

# **Ramsar Workshop for the STRP National Focal Points in Africa and other wetland experts**

## **Meeting Report**



**Emperors Palace, Johannesburg, South Africa**

**30 November-2 December 2010**



*This report was edited by Rob McInnes, Heather Mackay, Monica Zavagli and Victoria Mkambule. All the participants at the workshop provided input and contributions. In particular, Paul Ouedraogo, Oliver Nasirwa, Gueladio Cisse, Moussa Diop, Evelyn Moloko and Edward Netshithothole are thanked for their comments on earlier drafts of the report. Stanley Liphadzi and colleagues at WRC are thanked for their assistance with the final publication of this document*







## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop for the African National Focal Points (NFP) of the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and other wetland experts was run over three days between the 30<sup>th</sup> November and the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshop was attended by 49 representatives drawn internationally from STRP National Focal Points, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the STRP Chair, STRP Experts, International Organisation Partners and Observer Organisations and from within South Africa from the Water Research Commission (WRC), Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, North West Parks and Tourism Board, and Department of Agriculture Conservation and Environment.

The purpose of the workshop was to build greater understanding of the STRP's work and its processes among African STRP NFPs, with the aim of improving the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national and regional level in Africa. Specific objectives included:

- To contribute to the progress of some key STRP tasks;
- To identify best ways of encouraging good networking between STRP NFPs, the STRP and the wetland expertise in the region; and
- To share experiences on key wetland issues and on-going initiatives in the African region.

The workshop was been made possible through the generous financial support of the Governments of Switzerland (through the "Swiss Grant for Africa" programme), Norway, Tanzania and South Africa, as well as from the WRC and the Convention's partnership with Star Alliance through Biosphere Connections.

The workshop included a series of presentations on the structure and functioning of both the Ramsar Convention and the STRP. Topical presentations were made on aspects of the STRP's workplan for the current (2009-2012) cycle. Presentations included information on:

- An overview of the Ramsar Convention and the STRP;
- Wetland issues in Africa and across its various regions;
- Ramsar's International Organisation Partners;
- The status of wetland management and conservation in South Africa;
- The development of guidance on urban wetlands;
- The development of guidance on wetlands and extractive industries;
- An update on developments in and the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement; and
- Building the STRP network in the Africa region.

Three working sessions were conducting utilising break-out groups and subsequent plenary discussions. The three working sessions focused on the following key STRP work areas: urban wetlands; extractive industries; and regional networking.

Overall the participants and the organisers considered that the workshop had been extremely beneficial and represented an essential element in integrating and delivering the work of the STRP within Africa. The workshop highlighted several key issues relating the objectives and implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Africa and generated a range of recommendations including:

- The workshop represented an essential element in integrating and delivering the work of the STRP within Africa. It was recommended that similar meetings should be repeated on a regular basis.
- More funds should be made available to STRP to translate technical guidance in the three working languages of the Convention.
- Additional financial support and resourcing is required to deliver on the volume of STRP work and to enable STRP NFPs to undertake their tasks and to attend other Ramsar meetings.
- The African STRP Regional Networker should more actively engage with the STRP NFPs and it would have been beneficial to have representatives of other regions to share views and ideas.
- The Ramsar Convention through their various bodies should find ways to generate guidance which can influence more politicians and other stakeholders on the important benefits (ecosystem services) provided by wetlands, and especially where these impinge on other sectors such as health, transport and education, whose indirect decisions have an impact on wetlands.
- Whilst not confined to one subject area or a single issue, the need to understand the future impact of climate change on wetlands in Africa underpins the majority of scientific and technical guidance to be produced by the STRP.
- Across the African region it was recommended that there is a demand for specific scientific and technical guidance for a better common understanding of the definition of “wetland”; on sustainable tourism especially relating to the management of water demand in arid areas; on economic evaluation of wetlands; and on wetland restoration with particular regard to urban areas.

Specific recommended actions were defined for the African STRP NFPs which included:

- STRP NFPs should proactively assist the STRP with readapting and translating key STRP guidance to local context and language.
- STRP NFPs should play a key role in running their local National Ramsar Committee.
- STRP NFPs should take a proactive role at the national and regional levels in the process of advising the Convention on scientific and technical priorities.
- STRP NFPs should play a proactive role in the dissemination of STRP guidance to the appropriate target audiences in their country.
- STRP NFPs should assist the global STRP in building a list of scientific research programmes and an associated list of expert contacts within their country.

All the workshop presentations and some photos are available in the main Ramsar website at [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-latest-strp-africa/main/ramsar/1-26-76-475\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-latest-strp-africa/main/ramsar/1-26-76-475_4000_0)

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# **1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

## **1.1 The Scientific and Technical Review Panel and National Focal Points**

The Scientific and Technical Review Panel ([STRP](#)) of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was established by Resolution 5.5 (Kushiro, 1993) as a subsidiary body of the Convention to provide scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee and the Ramsar secretariat.

The STRP's Work Plan for each triennium is built around the priority tasks determined by the Standing Committee, which are based upon requests from the Conference of the Parties (COP). The STRP members and observers are assisted in their work by a network of [STRP National Focal Points](#) (NFPs) who advise directly on STRP matters and provide liaison between the STRP and the networks of other relevant experts and the Administrative Authority (AA) within each of their countries. Contracting Parties nominate a suitably qualified technical expert to act as a NFP for STRP matters.

## **1.2 Objectives of this workshop**

The purpose of the workshop was to build greater understanding of the STRP's work and its processes among African STRP NFPs, with the aim of improving the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national and regional level in Africa. Specific objectives included:

- To contribute to the progress of some key STRP tasks;
- To identify best ways of encouraging good networking between STRP NFPs, the STRP and the wetland expertise in the region; and
- To share experiences on key wetland issues and on-going initiatives in the African region.

## **1.3 Organizers and financial support**

The Ramsar Secretariat in partnership with the Water Research Commission and the Ramsar Administrative Authority of South Africa (Department of Environmental Affairs) were the organizers of this workshop.

The workshop was been made possible through the generous financial support of the Governments of Switzerland (through the “Swiss Grant for Africa” programme), Norway, Tanzania and South Africa, as well as from the WRC and the Star Alliance Biosphere Connections.

The workshop was run over three days (30<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010) and was conducted in English and French with a full translation service available. A list of participants is included in Appendix I.

## **2. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS AND CONTENT**

### **2.1 Agenda**

The workshop had a comprehensive and thorough agenda (see Appendix II). Briefing notes on key subjects were circulated in advance and are reproduced in Appendix III. Following formal introductions, to deliver on the objectives the agenda combined oral presentations, plenary discussions and working sessions.

### **2.2 Day 1 - Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

#### ***Agenda item 2: Opening and welcome session***

The STRP chair, Dr Heather MacKay, welcomed all participants included the appointed NFPs, International Organization Partners (IOPs) members, invited experts, and representatives of Observer Organizations to the workshop. Dr MacKay thanked the organizers for the work in setting up the meeting and explained that this meeting was not only for networking but also to foster broader collaboration that would make a genuine positive difference for wetland science and management across Africa.

#### ***Official opening of the workshop***

The workshop was officially opened by Ms Wilma Lutsch, who is Director, Biodiversity Conservation in the Department of Environmental Affairs. She indicated that South Africa was indeed proud to host a workshop of such magnitude. She also mentioned that South Africa signed the Ramsar Convention in 1971 at its inception. However, membership was formalised in 1975 when South Africa ratified the Convention and became the fifth Contracting Party, thus being considered a founding member. It was thus not by sheer luck that South Africa hosted the first African workshop of such nature.

She further indicated that South Africa has designated 20 Ramsar Sites, the majority of which are in formal protected areas. Of these 20 Ramsar Sites, three are protected within National Parks, fourteen are within Provincial Nature Reserves or State Forests, one is a Special Nature Reserve, and two are on state land under the jurisdiction of a provincial nature conservation agency. The remaining wetland is partially in a proclaimed Provincial Nature Reserve and partially on privately owned land. Of the three in the National Parks, one (Makuleke Wetlands) is owned by a community following the land restitution process that evolved in 1993. Through this process, anybody who was dispossessed of their land after 19th June 1913 under racist legislation was given the right to claim restitution against the State, and a commission and a court were established to give effect to this process.

She also alluded to the fact that a process was underway to draft or revise management plans of these sites in accordance with the frameworks for managing Wetlands of International Importance and other wetland sites. This process is commissioned under output of the delivery agreement Outcome 10 on *Environment Assets and Natural Resources that are valued, protected*

*and continually enhanced.* This outcome is one of the twelve outcomes agreed to by the South African Government as a key focus of work between now and 2014. Each outcome has a limited number of measurable outputs with targets. Each output is linked to a set of activities that will help achieve the targets and contribute to the outcome. Each of the 12 outcomes has a delivery agreement which in most cases involves all spheres of government and a range of partners outside government. Combined, these agreements reflect the Government's delivery and implementation plans for its foremost priorities.

Responding to wetlands loss and degradation, the Working for Wetlands programme was formed in 2004 to champion the rehabilitation, protection and sustainable use of South Africa's wetlands. The programme's philosophy is underpinned by four interlinked pillars – rehabilitation; communication, education, participation and awareness; applied research; and building capacity.

The benefits from rehabilitated wetlands include improved livelihoods, protection of agricultural resources, enhanced biodiversity, cleaner water, reduced impacts from flooding and increased water security. Since 2004, 427 wetlands have been rehabilitated at a total cost of R294 million.

The social benefits provided by Working for Wetlands include employment, training, enterprise development, and the dignity of decent work. In support of the objectives of the Expanded Public Works Programme, Working for Wetlands has created 9,840 job opportunities since 2004 for people from the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Ms Lutsch concluded by welcoming everyone to the workshop.

The Water Research Commission ([WRC](#)) played a key role in organizing the workshop. Dr Rivka Kfir, the Chief Executive Officer of WRC, presented a summary of the wetland research WRC supports. She explained that the mission of WRC is to be a dynamic hub for water-centred knowledge, innovation and intellectual capital; to provide leadership for research and development through the support of knowledge creation, transfer and application; and to engage stakeholders and partners in solving water-related problems which are critical to South Africa's sustainable development and economic growth, and are committed to promoting a better quality of life for all. The WRC has invested R50 million in wetland research between 2002-2009 with approximately 10% of projects being co-funded with other institution (such as the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), Department of Water Affairs (DWA) and Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)). A full copy of Dr Kfir's presentation is available [here](#).

### ***Agenda item 3: Overview of workshop process and objectives***

Dr Mackay provided an overview of the workshop process and objectives (the presentation is provided [here](#)). She explained that the objective of the workshop was to build understanding of the Ramsar Convention and STRP, share knowledge and experience on wetlands issues and on-going scientific initiatives around Africa, get inputs from NFPs on selected priorities, and establish a platform for future STRP tasks networking in Africa.

It was stressed that Ramsar, despite its 160 Contracting Parties, remains a relatively small Convention in terms of budget and Secretariat resources, and there is need for more awareness of the Convention at national level, particularly amongst wetland scientists. A quick straw poll conducted in the workshop revealed that of the 50 attendees (including STRP NFPs, invited experts and Secretariat staff):

- only 20 had ever attended any form of Ramsar-related meeting,
- only 15 had been at Ramsar's COP10 in Changwon in 2008 and
- only 4 had been present at the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) meeting of Contracting Parties in Nagoya in October 2010.

All the participants were invited to introduce themselves. The following issues were raised during the round-table introductions:

- NFPs experienced difficulties in maintaining their involvement in Ramsar processes due to the routine changing of ministers with responsibility for wetlands;
- It was clear that there are many initiatives related to wetland science and management currently on-going across many of the participating countries;
- There was a generally positive attitude towards the workshop and the wider role of the Ramsar Convention;
- Many attendees raised their concerns regarding future challenges including climate change and the need for appropriate policy formulation;
- There was a consistent recognition that in Africa it is difficult to fully influence politicians regarding the value and importance of wetlands and that wetlands are not getting the profile that they deserve;
- Some participants made the plea that the STRP should focus on providing practical and useful technical guidance;
- In addition to nature conservation aspects, the significant issues of understanding the economics of wetlands and the importance of wetlands for human health were raised as requiring further consideration and guidance;
- In many countries, there is a strong emphasis on designated Ramsar Sites rather than on the other two pillars of the Convention, namely wise use of wetlands and international co-operation; and
- There was an over-riding plea that we all need to work to convince politicians of the multi-functional benefits that wetlands provide.
- The high turnover of key persons responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Convention was highlighted as a concern.

#### ***Agenda item 4.1: Introduction to the Ramsar Convention***

Ms Cathleen Cybèle, Assistant Advisor for Africa, gave a presentation on the global status of the Ramsar Convention. Ms Cybele's full presentation is available [here](#).

The presentation charted the genesis of the Ramsar Convention through the 1960s and growing concerns regarding the destruction of wetlands and the impacts on people and biodiversity. On

the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1971 in the town of Ramsar, Iran, the Convention became the first of the modern global multilateral intergovernmental agreements. The Convention aims at achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world. Today the Convention has 160 Contracting Parties and an area covering 168 million hectares is now designated as Ramsar Sites or Wetlands of International Importance, which makes this the largest existing global ‘protected areas’ network.

Ms Cybèle described the three pillars upon which the Ramsar Convention is based, namely:

- *Wise use of all wetlands*  
Wise use has at its heart, the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of humankind. It includes: developing a national wetland inventory to describe, and assess the extent, condition, use and value of wetlands in the country; developing and implementing policies and legislation to ensure the wise use of wetlands, e.g. on land-use planning, wetland environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, National Wetland Policy, etc.; and increasing cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services such as water supply, food security, health, livelihood, coastal protection, tourism, cultural heritage, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation. A further element is the promotion of the conservation and wise use of wetlands through a communications, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) programme.
- *Development of a list of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)*  
Wetlands of International Importance are designated and identified based on a range of criteria including representative, rare or unique wetland types and international importance for biodiversity. Once designated a Contracting Party has an obligation to establish adequate management planning processes, cross-sectoral site management committees and mechanisms for reporting on Ramsar Sites whose ecological character has changed, is changing or is likely to change.
- *International cooperation*  
Examples of international cooperation include cooperation on shared river basins and transboundary wetlands, networks for the protection of migratory species and their wetland habitats, and the promotion and sharing of information and expertise.

After this presentation it was recommended by one of the participants that the achievements of the Convention were many however given the limited number of staff in the Secretariat that there was a need to secure additional resources to fund the future implementation of the Convention.

#### ***Agenda item 4.2: Convention bodies and processes***

An introduction to the various bodies and processes of the Ramsar Convention was provided by STRP Officer Ms Monica Zavagli. A copy of Ms Zavagli’s full presentation is available [here](#).

The role of the various bodies of the Ramsar Convention: the Conference of Parties (COP), the Standing Committee (SC), the STRP, and the Ramsar Secretariat was described. It was noted

that the SC, which is the intersessional executive body that represents the COP and oversees implementation between COP meetings, currently has regional representation from Africa, through Cameroon, Mauritius, Tanzania and Nigeria.

