10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

"Healthy wetlands, healthy people"

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Agenda item XV	Ramsar COP10 DR 13

Draft Resolution X.13

The status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

Explanatory note

1. Article 8.2 of the Ramsar Convention states that the continuing duties of the Secretariat include, *inter alia*:

   b) to maintain the List of Wetlands of International Importance and to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any additions, extensions, deletions or restrictions concerning wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article 2;
   c) to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any changes in the ecological character of wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 3;
   d) to forward notification of any alterations to the List, or changes in character of wetlands included therein, to all Contracting Parties and to arrange for these matters to be discussed at the next Conference;
   e) to make known to the Contracting Party concerned, the recommendations of the Conferences in respect of such alterations to the List or of changes in the character of wetlands included therein.

2. Pursuant to these duties, information concerning alterations to the Ramsar List and reported changes or likely changes in the character of listed wetlands is provided to the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in the "Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance" (COP10 DOC. 7).

3. The present draft Resolution X.13 provides the mechanism for Parties to discuss these matters at COP10 in line with Article 8.2 (d), based on the information provided in COP10 DOC. 7 and in discussion at COP10, and to make recommendations, if they so wish, on any such matters raised (Article 8.2 (e)).

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number, and will not be distributed at the meeting. Delegates are requested to bring their copies to the meeting and not to request additional copies.

4. The Secretary General's report pursuant to Article 8.2 (COP10 DOC. 7) will be distributed to the participants in the second mailing of COP10 documentation, following completion of the Secretariat's analyses of the Parties' COP10 National Reports in order to include up-to-date information from those Reports.

5. This draft Resolution also covers related issues concerning reporting and responding to change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in relation to the terms of Article 3.2, as well as issues concerning progress in the establishment of a global network of Ramsar sites, including the provision of adequate and up-to-date information on the status of Ramsar sites through the preparation of Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands (RISs).

6. Bracketed sections [….] of the draft Resolution indicate where the latest information on the status of Ramsar sites, as reported to the Secretariat, will be incorporated from the Secretary General's report pursuant to Article 8.2 (COP10 DOC. 7) in time for discussion and amendment of the Resolution at the COP.

Submitted by the Standing Committee

1. RECALLING Article 2.1 of the Convention, which states that "each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance", and Resolution VIII.11 (2002), in which the Parties established that the Vision of the Ramsar List is to be achieved through the designation of coherent and comprehensive national and international networks of Ramsar sites;

2. CONGRATULATING the [xx] Contracting Parties that since the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties have designated a total of [xx] Ramsar sites covering a total of [xx] hectares: [add list of Parties];

3. NOTING, however, that despite the fact that this represents an [xx%] increase in the number of sites included in the List and an [xx%] increase in the total area designated since COP9, there remain significant gaps in the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the global network of Ramsar sites and that the total of [xxxx] sites on the Ramsar List as of 1 September 2008 falls below the targets of 2,000 sites set for the year 2005 by Resolution VII.11 (1999) and of 2,500 sites by the year 2010 that the Parties established in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the development of the Ramsar List* (2005);

4. CONCERNED that for [xx] Ramsar sites ([xx%] of all Ramsar sites) in [xx] countries (see the annex to this Resolution), Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) or adequate maps have not been provided or updated RISs and maps have not been supplied to the Secretariat for more than six years, so that information on the current status of these sites is not available;

5. AWARE that Article 3.2 of the Convention provides that "each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the [Ramsar Secretariat]";

6. RECALLING that in Resolution VIII.8 (2002) the Parties expressed concern that many Contracting Parties do not have in place the mechanisms to fulfill Article 3.2, and that they urged Contracting Parties to promptly "put in place mechanisms in order to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar [Secretariat] so as to fully implement Article 3.2 of the Convention";

7. CONCERNED that of the [xx] Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record only [xx] sites have been removed from the Record since COP9;

8. RECOGNIZING the submission of Article 3.2 reports by the governments of [list Parties and sites] of the steps being taken to restore the ecological character of these Ramsar sites;

