



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

**Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015**

### **Resolution XII.16**

#### **Thanks to the Host Country, Uruguay, and the “Declaration of Punta del Este”**

1. HAVING MET for the first time in South America, in Punta del Este, Uruguay;
2. FULLY AWARE of the significant effort required for the organization of a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), with, on this occasion, more than 800 participants, including delegations from 141 Contracting Parties and 2 Observer States;
3. RECOGNIZING Uruguay’s long-term commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through their actions for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, including recent efforts such as:
  - a. Removing Bañados del Este y Franja Costera from the Montreux Record;
  - b. Completing the National Wetlands Inventory, which aims to allow the development of additional environmental policies in order to protect wetlands, other related ecosystems and aquatic resources in general; and
  - c. integrating scientific and technical knowledge into wetland managements plans, aiming to achieve an adequate balance between their necessary protection and their productive use;
4. NOTING the request to designate Laguna de Rocha as a new Uruguayan Ramsar Site;
5. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION that all resolutions considered at this Conference of the Parties were approved by consensus;
6. WELCOMING and APPRECIATING the initiative of the Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay to prepare the “Declaration of Punta del Este” attached to this Resolution as Annex 1;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. CONGRATULATES Uruguay for a successful COP12 and RECORDS its thanks to the President, the Alternate President and the Vice-Presidents of COP12 for their commitment to ensuring efficient and effective conduct of the plenary sessions;
8. EXPRESSES its thanks and appreciation to Uruguay, and in particular to the Ministry of Housing, Land Planning and Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their efficient, comprehensive and thorough preparations which ensured the COP and all its associated events ran smoothly;
9. FURTHER EXPRESSES its heartfelt thanks to the people of Uruguay for their warm and gracious welcome and hospitality;

10. EXPRESSES its appreciation for the crucial role played by the COP12 volunteers that have contributed to the many aspects of the COP's success;
11. GREATLY APPRECIATES the numerous side events and cultural events that provided a wonderful opportunity for technical and cultural exchanges between delegates and Uruguayan citizens;
12. LOOKS FORWARD to working ever more closely with the government and people of Uruguay to harness the interest and energy generated in the framework of COP12 for the benefit of wetland conservation locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;
13. RECOGNIZES that the "Declaration of Punta del Este" will enhance the visibility of the Convention and the advances made during the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties showing the strong commitment of the Parties with the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024, the strong relationship between wetlands and other environmental issues, and the need to strengthen the collaborative association of the Convention with other instruments, organizations and stakeholders;
14. DRAWS ATTENTION to the "Declaration of Punta del Este" that emerged from COP12 in the Annex;
15. RECOMMENDS that the Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay on behalf of all Contracting Parties submit this declaration to all members and observers of the United Nations for their consideration.

## Annex

### “Declaration of Punta del Este”

1. WE, the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), gathered in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 1 to 9 June 2015 on the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties under the slogan “Wetlands for our Future”;
2. STRESSING the vital ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services that all wetlands provide to people and nature such as water supply, water purification, climate and flood regulation, coastal protection, and in spiritual, cultural and tourist services;
3. RECALLING with concern that since 1900 over 64% of the world’s wetlands have been destroyed, representing a reduction in access to fresh water for two billion people, and a real threat to the preservation of the above mentioned ecosystem functions and ecosystem services;
4. RECOGNIZING the progress made in the implementation of the third Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2009-2015 adopted by Resolution X.1;
5. RECALLING that the “Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands” (Resolution X.3), adopted for the purpose of complementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, serves as the basis for decision-making processes and national policies of the Contracting Parties, other governments and stakeholders, and addressed the relationship between water and wetlands, climate change and wetlands, livelihoods of people and wetlands and among changes in land use, biodiversity and wetlands;
6. AWARE of the report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands* (Ramsar, 2013), which notes the values of wetlands and their vital role in safeguarding and regulating water resources, specially: the “nexus” between water, food production and the energy sector, which constitutes one of the fundamental relationships for societies; and the fact that wetlands provide ecological support that underpins sustainable development and that their loss can lead to significant negative impacts on human well-being, communities, countries and businesses;
7. NOTING the outcome of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which recognized degradation of wetlands as a root cause of increasing frequency and impact of water-related disasters and which also recognized that sustainable management and restoration of wetlands is a means to build resilience to disasters;
8. RECALLING ALSO the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and REAFFIRMING the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio +20”, reflected in the final document “The Future We Want”;
9. WELCOMING the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals, especially the proposed goals related to the mission of the Ramsar Convention: Goal 2, to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 6, to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 11, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12, to ensure

sustainable consumption reduction patterns; Goal 13, to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and Goal 15, to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

10. RECOGNIZING the importance of technical guidance established by the Ramsar Convention, which is highly relevant for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
11. OBSERVING that all wetlands, including the Ramsar Site network, will have a direct relevance to the achievement of any Sustainable Development Goal related to the quality and supply of water for different uses, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, healthy living, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements, poverty reduction, as well as the innovation and the development of adequate infrastructure;
12. OBSERVING that the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2016-2024 will be the basis for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention for the next three triennia for the Contracting Parties, Convention bodies and other stakeholders; and
13. NOTING the Ministerial Declaration of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, Republic of Korea, April 2015.

WE DECLARE THAT:

14. WE REAFFIRM our commitment to sustainable development, the preservation and wise use of all wetlands and the Ramsar Site network, for their direct relevance to the quality and supply of water, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, human health, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements and poverty eradication.
15. WE WELCOME the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2016-2024, based on four strategic priorities: addressing the factors driving the loss and degradation of wetlands, conservation and effective management of the Ramsar Site network, wise use of all wetlands, including the integrated management of resources at the level of watersheds, and improvement of the implementation of the Convention.
16. WE DECIDE to inform our partners, stakeholders, and others to consider the guidelines of Ramsar's 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan, with due regard to their different situations and capacities, setting the corresponding national goals and strengthening international cooperation in the management of wetland ecosystems and water resources, when designing, planning and implementing their policies, strategies, action plans, projects and programmes at local, national and regional levels linked directly or indirectly to wetlands; and
17. WE HIGHLIGHT the need for and importance of strengthening partnerships with individuals and organizations beyond those responsible for the management of the Ramsar Sites and important wetlands, especially through the strengthening of existing linkages with International Organization Partners, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the United Nations system and regional and global initiatives and debates on sustainable development processes, including water, livelihoods of people, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, resilience, and climate change, as a means to create conditions that allow and promote the implementation of the Convention.