A summary of how the Convention is delivered in each Contracting Party was provided<sup>1</sup>. This explained that the Administrative Authority (AA) is the main governmental agency responsible for the application of the Convention at national level. Daily contacts are maintained by the Secretariat with the AA Focal Point. The STRP NFP in each country provides liaison between the STRP members and national experts. CEPA Government and NGO Focal Points provide leadership to disseminate widely the Convention's approaches to wetlands management. A National Ramsar Committee has proved to be a successful mechanism to maintain good contacts and exchange of information between these Focal Points, wetland managers, scientists, and other stakeholders as well as to spread the Convention's tools beyond individuals and assist in developing national policies.

The main functions of the STRP NFPs were summarised as follows:

- To provide inputs to and support the work of STRP;
- To advise STRP on national and regional wetland issues;
- To act as liaison person between STRP and other expertise in the country;
- To assist the Ramsar AA (i.e. brief on them on upcoming technical guidance and draft resolutions to COP);
- To be involved in Ramsar implementation processes in the country (National Wetland Committee, Ramsar Advisory Missions, etc); and
- To disseminate the work of STRP to their Contracting Party.

It was explained that only the SC or a Contracting Party can submit a draft Resolution (DR) to the COP. The STRP usually drafts scientific and technical resolutions and accompanying guidance. The Secretariat assists the SC in drafting administrative, policy and procedural resolutions. All resolutions must be approved by the SC before consideration at the COP. A time-line for draft resolution submission from November 2010 to COP11 in June 2012 was presented.

#### ***Agenda item 4.1: The Convention in Africa – Status and implementation***

Whilst being relatively new to the post, Dr Paul Ouedraogo, Senior Advisor for Africa, presented his initial views on the problems, initiatives and challenges which the Ramsar Convention faces in Africa (see [here](#) for a copy of Dr Ouedraogo's presentation).

Dr Ouedraogo affirmed that, "So far the convention in Africa goes well enough but with many, many challenges". He also emphasized strongly that the Africa team in the Secretariat needs everyone's assistance to take the Convention forward across the continent.

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<sup>1</sup> The brochure "Delivering the Ramsar Convention in your country: National Focal Points and their roles" is available [here](#).



The principal problems identified included:

- *Institutional set-up of the Administrative Authority*  
Specifically the following common problems were highlighted: 1) there is a shortage of staff involved in wetlands and the implementation of the Convention; 2) the AA's need to plan both networking and fundraising actions within their plans for wetland activities; 3) the time allocated to the Convention implementation is too limited; and 4) working relationship between the NFPs and the other FP's needs to be improved.
- *Human, financial and technical capacities*  
The following issues were highlighted: 1) the process of updating the Ramsar information sheet (RIS) is considered to be overly lengthy; 2) there is high turn-over of NFPs in many countries; 3) there is no global funding mechanism for Convention implementation besides the Small Grant Fund and the Swiss Grant for Africa; and 4) most of the national environmental budgets do not make adequate provision for wetland activities under the Convention.
- *Lack of political will*  
In some countries a lack of political will is reducing the potential effectiveness of the Convention. The following specific points were made: 1) only a few countries have prepared a national wetland policy, such as Uganda; 2) wetland issues are not addressed in the national economic development and poverty reduction strategies (EDPRSs); 3) in spite of the commitment from many Heads of State, the implementation of the wetland component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Environment Action Plan is running into difficulties in the region; 4) many of the African CPs do not pay their dues to the Convention; and 5) only a few countries have adequate institutional arrangements to deal with the implementation of the Convention (e.g. Uganda with a Commissioner for Wetlands Inspection; or Lesotho and Ghana that have a Wetlands Coordination Unit).

Despite some difficulties there are active initiatives in Africa. The following four regional initiatives were described briefly:

- **CongoWet** (Congo Basin).
- **NigerWet** (Niger Basin).
- **ChadWet** (Chad Basin).
- **WacoWet** (West African Coast).

Also described, but still under development, was the Ramsar Centre for East Africa in Uganda.

The key challenges identified for the Convention in Africa were:

- To achieve better collaboration and improved synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) which have similar objectives (at the local and regional level) as Ramsar, including *inter alia* Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), CBD, Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural

Organisation (UNESCO) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- There should be a broader approach in the Convention implementation, the priority should shift somewhat from site designation to developing and implementing policies and strategies and demonstration sites for wise use of wetlands.
- Implementation of the wetlands component of various initiatives such as NEPAD, le Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC), the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Environment Action Plan could be improved and maybe a broader strategy is required to integrate wetland issues into regional economic and social development initiatives.
- The Convention needs to assist in the development and implementation of national wetland policies and the integration of wetland issues into national development frameworks.

Dr Ouedraogo outlined immediate actions which required addressing including:

- organizing regional preparatory meetings before COP11,
- finalising a work plan and
- drafting a networking strategy for Africa, to include specific fundraising, sustaining the CP's existing capacity building programmes, and boosting the collaboration with the regional initiatives.

#### ***Agenda item 5.1: Wetland issues in the East Africa region***

Professor Kassim Kulindwa, STRP invited expert, provided an Eastern Africa perspective including an overview of values and conservation challenges in selected wetlands of East Africa. A copy of Professor Kulindwa's full presentation is provided [here](#).

It was stressed in the presentation that despite the important functions and values of wetlands in East Africa, and the world in general, wetlands are still under tremendous pressure. Primary drivers of pressures on wetlands include increasing population, competitive uses for economic activities, and expanding human settlement.

Wetland occupies about 10%, 2-3% and 13% of total land surface area in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda respectively. The ecological values in Eastern Africa are similar to those found in similar types of wetland elsewhere in Africa and include *inter alia* provision of aquatic habitats for fish, carbon sinks, climate regulation, domestic water, agriculture and sources for medicinal products.

However, wetlands are under threat from conversion for multiple uses, such as for biofuels or prawn farming, and modification through pollution. Often decision-making criteria need to address dynamic issues. For instance the current value of a wetland often needs to be understood against any future values. Similarly, trade-offs need to balance nature conservation needs against the desire to eradicate poverty or improve economic growth. A key issue is the inadequate capacity for wetland management and the need for training and involvement of stakeholders at all levels, as well as the need to mobilize global and local financial resources to support wetland

management. The role of local communities in changing or influencing decisions about wetland conversion can be crucial, but this requires building awareness of wetland values amongst local communities, and ensuring that communities have legitimate ways to be heard and to influence policy.

The presentation highlighted case studies from the Nakivubo wetland in Kampala, Uganda and the Tana River Delta in Kenya which are under threat, despite having demonstrable economic values for local and wider stakeholders. One outcome from wetland conversion is often a transfer or redistribution of economic benefits away from the poor to the rich. This was described as the ‘cost of ignorance’. The example of the endemic Kihansi spray toad from Tanzania was described. Due to the proposed construction of dams for hydropower generation the resultant habitat loss and damage was predicted to lead to the potential extinction of the Kihansi spray toad, which had been declared extinct by the IUCN in 2009. To save the toad a captive breeding programme was funded in 2007 by a World Bank International Development Association loan of US\$3.5m. Therefore the opportunity cost to Tanzania of saving the toad from extinction has placed a substantial debt on the country.

The East African examples demonstrate that wetlands in the region provide substantial ecological and livelihood benefits to the local communities but they are still being degraded and converted at an alarming rate. One of the principle reasons for this is that there remains insufficient appreciation of ecosystem services provided by wetlands and their associated economic values. This lack of awareness is compounded further by management capacity inadequacies. As a result, it was recommended that conservation efforts need to be guided by a management planning utilizing participatory or stakeholder-driven approaches, which will lead to sustainable utilization and wise use of wetland resources. But the crucial message is that more efforts should be made by experts to demonstrate and impress upon decision makers, but also the general public, the value of wetlands and to justify their conservation.

### ***Agenda item 5.2: Overview of northern Africa perspectives***

An overview of wetland issues in North Africa was provided by Denis Landenbergue, Wetland Manager WWF, in combination with the STRP NFPs from Tunisia, Dr. Mohamed Salah Romdhane, and Libya, Dr Musbah Mohamed. The presentation can be found [here](#).

The presentation reviewed the status, distribution and management issues relating to wetlands in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Mauritania. Attention was also drawn to three regional wetland initiatives: MedWet, ChadWet and NigerWet which are pursuing collaborative working across states to implement the Ramsar Convention.

A lively discussion followed with several important points being raised with regard to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on a regional basis. The speakers emphasized the problems associated with lack of communication between different government departments, and between technical experts and political decision makers.

The following key questions were raised for consideration by the participants over the course of the workshop:

- How can Contracting Parties ensure that there are better communications across their own government parties in relation to wetland issues and especially how can STRP NFPs communicate better with the AA and politicians?
- How can both technical and economic information be made more accessible to decision-makers and especially politicians in different countries?
- How can the various bodies of the Convention at a national level, such as the STRP NFP, the AA, National Ramsar Committee and wetland experts, become more fully engaged in the implementation of the Convention and the protection of wetlands?

***Agenda item 6.1: Overview of the STRP work plan for 2009-2012 cycle, priorities and leading up COP11***

Dr Heather MacKay, STRP chair, presented. A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#). The presentation included:

- i). A brief overview of how the STRP functions, how STRP work priorities are set, and how the STRP works with other bodies of the Convention as well as with other international processes and organizations;
- ii). Introduction and discussion of the current STRP work plan for the 2009-2012 cycle, and highlighting particular priority issues on which the STRP is focusing its resources in this cycle. This included discussion of how the STRP National Focal Points can assist in delivery of STRP work.
- iii). Explanation of the STRP schedule of work and the process leading up to 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP11), scheduled for 2012, as well as the STRP involvement in the deliberations and decision-making at the COP11 meeting itself.

The composition and functions of the STRP are described in the STRP *modus operandi* in the Annex to Resolution X.9<sup>2</sup>, which also lists the current group of observer organizations who participate in STRP meetings and processes. Core STRP members are appointed in their individual capacity, for their expertise in a thematic work area or regional knowledge. They are expected to provide independent, objective scientific advice to the Convention and the Contracting Parties. Meetings held by the STRP are fairly informal and protocol is limited. Observers and invited experts are encouraged to participate actively in STRP meetings and intersessional processes. Terms of reference for STRP National Focal Points can also be found in the above-mentioned Annex to Resolution X.9. Participants may also wish to study the short Ramsar brochure on the roles of National Focal Points in Convention processes generally, found [here](#).

The roles of STRP in the Convention are:

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_09\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_09_e.pdf)

- To respond to ad hoc requests for scientific information and advice from Contracting Parties, international organization, and Ramsar Site managers, and on occasion to participate in a Ramsar Advisory Mission when requested by a Contracting Party;
- To provide advice and guidance to parties on emerging strategic issues of relevance to the Convention and
- To provide scientific information on wetlands to various international processes.

Both the quality of the science utilized by the STRP and the rigour of the review process are essential not just for internal Ramsar processes but also where information feeds into wider processes such as the IPCC.

The updated version of the STRP's 2009-2012 Work Plan<sup>3</sup> contains a description of each task in the plan and an indication of the current status of each task. The STRP report to the 41<sup>st</sup> Standing Committee meeting<sup>4</sup> provides an overview of progress with our work up to March 2010, following our mid-term workshops. Annex 3 of that report contains a list of STRP products proposed for delivery in this cycle, including those which must be completed in time for submission to the COP11. Products include:

- COP11 Draft Resolutions;
- COP11 Draft Resolutions with annexed scientific and technical guidance;
- COP11 Information Papers (COP11 DOCs.);
- Ramsar Technical Reports;
- STRP Technical Advisory Notes/Briefing Notes; and
- Other types of product (such as papers published in scientific journals)

Future work priorities for STRP are identified through various processes, including STRP ongoing tasks that extend over more than one triennium, regular STRP review of emerging issues ("blue sky" list), requests from Contracting Parties or IOPs within one or more regions, and requests from COP for specific guidance/products and International policy and/or assessment processes. The list of possible future work items is prioritized and consolidated into a Draft Resolution to COP regarding "Future scientific and technical priorities". Once COP has debated and adopted the Resolution, then at its first meeting of the new triennium, STRP reviews and agrees on the final work plan for that triennium and the scope of work for each priority task.

STRP National Focal Points can assist in various ways in this cycle:

1. Providing specific inputs to and review of STRP documents and products leading up to the February 2011 meeting of the STRP;
2. Participating in regional preparatory meetings during 2011 and 2012, leading up to COP11;
3. Advising their country delegations to COP11, and joining these delegations at COP where possible.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/STRPworkplanMarch2010.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520_4000_0)

During discussions on STRP priorities the issue of wetlands and human health was raised as warranting serious consideration. The STRP Chair agreed and recalled that in the STRP workplan significant progress, under the leadership of Dr Pierre Horwitz, had been made on developing guidance and advice on human health issues. A summary of progress on this important issue has been provided on the STRP support service.

#### ***Agenda item 6.2: STRP priority issues - wetland restoration guidance***

Rob McInnes, STRP expert, presented an update of the STRP Thematic Work Area 8 on Wetland Management – Restoration, Mitigation and Compensation and in particular high priority task 9.1 “guidance on mitigation and compensation for wetland loss” and task 9.2 “updating and expansion of wetland restoration guidance”. A full copy of the presentation is available [here](#).

Task 9.1 requires the STRP to develop guidance on the avoidance, mitigation and compensation of impacts on wetlands. Definitions of these three elements have been drafted and these were presented. Much of the work has focused on developing a framework for avoiding, mitigating and compensation for wetland loss or more specifically a change in ecological character. The draft framework was presented to demonstrate the importance of understanding when avoidance, mitigation or compensation becomes the appropriate response strategy.

A brief update on progress on Task 9.2 was presented. This task requests STRP to prepare proposals for updating and expanding existing Ramsar guidance on restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands including approaches to prioritization and links with other Ramsar tools and guidance, *inter alia* those on climate change and on economic values of ecosystem services. The participants were asked for their assistance (including completing a questionnaire) in providing information to support the task in the following key areas:

- Information on existing wetland restoration guidance, methodologies or other material that they find most useful for restoration work, also indicating for which wetland type they are used.
- Guidance on prioritising wetland restoration on a national or regional scale.
- Significant information gaps for wetland restoration.
- Examples of restoration projects (both successful and unsuccessful).

The discussion raised a couple of points of interest. Clarification was sought on what is meant by ‘human induced change’ and are there limits of acceptable change? This was considered an important consideration especially since climate change is also a driver of change.

Attention was drawn to recent rehabilitation guidance published by WRC / SANBI on wetlands. The WET-Rehab Methods national guidelines and methods for wetland rehabilitation are available [here](#).

#### ***Agenda item 6.2.2: Revision of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) and Strategic Framework***



Dr Heather Mackay, STRP Chair, presented. A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#).

After 40 years of operation and somewhat incremental development of Convention processes, there is now a great need for consolidation and rationalization of several processes related to information flow within the Convention. This intention is to clarify the information gathering and reporting related to these processes for Parties, and to ensure that the information which they collect on Ramsar Sites is useful not only to the wetland managers and policy makers within the country, but also to the Convention's implementation processes at regional and global levels.

The work on these tasks (8.4, 4.5 and 8.3 in the 2009-2012 STRP Work Plan) arises from a proposal by the STRP for restructuring the way in which information on Ramsar Sites is delivered into Convention processes, for the purposes of site designation, monitoring and reporting on change in ecological character of sites, and wetland inventory amongst others.

The Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) provides, amongst other things, information about a Ramsar Site such as specific wetland location boundaries, criteria for designation as Ramsar Sites, wetland types and ecological threats. Contracting Parties submit an RIS when applying for Ramsar Site designation, and the RIS is expected to be updated every 6 years. The information in the RIS has multiple uses such as:

- Reporting to the Convention on status of Ramsar Sites (CP)
- Providing a baseline for assessing change in ecological character of the site, and appropriate response to change (CP, Convention)
- Information to support wetland inventory, status and trends in wetlands at regional and global level (Convention).

The Ramsar Information Sheet is not adequately designed for use with modern information systems, and it is now outdated and poorly reflects the information needs of the Contracting Parties and the Convention.

The Strategic Framework supports a systematic approach to identification and designation of sites for the Ramsar list. It also provides guidance on how to apply the various criteria for Ramsar Site designation. It was first approved at COP7 (1999). Different aspects of the Strategic Framework (SF) have been revised since COP7. Information and guidance in the current SF overlaps with separate guidance documents on completion of the RIS. In addition, information on the same SF-related topics is currently to be found in several places in Ramsar documentation and consolidation is urgently needed.

The RIS and SF are priorities for STRP attention because they are central to the administration and implementation of the Convention. Contracting Parties will need assistance from STRP in terms of understanding the revised RIS and SF, as well as in implementing the new RIS submission and updating procedures.

The format of the new RIS may look more complicated but:

- It should be easier for Parties to complete;
- It will provide (or can be drawn from) the same information as in management plans;
- The RIS will be easier to update;
- Clearer guidance on completing and updating the RIS will be provided.

A particularly important message to share with Contracting Parties is that even though not all Parties will have data to complete all aspects of the ecological character description, the aim is to complete what is feasible at designation, and hopefully information availability will improve over time for the next update of a RIS. Also it is likely that STRP will recommend phased implementation of the new RIS format and procedures, so that those Contracting Parties who are currently preparing a RIS for a new site designation will continue their submission on the current format and change to the new format when they next update the RIS.

The new SF should be more logically structured and give clear guidance on how to interpret and apply the Ramsar criteria, identify Ramsar Sites and boundaries, how to describe sites and update those descriptions, and how to identify sites for potential future designation.

Tasks for National Focal Points (NFP):

1. Assist in drafting of worked examples of the new RIS to include in the new guidance;
2. Champion the new RIS and SF documentation and help to explain it in the lead up to (and at) CoP11;
3. Comment on future drafts and provide guidance and experience to STRP.

### ***Agenda item 7.1: The Ramsar Convention's International Organisation Partners (IOP)***

Mr Denis Landenbergue, WWF representative presented on how the five Ramsar IOPs, namely BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International (WI), IUCN and WWF, support the Ramsar Convention at global, regional and national levels through a case study of WWF. It was noted that the potential exists for the number of IOPs to increase in the future. The full presentation is available [here](#).

At a global level IOPs support the general objectives and implementation of the three pillars of the Ramsar Convention; they operate in each of the six Ramsar regions; and are observers to the Standing Committee and the COP. At regional level IOPs are actively involved in selected Ramsar regional initiatives, they often act as facilitators between governments and donors or funders and they may act on behalf of the Secretariat at specific meetings or events. At a national level the IOPs also continue to support the implementation of the three pillars of the Convention, assist with designating Ramsar Sites, aid with CEPA activities, take part in National Wetland Committees and advise governments on technical and policy issues within the context of regional initiatives.

### ***Agenda item 7.2: Wetland, agriculture and livelihoods***

Dr Lisa Rebelo, from IMWI, presented on the relationships between wetlands and livelihoods and the use of remote-sensed data in assisting wetland management. A full copy of Dr Rebelo's presentation is available [here](#).

Wetlands contribute in many diverse ways to the livelihoods of millions of people. Wetland agriculture in Africa is expanding rapidly, driven by population growth and the degradation of upland areas as a result of climate change and prolonged drought. Dr Rebelo highlighted that the challenge is to devise strategies that support sustainable agriculture and simultaneously safeguard important wetland ecosystem services.

The research conducted by IWMI investigates the interaction between wetlands, agriculture and livelihoods, through the development of frameworks, models and tools. An analytical framework and methodology for assessing the results of wetland conservation on poverty reduction initiatives has been developed utilising remote-sensed data. Some of the outputs from this were used to inform Resolution X.28 (Wetlands and Poverty Eradication) and the approach continues to contribute to the STRP's work especially in scoping guidance under the current STRP task No. 2.6 on Wetlands and poverty eradication.

IWMI's work in the interpretation of remote-sensed data in a number of projects was presented. The Working Wetland Potential (WWP), an index derived through the application of a semi-analytical framework for identifying, organizing and analysing the complex factors that link people, agriculture and wetlands, was described. More information is available [here](#). The WWP index provides a coherent tool for considering trade-offs in wetland-agriculture related decision-making.

The WETwin project was described. The overall objective of WETwin is to enhance the role of wetlands in basin-scale integrated water resources management (IWRM), with the aim of improving the community service functions while conserving good ecological status. Further information is available [here](#).

The discussion session generated considerable interest from the participants regarding the utility of remote sensing approaches. Several questions were raised regarding costs, data availability, spatial accuracy, data resolution and staff capacity. The linkages between the outputs, such as maps, derived from remote sensed data and policy making were also discussed and the need to work in collaboration with government departments was recognised as being extremely important. Participants were referred to recent applications of remote sensing technology to various aspects of wetland management and specific attention was drawn to the GlobWetlands project<sup>5</sup> which was recently initiated by the European Space Agency.

Overall the merits of using remotely sensed data to assist in both site management and policy formulation and implementation were strongly advocated. As part of their role, NFPs need to

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.globwetland.org/>

make governments aware of this field of research and its application and relevance to policy drafting.

***Agenda item 8: The status of research on wetland ecology, management and conservation in South Africa***

Dr Heather Malan, University of Cape Town, presented a summary of past, present and future wetland research activities in South Africa. Her presentation is available [here](#).

Although South Africa has a long tradition of research on rivers, it is perhaps fair to say that standing-water (lentic) or wetland systems have been neglected until recently. In the past few years, however, great strides have been made to remedy this omission and a number of important research projects on wetland ecology, management and conservation have been undertaken. The presentation outlined some of the major objectives that have been achieved and the useful products that have been the outcomes of these research endeavours.

The presentation drew attention to the progress which was made in the 1990s including the publication of “Wetlands of South Africa” and the National Water Act of 1998 which included wetlands. However, Dr Malan also highlighted the paucity of information which was available to implement action on the ground.

The 2000s have seen an exponential growth in the number of wetland research projects as a result of the National Wetlands Research Programme, which commenced in 2004. The Workshop was made aware of the new series of integrated tools for effective management and rehabilitation of wetlands is now available from the WRC. The Wetland Management Series of reports address a range of issues including sustainable use, ecosystem services and rehabilitation. More information is available [here](#).

Dr Malan also outlined the main gaps in research and knowledge that still need to be addressed in order to manage and conserve wetlands more effectively. The challenges faced by wetland researchers in South Africa, including the diversity of the systems, the lack of baseline data, limited available funding and the issue of Government departments often being over-worked, under-resourced, and sometimes lacking in political will, were highlighted. But more positively, the advantages, including the enthusiasm of the South Africa research community and the natural diversity of the wetlands, were also stressed.

The plenary discussion emphasised the need to quantify the benefits provided by wetlands, the issues relating to decision-making in the absence of robust long-term monitoring data, with the exception of bird data and the problems of trying to get collaborative working across different Government departments and legal frameworks.

***Agenda item 6bis: Who is a wetland manager?***

Each participant was asked to draw who is a “wetland manager”. This particular exercise was interesting to show that people have very different concepts of who is a wetland manager in their

minds and that this needs to be borne in mind when considering the target audience for any guidance documents.

Interesting outcomes emerged. The drawings could be grouped in four, or possibly five, categories:

- Site manager such as a typical nature reserve manager;
- Multi-tasking site manager with multiple roles;
- Someone looking after a wetland and all the pressures and issues it confronts; and
- A conceptual entity – maybe not a person.

One ‘artist’ drew a beaver as a representation that a wetland manager might not even be a human!

## **2.3 Day 2 - Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

### ***Agenda item 9.1: Identification and mapping of national freshwater ecosystems priority areas in South Africa***

Ms Namhla Mbhona, from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) presented an update on work on the South African National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and the National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPA) programme. A copy of her presentation is available [here](#) and additional information on Wetlands South Africa can be found [here](#).

The objectives of the NWI are to identify the location of priority wetland conservation sites, identify the functions and values of wetlands and establish a baseline for measuring future change in wetland area, function and values. The challenges posed by these objectives were discussed and the approach was presented. The hydrogeomorphic (HGM) basis of the South African wetland classification system, and its application in wetland inventory, were described in detail.

The NFEPA programme, which aims to develop an institutional basis to enable effective implementation of fresh water ecosystem priority areas, was described. The approach utilises national spatial datasets and can map the status or condition of wetlands and also identify their threats. The work has been used to develop conservation visions with catchment management strategies. The work has also guided the production of a national strategy for wetland rehabilitation.

The prerequisites for the NFEPA programme in South Africa include a robust wetland inventory, a standardised classification system (in this case adopting HGM approach), species data associated with freshwater, the involvement of multiple stakeholders, on the ground implementation by managers and a breadth of conservation planning expertise.

Some salient lessons have been learnt including that data collection can be incredibly time consuming, similarly data processing and computing time can demand a significant time element, methods using geographic information systems (GIS) need to be trialled, an inclusive collaborative approach has been highly beneficial and the results have facilitated upstream management of shared basins.

Several issues arose from the work of SANBI on the identification and mapping of national freshwater ecosystems priority areas in South Africa. The HGM approach adopted could be used as a demonstration approach for Ramsar to investigate further. The linking of wetland type with particular drivers of change has resonance across several STRP work areas including extractive industries and urban wetlands. The establishment of a national wetland rehabilitation programme speaks directly to the Task 9.2 on the development of guidance on the prioritisation of wetland restoration at a national scale.

### ***Agenda item 9.2: Rwanda, a case study on wetland governance and its impact on urban city planning***

Dr Ouedraogo, Senior Adviser for Africa, presented a case study from Rwanda on the impact of urbanisation on wetlands. A full copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

The relatively small size of Rwanda and its relatively high population density generates a range of implications for the country's wetlands. The major problems encountered include direct pressure on land, water, flora and fauna and other non-renewable resource and waste from economic activities that results in environmental pollution. Solid waste is often disposed of in unsustainable ways, as demonstrated through illegal dumping into a wetland in Gastata. Another result of the high population density and land scarcity has been to force people to settle along the ecologically fragile river banks resulting in soil erosion and wetland degradation.

Rwanda is divided into two major drainage basins, the Nile to the east covering 67% of the land, and the Congo to the west which covers the remaining 33%. An inventory completed in 2008 demonstrated that the country supported 860 marshlands, covering a total surface of 278,536ha, which corresponds to 10.6% of the country surface, 101 lakes covering 149,487ha, and 861 rivers totalling 6,462km in length.

Wetlands are subject to a degree of protection in Rwanda. Instruments have set legal protection for Rwanda's Marshlands Sustainable Management. Similarly, capacity building tools and elaborate technical tools have been established to facilitate sustainable marshland and watershed management. The Rwanda Wetland Bill has strengthened further the legal status of the wetlands and assists in facilitating their sustainable management. The presentation also provided an update on the Rwanda Environment Management Authority's (REMA) biodiversity information system which aims to design and setup a biodiversity information system platform across Rwanda.

An example of good wetland governance was provided by the conceptual view of the community centred approach to developing the proposed Kigali City Master Plan which is taking into consideration contemporary wetlands governance tools. An urban sustainability



framework has been developed and lists the key environmental, social and economic issues, and presents key performance indicators and recommendations which need to be achieved to address these critical issues. A specific example was provided for the Urban Sustainability Framework Proposed for Nyarugenge District of Kigali. Part of the overall objectives within the framework was to create alluring recreational features and tourist attractions, including wetlands, and the conservation, revitalisation and management of the unique and rich natural features, which aims to ensure protection of all wetland systems including upstream measures to control the quantity and quality of discharge into the wetlands and downstream measures to ensure wetland conservation.

In the discussion session the integration of wetlands within the Kigali City Master Plan was considered to represent an example of best practice from Africa which contained the essential elements of key principles for the sustainable management of wetlands within an urban context.

#### ***Agenda item 10: Work session 1 – Urban and peri-urban wetlands***

In light of the advice from the CPs through their STRP NFPs on issues concerning urban and peri-urban wetlands, the STRP has been requested to provide guidance for Contracting Parties and to consider ways to disseminate information on managing urban and peri-urban wetlands. Rob McInnes, STRP task lead, presented an update on progress to date.

As a prelude to the work session 1 (see section 3.2 below), Rob explained the importance of wetlands to urban communities and the impacts that increased urbanization can have both directly and indirectly on wetlands. A brief summary of activities undertaken to date, including a joint workshop with UN HABITAT and a series of sessions at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP in Nagoya in November 2010, were described. Future activities, including the development of guidance and a draft resolution were also presented. Rob's presentation is available [here](#).

#### ***Agenda item 11: Work session 2 – Wetlands and extractive industries***

STRP Chair and task lead Dr Heather MacKay provided an update on progress on STRP Task 2.3 Wetlands and Extractive Industries. Dr MacKay explained how high commodity prices are driving rapid expansion of the extractive industries which, coupled with a limited understanding by wetland managers of the implications and the prevalence of poor governance, are resulting in significant loss and degradation of wetlands.

Dr MacKay described on-going work on a flyways vulnerability assessment methodology including the conceptual basis and the initial outputs which link mining activity in Africa, as an example, with Ramsar Sites and Important Bird Areas (IBAs) on a watershed basis. The methodology allows wetland managers to identify wetlands which are co-located with mining 'hotspots' which assists in prioritising resources for future studies and assessments.

The Task is also working towards the development of a guide to available guidance. This component was addressed in more detail in the work session described in section 3.3 below. A full copy of Dr MacKay's presentation is available [here](#).

#### ***Agenda item 12: African – Eurasian migratory water birds agreement (AEWA)***

Ms Evelyn Moloko from the AEWA Secretariat provided an update on the activities of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and AEWA in Africa. A copy of her presentation is available [here](#).

CMS is an intergovernmental treaty which aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range, on a global scale. AEWA was negotiated under the provisions of Article IV of CMS. The main aim of AEWA is to create a legal basis for concerted conservation and management policy by the Range States for migratory waterbird species, with a mission to maintain migratory waterbird species and their populations at a favourable conservation status or to restore them to such a status throughout their flyways, over a range of 118 countries. Presently AEWA consists of 63 Contracting Parties and 26 out of the 53 African countries are Contracting Parties.

Some of the activities of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) activities in Africa are achieved through Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding. In addition, the work of the CMS Scientific Council and specific council's working group on global flyways as well as the guidance on how CMS could contribute to protection of critical sites and setting up of ecological networks for migratory species, impacts significantly on the African region.

There is strong collaboration between Ramsar and CMS-AEWA. Recent initiatives include:

- Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project
- Assisting with technical/scientific field missions and Ramsar Advisory Missions
- Aiding with technical/scientific tasks such as the STRP work on mining and extractive industries
- Assisting with the recruitment of Parties; and
- Collaboration in organising the African regional preparatory meeting for COPs and MOPs.

