



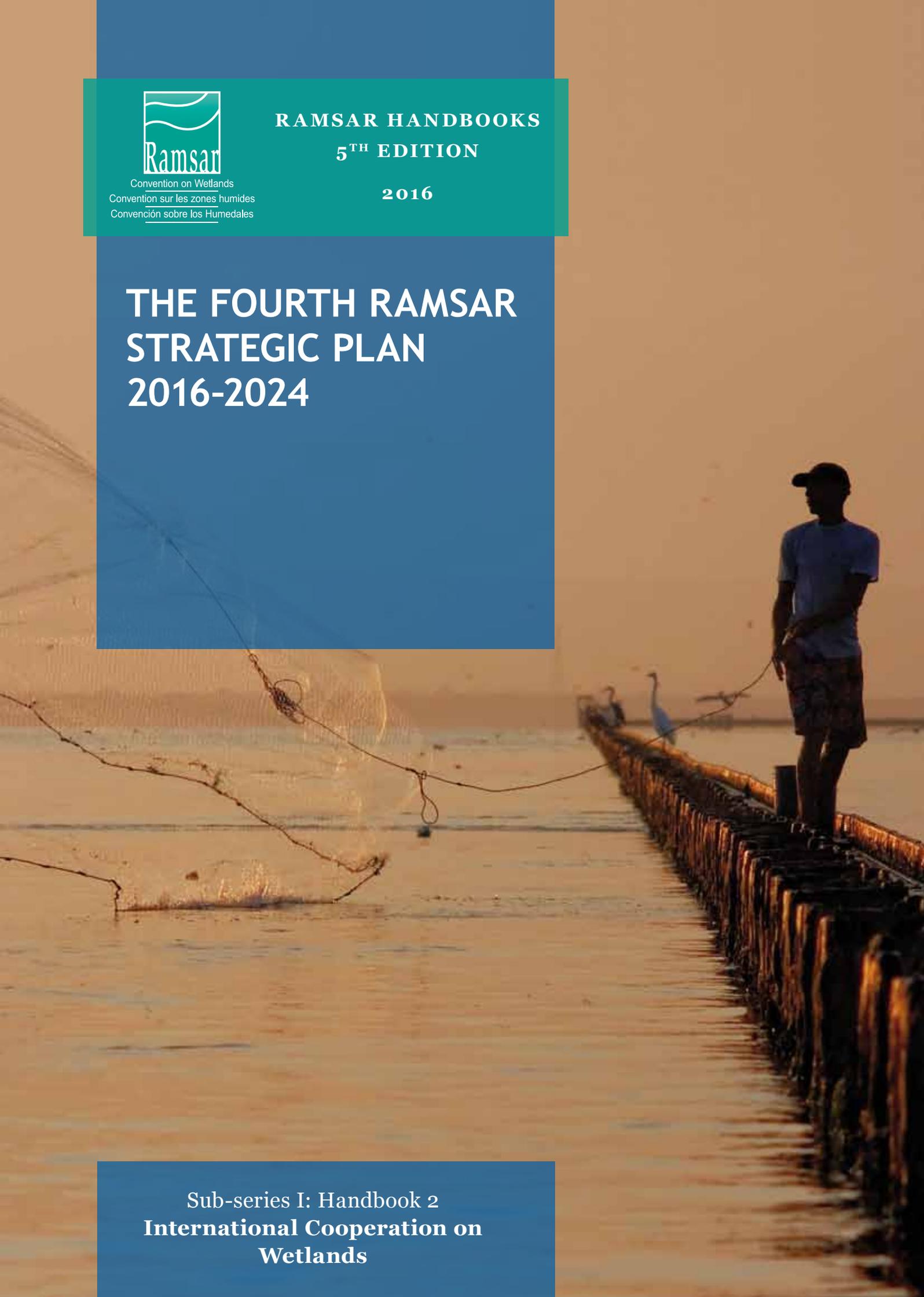
Convention on Wetlands  
Convention sur les zones humides  
Convención sobre los Humedales

**RAMSAR HANDBOOKS**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

**2016**

**THE FOURTH RAMSAR  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2016-2024**

Sub-series I: Handbook 2  
**International Cooperation on  
Wetlands**





## About the Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is an inter-governmental treaty whose mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”. As of January 2016, 169 nations have joined the Convention as Contracting Parties, and more than 2,220 wetlands around the world, covering over 214 million hectares, have been designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

### What are wetlands?

Article 1 of the Convention states that “wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres”.

