



12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to  
the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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Draft Resolution XII.10

World Wetland City<sup>1</sup> WWC Accreditation

*Submitted by Tunisia and the Republic of Korea*

1. RECALLING the commitments made by Contracting Parties to achieving the wise use of all wetlands in their territory and to maintaining the ecological character of designated sites for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;
2. RECALLING also that Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization* underlined the importance of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments, and of their wise use;
3. FUTHER RECALLING that Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* which detailed the objectives, principles, opportunities and potential solutions for the wise use of urban wetlands and requested the Convention to explore establishing a “wetland city accreditation” scheme, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate ;
4. RECALLING that the Information Document 23 submitted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties entitled *Background and context to the development of principles and guidance for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* noted that more than 50% of the Earth’s population now resides in cities, towns and urban settlements; that this shift to a predominantly urban population is predicted to continue at rates up to almost 4% per annum, with the rate of increase in urban populations being greatest in the least developed nations; that some estimates suggest that by 2030 80% of the human population will dwell in urban areas; and that whilst cities currently only occupy 2% of the Earth’s surface, they use 75% of the world’s natural resources and generate 70% of all the waste produced globally;
5. NOTING also that with the increasingly rapid urbanization, wetlands are being threatened in two principle ways:
  - i. through direct planned or unplanned conversion of wetlands to urban areas, leading to acute problems associated with polluted drainage, direct habitat loss, overexploitation of wetland plants and animals by urban and peri-urban residents, and the increased prevalence of non-native invasive species, uncontrolled waste disposal etc.; and

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<sup>1</sup> A city as defined in this draft resolution refers to a settlement which has its own governing system (i.e. municipal authorities).

- ii. through the watershed-related impacts of urban development, including increased demands for water, increased diffuse and point source pollution, the need for greater agricultural production, demands on the extractive industries to supply materials to support the development of urban infrastructure, and the water requirements of energy production to support the burgeoning urban population;
6. CONSIDERING that with the growing impact of urbanization on wetlands the importance of urban and peri-urban wetlands for biodiversity as well as the quality of urban life becomes even more significant;
7. AWARE of the huge potential of urban areas in terms of education and public awareness related to wetlands conservation, including through wetland education centres, guided tours for the public in general and schools in particular, and various communication means such as World Wetlands Day celebration, production of film documentaries, media events, etc.; and
8. FURTHER AWARE that World Wetland City accreditation can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness and attracting support for the wise use and conservation of wetlands and other sustainable development initiatives
9. TAKING into account the recommendations of workshops considering a city accreditation mechanism held in Morocco in 2012 and in the Republic of Korea and in Tunisia in 2014;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. APPROVES the establishment of a voluntary World Wetland City accreditation system, which is attached as Annex of this Resolution;
11. DECIDES to review implementation progress and financing of the framework and the voluntary accreditation system at the COP 13;
12. INVITES Contracting Parties to propose for accreditation as a World Wetland City those cities in their territory which are located close to Ramsar Sites and/or other significant wetlands that satisfy the criteria outlined below;
13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties which are interested to submit proposals for candidate cities consistent with the attached framework for the World Wetland City accreditation;
14. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat, through their relevant Senior Regional Advisors, to submit the nominations received to the Independent Advisory Committee for its consideration;
15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and their agencies including the local stakeholders, local governments, or relevant equivalents, non-governmental organizations and other partners to disseminate information on the World Wetland City accreditation through communication and awareness materials, events, celebrations and media channels; and
16. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to develop a global online network of cities having obtained the World Wetland City accreditation;
17. INVITES the International Organization Partners IOPs and other partners to promote the Ramsar Convention's branding through the World Wetland City accreditation, and promote local efforts

to gain and maintain this branding, including through participation in and support to local management committees.

### Framework for World Wetland City accreditation

#### Introduction

1. At COP 11 Resolution XI.11 was adopted on the *Principles for the sustainable planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* which recognizes that the Principles can also be applied to spatial planning and management in rural areas, as appropriate, and it urges Contracting Parties and other governments to act upon these Principles, further disseminate them to other interested parties (including through translation into local languages), and seek to ensure that they are taken up by the sectors and levels of government responsible for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban environments.
2. Resolution XI.11 also asked the Convention to explore establishing a “wetland city accreditation” system, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands.
3. During the 47th meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee, the Republic of Korea presented a report on the workshop it organized on Ramsar city accreditation. Through Decision SC47-27, the Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to prepare a document for the 48th Meeting of the Standing Committee taking into account this report. In addition, it invited Tunisia, WWF, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Republic of Korea to prepare a draft resolution related to wetland city accreditation.
4. It is within this context that this Framework for the World Wetland City accreditation was developed.
5. This accreditation would encourage cities that are close to and depend on wetlands, primarily Wetlands of International Importance, as well as other wetlands, to establish a positive relationship with these wetlands through increased participation and awareness and consideration of wetlands in local planning and decision making.