#### ***Agenda item 13: Capacity building, conservation and management of migratory waterbirds and their flyways in the African-Eurasian Region***

Mr Oliver Nasirwa and Mr Moussa Diop of Wetlands International presented an update on the Critical Sites Network tool which has been developed as part of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) project. A copy of their presentation is available [here](#) and further information on the project can be found [here](#).

WOW is considered as the largest waterbird conservation initiative ever to take place in the African-Eurasian Region. The work started in 2006 and concluded in 2010 bringing together a

partnership comprising representatives from government bodies, NGO's and recognized wildlife training institutes.

The presentation provided details on the flyway concept and the critical sites network, including a detailed description of the infrastructure, status and operation. The participants were encouraged to access the Tool to understand better its utility and potential. Information was provided on demonstration projects from a range of African countries which have been developed across the critical sites network. The projects highlighted the various successes which address a range of issues including ecotourism, wetland restoration, invasive species control, transboundary management and enhancing livelihoods.

In response to questions regarding the sustainability of the CSN Tool once the project is completed at the end of 2010, Mr Nasirwa noted that the partner organizations who hold the core database underlying the CSN Tool will continue their data collection and maintenance activities as part of their own mandates, so that the data would be available for the foreseeable future. AEWA will continue to provide service to the CSN portal itself and the partner organizations would continue to provide support and training as needed.

Ms Cybele noted that the CSN Tool had proven very useful for the Ramsar Secretariat staff who had to check Ramsar Information Sheets for African Ramsar Sites.

The workshop participants showed considerable interest in the potential of the tool but requested to have more time to actually apply it and understand better how it functions before providing formal review comments and agreeing to formally endorse the CSN Tool.

## **2.4 Day 3 - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November**

### ***Agenda item 14: Work session 3 – Building the STRP Network in the African Region***

Ms Monica Zavagli, lead for this work session, provided an introductory presentation highlighting the current activities undertaken within the STRP Thematic Work Area 1 on Regional Networking. The work area's aim is to identify best ways to strengthen the communication and engagement of STRP NFPs from the six Ramsar regions into the STRP work. Among a number of ongoing activities: i) the introduction since July 2009 of a quarterly newsletter to maintain the STRP family informed on progress with the various STRP tasks and to share other relevant information; ii) a more structured set of information and support material for new STRP NFPs; iii) more specific requests for STRP NFPs' contributions such as to provide case studies, to fill in questionnaires, or to advise on relevant expertise in the country; iv) identification of opportunities for holding STRP NFPs meetings and v) development of a more user-friendly web-based work space to share information and carry on STRP work during the intersessional periods.

Indeed, participants were reminded that the STRP meet face to face only once a year and that intersessionally the Panel works electronically either via email or through the STRP Support Service accessible at [http://www.wetlands.org/\\_strp/](http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/) with a username and password.

Ms Zavagli highlighted that despite a range of efforts, the STRP still reported difficulties in establishing effective contact and exchanges with many STRP NFPs. The reasons are multiple and they differ from region to region. Common issues are problems with communication, appointment of the right person, language, accessibility to good internet facilities, workload etc. The workshop offered a unique opportunity to discuss some of these issues and the work session highlighted extremely useful recommendations to improve communication strategies, to activate the network in the region and to understand how STRP can assist the STRP NFPs in their role. The outcomes of the sessions are listed in section 3 of this report.

It was also reminded that one of the most important roles of STRP NFPs is to ensure that Contracting Parties' needs and priorities be addressed through the guidance produced by the STRP as well as to facilitate the access to the best expertise available in the regions. During the work session, participants had the opportunity to highlight what are the relevant wetland issues in Africa that they would like STRP to consider as a matter of priority for future work and to report back to the 16th Meeting of the STRP in February 2011. A copy of Ms Zavagli's full presentation is available [here](#).

#### ***Agenda item 15: Wrap up discussion and summary of recommendations***

Dr Mackay chaired the final discussion session. It was agreed by all that the workshop had been fruitful and productive. Participants felt that they were able to contribute and express their views openly and in a constructive manner and it was clear that participants were enthusiastic and inspired by the workshop. It was agreed that, even though the official working language of the STRP is English, the bi-lingual nature of the workshop was invaluable. By having interpretation facilities available, much new information about ongoing wetlands research and management in African countries could be shared amongst all participants.

A series of recommendations were made which are considered further in Section 4 of this report. In addition, a number of specific tasks were identified on which inputs are required from STRP National Focal Points in the near future. These are also listed in Section 4.

#### ***Closure of the workshop***

The STRP Chair Dr Mackay and the meeting's organisers offered their thanks to the Ramsar Secretariat, translators, the catering staff and the technicians for their support and for a job well done, and especially all STRP NFPs, IOP members, invited experts and other representatives for their very hard work and teamwork in making the workshop, extremely fruitful and productive.

In closing, Dr MacKay remarked that she hoped for a number of outcomes arising from this workshop in the future, namely:

- That STRP National Focal Points who participated in the workshop would, on returning home, call up their counterpart Focal Point in the Administrative Authority and arrange a meeting;
- That more STRP National Focal Points would be able to participate in STRP meetings and in the COP;
- That more STRP National Focal Points would play active roles in STRP's core working groups and task groups; and
- That through the support and engagement of the STRP National Focal Points, scientific input to the preparatory regional meetings and the African regional meetings at COP would be strengthened.

### ***Workshop evaluation***

An evaluation form was circulated to all the participants to elicit feedback on the workshop and to inform the development and implementation of future meetings. A total of 35 forms were returned. Overall the feedback was very positive with 87% of the participants ranking the workshop either satisfactory or fully satisfactory. Approximately 75% of the attendees also found the meeting useful or very useful for acquiring new knowledge and information about wetlands and the workings of the STRP. The quality of the presentations and the administration also received a high level of commendation.

In addition to the information captured on the evaluation forms, the following constructive comments were provided. These are considered essential if the utility of future events, both within Africa and beyond, is to be optimised:

- There was a common view that there should have been more time for working sessions and demonstration in the agenda. However, it was acknowledged that for a first event of its kind there was always going to be a need to have several background presentations to ensure that everyone was brought up to the same level of understanding.
- There should have been more time to discuss regional or sub-regional experiences, such as on issues related to extractive industries, in order to focus assistance with the input to the STRP process;
- The length of time spent on formal presentations could have been reduced with more information being circulated in advance of the workshop.
- For new attendees or participants with limited understanding of Ramsar and its various processes and bodies, a preparatory training course held before the main workshop would have assisted in creating a common ground for members new to the STRP work.
- There were several suggestions to have the workshop expanded to up to five days, lunch time to two hours and with a field trip organized earlier in the workshop, to accommodate and facilitate greater discussion.
- The need for greater time for less formal discussions was a strong recommendation.
- All STRP NFPs should be given the opportunity to present on issues pertaining to their countries at the workshop.
- There was a clear indication that the meeting should be repeated on a regular basis. 47% of the participants recommended that the meeting should be an annual event, 42%

recommended that it was held every two years and 10% thought that a triennial meeting was most appropriate.

- To optimize the resources available and the utility of regional meetings, the planning of back-to-back meetings of NFPs, CEPA, STRP NFPs and other training should be considered.
- The tone and approach of the organisers was seen as being very important to set the tone and makes new comers feel both welcome and valued. Several participants reserved a special vote of thanks to STRP Chair Heather MacKay and Ms Zavagli for the coordination and planning.
- The choice of venue was considered important. Several attendees thought that the hotel was isolated and consequently there was a limited opportunity to see the real Johannesburg.
- The need to be respect and use the official Convention languages, despite the STRP using English as its official language, was recommended as being important.
- Access to internet during the workshop was constrained. Free and functioning access to the internet was considered to be essential for future meetings.

### ***Field visit to Rietvlei Nature Reserve***

The participants visited the Rietvlei Nature Reserve on the last day. This provided an opportunity to understand some of the issues discussed during the workshop within a local context. The Rietvlei Nature Reserve is one of the world's largest urban nature reserves. Covering an area of some 3,800ha, it is situated south of Pretoria but still within the city limits. For more information about the reserve there is an official website [here](#).



### 3. WORKING SESSIONS

#### 3.1 Introduction

The working sessions provided the attendees with an opportunity to input into several priority STRP tasks and to work collaboratively with their colleagues from Africa. Three working sessions were held to garner information on urban wetlands, extractive industries and regional networking. In each case the participants were divided into three groups. Each group nominated a chair, a rapporteur and a spokesperson to feedback in plenary.

#### 3.2 Work session 1: Urban wetlands

The workshop session on urban wetlands had two key objectives: 1) to try and understand better the nature of the problem, i.e. what issues are faced by wetlands in the urban environment and what are the drivers behind these; and 2) to investigate whether solutions to the range of issues confronting urban wetlands are known.

***Part 1 – Can we define the problem?*** (i.e. if we know what the problem is it is easier to find the solution).

- To understand better the drivers of wetland loss and degradation in urban areas across Africa, e.g.
  - ▣ Is it due to weak legal controls?
  - ▣ Is it due to poor regulation?
  - ▣ Is it due to lack of joined up planning?
  - ▣ Is it a result of inadequate governance?
  - ▣ Is it because the value and importance of wetland ecosystem services are not recognised?
  - ▣ Is due to a lack of scientific understanding about wetlands?
- To understand which are the main activities associated with urbanisation that impact on wetlands in Africa, e.g.
  - ▣ Is it direct habitat loss due to informal settlements?
  - ▣ Is it degradation due to over-exploitation of resources?
  - ▣ Is it infilling for housing or industrial development?
  - ▣ Is it draining to prevent disease?
  - ▣ Is it changes in the hydrology (both water quality and quantity)?
- To understand better why wetlands are not used to solve urban problems such as sanitation, drinking water supply, flood protection, agriculture, etc.
  - ▣ Is it because of a lack of technical information?
  - ▣ Is it because of a general lack of awareness and the potential of wetlands?
  - ▣ Is it because wetland management has focused on biodiversity conservation?

***Part 2 – Can we define the solution?*** (Are there good practical examples or is there good scientific research that can be utilised).

- Are there good examples which demonstrate how wetland conservation and sustainable urban development have co-existed?
- Are there good practical examples of wetlands being conserved, restored or protected to provide multiple benefits in urban environments?
- Are there good examples of scientific studies which demonstrate the potential of wetlands to provide solutions to urban issues in Africa?

***Feedback from urban wetland working session***

The three working groups delivered similar results and identified similar issues associated with urbanisation and wetlands in Africa. The principle drivers of wetland loss and degradation and the impact they cause within urban areas across Africa were considered to be:

- Population growth and population density, often driven by rural poverty forcing migration to urban centres.
- An association with diseases such as malaria resulting in drainage and infilling.
- Urban poverty and over exploitation out of economic necessity.
- Lack of awareness about the value of wetlands and their ecosystem service at a range of levels from national and local policies and governance.
- Sectoral conflicts and the paucity or lack of joined-up planning and coordination.
- A lack of a wetland inventory to inform planning.
- Lack of appreciation and poor awareness at all levels regarding the importance of wetlands.
- Weak definition or understanding of what a “wetland” is.
- Lack of leadership and poor governance.
- Lack of policies and laws to protect wetlands as well as a lack of regulatory mechanisms to enforce them.
- Lack of infrastructure, financial and human resources to plan for and manage wetlands.
- The geographic position of wetlands sees more pressure along coastal wetlands, rather than inland ones.
- Unsustainable development with illegal buildings, especially in proximity of the coast, and illegal activities such as dumping of waste.
- Lack of urban waste water and sewage treatment resulting in pollution.
- Polluted run-off from agro-chemicals and industrial waste as well as sewage from settlements.
- Lack of moral interest and associated issues of corruption.
- Climate change causing increasing numbers of environmental refugees in urban centres, compounding population pressures.
- Extraction of geological materials for both building and development and to support urban populations such as sand, salt and minerals.
- Drainage of water resources for human consumption and industries

- Over exploitation of wetland resources and the introduction of alien species causing loss of habitat

The working groups considered both actual and theoretical examples to work towards a range of solutions. The following potential solutions were advocated:

- Improving awareness of the benefits wetlands deliver at different levels, including teaching programmes at universities, wider public awareness campaigns and across government departments.
- To explicitly include wetlands in all aspects of urban planning, including in landscape planning and all aspects of water management including storm water management, water resources and water treatment.
- To consider wetlands not just as nature conservation areas but as key elements within water management infrastructure.
- Use of wetlands as natural waste water treatment systems (for instance through reinstating meanders and emergent vegetation) to mitigate pollution and sedimentation.
- Government efforts to focus on preserving priority areas and, if necessary, to pay people to move to other, less sensitive, areas, as is happening through systems which provide payment for ecosystem services.
- Specific programmes should be developed aimed at benefiting and involving communities in sustainable wetland management
- Increasing policies and laws protecting wetlands and the enforcement and regulation of such laws.
- Control programmes for management and eradication of alien biota.
- Coordinated programmes of wetland restoration and remediation need to be established and appropriately funded.

Several success stories and specific case studies were highlighted where sustainable wetland management had been delivered within an urban context. These included:

- Zambezi Delta
- Nairobi River
- Rietulei NR
- Everglade
- River Versoix, Switzerland
- Nakuburo Wetland, Uganda
- Sanbi, SA. (WfWet)

Overall the working session on urban wetlands proved to be very useful to all involved with excellent feedback and a great willingness to engage. The three groups demonstrated considerable consistency of drivers and impacts. One of the most concerned conclusions was the widely and strongly held view that there was a serious concern regarding the lack of awareness of the importance of wetlands at all levels and the need for better integration throughout policies across Government departments and agencies. Where successes had been delivered the importance of leadership and good governance was seen as crucial.

The outputs from this working session will contribute the on-going work on Task 2.7 Planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands, both in terms of shaping a draft resolution for COP11 and also for developing future guidance for parties.

### **3.3 Work session 2: Extractive industries**

#### ***Introduction***

The objectives of the work session on Wetlands and Extractive Industries were:

- To brief meeting participants on issues, task progress and deliverables
- To identify additional information sources for the flyway vulnerability assessment methodology
- To discuss and identify possible needs for additional guidance on managing impacts of extractives industries on wetlands.
- To discuss and identify possible training and information needs for wetlands managers, extractives sector policy makers & decision makers,

In the current STRP Work Plan, work on wetlands and extractive industries is principally contained under Task 2.3. This task is being conducted jointly with the Technical Committee of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA-TC), since AEWA members are equally concerned about the potential for increased impacts of extractive industries on wetlands and other important sites on international waterbird migratory routes and flyways within the AEWA area.

There are two deliverables for the extractive industries task as it is currently formulated:

- A. A low-cost flyway-scale methodology for identifying sites/areas, especially wetlands, likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of the extraction of minerals and other geological resources (status of this task was presented by Dr Heather MacKay, see [here](#)).
- B. A guide to available technical guidance on assessing, avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impacts of extractive industries on wetlands (overview and status of this task was presented by Dr Kym Morton (see [here](#)).

Additional in-country information was requested from the participants. Two worksheets (see Appendix IV) were distributed in order for participants to gather this information on their return home, and send it back to the STRP task leads.

Participants then moved into smaller groups to discuss and provide recommendations on:

- i). Suitability of available technical guidance and the need, if any, for development of new technical guidance;
- ii). Training and information needs related to managing the impacts on wetlands of extractive industries, aimed at wetland site managers, wetland policy makers, EIA and licensing decision-makers.

