



11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands: home and destination”

Bucharest, Romania, 6-13 July 2012

Agenda item XV

Ramsar COP11 DR4

Draft Resolution XI.4

The status of sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance

Explanatory note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat draws to the attention of the Contracting Parties the following aspects of the process of preparation and finalization of this Draft Resolution, its consideration during the COP plenaries, and the Decisions of the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee concerning these matters:

1. The information included in the Draft Resolution on “The status of sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance” is compiled by the Secretariat from information provided by Contracting Parties and included in the “Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning List of Wetlands of International Importance”, which is provided to COP11 as an Information Paper (COP11 DOC. 8).
2. In order to ensure that the information provided to Parties in both the Draft Resolution and the Article 8.2 Information Paper are as up to date as possible, Standing Committee 43 decided, through Decision SC43-30, that the following process should be followed for COP11 consideration of these matters:
 - i) Concerning COP11 DOC. 8, Contracting Parties are requested to provide to the Secretariat any updated and/or new information (subsequent to information provided to the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee and included in DOC. SC43-29) not later than 2 June 2012.
 - ii) All such updated and/or new information received by the Secretariat by 2 June 2012 will be incorporated into COP11 DOC. 8, which will then be issued in mid-June, prior to the start of COP11.
 - iii) Concerning COP11 DR4, an outline text is provided below, and on the basis of all information received from Parties by 2 June 2012 and included in COP11 DOC.8, the Secretariat will then prepare a revised version of COP11 DR4.

- iv) This COP11 DR4 Rev. 1 will, according to Decision SC43-30, be issued to Parties in the three Convention languages shortly before the opening of the COP.
- 3. The process outlined here has also been designed to help streamline COP plenary processes by minimizing the need for Parties to make plenary interventions to provide detailed factual updated information on Ramsar Sites for inclusion in the final text of COP11 DR4, and also by making unnecessary any interventions concerning only information provided in COP Information Papers, such as COP11 DOC. 8 pursuant to Article 8.2, which are not the subject of COP negotiation.
- 4. At its 42nd meeting the Standing Committee expressed concern at the undue length of time taken during plenaries of recent COPs on interventions concerning only the content of COP Information Papers and the information in the “Status of Ramsar Sites” Draft Resolution. At its 43rd meeting the Committee approved guidance to Parties on these matters, “to be provided as a COP11 Information Paper, and to be specifically drawn to the attention of all Parties and delegates who will participate in the COP” (Decision SC43-1).
- 5. For ease of reference for Contracting Parties and other COP11 participants when COP11 DR4 is under consideration, the sections of this COP11 Information Paper relating to consideration of COP11 DR4 and its supporting Article 8.2 Information Paper are reproduced here:

B) The Information Paper on the “Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance”

- 12. Parties should not intervene during plenary sessions merely to update, correct or amend information contained in this Information Paper.
- 13. Parties should submit any proposed updates, corrections or amendments concerning the status of Ramsar Sites contained in this Information Paper to the Secretariat, in writing (on paper or by e-mail), before or during the COP.
- 14. The Secretariat will then reflect these proposed updates, corrections and amendments in a “Rev.1 version” of this Information Paper to be made available on the Ramsar website following the COP.

C. Draft Resolution on “The Status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance”

- 15. An “outline” version of this Draft Resolution will have been provided to Parties at the time of issuing all COP Draft Resolutions three months before the opening of COP.
- 16. The Secretariat will prepare a “Rev. 1” of this Draft Resolution, in the three Convention languages, reflecting the up-to-date information provided in the COP Information Paper on the “Report of the Secretary General pursuant to

Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance”, which will be issued to Parties shortly before the opening of the COP.

17. Once this Draft Resolution Rev. 1 has been issued, Parties are requested to submit to the Secretariat, in writing (on paper or by e-mail), any proposed updates, corrections or amendments concerning the status of Ramsar Sites contained in this Draft Resolution as soon as possible – either before the COP or at the latest during the COP prior to the first plenary discussion of the Draft Resolution¹.
18. During plenary sessions Parties should refrain from intervening to speak in detail on any updates, corrections or amendments to factual information contained in this Draft Resolution which they have submitted to the Secretariat, but rather they should intervene only briefly to advise that they have provided, or are providing, such text to the Secretariat, so that this can be recorded in the Conference report and so that the Secretariat can verify that it has received all such texts from Parties.
19. Interventions and negotiations during the COP should be addressed exclusively to the content of the Rev.1 version of this Draft Resolution, and not to the content of the supporting Article 8.2 Information Paper.
20. The Secretariat will prepare a “Rev. 2” of this Draft Resolution, incorporating all amendments to the text submitted by Parties, for Parties’ further consideration and adoption later in COP.

