



**Report**  
on the  
**6<sup>th</sup> Association of Members Meeting**  
**6 and 7 November 2007**  
**Xianheng Hotel**  
**Shaoxing City, China**





## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Minutes and Resolutions related to the Association of Wetlands International as a legal entity.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Minutes and Resolutions.....	2
1.1 Attendance and apologies.....	7
<b>2. Strategy Progress Review – summary of outcomes of the regional discussions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction and purpose.....	9
2.2 Western Europe. ....	10
2.3 Central & Eastern Europe; Central Asia.....	11
2.4 South & South East Asia.....	14
2.5 Africa.....	17
2.6 North Asia and Oceania.....	20
2.7 Americas.....	21
<b>3. Speeches and presentations.....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Opening and welcome speeches.....	23
3.1.1 Opening by the President.....	23
3.1.2 Welcome by the Director of Wetlands International in China.....	25
3.1.3 Address by the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.....	26
3.2 Report from the Chief Executive Officer.....	27
3.3 Keynote presentations (abstracts) .....	30
3.3.1 Waterbird Conservation Programme and avian influenza... ..	30
3.3.2 Freshwater fishes employ millions and feed billions.....	31
3.3.3 Wetlands and climate change.....	32
3.4 Other presentations.....	33
3.4.1 Presentations from members; examples of collaboration at national level.....	33
3.4.2 Side event on Goals of Wetlands International at the UNFCCC COP- 13, Bali, December 2007.....	34
3.4.3 Award ceremony.....	35
<b>Annex 1.List of participants with contact details.....</b>	<b>36</b>



## **Introduction**

The 6<sup>th</sup> tri-annual Wetlands International Association of Members Meeting (AoM) was held on 6 and 7 November 2007, at the Xianheng Hotel in Shaoxing City, China. The meeting was followed on 8 November by the Symposium “Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People”, co-hosted by the Municipality of Shaoxing City. The proceedings of the Symposium are published in a separate document.

In this report the matters related to the Association of Wetlands International as a legal entity have been separated from presentations and discussions on matters related Wetlands International’s Strategy and other programmatic issues.



**Association of Members Meeting  
6 and 7 November 2007  
Xianheng Hotel, Shaoxing City, China**

**1. Minutes and resolutions related to the Association Wetlands International as a legal entity**

The 6<sup>th</sup> tri-annual Wetlands International Association of Members Meeting (AoM) was held on 6 and 7 November 2007, at the Xianheng Hotel in Shaoxing City, China. The meeting was followed on 8 November by the Symposium "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People", co-hosted by the Municipality of Shaoxing City. The proceedings of the Symposium are published in a separate document.

The minutes and resolutions as presented here reflect only matters related to the Association of Wetlands International as a legal entity. Paragraph 1.2 contains the list of member delegates and Board members attending and apologies received. A list with the names and contact details of all participants is included in Annex 1 of the overall report. The minutes will be finalised after acceptance at the next annual Members Meeting. It should be noted that only the Member Delegates are allowed to vote on resolutions of the Association, one vote per member country or member organisation.

Chapters 2 and 3 of the overall report contain the presentations and discussions on matters related to Wetlands International's Strategy and other issues.

**1.1 Minutes and resolutions**

**1.1.1 Opening**

The President of Wetlands International (WI) and acting Chair of the AoM, Dr. Max Finlayson, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants and special guests.  
(The text of the speech is included in paragraph 3.1.1)

**1.1.2 Welcome**

The Head of the Wetlands International office in China, Mr. Chen Kelin, welcomed all participants to the host country China.  
(The text of the speech is included in paragraph 3.1.2)

**1.1.3 Address**

Mr. Anada Tiega, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.  
(An outline of the speech is included in paragraph 3.1.3)

**1.1.4 Report from the Chief Executive Officer**

Ms. Jane Madgwick, Chief Executive Officer, presented her report on the progress of the organization Wetlands International during the period November 2004 to November 2007. The CEO explained that the main achievements of the organization against the Strategy goals and targets are highlighted in the document titled *Strategy Review 2005-2007*, included in the papers for this meeting.

Her presentation subsequently summarized the vision of the organization, some “Wetland Facts”, and how Wetlands International made ground-breaking insights; raised attention to wetland wise use and poverty reduction links; improved the understanding of wetland ecosystem services; provided opportunities for local people to act; connected wetlands, biodiversity and peoples. She also explained how the organisation more than doubled the income, mostly through projects, realized more visibility worldwide and improved connections with partner organizations.

(The full text of the CEO’s speech is included in paragraph 3.2)

### 1.1.5 Governance and Finance

Mr. Guiseppe Raaphorst, acting Chairman of the Finance and Operations Standing Committee of the Board of the Association, explained in short to the member delegates and other participants why the present legal structure under Dutch law was chosen for the organization Wetlands International.

For the reasons explained the following structure was created:

- the **Association** Wetlands International: an organization of members which determines the policy and strategy of the organization, The Association is managed by the Board of the Association, the General Members Meeting takes specified decisions on behalf of the Association.
- the **Foundation** Wetlands International: an executing organization which executes the policy and strategy of the organization. The Supervisory Council supervises the management of the Foundation. The Management Board, including the CEO, manages the organisation.

In order to simplify the legal structures, it has been arranged through the Articles of Association that the members of the Board of the Association are the same persons as the members of the Supervisory Council.

He further explained that revised Articles of Association of the Association Wetlands International are proposed for adoption by the Members Meeting. In the original Articles the General Meeting, which takes legal decisions, is comprised by a **limited** number of members. The proposed amendment defines that the General Meeting is comprised by **all** members. The adjusted Articles are included annex AoM 1.3.2 of the papers for the AoM.

There were no questions from the participants related to the governance issues.

Mr. Raaphorst continued with an explanation on the financial situation of the organisation Wetlands International as well as the Association.

The global financial turnover of Wetlands International shows a rapid growth. It has almost tripled since 2004, and is expected to continue to expand over 2008. The growth is almost entirely due to an increase in major projects. The operating costs of the organisation remained modest over this period.

The Profit and Loss Account of the **Association** as projected for 2007 was presented. The total projected income of € 470,000, from membership dues would be around 7% less than expected. An expenditure of a subsidy of € 420,000 to the Foundation, and € 50,000 to the general reserve was proposed for approval by the members.

For 2008, a total income of €510,000 was expected. An expenditure of a subsidy of € 435,000 to the Foundation, € 25,000 as a reserve for the AoM in 2010, and 50,000 Euros to the general reserve were proposed.

The presentation generated several observations and questions from member delegates. The challenge of the rapid growth of the turnover of the organization against a relatively stable income of the Association was recognized. Some member delegates mentioned that the budgets as presented provided very little information to the members on what their dues are actually used for and they would like to receive a more detailed report and budget in future. It was also noted that the financial reports related to the Association had not been included in the papers for this meeting.

It was agreed that the points raised by the member delegates would be addressed for the next Members Meeting.

#### **1.1.6 Nominations for the Board of the Association and Supervisory Council 2008-2010**

Dr. Max Finlayson, Acting Chair of the Nominations Committee, explained the role of the Board of the Association, as well as the process of appointment of the Board including a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary for the period 2008-2010. He explained that with the appointment of the Board of the Association, the Supervisory Council of the Foundation will also be appointed, as these persons would act simultaneously in both governance bodies.

The Nominations Committee had taken into account the global level of expertise, regional expertise and member representation. They also considered that the term of many of the existing SC members was ending in 2007. A new slate of nominees had been proposed and provided to the members in Annex 2 of AoM paper 1.6, including a new Chair and President. Short biographies, photos and statements were provided to the members in AoM paper 1.6 nom. Dr. Finlayson introduced the nominees, with special attention to those present at the meeting. Five nominees were proposed to comprise the Executive Board as per the Statutes of the Association: Dr. Gordana Beltram as Chair, Mr. Ruud Keulen as Treasurer, Mr. Sergio Lasso as Secretary, Mr. Jean-Paul Taris as Vice-Chair and Mr. Paul Mafabi as 5<sup>th</sup> member.

The Association of Members was requested to adopt the proposed slate of nominees for the Board of the Association on day 2 of the AoM. This included the nominees for positions on the Executive Board.

There were no questions on the subject of nominations.

#### **1.1.7 Membership**

Mr. Alan Martin, Chair of the Resource Development and Communications Standing Committee, informed the meeting on progress related to membership since 2004, and the next steps to be taken. In summary he explained how the membership dues were established, what happens when a member doesn't pay, and the benefits of membership. He also explained the importance of a broad membership to Wetlands International in providing a mandate for its international work, an important source of expertise and guidance, as well as essential core funding.

Several actions to increase engagement with members were undertaken since last AoM meeting in Bangkok. Nevertheless, membership numbers showed a slight decrease. The income from membership remained stable since 2005. There are few members in Africa and South America, and the income was largely dependent on a few high-paying countries, with the top 14 contributing 78% of the income.

Mr. Martin further explained some of the actions agreed upon by the Board of the Association to establish a growth in membership; to broaden Wetlands International's mandate whilst maintaining the income level.