### ***Summary of work session discussions:***

The impacts of mining and extractive activities on wetlands are widespread and numerous. This is despite the presence of some good guidance and Government 'Mining Codes of Practice' (e.g. Senegal and Madagascar). But more importantly this is despite the presence of sound EIA legislation. However the following recommendations/suggestions were made:

- Currently the lack of resources, capacity, expertise, finance and the role of corruption and poor governance are significant barriers to both the utilisation and implementation of existing guidance and codes and also the appropriate performance of EIA legislation.
- There needs to be a political framework to pull the guidance, legal obligations and stakeholders together.
- Ramsar 'branded' guidance was seen as important as it would be considered independent and was not simply the provenance of the Government or an NGO. The branding was seen as being more important than the format.
- Guidance was also required for both Ramsar sites and also all other non-designated wetlands.
- A suggestion was to set up a 'platform' composed of mining interests, Governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to roll out Ramsar's Guide to Guidance (using the similar model developed by Maria Rivera in Chile).

### ***Currently available guidance:***

All agreed that there is a major gap with little or no specific guidance available to understand impacts of extractive industries on wetlands. The table of guidance prepared by the STRP task group represented a new information source for many participants who had previously been unaware of the existence of this wide range of guidance.

Many countries also lack any EIA or SEA legislation that would provide a supporting policy context within which to apply such guidance. The following summarises the situation in a range of African countries:

#### **Sudan:**

- Permits are issued based on the guidelines recommended by the funders ie the government has to fit in with the funders wishes.

#### **Mozambique:**

- The Ministry is very under resourced and permits for mining are issued by the Minister without coordination or feedback from the department of water affairs (DNA) or dept of environment.

#### **Guinea:**

- There is no information available on specific directives; exploration permits are given by the state and by the local government for artisanal exploration.

- Existing guidance on Gold: Ashanti Gold (Z.H.) & Tinkiso; the management is under the coordination of the Ministry of mines.
- Impacts such as river beds silting are observed.

#### Tunisia:

- Environmental impact assessments are compulsory and coordinated by a National Agency; follow-on monitoring activities are however non-existent.
- Existing guidance for phosphates, iron, gas and petroleum.
- Impacts from these mining activities are water runoff and creation of artificial wetlands.

#### Benin:

- A law with sectoral guidelines exists. The management authority is the Benin Environment Agency. There is lack of resources for implementation.
- Petroleum is the main resource extracted. Often EIAs are not undertaken and exploration platforms are abandoned.

#### Madagascar:

- Existence of a law for Environmental and Social Impacts.
- Existence of sectoral guidelines for mineral and petroleum exploration.
- The mining company finances the work of the National Environment Office.

#### Senegal:

- The Government has separate codes for: Mining, Forestry, Environment and Hunting. EIAs are compulsory.
- There is need for more guidelines. Financial resources are lacking.
- Titanium sands are amongst the exploited resources.
- Biodiversity such birds and turtles are the most threatened.

#### Rwanda:

- Peatland is among the exploited resources.

#### South Africa:

- There is mining legislation although there is lack of follow-up on its implementation.

### ***Recommendations regarding guidance needs:***

The South African collection of 15 guidelines for protection of water resources from mining were seen as a good start for African conditions. They are clear and written in a simple style, with many pictures and examples of good practices.

- Target users of guidance (may require different versions of the product for these different audiences):
  - Minister of mines
  - Regulators of mines
  - Licensing authorities

- Environment sector (govt)
  - NGOs
  - Ramsar focal point
  - Ramsar CEPA focal point
  - Tribal/traditional authorities
- Guidance needs to cover political, social and technical aspects, but focus on the technical (brief mention of others). The Mozambique example was cited. Zambia many ministers are unaware of Ramsar. Therefore some form of guidance for ministers was recommended, including possibly a checklist that asks if wetland and environmental issues have been addressed etc.
  - It was noted that there is an absence of financial instruments for managing impacts of extractive industries.
    - Example of Chile’s funding of mining activities - there is a similar situation for Africa.
    - The government is not the only actor – NGOs and civil society can put pressure on the government’s decisions.
    - Example of the World Bank [guidelines?] for poverty reduction: transfer these to wetlands; [also] World Bank environmental guidelines for artisanal and large scale mining.
    - Guidance with more practical examples
    - Recommendations for a good directives implementation strategy.
  - Various options were discussed for the format of the guide to guidance (see flipchart notes):
    1. Explanation booklet plus table
    2. Flow chart that leads to the “correct” guide
    3. Ramsar-specific manual with checklist of what to look for when approving an EIA for issue of permit to the mine
    4. Wikipedia type web site to allow updating and searching for guidelines
    5. Interactive table with searches done under key words like gold, tropical, open pit etc
  - Need both soft and hard copy of documents. The difficulty of downloading large documents using Africa’s very slow internet connections was emphasised.
  - Content – need to include very clear definitions of terminology and concepts. Procedures should be practical, clear and specific. Include more practical examples and case studies. Potential case studies noted include Rwanda’s peatland exploitation, and Tanzania’s difficulties in applying the existing directives due to corruption.
  - Urgency – very urgent need for such guidance.
  - Language – guidance should be available in the official business language of the country.



### ***Training courses and training needs:***

Training – not aware of any training which specifically addresses extractive industries in relation to wetland impacts, but all agreed that this would be a major need, for all groups including mining regulators, environmental practitioners, people reviewing EIA etc.

### **3.4 Work session 3: Regional networking**

The objectives of the work session on building the STRP Network in the Africa Region were:

- To brief workshop participants on current work and activities under the STRP Thematic Work Area on Regional Networking.
- To discuss and identify the needs and obstacles faced by STRP National Focal Points in carrying on their role and responsibilities.
- To identify best ways to improve communication and engagement of STRP African National Focal Points and other experts in the region with the STRP.
- To identify wetland-related emerging and ongoing priority issues in the Africa region to be addressed by the STRP work in the next cycle.

To facilitate the discussion, participants were asked to address the following three questions:

- 1. How STRP NFPs and other Experts would like STRP to communicate and engage with them?*
- 2. What could STRP NFPs and other Experts do better to support STRP and their Ramsar Administrative Authority?*
- 3. What are the wetland-related emerging or ongoing issues in their country or region that would require to be addressed as work priority for future STRP work?*

### **Summary of work session discussions:**

The feedback on the three questions posed to participants during the break out groups highlighted very similar outcomes.

In answering the first question related to improving the communication between STRP and the Focal Points, participants were asked to particularly look back at their own experience with exchanging of information and to list concrete recommendations on existing tools for effective communication.

Participants suggested that:

- emails, social network tools such Facebook and Twitter, as well as sms were considered the best way for STRP to use for day-to-day communication with them, particularly to share ideas and to discuss issues;

- Regional or sub-regional meetings for STRP National Focal Points, should also be organized when the opportunity arises and ideally every year. Workshops such as the one in Johannesburg was in fact seen as an opportunity to discuss broader issues and to build capacity among new comers;
- Visits from STRP members and the Ramsar Secretariat should also be considered as an option for brainstorming sessions and boosting the network;
- Participants also suggested using Skype or teleconferences although recognizing that these require good internet connections and devices;
- The STRP Newsletter was considered a useful tool to them, however someone commented that the English language is often an obstacle and it was suggested that it could be either translated in to French and Spanish or alternatively to have a multi-lingual newsletter where articles are provided in any of the three Convention's languages. It was also stressed that despite requests being made in English, responses from STRP NFPs and other experts are also welcome in French and Spanish;
- A user friendly web-based workspace with access to a database which provides up-to-date links to available wetland tools and guidelines was recommended by some. It was also agreed that a web-based workspace is very useful to share and store documents.

The second question for the working groups aimed at reflecting on how STRP NFPs and the other participants could proactively engage in improving the implementation of the Convention in their countries and support their Ramsar Administrative Authorities.

- STRP National Focal Points agreed that they should play a major role in establishing or reactivating National Ramsar Committees in collaboration with the Administrative Authority and with the engagement of the CEPA Focal Points and wetland stakeholders;
- They also expressed a strong interest in facilitating the communication between STRP and national expertise;

Other areas where participants have indicated willingness to undertake proactive actions are:

- to help organizing events such World Wetlands Day to raise awareness on the importance of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention as well as to provide opportunities for educational and capacity building trainings;
- to identify opportunities to organize regional STRP workshops and also to facilitate fundraising efforts.
- to review scientific and technical documentation under request of STRP and to communicate to them relevant priorities issues by acting as a watch dog for STRP.
- to make the STRP scientific and technical information more user-friendly for key local managers, politicians, and the local community and to translate them to local languages for better dissemination.
- to advise on the designation of Ramsar Sites and to assist the Administrative Authority to fill Ramsar Information Sheets.
- to keep the Administrative Authority informed of the work of the STRP and upcoming draft Resolutions to be considered at the Conference of the Parties.

The third question helped participants to discuss and share views on emerging and ongoing wetland issues in the Africa region that would benefit from future work from the STRP. For each suggested issue, participants were asked to explain why and for whom it was a priority, its background and what it was needed (for instance guidance, governance, training, implementation support, resolution, international collaboration etc.)

The summary of the issues highlighted during the session are reported below without order of priority. Among those, a big proportion is being already addressed by the work of the STRP. Furthermore, participants recognized that some of the listed issues, although critical, were not necessarily viable for STRP to address, whereas for others, specific suggestions of what would be needed were explicitly indicated.

- **Tourism around wetlands** particularly in arid areas is one of the major issues in the Africa region that directly affects people dependent on wetlands - population increase, new infrastructure development for tourists, and lack of awareness lead to over-extraction of water and bad sanitation. Need for guidance, or guide to guidance, on sustainable tourism with best practices and case studies specifically for wetlands.
- Impacts from **extractive industries** – this is a big issue that puts lot of pressure on wetlands and that see developing countries especially affected. Tools available like EIA, management plans are lacking or not implemented. The guide to guidance that is being produced by the STRP is a good first step and needed urgently. Besides that there should be more focus on governance and regulation issues.
- **Urbanization** - unsustainable use and management of wetlands due to bad planning, population growth, encroachment, introduction of alien invasive species, overexploitation of resources (fish, wild life, overgrazing and etc.) and lack of awareness. There is the need for more guidance on the role of local authorities and best practices.
- **Wetland restoration** – many wetlands are polluted, neglected, particularly in the vicinity of settlements and urbanized areas. Better prioritization for restoration activities and better access to available guidance and resources is important.
- **Lack of national wetlands policies or implementation issues** due to lack of political good-will, leadership and dedicated institutions for wetlands conservation. There is need for more guidance for Administrative Authorities, government and civil society on how to improving participatory processes. The guidance should set overarching principles and provide examples and good cases. In addition, funds and access to the right expertise for preparing national policies are also needed.
- **Transboundary wetlands** – many problems arise with the management of shared wetlands, particularly due to the importance of upstream management of catchments. Better policies at river/lake basin level, workshops for information-sharing and capacity building are necessary. Inter-governmental organizations could play an important role to help ensuring good implementation and monitoring. STRP might need to review and perhaps revise the existing Ramsar guidance on international collaboration, to recognize the challenges of managing shared river basins.
- **Lack of wetland inventories and adequate data** - more resources should be invested to increase the capacity to undertake wetland baseline studies and make data accessible to everyone.

- **Economic valuations of wetlands** should receive more attention and be integrated as an essential element within projects and strategies at national and regional level.
- **Institutional memory in Ramsar processes** –ministries and institutions in charge of the Ramsar Convention in the African countries often face too frequent turn over and reshuffle of personnel. These changes lead to a loss of institutional memory of the convention processes due to lack of good handovers and capacity. There is the need to maintain and ensure better continuity and support for participation in Ramsar processes, especially STRP. There is a need for trainings and orientation material for new Focal Points.
- **Lack of synergies at national level** – there is a need to ensure better integration of wetlands into river catchment management plans. Often the river basin community doesn't work closely enough with wetland practitioners. Better policies and better participatory processes are required.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following general recommendations regarding wetland management and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Africa have been distilled out of the various presentations, discussions and working groups. The recommended actions require consideration and implementation by a range of actors including AAs, the Ramsar Secretariat, the global STRP, STRP Regional Networkers and STRP NFPs. A range of immediate follow-up actions were identified upon completion of the Workshop. These are described in Appendix IV.

### 4.1 Recommendations on capacity building and resourcing

- The workshop represented an essential element in integrating and delivering the work of the STRP within Africa. **It is recommended that similar meetings should be repeated on a regular basis.**
- **More funds should be made available to STRP to translate technical guidance in the three working languages of the Convention.**
- **National Ramsar Committees should be established and/or reactivated as a mechanism for good exchange of information** between AA, the Ramsar National Focal Points and other key players such wetland managers and other stakeholders as well as to spread the Convention's tools.
- The volume of work that both the Secretariat and the STRP deliver is considerable, however more is required. **Consequently the provision of additional resource to support the Secretariat staff and STRP is essential.**
- **The Ramsar Administrative Authorities should provide sufficient support, in particular financial support, to enable STRP NFPs to undertake their tasks and to attend other Ramsar meetings.**
- **The Ramsar Secretariat should consider hosting training courses for NFPs** back to back with other Ramsar meetings such pre-COP regional meetings.
- **The STRP Regional Networkers should more actively engage with the STRP NFPs in the regions.**
- **For future regional STRP NFPs meetings, it would be valuable to have representatives of other regions to share views and ideas.**

### 4.2 Recommendations on communication

- Although English is the working language of the STRP, having the workshop in French and English proved to be invaluable; **STRP members and STRP NFPs should make joint efforts to be more operational in the three official languages of the Convention.**
- The Ramsar Convention through their various bodies should find ways to **influence more politicians and other stakeholders on the important benefits (ecosystem services) provided by wetlands.**
- Ramsar **Contracting Parties should work more closely with all those other sectors,** including the less obvious ones such as health, transport and education, whose indirect decisions have an impact on wetlands.

- **A key challenge for the Ramsar Convention and STRP is to produce guidance and advice in a form which will reach and influence politicians and decision-makers.**
- **Communication between the Administrative Authority and the STRP NFP should be improved in terms of quality and frequency.**

#### **4.3 Recommended actions for the African STRP NFPs**

- **STRP NFPs should proactively assist the STRP with readapting and translating key STRP guidance to local context and language.**
- **STRP NFPs should play a key role in running their local National Ramsar Committee.**
- **STRP NFPs should take a proactive role at the national and regional levels in the process of advising the Convention on scientific and technical priorities.**
- **STRP NFPs should play a proactive role in the dissemination of STRP guidance to the appropriate target audiences in their country.**
- **STRP NFPs should assist the global STRP in building a list of scientific research programmes and an associated list of expert contacts within their country.**

#### **4.4 Scientific and technical priorities**

- **Across the African region there is a need to establish more wetlands inventories.**
- **Whilst not confined to one subject area or a single issue, the need to understand the future impact of climate change on wetlands in Africa** underpins the majority of scientific and technical guidance to be produced by the STRP.
- **The Workshop identified the need for a better common understanding of the definition of “wetland”.**
- **More guidance on sustainable tourism around wetlands** is needed to reduce the pressure from water demand particularly in arid areas.
- **Need for more economic evaluation of wetlands** around the region to increase awareness of their values and improve decision-making processes.
- **Better policies** at river/lake basin level, information-sharing and capacity building are needed to improve the management of **transboundary wetlands as well as National Wetland Policies.**
- **Restoration of wetlands, with particular regard to urban areas** is needed.

