



Asian Wetland Symposium (AWS)/ Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting (RARM)

Meeting Report

Siem Reap, Cambodia

3 – 7 November 2014



**Asian Wetland Symposium (AWS)
and
Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP12 of the Ramsar Convention
(RARM)**

Date: 3 – 7 November 2014

Venue: Apsara Angkor Resort and Conference

Host: Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia

Organizers: Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Ramsar Center Japan, Wetlands International Japan and
Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia.



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Background Information

In preparation for the 12th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention which will be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 1 – 9 June 2015, a meeting for the Asian Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was organized in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 3 to 7 November 2014. This event was organized in conjunction with the Asian Wetland Symposium (AWS) as encouraged by Ramsar Resolution IX. 19.

Some 162 participants registered for the meetings. This included representatives from 21 Ramsar Contracting Parties in the Asia Region while observers included representatives from intergovernmental, international and national non-governmental organizations, as well as wetland experts and other stakeholders.

Previous Asian Wetland Symposiums have provided an opportunity for discussions among various sectors including national and local governments, NGOs, scientists, private sector, and local and indigenous people engaged in wise use of wetlands on issues, approaches and priorities relating to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Asia.

Recognizing the importance of the AWS in bringing other wetland actors to a common platform, Ramsar Convention adopted Resolution IX. 19, requesting "Contracting Parties, in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and international NGOs, to facilitate the support to and the participation in the AWS by a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to local governments, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities...", at the 9th Conference of the Parties.

The Ramsar Secretariat and the Standing Committee were also requested to develop and encourage linkages between the Ramsar Pre-COP Regional Meetings and regional wetland fora by Resolution IX. 19. Therefore, the AWS was organized jointly with the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting in 2014. One of the aims of this joint meeting was to gather practical inputs from various sectors on key Draft Resolutions that will be presented to COP12.

Objectives

The main focus of the meeting was to bring together the National Focal Points from Contracting Parties, wetland experts, international and national NGOs working in the field of wetlands conservation and wise use. During the meeting, discussions were held on the key Draft Resolutions as well as on the emerging issues and other pertinent themes in the Asian wetlands context.

The main objectives of the meeting were to:

- Share progress on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Asian Region;
- Share progress on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives and discuss the potential to add new Ramsar Regional Initiatives in Asia;
- Share and discuss the key Draft Resolutions that will be discussed at COP12 in 2015;
- Introduce the new Ramsar Site Information Service (RSIS) and online Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) template and provide training to the Contracting Party members on how to access and use these tools;
- Provide a platform for other partners working on wetland conservation in Asia to share their success stories and lessons learned;

Working language: English

Participants

Since this was a joint meeting of the Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting, representatives from the Asian Contracting Parties as well as wetland experts, and national and international non-governmental organizations participated in the meetings. Some 162 participants registered for the meeting and the full list of participants is available in Annex 1 (a to c).

Meeting sponsorship

The meeting received generous financial support from the Governments of Cambodia, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, as well as from the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF) and the Biosphere Connection programme of the Star Alliance network of airlines companies. The meeting organizers wish to express their gratitude to these sponsors without whom, the meeting would not have been possible.

Program

The program contained a mixture of sessions under the Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting. The AWS sessions complemented the Ramsar Pre-COP12 sessions and enhanced participants' understanding of the Draft Resolution and other emerging issues in the region. The full program is available in Annex 2. Additionally, all the Draft Resolutions that were discussed during the course of the meeting and amended with track changes are available in Annex 3.

Field Visits during the meeting

During the meeting, a field visit was made on 5 November to Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary. This is a new proposed Ramsar Site within the Tonle Sap Lake which is home to large breeding populations of various Waterbird species.



Figure 1. Field trip to Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

On 8 November, an optional visit was made to the Angkor Wat UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Figure 2. Sunrise at Angkor Wat

Meeting Sessions

DAY 1:

Opening Ceremony

During the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Khim Bunsong, the Governor of Siem Reap Province gave his welcome remarks, during which he emphasized the importance of Siem Reap for tourism and elaborated on the vision of clean and green tourism based on the concept of sustainable development. He also elaborated on the importance of wetlands to some of the historical sites in Cambodia, including the world renowned Angkor Wat temples, as well as the various benefits provided by the wetlands that people still depend on in Siem Reap, and in Cambodia. He also stressed on the importance, not just in designating more Ramsar Sites, but also in paying attention to the management and conservation of the existing sites.

Following his speech was Ms. Bour Khamtorng, from the Stung Treng Ramsar Site. She represented the local communities living in the wetlands in Cambodia and she emphasized the importance of wetlands in their daily life and their historical and current dependence on it. She also mentioned the current threats and the concerns that local community members share about their future, if development projects in and beside the Mekong River did not take into account the importance of wetlands for people. She stressed on prioritizing people and their habitats before starting development projects.

After Ms. Khamtorng moving speech, there was a video statement from the Ramsar Secretary General, Dr. Christopher Briggs, who once again stressed on the importance of wetlands. Then, Mr. Yoshihiro Natori, on behalf of Wetlands International Japan and Ramsar Center Japan, introduced the idea behind the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting.



Figure 3. His Excellency Say Samal, the Minister of Environment, Cambodia

Finally, opening remarks were made by H.E. Say Samal, the Minister of Environment, Cambodia. He reiterated the environmental challenges in the country as a result of the growing population, land degradation, deforestation, intensification of aquatic systems and climate change. He also shared that the Ministry of Environment is acknowledging these challenges and spearheading government reform with strategic policies, better management plans and implementations of urban and industrial waste and also the implementation of the sustainable city concept. He also expressed his hope that this meeting will be valuable for all the participants of the meeting.

Session 1. Status of wetland conservation and wise use in Cambodia

This session heard presentations for the Ministry of Environment, Birdlife International, IUCN and a joint presentation from WWF and Conservation International, elaborating on the importance of wetland conservation and the process of Ramsar Sites designation. Mr. Long Kheng (Ministry of Environment) elaborated on the importance of responding to the livelihood needs of the people and of working with local communities in conservation activities. Furthermore, Mr. Bou Vorsak (Birdlife International Cambodia) described the process of designating a Ramsar Sites and it was found that the internal approval process to designate a site can take up to 2-3 years.

Mr. Chhith Sam Ath (WWF Cambodia) made a joint presentation with Conservation International, wherein he stressed the importance of the connectivity and continuity of water flow along the Mekong River, since 80% of the population are in the rural areas and are heavily and directly dependent on agriculture and fisheries. He also shared that while the current ecosystem connectivity (2011) is 44.4%, after the hydropower initiatives, the value is predicted to fall down to 9.7% by 2022. To tackle this and conserve the ecosystem connectivity, NGOs are working with the Governments to prepare management plans addressing trans-boundary issues. Finally, Mr. Kimsreng Kong (IUCN Cambodia) presented the zoning scheme at Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary and the awareness programme to increase community involvement in the conservation of the site.

During the discussion, general comments and recommendations from the participants were to:

- Take into account the local community livelihoods in any and all conservation interventions;
- Scale up and replicate successful initiatives at other locations. For example, co-management agreements have proven to be highly successful in Cambodia as each stakeholder's role is clearly define from the start and because co-management agreements tend to be community-driven, adaptive and resilient to changes;
- Develop integrated management plans that incorporate a wide range of impacts on wetlands, taking into account existing plans;
- Protect sites with high conservation value adjacent to local communities by zoning of sites into core areas and buffer areas;
- Incorporate local knowledge and traditional practices into site management plans for efficient and cost-effective approach to managing the site.

Session 2. Updates from the Ramsar Secretariat and partners

Mr. Lew Young (Ramsar Secretariat) briefed the audience on the number of new Ramsar Sites that have been designated over the past triennium as well as the number of RIS updates that the Asia Team has received and the RIS updates that are outstanding. He also mentioned the recent decline in funding available for Small Grants Fund projects and encouraged Contracting Parties to make voluntary contributions towards the SGF program. Japan has been a strong supporter of the SGF, by providing annual contributions of CHF40,000 in recent years to support one project.

Next, Mr. Chris Perceval (Ramsar Secretariat) made a short presentation on the partnerships and resource mobilization and shared the ten priorities areas for his work. Comments from the participants included that the priorities should be consistent with the needs of the Contracting Parties and that local people and local communities should be recognized as being important partners. Following that, Dr. Sonali Senaratna (IWMI) introduced the participants to the operation of the STRP and their current work.

Finally, Ms. Reiko Nakamura (Ramsar Center Japan) went over the history of the Asian Wetland Symposium and the 'KODOMO' educational activities for children that are conducted by RCJ. There was some discussion about expanding the scope of RCJ's educational work, at least by way of formulating a framework that can be shared so that other interested organizations can undertake similar activities.

Generally, Contracting Parties showed their desire to focus on the management of existing sites, rather than designating new sites and they also proposed the development of a handbook for Ramsar Sites

managers and management authorities. There was also a call for improving synergies in the implementation of the biodiversity related conventions and for the Ramsar Secretariat to help identify opportunities within the Asia Region.

Session 3. Updates from the Ramsar Regional Initiatives

In this session, presentations were given by the two Ramsar Regional Centres (for East Asia, and for Central and West Asia) and one Ramsar Regional Initiative (EAAFP), about the history of their initiative and also the progress they have made so far.

During discussions, three new initiatives were also proposed. The first was from Thailand for a 'Regional Wetland Learning Center' based at the Siriwat Rajini Ecosystem Learning Center. This initiative is based on a national partnership between academia, government, local communities and also the private sector, with the objective of turning it into a broader regional initiative.

The second new initiative was proposed by IUCN for the formation of a network tentatively entitled called 'MekongWET' to cover the Greater Mekong Sub-region. The proposed MekongWET would aim to promote transboundary cooperation, share best practices and develop local language tools. However this initiative needs to address the political, technical and operational issues as well as determine who would be in charge of leading it.

There were also initial discussions on developing a Ramsar Regional Centre for South Asia. Whilst there was enthusiasm for this suggestion, further details still have to be discussed, such as on the management and operational structure for such an initiative. Overall, there was general consensus that the member countries must be active for this initiative, and that they must collaborate to make sure that there is no overlap or duplication of work.

During the breakout session that followed, each existing and proposed Initiative was able to discuss their ideas more fully and to come up with a course of action that was more consistent with what they wanted to achieve by establishing such an initiative.

DAY 2.

Session 4. Communications and CEPA Program

This was one of the AWS sessions that complimented the Draft Resolution on the CEPA Program. There were five presentations elaborating on the importance of participatory environmental education where students are involved in monitoring activities; basin-wide research collaboration between select universities in South-East Asia that focused on creating a baseline for persistent organic pollutants (POP) in the Mekong River Basin; turning 'invisible' wetland landscapes such as tidal flats into visible landscapes by acknowledging them in maps, in management plans, and finding ways to promote a positive attitude towards them; providing climate change education to increase adaptive capacity of local communities by also targeting women and children; and finally, again, promoting environmental education activities by involving local communities, students and teachers in the research.

The main points discussed during this session were the importance of:

- Research and training;
- Stakeholders coming together to address the needs and issues at the basin level;
- Increasing visibility of certain wetlands such as tidal flats because they are generally overlooked and not considered in development planning, although they provide huge benefits;
- Promoting inter-regional cooperation to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches and documenting best practices in CEPA and;
- Recognising that the main challenge in CEPA is getting enough donor-funding because the outcomes of CEPA take a longer time to be realised.

Session 5. Draft Resolution on Programme on CEPA 2016-2021 (SC48-23)

Lew Young briefed the participants on the Draft Resolution on 'The Wetlands and People Programme' or CEPA Program. After this, there were three presentations, concerning the Ramsar Wetland Education Centre Handbook prepared by the Environment Resource Foundation (RO Korea); the water research and learning program in UAE, and the challenges and approaches to promoting wetland CEPA that has been utilised by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) in East and South-East Asia.

Following these presentations, participants discussed and made comments on the draft CEPA Programme (SC48-23). Overall, the participants:

- Preferred to use the term 'CEPA' rather than 'The Wetlands and People Programme' since they believed the former has already been well established;
- Decided to remove 'capacity development' from the sub-heading;
- Requested that special attention be paid to the needs of the CEPA Focal Points in Least Developed Countries and countries in special situations.

These and other changes were made in the revised text of SC48-23 with tracked changes. This revised text is available in Annex 3a.