Subsequently the different options proposed for the next 3 years were explained and discussed. In option 1, an annual inflation of 3 % per annum was applied to the dues and to the band widths. In option 2 an annual inflation rate of 3 % per annum was applied to the dues for each band width, but all members remained in their current bands. Option 1 was consistent with the standard methodology, but it was expected that the high increase in dues would be unacceptable for some countries. Option 2 was therefore recommended to the Association of Members, delivering an average increase of 9% over the 2005 level. Mr. Martin invited member delegates that had questions on the resulting fees for individual countries to meet with him or the Membership Officer that evening.

Mr. Martin continued with an explanation on the proposal to broaden the NGO Membership Scheme and introduce an Affiliate Scheme. The schemes would allow smaller NGOs and individuals to associate formally with Wetlands International.



The Association of Members is requested to adopt the proposal on Membership Dues (option 2) and the NGO and Affiliate scheme day 2 of the AoM.

Several questions were raised by member delegates. On the question why we had chosen the figure of 3 % inflation correction per annum, Mr. Martin explained that this was the same rate as used for the last AoM in Bangkok in 2004 and decided by the members. The actual average 'world' inflation rate as published by the World Bank was 4.9 % per annum.

Several delegates questioned the fact that in the present methodology the fees remained the same for a period of 3 years, after which the fees were increased, applying retrospectively the correction for annual inflation. The delegates mentioned that this was more difficult to explain to their respective finance departments and suggested that it would be easier to apply an annual increase of the membership dues. Ms. Jane Madgwick, CEO, explained that previously the Members Meeting which approves the increase in dues, took place only once every three years and hence the dues were increased only once every three years. As the members will from now onwards have an annual meeting, a change to membership dues can be proposed annually. She also mentioned that the invoices for the membership dues of 2008 will be accompanied by a letter explaining the methodology used and the increase of 9 %.

Several other delegates requested further explanation on how the methodology was applied. They also expressed their concern over the fact that countries with a low GNI per capita, considered as low or middle income country according to the World Bank classification, had to pay similar or higher membership dues than high income countries. Particularly the delegates from India and China remembered how their country's membership dues jumped from € 600 to over € 30,000 after the Members Meeting in Bangkok in 2004. Mr. Martin agreed that this was indeed a weak point in the methodology but that this methodology was nevertheless adopted at the last Members Meeting in Bangkok. He further requested these delegates to discuss with him further after the meeting.

On the proposed NGO and affiliate scheme some clarification was requested and provided on the difference between the affiliate and NGO-scheme, and the role of the regional offices. The CEO explained that local NGOs which become a member through a regional WI office, will automatically become a member of the Association Wetlands International with equal rights as the present members.

### **1.1.8 Resolutions**

On day 2 of the AoM Meeting the member delegates voted on the resolutions proposed to them on day 1. All resolutions were adopted without alteration excepting the resolution on membership dues. Some of the member delegates questioned the methodology used, or stated they required prior consultation with their ministry before being in a position to cast a vote. After discussion with the delegates concerned and the CEO, Acting Chair of the SC and Chair of the RDC committee, the resolution was extended with 2 clauses, and subsequently adopted by the members.

Below is an overview of the resolutions passed by the General Meeting on 7 November 2007 in Shaoxing, China.

### **GOVERNANCE**

#### Resolution AoM.07.1

The General Meeting approved the Articles of Association of the Association as set out in Annex AoM 1.3.2 of the papers for the 6<sup>th</sup> AoM.

#### Resolution AoM.07.2

The General Meeting reconfirmed the structure of Wetlands International as set out in Annex AoM 1.3.1 of the papers for the 6<sup>th</sup> AoM.

## **FINANCE**

### Resolution AoM.07.3

The General Meeting approved the budget of the Association for 2007 and 2008 as presented to the AoM on 6 November 2007:

- For 2007 a total income of 470,000 Euros, an expenditure of a subsidy of 420,000 Euros to the Foundation, and 50,000 Euros to the reserve.
- For 2008 a total income of 510,000 Euros, an expenditure of a subsidy of 435,000 Euros to the Foundation, 25,000 Euros as a reserve for the AoM 2010, and 50,000 Euros to the general reserve.

## **APPOINTMENT OF THE BOARD OF THE ASSOCIATION (also Supervisory Council Members)**

### Resolution AoM.07.4

The General Meeting appointed as Members of the Board of the Association the individuals nominated in Annex AoM 1.6, annex 2, of the papers for the 6<sup>th</sup> AoM.

### Resolution AoM.07.5

The General Meeting appointed Gordana Beltram as Chair of the Board, Ruud Keulen as Treasurer of the Board and Sergio Lasso as Secretary to the Board.

### Resolution AoM.07.6

The General Meeting appointed Jean-Paul Taris (Vice-Chair) and Paul Mafabi to the Executive Board of the Association. in addition to the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary..

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### Resolution AoM.07.7

The General Meeting adopted the recommendation to implement Option 2 of the proposal for membership dues for 2008-2010 as presented in Annex AoM 1.5 of the papers for the 6<sup>th</sup> AoM.

#### *Additional clauses to Resolution AoM.07.7*

- The Executive Board will review the method used to calculate the dues and make a recommendation to the Members Meeting in one year time.
- The Executive Board will discuss the implications of the current proposal with 5 identified countries on a one-to-one basis and establish a payment level for 2008 - to be concluded by end of March 2008.

### Resolution AoM.07.8

The General Meeting adopted the introduction of the proposed NGO and Affiliate schemes as presented in Annex AoM 1.4.2. of the papers for the 6<sup>th</sup> AoM.

### **1.1.9 Any Other Business**

The Acting Chair announced that the next General Meeting will be in one years time, but through email. The next tri-annual meeting (AoM) where 1 member delegates will be invited to meet in person will be held in 2010. The Chair requested participants to contact the CEO should their country wish to host the this meeting or have any other suggestion in this respect.

One participant suggested that the next AoM could be linked to the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2010.

### **1.1.10 Closure**

The Acting Chair closed the meeting on 7 November 2007 at 13:05 hrs.

## **1.2 Attendance and apologies**

### **Participants**

#### ***Member Delegates:***

1. Nadia S. Boscarol, Member Delegate, Argentina
2. Su Ming, Member Delegate, China
3. Ma Guangren, Member Delegate, China
4. Petr Musil, Member Delegate, Czech Republic
5. Hans Meltofte, Member Delegate, Denmark
6. Andres Kuresoo, Member Delegate, Estonia
7. Tiit Randla, Member Delegate, Estonia
8. Sauli Härkönen, Member Delegate, Finland
9. Oliver Schall, Member Delegate, Germany
10. Johan H. Mooij, Member Delegate, Germany
11. Gábor Magyar, Member Delegate, Hungary
12. Sidharth Kaul, Member Delegate (also Supervisory Council Member), India
13. Noor Hidayat, Member Delegate, Indonesia
14. Naoki Amako, Member Delegate, Japan
15. Fred Omengo, Member Delegate, Kenya
16. Vija Busha, Member Delegate, Latvia
17. Saharudin Anan, Member Delegate, Malaysia
18. Gerard van Dijk, Member Delegate, the Netherlands
19. Muhammad Imtiaz Tajwar, Member Delegate, Pakistan
20. Ján Kadlecík, Member Delegate, Slovakia
21. Gordana Beltram, Member Delegate, Slovenia
22. Henrik Schreiber, Member Delegate, Sweden
23. Olivier Biber, Member Delegate, Switzerland

#### ***Members of the Board:***

24. Max Finlayson, President of Wetlands International, Acting Chairman Supervisory Council
25. Paul Mafabi Gumonye, Supervisory Council Member
26. Alan Martin, Supervisory Council Member
27. Yoshihiro Natori, Supervisory Council Member
28. Stefan Pihl, Supervisory Council Member
29. Christine Prietto, Supervisory Council Member
30. Dave Pritchard, Supervisory Council Member
31. Jean-Paul Taris, Supervisory Council Member
32. Cees van Woerkum, Supervisory Council Member
33. Giuseppe B. Raaphorst, Observer to the SC

### **Observers**

34. Luc Hoffmann, Counsellor of Honour to Wetlands international
35. Anada Tiega, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Switzerland
36. Abdoulaye Berthe, Secretary General, Ministry of Environment and Sanitation, Mali
37. Malcolm Coulter, Specialist Group Coordinator, New World Storks, Ibis and Spoonbill SG
38. Gordon McGregor Reid, Specialist Group Coordinator, Freshwater Fish
39. Michael Ounsted, Chair Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group, Wetlands International
40. Martin Spray, Partner Representative, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, United Kingdom
41. Idrissa Doucoure, Head of West Africa Region, WaterAid, United Kingdom
42. Margarita Astralaga, Director, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, Spain
43. Ruud Keulen
44. Rosa Montañez, Ramsar -CREHO, Panama
45. Gerard Boere, Associate Expert, the Netherlands
46. Anthony Fox, National Environmental Research Institute, University of Aarhus, Denmark
47. Richard Kingsford, University of New South Wales, Australia

