



**12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Ramsar COP12 DR11

Draft Resolution XII.11

**Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar
Convention**

Submitted by Denmark and supported by Finland

1. RECOGNIZING that the ecosystem services performed by peatlands, which contribute to human well-being, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, can be seriously degraded if the ecosystem is not managed wisely and AWARE that increased attention of the Ramsar Convention may be required to address this threat;
2. RECALLING that paragraph 13 of Resolution XI.14 recognized that scientific reports indicate the continuing degradation and loss of many types of peatlands cause the release of large amounts of stored carbon and thus exacerbate climate change, and that the designation and effective management of Ramsar Sites can, in some regions, play a vital role in carbon sequestration and storage and therefore in the mitigation of climate change;
3. RECALLING that paragraph 29 of Resolution XI.14 encouraged Contracting Parties and their representatives to reach out to their counterparts in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its relevant subsidiary bodies, in order to initiate and foster greater information exchange on the actual and potential roles of wetland conservation, management, and restoration activities in implementing relevant strategies, as appropriate, in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through enhancing carbon sequestration and storage in wetlands;
4. ALSO RECALLING paragraph 35 of Resolution X.24 calling on Ramsar Administrative Authorities to provide expert guidance and support to national UNFCCC focal points on policies and measures to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from peatlands, and urged relevant Contracting Parties to reduce the degradation, promote restoration, and improve management practices of peatlands and other wetland types that are significant greenhouse gas sinks, and to encourage expansion of demonstration sites on peatland restoration and wise use management in relation to climate change; and encouraged Contracting Parties to utilize peatlands to showcase the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness activities for implementation of the Convention in the context of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change;
5. FURTHER RECALLING that paragraph 4 of Resolution VIII.17 stressed the importance of peatlands for global biodiversity and for the storage of the water and carbon that is vital to the world's climate system;

6. RECALLING that paragraph 3 of Resolution VIII.3 welcomed the invitation of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC at its eighth session to share information;
7. NOTING that paragraph 17 of Resolution X.25 encouraged Contracting Parties to consider the cultivation of biomass on rewetted peatlands (paludiculture), and AWARE that since this Resolution the rewetting of peatlands, while maintaining their productive use, has been widely recognized as a promising option to enhance the climate change mitigation option of peatlands;
8. ALSO NOTING that in its Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that most global estimates do not include emissions from peat burning or decomposition after a land use change; and that particularly, the decomposition of carbon in wetlands and peatlands is not reflected in models despite the large amount of carbon stored in these ecosystems and their vulnerability to warming and land use change;
9. AWARE that the IPCC has completed the *2013 Supplement to the IPCC 2006 Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands* and the *2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance Arising from the Kyoto Protocol*, providing detailed guidance for reporting and accounting for greenhouse gas emission reductions by rewetting of drained peatlands; and ALSO AWARE that the IPCC refers to the Ramsar Convention as a global and regional resource for data for developing an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from wetlands and organic soils;
10. AWARE of the adoption by the UNFCCC through Decision 2/CMP.7 of a new activity "*Wetland Drainage and Rewetting*" for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, which enables Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to account for reductions in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the rewetting of drained peatlands;
11. NOTING Decision 12CP.17 of the UNFCCC that in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD+) "significant pools" including peat soils in peat swamp forests "should not be excluded";
12. NOTING that the disproportionately large emissions from drained peatlands require special attention when including the land sector in "a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties" (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.17), which the UNFCCC is currently developing;
13. AWARE that the Verified Carbon Standard has approved Wetland Rewetting and Conservation (WRC) under the Verified Carbon Standard Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (VCS-AFOLU) programme for crediting climate benefits from all wetland areas, including peatlands;
14. FURTHER NOTING Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – Aichi Target 15): "*By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification*";
15. RECOGNIZING that peatlands drainage may lead to rapid soil degradation and the loss of productive land;

16. ACKNOWLEDGING that drained peatlands contribute disproportionately to global anthropogenic CO₂ emissions from land use and land use change and that rewetting of drained peatlands may contribute substantially to reducing these emissions; and AWARE that the climate effect of these emissions is independent of where emissions or emission reductions take place due to the fast mixing of gases in the atmosphere; and
17. FURTHER AWARE that the acknowledgement of peatlands' "capacity to regulate local and regional climates" in Paragraph 10 of the Ramsar *Guidance for identifying and designating peatlands, wet grasslands, mangroves and coral reefs as Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VIII.11), see also Paragraph 139, Ramsar Handbook 17: *Designating Ramsar Sites* (Ramsar Handbooks 4th edition 2010) refers to the hydrologic role of wet peatlands in regulating the local and regional climate via evapo-transpiration cooling;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

18. ACKNOWLEDGES the distinct mandates, principles and provisions and independent legal status of Conventions and AFFIRMS that the UNFCCC and IPCC are the key references for the terms *mitigation, adaptation, carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions and carbon storage* used in this Resolution, as they pertain to climate change;
19. REAFFIRMS the mandate of UNFCCC and IPCC in climate change;
20. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties as appropriate to designate as Wetlands of International Importance at least one peatland area that has a special suitability for communication, education and public awareness raising with respect to the climate impact of peatlands and their necessary conservation and wise use;
21. ENCOURAGES Parties, the Secretariat and other organizations to facilitate information exchange and cooperation among these sites;
22. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) with respect to its Work Plan related to the 4th Strategic Plan 2016 - 2021, consider in conjunction with interested Contracting Parties and Ramsar IOPs:
 - developing guidelines for designation of these peatland sites as Wetlands of International Importance,
 - evaluating the progress made with the implementation of the "Guidelines for Global Action for Peatlands" and
 - advising the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on further steps to be taken to enhance the role of peatland conservation and rewetting in climate change mitigation and adaptation including water resource implications;
23. INVITES the STRP National Focal Points to contribute to this work of the STRP in order to provide national and regional perspectives and contribute expertise from their in-country networks of peatland scientists and other experts;
24. FURTHER REQUESTS that the Ramsar bodies collaborate with relevant international conventions and organizations including UNFCCC bodies, within their respective mandates, to further investigate the potential contribution of peatland ecosystems to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to develop policies and measures that are aimed to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from peatlands; and

25. INVITES the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.