Figure 4. Participants of the joint AWS/Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting

Session 6. Wetlands and Poverty Eradication – Mainstreaming wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication into national policies and programs – STRP Briefing Note

Dr. Sonali Senaratna briefed the participants on the background to this briefing note on wetlands and poverty eradication. She reminded them of previous Resolutions involving wetlands and their importance in poverty reduction and eradication. She also updated the participants on the progress of the STRP working group on this topic. This was followed by three presentations, all revolving around fisheries adaptation and innovative aquaculture systems.

The presentations and discussions revealed that participants agreed that there is a need to:

- Emphasize the importance of baseline research and documentation of the different approaches;
- Call for the involvement and to assign responsibility to actual resource users;
- Consider co-management approaches and to mainstream wetland conservation and wise use policies to local levels and that;
- CEPA is essential in mainstreaming the concept of the role of wetlands in poverty eradication

Session 7. Emerging issues (1): Cultures and customary technologies of wetland in East Asia

There were six presentations in this session. Mr. Yoshihiro Natori (Wetlands International Japan) began the session by providing background to the work that is being done by Wetlands International Japan. Following this presentation, Ms. Sansanee Choowaew (Mahidol University, Thailand) elaborated on the importance of wetlands in Thai Culture due to the connection between Lord Buddha and the lotus flower. Then, Mr. Chen Kelin (Wetlands International China) presented on the relationship between wetlands and culture in China and shared cultural practices related to wetlands such as the Dragon Boat Festival, rice wine culture, traditional irrigation systems that make sure of underground and above ground canals and small reservoirs and the wetland school network that is being used to promote wetland education and improve communication between relevant stakeholders.

Next Professor Joo Gae-Jae (RRC-East Asia) outlined the different types of wetland culture and the work of Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia but focused on the cultural aspects such as the duck-shaped pottery in Japan and Korea, and the crane dance in Tongdo Temple, as well as the use of the symbol of Geese for a happy married life and traditional fishing methods to name a few. Then, he introduced the Wetland Culture for Children that were produced by RRC-EA. Finally, Mr. Raphael Glemet (IUCN), showed a short movie about the cultural practices in Xe Champone Ramsar Site (Lao PDR) which demonstrates the linkages between sacred sites and their roles in wetland conservation and management.

Session 8. Hands-on testing and training of the new online RIS format

Ms. Samridhi Rijal (Ramsar Secretariat) provided a guided tour of the new online RIS system to the Contracting Party participants. For the first 15 to 20 minutes she demonstrated to the participants how to use the 'Explore my sites' section of the website that is available to the public. After this introduction, she then demonstrated the 'Manage my sites' section of the website, which is restricted to the Head of Ramsar Administrative Authority and the National Focal Point. She guided the participants through the process of creating a new Ramsar Site or updating the information for an existing Site, and how to input information into the new system.

Session 9. Emerging issues (2) – Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

There were six presentations in this session as well. After a brief introduction to the session, by Mr. Bhisnu Bandari, Mr. Takao Suzuki described the impact of the earthquake and tsunami on the intertidal benthos and recovery processes. Mr. Yus Noor described the process of strengthening resilience by reducing the impact of natural disasters on the local community and reducing the disaster related risk by combining taking into account ecosystem management and restoration and climate change adaptation. Ms. Maeve Nightingale briefly described the importance of mangroves and the objectives of Mangroves for the Future. Following her, Dr. Ajit Pattnaik elaborated on the importance of community participation in implementing cost-effective strategies such as, self-initiated mangroves plantation by fishermen along the inlet channel of Chilika Lake. Mr. Aminul Islam illustrated the many factors that have an impact on the vulnerability, Bangladesh government's strategy and risk reducing measures. Finally, Ambassador Amado Tolentino stressed on the need to manage the unexpected displacement of wetland dependent individuals following a disaster and to reduce climate change related vulnerabilities.

The key message from the six presenters was the important role that natural ecosystems can play in reducing the impact from natural disasters, such as coastal storm surges and inland flooding. By acknowledging this role, conserving and managing natural ecosystems for disaster risk reduction, it would also be possible to conserve the ecosystem and the biodiversity they support. Furthermore, disaster mitigation measures using natural ecosystems have to be considered and implemented instead of always using hard engineering, such as seawalls, for example. The responses for disaster risk reduction need to branch out to partners with different capacities because they are all interlinked. It is also important to consider managing natural ecosystems in reducing the risk from natural disasters and in climate change adaptation. However, it has to be recognized that natural ecosystems cannot reduce

all natural risks completely. Therefore, it is also vital to invest in learning traditional knowledge, participatory research and multiple knowledge based systems.

Building local community capacity by providing them information about climate trends and the implications of hazards and impacts on their livelihoods would also help form preparedness systems.

Session 10. Draft Resolution on Wetlands and Disaster Risk Reduction (SC48-28)

After Mr. Lew Young provided the background to the DR, there were 2 presentations on the inter-linkages and importance of wetlands and disaster risk reduction. Dr. Rowena Valera presented on the use of eco-belts to shield the communities behind the belt from flooding during the monsoon season. After this, Mr. Manjula Amaratunga illustrated the restoration activities being undertaken on urban wetlands in Colombo such as the removal of garbage and invasive species to increase the flood water storage capacity of these urban wetlands.

Following these presentations, the Draft Resolution (SC48-28) was discussed and changes made to the text according to participants' suggestions. Some of the suggestions were to:

- Make references to Resolution X.22;
- Acknowledge the role of other wetlands such as sea-grass beds, glacial lakes, tidal flats, and oases in disaster risk reduction;
- Consider glacial lake outbursts and cyclones as hazards;
- Include climate change adaptation to policies and planning;
- Emphasize wetland based disaster risk management;
- Adopt a human-rights based approach to disaster risk reduction and;
- Focus on collaboration with research institutes to carry out research in these areas.

The revised text of SC48-28 is provided in Annex 3.



Figure 5. AWS/Ramsar Pre-COP12 participants during a DR session

Session 11. Draft Resolution on Management Effectiveness of Ramsar Sites (SC48-25)

After the background on this DR was provided by Mr. Lew Young, there were a number of presentations. The first presentation made by Mr. Katsumi Ushiyama (Miyajima-numa Ramsar Site, Japan) dealt with the Ramsar Network in Hokkaido. Japan encourages different agencies and local management authorities to respond to environmental threats and to interact and cooperate with each other for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Ms. Fang Yan (State Forestry Administration, China) then gave a presentation on the management of Ramsar Sites in China. She described the "Early warning work plan for ecological character changes of Ramsar Sites" which depends on the evaluation of selected monitoring indicators and which was implemented in May 2014. She also explained that a 'management regulation for Ramsar Sites' was in the process of being drafted.

After the presentations, the Draft Resolution (SC48-25) was discussed and changes were made according to participant's comments. The participants recommended that:

- Strategy 2.5 should be referred to in the preamble;
- The Ramsar Secretariat, STRP, IOPs and other relevant agencies should assist the Contracting Parties in evaluating the implementation of this DR;
- The text needs to better reflect the fact that this DR is recommending that the METT be used as an optional tool by Contracting Parties.

Annex 3 contains the changes and comments on SC48-25 that were noted during the meeting.

Session 12. River Basin Management

Mr. Lew Young provided the background for the Draft Resolution (SC48-30) submitted by Mexico. Following his introduction, 5 presentations were made in this session covering a range of topics such as environmental consideration for communities in transboundary river basins, ecological compensation policy, participatory monitoring and management of wetlands using the ecosystem approach.

One way of dealing with the political challenges of trans-boundary wetland conservation and management issues is to develop and establish technical committees with international organizations in order to address the very frequent problem of lack of trust between the neighbouring countries.

The main challenges identified for effective river basin management were:

- Impacts of climate change,
- Excessive upstream withdrawal and storage of water,
- Increasing demand for water resources and;
- Excessive water flows during some seasons (monsoon) that lead to flooding.

There was not enough time to go through and edit the Draft Resolution (SC48-30) in plenary but during the discussion, WWF provided additional text which are available in Annex 3.

Session 13 and 14. Draft Resolution on the Ramsar Strategic Plan

This session was chaired by Mr. Md. Nojibur Rahman, the National Focal Point from Bangladesh. After a quick introduction from the Chair, Mr. Peter Hilaire introduced the 4th Strategic Plan and asked for comments from the floor. He also mentioned that any further written comments are welcome until 21 November. He explained that for this session, the focus would be on reviewing the goals, targets and indicators rather than the wordings of the Strategic Plan since it will still need to go through a couple more drafts before being finalized.

The recommendations of the two sessions dedicated to the Ramsar Strategic Plan are described below.

General Comments:

- There needs to be a sense of action in each goal, which can be by the use of verbs;
- The language of the document is too dense and complex; so the language needs to be simplified;
- Goals and targets need to be re-arranged in some case. This is elaborated on in the rest of the text;
- The Strategic Plan had not taken into account climate change although, it is expected that climate change will have an impact on the ecological character of wetlands as well.
- The National Report format needs to be re-designed. In the new format, the resolutions and the targets relevant to each goal should be mentioned to remind the Contracting Parties of their obligations and would also help in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and its Resolutions.

The discussion on the **overall goals** revealed that:

- Japan and WWF would like to include an additional goal that was geared toward the promotion of international and regional cooperation as this is one of the three pillars of the Convention. To do this, they recommended that the consultant should examine goal 3 in the 3rd Strategic Plan. They also recommended that some additional targets be added under the new goal. These targets would involve synergies with other conventions, such as the CBD and other agencies with similar objectives, such as the EAAFP because this is essential and so should be incorporated into the revised strategic plan;
- The Chair mentioned that there would be an emphasis on partnerships in the new plan.
- WWF also proposed combining the goal of increasing partnerships and raising awareness as one goal, but emphasizing it as a separate goal by themselves, so that there would be 5 goals in total.
- Thailand and Ramsar Network Japan brought up the issue that in the Convention text, references are made for the management of all wetlands since all are important at either national or international levels, not only Ramsar Sites and this should be reflected in the new plan as well.
- Furthermore, it was recommended that instead of using only the word cooperation, the phrase 'cooperation at all levels' should be mentioned.
- EAAFP recommended that the vision be simple, since the current vision has some goals within it. Furthermore, goals should be of the same level; however, in this case different levels of goals are mixed and that some of the goals are required to achieve some other goals. Furthermore, they also recommended merging Goals 2 and 3 since effective management and wise use are linked to each other. In this case, Goal 3 could be incorporated with the proposal made by Japan at the start.
- Bangladesh also supported this idea and added that partnership and cooperation could be mixed; however that it should be made very clear that the partnership referred to is partnership at all levels.
- Iran supported the idea of implementing works through partnerships; however they showed concern about the monitoring activities. Who would be responsible for monitoring activities? Would it also be done through these types of partnerships? They also suggested that more monitoring activities should be included, although, they didn't have recommendations on where it would go.
- Iraq supported the 'wise use of all wetlands and monitoring through partnerships' since Iraq faces water shortage problems and they would like to add the partnership dimension.
- Iran also raised the point that the current plan seems to only talk about preventing, stopping and reversing the trends of wetland loss and degradation; but what about addressing some of the good examples and success stories? Furthermore, these goals are relevant for working in wetlands themselves, and while international and regional cooperation is good, it is also very different from the other goals that focus on wetlands themselves.
- UAE proposed two ways of increasing the visibility of the Convention. These two ways were by introducing new languages and also by adding new Contracting Parties to the Convention. He also supported that this can be done by the current Goals 3 and 4. Iraq supported the addition of new languages as this would enable them to be more effective at the ground level.
- India mentioned the need to also have proper institutional arrangements in the country before much progress can be made in terms of implementing the convention.
- Malaysia stressed on forming linkages between wise-use and the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level to address questions such as, how would this wetland support the development of the country? So this linkage between SDGs and wetlands needs to be reflected in the new Strategic Plan.
- IUCN – Asia Regional Office recommended allocating some time to identify the overarching goals because in the current version of the strategic plan, goal 1 seems to be the most important goal with goals 2, 3, and 4 as tools for addressing goal 1. He also reiterated the same view that Ramsar Convention is about protecting and conserving all wetlands and not just Ramsar Sites.
- WWF – International supported this point to reorganize the goals more logically. He urged the consultant to keep in mind the three pillars of the Convention. Remembering that, the wise-use

goal could encompass the effective management and wise use goals within it. Raising awareness is a tool that is used to implement the three pillars.

Goals 1.