***Wetlands International Staff present:***

48. Jane Madgwick, Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International - Headquarters
49. Marie José Vervest, Project Manager Green Coast, Wetlands International - Headquarters
50. Chris Baker, Head of Programme Wetlands & Water Resources
51. Marcel Silvius, Senior Programme Manager
52. Ward Hagemeijer, Head of Biodiversity and Ecological Networks
53. Tunde Ojei, Global Capacity Building Coordinator, Wetlands International - Headquarters
54. Bertine Niesten, Membership Officer, Wetlands International - Headquarters
55. Mary Cisse, Programme Assistant, Wetlands International - West Africa
56. Bakary Kone, Head of office, Wetlands International - Mali
57. Chaman Lal Trisal, Head of office
58. Ibrahima Thiam, Acting Programme Director for Africa, Wetlands International – W. Africa
59. Doug Watkins, Head of office, Wetlands International-Oceania – Canberra, Australia
60. Sarala Aikanathan, Head of office, Wetlands International - Malaysia
61. I. Nyoman N. Suryadi Putra, Head of office, Wetlands International - Indonesia
62. Victoria de la Balze, Programme Officer, Wetlands International – South America
63. Asae Sayaka, Head of office, Wetlands International – Thailand
64. Ritesh Trisal, Sr Project Office, Wetlands International - South Asia
65. Chen Kelin, Head of office, Wetlands International - China
66. Zhang Xiaohong, Deputy Director, Wetlands International - China

**Apologies received:**

***Member Delegates:***

- Gerhard Sigmund-Schwach, Member Delegate, Austria  
Patrick de Wolf, Member Delegate, Belgium  
Lyobomiv Profirov, Member Delegate, Bulgaria  
Tanyo Michev, Member Delegate, Bulgaria  
J. Chytil, Member Delegate, Czech Republic  
Sergio Lasso Barreto, Member Delegate, Ecuador  
G. Handrinos, Member Delegate, Greece  
S. Farago, Member Delegate, Hungary  
John Wilson, Member Delegate, Ireland  
Kazuaki Hoshino, Member Delegate, Japan  
J. Viksne, Member Delegate, Latvia  
Sivananthan Elagupillay, Member Delegate, Malaysia  
Fred Wouters, Member Delegate Vogelbescherming, Netherlands  
Oystein Storkersen, Member Delegate, Norway  
John Kalas, Member Delegate, Norway  
Zygmunt Krzeminski, Member Delegate, Poland  
L.C. Costa, Member Delegate, Portugal  
J. Seffer, Member Delegate, Slovakia  
Ann Wahlström, Member Delegate, Sweden  
Ake Andersson, Member Delegate, Sweden  
Verena Keller, Member Delegate, Switzerland  
Graham Wynne, Member Delegate RSPB, UK  
Colin Galbraith, Member Delegate, UK  
James Harris, Member Delegate International Crane Foundation, USA

***Members of the Board:***

- Ernesto Briones  
Stew Morrison  
Maria Carolina Hazin  
Kevin Erwin  
Willem Aalbersberg  
Nick Davidson, Permanent Observer - Ramsar Convention

## 2. Strategy Progress Review - summary of outcomes of the regional discussions

### 2.1 Introduction and purpose

At the Members Meeting in November 2007, we used the opportunity to gain feedback in order to:

- review our progress in implementing the 5 year targets that we set at the end of 2004
- share experiences and lessons learnt and increase understanding and recognition on what Wetlands International has achieved and the reasons for successes (and failures or gaps)
- consider and reaffirm our niche in addressing the major challenges to wetlands, given our experience over the last years
- identify particular opportunities for Wetlands International in the coming triennium at the global or regional scales

The assessment was facilitated by the production of a Strategy Review document that set out the investments per Goal area and main achievements for the organisation during 2005-2007. Comments were provided on the status and outlook of this work.

Based on the feedback from regional discussions at the Members Meeting in 2007 (see reports below), the senior staff (Global Support team plus Heads of Office) will reset priorities for implementation of our existing 5 year Strategy (to 2010) and take account of comments that may affect the setting of targets from 2010 onwards.

The following scheme explains the strategy development, adoption and review cycle, showing the context of the progress review that Wetlands international is currently undertaking:

2004	<b>Strategy Review</b> (2002-2005) + new Strategy development initiated .
Members Meeting 2004	<b>Adoption of 10 year Strategic Intent</b> (2005 – 2014), 5 year Strategy and Strategic Framework
Members Meeting 2007	<b>Progress review</b> ; progress against 5 year targets (for 2010)
2009 - 2010	<b>Mid-term Strategy Review</b> to be undertaken
Members Meeting 2010	<b>Adoption</b> of new 5 year targets and 10 year Strategic Intent

## 2.2 Western Europe

Chair: David Pritchard, partner organisation BirdLife

Staff: Marcel Silvius, Wetlands International - headquarters

Member delegates:

Hans Meltofte, Denmark  
Sauli Härkönen, Finland  
Oliver Schall, Germany  
Johan Mooij, Germany  
Gerard van Dijk, the Netherlands  
Henrik Schreiber, Sweden  
Olivier Biber, Switzerland

### Assessment of Achievements:

- The Strategy Review was commended as a clear and honest assessment, showing an impressive level of achievement.
- Generally welcomed development of effective programmes under Goals 2 and 3.
- Under Goal 3 it would be useful to develop more strategic emphasis on rivers, in general.
- Concerns relating to waterbird work:
  - lack of central staff capacity to service and provide feedback to the Specialist Groups/ networks;
  - concern that this may deter western European countries from becoming or remaining members;
  - *perception* that, while developing other areas of work, Wetlands International is neglecting a core part of its historical role and strengths on waterbird science.

### Future:

- Improve levels of service/communication to Specialist Groups/specialist experts network (which should help to increase their levels of engagement);
- Develop enhanced approaches to the uses of waterbird information, including “marketing” it in ways that can help recoup costs;
- Produce regular species population trend analysis reports;
- Set out more clearly the relationship between membership subscriptions and the benefits that countries/organisations gain by being members (and investigate members’ opinions/expectations on this);
- Use existing members as ambassadors to encourage others to join;
- Develop a prospectus of projects (including elements of support for specialist experts network) as a fundraising tool;
- Explore innovative funding possibilities e.g. via carbon trading;
- Develop a strategy for engagement with EU institutions.

## 2.3 Central and Eastern Europe; Central Asia

Chair: Gerard Boere, Associate Expert

Staff: Chris Baker, Wetlands International headquarters

Member delegates:

Vija Busha, Latvia

Jan Kadlecik, Czech Rep

Tiit Randlaa, Estonia

Andres Kuresoo, Estonia

Gabor Magyar, Hungary

Gordana Beltram, Slovenia

A short regional presentation of main achievements and activities was provided.

### ***Review implementation of WI-Strategy over the last 3 years***

- **What are main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years?**

There were achievements in Ukraine and Russia. These are centred most on inventory, strategy development and econet development. Achievements are not evenly spread across the Goals and the 5-year targets under the Strategic Intent. However, beyond these countries the Programme is rather thin. As a result there was a lot of reflection on the need to become more involved in the rest of the region and the opportunities / niche that Wetlands International might address.

- **Which achievements are most highly valued and why (top 3)?**

Given the geographical range of countries participating in the group it was difficult to identify those that were considered most important. All countries were from EU States and so had a different outlook on priorities to Ukraine, Black Sea Countries and Russian Federation.

Reflections on useful activities (note, not achievements) from the past included:

- Specialist Group meetings for support of waterbird work
- The International Waterbird Census is generally seen as positive and still working well and effectively.

- **Reasons for main gaps in achievements – can they be overcome in the coming years?**

The Targets under the Goals are not fully relevant to the region;

- Goal 2 has very limited relevance; poverty reduction is not an important issue related to wetlands in this region. However, it was noted that there are issues related to livelihood support due to provisioning services that are relevant but do not fit under the Targets.
- Goal 3: Some countries in the region are land-locked and have no coastal zone.

Whilst work in Ukraine and Russia is ongoing and producing some achievements there is a gap in terms of activity and achievements generally in the rest of the region. Some reasons were identified with respect to this:

- Lack of unrestricted funds to strategically develop Wetlands International in the region outside Ukraine and Russia
- Limited capacity of the organisation in the existing offices in Europe to move into the rest of the region.
- The existing offices were still experiencing a 'shadow effect' following the organizational changes; ending of old projects developed under the previous Strategy drawing resources from other development. They are now out of this phase.
- The accession of many East and Central European countries to the EU means that funding is not so readily available from sources previously accessed. Wetlands International has not developed its capacity to access the new sources

such as from the EU. Also, national sources have not become correspondingly more available because of national priorities for development and not environment.

### ***Considerations for the next 3 years phase***

#### **What lessons have we learnt in this 3 year period and what does it mean for the next period?**

EU Accession has changed the situation regarding support for wetland conservation and the niche for Wetlands International.

- Sources of support for work in the newly acceded countries is available most strongly through the EU. National sources and international sources (e.g. GEF, bilateral support) are disappearing or already gone.
- In EU countries more traditional activities such as monitoring and inventory are not in need of so much attention. Support for policy, advocacy with a view to ensuring that EU policy and legislation is implemented in an appropriate way is a much higher priority.

The situation in Ukraine, Russian Federation and other non-EU countries compared to EU countries is quite different. Although the activities of Wetlands International have to a large extent provided an information basis for wetland conservation, further activity is still necessary.

If Wetlands International is to develop its activities further in Central and Eastern Europe, it needs to develop a strategy that reflects these realities.