Hence, as defined by the Convention, wetlands include a wide variety of inland habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and coastal areas such as saltmarshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds, and also coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than six metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as dams, reservoirs, rice paddies and wastewater treatment ponds and lagoons.

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# **THE FOURTH RAMSAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2024**

Sub-series I: Handbook 2  
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Wetlands**

# The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-24: the Vision, Mission, Goals and Targets

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1

### Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation

- 1 Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.
- 2 Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.
- 3 The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.
- 4 Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

### Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network

- 5 The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.
- 6 There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular underrepresented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.
- 7 Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.

The Vision: “Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all.”

The Ramsar Mission: Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

### STRATEGIC GOAL 3 Wisely Using All Wetlands

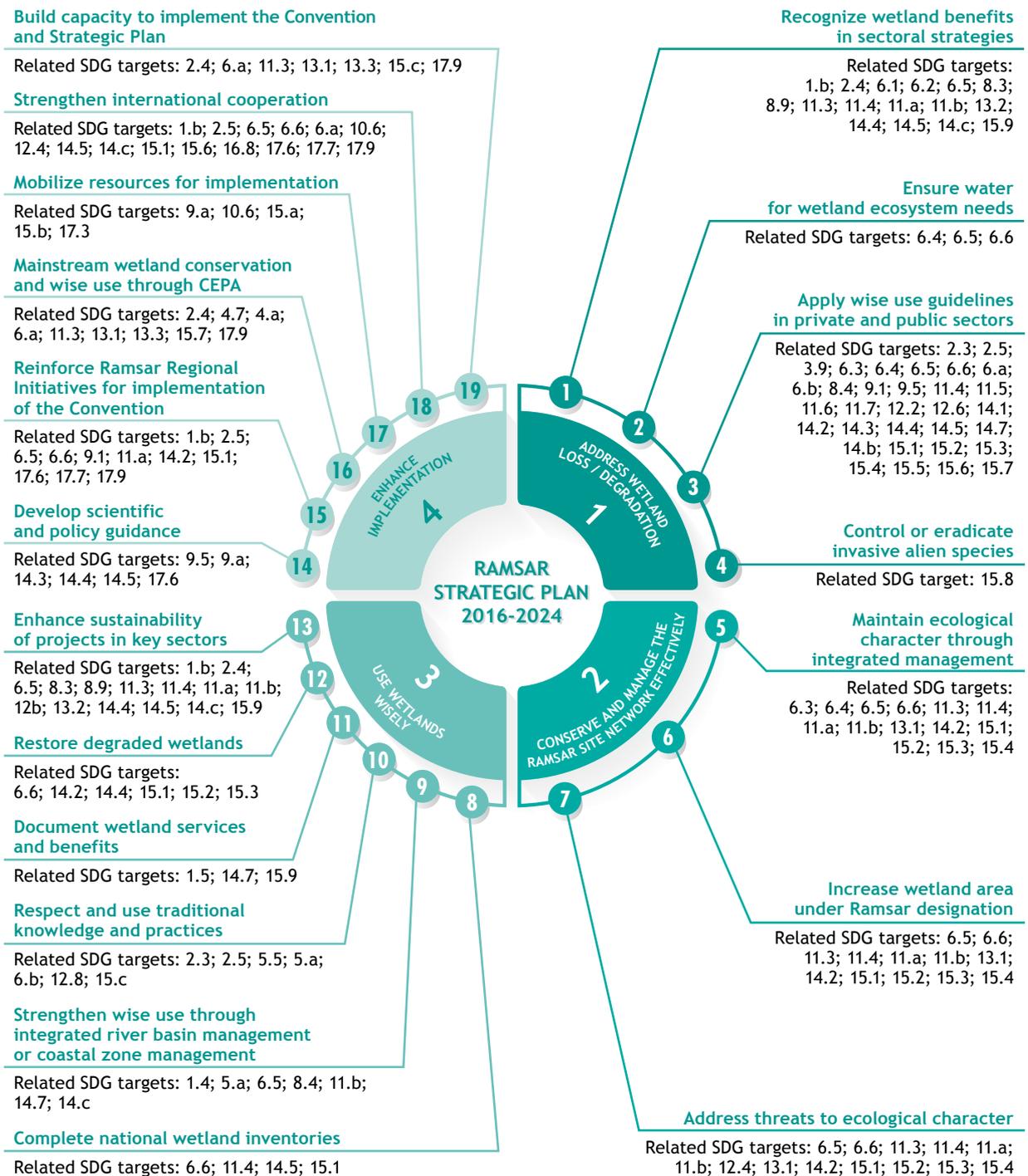
- 8 National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.
- 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.
- 10 The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels.
- 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.
- 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 13 Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.

