

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel  
Gland, Switzerland, 8-11 April 2003**

**DOC. STRP11-21**

Agenda item 6.3 v)

### **Background materials concerning invasive alien species**

1. Attached to this note is COP8 Resolution VIII.18 on *Invasive species and wetlands*.
2. This provides background material to the task requested to be undertaken by the Panel for 2003-2005 on this issue, if a lead organization or organizations are able to take on this work.
3. The STRP is requested to familiarize itself with the contents of this material, as the basis for preparing its Work Plan activities on these matters.

**"Wetlands: water, life, and culture"**  
**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**  
**to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002**

## Resolution VII.18

### Invasive species and wetlands

1. AWARE that alien species that become invasive continue to pose a major threat to the ecological character of wetlands worldwide, and to wetland species, and that such invasions can cause major social and economic damage and loss;
2. ALSO AWARE that it is predicted that the effects of global climate change will include invasion by alien species into new areas, and that species formerly regarded as benign may become invasive;
3. RECALLING Resolution 5.6 on *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept*, which includes reference to taking measures to address problems of invasive species, and Resolution VII.14 in which the Contracting Parties urged that steps be taken to identify, eradicate and control invasive species in their jurisdictions; to review and as necessary adopt legislation and programmes to prevent the introduction and movement or trade of new and environmentally dangerous alien species into or within their jurisdictions; to develop capacity to facilitate identification and awareness of alien and invasive species; and to share information and experience, including on best practice management;
4. CONCERNED that little information has been supplied by Contracting Parties in the Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) prepared for the designation of Wetlands of International Importance concerning the presence, threats and management measures for invasive alien species on Ramsar sites and that in many cases this information is out of date, and RECALLING that Contracting Parties have resolved to provide an updated RIS for each designated Ramsar site at no longer than six-year intervals (Resolution VI.13);
5. NOTING that guidance adopted by this meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14) and the Resolution on the guidelines adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment and their relevance to Ramsar (Resolution VIII.9), is relevant to the recognition, prevention, eradication and control of invasive alien species;
6. RECALLING that in Resolution VII.14 the Parties also directed the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to prepare wetland-specific guidelines for identifying, establishing priorities for action, and managing alien species which potentially pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, in cooperation with the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of CBD, the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), and other programmes established under international conventions;

7. AWARE that the STRP has contributed its input to CBD's SBSTTA at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting (March 2001) when guidance based on Article 8 (h) of the CBD and Decision V/8 of CBD COP5 on invasive species was extensively reviewed;
8. ALSO AWARE that the CBD-Ramsar 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Work Plan 2002-2006 includes collaborative actions with the GISP, IUCN–The World Conservation Union and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), to increase the availability of information and guidance on aquatic invasive species and the development of further work, including assessment of inland waters invasive alien species;
9. RECOGNISING that CBD, GISP and IUCN have prepared strategies, reviews of legislation, and toolkits, including case studies for addressing different aspects of invasive alien species, and that these also provide valuable guidance and assistance to Contracting Parties addressing wetland invasive species issues;
10. NOTING that the GISP is developing a further programme of work which will include a focus on assessment, assistance and tools for application at national and regional scales, and provision of further information focusing on aquatic invasive species, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, CBD, IUCN, and other relevant organizations; and
11. WELCOMING the work of the Ramsar Bureau, in collaboration with IUCN, the World Heritage Centre, and others, for the initiation of a communications and awareness-raising project on African wetland invasive species which will disseminate information and advice on good practice and experience to wetland managers;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. URGES Contracting Parties to address the problems posed by invasive species in wetland ecosystems in a decisive and holistic manner, making use, as appropriate, of the tools and guidance developed by various institutions and processes, including any relevant guidelines or guiding principles adopted under other conventions;
13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to participate in and contribute fully to the further development of appropriate tools and guidance for addressing these problems;
14. INSTRUCES the Ramsar Bureau to continue cooperating as closely as possible with the institutions and processes that are dealing with invasive species issues, particularly those of direct relevance to wetland ecosystems;
15. URGES Contracting Parties to undertake risk assessments of alien species which may pose a threat to the ecological character of wetlands, taking into account the potential changes to ecosystems from the effects of global climate change, and applying the guidance available in Ramsar's *Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10);
16. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to identify the presence of invasive alien species in Ramsar sites and other wetlands in their territory, the threats they pose to the ecological character of these wetlands, including the risk of invasions by such species not yet present within each site, the actions underway or planned for their prevention, eradication or control, and, for Ramsar sites, to report on this to the Ramsar Bureau without delay in line

with Article 3.2 of the Convention, so that this information may be included in the Ramsar Sites Database;

17. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to make information provided by Contracting Parties available to the Convention on Biological Diversity and others in support of the implementation of the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan 2002-2006;
18. RECOGNISES that many aquatic invasive species, both inland and coastal and marine species, can spread rapidly and repeatedly throughout entire wetland ecosystems, river basins and coastal and marine zones, such that eradication in one place may not prove effective at preventing further invasions, and URGES all Contracting Parties with shared wetlands, river systems, and coastal/marine zones to cooperate fully in the prevention, early warning in transboundary wetlands, eradication and control of invasive species, applying the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Ramsar Handbook 9);
19. URGES Contracting Parties, in their development and implementation of national strategies and responses to invasive alien species, to recognise that terrestrial invasions by alien species can threaten and affect the ecological character of wetlands including through the lowering of water tables and alteration of water flow patterns, and to ensure that appropriate measures to prevent or control such invasions are in place;
20. URGES Contracting Parties, prior to moving water between river basins, to examine carefully the potential environmental impacts due to invasive species;
21. FURTHER URGES all Contracting Parties to work closely with their counterpart national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and others in the development and implementation of national policies, strategies and management responses to threats from invasive alien species, and to ensure that prevention, eradication and control of such species are fully incorporated in national legislation and national wetland and biodiversity policies, strategies and action plans, applying the Ramsar *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands* (Ramsar Handbook 3) and *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies* (Ramsar Handbook 2);
22. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to explore with the secretariat of the CBD and the GISP ways and means for the Ramsar Convention to contribute to the review, for the CBD, on the assessment of the impact of invasive species on inland waters, including on islands, and to make available the results of this review to Contracting Parties and wetland managers;
23. ENCOURAGES the Ramsar Bureau, in collaboration with IUCN, the World Heritage Centre, and UNESCO's MAB, to further develop and implement communication and awareness-raising work on African wetland invasive species for wetland managers, to disseminate widely its information and awareness products, and to consider developing similar projects in other Ramsar regions; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and donor organizations to consider providing resources for such projects; and
24. ALSO ENCOURAGES the GISP, IUCN, and others to further develop Web-based sources of information on identification, distribution and management of invasive species

and potential invasive species affecting wetlands, and to make these widely available to Contracting Parties and wetland managers so as to assist them in the early detection, eradication and control of invasive species.