#### **Are there particular opportunities (and niches) for WI in the region relevant to our global Strategy - and how can we address these (change in focus, new partnerships, new donors, etc)?**

Generally the approach to the region must change. The previous more structural approach to supporting work in the region that addressed traditional strengths such as inventory, monitoring and policy / strategy development need to change to be issue focused. This might also serve as a better basis to engage with Brussels; the Avian Influenza work was cited as a good, recent example of this.

Implementation of EU policy and legislation related to river basin management in EU countries. There is still a major niche in Europe to ensure that wetland wise use is implemented. Currently it does not adequately reflect policy and legislative intentions. The regulating service role of wetlands in RBM is still not really addressed.

- **Water Framework Directive** – Although there is guidance to integrating wetlands in the implementation of the Directive it is not strongly understood or implemented.
- **Flood Risk Management Directive** – A new piece of legislation that gives excellent opportunities for integrating wetland services such as flow regulation in flood risk management and to stimulate wetland restoration. Little understanding of this Directive and the practicalities of its implementation.

Carpathian Wetland Initiative. This initiative is linked to the Carpathian Convention. A regional initiative is at an advanced stage of planning and will be submitted to the next Ramsar Convention CoP, Korea, 2008. It has been agreed that the Black Sea Programme will engage with this Initiative in the future. The Initiative has components including inventory, monitoring, flood risk management and would provide the opportunity for many achievements to be realized in partnership with other national and international partners.

Wetland Restoration. This is one of the key activities in the region, partly at least driven by EU legislation. There are needs for both technical and financial resources to support this work. Wetlands International could consider how it can engage a network to support this. The European Centre for River Restoration might be such a group and / or to develop the currently relatively inactive Restoration Specialist Group. The role of the European Community in supporting this work financially needs to be investigated.



Transboundary wetland management. This continues to present very specific challenges in the region. Some work has been undertaken between EU countries such as between Latvia and Estonia (Wetlands International was involved in this project), but work between EU and non-EU countries such as Russian Federation would be very important. There are two very different systems at work and these need to be rationalized to enable transboundary work to be effective.

Wetland protection. Many wetland areas still fall outside the Natura 2000 network, especially marine / coastal areas. Identification and designation would be an important focus.

Capacity building and increasing public awareness. This is important in terms of securing wise use of wetlands in many areas such as in Latvia. There is still a role. Wetlands International could begin by re-establishing contracts with the Trebon Centre to identify their niche.

Flyway conservation. There is an over-emphasis in Wetlands International on wintering and breeding areas. The need to understand stop-over sites is not adequately addressed and represents a gap in understanding. The region is key for these types of sites.

Sustainable harvest. Re-engagement with hunters groups should be investigated.

Species Action Plans. Currently BirdLife International dominates in this field but it should be an area where Wetlands International also has a niche.

Funding. Wetlands International is not active in any EU LIFE projects in the European Union. The organisation should consider how it can become involved in such projects in line with some of the technical foci outlined above. Member country delegates may be able to help secure engagement.

Engagement with new partners. For instance the Global Water Partnership may represent a good opportunity in this respect.

The next EU 10 year management plan refers to how to manage specific landscapes. This gives an opportunity to look at how wetlands can be incorporated into such approaches.

#### ***Any other issues discussed or recommendations made by the Regional Group?***

The future of the International Waterbird Census (IWC) is a particular source of concern given current funding uncertainties and the associated need to cut costs. There was general acceptance of the idea that IWC might be taken on more strongly in the Black Sea and Russian Offices.

There was strong support for the continued operation of the Black Sea and Russian Offices as the centres for Wetlands International's work in the non-EU countries. In the case of the Black Sea Office there is a commitment in place to extend their role westwards to engage with the Carpathian Convention.

## 2.4 South & South-East Asia

Chair: Mike Ounsted, Working Group Wetlands & Livelihoods

Co-Chair: Marie-Jose Vervest, Wetlands International headquarters

Staff: Alue Dohong, Wetlands International –Indonesia

Nyoman Suryadiputra, Wetlands International – Indonesia

Chaman Trisal, Wetlands International - India

Sarala Aikanathan, Wetlands International – Malaysia

Member delegates:

Noor Hidayat - Indonesia

Muhammad Imtiaz Tajwar – Pakistan

Siddharth Kaul - India

Saharudin Anan - Malaysia

### ***Short summary of regional presentation***

#### India

Since 2004 four goals (3 goals high reception)

- hydrology + biodiversity + policy formulation were linked the goals
- Capacity building of the agencies and staff project sites was that was the main area of concentration.
- regional level projects were generated, they include the Green Coast with sub-projects & livelihood program
- eco-system & livelihood of the first kind
- Himalayan project, initiate by HQ ( project looking hill-land restoration)
- Sind Delta: Pakistan + India are working together, another example of regional work.
- GEF biodiversity project in Pakistan: looking at all the park mgt & capacity building at the is one of the show case
- Thematic areas for the management of wetlands with WI are accepted by the government.
- Regulation on water management is being refined from Federal to district level
- Evaluation of on-going projects has been set in place & need to done for all projects
- Committee has set to look into management plans of sites: working of it, mgt of the site; capacity building of the site

#### Indonesia

- Wants more support from WI for projects in Indonesia (esp with 20mill hec peatlands & 7mill hec peatlands is protected under the ministry of forestry)
- WI needs to Work with Min of Agriculture esp to conserve forest & best management practices
- Central Kalimantan: presidential degree to rehabilitated from the Mega-rice project, one of the best case-study on peatland management
- Need assistance in funds management
- Further work required for rehabilitation of degraded forest, esp peatland

#### Malaysia

- cooperation with government since mid 80's
- crucial support on Ramsar site establishment, collaboration with local authorities
- Education & awareness program on wetland related issues
- more capacity building required for Ramsar site monitoring and management

### ***Review implementation of WI-Strategy over the last 3 years***

- **What are main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years?**

Green Coast brought most of the countries together to work on coastal related issues, live hood and disaster management in this region. It was spearhead for livelihood program in S & SE Asia.

#### **India**

- the government has committed to the protection of wetlands
- There is now the involvement of the different levels of agencies for wetland related work. The capacity building of community on site is evident
- Community participation has been included in projects
- The wetlands work now encompasses more than water birds related program
- Fish related program has been included in the live hood activities

#### **Malaysia**

- Peatlands management program has been initiated and is well on the way dealing with issues related on oil palm management & future biofuel future
- Capacity building on the wetlands mgt: related mgt of the lake & livelihood management of the locations
- Live hood and community related program are part of all projects implemented or developed.
- All wetlands program has a mutl-sectoral involvement, esp on protected sites.

#### **Indonesia**

- Poverty, live hood & restoration programs have shown proven its' success – goal 3 (Projects sites include: Acheh ,Central Kalimantan & Sumatra
- Integration of all level of government & non-government efforts are seen for the Berbak National Park in Kalimantan
- The ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy has been initiated: with the min of home affairs
- ( This program shall be adopted by the ASEAN countries.)

- **Which achievements are most highly valued and why (top 3)?**

Inclusion of the live hood program in projects was the highly valued achievement

- **Reasons for main gaps in achievements – can they be overcome in the coming years?**

- Main gap was project monitoring
- sharing of info gained to other stakeholder & possible project implementers
- assessments data is also not available
- donors are not keen on pure research
- ability to extend & support project to other sites
- for regional cooperation to be further intensified (Pakistan needs assistance from the India office)

### ***Considerations for the next 3 years phase***

- **What lessons have we learnt in this 3 year period and what does it mean for the next period?**

#### **Expectation of WI in Malaysia**

- It has been good that WI has move from water birds related issues to other issues
- The draft review documents states well the expectation from WI

Expectation of WI in Indonesia

- Would like to have criteria established for the activities carried out.
- Indicator & outputs need to strong and specific

Expectation of WI in India

- traditional knowledge to be translated to project development & management
- R & D be further improved for the wetlands management
- Monitoring mechanism to improved.
- Training of trainers is required

PRSP existing in the countries??

In India & Indonesia PRSP still exist.

This is not so in Malaysia.

- **Are there particular opportunities (and niches) for WI in the region relevant to our global Strategy - and how can we address these (change in focus, new partnerships, new donors, etc)?**

Not discussed

***Any other issues discussed or recommendations made by the Regional Group?***

The group discussed on lessons learned.

Indonesia:

1. Partnership with various other stakeholders is necessary for successful implementation of large scale project, which is clearly shown with the GC in Aceh & peatland restoration in Central Kalimantan.
2. Local commitment participation ensures project are well received, managed & has continuity.
3. Communication to other of the projects' outputs & success, encourages the adoption of the outputs by the government and community.

Malaysia:

1. Communication between NGO & the implementing government agencies is very important in settling the projects in the right working scheme.
2. Communication & trust is needed to build long term sustainability of work carried out on projects carried out.

India:

1. Communication of the project plan & work schedule to all sectors is crucial.
2. Good monitoring system of projects is necessary to determine achievement.

## 2.5 Africa

Chair: Jean-Paul Taris, Supervisory Council/Board of Association

Staff: Bakary Kone, Wetlands International – Mali  
Ibrahima Thiam, Wetlands International – Senegal  
Tunde Ojei, Wetlands International headquarters

Member delegates:

Fred Omengo, Kenya

Supervisory Council/ Board of the Association:

Paul Mafabi Gumonye, Uganda

Partner organisation:

Idrissa Doucoure, WaterAid

### ***Short summary of regional presentation***

During the last three years, the Africa programme made a lot of achievements against the four goals of our Strategy. Some of the achievements and lessons learnt have been valuable by impacting at policy as well as at field levels. However, many gaps and challenges need to be overcome during the coming years. Also, the Africa Programme is going through some internal and external changes.