### OPERATIONAL GOAL 4 Enhancing Implementation

- 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
- 15 Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.
- 16 Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.
- 17 Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024 from all sources are made available.
- 18 International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.
- 19 Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024 is enhanced.

# How the Ramsar Strategic Plan contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 includes four goals and 19 targets. Implementing each of these will also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. Each Ramsar target is shown with the SDG targets to which it contributes, and the text of each SDG target is summarized on the facing page. The SDGs are listed in full at the UN's Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>).



# The Sustainable Development Goals and Targets



## GOAL 1. END POVERTY

- 1.4 Ensure that all men and women have equal rights
- 1.5 Build the resilience of the poor and reduce their vulnerability to climate-related extreme events
- 1.b Invest in poverty eradication



## GOAL 2. END HUNGER AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- 2.3 Double the agricultural productivity of small-scale food producers
- 2.4 Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices
- 2.5 Promote benefit sharing of the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge



## GOAL 3. ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES

- 3.9 Reduce deaths and illnesses from air, water and soil pollution



## GOAL 4. ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION

- 4.7 Ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills for sustainable development
- 4.a Build education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive



## GOAL 5. EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

- 5.5 Ensure women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership
- 5.a Give women equal rights to economic and land resources



## GOAL 6. ENSURE WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

- 6.1 Achieve access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 Achieve access to sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation
- 6.3 Improve water quality by reducing pollution and increasing recycling

6.4 Increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater

6.5 Implement integrated water resources management, including through transboundary cooperation

6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

6.a Expand international cooperation and capacity-building to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities

6.b Support participation of local communities in water and sanitation management



## GOAL 8. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities

8.4 Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production and decouple economic growth from environmental degradation

8.9 Promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products



## GOAL 9. BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1 Develop infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being

9.5 Enhance scientific research and upgrade industrial sectors

9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure in developing countries



## GOAL 10. REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

10.6 Ensure enhanced representation for developing countries in global decision-making



## GOAL 11. MAKE CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

11.3 Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization

11.4 Protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

- 11.5 Reduce deaths and people affected by disasters, including water-related disasters
- 11.6 Reduce adverse per capita environmental impact of cities
- 11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces
- 11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas
- 11.b Increase cities implementing inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters

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 **GOAL 12. ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS**

- 12.2 Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- 12.4 Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and reduce their release to air, water and soil
- 12.6 Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices
- 12.8 Ensure that people everywhere have lifestyles in harmony with nature
- 12.b Develop sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

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 **GOAL 13. COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 13.1 Strengthen resilience to natural disasters in all countries
- 13.2 Integrate climate change into policies, strategies and planning
- 13.3 Improve human and institutional capacity on climate change

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 **GOAL 14. CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES**

- 14.1 Reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities
- 14.2 Manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts
- 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification
- 14.4 Regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- 14.5 Conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas

- 14.7 Increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources
- 14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
- 14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans by implementing international law

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 **GOAL 15. PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS**

- 15.1 Ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands
- 15.2 Promote sustainable management of all types of forests
- 15.3 Combat desertification, and restore degraded land and soil
- 15.4 Conserve mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity
- 15.5 Reduce the degradation of natural habitats and halt the loss of biodiversity
- 15.6 Promote sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources
- 15.7 End poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna
- 15.8 Reduce impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems
- 15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning
- 15.a Mobilize financial resources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems
- 15.b Mobilize significant resources to finance sustainable forest management

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 **GOAL 16. PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES**

- 16.8 Broaden the participation of developing countries in global governance

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 **GOAL 17. STRENGTHEN MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

- 17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries
- 17.6 Enhance international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation
- 17.7 Promote diffusion of environmentally sound technologies
- 17.9 Enhance international support for capacity-building in developing countries