- India thought that target 4 was too ambitious. When limits are set, it gets to be confusing. He said that in some countries water efficiency is a lot more relevant than agriculture
- Iran also suggested addressing water right targets with an aim of having '80% of the water available' for various purposes rather than simply saying that they are going to bring water to the people. He also recommended using words such as water rights, and water needs.
- Thailand also asked for clarification of the meaning of water efficiency, esp., related to agriculture and it's linkages with wise-use. Furthermore, she pointed out that target 6 seemed more like the Secretariat's target. Therefore, she asked for clarification on the role of the Contracting Party.
- UAE also pointed out that if the target is 80%, then what would happen to the missing link of 20%?
- EAAFP had a very specific recommendation of deleting target 4, since target 3 would include target 4 anyway within this goal. He explained that singling out agriculture is not good, since while this might be a priority in some countries, in some other countries, other issues are more important.
- Japan and India asked that the numerical targets be removed since there is no baseline data available. For example, why was 80% chosen and not 50% or any other percentage? Furthermore, India continued that it would be too ambitious since even a 10% increase would be significant for some countries.
- Bangladesh also added that in addressing goal 1, there are two main drivers of wetland degradation and loss: 1) upstream water diversion issues which would require international cooperation and 2) urbanization, which will likely convert most of the remaining. He recommended that these be addressed as well.
- Iran expressed appreciation for the use of numerical targets, even at the absence of baseline. He went further to say that while using this numerical value would not be possible in most cases, having these numbers could be beneficial in some cases, and this would give the Secretariat and the Party concerned something that can be measured at the end. He also added that Climate change was mentioned above, but maybe it should also be mentioned here, furthermore, that the targets need to be a more specific and wetlands related.
- Bangladesh agreed that there was a lack of baseline information, and stressed that there is a need to create the baseline data.
- WWF asked that the word 'infrastructure' should be added in front of incentives in the second line of Target 5.



Figure 6. Participants of AWS/RARM

Goal 2:

- Thailand pointed out again that the Convention is for the conservation and wise use of all wetlands, not just Ramsar site and this should be reflected in the targets as well.

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- India (CDA) also stressed on the importance of science based management planning that was based on data and professional input. He proposed that the first steps would be to find out how many sites have management plans so far, and then reformulate the question based on that information.
- Iran also pointed out the importance of having river basin management plans, since site managers cannot talk about the loss of ecological character if the problem originates from up-stream. He also stressed that degraded or lost wetlands cannot be restored within a year. It might be realistic to develop a complete restoration plan within a year, but it will take a lot longer for the site to actually be restored.
- Ramsar Network Japan recommended include other wetlands sites that have not been designated as a Ramsar Site in target 12, as in the past Strategic Plan, rather than focusing only on management of Ramsar sites.
- UAE noted that there were not guidelines or handbooks in case of some development projects in the context of wise-use. For example, when they have been approached by some industries, they have to go through the process each time, so he recommended that the Secretariat set some standards.
- IUCN – ARO also reminded the participants that countries can also designate buffer zones, rather than only designating only Ramsar Sites. So the area outside the Ramsar Site would still have a measure of protection, but more development projects could also be allowed in the area. This could be vital for effective management.
- Malaysia wanted to know if the support from the Secretariat on the process for removing sites from the Montreux Record would also be mentioned. He also asked how the issues of wetlands conservation of coastal wetlands in international waters were going to be addressed in the fourth Strategic Plan.
- UNDP-Bangladesh recommended adding a target on how to address about 30-40% of the degraded wetlands. He added that another target could be to get about 50% of these out of their degraded status.
- Iraq and WWF agreed that the Strategic Plan needs a target of removing, for example, 50% of the sites in the Montreux Record by the next strategic plan, i.e., 2021.
- Iran noted that targets 9 and 10 reflect effective participation of other sectors that depend on the wetlands. They pointed the importance of having a higher level of participation and therefore, involving more people in the management of the sites.
- Japan agreed but pointed out that the target itself should be under goal 4 and not goal 2.

Goal 3.

- IUCN – ARO, on behalf of Mangroves for Future pointed out that restoration should also include management and that the figure in the strategic plan is too high.
- Indonesia asked that the words ‘carbon storage’ be used instead of ‘carbon capture’ in target 19. He also asked that peatlands be added as an additional ecosystem in target 18.
- Malaysia noted that there was too much emphasis on the ecosystem services and not enough on biodiversity. He suggested on focusing more on the biodiversity aspect as well and linking some of the targets to the Aichi Target 2.
- Iran pointed out that all the targets seem to have been lumped under this goal. He said that most of the targets are not actually talking about wise-use of wetlands, for example, target 23 is about wetlands management and is not just related to the wise-use of wetlands. He recommended that the targets be reviewed and also to advocate best practices.
- EAAFP agreed and added that some of the targets do seem to be addressing the drivers of change, so there is a need for strategic re-ordering. This could also enable the Goal to be reduced significantly.
- WWF agreed with Iran and added that target 16 should be under international cooperation goal, not necessarily within the wise-use goal. He also agreed with EAAFP.

- Thailand asked for clarification on target 23 because the amount specified is too large and the entire fund cannot be restricted to wetlands. She also asked whether it would be possible to group the targets according to their expected output. Peter responded that the idea behind that target was raising funds, and that it would be led by the Secretariat.
- Japan also agreed with Iran and EAAFP that the targets within the goals need to be refined. She also proposed merging targets 17 and 20; and targets 21 and 22, to promote understanding. This she proposed could also be moved to goal 4 since they are more related to it, rather than this goal.
- EAAFP also queried about the possibility of having a public-private partnership goal or a more specific target.
- WWF agreed with EAAFP that some of the targets should move to goal 4, if that goal is also renamed to include partnerships as well. He also agreed with Thailand that there was no need to specify the amount of GEF funding.
- Iran pointed out that the importance of wetlands needs to be better captured for the local communities.
- Iraq agreed that the targets were not very clear. They also said that they would like to add a paragraph between targets 20 and 21 stressing on using more techniques and activities that do not have a negative impact on the ecological character of wetlands.
- Bangladesh added that Climate change should be added in target 18, since it will also have an impact on the ecological character of wetlands.
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- EAAFP also noted that in target 18, it is only mentioned that the linkages between DRR and wetlands are clearly understood; however, we need to go beyond that by forming linkages with the draft resolution of DRR.



Figure 7. AWS/Ramsar Pre-COP Asian Regional Meeting participants

Goal 4

- EAAFP mentioned that Target 25 seems passive in only providing guidance. He suggested that it needs to be more active in terms of addressing policy makers and the advocacy role within the Ramsar Secretariat. He also mentioned that he wasn't entirely sure where exactly it would fall, however.
- UAE noted that the conservation targets are restricted to the river basins, but there is a need to broaden it and be more inclusive.
- UNDP – Bangladesh suggested having stronger targets under the goal such as the publication of public materials, for example. He also stressed on the need to regularly compile information and make it available publically.
- Iran queried at this point to ask whether there was a systematic approach and process related to comparing the information in the strategic plan and issues discussed in the draft resolutions.
- The Chair acknowledged the importance of creating linkages between the draft resolutions and the strategic plan.

- Iraq proposed that one of the targets could be to enhance Contracting Parties' understanding on the linkages between DRR and wetlands by 2021.
- Thailand also proposed that it should be linked with the CEPA program. She said that overall, this strategic plan makes her feel like she's being forced by the Secretariat to take certain actions, rather than being motivated by herself and doing them herself.
- UAE proposed a slight modification in the goal, with the additional of a new target, which would be using proper language and adding new languages. He proposed that the indicators used can be the number of new Contracting Parties that sign the Convention.
- Iran also mentioned the importance of the CEPA program and that currently, there were no synergies between the CEPA national and regional plans. But if there are synergies, then it can be implemented and the overall impact would be a lot greater. Furthermore, he also suggested that the targets be more specific, since there is mention of making major actors 'acknowledge' wetland, but there is no mention of how to achieve that.
- Bhutan suggested a target such as promoting awareness via all levels of educational programs. She also suggested that wetland issues would also have to be mainstreamed.
- Philippines recommended adding a direct reference to the CEPA program and also a target dealing with developing capacity for developing countries.
- Nepal supported her, stating that capacity development is very important. He suggested adding a target in that form.
- Ramsar Network Japan noted that many conservation activities are also conducted by NGOs, local communities and other agencies, so the word 'public' should be made more clear and the work to be done by the NGOs and other agencies (apart from Parties) should also be written out as targets.
- UAE emphasized the importance of visitor centers and wetland centers for awareness raising, education and so on. He also mentioned the handbook (from RRC-EA) that was introduced in this meeting.
- WWF, on behalf of WWI, proposed an additional target, to develop a global database of wetland educational centre network be available by 2021 with support from WWI. WWF also proposed heavy promotion of the Ramsar Convention brand by 2021, for example, in products such as rice and/or salt. He also proposed using the wetland community accreditation system for branding purposes. Finally, he mentioned that it was important not to underestimate the value of the Ramsar website.
- Some participants also mentioned that there is a need to emphasize the local communities in the implementation of the Convention.
- Environmental Ecosystem Research Foundation supported WWF in their idea for the Secretariat to establish a full list of visitor centres in all the Contracting Parties as this would enable interested parties to contact each other for information sharing and transfer of knowledge.
- Iraq supported this and recommended adding a target that by 2021, capacity development centres would be established to emphasize the capacity development.
- Bhutan proposed that these should be educational institutions at all levels. She also proposed adding a target for CP to complete their wetland inventory.
- EAAFP noted that there was not a single mention of local communities so it would be good to include them under this goal or under partnership.
- Bangladesh mentioned that during CEPA, he has also mentioned the extra support that Least Developed Countries and countries in special conditions require. Again, this needs to be reflected in the strategic plan as well.
- Finally, Peter Hilaire went over the main points of the meeting and the Chair concluded the session.

Session 15. Draft Resolution on Wetland Community Accreditation (SC48-29)

Mr. Denis Landenbergue (WWF) introduced the Draft Resolution. Afterwards, Dr. Yang Hee-Sun made a presentation of the pilot 'wetland village' project from R.O. Korea which provide incentives for local

communities to co-manage their Ramsar Sites. Ms. Nirawan Pipitsombat (ONEP, Thailand) then presented the 'wetland city' scheme that is being developed in Thailand to honour His Majesty the King.

After these presentations, there were discussions and comments on the logistical aspect of the DR, such as the budgetary implications and the agency responsible for providing the accreditation. These and other comments have been described below:

- Some Contracting Parties were worried that countries not in the DAC list may have to bear the additional cost of this system.
- Japan queried about the need for this system and what issues this system plans on resolving, i.e. what would the value addition of this system be? Japan continued that this system may cause tensions between local communities and governments with accreditation and those without accreditation.
- India was concerned about what it meant for towns and cities that already have existing development plans.
- Some participants were also concerned about how the proposed accreditation system would affect towns and cities that have existing programmes promoting and conserving their local wetlands?
- There were further concerns that the introduction of the accreditation system would be an additional burden for the Secretariat; however, WWF clarified that the Standing Committee members who meet in Gland for each of the Standing Committee meetings would be in charge of reviewing the applications and so the burden of the task would not fall on the Secretariat.
- WWF also added that one of the key benefits on this system would be the wider awareness and communication, for example, increased publicity for the Contracting Parties.
- Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia added that this accreditation system could be used as a tool in promoting wetland CEPA. He further elaborated that since it is not obligatory, countries that find it useful can utilize it and countries that do not find it useful can skip over it.
- Bangladesh noted that while the idea is interesting, for most developing countries, the focus needs to be putting into place a mechanism to maintain the ecological character for existing Ramsar Sites, before we can move forward. He recommended that the wordings of the DR be changed to create linkages with the CEPA DR. He also queried about the costs of the accreditation system.
- UAE also mentioned the need for acknowledging local authorities. He also mentioned that the objectives and the roles should be very clearly defined.
- Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand supported the DR, but had a few questions such as why it was called the Wetland Community Accreditation and how they could promote the resolution and encourage others to support it as well.
- Overall, many Contracting Parties were in favour of the DR; however, some, such as India and Japan, did not agree that this DR would add value to the Ramsar Convention. For other countries, this system may help in implementing the obligations of the Ramsar Convention at the local level.

Session 16. Draft Resolution on improving the scientific and technical aspects of the Convention (SC48-18)

Overall, there was general agreement on the proposed revised framework for the scientific and technical delivery of the STRP. However, participants did ask that the priority tasks for STRP's work should complement and be integrated with the targets in the new Strategic Plan. The participants were asked to prioritise the 10 STRP tasks proposed in the DR and the result of this exercise was:

1. Best practice methodologies/tools to monitor Ramsar Sites;
2. Balancing wetland conservation and development: infrastructure;
3. Best practices for developing and implementing management plans for protected areas/Ramsar Sites;
4. Methodologies for valuation of wetlands goods and services and jointly at fifth place;

- 5a. Balancing wetland conservation and development and;
- 5b. Urbanization and legal frameworks for conservation of wetlands.