#### World Wetland City

6. The World Wetland City is so labeled in order to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and regional and international co-operation, as well as to generate sustainable socio-economic benefits for the local populations.
7. **A candidate city for the World Wetland City accreditation would be approved as a World Wetland City by the Independent Advisory Committee, following proposed by the Contracting Party on whose territory it stands, after completing the accreditation procedure described below. Newly** accredited cities join the global network of World Wetland City established by this framework. Accreditation as a World Wetland City is not intended to create any legal rights or legal obligations of the city or the Contracting Party.
8. The aim of this Framework for the World Wetland City is to improve the local authorities work with wetlands. This includes promoting conservation and wise use of wetlands within the local authorities’ boundaries, and when relevant, Ramsar Sites.

9. This framework establishes the procedure for the Wetland city accreditation and for the support and promotion of the World Wetland City . Each Contracting Party, as appropriate, is encouraged to consider local conditions when implementing the international criteria for the World Wetland City accreditation.
10. The accredited World Wetland Cities are intended to act as models for the study, demonstration and promotion of the Ramsar Convention objectives, approaches, principles and resolutions.
11. A World Wetland City (urban or rural) is one which, through its inhabitants, its local government and its resources, continuously promotes the conservation and wise use of any Ramsar Site(s) and other wetlands within or nearby the limits of the city, respecting its physical and social environment and its heritage, while supporting the development of a sustainable, dynamic and innovative economy as well as educational initiatives in connection with these wetlands.
12. An eligible city for the World Wetland City accreditation may be a city or any other types of human settlement according to the definitions given by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, with its own governance system.

#### **Criteria**

13. To be formally accredited, a candidate for the World Wetland City accreditation must satisfy the national standards used to implement each of the following international criteria:
  - a) Has one or more Ramsar Sites or other significant wetlands fully or partly situated in their territory or in its close vicinity and that provides a range of ecosystems services to the city.
  - b) Adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity,
  - c) Implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures,
  - d) Considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands where jurisdiction exists
  - e) Delivered locally adapted information for public awareness about the values of wetlands, including and encouraging the wise use of wetlands, to stakeholders through, for example, establishing **wetland education/information centers**.
  - f) Established a local World Wetland City committee with appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and representation of and engagement with stakeholders to support the World Wetland City accreditation submission and the implementation of proper measures for fulfilling the obligations under the accreditation
14. Examples for satisfying the World Wetland City accreditation criteria may include the following approaches :
  - a) Appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under its jurisdiction, as appropriate depending on existing standards;
  - b) Sustainable agricultural, forest, fish, aquaculture, tourism and pastoral production systems contributing to the conservation of the Ramsar Site(s);

- c) Evaluations of the socio-economic and cultural values as well as the ecosystem services of the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands, and good practices to conserve them; and
- d) Where appropriate, plans for disaster prevention and management which addresses hazards which relate to the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands such as accidental pollution or flooding.

### **Accreditation procedure**

15. A city will be recognized as a World Wetland City by the Conference of the Parties , in accordance with the following procedure:

- a) Any Contracting Party that wishes to participate in World Wetland City accreditation, will undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the Independent Advisory Committee based on the proposed city's compliance with the criteria outline in section 13 as implemented by the Contracting Party.
- b) Any proposals from Contracting Parties shall be submitted to the Independent Advisory Committee within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties,
- c) The Independent Advisory Committee reviews the applications and decides whether to accredit proposed cities and reports its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the Conference of the Parties,
- d) the Standing Committee reviews the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmitted to the Conference of the Parties,
- e) the Secretary General will provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the World Wetland City, which is valid for six years.
- f) The status of each World Wetland City can be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Committee upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years.

### **Independent Advisory Committee**

16. It is proposed that the composition of the Independent Advisory Committee shall be chosen by the Standing Committee from the following:

- a) A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), who shall act as Chair of the Committee;
- b) A representative of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) ;
- c) A representative of the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners;
- d) A Standing Committee member representative from each of the six Ramsar regions, selected by the regions;
- e) One representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention;
- f) A representative of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel of the Ramsar Convention;

- g) The Ramsar Secretary General or his/her designated representative; and
  - h) The Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur).
  - i) The coordinator of the Regional Initiative concerned, if any
17. The Independent Advisory Committee may develop its own work plan and procedures for completing accreditation decisions within the timeframe and using the criteria outlined in sections 13 and 15 of this annex.
  18. The World Wetland City and the Contracting Party concerned, are encouraged to disseminate information on the World Wetland City accreditation, both locally and more widely, through events or national or international celebrations (World Wetlands Day, World Water Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, etc.) and through diverse media channels.
  19. Any costs for preparing and approving the World Wetland City accreditation shall not be borne by the core budget of the Secretariat.
  20. The benefits of the World Wetland City accreditation are to support the implementation of the principles adopted in Resolution XI.11 by (i) delivering the wise use of wetlands and avoiding any further degradation or loss of wetlands as a result of urban development or management, and (ii) promoting the contribution that wetlands make to the social and environmental sustainability of a World Wetland City.