### ***Review implementation of WI-Strategy over the last 3 years***

**Goal 1: Stakeholders and decision makers are well informed about the status and trends of wetlands, their biodiversity, socio-economic values and priorities for action**

#### ***Main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years***

- Capacity building of technical staff in Senegal and Mali
- Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project courses for policy decision makers and practitioners
- Partnership with 3 training centres in Senegal, Uganda and Kenya
- National Wetland policies in Mali, Uganda, Ghana, adopted Benin, Rwanda Kenya and Senegal in process
- World Wetlands Day (Feb. 2) celebrated in many African countries
- Countries with wetland policies provided with technical information
- Report on Africa Water bird Census, Newsletter Fadama
- Active participation in the Ramsar Convention COP9 in Uganda.

#### ***Achievements which are most highly valued and why (top 3)***

1. Wetlands Policies adopted and implemented
2. Capacity building
3. African Waterbird Census database

**Goal 2: The values and services delivered by wetlands are recognized and integrated into sustainable development**

#### ***Main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years***

- Benin, Ghana, Mali: have elements of wetlands in their growth and poverty reduction strategy documents
- 3 demonstration projects for wetlands and poverty reduction in Mali, Kenya and Malawi-Zambia
- Partnerships signed with AFDB, UNDP, Care, Oxfam America
- Partnership developed with development organizations (Care, Oxfam)

***Achievements which are most highly valued and why (top 3)***

- Poverty Reduction Strategies in Mali, Ghana, Benin
- Partnerships signed with AFDB, UNDP, Care, Oxfam America

**Goal 3: Conservation and wise use of wetlands is achieved through integrated water resource management and coastal management**

***Main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years***

- Contribution to elaboration of integrated water resource management in Senegal and Mali
- Development of decision making tools for the Niger River Basin
- MOUs with OMVG, OMVS
- Wetlands training Board with training program active in West and East Africa
- Freshwater biodiversity assessment piloted with OMVG

***Achievements are most highly valued and why (top 3)***

- Training Board with training program active in West and East Africa
- Contribution to national action plan for Integrated Water Resource Management

**Goal 4: Improved conservation status of wetland biodiversity is achieved through large scale, transboundary initiatives for wetland-dependent species and critical wetland habitats**

***Main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years***

- Wings over Wetlands project started
- Species action plan: manatee and black crown crane
- West African Mangroves Initiative
- Evaluation of impact of dams on fish
- More active in PRCM (Programme Regional de Conservation Marine) partnership

***Achievements which are most highly valued and why***

Species action plans: manatee (PRCM)  
Mangroves initiative (PRCM)

***Reasons for main gaps in achievements: Gaps Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4– can they be overcome in the coming years?***

- Lack of funding and appropriate staff (policy and communication)
- Low capacity in government technical services
- Need to harmonize policies and regulation for concerned countries
- Need to scale up the demo projects
- Gaps of knowledge in economic valuation of wetlands
- Involvement of local communities (expectations)

These gaps could be overcome the coming three years

***Considerations for the next three years phase***

**Lessons learnt goal 1, 2, 3 and 4**

- Reaching out to development organizations
- Harmonize IWRM and Development AID
- Training modules are cross-cutting of conservation and development.
- Lessons learnt from the Demo projects will inform policies
- Lessons learnt from the demo projects will be made available for COP10

Particular opportunities for WI in the region relevant to our global Strategy.  
Partnership with AFDB, FAO and EU

***Any other issues discussed or recommendations made by the Regional Group***

Recommendations from the group

- Develop tools for implementation of the policies
- Measure and promote the impact of WI interventions
- Target the decision makers better
- Develop appropriate tools for economic valuation by involvement of relevant stakeholders

***Next steps for the Africa program***

Internal Management:

- Document best practices
- Focus the program
- Mobilize the staff
- Align the resource to the main goals
- Attract new financial resource
- Standardize monitoring & evaluation
- Increase influencing role

Programme:

External:

- Learning from experience
- Scale up/replication
- Expansion

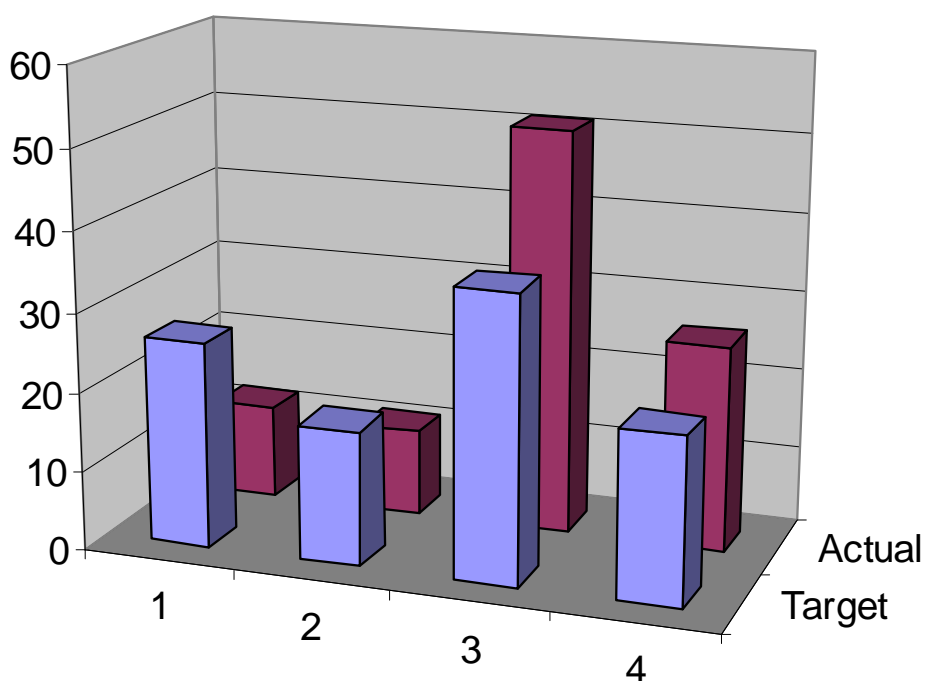
## 2.6 North Asia and Oceania

Staff: Doug Watkins, Wetlands International - Oceania  
Chen Kelin, Wetlands International - China

### Status of Operations

Office	Staffing	Annual Turnover	# projects
China	10 + 2 volunteers	€ 800 000	~12
Japan	3	€ 175 000	~10
Oceania	4	€ 250 000	~40

### Investment in each Goal area: based on % of Project Turnover



### Key Achievements

#### China Office

- Increasing awareness of wetland values
- Involvement in development of wetland parks
- Peatland restoration
- Wetland education for children and teachers (Japan, Korea, China)

#### Japan Office

- Promoting knowledge on the wise use of wetlands for the public and wetland managers
- Communication about important wetlands in Japan in cooperation with Local Governments



- Generating knowledge on tidal and shallow marine wetlands in Japan using a network of wetland experts

#### Oceania Office

- Locally managed marine areas in Papua New Guinea and Fiji
- Capacity building and knowledge transfer to wetland managers
- Launch of the EAA Flyway Partnership
- Regional liaison role in promoting wetland conservation to government and NGO

#### Observation:

Implementation of projects involving several offices is strengthening the overall operations of Wetlands International across regions

### ***Limitations on Strategy Implementation***

Oceania - limited communication to the community of our work and achievements

Japan - limited international engagement

China - need greater technical skills (scientific)

### ***Looking forward***

- Challenge of addressing sustainable development around wetlands
- Climate change assessment and adaptation projects
- Opportunity of the Ramsar Conference of Parties in Korea 2008 to profile the activities of Wetlands International
- Need to give greater attention to the cross cutting themes of the Strategy in our planning and reporting

## **2.7 Americas**

Chair: Ward Hagemeijer, Wetlands International headquarters

Staff : Victoria de la Balze, Wetlands International – Argentina

Member delegates:

Nadia Boscarol, Argentina

Partner organisation:

Margarita Astralaga (IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation)

### ***Review implementation of WI-Strategy over the last 3 years***

**What are the main achievements (against the global targets) in the region over the last 3 years?**

- Understanding of migration of waterbirds enhanced through the production of Flyway maps
- Guidelines for species conservation. Upland Sandpiper flyway-wide conservation plan and Buff-breasted Sandpiper habitat conservation plan
- Raised awareness for the Ruddy-headed Goose conservation in the wintering grounds where the species is mostly threatened (including a provincial hunting ban)
- Information base is provided for stakeholders of the south countries of South America in relation to waterbird conservation in rice-fields and network for intersectorial collaboration has been established for improved habitat management
- Involvement of environmental lawyers for the wise use of peatlands – development of partnership

- Awareness raised on values and benefits that wetlands provide through the video "Argentina's Wetlands"

**Which achievements are most highly valued and why (top 3)?**

- 1) The involvement of environmental lawyers for the wise use of peatlands because it influences policy changes that will have a long-term effect.
- 2) Engagement of the rice-field growing sector for waterbirds' conservation

**Reasons for main gaps in achievements – can they be overcome in the coming years?**

- Low operational capacity
- Lack of communication of deliverable information to the countries and members

***Considerations for the next 3 year phase:***

**What lessons have we learnt in this 3 year period and what does it mean for the next period?**

- We need to think in terms of measurable results when developing projects and programmes
- We need to sell ourselves and communicate the achievements to the members in order to show the contribution to them and therefore get and maintain the memberships, as well as to show them how we can help (eg. in assessment of wetlands' inventory)

**Are there particular opportunities (and niches) for WI in the region relevant to our global Strategy - and how can we address these?**

- More emphasis and support on wetlands and livelihoods work in Latin America – the opening of a new office and programme for this purpose in Panama is a big opportunity
- We need to broaden the donor base
- We still identify the same opportunities that were already identified at the 2004 BoM Meeting: Targets 1.1, 2.1, 3.3 and 4.3 because there is still a need to work on them

**Other issues discussed:**

Wetlands International is perceived to be mainly working in Argentina. This is partly a communications issue and we must make efforts to more explicitly include other countries of the region in the implementation and communication of our work.