## APPENDIX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Ramsar Workshop of the STRP National Focal Points in Africa & Other Wetland Experts								
Emperors Palace, Johannesburg, South Africa								
30 November – 2 December 2010								
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## APPENDIX II: ANNOTATED AGENDA

Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2010		Support documents
8.00-9.30	<b>1. Participant Registrations</b>	
9.30-9.50	<b>2. Opening &amp; Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 The Ramsar Administrative Authority of South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs (<i>Ms Wilma Lutsch, Director of Biodiversity Conservation</i>)</li> </ul>	
9.50-10.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.2 The Water Research Commission - WRC (<i>Dr Rivka Kfir, Chief Executive Officer</i>)</li> </ul>	
10.20-10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.3 The Scientific &amp; Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention (<i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i>)</li> </ul>	
10.30-10.50	<b>3. Overview of the workshop process and objectives – Presentation &amp; Questions</b> ( <i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i> )	
10.50-11.10	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	<b>4. Introduction to the Ramsar Convention - Presentations &amp; Questions</b>	
11.10-11.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Global status of the Ramsar Convention. (<i>Ms Cathleen Cybéle, Ramsar Secretariat</i>)</li> </ul>	
11.25-11.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.2 Convention bodies and Processes (<i>Ms Monica Zavagli, STRP Officer, Ramsar Secretariat</i>)</li> </ul>	
11.40-12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.3 The Convention in Africa – status &amp; implementation (<i>Dr Paul Ouedraogo, Ramsar Secretariat</i>)</li> </ul>	
	<b>5. Wetland issues in the Africa region - presentations &amp; discussion</b>	<a href="#"><u>Presentation Outline</u></a>
12.00-12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Eastern Africa perspective (Professor Kassim Kulindwa, STRP invited Expert)</li> </ul>	
12.30-13.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.2 Northern Africa perspective (Mr Denis Landenbergue, Wetlands manager, WWF International)</li> </ul>	

13.00-14.15	<i>Lunch</i>		
	<b>6. STRP 2009-2012 work plan - presentations &amp; discussion:</b>		<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note Agenda item 6.1</u></a>
14.15-14.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Overview of the STRP work plan for 2009-2012 cycle, priorities &amp; process leading up to COP11. (<i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i>)</li> </ul>		
14.50-15.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.2 STRP priority issues for COP11: 6.2.1 Restoration guidance (Mr Rob McInnes, <i>STRP expert</i>)</li> </ul>		<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note Agenda item 6.2.1</u></a>
15.45-16.00	<b>6 bis. “Who is a Wetland Manager” exercise.</b> ( <i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i> )		
16.00-16.30	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16.30-17.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.2 STRP priority issues for COP11: 6.2.2 Revision of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) &amp; Strategic Framework. (<i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i>)</li> </ul>		<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note- Agenda item 6.2.2</u></a>
	<b>7. Ramsar’s International Organization Partners (IOPs):</b>		
17.00-17.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 How the IOPs support the Convention at global, regional and national level: the case of WWF (<i>Denis Landenbergue, WWF International</i>)</li> </ul>		
17.30-18.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.2 Wetlands and Livelihoods (<i>Dr Lisa Rebelo, International Water Management Institute - IWMI</i>)</li> </ul>		<a href="#"><u>Presentation Abstract</u></a>
18.00-18.30	<b>8. The status of research on wetland ecology, management and conservation in South Africa</b> ( <i>Dr Heather Malan, University of Cape Town</i> )		<a href="#"><u>Presentation Abstract</u></a>
18.30-19:15	<i>Break</i>		
19.15-19.30	Results & brief discussion of “Who is a Wetland Manager” exercise (Mr Rob McInnes, <i>STRP expert</i> )		
19.30	<b>Welcome dinner host by the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa</b>		



<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010</b>		<b>Support documents</b>
	<b>9. Wetland issues in the Africa region - presentations &amp; discussion</b>	
9.00-9.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1 Identification and Mapping National Freshwater Ecosystems Priority Areas (wetlands) in South Africa (Miss Namhla Mbona, South African Institute of Biodiversity - SANBI)</li> </ul>	
9.30-10.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.2 Rwanda, a case study on wetland governance and its impacts on urban city planning (Dr Paul Ouedraogo, Senior Adviser for Africa, Ramsar Secretariat)</li> </ul>	
10.00-10.20	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10.20-13.00	<b>10. Work session1: Urban and Peri-Urban Wetlands</b> (Mr Rob McInnes, STRP task lead)	<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note-agenda item10</u></a>
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14.00-16.00	<b>11. Work session2: Wetlands &amp; extractives industries</b> (Dr Heather MacKay, STRP task lead)	<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note-agenda item11</u></a>
16.00-16.25	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16.25-17.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetlands &amp; Extractives industries work session continues</li> </ul>	
17.15-17.30	<i>Break</i>	
17.30-17.50	<b>12. African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement-AEWA. presentation &amp; discussion</b> (Ms Evelyn Moloko, AEWA Secretariat )	
17.50-18.30	<b>13. Capacity building, conservation and management of migratory waterbirds and their flyways in the African-Eurasian Region - presentation &amp; discussion</b> (Mr Oliver Nasirwa, Wetland International)	<a href="#"><u>Presentation Abstract</u></a>

<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010</b>		<b>Support documents</b>
9.00-10.15	<b>14. Work session3: building the STRP Network in the Africa Region</b> ( <i>Ms Monica Zavagli, task lead</i> )	<a href="#"><u>Briefing Note-agenda item14</u></a>
10.15-10.40	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10.40-11.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Work session on STRP Network continues</li> </ul>	
11.30-12.20	<b>15. Wrap up discussion &amp; Summary of Recommendations</b> ( <i>Dr Heather MacKay, STRP Chair</i> )	
12.20-12.30	<b>16. Closure of the workshop</b>	
13.00-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.30 – 18.30	<b>17. Field Trip</b> - <i>more information to come.</i>	

Speakers' Biographies can be found [here](#)

## APPENDIX III: BRIEFING NOTES

### Briefing Note for agenda item 6.1:

#### Overview of the STRP work plan for the 2009-2012 cycle, priorities and process leading up to COP11

#### 1. Objectives of Agenda item 6.1

The objectives under this agenda item are to help participants understand:

- i). how the STRP functions,
- ii). what the STRP work priorities are, and how future work priorities will be established;
- iii). how STRP National Focal Points can support and participate in the work of the STRP.

#### 2. Content

In order to achieve these objectives, we will:

- i). Provide a brief overview of how the STRP functions, how STRP work priorities are set, and how the STRP works with other bodies of the Convention as well as with other international processes and organizations;
- ii). Introduce and discuss the current STRP work plan for the 2009-2012 cycle, and highlight particular priority issues on which the STRP is focusing its resources in this cycle. This will include discussion of how the STRP National Focal Points can assist in delivery of our current work plan.
- iii). Explain and discuss the STRP schedule of work and the process leading up to 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP11), scheduled for 2012, as well as the STRP involvement in the deliberations and decision-making at the COP11 meeting itself.

#### 3. Background materials

As background materials for this agenda item, participants are referred to the following documents:

- i). The composition and functions of the STRP are described in the STRP *modus operandi*, which can be found in the Annex to Resolution X.9<sup>6</sup>. This Annex also lists the current group of observer organizations who participate in STRP meetings and processes.
- ii). A description of the terms of reference for STRP National Focal Points can also be found in the above-mentioned Annex to Resolution X.9. Participants may also wish to study the short Ramsar brochure on the roles of National Focal Points in Convention processes generally.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_09\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_09_e.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about\\_nfp\\_2007\\_e1.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about_nfp_2007_e1.pdf)

- iii). The updated version of the STRP's 2009-2012 Work Plan<sup>9</sup> contains a description of each task in the plan and an indication of the current status of each task. Tasks in the work plan are grouped according to our 10 Thematic Work Areas.
- iv). If you are not familiar with how the STRP work plans are developed in each triennium, you may find it helpful to first read the STRP report to COP10<sup>10</sup>, which provides an overview of the Panel's thematic work areas in the previous 2005-2008 cycle, and indicates what we considered would be priorities for STRP attention in the current 2009-2012 cycle.
- v). The STRP report to the 41<sup>st</sup> Standing Committee meeting<sup>11</sup> provides an overview of progress with our work up to March 2010, following our mid-term workshops.
- vi). The above-mentioned STRP report to SC41 contains an annex (Annex 3) which sets out a list of STRP products proposed for delivery in this cycle, including those which must be completed in time for submission to the COP11. Products include:
- COP11 Draft Resolutions;
  - COP11 Draft Resolutions with annexed scientific and technical guidance;
  - COP11 Information Papers (COP11 DOCs.);
  - *Ramsar Technical Reports*;
  - STRP Technical Advisory Notes/Briefing Notes; and
  - Other types of product (such as papers published in scientific journals)

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about\\_nfp\\_2007\\_e2.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about_nfp_2007_e2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> STRP work Plan <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/STRPworkplanMarch2010.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> STRP report to COP10 [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop10-10th-meeting-of-the-19370/main/ramsar/1-31-58-127%5E19370\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop10-10th-meeting-of-the-19370/main/ramsar/1-31-58-127%5E19370_4000_0)

<sup>11</sup> STRP report to SC41 [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520_4000_0)

## **Briefing Note for agenda item 6.2.1:**

### **Ramsar Wetland Restoration Guidance**

#### **Objectives of the discussion on Ramsar Wetland Restoration Guidance**

- To brief meeting participants on the progress with the task and deliverables
- To exchange information and participants assistance with the Task

#### **1. Task Description**

Under Task 9.2 of the STRP Work Plan, the STRP was asked to:

“Prepare proposals for updating and expanding existing Ramsar guidance on restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands, in the context of Resolution X.16<sup>12</sup> on A Framework for processes of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character, including approaches to prioritization and links with other Ramsar tools and guidance, inter alia those on climate change and on economic values of ecosystem services.”

#### **2. Background and Update on activities**

A recent review of Ramsar’s wetland restoration guidance was undertaken. The Review concluded that:

- Over half of the Ramsar Contracting Parties are currently using the existing guidance.
- Guidance is currently being applied to a range of wetland types and to address a variety of drivers.
- Restoration is being used as a response option under a range of scenarios.
- No single end-user has been identified for the guidance.
- The guidance in its current format contains much useful and good quality information and addresses the essential elements expected within restoration guidance.
- The guidance currently provides a generic approach to wetland restoration rather than specific end-user targeted guidance.

The utility of the current guidance depends on several factors including:

- The background and level of understanding of the end-user.
- The application for which the guidance is being applied.
- The relevance of specific case studies or examples.
- The explicit or implicit nature of the linkages with other Ramsar guidance or documents.
- The wider understanding and appreciation of an end-user of the available Ramsar documentation.

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<sup>12</sup> Resolution X.16 [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_16\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_16_e.pdf)

In terms of progressing the work on Ramsar's guidance on wetland restoration the following key issues are raised:

- a. Have any of you used the Ramsar wetland restoration guidance?
- b. What other wetland restoration guidance has been utilised?
- c. Is there existing guidance specific to certain wetland types?
- d. Is there guidance on the prioritisation of sites at a national or regional level?
- e. Are there good examples of wetland restoration within your country?

The Restoration Team has prepared a **Questionnaire** to identify information relevant to other existing guidance, expertise and examples of restoration projects.

If you think you can contribute, please fill it in and send it back to us.

The questionnaire can be downloaded [here](#).

Feel free to pass the questionnaire on to colleagues and associates if they are better placed to respond.

### **Briefing Note for agenda item 6.2.2:**

#### **Revision of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for Ramsar Sites, and revision of the Strategic Framework**

This work combines three tasks in the STRP current work plan for 2009-2012, namely tasks 8.4, 4.5 and 8.3.

The work on these tasks supports a proposal from the STRP for restructuring the way in which information on Ramsar sites is delivered into Convention processes, for the purposes of site designation, monitoring and reporting on change in ecological character of sites, and wetland inventory amongst others.

After 40 years of operation and somewhat incremental development of Convention processes, there is now a great need for consolidation and rationalization of several processes related to information flow within the Convention. This intention is to clarify the information gathering and reporting related to these processes for Parties, and to ensure that the information which they collect on Ramsar sites is useful not only to the wetland managers and policy makers within the country, but also to the Convention's implementation processes at regional and global levels.

During 2010, the following consultations have occurred:

- The STRP working group on this topic developed a short questionnaire to seek information about the experience of Contracting Parties and others in completing the current Ramsar Information Sheet. This asked for feedback on the experience of completing sheets, especially about which elements work well, and which could be improved. This questionnaire was circulated to a selection of Contracting Parties in all regions with recent experience of completion of sheets. A range of very valuable responses were submitted from all Ramsar regions which were very helpful.
- Meetings were held with Secretariat staff in June to review the responses to the questionnaire, and derive an improved structure for the information sheet both in the light of suggestions made, and the outcomes from the STRP mid-term workshop.
- A first draft proposed format was circulated for comment within the STRP working group at the end of June.
- A second draft – revised in the light of initial comments from the STRP – was again circulated to the working group and relevant Secretariat staff in October, and was thoroughly reviewed during a workshop on 2 & 3 November in Gland. This meeting also considered a first draft of a revised Strategic Framework document – which aims to consolidate the associated guidance for selection of sites and completion of the information sheet.



- It is intended that the information sheet and Strategic Framework – further revised in the light of the detailed comments made at the November workshop - will be circulated for comment to STRP and others prior to discussion by the full STRP in February 2011.

## **Background information:**

### **Annex 4 from the STRP Report to SC41<sup>13</sup>**

#### **“Development of guidance for Ramsar site selection, data and information needs, and options for RIS revision”**

1. COP10 requested the STRP to undertake a number of tasks related to the Convention’s guidance on selection and designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) and its needs for data and information at the point of designation. These tasks include:
  - a) a review of the consistency, logic and clarity of the targets and guidelines that support Ramsar’s site selection criteria,
  - b) seeking the views of users of this guidance;
  - c) a review of options for revising the format of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) in order to ensure linkages and synergies with other Ramsar instruments to collect and report data and information on listed sites; and
  - d) further consideration of data and information needs related to the description of ecological character at the point of designation (and assessment of potential change thereafter).
2. In view of the significant linkages in the nature of these tasks, they are being undertaken together in an integrated manner in order to harmonize the relevant technical guidances and to avoid, as far as possible, the risk of needing any further future changes.
3. STRP are working to the principle of trying to simplify the guidance associated with the site selection Criteria, ‘repackaging’ the various existing agreed guidances which have developed separately over time and accordingly have a degree of unnecessary overlap. A further principle being adopted is to ensure that guidances and proposals reflect the very variable extent of data and information on sites available in different countries. The scientific ‘ideal’ may simply be impracticable in some developing countries owing to resource and other constraints. STRP are accordingly exploring hierarchical approaches to some aspects of guidance that recognize that some countries are less ‘data-rich’ than others.
4. A central need, repeatedly expressed by Contracting Parties and others, is to have an unambiguous description of ecological character at the point of designation which can act as a baseline description. STRP work has shown that a significant amount of the

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<sup>13</sup> STRP report to SC41 [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-strp-rpt/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E24520_4000_0)

data and information used with the Convention's Ecological Character Description Sheet (as defined in Resolution X.15) can be delivered by the Ramsar Information Sheet. Ensuring that the RIS delivers the necessary information on ecological character has the advantages of:

- a) reducing reporting burdens by seeking to collect data once that has utility for several different processes;
- b) ensuring that data collected at the point of designation much better defines ecological character against which future changes of site status can be assessed; and
- c) determining the potential use of data collected at the point of designation (and updates thereof) for other MEA reporting processes, still to be explored in detail.

