



# Montreal Workshop on Partnerships - Summary Report

9 September 1997

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International Workshop on Partnership for Integrating Wetlands and Water Resources Management

Montreal, Canada, on 31st August and 1st September 1997 

Organised by: Wetlands International

in association with

the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, GEF, GWP, IWRA, IUCN, Ramsar Convention Bureau, UNEP, UNDP, WCMC, World Bank, WWF

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## SUMMARY REPORT

The Workshop was held in conjunction with the World Water Congress (2-6 Sept), SBSTTA meeting of CBD (1-5 September), and the Global Biodiversity Forum (29-31 August). It aimed to capitalise on the presence of key representatives from international agencies in the biodiversity and water sectors who were attending these meetings, to exchange information on programmes, and to examine options for partnership in wetlands and water resources management.

The Workshop commenced with a plenary session including the launch of a Wetlands International / UNEP publication on Wetlands and Integrated River Basin Management. High level panel presentations highlighted issues which were then debated by working groups to explore options for partnership. The Panel was chaired by Jon Kusler (Coordinator of the Wetlands, River Basins and Water Resources Management Specialist Group, Wetlands International), and included:

Calestous Juma (Executive Secretary, CBD)

Peter Schei (Chair, CBD - SBSTTA)

Franklin Cardy (Executive Coordinator, Natural Resources and Director, Land - UNEP)

Torkil Jonch-Clausen (Chair, Technical Advisory Committee, Global Water Partnership)

Mike Smart (Senior Policy Advisor, Ramsar Convention Bureau)

Gunilla Bjorklund (Executive Secretary, Comprehensive Freshwater Assessment Program)

Walter Lusigi (Senior Environmental Specialist, Land Resource Management, GEF)

Richard Jolly (President, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council and Special Advisor to the Administrator of UNDP)

Wulf Klohn (Water Resources Specialist, FAO)

Tony Whitten (Biodiversity Specialist, World Bank)

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## The challenge

There is universal recognition that one of the greatest challenges for present and future generations is to ensure and sustain the availability of an adequate supply of clean freshwater. Inland fresh waters (which are mainly wetlands) are

often the direct source for people of this vital natural resource, and the micro- and macro-biodiversity of inland waters are major cleaning agents for polluted water. In addition, the various types of inland waters have a range of well-known hydrological functions (including flood control and groundwater recharge), and support a rich biodiversity. Thus, there is an inextricable link between water resources, wetlands, and the health and livelihood of human communities.

With the growing freshwater crisis, effective wetland conservation will depend increasingly on sustainable and integrated water resource management. Similarly, due to the important functions of wetlands in sustaining the hydrological cycle, effective water resource management will increasingly depend on wetland management as a tool in water management. The workshop participants therefore concluded that integrated wetland and water resource management would be greatly enhanced by the following actions:

### *Establish Partnerships*

*Specialised organisations (governmental, non-governmental, and the private sector) from the wetland and water resources sectors should establish lasting partnerships at the international and national levels, and develop and implement with appropriate government agencies and donors a collaborative programme of actions (against measurable goals) to ensure the integrated management of wetlands and water resources through ecosystem-based management.*

### *Communicate Effectively*

*The integration of wetland conservation and water resources management will only occur if there is effective communication between and within these sectors at international, national and local levels. Such communication will involve the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and at international level may be South-South or South-North. Important communications media will include integrated management committees, demonstration management projects, management guidelines, specialist groups, training programmes, awareness campaigns, the Internet. Quality information is a prerequisite for useful communication.*

### *Build Local Empowerment*

*Integrated wetland and water resource management occurs on the ground and depends on, and provides benefits to, local people. Community involvement, self help programmes, local language materials, and educational programmes should be a priority for all action programmes. Small grant, and support to NGOs may be very effective at local level.*

During the workshop the first steps were made to establish this partnership at international level between organisations involved in delivery of wetland and water resource activities throughout the world. A work programme was drafted that takes into account the primary needs of communicating effectively and empowering at local level. This is available for consultation and comment. Further specific, short-term actions were identified as follows:

1. The wetlands sector should work actively to provide input to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, to ensure that the valuable role of wetlands in providing and regulating water supply, and supporting local communities, is taken into account when addressing the challenges for sustainable water resource management.
2. CBD (via SBSTTA3 and COP4) should build on the work of the White Oak, Trondheim, Wageningen and GBF8 workshops on Biodiversity of Inland Waters to establish a funded programme of work that incorporates actions to facilitate cooperation at the national, river basin, or international levels to integrate wetland conservation issues into water use planning and management. Quantifiable goals should be established, and progress monitored and reported.
3. The Global Water Partnership should develop its Ecosystem and Environment window, and identify priority programme areas and the necessary partnerships to implement those programmes. Furthermore, wetland ecosystem issues should be included in the other GWP sectoral windows.
4. More widespread recognition and use should be made of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) as an enabling framework for the multi-sectoral wise use of wetlands in the context of their catchments; a review of progress in this area should be made at the time of the next COP in 1999.
5. Multilateral and bilateral donors and governments should take urgent action to meet the challenge by enhancing or reallocating resources in favour of integrated management of wetlands and water resources.

NB. This document considers wetlands according to the definition of the Ramsar Convention, which includes rivers and lakes.

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