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# Foreword

2016 is a highly auspicious year for the launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan. For the first time, in 2015, countries agreed a set of coherent policies, frameworks and commitments across the international community. Never before have we seen such a convergence of political will, which signals a brighter future for truly sustainable development, and for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

In 2015 we saw the following international agreements coming to fruition:

- The Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 2015
- The 12<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Conference of the Parties, June 2015, which agreed this 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan
- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, July 2015
- The Sustainable Development Goals, September 2015
- The Paris Agreement at the 21<sup>st</sup> COP of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, December 2015

Of these, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically mention wetlands in relation to two of the goals, and hence provide a policy context for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and its new Strategic Plan, through to 2030. The overarching characteristics of the SDGs are their universality, the desire to include everyone in all countries in building a better life (“no one left behind”), and their focus on linking sustainability with economic growth and development in each of the goals. Building on experiences with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which focused on developing countries, with environmental sustainability as just one of eight goals, the seventeen SDGs are more holistic, ambitious and visionary.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is uniquely equipped to respond to the challenge of the SDGs, because from its inception in 1971 it has worked on the conservation and the wise use of wetlands, with the third policy pillar of international cooperation. The concepts of conservation on one hand, and wise use on the other, address sustainability as well as the economic growth and development aspects of the SDGs.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, the aim is to be congruent both with the SDGs and with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (many of which have in turn been incorporated into the SDGs). Unusually for the Ramsar Convention, this Strategic Plan therefore covers 9 years (3 triennia) rather than 6 years (2 triennia), enabling its timing to harmonize with both the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The 5<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan will once again be a 6 year plan, covering the years 2025 to 2030, which is the final target date for the SDGs. Also important to note regarding timing, the midpoint review of this new 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan will fall in 2020, when the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be revised, to enable a realignment at that point towards the new biodiversity targets which will emerge to 2030.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will work directly in support of the achievement of all the SDGs, since wetlands contribute towards a very broad range of the aspirations set out in the SDGs.

Specifically, the Strategic Plan notes the reference to water and wetlands in the proposals for the Sustainable Development Goals, and also recalls (Resolution XII.2, paragraph 4) the Rio+20 outcome, that water is at the core of sustainable development. This is a key point to note. In SDG 6 which focuses on water and sanitation, for the first time in history the world has a coherent policy framework for water issues, ranging from drinking water supply and sanitation, to integrated water resources management, and the importance of water-related ecosystems. Wetlands are specifically mentioned under target 6.6, and the structure of the goal links wetlands directly with the increasingly urgent questions of water allocation, water risks and water scarcity, while opening the door to the other 16 SDGs.

Biodiversity issues arise within Goal 14 on oceans, seas and marine resources, and in Goal 15 on terrestrial ecosystems. Target 14.2 calls for the management and protection of coastal and marine ecosystems, while wetlands are once again specifically mentioned within target 15.1. Thus wetlands have a direct relevance to three of the SDGs, and indirect links to many more. The 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan was finalized just before the SDGs themselves were agreed; however, the broad shape of the SDGs was already visible. Hence the Ramsar Strategic Plan states in paragraph 15 : “..all wetlands and the Ramsar Sites network will have a direct relevance for any Sustainable Development Goals which are related to water quality and supply, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, healthy living, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements, poverty eradication, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure.”

The implementation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan will therefore support the achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals. It will guide the actions and decisions of the Contracting Parties through until 2024, as well as reaching out to all stakeholders involved with wetland conservation and management, including the many new and concerned stakeholders in other sectors. The specific linkage of wetlands with the SDGs raises the profile of the Convention as never before, and will help to develop broad new coalitions of support for wetlands and sustainable development. A greener future can be glimpsed between the lines of this Strategic Plan, and as you delve into it, I wish you enjoyable and fruitful reading.

*Dr Ania Grobicki  
Acting Secretary General*

*July 2016*

# The Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

## The Mission of the Ramsar Convention

**Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.**

To achieve this Mission it is essential that vital ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature are fully recognized, maintained, restored and wisely used.

