

# **Memorandum of Cooperation 2011-2015 between the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)**

July 2011

## **Preamble**

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the single most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues. According to the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties agree to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on three pillars of:

- promoting wise use of wetlands,
- developing international cooperation, and
- developing a network of Wetland sites of International Importance.

The conservation and wise management of wetlands through the designation of wetlands for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, especially the obligation to maintain the ecological character of designated sites, deserves special recognition. This obligation recognizes the importance of wetlands for the maintenance of healthy and productive inland freshwater and coastal systems. In the context of water and wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands thus addresses issues that guide its Contracting Parties on ways to achieve sustainable development.

Within the general obligations set out by the treaty, Contracting Parties, meeting as the Conference of the Parties (COP), identify priorities for action through a Strategic Plan. Implementation of this Memorandum of Cooperation shall be through joint actions within the framework of the Strategic Plan, detailed in the attached annex.

The objectives of the Society of Wetland Scientists are to foster conservation and understanding of wetlands by advancing public education and awareness about the world's

wetland resources, provide an independent forum for exchanging ideas and data developed within wetland science, developing and encouraging wetland science as a distinct discipline, and encouraging the knowledgeable management and sustainable use of wetland resources.

The Convention on Wetlands and SWS recognize the fundamental role played by wetlands in regulating and providing water, in supporting maintenance of cultural and biological diversity, in ensuring high ecosystem productivity, and in providing ecosystem services and benefits for people and the planet.

The Convention on Wetlands and SWS share similar conservation and management goals and the positive cooperation between the two institutions to date has been expressed through mutual recognition by our respective governing bodies. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS have entered into a cooperative relationship to reinforce existing mechanisms, through a Memorandum of Cooperation first signed in 1999 and renewed in 2004, including any specific joint work plans, and establish new and specific mechanisms for enhancing synergies and partnerships to achieve common goals, whilst avoiding duplication of effort through application of the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan.

To facilitate this ongoing collaboration in 2010 SWS established a formal Ramsar Section.

Therefore, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS, through this further renewal of the Memorandum of Cooperation, agree the following:

#### **Article 1. Mechanisms for Programme Cooperation**

A . The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS will continue to develop a collaborative programme for sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management by maintaining and increasing current consultation and cooperation between them.

B. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS will inform their focal points at regional and national levels of their cooperative activities. For general matters, the focal points for the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS are respectively the Secretary General and the President, or their delegated representatives.

C. The focal points, or their assigned delegates, may meet from time to time to assess the implementation of this Memorandum, exchange documents, and review on-going activities.

## **Article 2. Joint Activities**

A. Common areas for specific joint activities will be identified and developed collaboratively between the Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel and the SWS Ramsar Section, and will be linked as implementation support to the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and will be reviewed annually or at the request of either party.

B. SWS and the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands will communicate agreement on common areas with their respective networks, and SWS will endeavour to mobilise the expertise available on wetlands and water resources within its organisation in support of these activities. This will include support and encouragement of both the SWS Ramsar Education and Outreach Sub-Committee and SWS's Ramsar Section, whose goals include facilitating the transfer of scientific and technical advice between the Ramsar Convention and SWS, facilitating the development of joint educational activities and community programs, and stimulating discussions of Ramsar related issues in the SWS membership through symposia, internet discussion and informal networking.

C. Two SWS representatives will participate in the work of the Ramsar Convention's Scientific & Technical Review Panel, with the goal of establishing a working relationship with the STRP on matters of common interest and expertise. One SWS representative will be the appointed Chair of the SWS Ramsar Section (or his/her delegated representative); the other will be selected by the SWS Chair in consultation with the SWS President and Executive Board, in relation to the priority themes of the current STRP work plan.

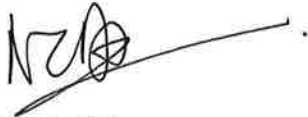
D. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and SWS will provide each other with details of their annual work programmes to ensure harmonisation of activities at global, regional and country levels.

E. The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint conservation activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.

### Article 3. Obligation, Review and Termination

A. This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared objective and vision. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for, the other party to this Memorandum of Cooperation.

B. The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is six years. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party (usually annually) and may be terminated by either party subject to six months notice in writing.



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