There were an additional two priorities identified by the participants in the meeting. These were:

- a. Enhancing the science-policy linkage and;
- b. Addressing the climate change adaptation – disaster risk reduction – ecosystem management (including restoration) nexus, with a focus on improving community resilience.

Discussion of Siem Reap Message

Before the closing ceremony, discussions were held on the “Siem Reap Message On Wetlands for Our Future” which was finally endorsed. This document captures the main points of the meeting and the tentative commitments made by the participants who attended the meeting (full text available in Annex 4).

Closing Ceremony

At the closing ceremony, Dr Sunleang Srey, National Focal Point for Cambodia, acknowledged the participants who attended the joint AWS/RARM and showed Cambodia’s appreciation to the Contracting Parties by presenting them with souvenirs.



Figure 8. Dr. Sunleang Srey presenting the representatives from the Asian Contracting Parties with souvenirs during the closing ceremony

Mr. Lew Young recognised Parties (Japan and the R.O. Korea) who provided financial support to sponsor delegates from other Contracting Parties from the DAC list. He also recognized those Parties who had funded their delegates even though they were eligible for funding support. These Parties were Indonesia, Iraq and Thailand. Finally, he recognised Malaysia for partially funding their delegate to attend the meeting.



Annex 1. List of Participants

Annex 1a. List of Contracting Party members attending the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and Ramsar Pre-COP12 Meeting

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135	MOE, Cambodia	H.E.	Heal	Lonh	
136	MOE, Cambodia	H.E.	Soviet	Khov	
137	MOE, Cambodia	H.E.	Bunsong	Khim	
138	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Rithy	Meas	
139	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Samray	Yin	
140	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Hout	Ly	
141	MOE, Cambodia	Mrs	Somonika	Meas	
142	MOE, Cambodia	Ms	Momontha	Sokkheng	
143	MOE, Cambodia	Ms	Savannary	Hay	
144	MOE, Cambodia	Ms	Nearyroth	Hay	
145	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Morance	Pech	
146	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Buntheun	Tong	
147	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Lok	Hong	
148	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Sophal	Sreng	
149	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Bunnang	Yin	
150	MOE, Cambodia	Mr	Sothea	Sok	
151	MOE, Cambodia		Y	Lavg	
152	MOE, Cambodia		Piseth	Saochhom	
153	MOE, Cambodia		Sopheel	Chuorpcham	
154	MOE, Cambodia		Saroeum	Sem	
155	MOE, Cambodia		Mao	Sokkha	
156	MOE, Cambodia		Ratana	Ou	
157	MOE/WCD, Cambodia		Kheng	Long	
158	CNHC/MOWRAM		Somnang	Sin	
159	FA.		Prak	Narina	

160	FIA		You	Chanpraseth	
161	MOWRAM, Cambodia		Sovann	Seng	
162	Ramsar Center Japan	Ms	Reiko	Nakamura	reiko.nakamura@nifty.com
163	Ramsar Center Japan	Mr	Motokazu	Ando	motokazu.ando@nifty.com
164	Ramsar Convention Secretariat	Mr	Lew	Young	young@ramsar.org
165	Ramsar Convention Secretariat	Ms	Samridhi	Rijal	asia.oceania@ramsar.org
166	Wetlands International Japan	Ms	Emiko	Nagakura	emiko_nagakura@wi-japan.org
167	Wetlands International Japan	Ms	Miki	Sasaki	miki_sasaki@wi-japan.org
168	Wetlands International Japan	Mr	Yoshihiro	Natori	ynatori@nagaofoundation.or.jp
169			Khamtorng	Bour	
170			Visal	Sun	



Annex 2. The full Programme for the joint Asian Wetland Symposium/Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting sessions

Asian Wetland Symposium / Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting 3 to 7 November, 2014 (Siem Reap, Cambodia)

Day 1 (3 November)	
07:25 – 10:20 (110 mins)	<p>Opening 07:45-08:45 Registration 09:00-10:00: Opening ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome remark, H.E. Khim Bunsong, Governor of Siem Reap Province - Community representative - Dr. Christopher Briggs (Ramsar Secretary General) introduced by Dr. Lew Young - Mr. Yoshihiro Natori (Wetlands International Japan and Ramsar Centre Japan) - Opening remark, H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment, Cambodia <p>10:00-10:20: Photograph</p>
10:20 – 10:40	<i>Break</i>
10:40 – 12:30 (110 mins)	<p>Session 1: <i>(Chair: Dr. Sunleang Srey, Cambodia)</i> Status of wetland conservation and wise use in Cambodia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation success project of the Prek Toal Core Area of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Cambodia (Long Kheng, Ministry of Environment) • Process of designation of a new Ramsar Site in Cambodia: Case study in designate Prek Toal bird colony as Ramsar Site (Bou Vorsak, Birdlife International) • Mighty Mekong Connected Nations Sustainable Development (joint presentation by WWF and Conservation International, presented by Mr. Chhith Sam Ath) • Management Plan of Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary (PKWS), Cambodia (Kong Kumsreng, IUCN)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:40 (70 mins)	<p>Session 2: <i>(Chair: Mr. Hans Nico Sinaga, Indonesia)</i> Updates from the Ramsar secretariat and partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Asia 2012 - 2014 (Lew Young, <i>Reference: SC48-21*</i>) • Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation (Chris Perceval) • The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu) • Ramsar Centre Japan (Reiko Nakamura)
14:40 – 15:00 (20 mins)	Discussions
15:00 – 15:20	<i>Break</i>
15:20 – 16:35 (75 mins)	<p>Session 3: <i>(Chair: Mr. Yoshihiro Natori, Wetlands International Japan)</i> Updates from the Ramsar Regional Initiatives (15 mins each, <i>Reference: SC48-24</i>)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia: Background, Achievements, Updates (Professor Gea-Jae Joo) • Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia (Neda Falsafi) • Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership: Conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats for the benefit of people and biodiversity (Tomoko Ichikawa) • Thailand: Regional Wetland Learning Center and Wetland Province (Sansanee Choowaew) • MekongWET: A Regional Initiative for the Greater Mekong Subregion? (Raphael Glemet)
16:35 – 18:00 (85 mins)	Breakout regional group discussions for each of the existing and proposed new Ramsar Regional Initiatives in Asia
18:00 – 18:30 (30 mins)	Sharing of the breakout session conclusions
19:00 – 21:00	<i>Welcome dinner hosted by Ministry of Environment, Cambodia</i>
	<i>End of day</i>

Day 2 (4 November)	
08:30 – 09:45 (75 mins)	Session 4: Communications and CEPA Program <i>(Chair: Amado Samala Tolentino Jr., Rapporteur: M. Aminul Islam)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Education on Wetlands for Children in Thailand (Chitchol Phalaraksh) • The University Network for Wetland Research and Trainings in the Mekong Region: Experience and Achievements (Sansanee Choowaew) • Planning Invisible Landscapes: Making Invisible Tidal Flat Landscapes Visible for Future Sustainability (Hiromi Yamashita) • Building adaptive capacity of the local communities through Climate Change Education in Bhitarkanika Ramsar Site, India (Durga Prasad Dash) • The Monitoring by Youth for Environment Project in Northern Thailand (Tatporn Kunpradid)
09:45 – 10:20 (35 mins)	Discussions
10:20 – 10:40	<i>Break</i>
10:40 – 11:40 (60 mins)	Session 5: DR: Programme on CEPA 2016-2021 (15 mins, Reference: SC48-23) <i>(Chair: Dr. Srey Sunleang, Rapporteur: Rebecca D’Cruz)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of DR: The Wetlands and People Programme (Lew Young) • Multi-level Communication and Interactive Participation for producing Ramsar Wetland Education Center Handbook (Sunyoung Bak) • Water research and learning program: Wadi Wurayah National Park (Maral Chreiki) • Challenges and approaches in CEPA along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway: Conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats for the benefit of people and biodiversity (Tomoko Ichikawa)
11:40 – 12:30 (50 mins)	Discussion
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>

13:30 – 14:20 (50 mins)	Session 6: Briefing Note: Wetlands and Poverty Eradication – Mainstreaming wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication into national policies and programs <i>(Chair: Hee-sun Yang, Rapporteur: Rebecca D’Cruz)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation on the Briefing Note (Sonali Senaratna) • Fishery adaptation with a scheme of welfare enhancement: a case study in Negombo Lagoon, Sri Lanka (Shimpei Iwasaki) • Freshwater Aquaculture Improvement and Extension Project Phase II (FAIEX – 2) in Kingdom of Cambodia (Yukiyasu Niwa) • Aquatic Agricultural System (AAS) in the Tonle Sap contributing to poverty reduction (Mak Sithirith)
14:20 – 15:20 (60 mins)	Discussion
15:20 – 15:40	<i>Break</i>
15:40 – 17:30 (110 mins)	Session 7: Emerging issues (1): Cultures and customary technologies of wetlands in East Asia (organized by, Asian members of Ramsar Culture Network, IUCN-Asia Regional Office and WIJ) <i>(Chair: Motokazu Ando, Rapporteur: Bishnu Bahadur Bhandari)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Cultures of Wetlands in East Asia and Japan’s cases (Yoshihiro Natori) • Ramsar Culture Network (Chris Perceval) • Wetlands and Thai culture: A case of Lotus Fields (Sansanee Choowaew) • Wetland and Culture in China (Kelin Chen) • Transferring society’s knowledge on wetland culture to the next generation: introduction of “Wetland Culture Book for Children” (Gea Jae Joo) • Sacred natural sites in Xe Champhone Ramsar Site, Lao PDR: the spirit of conservation (Raphaël Glémet)
17:30	<i>End of day</i>

Day 3 (5 November)	
06:30 – 14:30	Field trip to Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary, Tonle Sap
14:30 – 15:30	<i>Break</i>
15:30 – 18:00 (120 mins)	Session 8: Hands-on training for the new online RIS format (for government representatives and anyone else interested) <i>(Facilitator: Samridhi Rijal)</i>
18:00	<i>Cocktail reception hosted by Ramsar Center Japan and Wetlands International Japan</i>
	<i>End of Day</i>

Day 4 (6 November)	
08:30 – 09:45 (75 mins)	Session 9: Emerging issues (2) Wetlands and disaster risk reduction <i>(Chair: Bishnu Bahadur Bhandari, Rapporteur: Gea Jae Joo)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami on intertidal benthos

09:45 – 10:20 (35 mins)	<p>communities and their recovery along the Pacific coast of Tohoku district, Japan (Takao Suzuki)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners for Resilience: A convergence of Ecosystem management/restoration and climate change adaptation into disaster risk reduction (Yus Rusila Noor) • Mangroves for the Future (Maeve Nightingale) • Wetland smart disaster risk reduction with community participation, a cost-effective strategy: examples from Asia (Ajit Kumar Pattnaik) • Wetlands and Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh: Emerging Challenges and Response (M. Aminul Islam) • Wetlands and Climate Change Justice - Prospects for a Law to Protect the Rights of Wetland-Dependent Displaced Persons in the Philippines (Amado Samala Tolentino Jr) <p>Discussions</p>
10:20 – 10:40	<i>Break</i>
10:40 – 11:40 (60 mins)	<p>Session 10: DR: Wetlands and disaster risk reduction (15 mins, <i>Reference: SC48-28</i>) (<i>Chair: Mr. Mohammad Rahman Abdullah Hassan (UAE), Rapporteur: Rebecca D’Cruz</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of DR: Philippines (Joy Navarro) • Establishing Sago-based Ecobelt in Lower Agusan River Basin towards Increasing the Community’s Adaptive Capacity to climate change for DRR (Rowena Paglinawan Varela) • The role of urban wetlands for flood control in Colombo, Sri Lanka (Manjula Amararathna) <p>Discussions</p>
11:40 – 12:30 (50 mins)	Discussions
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30 (60 mins)	<p>Session 11: DR: Management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites (15 mins, <i>Reference: SC48-15 and SC48-25</i>) (<i>Chair: Thailand, Rapporteur: Ramsar Secretariat</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of DR: Towards the effective conservation and management of Ramsar Sites (Lew Young) • Networking Ramsar Sites in Hokkaido, Japan (Katsumi Ushiyama) • Beung Kiat Ngong co-management plan: A collaborative approach for the management of a Ramsar site in Lao PDR (Raphaël Glémet) • The Conservation and Management of Ramsar Sites in China (Fang Yan) <p>Discussions</p>
14:15 – 15:20 (50 mins)	Discussions
15:20 – 15:40	<i>Break</i>
15:40 – 16:55 (75 mins)	<p>Session 12: River basin management (<i>Chair: Gea Jae Joo, Rapporteur: Sansanee Choowaew, Reference: SC48-30</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of Draft Resolution: “Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future” (Lew Young) • Environmental Considerations for the Communities' of a Trans-boundary River Basin (Sanowar Hossain) • Ecological Compensation Policy – Case study of Ruergai Zoigê Plateau Wetland,