## Rationale

### A Vision for the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan

“Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all”

## Background

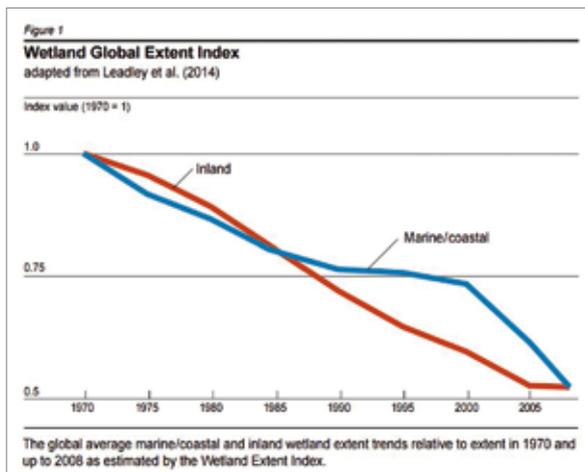
1. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention, the first of which was prepared in 1997<sup>1</sup>. The work of the Convention has since 1997 been organized around three pillars: i) the wise use of all wetlands through national plans, policies and legislation, management actions and public education; ii) the designation and sustainable management of suitable wetlands for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance; and iii) international cooperation on transboundary wetlands and shared species.

2. The wise use of wetlands is the key concept orienting the work of the Ramsar Convention. “Wise use of wetlands” is defined as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. Wise use therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of people and nature.



<sup>1</sup> Between 1997 and 2015, three Strategic Plans have been implemented: SP1 (1997 – 2002); SP2 (2003 – 2008); SP 3 (2009 – 2015)

The Fourth Strategic Plan is designed to support all stakeholders’ efforts to ensure that Wetlands are conserved wisely used, restored and their benefits recognised and valued by all.



Inland and coastal wetlands are being lost at a rate faster than that of any other ecosystem, and the trend towards loss of wetlands resources has not been reversed since.

3. In the context of implementation of wetland activities under the Convention on Biological Diversity the Ramsar Convention is recognized as the lead and both conventions are striving to strengthen the cooperation and explore possibilities of synergy. In 2014 the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited the Ramsar Convention to provide elements of advice concerning the funding that may be referred to the Global Environmental Facility through the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>2</sup>.

## Importance of Wetlands

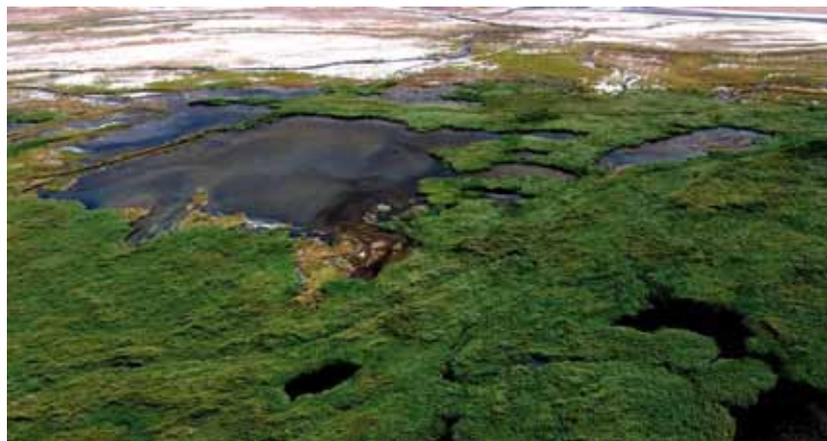
4. The Ramsar Convention is the first Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) at the global level, adopted in 1971. The Ramsar Sites network constitutes the largest network of officially recognized internationally important areas in the world. This network of wetlands, comprising 2,208 Ramsar Sites covering 210.7<sup>3</sup> million hectares as of 8 June 2015, constitutes the backbone of a global network of wetlands that maintain vital functions and provide ecosystem services for both people and nature. The identification and the management of these wetlands, for conservation and sustainability, is a core purpose of the Convention, essential for the realization of long-term benefits for biological

diversity and people taking into account different approaches and visions.

5. Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.

6. Wetlands deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water supply, water purification, climate regulation, flood regulation, coastal protection, useful fibres, spiritual and cultural inspiration and tourism.

7. Wetlands play a key role in economic activity linked to transportation, food production, water risk management, pollution control, fishing and hunting, leisure and the provision of ecological infrastructure.



Aerial view of the Gavkhouni Lake and marshes of the lower Zaindeh Rud, Iran.

8. Most of the water we collect and use comes from wetlands<sup>4</sup>. However, water is unevenly distributed and today, over 700 million people live without access to safe drinking water. In addition 2.5 billion people lack sanitation impacting further on wetlands<sup>5</sup>.