5. Specifically, the STRP has proposed that:

- a) The existing guidance on the completion of the RIS within the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the development of the Ramsar list is merged and consolidated to produce a single supporting document that will provide the necessary information on all aspects of the process of Ramsar site identification and designation;
- b) This new document will largely comprise existing adopted guidance, but re-ordered, better structured and with duplication removed so as to be more easily understood by Contracting Parties and other users. It will also bring together a range of other guidance agreed by Ramsar into this single document and will more coherently integrate links with the Ecological Character Description Sheet adopted in Resolution X.15;
- c) Emphasis will be given to simplifying the guidance and providing worked examples and illustrative case-studies which may further help those compiling (or revising) Ramsar Information Sheets;
- d) It is aimed to provide a more consistent structuring for the guidance associated with each Criterion. This will probably follow the following model:

***Criterion X***

*What this criterion is seeking to achieve?*

*How to interpret this criterion – what does it mean?*

*What data and information is needed to apply this criterion?*

*Potential ambiguities/pitfalls in applying this criterion*

*Where to go for further help or information*

- e) There will be the need for additional guidance associated with some Criteria where the current explanations are limited or ambiguous.

## **Briefing Note for agenda item 10:**

### **Urban & Peri-Urban Wetlands**

#### **Objectives of the work session on Urban and peri-Urban Wetlands**

The Workshop represents a further stage in an on-going and evolving process. Building on the key findings of the Naivasha Workshop, the mid-term STRP workshops, the CBD COP10 and the City Biodiversity Summit the following objectives have been identified for this Workshop:

- Brief participants on the objectives and progress to date.
- Discuss the issues relating to urban and peri-urban wetlands.
- Discuss and scope out solutions to the planning and management of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments.
- Discuss and draft the overarching principles to urban development, biodiversity and wetland management and scope out broad terms of reference for urban planning guidance.

#### **Program for the work session**

### **1. Introduction to Urban Wetland issues and task work**

#### **1.1 Current task description**

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention in Changwon, in October 2008, the parties adopted Resolution X.27 on Wetlands and Urbanization<sup>14</sup>.

In the light of advice from Contracting Parties through their STRP National Focal Points on issues concerning urban wetlands and peri-urban wetlands that would benefit from additional scientific and technical guidance, The STRP was requested to consider the preparation of guidance for Contracting Parties and consider ways to disseminate information to Contracting Parties on managing urban and peri-urban wetlands, in accordance with an ecosystem approach, and taking into account issues such as climate change, ecosystem services, food production, human health and livelihoods.

The STRP 2009-2012 Work Plan<sup>15</sup> approved by the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee in May 2009 and updated in March 2010, is built around ten different Thematic Work Areas (TWAs) under which, Term of Reference for a number of tasks are defined and prioritized.

Task 2.7 under the TWA2 of the Work Plan defines the scope of work required for developing guidance for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands.

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<sup>14</sup> Resolution X.27 [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_27\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_27_e.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> STRP Work Plan 2009-2012 <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/STRPworkplanMarch2010.pdf>

## 1.2 Update on activities

In November 2009 an Expert Workshop was held in Naivasha, Kenya, hosted by UN HABITAT and co-supported by the Ramsar Convention to initiate the development of guidance on urban development, biodiversity and wetland management. You can find the report [here](#)<sup>16</sup>.

A follow up workshop was held in Gland during the STRP Mid-Term Workshops in February 2010. The outcomes of this session are reflected in the STRP mid Term Report<sup>17</sup>.

Since the STRP Mid-Term Workshops progress has been made on a draft resolution and a supporting annex. Secretariat staff and the Task Lead have also been liaising with key collaborators from UN HABITAT, CBD, ICLEI and STRP IOPs to investigate future synergies and opportunities. This has included taking an active role in side events during the CBD COP1- in Nagoya and the contributing to the Nagoya/Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity<sup>18</sup> which charged the Governor of Aichi Prefecture and the Major of Nagoya to present this key statement at the High Level Segment of the CBD COP for consideration by all the parties.

## 1.2 Summary of key findings from Naivasha Workshop

The Workshop held in Naivasha, Kenya, generated a huge amount of information exchange and brought together experts from both the wetland and the urban sectors. The Workshop identified the need for more intelligent urban planning policy development, including development frameworks and spatial zonation to protect ecosystem services, and in particular those performed by wetlands, and to address water management issues at the appropriate scale.

The benefits of stakeholder participation and empowerment, both in problem setting and problem solving, to delivering sustainable cities, were seen as currently lacking but essential to future successes. Any guidance produced should address the issue of adequate and appropriate stakeholder involvement.

A significant barrier to developing and implementing more innovative and cross-cutting policies was the failure within the planning sector to ensure the provision of adequate institutional capacity for policy development and delivery.

The Workshop acknowledged that the multi-functional role that wetlands can play was not always recognized or even considered within urban planning. The importance of considering wetlands as **water management infrastructure** rather than 'nature reserves' was emphasized. The broad utility of wetlands was not fully appreciated and understood by many participants from the planning sector.

The Workshop re-emphasized the need to consider the wise use of wetlands both within and beyond urban boundaries and understand the interconnectivity of watershed-scale issues. A

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<sup>16</sup> Report of Naivasha workshop:

[http://www.wetlands.org/strp/cfforum/fileattachments/ExpertWorkshopReport\\_RM\\_VFFINAL.pdf](http://www.wetlands.org/strp/cfforum/fileattachments/ExpertWorkshopReport_RM_VFFINAL.pdf)

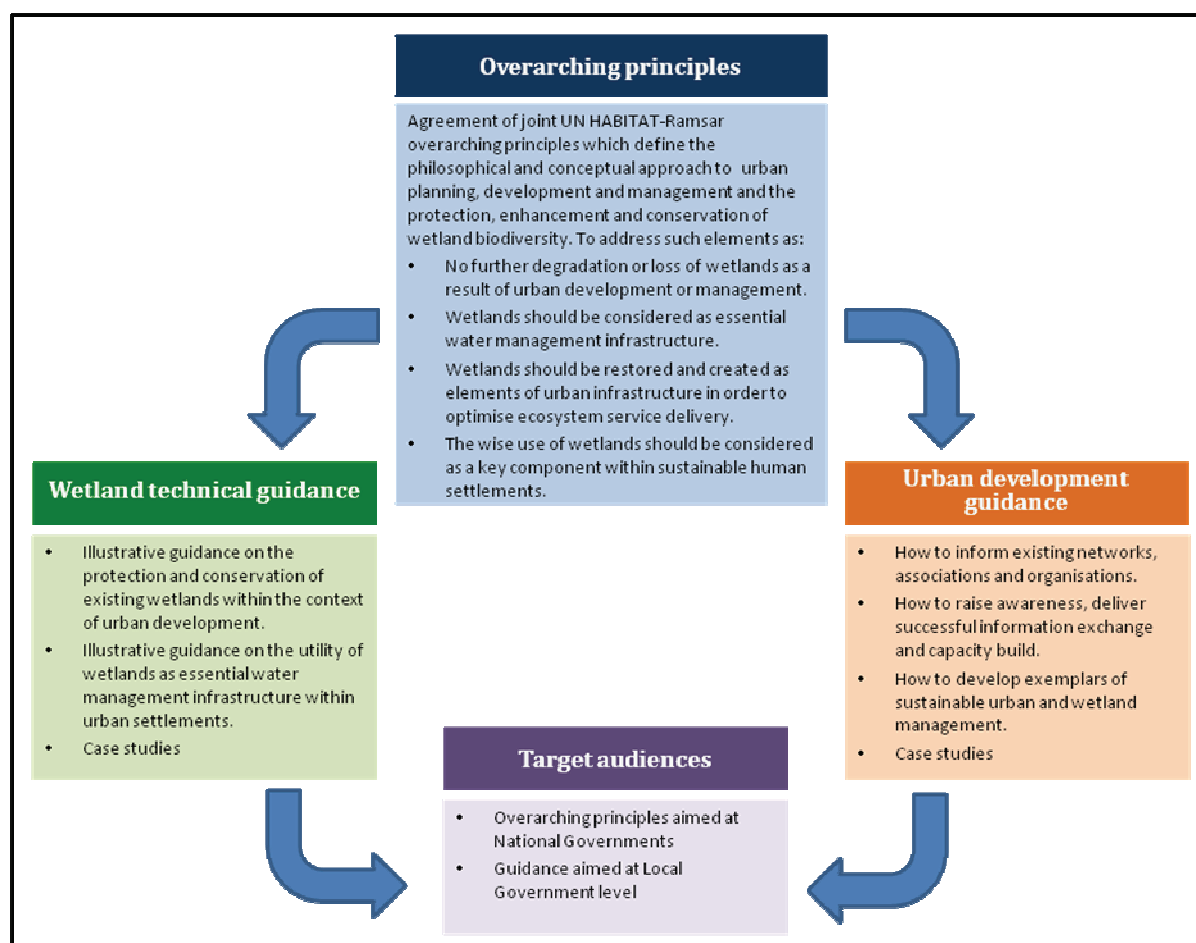
<sup>17</sup> STRP midterm workshops [http://www Ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp\\_workshop2010\\_report.pdf](http://www Ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp_workshop2010_report.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Aichi/Nagoya Declaration <http://www.cop10.jp/citysummit/english/images/top/declaration.pdf>

key challenge to planners is to develop policies which address factors that extend beyond municipal boundaries. These issues have been integrated into a new conceptual paradigm which identifies linkages between the two areas of interest in order to deliver sustainable urban development and the wise use of wetlands (see below).

A range of other issues and concepts were also considered as part of the final report. Potentially all of these have a role to play in the delivery of more integrated and sustainable urban development. These include: ecological and water footprints; mitigation banking; payment for ecosystem services; the ecosystem approach; strategic environmental assessments; green building evaluation and labeling; integrated constructed wetlands; working wetland potential; and carbon management.

An approach to developing guidance was discussed and outlined. The proposed way forward was to establish overarching principles which set the policy framework for subsequent guidance. Below the overarching principles parallel workstreams are proposed to develop specific guidance from the perspectives of urban development and wetland management. The overarching principles need to reflect the collective philosophies of both Ramsar and UN HABITAT. The suggested approach is presented in the schematic below.



## 2. Breakout groups

Participants will break into smaller groups to discuss and respond to the following questions:

Based on your experiences can we define the problem? (30 minutes)

1- Drivers, 2- Impacts, 3- Barriers

Based on your experiences can we define the solution? (30 minutes)

1- Hypothetical, 2- Theoretical, 3- Best practice examples

## **5. Report back from groups to plenary**

In your breakout group, please appoint a person to record the outcomes of the group discussion and to present the group findings/recommendations.

Group reports back should be no longer than 10 minutes

## **Briefing Note for agenda item 11:**

### **Work session on wetlands and extractive industries**

#### **Objectives of the work session on Wetlands and Extractive Industries**

- To brief meeting participants on issues, task progress and deliverables
- To identify additional information sources for the flyway vulnerability assessment methodology
- To discuss and identify possible needs for additional guidance on managing impacts of extractives industries on wetlands.
- To discuss and identify possible training and information needs for wetlands managers, extractives sector policy makers & decision makers.

#### **Program for the work session**

##### **1. Introduction to extractives issues and task work (Dr Heather MacKay, task lead)**

###### **1.1 Current task description**

In the current STRP Work Plan, work on wetlands and extractive industries is principally contained under Task 2.3. This task is being conducted jointly with the Technical Committee of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA-TC), since AEWA members are equally concerned about the potential for increased impacts of extractive industries on wetlands and other important sites on international waterbird migratory routes and flyways within the AEWA area.

There are two deliverables for the extractive industries task as it is currently formulated:

- A. A low-cost flyway-scale methodology for identifying sites/areas, especially wetlands, likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of the extraction of minerals and other geological resources.
- B. A guide to available technical guidance on assessing, avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impacts of extractive industries on wetlands.

###### **1.2 Background to the development of guidance related to extractive industries**

Concerns regarding the increasingly widespread impacts upon wetlands of mining and extractive industries were raised by Ramsar Senior Regional Advisers at the mid-term meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in March 2007. It was noted that Latin American as well as African Contracting Parties were asking for scientific and technical guidance related to the impacts of mining in and around wetlands. A briefing paper was commissioned by the STRP, to provide an overview of current and future trends in the mining/extraction sector, in order to help clarify the manner in which the STRP could potentially best provide scientific and technical support for Parties in addressing this sectoral issue.

During and immediately after the STRP mid-term meeting, the discussion centered around oil and gas exploration and exploitation, but it became clear from the briefing paper that all sectors of the mining industry, including precious metals, base metals, industrial minerals and coal, are expected to continue on rapid growth paths, leading to increasing potential for impacts on wetland ecosystems.

The key background documents related to STRP work on this task are:

- The briefing paper on wetlands and extractive industries, which was later tabled as an Information Document at COP10<sup>19</sup>;
- Resolution X.26<sup>20</sup> on Wetlands and Extractive Industries, which sets out the Parties' positions and concerns in this area, and established this as a priority work area for the STRP in the 2009-2012 cycle.

It should be noted that STRP task 2.4 in our 2009-2012 work plan (Wetlands and energy issues) also addresses some aspects of extractive industries, specifically those associated with energy production, including oil and gas, coal and nuclear fuels, and peat.

## **2. Extractive industries task 2.3A: flyway-scale vulnerability assessment methodology (Dr Heather MacKay, task lead)**

Task terms of reference (from 2009-2012 STRP work plan): *Develop and test, on a selected flyway, a possible vulnerability assessment framework that incorporates information from mapped mineral resources for selected commodities, economic & political risk assessments for the flyway area from mining industry information, WOW critical sites information for waterbirds (as a surrogate for wetlands information).*

At the work session, the results of pilot testing of the methodology will be presented for discussion. The pilot test was conducted for selected mineral commodities (gold and uranium), with a focus on the flyway area for the Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopus minor*.

The project team would appreciate the assistance of STRP National Focal Points in providing additional data to “ground-truth” the methodology in African countries, and we refer you to the questions in Table 1 below. We would be grateful if you could communicate with colleagues in your country to provide information against these questions. A worksheet based on these questions will be distributed at the work session.

