- Q -- **Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes**.
- R -- **Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes and flats**.
- Sp -- **Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools**.
- Ss -- **Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools**.
- Tp -- **Permanent freshwater marshes/pools**; ponds (below 8 ha), marshes and swamps on inorganic soils; with emergent vegetation water-logged for at least most of the growing season.
- Ts -- **Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools** on inorganic soils; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.
- U -- **Non-forested peatlands**; includes shrub or open bogs, swamps, fens.
- Va -- **Alpine wetlands**; includes alpine meadows, temporary waters from snowmelt.
- Vt -- **Tundra wetlands**; includes tundra pools, temporary waters from snowmelt.
- W -- **Shrub-dominated wetlands**; shrub swamps, shrub-dominated freshwater marshes, shrub carr, alder thicket on inorganic soils.
- Xf -- **Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands**; includes freshwater swamp forests, seasonally flooded forests, wooded swamps on inorganic soils.
- Xp -- **Forested peatlands**; peatwamp forests.
- Y -- **Freshwater springs; oases**.
- Zg -- **Geothermal wetlands**
- Zk(b) – **Subterranean karst and cave hydrological systems**, inland

Note: “**floodplain**” is a broad term used to refer to one or more wetland types, which may include examples from the R, Ss, Ts, W, Xf, Xp, or other wetland types. Some examples of floodplain wetlands are seasonally inundated grassland (including natural wet meadows), shrublands, woodlands and forests. Floodplain wetlands are not listed as a specific wetland type herein.

**Human-made wetlands**

- 1 -- **Aquaculture** (e.g., fish/shrimp) **ponds**
- 2 -- **Ponds**; includes farm ponds, stock ponds, small tanks; (generally below 8 ha).
- 3 -- **Irrigated land**; includes irrigation channels and rice fields.
- 4 -- **Seasonally flooded agricultural land** (including intensively managed or grazed wet meadow or pasture).
- 5 -- **Salt exploitation sites**; salt pans, salines, etc.
- 6 -- **Water storage areas**; reservoirs/barrages/dams/impoundments (generally over 8 ha).
- 7 -- **Excavations**; gravel/brick/clay pits; borrow pits, mining pools.
- 8 -- **Wastewater treatment areas**; sewage farms, settling ponds, oxidation basins, etc.
- 9 -- **Canals and drainage channels, ditches.**
- Zk(c) – **Subterranean karst and cave hydrological systems**, human-made

## Appendix II

**Financing actions under CBDs inland water themes**

In the context of the Joint Work Plan 1998-1999, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its fourth meeting, in May, 1998, adopted decision IV/4, relating to biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. The decision encourages Contracting Parties of both Conventions to develop appropriate projects for GEF funding:

**Extracts from CBD Decision IV/4****Status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use**

4. Encourages *the implementation of the Joint Work Plan with the Convention on Wetlands in document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.8, as recommended by the Conference of the Parties in its decision III/21 and by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in recommendation III/1, part A, section I, paragraph (b) and endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting as a framework for enhanced cooperation between the Conventions through decision IV/15;*

5. ..

6. Recognizing that *Global Environment Facility projects are country-driven, requests the Financial Mechanism, within the context of implementing national biological diversity strategies and action plans, to provide adequate and timely support to eligible projects which help Parties to develop and implement national, sectoral and cross-sectoral plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of inland water ecosystems.*

7. Urges *Parties when requesting support, for projects related to inland water ecosystems, from the Financial Mechanism that priority be given to:*

*(a) Identifying inland water ecosystems in accordance with Article 7 and Annex I of the Convention, taking into account the criteria for Wetlands of International Importance as adopted under the Convention on Wetlands;*

*(b) Preparing and implementing integrated watershed, catchment and river basin management plans based on an ecosystem approach including transboundary watersheds, catchments and river basins, and those which include ecosystems identified under subparagraph (a) above;*

*(c) Investigating where appropriate, the processes contributing to the loss of biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, through targeted research, such as: investigations into the impacts of harmful substances, alien invasive species and saltwater intrusions; and the identification of measures needed to address these issues where they constitute threats to inland water ecosystem biological diversity;*

## Appendix III

## The Ramsar Convention 'toolkit'

Following its 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP7), in Costa Rica in May 1999, where several Resolutions adopted guidelines to assist with applying the Ramsar Convention, the Ramsar Bureau has published an integrated 'toolkit' of handbooks as shown below. These handbooks fall under the three main themes of the Convention – Wise Use, Ramsar sites and International Cooperation.

<b>The Ramsar Convention 'toolkit' for Contracting Parties</b>		
<b>I. Wise use of wetlands</b>	<b>II. Wetlands of International Importance - designation and management.</b>	<b>III. International cooperation</b>
<b>Handbook 1</b> Wise use of wetlands	<b>Handbook 7</b> Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance	<b>Handbook 9</b> Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands – which covers:
<b>Handbook 2</b> Developing and implementing National Wetland Policies	<b>Handbook 8</b> Frameworks for managing Wetlands of International Importance and other wetlands - including:  i. Guidelines on management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands,	i. Management of shared wetlands and river basins;  ii. Management of shared wetland-dependent species;  iii. Partnerships between Conventions and agencies
<b>Handbook 3</b> Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands	ii. Guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of Listed sites	vi. Sharing knowledge and expertise;
<b>Handbook 4</b> Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management	iii. Framework for designing a wetland monitoring programme	v. Development assistance;
<b>Handbook 5</b> Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands	iv. Guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record (of sites where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or likely to occur)	vi. Foreign investment and business sector codes of conduct
<b>Handbook 6</b> Promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands through communication, education and public awareness - The Outreach Programme of the Convention on Wetlands	v. Wetland Risk Assessment Framework	

**Appendix VI****Designated 'leaders' for the ten Expert Working Groups operating under the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention**

The full STRP Work Programme for the triennium, including the Terms of Reference for each Expert Working Group is available through the Ramsar Convention web site at <http://ramsar.org/>

<b>Expert Working Group</b>	<b>Leader(s)</b>
1. Integrated Coastal Zone Management	Dr Angel Alcala (Philippines)
2. World Commission on Dams	Dr Max Finlayson (Australia)
3. Impact Assessment	IUCN (Frank Vorhies, Andrea Bagri)
4. Incentives	Dr Arthur Hawkins (USA)
5. Invasive Species	Dr Max Finlayson (Australia)
6. Inventory	Wetlands International (Dr Nick Davidson)
7. Peatlands	International Peat Society (Dr Jack Riley), International Mire Conservation Society (to be advised)
8. Restoration	Dr George Zalidis (Greece) and the Society of Wetland Scientists (Dr Bill Streever)
9. Site management planning guidelines	Dr Arthur Hawkins (USA)
10. Water allocation and management	Dr Geoff Cowan (South Africa)