16:55 – 17:30 (35 mins)	<p>China (Kelin Chen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Conservation Endeavor in Fish Species Diversity and Endangered Species of the Mekong and Adjacent River Basins through ‘Participatory Monitoring’ and ‘Amplification of Natural Stock’ (Kenzo Utsugi) • Trans-boundary Wetlands Management: Concerns and Challenges (Neda Asad Falsafi Zadeh) • Applying Ecosystem Approach for Managing Iranian Wetlands (Mohsen Soleymani) <p>Discussion</p>
<i>End of day</i>	

Day 5 (7 November)	
08:30 – 10:20	Session 13: DR: Ramsar Strategic Plan (<i>Reference: SC48-19</i>) (Chair: Md. Nojibur Rahman, Facilitator : Peter Hilaire, Rapporteur: Samridhi Rijal)
10:20 – 10:40	<i>Break</i>
10:40 – 12:30 (110 mins)	Session 14: DR: Ramsar Strategic Plan (continued) (Chair: Md. Nojibur Rahman, Facilitator : Peter Hilaire, Rapporteur: Samridhi Rijal)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30 (50 mins)	Session 15: DR: Ramsar Community Accreditation (15 mins, <i>Reference SC48-29</i>) (Chair: So Ping Man, Rapporteur: Ramsar Secretariat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of DR: WWF (Denis Landenbergue, 20 mins) • Pilot “Wetland City” Project – Ramsar Maueul in Korea (<i>Yang Hee-Sun</i>) • Prachuab Khiri Khan: The Wetland City to Honour His Majesty the King (Nirawan Pipitsombat)
14:30 – 15:20 (60 mins)	Discussions
15:20 – 15:40	<i>Break</i>
15:40 – 17:30 (110 mins)	Session 16: DR: Improving the scientific and technical aspects of the Convention (<i>Reference: SC48-18</i>) (Chair: Rebecca D’Cruz, Rapporteur: Lew Young)
17:30	Discussion of Siem Reap Message Closing
18:30	<i>End of meeting</i>

Day 6 (8 November)	
08:30 – 10:20	Angkor Wat (optional trip)

* These documents can be downloaded from the Ramsar website via this link <http://ramsar.org/event/48th-meeting-of-the-ramsar-standing-committee>

Annex 3. Draft Resolutions amended during the Asia Regional Pre-COP12

Annex 3a. Programme on CEPA 2016-2021

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
48th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

Action requested:

- Standing Committee is invited to consider and endorse the Draft Resolution concerning the CEPA programme for 2016-2021.

SC48-23

The Convention's Programme on communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2021

Draft Resolution XII.xx

~~The Wetlands and People Programme~~
Wetland CEPA Programme

The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, ~~capacity development~~, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2021

1. RECALLING that the Contracting Parties through Resolution X.8 adopted the third CEPA Programme for the Convention (for the term 2009-2015) and introduced participation as an important component of CEPA programmes in recognition of the role that participation can play in building awareness, engagement and capacity;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Ramsar Convention's stakeholders increasingly recognize that CEPA should form a central part of implementing the Convention at all scales;
3. RECOGNIZING that as of 1 June 2014, 129 Contracting Parties had designated Government CEPA Focal Points and 98 Parties had designated national Non-governmental Organization CEPA Focal Points, but CONCERNED that that this represents a reduction in designations since the last triennium, and so limits the opportunities for coordinating CEPA delivery, and indeed broader implementation of the Convention;

4. CONGRATULATING the 30% of Contracting Parties which have reported carrying out CEPA activities at Site level and particularly those which have incorporated these into wetland management plans, the 66% of Parties which have developed wetland centres at some Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, the 70% of parties which promote participation in wetland planning and management, and the 90% of Parties which reported celebrating World Wetlands Day, but NOTING the number of Parties that still have to make significant progress in many of these areas.
5. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE to the Danone Group for its continuing sponsorship of outreach activities under the Convention, and particularly the support for the annual World Wetlands Day campaign;
6. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the work done by the Ramsar Secretariat and the CEPA Oversight Panel in developing the new programme and the Panel's oversight of the implementation of the CEPA Programme since 2005;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. ADOPTS the Convention's *Wetlands and People Programme 2016-2021* which is at Annex 1 to this Resolution, as an instrument to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Secretariat, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), NGOs, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders in the development of appropriate actions to engage, enlist and enable people to act for the wise use of wetlands;
8. CONFIRMS that this Resolution and its Annex incorporates the key recommendations from Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31, and X.8;
9. CONFIRMS that this Resolution incorporates advice on participation provided in Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.28;
10. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to continue to monitor and report on CEPA issues within the Convention and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme as established by this Resolution, and to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on the CEPA work priorities at the national and international levels;
11. REAFFIRMS the call made in the previous Resolutions for all Contracting Parties that have yet to do so to nominate as a matter of priority suitably qualified Government and Non-governmental Organization Focal Points for wetland CEPA and to inform the Ramsar Secretariat accordingly, and URGES Parties to ensure that the CEPA Focal Points are members of the National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee where these exist;
12. URGES all Contracting Parties, as suggested in Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31 and X.8 in the CEPA Programme 2016-2021, to formulate their Wetland CEPA Action Plans (at national, subnational, catchment, or local levels) for priority activities that address international, regional, national, and local needs, and to provide copies of these to the Ramsar Secretariat to make available to other Contracting Parties and organizations;
13. STRONGLY URGES all Contracting Parties to seek to develop and implement their Wetland CEPA Action Plans and planning as integrated components of their broader environment, biodiversity, wetland and water management, education, health, and poverty reduction policy instruments and mainstreamed in relevant programmes, at decentralized level where appropriate, and to ensure that CEPA is recognized as underpinning the effective delivery of these activities;

14. CALLS UPON those Contracting Parties with wetland CEPA plans to evaluate the effectiveness of those plans on a regular basis, to amend their priority actions where necessary, and to provide feedback to the CEPA Oversight Panel on such reviews and revisions;
15. REITERATES the call to multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector sponsors to support appropriate actions as set out in the Ramsar CEPA Programme 2016-2021;
16. URGES the Ramsar Secretariat to assist in strengthening the capacity of the CEPA Focal Points, [especially the Least Developed Countries and countries in special situations](#) and others by the provision of training, toolkits, and templates, for example for CEPA action planning and CEPA training;
17. RECOGNIZES the growing celebration of World Wetlands Day in a large number of countries, and URGES Contracting Parties to continue, or to begin, to use this occasion to bring attention to their achievements and continuing challenges in wetland conservation and wise use;
18. ENCOURAGES those Contracting Parties with established, or proposed, wetland education centres and related facilities to support the development of those centres as key places of learning and training about wetlands and wetland-related CEPA and to support their participation in the global network of such centres under the Wetland Link International programme of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, WWT (UK);
19. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilize and support the capacity of the Ramsar Regional Centres in wetland training. [in their respective regions;](#)
20. INVITES the Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other organizations with which the Ramsar Secretariat has collaborative agreements to support the implementation of the Ramsar CEPA Programme at the global, regional, national or local levels, as appropriate, with the expertise, networks, skills and resources they have at their disposal; and
21. URGES those Parties with other national and local languages different from the three official languages of the Convention to consider translating key Ramsar guidance and guidelines into those languages in order to make them more widely available.

Annex 1

Wetlands and People Programme 2016 – 2021

A programme on CEPA, communication, capacity development, education, participation, and awareness of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Background

This is the Convention's fourth CEPA Programme and it will operate for a six-year period. It has been developed in conjunction with the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention adopted at COP12 and is consistent with this document. It replaces the annexes to Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31 and X.8. An explanation of the key terms associated with this Programme, including communication, education, participation, awareness, and capacity development, is available in Appendix 1.

Promoting the value of wetlands and their ecosystem services and supporting Contracting Parties with high quality guidance to manage wetlands wisely are central to the Ramsar Convention. The Convention considers communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness as key processes to build an informed constituency, increase the number of advocates, and build the capacity of key stakeholders to participate in the wise use of wetlands. The commitment of the Contracting Parties in the last triennium is reviewed in some detail in Ramsar COP11 DOC.14. The Convention recommends that communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness are employed in all areas and at all levels: this programme provides a set of strategies to guide the delivery of that recommendation.

A fundamental assumption of the CEPA Programme is that the actions taken in response to it will result in an increasing number of “actors” who become agents, ambassadors or advocates for the Convention on Wetlands and its principles. Support for the CEPA Programme should therefore be seen as an investment which aims to help decision-makers and mobilise local and national-scale actions directed at achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Vision

The vision of the Ramsar Convention’s CEPA Programme

“People taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands”
People using wetlands wisely through recognising nature-based management

Strategies and Key Results Areas to achieve the Vision

The Programme identifies what needs to be achieved to realize the vision through eight Strategies and the results that should be achieved in 38 Key Result Areas (KRA).

Strategies	
Strategy 1	Ensure leadership to support effective implementation of the Programme by providing institutional mechanisms, building a National implementation team, and establishing and supporting relevant networks.
Strategy 2	Integrate CEPA processes into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.
Strategy 3	Provide support for Ramsar implementers, especially those with a direct role in site management by developing and making accessible guidance materials and expertise on wetlands and their ecosystem services.
Strategy 4	Build the individual and collective capacity of people with a direct responsibility for Ramsar implementation.
Strategy 5	Develop and support mechanisms to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in wetland management.

Strategy 6	Implement programmes, projects and campaigns targeting diverse sectors of society to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide.
Strategy 7	Recognize and support the role of wetland centres and other environmental centres as catalysts and key actors for activities that promote Ramsar objectives.
Strategy 8	Support the development and distribution of education materials that build awareness of the values of wetlands and their ecosystem services for use in formal education settings, at Ramsar Sites and by all Ramsar actors.

Implementation of the Programme must be undertaken by a number of responsible bodies and partners of the Convention including, *inter alia*:

- AA: Administrative Authority in each country, including the AA National Focal Points
- CEPA: Convention's CEPA National Focal Points, both government and NGO
- NRC: National Ramsar Committees / National Wetlands Committees (or equivalent bodies), where they exist
- RamSec: Ramsar Convention Secretariat
- STRP: Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel
- IOPs: International Organization Partners, at present BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN, Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- RRICs: Ramsar Regional Centres-Initiatives endorsed by the Convention as Ramsar Regional Initiatives
- SM: Site managers
- WEC: Wetland education/visitor centres
- PS: Private sector organizations whose activities directly or indirectly affect wetlands
- CSO: Civil Society Organizations such as national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs)

This is an indicative list of key actors that may change during the life of the Programme and will undoubtedly vary to some extent from one country to another. As a broad guide to actors that could contribute to achieving the results, suggested implementers of each KRA are indicated below using the abbreviations above, for example {AA }.

Key Result Areas

Strategy 1	Ensure leadership to support effective implementation of the Programme by providing institutional mechanisms, building a qualified implementation team and establishing and supporting relevant networks.
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- 1.1 Appropriately qualified persons to fulfill the roles of National Government and Non-governmental Organization CEPA Focal Points (see Appendix 2) nominated by Contracting Parties and communicated to the Ramsar Secretariat. {AA }
- 1.2 National Ramsar/Wetland Committees established to collaborate with relevant government departments and institutions to mainstream wetlands and their ecosystem services. {AA }

- 1.3 National Focal Points (AA, CEPA and STRP) included as members of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees where these exist. {AA, NRC}
- 1.4 Email networks that connect and support Administrative Authorities, National Focal Points, Site managers and other Ramsar implementers established and supported at global and national levels. {RamSec, AA, STRP, IOPs}
- 1.5 Relationships developed and maintained with those organizations that can support Ramsar objectives through their expertise, their human resources or through funding. {RamSec, AA, IOPs}
- 1.6 Effectiveness of strategies, especially regarding development and distribution of materials on wetland education and management, the success of campaigns under WWD in engendering a change in behaviour, policy, and practice are regularly evaluated. {RamSec, AAs, NRC, NFPs}

Strategy 2 Integrate CEPA ~~programme processes~~ into regional, national and local all-levels of policy to ensure the development, planning and implementation of the Convention.