## **3. Extractive industries task 2.3B: guide to available guidance (Dr Kym Morton, STRP expert)**

Task terms of reference: *Review available technical guidance on assessing, avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on wetlands in the exploration, development, operation, closure and post-closure phases, taking into account the potential for adoption of new or emerging extraction technologies and paying*

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<sup>19</sup>COP10.DOC24 [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop10-10th-meeting-of-the-19302/main/ramsar/1-31-58-127%5E19302\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-cops-cop10-10th-meeting-of-the-19302/main/ramsar/1-31-58-127%5E19302_4000_0)

<sup>20</sup> Resolution X.26 [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_26\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_26_e.pdf)



*particular attention to restoration options. On the basis of this review, to make recommendations regarding the suitability of available technical guidance and the need, if any, for development of new technical guidance.*

At the work session, the results of the review of available guidance will be presented and discussed. The project team have attempted to identify as many as possible of the relevant technical guidance documents in use around the world for managing the impacts of mining and extractive industries on wetlands. These guidelines were reviewed and rated for their relevance and usefulness.

In order to ensure that our review is as thorough as possible, we would appreciate inputs from work session participants to provide additional information and guidance that may be relevant and useful. It is particularly important to be able to find and share guidance in languages other than English.

Accordingly, we refer you to the questions in Table 2 below, and ask that you communicate with colleagues in your country to provide information against these questions. A worksheet based on these questions will be distributed at the work session.

#### **4. Breakout groups**

Participants will break into smaller groups to discuss and provide recommendations on:

- iii). Training and information needs related to managing the impacts on wetlands of extractive industries, aimed at wetland site managers, wetland policy makers, EIA and licensing decision-makers.
- iv). Suitability of available technical guidance and the need, if any, for development of new technical guidance, whether:
  - for specific sub-sectors of the extractive industries sector overall, such as oil and gas, precious and industrial metals, industrial minerals, or
  - for specific phases of the extractives cycle (including exploration, development and operation, closure and post-closure), or
  - for certain sizes of operations (including artisanal, small to medium scale commercial, or large-scale commercial).

#### **5. Report back from groups to plenary**

In your breakout group, please appoint a person to record the outcomes of the group discussion and to present the group findings/recommendations. Group reports back should be no longer than 10 minutes.

**Table 1: Additional information for the flyway-scale vulnerability assessment methodology**

Information sources for extractive industries	
1. Geospatial information for locating extractive industrial activities in your country:	
1.1 Is there a registry or repository where records of mining and extractive industries licenses or permits are stored? If yes, please provide name of responsible Ministry, Department or Institute, and name and address of a suitable contact person there.	
1.2 Is there a publicly available database that could provide the geospatial data to locate extractive activities, whether exploration, current operation, or sites already closed? If yes, please provide name of responsible Ministry, Department or Institute, and name and address of a suitable contact person there.	

**Table 2 : Additional information for the review of technical guidance**

Information sources for extractive industries technical guidance	
1. Regulation of extractive industries in your country:	
1.1 Is there a single Ministry, Department or Institute responsible for approving permits for extractive industries? If yes, please provide name of the Ministry, Department or Institute, including the name and address of a suitable contact person there.	
1.2 Is there a law or regulation governing the approval and licensing or permitting of extractive industries? If yes, please provide reference information, including full title and document number, and an internet download address if possible.	
1.3 Is there a law or regulation governing the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment procedures in relation to extractive industries ? If yes, please provide reference information, including full title and document number, and an internet download address if possible.	
1.4 Are there separate approval, permitting and enforcement mechanisms for artisanal extractive industries ? If yes, please provide reference information, including reference to appropriate policies, laws and regulations, and to responsible Ministries, Departments or Institutes.	
2. Technical guidance in use in your country	
2.1 Is there technical guidance available in your country for managing the impacts of extractive industries on ecosystems?	
If yes, does the guidance, in part or in its entirety specifically relate to wetland ecosystems, and in what language is the guidance presented ? <sup>21</sup>	
2.2 Has the guidance been developed in-country and adopted as part of policy, regulations or laws related to extractive industries?	

<sup>21</sup> Note the Ramsar definition of wetlands is “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres”.

If the answer to question 2.2 is yes, please provide reference information, including reference to relevant laws, regulations or policies.	
If the answer to question 2.2 is no, and guidance from other sources such as international organizations or other countries is being used, please provide reference information, including full title of the guidance, source of guidance, internet download address if possible.	

## **Briefing Note for agenda item 14:**

### **Building the STRP Network in the Africa Region**

#### **Objectives of the work session on building the STRP Network in the Africa Region**

- To brief workshop participants on current work and activities under the STRP Thematic Work Area on Regional Networking.
- To discuss and identify the needs and obstacles faced by STRP National Focal Points.
- To identify best ways to strengthen the role of the STRP National Focal Point at National Level.
- To identify best ways to improve communication and engagement of STRP African National Focal Points and other experts in the region with the STRP.
- To identify emerging issues and work priorities in the Africa region to be addressed by the STRP work in the next cycle.

#### **Program for the work session**

##### **1. Background information**

###### **i) the Role of STRP National Focal Point (NFP)**

The “figure” of STRP National Focal Point was established to support the work of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel to ensure that Contracting Parties’ needs and priorities are addressed in the guidance that STRP produces and to facilitate STRP to get access to the best expertise available in the regions.

The Appendix of Resolution X.9<sup>22</sup> illustrates the Terms of Reference and the skills profile of the STRP NFP. In a sentence, the STRP NFP is an acknowledged and committed wetland technical expert from either government or other organization able to work in English, with access to internet and appointed by the Ramsar Administrative Authority.

The role of the STRP National Focal Point is:

- to provide input and support to the implementation of the Work Plan of the STRP;
- to provide advice to the STRP on national and regional wetlands issues;
- to act as liaison person between STRP and the other expertise in the country;
- to assist the Ramsar Administrative Authority with STRP matters (including briefing them on scientific and technical issues, Resolutions and other documents in preparation of the Ramsar COP11.)
- to involve in Ramsar processes within the Contracting Party (including participating in any National Ramsar or Wetland Committee or Ramsar Advisory Missions )
- disseminate Ramsar and STRP information;

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<sup>22</sup> Resolution X.9 [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_09\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_09_e.pdf)

You might also want to look at the Ramsar Brochure “Delivering the Ramsar Convention in your country”<sup>2324</sup> which provides a very synthetic overview of the Convention Processes and explain the Role of the Administrative Authority, the CEPA Governmental and non-Gov. NFP as well as the role of STRP NFP.

The list of the STRP National Focal Points in the world can be found [here](#).

## ii) How the Scientific & Technical Review Panel works

The STRP meet once a year in Gland, Switzerland. In the first meeting of the cycle, the Panel focus particularly on building the precise terms of reference for each of the tasks of what will form the STRP work plan<sup>25</sup>, to set timelines, task priorities, budget requirements, to identify task leads, roles and responsibilities. Mid-term meetings are instead used to substantially progress and/or finalize tasks and to review work priorities.

Beside these annual appointments, most of the STRP work takes place electronically via email, but principally through the STRP Support Service<sup>26</sup>, a web-based work space organized in different forums ordered by Thematic Work Areas that allows subscribed members to carry on discussions related to various task, as well as general matters and to share documents.

All STRP members, all STRP NFPs, STRP Observer Organization representatives and other wetland experts are subscribed to the STRP Support Service.

One of the STRP task for this triennium is to prepare recommendations for the redevelopment of a more user-friendly STRP electronic work space to better facilitate the work of the Panel and to better meet users ‘needs. As many of you might have seen, an online survey was recently circulated among the Support Service Users for this purpose. You can find the link to the survey [here](#). (You still have time until the 10<sup>th</sup> December to complete it!)

## 2. Introduction to the STRP Regional Networking

The current STRP work Plan has a dedicated Thematic Work Area (TWA1) on “Regional Networking” that was established in order to continue to strengthen the role and participation of STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) in the work of the Panel.

In particular, six STRP members are currently appointed with the role of Regional Networkers for the six Ramsar Regions (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania), acting as liaison person between the Panel, the STRP NFPs and other expertise in the Regions. The Scientific and Technical Officer at the Ramsar Convention Secretariat also provides support with the communication between the Panel Members and the STRP NFPs.

### i). Current task description and activities

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<sup>23</sup> Ramsar brochure 1st part [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about\\_nfp\\_2007\\_e1.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about_nfp_2007_e1.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Ramsar brochure 2nd part [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about\\_nfp\\_2007\\_e2.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/about/about_nfp_2007_e2.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> STRP updated Work Plan <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/STRPworkplanMarch2010.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> STRP Support Service [http://www.wetlands.org/\\_strp/](http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/)

The Thematic Work Area on Regional Networking (TWA1) proposed under Task n. 1.3 “support and network development” a list of actions and activities for this triennium aimed at engaging more effectively and enhancing the frequency of regular contacts with the Network of the STRP NFPs.

The pro forma for this task can be found in the current STRP work Plan;

Among the activities undertaken:

- Since July 2009 a quarterly STRP Newsletter is sent with the purpose of maintained informed the STRP Family on progress with the various STRP tasks and to share other relevant information; articles or announcement contributions from STRP NFPs would be very welcome, although so far these have been seldom.
- New appointed STRP NFPs now received a more structured set of information and support material that should assist them in fulfilling their role.
- An STRP NFP Appointment form and Expertise form were developed and introduced to assist the Administrative Authorities to identify suitable individuals, to establish a better link between the two entities as well as for the Panel to gather information on the expertise of the STRP NFPs.
- A special STRP website is being developed to provide a more friendly interface with FAQs, easy-to-find information and updates for each of the Thematic Work Area as well as an area dedicated to the “requests for contribution” to STRP tasks.

It should be noted that TWA1 deals with the “mechanisms” to make the STRP Network more efficient, whereas it’s under each of the nine other Thematic Work Areas that the input of the STRP National Focal Points in a form or the other is sought. Frequently the “calls” for STRP NFPs’ contributions are direct requests for providing Case Studies, to fill in an online survey, a questionnaire, or to provide advice on relevant expertise in the country.

Resolution X.9<sup>27</sup> requested the STRP and Secretariat to identify opportunities and mechanisms for holding intersessional regional or sub-regional meetings of STRP National Focal Points.

In 2007 a meeting of European STRP NFPs was already held in Vienna, Austria. The recommendations of the meeting participants addressed general topics such communication and synergies as well as specific suggestions for individual Work Areas. The Report of the meeting can be found here available <here><sup>28</sup>.

## ii). Constrains in Communicating

Despite a range of efforts, the STRP still reports difficulties in establishing effective contact and exchanges with many STRP National Focal Points;

The reasons are multiples and different from region to region. It’s a matter of communication, appointment of the right person, language, accessibility to fast internet connections, workload etc.

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<sup>27</sup> Resolution X.9 [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key\\_res\\_x\\_09\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/res/key_res_x_09_e.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Report of the European STRP NFP meeting [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp\\_nfp\\_austria2007.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/strp/strp_nfp_austria2007.pdf)

These problems are sometime made worse also due to numerous changes to such NFPs and the long delays in transmitting the information back to the Ramsar Secretariat.

This workshop of the STRP African NFPs, the first in the region, and the second of its kind, offers a great opportunity to discuss best options to activate the Network and to understand how STRP can assist you in your role of STRP NFP.

### **3. Emerging issues and work priorities**

Task 2.15 on “Other sectoral and /or emerging issues”, under the Thematic Work Area on Strategic, Emerging and Ongoing Issues (TWA2) consists of maintaining a watching brief of possible issues that the Panel should consider in its work priorities for the next triennium. The Panel has established a “rolling list” of sectoral issues (i.e., those related to the interactions or impacts of a specific sector on wetlands) and emerging issues (those broader issues that influence the management, protection and condition of wetlands, but which are not limited to single sectors). Regularly the list is revised and in some cases, the sector or issue becomes sufficiently important that STRP proposes a specific task to address it, as it happened for the guidance on mining and extractive industries.

The STRP would like to take the opportunity to hear from you and to discuss with you what, if there are any relevant issues increasingly emerging in your country and in the Africa region that you would like STRP to consider as a matter of priority for future work and to Report back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the STRP, in February 2011.

In this regard, issues recommended as a priority will need to be clearly explained with indication of: why and for whom it is a priority, what the background is, and what it is envisaged as being needed (guidance, governance, training, implementation support, resolution, international collaboration etc).

### **4. Breakout groups**

Participants will break into smaller groups to discuss and provide recommendations on:

1. How to enhance the STRP Regional Network:
  - a) How the STRP National Focal Points would like STRP to communicate/engage with them to ensure effective exchange of information and participation in the work of the Panel (including recommendations on communication tools such online work space, emails or else that can be used.)
  - b) How the STRP National Focal Points can best fulfil their Role and support their Ramsar Administrative Authorities particularly in view of the forthcoming 11<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Conference of the Parties.
2. What, if any, wetland-related emerging or ongoing issues in your country and at regional level are that you would suggest addressing as work priority for STRP in the next cycle (2012-2015).



**5. Report back from groups to plenary**

In your breakout group, please appoint a person to record the outcomes of the group discussion and to present the group findings/recommendations.

Group reports back should be no longer than 10 minutes.

## APPENDIX IV: IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

While the full report of the meeting will be sent to you in draft for your comments in late December, we would appreciate your early attention to the following issues (feel free to reply in English or French):

1. Request for inputs related to review of Ramsar guidance on restoration of wetlands  
(agenda item 6.2.1):

Annex 1A and 1B to this document includes the questionnaire from the STRP restoration working group (1A in English and 1B in French), as tabled by Rob McInnes.

Due date for inputs is 07 January 2011.

2. Request for comments on the revised Ramsar Information Sheet and Strategic Framework  
(agenda item 6.2.2):

The next draft of the revised Ramsar Information Sheet has been posted on the STRP Support Service, and if you wish to comment on this document, please do so via the Support Service before 31 December 2010. Your comments will then be available to the STRP as we discuss the revised RIS further at the STRP16 meeting in February 2011. The document and request for STRP comments can be found at

[http://www.wetlands.org/\\_strp/cfforum/viewtopics.cfm?Forum=63](http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/cfforum/viewtopics.cfm?Forum=63)

(The name of the topic is: "Draft revised Ramsar Info Sheet for comment")

If you don't remember your Username and Password or you don't have access yet to the Support Service please contact Monica Zavagli [zavagli@ramsar.org](mailto:zavagli@ramsar.org)

3. Request for information on peri-urban and urban wetlands(agenda item 10)

If you have useful contact names and details of people who are currently engaged in urban wetland issues in Africa, please send these to Rob McInnes [robmcinnes@bioscanuk.com](mailto:robmcinnes@bioscanuk.com). This would allow STRP to continue to build up a wider network for future involvement in this work area.

4. Request for information on mining license information availability in your country(agenda item 11.1):

Annex 2 of this document contains the worksheet on this topic, which we would appreciate receiving back from you by 31 January 2011.

5. Request for information related to the guide to guidance on managing the impacts of extractive industries on wetlands(agenda item 11.2).

Annex 3 of this document contains the worksheet on this topic, which we would appreciate receiving back from you by 31 January 2011.

6. Request for comments on and possible endorsement of the Critical Sites Network Tool(agenda item 13)

Please provide your comments via the STRP Support Service by 7 January 2011, in order for your inputs to be available when we discuss this issue at the STRP16 meeting in February 2011. The message posted on the STRP Support Service will provide you with a link to the CSN portal, and will also set out the questions for your consideration as you review and test the CSN Tool.

Link to the message: [http://www.wetlands.org/\\_strp/cfforum/viewtopics.cfm?Forum=63](http://www.wetlands.org/_strp/cfforum/viewtopics.cfm?Forum=63)

(The name of the topic is: "Critical Site Network- review for STRP endorsement")