9. AWARE, however, that in general few Parties have reported instances of change, or likely change, in the ecological character of their Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2, and CONCERNED at the number of third-party reports received by the Secretariat of Ramsar sites facing human-induced change, or likely change, in their ecological character, as reported to this meeting in the Report of the Secretary General (COP10 DOC. 7) pursuant to Article 8.2 (d), including *inter alia*: [list the sites and countries];

10. NOTING that some of these sites are parts of transboundary wetlands and river systems, such that change in their ecological character may affect the status of those parts of the wetland, including any Ramsar sites, lying within the territory of neighbouring countries, and RECALLING that Article 5 of the Convention states that "the Contracting Parties shall consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by Contracting Parties", but;

11. CONCERNED that in the management of some transboundary wetlands that include Ramsar sites, such as those in the Danube Delta [possibly list other sites as well], in relation to developments causing or likely to cause change in ecological character, fruitful international cooperation has not been achieved;

12. ALSO EXPRESSING CONCERN that the lack of Article 3.2 reporting by the Parties has meant that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has been unable to prepare a report to COP10 on the status and trends in the ecological character of Ramsar sites, as requested by Resolution VIII.8, but NOTING that the STRP was able to prepare for COP10 an operational tool on "Detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character: scientific and technical guidance" (cf. draft Resolution X.16) to help Parties to address these issues in an organized way; and

13. RECOGNIZING that the pressures on Ramsar sites are likely to increase, and that many Ramsar sites have undergone or are undergoing change in their ecological character, or are likely to undergo such change, by virtue of the land use and other pressures affecting them;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. REAFFIRMS the commitment made by the Parties in Resolution VIII.8 to implement fully the terms of Article 3.2 on reporting change and to maintain or restore the ecological character of their Ramsar sites, including employing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as possible the matters for which a site may have been the subject of an Article 3.2 report; and, once those matters have been resolved, to submit a further report, so that both positive influences at sites and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in the reporting to meetings of the Conference of the Parties in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar site network;

15. CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties to adopt and apply, as part of their management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, a suitable monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the annex to Resolution VI.1 (1996), and to incorporate within these monitoring regimes the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), so as to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2;

16. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those [xx] Contracting Parties that in their National Reports to this meeting provided information on [xxx] Ramsar sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, namely: [list to be added from COP10 National Reports];

17. ALSO CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfillment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the site would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record, and to request such listing as appropriate;

18. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with sites on the Montreux Record to regularly provide the Secretariat with an update on progress in addressing the issues for which these Ramsar sites were listed on the Record, including reporting fully on these matters in their National Reports to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

19. REQUESTS those Contracting Parties with Ramsar sites for which the Secretary General has received reports of change, or likely change, in their ecological character to advise the Secretary General at the earliest opportunity of steps taken to address these changes, or likely changes, in ecological character;

20. CONGRATULATES Contracting Parties for their statements made at this meeting concerning site-specific ecological character and boundary issues, notably:

[to be added during COP]

21. RECOMMENDS, pursuant to Article 8.2 (e), the following with respect to alterations to the List or changes in the ecological character of specific Ramsar sites listed in the Report of the Secretary General to this Conference:

i) [recommendations arrived at during COP discussions]
ii)
iii)
iv) etc.

22. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to use the most up-to-date format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) prepared by the Secretariat to incorporate the amendments introduced at this meeting in their designations of new sites, extensions to existing sites, and updates on existing sites;

23. STRONGLY URGES those Parties within whose territories lie Ramsar sites for which official descriptions have not been provided, and/or for which suitable maps have not yet been submitted, to provide or update, as a matter of urgency, Ramsar site descriptions (Ramsar Information Sheets and/or maps) in one of the Convention's official working languages, using the most up-to-date Ramsar Information Sheet, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the Contracting Parties listed in the annex to this Resolution and request them to do so;

24. WELCOMES the statements made in the National Reports to COP10 or during this meeting concerning planned extensions to existing Ramsar sites, and future designations of new or extended Ramsar sites, from the following [xx] Contracting Parties: [Country (x sites) to be added from National Reports and statements made during the COP]: and

25. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to consider options for assisting and encouraging Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in ecological character.

Annex

List of Contracting Parties from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated Sheets are needed as a matter of priority

[to be added in September 2008 from information supplied from the Ramsar Sites Information Service]