9. Wetlands are too often equated with wastelands and there is little awareness of the vital services that wetlands bring.

<sup>2</sup> CBD Decision XII/30

<sup>3</sup> see <http://www.ramsar.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, UNICEF, WHO, 2012

<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/wash\\_statistics.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/wash_statistics.html)

## Trends in Wetlands

10. At a global level, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment<sup>6</sup> found that inland and coastal wetland ecosystems were (in 2005) being lost at a rate faster than that of any other ecosystem, and the trend towards loss of wetlands resources has not been reversed since. The primary indirect drivers of this degradation and loss are identified as population growth and change in economic activity; the primary direct drivers of degradation and loss are identified as infrastructure development, land conversion, water use, eutrophication and pollution, overharvesting, overexploitation of wetland resources, climate change and invasive alien species.

11. A recent study<sup>7</sup> of long-term and recent trends in global wetland area, based on a review of 189 reports of change in wetland areas finds that the reported long-term loss of natural wetlands averages between 54% and 57% but that loss may have been as high as 87% since 1700 AD. There has been a much (3.7 times) faster rate of wetland loss during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21st centuries, with a loss of 64% to 71% of wetlands since 1900. Conversion of coastal natural wetlands has accelerated more than that of inland natural wetlands in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that conversion and loss is continuing in all parts of the world, and particularly rapidly in Asia.

12. In the report *Changes in the Global value of Ecosystem Services*<sup>8</sup>, the costs of loss of freshwater wetlands worldwide from 1997 to 2011 has been valued at US\$2.7 trillion per year, the costs of loss of tidal marshes / mangroves has been estimated at US\$7.2 trillion per year and the loss of coral reefs has been estimated at US\$11.9 trillion.

13. The report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands*<sup>9</sup> notes that values of inland and coastal ecosystem services are typically higher than for other ecosystem types, that the “nexus” between water, food and energy is one of the most fundamental relationships – and increasing challenges – for societies, that

wetlands provide ecological infrastructure that can help to reach a range of policy objectives, that wetland loss can lead to significant loss of human well-being and have negative economic impacts on communities, countries and businesses, and that wetlands-related and water-related ecosystem services need to become an integral part of water management in order to make the transition to a resource-efficient, sustainable economy.

14. The Convention on *Biological Diversity's Global Biodiversity Outlook 4<sup>o</sup>* also indicates that the trend of wetland loss and degradation is worsening. In contrast to natural wetlands, however, it notes that the area of human-made wetlands tends to be increasing, but the quality of these may be lower than that of the ones destroyed. Despite the partly good progress, additional action is required to achieve global Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2020. For achieving the 2050 vision of an end to biodiversity loss in conjunction with key human development goals for climate change, combating desertification and land degradation, requires changes in society including much more efficient use of land, water, energy and materials, rethinking our consumption habits and in particular addressing trends in food production.

## Global Context

15. Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. It is anticipated that all wetlands and the Ramsar Sites network will have a direct relevance for any Sustainable Development Goals which are related to water quality and supply, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, healthy living, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements, poverty eradication, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure.

16. The Ramsar Sites network, and the effective management of Ramsar Sites and more widely the wise use of rest of the world's wetlands is an essential contribution to the work of not only the

6 See <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.358.aspx.pdf>

7 N. Davidson, How much wetland has the world lost? Long-term and recent trends in global wetland area, CSIRO Publishing, Marine and Freshwater Research, 2014, 65, 934 – 942, September 2014

8 R. Costanza et al., Changes in the Global value of ecosystem services, *Global Environmental Change* 26 (2014) 152 - 158

9 Russi D., ten Brink P., Farmer A., Badura T., Coates D., Förster J., Kumar R. and Davidson N. (2013) *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands*. IEEP, London and Brussels; Ramsar Secretariat, Gland.

10 Report “Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: An Assessment of Biodiversity Trends, Policy Scenarios and Key Actions” available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4advance>.



Peatlands cover only 3% of the Earth's land surface, but store more carbon than all the world's forests combined.

Convention on Biological Diversity but also the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the water-related Conventions.

### Review<sup>11</sup> of Progress in the Implementation of the Third Strategic Plan

17. A review of progress with implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan was made on the basis of National Reports to COP11 and responses by Contracting Parties and Ramsar partners to a questionnaire on the Strategic Plan in 2014.