- 2.1 CEPA expertise involved in the development of guidance by the Convention's bodies including the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and Standing Committee (SC). {RamSec, STRP}
- 2.2 Wetland communication (CEPA) plans developed at the appropriate level (national, basin or site) to support Ramsar implementers. {AA, NRC, CSO}
- 2.3 ~~Where appropriate,~~ wetland CEPA integrated into national policy and planning mechanisms, such as land-use plans, relevant to wetlands. {AA, CEPA, NRC}
- 2.4 CEPA strategies included in basin and site level management planning. {STRP, AA, NRC, CEPA, SM, CSO}

Strategy 3 Provide support for Ramsar implementers, especially those with a direct role in site management by developing and making accessible guidance materials and expertise on wetlands and their ecosystem services.

- 3.1 Appropriate guidance materials that support and encourage the wise use of wetlands produced for use at Ramsar Sites and other wetlands and by wetland networks. {RamSec, STRP, IOPs, CSO}
- 3.2 Websites, including the Convention's website, maintained for sharing information and resources, including an online platform for sharing information and experiences among CEPA National Focal Points. {RamSec, STRP, AA}
- 3.4 Appropriate Ramsar Sites and other wetlands promoted as 'demonstration sites' for the wise use principle, and these sites suitably equipped in terms of capacity, signage, and interpretive materials {AA, CEPA, IOPs, CSO}

- 3.5 CEPA stories and materials collected and shared through the Secretariat to illustrate how CEPA activities improve wetland management. {RamSec, CEPA}
- 3.6 Collaboration on CEPA with other Conventions, Ramsar's IOPs, other NGOs, UN agencies and others ensured through sharing of CEPA experiences and the encouragement of synergies. {RamSec, IOPs, CSO}

<p>Strategy 4 Build the individual and collective capacity of people with a direct responsibility for Ramsar implementation.</p>
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- 4.1 Site managers supported to build communication, education, participation and awareness into their management plans. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, RRCs, CSO}
- 4.2 Current needs and capacities of wetland site managers and National Focal Points assessed and the results used to define training and capacity-building priorities at regional and national levels. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, RRCs}
- 4.3 Resources provided to produce appropriate wetland management training and capacity building materials and carry out the prioritised training and capacity building identified in 4.2. {RamSec, AA, CEPA, STRP, SM, RRCs, CSO}
- 4.4 A network of Ramsar Regional Centres working to agreed standards (such as peer reviewed materials) supported to deliver capacity building to site managers, National Focal Points and other relevant stakeholders. {RamSec, RRCs, STRP}
- 4.5 Partnerships with tertiary education institutions and other relevant organisations are developed to support the production and delivery of wetland management training and capacity building materials and programmes. {RamSec, STRP, RRCs, CSO, PS}

<p>Strategy 5 Develop and support mechanisms to ensure multistakeholder participation in wetland management.</p>
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- 5.1 Participation of major stakeholders used by site managers and others as an effective process for selection of Ramsar Sites and management of all wetlands, including at basin level. {AA, SM, CEPA, CSO}
- 5.2 Participation in wetland management of stakeholder groups with cultural, spiritual, customary, traditional, historical and socio-economic links to wetlands or those communities who depend on wetlands for their livelihoods is given a high priority {AA, SM, CEPA, CSO}
- 5.3 Wetland knowledge and practices held by indigenous and local communities respected and integrated into site management plans. {AA, SM, CSO}
- 5.4 Encourage community participation in wetlands through volunteer programmes which support the delivery of management objectives. {AA, SM, CSO}
- 5.5 Partnerships with the private sector are sought and developed, including non-traditional sectors and those sectors whose activities have a major impact on wise use of wetlands. {AA, NRC, SM, PS}

Strategy 6 Implement programmes, projects and campaigns targeting diverse sectors of society to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide.

- 6.1 Programmes, projects and campaigns, including World Wetlands Day, undertaken with diverse partners to raise awareness, build community support, and promote stewardship approaches and attitudes towards wetlands. {RamSec, AA, NRC, CEPA, SM, IOPs, RRCs, PS, CSO}
- 6.2 Awareness enhanced on the ~~existence monetary and non-monetary~~ values of wetlands ~~and their~~ ecosystem services to improve understanding of the benefits which wetlands provide. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM}
- 6.3 Photo libraries, promotional videos and other similar tools developed and/or maintained to support awareness raising and appreciation of wetlands and their ecosystem services. {RamSec, AA, CEPA}
- 6.4 Collaboration with the media, including social media, carried out to promote the wise use of and recognition of their ecosystem services to decision-makers, key wetland users and the broad public. {RamSec, AA, CEPA}

Strategy 7 Recognize and support the role of wetland centres and other environment centres as catalysts and key actors for activities that promote Ramsar objectives.

- 7.1 ~~Encourage the establishment of~~ Wetland education/visitor centres ~~established at Ramsar Sites and other important wetland sites~~ in all countries. {AA, IOPs, WEC}
- 7.2 National CEPA Focal Points communicating directly with wetland education/visitor centres to support their delivery of Ramsar messages. {AA CEPA, WEC}
- 7.3 Wetland education/visitor centres linked nationally and internationally through Wetland Link International (WLI) and other mechanisms as a means for gaining access to global and national expertise in CEPA and sharing of experience and resources. {AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 7.4 Partnerships established with other education centres that could play a role in promoting wetlands and Ramsar objectives. {AA, CEPA, WEC}

Strategy 8 Support the development and distribution of wetland education ~~and best practice~~ materials that build awareness of the values of wetlands and their ecosystem services for use in formal education settings, at Ramsar Sites ~~and other important wetland sites~~, and by all ~~wetland stakeholders~~ ~~Ramsar actors~~.

- 8.1 Wetland education materials that build awareness of the values of wetlands and their ecosystem services developed, promoted and distributed among relevant target audiences. {STRP, AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 8.2 Tertiary education institutions, especially those with water and wetland programmes, contributed to the production of targeted wetland education materials. {STRP, AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 8.3 ~~Cultural and Cultural and local~~ ~~traditional~~ wetland knowledge and practices are incorporated into wetland education materials. {WEC, CEPA}

- 8.4 Key messages about wetlands and their ecosystem services regularly reviewed through dialogue and feedback with all [wetland stakeholders](#).~~Ramsar actors~~

Annex 3b. Wetlands and Disaster Risk Reduction

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
48th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

SC48-28

Action requested:

- The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached draft resolution for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Draft resolution XII.xx

Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

Submitted by the Philippines

1. RECALLING that the Convention adopted Resolution IX.9 on *The role of the Ramsar Convention in the prevention and mitigation of impacts associated with natural phenomena, including those induced or exacerbated by human activities* and Resolution VIII.35 on *The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems*, but RECOGNIZING that there exists no specific framework to operationalize this urgent role;
2. RECALLING that Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, which updated and superseded Resolution VIII.3 on *Climate change and wetlands: impacts, adaptation and mitigation*, affirms the relevance of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention to increasing resilience to climate change and extreme weather events and to ensuring climate change responses that would not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands, and RECOGNIZING the Ramsar Convention's role and mandate to address all issues affecting the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands;

~~2. 3.~~ 2. 3. — Further RECALLING that Resolution X.3 on *The Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands* and Resolution X.23 on *Wetlands and human health and well-being* emphasize the importance of sustainable wetland management and restoration of wetlands to ensure future human well-being and security;

~~2.3.~~ 2.3. [Ref. 10.22](#)

4. AWARE of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and RECALLING Resolution VII.8 on *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation on the management of wetlands* particularly the recognition of the contributions of indigenous people and local communities in the management and wise use of wetlands;
5. AWARE that water related hazards are increasingly accounting for a significant proportion of hazards, and that their frequency and intensity is increasing, and RECOGNIZING that the way in which we use and manage water resources and wetlands is central to sustainable risk reduction;
6. CONCERNED that climate change and other human-induced environmental degradation further exacerbate the adverse impacts of natural disasters and *increase disaster risk*; and FURTHER CONCERNED that disasters affect wetlands worldwide, as well as the resources therein and the ecosystem services they provide;
7. ACKNOWLEDGING the vital role of healthy and well-managed wetland ecosystems – such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, glacial lakes, mangroves, swamp forests, tidal flats, oases, dunes and peatlands and other catchment wetlands or floodplains – to reduce disaster risk by acting as natural buffers or protective barriers, for instance through mitigating the glacial lake outburst, impact of flood, tidal surge, cyclone, tsunami and landslide, and with the high water storage capacity of the wetland, through reducing peak flood flow during the wet season while minimizing-maximizing water shortage during the dry season; and FURTHER RECOGNIZING that fully-functioning wetland ecosystems enhance local resilience from disasters by providing water supply and important products and by sustaining the lives and livelihoods of local populations and biodiversity;
8. AWARE that the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment recognizes the significant services that (wetland) ecosystems provide to human communities in regulating the frequency and magnitude of hazard events such as floods, fires and droughts, and in providing natural barriers that can mitigate the adverse impacts of hazards and protect communities, but also recognizes that there is accelerated loss of these vital ecosystem functions and services, including in wetlands;
9. AWARE that the 2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA), and the 2012 RIO+20 Declaration 'The Future We Want', reports and similar UN and global coordinating bodies call for addressing disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development as well as for increased coordination among national, regional and international levels for a robust response to environmental emergencies and improved forecasting and early warning systems;

10. AWARE that the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is reviewing and updating the *Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015; Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* in preparation of a post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework;
11. NOTING that the post-2015 Hyogo Framework of Action strongly recognizes that ecosystem degradation amplifies disaster risk and that the new framework needs to focus much more strongly on anticipating long-term risk scenarios and concrete measures to prevent the creation of new risk and therefore aims for clear guidance on investing in addressing underlying risk factors including by strengthening the sustainable use and management of ecosystems;
12. NOTING that different forms of interventions are required in ecosystems that have lost, or are at risk of losing, their disaster risk reduction functions as a result of the rapid and accelerating rate of degradation and loss of wetlands due to various threats such as resource exploitation, conversion to inappropriate land use, water diversion, pollution and infrastructure development;
13. CONCERNED that the devastating impacts of natural and human-related disasters on the delivery of ecosystem benefits/services, and thus on the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands of international importance and other wetlands in affected countries, have had serious effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people and on biodiversity, and cause major environmental, social and economic impacts;
14. AWARE that disaster risk reduction requires reducing exposure and vulnerabilities through enhancing the capacities of people to cope or recover from disasters and through sustainable management and use of land and water resources to reduce, buffer and in certain circumstances to mitigate disaster risk;
15. RECOGNIZING the global network of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and the actual or potential role that many of these wetlands can play in disaster risk reduction if the sites are effectively managed and/or restored;

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16. AFFIRMS the need to develop and implement management plans for wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, that ensure wise use and conservation of wetlands through an ecosystem-based approach and URGES the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction measures in these management plans and other such policies, action plans and programmes;

17. REQUESTS the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to review Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands* and Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* for possible amendments on the inclusion of disaster risk reduction;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to integrate the principles of ecosystem-based management and adaptation against floods, [glacial lake outbursts, cyclones](#), drought, fire, landslides, tsunamis, and storm surges, as well as accelerated sea level rise, into the management plan of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands;
19. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to integrate [wetland-based](#) disaster risk management [and climate change adaptation](#) into development policies and planning at all levels of government [and stakeholders](#), including in [vulnerability analysis](#), poverty reduction strategies and natural resource management plans (including land-use and water-use plans) and sectors, and in multi-sector policies and plans;
20. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to integrate wetland management plans, or other broader in scope water and landscape management plans, into land-use and development plans, and FURTHER ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to integrate ecosystem management related considerations, in particular on wetland and water management, in their national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to assess disaster risk at the appropriate landscape scale (for example, within a river basin or along a coastal zone) to enable the designing of effective disaster risk reduction interventions to reduce vulnerability and exposure of communities;
22. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to incorporate financial and other resource requirements of wetland [conservation, restoration and](#) management activities related to disaster risk reduction into long-term investment programming while ensuring the inclusion of measures to prevent adverse environmental or social impacts;
23. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties and URGES the Ramsar Secretariat to engage in the development process of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, and the implementation of the subsequent post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, in coordination with the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, with a view on emphasizing the importance of conserving and restoring wetlands for disaster risk reduction;
[To engage in the implementation of the post 2015 framework for DRR](#)
24. CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties, in conjunction with the STRP and different expertise and agencies, and take urgent substantive actions in developing and implementing a set of

guidelines or a framework based on existing materials which emphasizes disaster risk reduction through the wise use of wetlands;

25. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to recognize the role of local communities and indigenous peoples and their methods and approaches to wetland management and disaster risk reduction

ALSO URGES the Contracting Parties to adopt the human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction in order to extend protection to the rights of wetlands-dependent displaced persons in this era of climate disruption;

(ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as far as possible, to avoid building seawalls and other similar infrastructures on tidal flats and floodplains, and to systematically take into account the ecological requirements and the services of such ecosystems.)