### **3. Speeches and presentations**

#### **3.1 Opening and welcome speeches**

##### **3.1.1 Opening speech by the President of Wetlands International**

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to welcome you to the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Association of Members of our Wetlands International.

I would like to make special mention of our distinguished guests from..... and welcome them to Wetlands International and to the meeting.

I am also very pleased to record our appreciation of the Municipality of Shaoxing City for hosting the meeting and for supporting Wetlands International China to prepare the event and ensure that we all made it safely to this grand hotel in this wonderful city – a city with a long history and proud heritage.

It's a pleasure to be here and to formally welcome you and open the meeting.



Whilst we have a formal agenda to attend to I encourage you to build on the cooperation and interactions that have been established in the lead up to the meeting and develop personal and institutional platforms for further cooperation.

We do have a busy schedule ahead of us. The Association of Members generally meets every 3 years. It is an important meeting for the organisation as it brings our member delegates, our expert networks, our staff and our friends together. It does reflect the partnership and cooperative approaches that have long characterised our organisation. I also offer a word of caution that we should not take these relationships lightly – they are important relationships and we need to work to ensure that they are maintained and strengthened.

The program before you covers the main activities that have been addressed since the previous meeting in Bangkok in 2004. The Board of the Association that represents the Association between meetings has been extremely busy in the intervening period. Key issues include the following: -

- revising the legal structure and the articles of the Association, and its linkages with the Foundation of Wetlands International based on previous decisions from yourselves, the members, and in line with the Netherlands legal requirements - these will be explained by our in-house legal expert.
- improving the financial and operational procedures in order to ensure a fully professional and accountable operating base across all offices.
- reinforcing and further developing the science and programmatic directions and procedures of the organisation, again across all offices.
- and developing and implementing the nomination procedures to ensure a smooth transition from one Board to another.

- and supporting and developing the resource base and communications of the organisation.
- the key issues to myself have been our efforts to ensure that the organisation was accountable and professional.

With this background of material and information and processes etc I hope that this meeting is able to consider and reflect on what has been done and what this means for Wetlands International now and in the future. In part we need to measure ourselves against the past and the mandate provided in 2001 and 2004 to establish a new base for the future.

I am sure you will welcome what is being presented, but I also hope that you actively contribute to the discussion about the proposals before you, and add value to the efforts of the Board of the Association and the staff of your organisation.

A short reflection to provide some context. In 2001 it was agreed that we should take steps to truly form “one-Wetlands International” and move away from the 3 independently governed organisations that had existed. I say had existed as one was non-operational, and within days another was bankrupted, with the Asia-Pacific organisation alone alive and doing very well. The 4-5 person International Coordination Unit was also alive and doing well. And it was to this small administrative group that we turned to resurrect Wetlands International.

Now when I think about it we asked a lot of them – they were not an established programmatic office with all the necessary processes and functions to develop and run projects. We asked them to take on a new role and develop a new model for “one-Wetlands International”.

The Association met in 2002 to approve a new operational model, and then met again in 2004 to approve amongst other things a new strategic approach. Which brings us to 2007.....and the future....

We are here to report many successes, and celebrate these with yourselves, while also looking at who we are and what we want to do in the future. When doing this I would like you to keep in mind that our past and tradition are important – the current operating conditions and constraints are important – as are the opportunities and constraints of the future.

One specific and final reflection – in 2001 we were asked and we agreed to remain faithful to our niche and traditions while we developed a new profile and vigour. We were asked to ensure we were relevant for the time, and not to become a mini-replica of other organisations such as WWF or IUCN. We have changed a lot and we have many successes to report – as we address our agenda I am interested in your opinions on how well we have responded and your guidance on how we need to respond. It is your organisation and it is your meeting.

Thus, I am pleased to declare the meeting open and welcome you.

Thank you.

Max Finlayson  
President  
Wetlands International

### 3.1.2 Welcome speech by the Director of Wetlands International in China

Thank you Mr Chair, Honoured Guest and Ladies and Gentlemen.

China has a land area of about 9.6 million sq km, and is the third-largest country in the world, with a total of over 70 million ha of wetlands, making up 10% of the world's wetland area. Which are 13.7 million ha marshes, 8.35 million ha lakes, 5.9 million ha. coast line, 8.2 million ha. rivers, 2.28 million ha reservoirs as well as 38 million ha paddy fields. Some of these wetlands are among the most important and unique wetlands of the world. It is quite difficult to overstate the global importance of China's wetlands.



China has over 200 of 947 internationally important wetlands in Asia defined according to the criteria of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, covering over 20 million ha or over 20% of the area of wetlands of international importance in the region. Because of the extremely wide range of altitudes, latitudes and climatic zones, the diversity of wetland habitats in China is supporting a large number of rare and endemic species.

China is also one of the key countries on both the East Asian-Australasian and the Central Asian flyway for migratory birds. These two globally significant migration routes support millions of birds each year belonging to more than two hundred species, for which China's wetland sites provide crucial wintering, staging and breeding areas for the migratory waterbirds.

Wetlands International-China was created in September 1996, the first international environmental protection organisation which has successfully registered in Beijing, and a sponsoring organisation of the Chinese government: the State Forestry Administration. Now we have 10 staff members working with our partners of national, local government agencies for a number of initiatives, such as a China National Wetland Conservation Action Plan; GEF Project on Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in China; North East Asian - Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network; Dutch government MILIEV Project on Integrated Management of Mangrove Forests and Conservation of Coastal Shelterbelts in the Leizhou Peninsula of Guangdong Province; Asia Pacific Network for Global Climate Change Project; Particular we have successfully applied ECBP project from EU this year on high mountain peatlands biodiversity project in the north west of China.

Shaoxing city is one of the first 24 historical and cultural cities in China. The city's network of rivers and bridges gives Shaoxing another name - the Oriental Venice. Last year, the government of Shaoxing city created the Jinghu National Urban Wetlands Park where you will be visiting in the afternoon on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November. As an adviser for the city government, Wetlands International-China has been fully involved in guiding them on the management of the Park and other issues related to wetlands conservation.

I welcome you again to this Meeting and invite you to enjoy yourselves.

Thank you,

Chen Kelin  
Director  
Wetlands International – China Office

### 3.1.3 Address by the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (main points only)



Mr. Chairman, distinguished special guests, ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues.

- Thanks: Wetlands International and China authorities
- Thanks: Dr. Luc Hoffmann
- Ramsar is a privileged Convention with 5 International Organisation Partners (IOPs)
- Wetlands International is influencing global debate
- Our common constituency: assess for mutual support

#### Challenges

Wetlands in context of: Water – Biodiversity and Climate change

Wetlands and Human Health

- Poverty Reduction
- Water related diseases
- Land use, especially urban development
- Water and Sanitation
- Food security
- Energy: Bio-fuels
- Extinctive industries

Thanks Wetlands International for managing the Ramsar site data base.

We remain confident that Wetlands international will keep hopes high and remains determined to improve strategies and operational tools, including policy and scientific knowledge.

Anada Tiega  
Secretary General  
Ramsar Convention



### 3.2 Report from the Chief Executive Officer to the 6<sup>th</sup> Wetlands International Members Meeting



It's my great pleasure to be amongst the Wetlands International family. Thank you so much for coming. Thank you also to the People's Government of Shaoxing City for co-hosting this event so generously.

In 2004 at the Bangkok members meeting we reaffirmed our mission, re-casted our vision and established a ten year Strategic Intent for the organisation. Now, we are all three years older and hopefully three years wiser. It is a good time to review our progress against this Intent to reflect and then to look forward again. This is a very precious opportunity to share our thoughts.

Of course it was predictable that there would be greater pressures on wetlands over these last three years. The MA was published in 2005, providing a better set of facts to back up what we knew: that inland and coastal wetlands are being lost and degraded faster than any other ecosystem. That a disproportionately high amount of biodiversity depends on wetlands. That most of the poor people of the world depend on these wetlands and their ecosystem services for their survival. And that climate change is set to accentuate this situation. Sadly, making this good information available didn't lead to a stronger focus on improved wetlands management. Even the global conservation organisations, that say they are based on science, have shown remarkably little adjustment in the light of this news. Wetlands are still the poor cousins of forests and a focus on marine issues is seen as the next big challenge. The development sector took even less notice. So, clearly we have not yet done our job – and there is absolutely a need for Wetlands International to become more influential. The vision for the organisation that we set three years ago, to become a global authority on the status on wetlands and communicate this knowledge to influence decisions - is still hugely relevant and important.