18. The main conclusion of the review of implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan was that at an overall, global level, the implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan can be characterized as a work in progress. It is noted that a number of core aspects of the Convention, such as the wise use of

wetlands identification of potential Ramsar Sites, inventories, preparation of management plans, monitoring of Site status and ecological character, and reporting under the Convention continue to require regular attention and action.

19. The other main finding is that there is an increasing sense of urgency amongst Contracting Parties in the face of accelerating degradation and loss of wetlands and that responding to this requires enhanced engagement with drivers of loss and degradation in order to prevent, stop and reverse degradation through a mainstreaming of wetland values in public and private investments and management of wetlands.

### Priority Areas of Focus<sup>12</sup> for the Convention in the Next Nine Years

20. This summary of priority focus areas of the Ramsar Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Convention in the 2016–2024 period is drawn from National Reports to COP11, from the

<sup>11</sup> A review of the implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan has been completed and is available at [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605_4000_0___)

<sup>12</sup> Particular challenges and conditions are described for each region in the COP 11 Regional Overviews and in the responses to the Questionnaires to Contracting Parties and partners (see [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605_4000_0___))

questionnaire on the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan completed by many Contracting Parties and partners in 2014, and from feedback received during the Pre-COP regional consultations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe in October and November 2014.

**21. Preventing, stopping and reversing the loss and degradation of wetlands:** The largest changes in loss of wetlands continue to be from unsustainable agriculture, forestry and extractive industries, especially oil, gas and mining, the impacts of population growth (including migration and urbanization) and changes in land use that override environmental considerations. Addressing and engaging the drivers behind these pressures on wetlands is a condition for limiting, adapting to, and mitigating their impacts. Realization of this fact and its consideration in planning and decision-making requires that wetland resources and wetland ecosystem benefits are measured, valued and understood widely within societies.

**22. Science-based advice and guidance:** Enhancing the generation and delivery of science based advice and guidance to practitioners and policy makers through the STRP and CEPA processes.

**23. Climate change and wetlands:** The critical importance of wetlands for climate change mitigation and adaptation is understood.

**24. Information about ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature:** The services, benefits, values, functions, goods and products that wetlands provide have not yet been integrated in national development plans. The lack of recognition of the role of wetlands to be able to exercise fully the human right to water and poverty reduction, is an important factor in its reduction as well as in the modesty of the efforts invested in restoring wetlands. The integral values and benefits, both material or non-material for people and nature, in a non-consumptive approach include spiritual, existential and future-oriented values.

**25. Communicating ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature:** Mainstreaming wetland values and enhancing the visibility of the Convention

through reaching out with effective communications to decision makers and the wider public. This should contribute to an enhanced understanding of the contribution of wetland values to people's livelihoods and health, economic development and biodiversity, soil and water.

**26. Enhancing cooperation:** Coordinating / participating in cooperation platforms<sup>13</sup> (site level, city, river, lake and groundwater basins, national, regional and global levels), to promote mainstreaming of wetland values within water, soil and biodiversity management and public and private investments bringing together site and other managers, key private and public stakeholders.

**27. Implementing the Convention:** Improving compliance with Ramsar provisions concerning Ramsar Site updates, inventories of all wetlands and Wetlands of International Importance, maintenance of ecological character and management of sites, improving the ecological character where not good enough, especially on the Montreux Record, the preparation of management planning processes for all Ramsar Sites, and implementation of such management planning on the ground through the presence of staff, appropriate infrastructure and other resources.

**28. Identifying and designating wetlands as Ramsar Sites and transboundary Ramsar Sites,** based on national inventories to ensure their protection for the future and the inclusion of under-represented wetland types in the Ramsar Site network.

**29. Wise use of wetlands:** Wetlands that are providing local, basin-level, national, regional and global benefits, are well and actively managed to ensure that the ecological functions are maintained.

**30. Invasive alien species:** Acting to limit and eradicate invasive species in wetlands.

**31. Strengthen and support the full and effective participation** and the collective actions of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, for the existence of sustainable, comprehensive and wise use of wetlands.

<sup>13</sup> National Wetland Committees; biodiversity, water, regional bodies

<sup>14</sup> Annex 2 shows convergence between Ramsar Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets.