D. The role of the COP President/Alternate President concerning these matters during plenary sessions.

21. The COP President or Alternate President chairing the plenary session shall call a Party or other delegate to order if he/she considers that an intervention consists only of comments on factual matters contained in an Information Paper for the COP.

Draft Resolution XI.4 [outline]

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

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

¹ In order to clarify the process and its timelines, this paragraph incorporates an extension to the timeline originally envisaged for Contracting Parties to submit amendments to COP11 DR4 Rev. 1, which is necessary to harmonise the terms of SC43 Decisions on these matters.

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. ALSO RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Ramsar Sites for the consideration and recommendations by the Parties at ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on these matters, and Article 6.2(d) concerning the competence of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
3. CONGRATULATING the XX Contracting Parties that since the close of COP10 (4 November 2008) have designated a total of XX Ramsar Sites covering a total of XX hectares as of 26 June 2012 [country names], and ALSO CONGRATULATING the XX Contracting Parties that have designated or are preparing to designate a further XX Ramsar Sites which are being finalized with the Secretariat for adding to the List: country names;
4. NOTING, however, that despite the fact that this represents a XX% increase in the number of sites in the List since COP10, there remain significant gaps in the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the global network of Ramsar Sites and that the total of XX sites on the Ramsar List as of 26 June 2012 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);
5. CONCERNED that for XX Ramsar Sites (XX% of all Ramsar Sites) in XX countries (see Annex 1 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;
6. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported to the Secretariat in updated Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) concern only extensions or recalculations of areas including through more precise boundary delineations;
7. 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]”;
8. RECALLING that in Resolution VIII.8 (2002) the Conference of the Parties expressed concern that many Contracting Parties do not have in place the mechanisms to fulfil Article 3.2, and that it urged 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”;

9. CONCERNED that of the XX Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record as of 26 June 2012 only XX sites have been removed from the Record since COP10, and NOTING that Contracting Parties have placed XX further Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record since COP10 [country names];
10. NOTING that XX Contracting Parties provided information only in their National Reports to COP11, rather than by reporting to the Ramsar Secretariat without delay as stipulated in Article 3.2 of the Convention, concerning ecological character change issues to a further XX Ramsar Sites (as listed in Annex 2 to this Resolution);
11. 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 reports first received by the Secretariat of Ramsar Sites facing human-induced change or likely change in their ecological character came from third parties, as reported to this meeting in the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (d) concerning XX sites in more than XX countries;
12. 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”; 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 and 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), in order 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 have provided Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat about XX Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur;
17. ALSO EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those XX Contracting Parties that in their National Reports to this meeting provided information on a further XX Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 2 to this Resolution;
18. 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;
19. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with sites on the Montreux Record to regularly provide the Secretariat with updates on their progress in addressing the issues for which those Ramsar Sites were listed on the Record, including reporting on these matters in their National Reports to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
20. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat, in conjunction with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel's task on redesigning the Montreux Record questionnaire, to consider desirable frequencies of progress reporting by Contracting Parties concerning resolution of issues that led to the inclusion of sites in the Montreux Record, and so to allow the Record to be updated before each COP;
21. 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;
22. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to use the most up-to-date format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) in their designations of new sites, extensions to existing sites, and updates on existing sites;
23. EXPRESSES APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have brought their Information Sheets for Ramsar Wetlands (RISs) up to date for all the Ramsar Sites within their territory;
24. STRONGLY URGES those Parties within whose territories lie Ramsar Sites for which official descriptions have still not been provided, and/or for which suitable maps have still not yet been submitted, to provide as a matter of the greatest urgency the Ramsar Information Sheets and/or maps in one of the Convention's official working languages, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 1 to this Resolution and request them to do so;
25. WELCOMES the statements made in the National Reports to COP11 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 names (number of Ramsar Sites); and

24. 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 1a

List of Ramsar Sites for which no RIS and/or adequate map has been submitted to the Secretariat

Annex 1b

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

(as at 26 June 2012)

Annex 2

Ramsar Sites with reports of human-induced negative changes having occurred, occurring or likely to occur (Article 3.2)

List of all sites with information received by the Secretariat and followed up with the Administrative Authorities. Initial information was received either from the Administrative Authorities or from third parties or was included in National Reports to COP11.

Party

Ramsar Site