I would like to give you some examples of how Wetlands International has contributed to making a difference over the past three years.

**Wetlands International produced some ground-breaking insights.** As you heard this morning, the Peat-CO2 report, concerning the severe implications of peatland degradation for global climate change has grabbed the attention of global and national decision-makers. Using very few resources, some well targeted advocacy led to policy action by governments and commitment for some changes in business practices. Through our waterbird population reports, we raised attention especially to the alarming decline in waterbird populations in Asia, linked with coastal wetland habitat loss and degradation. In South America, we assessed

waterbird distribution in relation to rice-farming practices and provided a channel to bring together stakeholder experience. Our report provides a basis for planning steps to improve rice-field management in the region. At the global level, Wetlands International guided the public and major international organisations on the possible role of waterbirds in transmitting avian influenza – acting as an independent, science-based interpreter of information and working side by side with the health specialists to improve monitoring data in key flyways.

**Wetlands International has raised attention to the links between wetland condition, poverty and climate change.** We have made the case for maintaining and restoring the Inner Niger Delta in Mali, in Sahelian Africa - where over a million people, dependent on seasonal grazing and fishing, stand to lose their livelihoods if new dams further restrict the reach of floodwaters. We did this by quantifying the relationship between different hydrological scenarios, the ecological status of wetlands and the socio-economic implications for people up and downstream. The assessment approach and decision-making framework used here could be further used to predict the impact of climate change in the Niger Basin as a whole – and to help identify mitigation and adaptation strategies.

**Wetlands International worked to improve understanding of the services that wetlands provide and to provide tools to help countries and communities use them wisely.** In setting out our Strategic Intent, we identified the important technical and capacity building roles of Wetlands International in promoting integrated water resource management. In the Himalayas and at the headwaters of the Yellow River in China, Wetlands International has been instrumental over the last years demonstrating how to use wetland assessment tools to inform decisions on water management, that will affect the livelihoods of millions of people downstream. In the major lake basin of Chilika in India, many years of ecological, hydrological and socio-economic assessment and local consultation by our South Asia office resulted in major breakthrough in 2006, when the state government decided to adjust water use and allocation so as to optimize the flow regimes for biodiversity, fishing and agricultural productivity. These examples serve to remind us that around a decade of commitment and involvement may be required in order to achieve real basin-scale outcomes.

**Wetlands International has provided opportunities for local people to act to reverse environmental problems.** In the post-tsunami Green Coast project, we formed an integral part of the humanitarian relief effort in five affected countries of South and South-East Asia. We prioritised coastal stretches for environmental management assistance, based on a combination of ecological and livelihood-related criteria. By nurturing local community project development and channeling small grants and micro-credit finance, we directly supported livelihood recovery of over 12,000 people and restored around 1000ha of coastal forest habitat. Most importantly, our project results have influenced the government and private sector policies and actions in the five affected countries. And at the global level we have made the case that natural disaster management strategies must be built on an understanding of the linkages between the coastal ecosystem condition and the services they provide.

The development of flyway conservation partnerships to connect wetland sites and people for cross-boundary conservation of waterbirds, is perhaps one of our best known innovations. In particular, the Wings over Wetlands project in the African-Eurasian flyway, started in 2006 will demonstrate new tools and approaches for achieving flyway-scale conservation, that can serve as a model for elsewhere. Through a global partnership with Shell, it is intended over the coming years to facilitate flyway conservation in all regions and to improve understanding of wetland management needs for waterbird populations to survive habitat degradation, climate change and other perturbations.

**The organisation has changed over the last three years.** The legal structure has started to be put in place, with new legal entities formed in Argentina, South Asia and Malaysia. The global turnover of the organisation has more than doubled, linked with our role in managing larger, longer-term, multi-regional projects, while our operational costs have remained low. Over this period it can be seen that Wetlands International has greatly increased its visibility and its influence on government policies, through improved skills and investment in communications, capacity building and advocacy. Most importantly, Wetlands International has achieved some of its greatest successes over this period due to coordinated actions



between offices joined by a common purpose, supported by a more service-oriented headquarters.

**But this is just work in progress. We still need to grow and continue to adapt.**

I remember well the advice of some friends and trusted advisors, when I was considering taking up this role for Wetlands International. They questioned whether there was still room for the organisation amongst the global conservation organisations or even the Ramsar Convention. I didn't doubt it then of course, but I believe that now the niche of Wetlands International has become indisputable. Wetlands International has differentiated itself and grown in confidence. We have made strengths out of our characteristics – our developing country base with offices run by nationals; our small size allowing for rapid internal decision-making and adaptation to a changing external agenda; our focus on livelihoods alongside biodiversity; our community-based and science-based approaches; our ability to work with governments to influence the agenda of global environment Conventions and then assist governments to turn Resolutions into reality.

Given the focus of the worlds agenda on poverty and climate change – and the critical role that wetlands can play in counteracting these threats, Wetlands International is well placed to increase its influence and impact. In fact it seems that the main obstacle to growth currently is our own institutional capacity. In particular, greater investment is needed in our regional offices so that they are better able to reach out to opportunities and to develop and manage larger-scale initiatives. Secondly, while we are very productive in terms of technical reports, I believe that much of our good work is still hidden away. We are still very poor in communicating our agenda, our achievements and our effectiveness in compelling ways to donors. Whilst we have extensive and growing networks of scientific experts, NGOs and partner organisations, our engagement is not well structured. Our membership is almost static while public attention on the environment is growing. It is the highest priority to address these shortfalls in the coming years.

**Strategy review**

We have provided you with a short document that illustrates the achievements of Wetlands International towards its five year targets, set in 2004. Additionally, we have provided a paper that shows some quantitative information on achievements in each region. These documents show that we are well on the way to achieve many of the targets – and we are likely to exceed some, while we have fallen short on others. There are some differences across Goals and across regions.

In the coming session we will divide into regional groups to assess the achievements of Wetlands International against our intentions that we jointly set out three years ago. We ask you to look into some of the reasons behind the gaps in particular. Additionally, we ask you to look forward and help us to anticipate our need to adapt and perhaps reset our future targets.

While this is a time for simply reviewing and reflecting on progress, we are mindful that next time we meet in 2010, we will be undertaking a more thorough review and resetting of our Strategic Intent. So, we are hoping that at this stage, you can help identify some "lessons learned" and to provide some insights into global or regional needs and opportunities. Each group will have the assistance of a Head of Office and/ or a Supervisory Council member. We will ask the rapporteur from each group to inform us of your findings tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention.  
Jane Madgwick  
Chief Executive Officer

### **3.3 Keynote presentations**

The participants enjoyed three very interesting and well illustrated keynote presentations on waterbirds and avian influenza, freshwater fish conservation and wetlands and climate change. Only abstracts of the keynote presentations are included in this report. The actual power point presentations are all available through our website [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org).

#### **3.3.1 Waterbird Conservation Program and Avian Influenza**

By: Ward Hagemeijer

##### Summary

The waterbird conservation program of Wetlands International gathers, analyses, mobilizes, communicates and applies information for the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands. With the emergence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 (HPAI H5N1) as an issue for poultry, human health and wild birds, it became clear that waterbird information was not reaching those that were debating strategies on how to fight this virus. Wetlands International undertook to change that.

There clearly is a wildlife component to the avian influenza debate: wild birds are dying from the virus and in some cases this can not be explained by nearby outbreaks in poultry. But while wild birds are mainly victims, they were commonly misunderstood to be the main vectors although their role in the spread of the virus was largely not understood.

We saw that ornithological expertise was needed and we decided to engage on several fronts:

Initially we offered expertise where Avian Influenza (AI) strategies were being developed in SE Asia. With the relevant Conventions, including CMS, AEWA, Ramsar and CBD, we worked on strong resolutions and we joined the Task Force Avian Influenza and Wild Birds. We approached FAO and OIE to work with them and attempted successfully to influence their position and way of working by providing information, expertise and arguments. Furthermore we chose to contribute to the gathering of new data on the role of Wild Birds in the spread of AI, with a multitude of partners including FAO, WCS, CIRAD, USGS and we joined the GAINS initiative.

Also we worked with National and Regional Governments, e.g. the EU.

Importantly we have been able to reach out to the media significantly over the issue of AI and wild birds, enabling us to raise the profile of our waterbird work with many audiences.

Our work on AI will continue. The resulting information will shed more light on waterbird and virus ecology and their interface and interaction with poultry. It will help us understand better how, where and when migrating birds use sites, and result in enhanced capacity in the networks of people, including those we work with in our waterbird conservation program.

In summary, the AI work has been and still is very strategic for the waterbird conservation program of Wetlands International.

### 3.3.2 Freshwater fishes employ millions and feed billions

By: Gordon Reid and Aaron Jenkins

#### Summary

Freshwater fishes are undeniably critical to the fabric of healthy wetland ecosystems and human societies worldwide. They support the employment of millions and feed billions, particularly in the less industrially developed nations of the world, providing over four per cent of the world's annual animal protein supplies.