(INVITES Contracting Parties and partners to strengthen the conservation of existing mangrove forests and to accelerate the restoration of degraded ones, without compromise to existing functioning ecosystems, as a way to prevent and mitigate the impact of natural disasters in coastal areas.)

26. REQUESTS the STRP to review existing information in order to present a set of practical policies and guidance which can be initiated by governments and others, for the management and wise use of wetlands to build resilience to natural hazards, especially floods, drought, fire, landslides, tsunamis and storm surges, as well as accelerated sea level rise, which include the use of risk-based approaches (Resolution VII.10), and to develop appropriate early warning indicators and baseline information benchmarks for demonstrating progress towards the integration of wetland management in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies; and FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to, in particular, investigate the role of wetland conservation and rehabilitation in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as well as identify economic valuation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
27. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to compile existing guidance on ecosystem-based adaptation concerning disaster risk reduction and wetland restoration in relation to other integrated management strategies such as *Integrated Water Resource Management* (Resolution X.19), *Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (Resolution VIII.4) and *Integrated River Basin Management* (Resolution X.19), among others;
28. INVITES the STRP to conduct an analysis of cross-cutting themes on wetlands and economics, health and wellbeing, land and water use management, housing and settlements, livelihoods, transportation and fisheries, and on the economic value of ecosystem services and the role of women and youth in disaster risk reduction, in order to

provide additional guidance and enhance capacities of Contracting Parties identified as most vulnerable to climate change on how the management, wise use and restoration of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, can reduce disaster risk and adapt to a changing climate;

29. REQUESTS the STRP to increase the knowledge base on wetlands affected by disasters and on the role of wetland conservation and rehabilitation in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts, to monitor the discussion, developments and trends in international disaster risk reduction fora, and to keep Contracting Parties informed of the these through technical reports, and support to the capacity-building activities of wetland managers on disaster risk reduction;
30. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, especially their Ramsar CEPA National Focal Points, to establish or strengthen CEPA programmes and increase awareness on the role of wise use, management, conservation and restoration of wetlands in disaster risk reduction and on the role of wetlands in contributing to reducing vulnerabilities and mitigating disasters;
31. CALLS ON humanitarian organizations to enhance engagement in wetland management and restoration as means of disaster risk reduction alongside other measure of risk reduction;
32. ENCOURAGES collaboration between National Disaster Management Agencies and river basin authorities, coastal managers and other authorities responsible for natural resource management, and humanitarian organizations to develop and implement laws, policies and plans, including contingency plans, to integrate ecosystem-based approaches, including green infrastructure, in disaster risk reduction;
33. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to collaborate with universities and research institutions to carry out long-term research on wetlands and disaster risk management in the face of climate change;
34. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat to liaise with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in highlighting the importance of wetlands in addressing impacts and reducing risks especially for countries identified as most vulnerable to climate change; ALSO REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat and/or STRP to establish strategic partnerships to ensure collaboration and access to global trust funds.
- ~~34. INVITES the Ramsar Secretariat to explore further refinement of the points in the Resolution in order to raise the priority of disaster risk reduction in the next Strategic Plan.~~

Note from the Philippines: Para 34 should be replaced by

New para 34: INVITES the Ramsar Secretariat to compile information on sustainable measures and specific actions in wetland management, including the guidelines on ecosystem-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction to be developed by STRP, and make it widely available.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
48th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

SC48-25

Action requested:

- Standing Committee is invited to consider and endorse the Draft Resolution concerning the effective management of Ramsar Sites, with any eventual amendments, for submission to COP12.

Background

1. One of the cornerstones of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention is the process by which Contracting Parties identify priority wetlands within their territories, include them in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and ensure their long-term management and conservation.
2. To achieve the final element of this, Ramsar Site managers must be able to anticipate new management issues and respond to them rapidly and effectively. To make this possible, they should conduct regular and open evaluations of the effectiveness of the Site's management.
3. A range of Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) assessment tools is available, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) published by WWF and the World Bank in 2003. Two subsequent studies found the METT suitable for evaluating the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites.
4. In June 2014, a workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand hosted by the Government of Thailand and supported by the Government of the R.O. Korea, Gyeongnam Province (R.O. Korea) and the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia to further consider the adoption by the Ramsar Convention of a PAME tool for use at Ramsar Sites, and in particular the METT. Participants acknowledged that certain Contracting Parties had already adopted their own PAME tool, and started to develop a Ramsar-adapted METT (R-METT) for other Parties to use.

About the Draft Resolution

5. The Draft Resolution invites Ramsar Contracting Parties to use this R-METT tool to evaluate the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites if they have not already adopted another PAME tool, and to report on the results of the evaluation to the Ramsar Secretariat as part of their National Report prior to each Conference of Parties.
6. Supporting the DR is an annex showing the R-METT data sheets, and an information paper with more detail on how the R-METT was chosen and developed.

7. The R-METT comprises four data sheets which are adapted from the METT, and one data sheet adapted from another PAME tool, the IUCN Conservation Assessment for World Heritage Sites. Together these sheets cover the six elements of the management effectiveness cycle: the context, planning, inputs, process, outputs, and outcomes of management.

Draft Resolution XII.xx

Evaluating and ensuring the effective management and conservation of Ramsar Sites

1. THANKING the Government of Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Gyeongnam Province (ROK) and the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia for their generous sponsorship and organization of a workshop in Bangkok in June 2014 that laid the ground for the text of this Resolution;
2. RECALLING Article 3.1 of the Convention, which states that “Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List [of Wetlands of International Importance]”;
3. ~~EMPHASIZING RECALLING~~ that designation of a wetland for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (hereafter referred to as a Ramsar Site) is one of the various components of just the start of a long-term international commitment to its conservation and wise use, in order to maintain its ecological character as well as the ecosystem services and benefits it provides;
4. RECALLING that Resolution 5.7 *Management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* called for Contracting Parties to establish appropriate legal and administrative structures for the application of management plans, funding for the implementation of the plans, and training of the necessary staff;
5. APPRECIATING the guidance detailed in Resolution VIII.14 *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands*, which calls for the development of management plans with clear objectives using simple and measurable indicators for each Ramsar Site, and which also highlights the importance of adaptive management, including both planning and evaluation, to create effective management outcomes;
6. NOTING that not all Contracting Parties have in place tools for effective management planning;
7. RECALLING that Annex E of Resolution IX.1 provided an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring, but AWARE that there is currently no agreed process for evaluating the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management and its outcomes;

8. NOTING the adoption and use of Protected Area Management Evaluation (PAME) tools by networks of protected areas such as World Heritage Sites and ASEAN Heritage Parks, and by institutions with a role in supporting their effective management, such as the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility;
9. FURTHER NOTING the Convention on Biological Diversity's Decision X/31 of 2010, that called for the institutionalization of management effectiveness assessment, for 60% of the total area of protected areas to be assessed by 2015, and for the results of the assessments to be implemented;
10. ALSO RECALLING CBD Decision XI/24 which invited the Ramsar Convention and other partners to align their activities to best support the implementation of national work programmes on protected areas, including the development and implementation of management effectiveness evaluations for protected areas and ecological networks;

[Add reference to Strategy 2.5](#)

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Ramsar Site management planning:

- ~~10~~.11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that [the Ramsar Site management authority](#) [and](#) managers develop and maintain an integrated system of planning, management and evaluation which promotes the wise use of Sites;
- ~~11~~.12. URGES Ramsar Site [management authorities and](#) managers to assess and measure the full range of services that their Site provides (such as the storage, treatment and provision of water, support to the livelihoods and health of human communities, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, tourism and education) and to prioritize the maintenance of these services in their management processes;
- ~~12~~.13. DIRECTS the Ramsar Secretariat and its scientific and technical bodies and officers, within available resources, to summarize the management planning guidelines adopted in Resolution VIII.14 for wide distribution and INVITES Contracting Parties to support the translation of the summary into languages which are not official languages of the Ramsar Convention;
164. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to support mechanisms such as networks of Site managers that communicate among themselves virtually and where possible in regular meetings, and establish such networks where they are not already in place, to enable Ramsar Site managers to share experiences and discuss issues of common concern, and REQUESTS that they transmit the views of the networks and Ramsar Site managers to the Ramsar Secretariat;

157. URGES Contracting Parties to encourage Ramsar Site managers to use Ramsar communication tools including websites and social media to exchange and promote good practice on wetland management practice more widely;

Evaluating the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management:

18. EMPHASIZES the importance of evaluating the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites and of adopting appropriate Protected Area Management Evaluation (PAME) tools for effective management; AND URGES the Ramsar Secretariat, STRP, IOPs, Ramsar Regional Centres and other Partners to support the Contracting Parties in their efforts;
19. ~~RECOMMENDS-ENCOURAGES that~~ Contracting Parties that have not already adopted a PAME tool for their Ramsar Sites ~~adopt to consider using~~ the Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (R-METT), which has been developed by the Ramsar Convention and which is annexed to this Resolution, ~~and to report to the Ramsar Secretariat on their experience of using R-METT;~~
2019. (URGES Ramsar Site managers Contracting Parties to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of each of their Ramsar Sites in collaboration with stakeholders, using a PAME tool that they have already adopted or the R-METT;
- ~~, and to XXX.XX ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to~~ report the results of any evaluation of the effectiveness of Ramsar Sites in Section 4 of the National Report prior to each Conference of Contracting Parties of the Convention);
21. ~~RECOMMENDS- ENCOURAGES that~~ Site managers who use R-METT to complement their use of the R-METT by monitoring and evaluating management outcomes in line with the *Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring* approved as Annex E of Resolution IX.1, and relevant guidelines and good practices identified by Ramsar partners;
22. URGES the Secretariat to collaborate with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC) to incorporate Ramsar Site management effectiveness evaluations into the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME), in order to support regional and national reporting on Ramsar Site management effectiveness.

Annex 3d. Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
48th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 26– 30 January 2015

DOC. SC48-30

Draft Resolution: Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

Submitted by Mexico

Action requested. This draft Resolution was sent to the Secretariat by Mexico on 30th September according to the rules of procedure. The Standing Committee is requested to consider the attached draft Resolution for transmission to COP12.