Freshwater fishes are amongst the most threatened classes of animals. 81 species have become extinct in the past century, with a further 11 species only remaining in captive populations. Fisheries data for several species show dramatic declines and many of the important fisheries species are at serious risk of extinction. Water quality deterioration, habitat degradation, species introduction, impoundment of rivers and overexploitation are driving species loss globally and provide huge challenges for the conservation of freshwater fishes. Issues like the unappreciated effects of climate change, a general lack of baseline information and a very weak integration of freshwater fish conservation principles into water resource management planning make the situation even more serious.

Conservation of freshwater fishes, within a broader framework of catchment management, has huge, untapped potential as a focus for *measurably* achieving many Millennium Development Goals such as poverty reduction, clean water, employment generation *as well* as biodiversity conservation and the profile of freshwater fishes needs raising within the conservation community as a “flagship” for all freshwater biodiversity. With the advent of the revitalized Wetlands International/IUCN Freshwater Fishes Specialist Group and its growing global network of experts, a strong platform for addressing these issues and championing the conservation of freshwater fishes now exists.

### 3.3.3 Wetlands and climate change

By: Marcel Silvius, Chris baker, Marie-José Vervest and Pieter van Eijk

#### Summary

Wetlands store huge amounts of carbon, both in biomass as well as in the soil. Peatlands, which cover 3 % of the world's land and freshwater surface and comprise 40% of all wetlands in the world, store over 550,000 million tones of carbon, or 30% of all terrestrial carbon. This is equivalent to 75% of all carbon in atmosphere. Other wetland habitats such as riparian forests, mangrove forests, wet savannas and reed marshes also represent significant stores. All over the world these stores are threatened by logging, drainage and fire, but most dramatically in the tropical peatlands of South-east Asia (primarily Indonesia) which account for 70 % of global peat CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The total of 12 million ha of drained and deforested SE Asian peatlands cover less than 0.1% of the earth but are emitting a total of 2000 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>, equivalent to 8% of global fossil fuel emissions.

Natural wetlands are often accused of playing a significant role in global warming by emitting methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). In this regard it is, however, crucial to distinguish between the natural baseline emissions (which have always taken place), and human induced methane emissions (which result from unnatural inundations, e.g. many rice fields). In addition, climate change may trigger unprecedented emissions of fossil methane (already starting) as a result of melting of permafrost in arctic peatland regions. Wetlands may thus be a key part of the ecological feed back or defense mechanism of the earth against the impacts of human interventions. Protecting carbon sinks in wetlands – and in tropical peatlands in particular –, is not only a vital, but also cost-effective way of mitigating climate change. By improving land use, restoring hydrology and replanting trees, avoided emissions can be accomplished at a cost which is much lower compared to other mitigation strategies. More efforts are therefore needed to incorporate wetlands in existing mitigation strategies.

Wetlands also have an important role to play in adaptation strategies, as they can significantly contribute to mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change. Adaptive or integrated wetlands and water management can therefore enhance security of local communities. Restoration and sustainable management of highland wetlands for example can play a key role in reducing flood and drought risks. Mangrove conservation and reforestation (with resulting increased siltation rates) can create buffer zones against increasing storm surges and other extreme weather events. At the same time wetland ecosystems are also vulnerable to climate change as change in a-biotic circumstances can lead to biodiversity loss, habitat alteration or even the destruction of complete ecosystems. Increased recognition of the delicate relations between wetlands and climate change is needed to ensure the future existence of wetlands and to enlarge the potential role of wetlands as part of adaptation strategies.

Building on its considerable experience with climate related initiatives, Wetlands International currently explores options how it can optimally contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This paper investigates the relevance of wetlands in relation to climate change and poverty issues, summarizes Wetlands International's past and ongoing initiatives in this field and provides an outlook on the organization's proposed activities in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

### **3.4 Other Presentations**

#### **3.4.1 Presentations from Members; examples of collaboration at national level**

In the preparations for the meeting, member countries were encouraged to present their view on the collaboration with Wetlands International, and give some examples of programmes or activities at the national level, implemented in partnership with Wetlands International. They were invited to look critically at give an honest evaluation of the cooperation in their country.

The member delegates of Argentina, China, India and Malaysia gave interesting and encouraging presentations that tried to answer some of the following questions: what went well, what were the beneficial points, what could have been improved, what are the gaps. What would they recommend or suggest for a more effective partnership with Wetlands International in the future?

The power point presentations of Argentina, India and Malaysia are accessible through our website [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org). The text of on the collaboration with China is presented here.

#### **Examples of collaboration between China and Wetlands International**

By: Hu Yuanhui, International Forestry Cooperation Centre, State Forestry Administration (SFA) of the People's Republic of China

In the last few years, Wetlands International and the SFA have established an effective working partnership and working relations. An annual meeting system has been set up and the regular contacts have been productive. There are achievements we have made, lessons we learned and expectations that we are going to achieve in the near future.

##### **What went well in the last few years?**

1. Education on the wise use of wetlands and the extension of the basic knowledge on wetlands.

I very much appreciate the Wetlands Newsletter published by Wetlands International-China Programme since its contains not only academic articles which give information to professionals, but also the common knowledge on wetlands that can be a useful tool for educating the general public. It is the effort and input from Wetlands International China Program that made the Newsletter a reality.

2. Network with government departments.

Working with the local government departments is a very important element for Wetlands International in China. Since most of the staff are local employees, they are familiar with policies and the government departments which makes it very easy for them to find the right person for cooperation. Actually, a working network has been established in the last few years between the Wetlands International China Program and the SFA.

##### **Lessons learned**

Effective working focal point. One of the most important jobs of my centre is to work with international NGOs and actually to provide a flexible environment for international NGOs working in China. The focal point works as a bridge between NGOs and the departments of the SFA and has proved to be a productive and vital organization in promoting international cooperation.

##### **Expectations for the future**

1. Communication. Communication with governments should be strengthened for informing what are the current jobs and what are the ongoing and priority programs. Working with local organizations. Though Wetlands International has expertise and a network, it is not easy and not a clever idea either for Wetlands International to work alone for doing a project. Different countries have different conditions. From my experience, the best way for an

international NGO to work in a country is to provide assistance to the local government and perhaps do projects with local organisations rather than working alone.

2. Platform for exchange. Wetlands International has been working in many countries in the world. There should be many experiences and lessons learned in the last decades and I suggest that Wetlands International should provide a platform for members to learn how to work with Wetlands International and exchange good experiences.

### **3.4.2 Side event on Goals of Wetlands International at the UNFCCC COP- 13, Bali, December 2007**

In the evening of the second day of the Members Meeting, a side event was organised to which all member delegates and other participants were invited. The purpose of the side event was to inform delegates on the position that Wetlands International would take during the UNFCCC conference in Bali in December 2007 and its activities in trying to achieve this. The information provided should help the member delegates to inform their colleagues and governments better on critical issues, and hopefully convince their countries' delegations to take similar views to the conference table in Bali.

Marcel Silvius, Senior Programme Officer of Wetlands International explained that one of the aims of Wetlands International during the Climate Conference in Bali would be to highlight that at present no policy was dealing with the issue of carbondioxide emission from degraded peatlands. During the conference national delegations will be informed on the magnitude of the current peatland emissions and the future risk if global peatland degradation continues. The organization would promote the inclusion of the issue of peatland emission to the UNFCCC draft decision on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries.

He further explained that Wetlands international would present its conservation and restoration work in Central Kalimantan and Sumatra, to illustrate how emissions from peatland degradation can be halted using a community based approach. Linked to this he mentioned the aim to launch the Global Peatland Fund with Biox.

During the conference Wetlands International also hopes to achieve more attention for its work on reducing the impact of climate change on wetlands.

### 3.4.3 Award Ceremony

The Luc Hoffmann Medal for Wetland Science and Conservation is awarded every triennium to honour Dr Luc Hoffmann, one of the inspirational and far-sighted founders of Wetlands International. In 2004 the first Luc Hoffmann Medal was awarded. At the same time Wetlands International introduced the President's Award for Staff Excellence.

Around 75 members, staff and special guests took part in the award ceremony during the 6<sup>th</sup> Members Meeting in Shaoxing, China. Luc Hoffmann himself presented the second Luc Hoffmann medal to Anthony Fox and Richard Kingsford. Both were awarded this medal for their excellence in wetland research, especially in waterbird ecology, and for outstanding communications, team work and collaboration worldwide for the active promotion of wetland conservation and wise use.



Wetlands International President Max Finlayson presented the President's Medal for Staff Excellence to Alue Dohong, Head of the Central Kalimantan project office of Wetlands International's Indonesia Programme, for excellence in wetland management and in communications and public awareness.

The President announced that three other candidates nominated for the President's medal will receive a Highly Commended certificate in recognition of their excellent, long term support to their respective Wetlands International offices and colleagues: Mary Cisse, from the office in Senegal, Meena Kumari, from the South Asia office in India, and Flora Jones, from the office in Malaysia.



Certificates of thanks were awarded to Mr. Gerard Boere, Associate Expert, and resigning Supervisory Council members, for their long personal commitment and support to Wetlands International.

The new Vice-Chair of the Board inaugurated Max Finlayson and Stew Morrison as Counsellors of Honour, in recognition of their key contributions and outstanding support to the organisation.

The award ceremony was concluded with a beautiful traditional opera performance by the theatre group of Shaoxing City.



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