Resolution XII. __

Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

1. NOTING the Preamble of the Convention, which recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic fauna and flora, especially waterfowl
2. RECOGNIZING that wetlands provide a wide range of ecosystem services, which contribute to human well-being **and health of the bigger ecosystem**, and that consequently their conservation and wise use **is-are** fundamental in order to continue to offer these services, and moreover that wetlands are both a source and consumer of water;
3. BEARING IN MIND that the report *The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands* highlights the urgent need to focus on wetlands as natural solutions to the global water crisis. SIMILARLY, it urges a major shift in our attitudes to wetlands, to recognize both their value in delivering water, raw materials and food, essential for life, and the crucial role they play in maintaining people’s livelihoods and the sustainability of the world’s economies.
4. NOTING Decision X/28 of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) on “Inland waters biodiversity”, and, in particular, AWARE of the concern for major anthropogenic changes that are ongoing in the Earth’s water cycle on global, regional and local scales, due to the direct use of water and land-use change; that the limits of sustainability of both surface water and groundwater resources have already been reached or surpassed in many regions; that these

trends are becoming more pronounced in some areas through climate change; and that the water-related stresses on biodiversity and ecosystem changes are rapidly escalating;

5. RECALLING the Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands (Resolution X.3), which recognizes explicitly that the increasing demands for, and over-use of, water jeopardizes human well-being as well as the environment, and that there is often not enough water to meet our direct human needs or to maintain the wetlands we require, and ALSO RECALLING the issues of fundamental importance for the future of the Convention indicated in Resolution X.1, which identifies the lack of water resources for wetlands and the increasing demand for water extraction as the main factors that generate continuous change and lead to the deterioration and disappearance of wetlands and their services;
6. PARTICULARLY CONCERNED, on a global and regional scales, by the increase in public works, and in particular hydroelectric power generation projects, which by modifying water flow and the transportation of sediments, interrupt connectivity and create barriers that prevent species migrating, as well as having a negative impact on the ecological characteristics of wetlands, in particular on species and ecosystems, and on their potential to produce a wide range of ecosystem services, on their biodiversity and on the quantity and quality of the water;
7. ALSO CONSIDERING Resolution VI.23 and Resolution VIII.1, which express explicit recognition that wetland ecosystems require a certain volume of water in order to maintain their ecological characteristics and establish guidelines for the process of allocating and managing water resources to this end, ALSO AWARE of Resolution VIII.40, which recognizes that maintenance of the ecological integrity of most wetlands, especially those located in arid or semi-arid zones, is closely linked to the supply of groundwater;
8. HIGHLIGHTING the fact that ensuring the availability of the water required by wetlands will promote both their biodiversity and the sustainable use of their components, in addition to meeting the targets of the CDB's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (Aichi Targets). STRESSING, in particular, that knowing wetlands' water requirements will favour the integration of biodiversity values into development planning processes and strategies, contribute to the sustainable management of water in agricultural areas, and maintain the impacts of the use of natural resources within ecological limits in order to guarantee biodiversity conservation.
9. RECOGNIZING that the allocation and protection of the water requirements of wetlands will help improve the integrated management of water resources (Resolution VII.18¹), and in particular river basins, by harmonizing the water-use and land-use strategies, maintaining the renewal of the water cycle and the link existing between ground and surface water, both enabling their management, and helping to establish adaptation conditions that allow climate variability to be mitigated;
10. RECALLING that Resolution X.24 on Climate change and wetlands (2008), recognizes the potentially serious impacts of climate change for ensuring the continued conservation and wise use of wetlands. Similarly, it calls on the Contracting Parties to manage their wetlands in such a way as to increase their resilience to climate change and extreme climatic events, and to ensure

¹ Replaced by Resolution X.19

that in their climate change responses, such implementation does not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;

11. NOTING Resolution VII.7 on Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote conservation and the wise use of wetlands, which URGES each Contracting Party to review its laws and institutions to ensure they are aimed not only at the wise use of wetlands and eliminating obstacles to conservation, but also at adopting measures that can serve as positive incentives for the effective implementation of the wise use obligation, such as the allocation of water to wetlands.
12. ALSO RECOGNIZING the need among the Contracting Parties to replicate successful examples of the determination, allocation and protection of wetlands' water requirements in order to maintain their ecological functions, prevent conflict over water resources, improve the resilience of wetlands to climate change, and to safeguard the ecosystem services that wetlands offer society.
13. NOTING that Resolution IX.3 on the engagement of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in ongoing multilateral processes dealing with water, in which it AFFIRMS that the conservation and wise use of wetlands is critical for the provision of water for people and nature, and that wetlands are a source, as well as a user, of water, as well as supplying a range of other ecosystem benefits/services;
14. AWARE of the role water will have to play in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as well as the so-called "Post-2015 Global Goal for Water", which include targets for improving the sustainable use and development of water resources and the conservation of wetland ecosystems, in order to promote decisions and actions that take into account both human and environmental water requirements, as well as the need to increase the long-term viability of natural supply systems.
15. RECALLING THAT the need to guarantee a volume of water is established in the local laws of several of the world's nations, and is thus currently emerging as an international principle in the areas of environmental and water legislation.
16. ECHOING the Changwon Declaration's call to action, which presents an overview of the priority action steps that together show how to deliver some of the world's most critical environmental and sustainability goals, including the wise management and protection of our wetlands – always ensuring that the latter have enough water for them to continue to be the source of the quantity and quality of water we need for food production, drinking water and sanitation.

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17. RECOGNIZES AND REITERATES that the lack of water in wetlands is a far-reaching global problem with serious consequences for ecosystems and people's livelihoods, in particular those of vulnerable, marginal communities that depend on wetlands, and that this problem has not yet been solved, on the contrary it will increase in the future due to the growing demand for water and the effects of climate change;

18. WELCOMES the process carried out in Mexico for the creation of water reserves for wetlands, described in the annex to this Resolution, and URGES the Contracting Parties to use this model, identifying the opportunities to act preventatively, and adapting it as necessary in order to address national and regional conditions and circumstances, within the framework of existing regional initiatives and commitments and within the context of sustainable development;
19. CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties, other pertinent governments and organizations, to increase their efforts in order to guarantee the allocation of the water required by wetlands, in particular identifying opportunities to anticipate the negative impacts of water-consuming projects and infrastructures on wetlands, their biodiversity and the services they provide.
20. PROPOSES to the interested Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the International Organization Partners the drawing up of a *Global action plan to guarantee the water required by wetlands*, which considers:
 - a. Integration with other global initiatives, in particular the Millennium Development Goals,
 - b. Assessment of the global situation regarding wetland water requirements
 - c. Application of strategies and tools for the determination and allocation of water to wetlands on a regional or national scale
 - d. A programme for monitoring the water conditions of wetlands and to ensure that there are scientific solutions for the water deficits.
 - e. International cooperation for the creation of research networks and specialized regional centres and for institutional capacity building
 - f. Education and raising public awareness about the water requirements of wetlands and the environmental benefits wetlands offer.

WWF's recommendation on DR DCO SC48-30

1. To develop a trade-off mechanism between downstream and upstream countries in a way that the connectivity of ecosystem, functionality of the wetlands and livelihood of communities are 100% protected.
2. Emphasize the need of independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) for infrastructure development with potential effects on the functionality of wetlands, and to follow international principles and obligations.
3. Encourage Contracting Parties to develop and implement energy saving policies, and to look, whenever possible, for alternative, clean energy resources that don't impact wetlands, and to consider ecosystem services mapping and valuation as a key tool to improve decision making process
4. Also encourage policy makers at all levels to consult with local communities, including at trans-boundary scale, in the framework of any infrastructure development projects.

Annex 4. Siem Reap Message

Siem Reap Message On Wetlands for our Future²

Asian Wetland Symposium/Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting

Siem Reap, Cambodia

3 to 7 November, 2014

Introduction

1. Thanking the Government of Cambodia for their generosity and hospitality in successfully hosting the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting in Siem Reap, from 3rd to 7th November 2014;
2. Appreciating the diversity of presentations made on wetland conservation and wise use in the Asia Region in general, and in particular from Cambodia regarding the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve and the Mekong river basin;
3. Following the field visit to the Prek Toal Core Area of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, the meeting participants recognise the international importance of the site and its considerable potential for designation as a Wetland of International Importance ('Ramsar Site'), and to be managed under the principle of the wise use of wetlands;
4. Recognizing that this first joint meeting of the Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP Asia Regional Meeting, as called for in Resolution IX.19, has proved to be effective in increasing understanding among the various wetland stakeholders in Asia and has provided a platform to promote and enhance partnerships between them;

Wise use of wetlands

Wetland ecosystem services

5. Recognizing that wetlands are water infrastructures and that wetlands and the resources that they support, e.g. water and biodiversity, are connectors of nations
6. Recognizing that wetland ecosystem services, and in particular the provision of and delivery of water, are vital for human well-being; recognizing also, that healthy functioning wetlands contribute to sustainable development, for example in ensuring livelihood, food security, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation;
7. Recognizing the importance of inter-linkages between wetland conservation and poverty eradication, and the need to use a wetland ecosystem based approach which simultaneously involves relevant stakeholders at the different scales/levels – from policy to the site management level and local community - to mainstream this concept into national programs, policies and action plans;

² This document is a report of the main points discussed during the joint Asian Wetland Symposium and the Ramsar Pre-COP12 Asia Regional Meeting

8. Recognizing also the role of wetlands in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, the meeting participants encourage Contracting Parties to put in place policies that will ensure the conservation of wetlands, and to manage and restore wetlands so as to maintain this vital service;
9. Contracting Parties are encouraged to put in place policies that will ensure conservation of wetlands and protection of the rights of wetland-dependent people displaced by natural hazard
10. Recognizing the cultural values of wetlands in Asia, including religious institutions, and their importance in supporting the conservation and wise use of wetlands, invites all interested persons to become members of, and participate in the Ramsar Culture Network (www.ramsarculture.org);
11. In decision-making related to infrastructure development, give priority to maintaining the ecological integrity of wetland ecosystems, and to the cultural and socio-economic values of wetlands, particularly for wetland-dependent communities;
12. Emphasizing the need for policies that encourage independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) for infrastructure development which could potentially impact the functionality of wetlands, and the need to develop a mechanism to minimize negative impacts of developments on wetlands with the aim for conservation and wise use of wetlands;
13. Urging Contracting Parties to develop and implement energy saving policies, and to explore, whenever possible, alternative, clean energy resources that do not impact negatively on wetlands;

Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)

14. Recognizing the good practices and lessons learnt under the Ramsar Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) program, the Contracting Parties reiterate and reaffirm the crucial need to increase awareness of government policy makers and the private sector, and to enhance the understanding and take into consideration the importance of wetlands and their ecosystem services in decision-making processes;
15. Promoting the CEPA program at all levels; and recognizing the value of wetland education centres, and the interest expressed by the participants of this meeting for such centres to be connected, such as through Wetland Link International (<http://wli.wwt.org.uk>);
16. Recognizing the vital role that local communities play in the management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, and the need to consider local and cultural knowledge and practices in wetland management practices;
17. Noting that there is a wealth of experience, information and knowledge in Asia from wetland projects and that this should be shared in more efficient manner;
18. Encouraging Contracting Parties to ensure capacity development of stakeholders for effective management and wise use of wetlands;

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)

19. Noting the importance of priority wetlands identified under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Regional Initiative, and calling on Contracting Parties to recognise the value of these ecosystems and to designate these sites as Wetlands of International Importance, and to designate sites that meet the relevant criteria as EAAFP Flyway Network Sites;
20. Recognising the need to promote the conservation of Ramsar Sites in terms of both quantity and quality, and encouraging Contracting Parties to develop a set of best practices guidelines for Ramsar Site management and to provide support at the policy level to implement these best practices. Contracting Parties are encouraged to consider adopting simple and effective tools to evaluate the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites and other wetlands;

21. Noting the need for Contracting Parties to ensure that the Ramsar Information Sheets for their Ramsar Sites are updated every 6 years and encouraging NGOs and local site managers to support the Contracting Parties in making these updates;
22. Encouraging Contracting Parties to use the Ramsar Advisory Missions mechanism to address and respond to threats to their Ramsar Sites; Noting that Ramsar Advisory Missions have already been implemented in Pakistan (post-floods disaster), and requested by Iraq (potential oil industry threats), and urging Contracting Parties to request such Advisory Missions when change or likely change of ecological character of Ramsar Sites occurs;

National and international cooperation

23. Encouraging countries to consider ecosystem services mapping and valuation at the basin scale as a way to inform and improve decision making process;
24. Urging policy makers to establish bi-lateral or multilateral technical committee to consider the issue of collaborative management of transboundary river basins, especially with addressing the needs of local communities at both sides;
25. Encouraging Contracting Parties to engage with and support the work of the current Ramsar Regional Initiatives and the Regional Training Centre in Thailand, and to support the establishment of other regional initiatives such as the proposed regional initiative among the Mekong river basin countries and the proposed regional initiative for South Asia;
26. Encouraging Contracting Parties to offer technical and financial support to the Governments of the Least Developed Countries and countries in special situations who are Parties to the Convention, to fulfil their obligation under the Convention as well as ensure participation in all important forums including the COP.

Looking forward to Ramsar COP12

27. Presenting the view of the Asian Contracting Parties on the Draft Resolutions, as well as the priority themes and actions for the STRP to undertake during the 2016-2018. These are:
 1. Best practice methodologies/tools to monitor Ramsar Sites, including surveying, mapping, and inventorying;
 2. Balancing wetland conservation and development: infrastructure;
 3. Best practices for developing and implementing management plans for protected areas/ Ramsar Sites;
 4. Methodologies for valuation of wetlands goods and services, and then jointly:
 - 5a. Balancing wetland conservation and development: urbanization, and
 - 5b. Legal frameworks for conservation of wetlands;
28. Presenting the views of the Asian Contracting Parties on other priorities identified. There were:
 - a) The need to enhance the linkages between science and policy and;
 - b) Addressing climate change adaptation-disaster risk reduction-ecosystem management (including restoration) nexus and focussing on improving community resilience.
29. Acknowledging the interest of most of the Contracting Parties for the concept of a Ramsar Community Accreditation scheme and requests them to provide written suggested improvements to the DR to the Secretariat;
30. Urging the Convention to support the adoption of new working/official languages of the Convention and the important role of effective communication in improving the visibility of the Convention at all levels