**32. Synergies<sup>14</sup>:** Enhancing efforts to streamline procedures and processes including reporting and to facilitate data sharing amongst parties responsible for – or cooperating in – the implementation of this and other MEAs and related agreements. Through cooperation, aim to increase the identification of synergies with collaborating MEAs and other international processes at national and global levels.

**33. Financing:** Financing is needed to manage wetlands. The cost for non-action may be severe. Adequate financing is a particular challenge in many countries, especially developing countries.

**34. Basin perspective:** Analysing and expressing wetland functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature at river, lake and groundwater basin level, engaging with the stakeholders is necessary to recognize wetlands as part of a wider water cycle.

## Implementing the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan

**35.** The 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan 2016-2024 calls for actions to be undertaken by the Contracting Parties, supported by the Secretariat, the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the CEPA (Communications, Education, Participation and Awareness) network, and in collaboration with International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other international and intergovernmental organizations and MEAs.

**36.** Contracting Parties should implement the Strategic Plan at national and regional levels by developing national wetlands policies, strategies, action plans, projects and programmes or other appropriate ways to mobilize action and support for wetlands. This can be part of or supplement to the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan.

**37.** It is understood that the Contracting Parties differ substantially in their situations and in their ability to implement the Convention. Each Party is encouraged to establish its own priorities within the Strategic Plan, develop its own work plan for implementing them, and consider its own use of its own resources. This strategic plan should be implemented as a contribution to the other internationally agreed environmental goals and targets.

**38.** Contracting Parties are encouraged to synergize their efforts aimed at implementing the

Convention with measures that they take to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention on Migratory Species, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and other regional and global MEAs as they deem appropriate.

## Enabling Conditions for Implementation

**39.** The successful achievement of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan depends on the commitment and engagement of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders. Based on views expressed by Contracting Parties during the consultative process for the preparation of this Strategic Plan, a certain number of factors that will enable and facilitate implementation have been identified. Contracting Parties and Convention partners are urged to cooperate in the implementation of these measures.

### Resource Mobilization

**40.** International and national funding sources committed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands have been facilitated through private, public, national and international resources from all sources including the Global Environmental Facility. Despite this development, the funds available are insufficient to achieve the full suite of goals and targets expressed in this plan. Effective mobilization of additional resources for wetland conservation and wise use, and for engaging with drivers of wetland degradation and loss, is required at local, national, regional and global levels. This mobilization can be achieved through the Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework and the efforts of Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and the Secretariat's Partnership Unit.

### Outreach and Promotion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan

**41.** The Secretariat's activities in Communications will be enhanced, including CEPA (communications, education, participation and awareness raising), to enable the Convention to be better known and its mission more widely recognized, as well as increasing involvement of the target audience in wetlands issues. These efforts will support the CEPA Focal Points network and the outreach and promotion activities of Contracting Parties.



The inception workshop for the development of the Lake Urmia Basin CEPA Plan, I.R.Iran.

## Partnerships

42. The wise use of wetlands and their resources will ultimately involve a range of actors well beyond those responsible for the management and maintenance of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands. This holds at local, national, regional and global levels where existing partnerships with Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and MEAs should be strengthened and new partnerships with civil society and the business sector forged in order to enhance Convention implementation and reverse the rates of loss and degradation of wetlands.

## International Cooperation

43. The Ramsar Convention has put in place a series of arrangements for international cooperation in order to link Ramsar with global debates and processes related to sustainable development including water, livelihoods, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, resilience and carbon sinks. These relationships will be consolidated over the coming period.

- The Ramsar Convention is the lead partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has a responsibility to offer

political, technical and scientific advice and guidance to the CBD and enhance cooperation between the two conventions at all levels.

- The Parties to the Ramsar Convention have granted IOP status to six leading organizations (Birdlife International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) which are actively contributing in all the regions and on a regular basis to the further development of policies and tools of the Convention and their application at the national and local levels, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to deliver conservation and wise use on the ground and meet their obligations under the Convention.
- The Ramsar Convention participates in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) bringing together the heads of the Secretariats of seven biodiversity-related conventions (the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals (CMS); the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- Memorandums of understanding and cooperation have been signed<sup>15</sup> with 48 partners.

## Regional and Bilateral Cooperation

44. Regional and bilateral cooperation should be strengthened to enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources. The Ramsar Regional Initiatives are effective mechanisms to promote and support regional and bilateral cooperation, capacity-building, technology and knowledge exchanges, wetland related information, communications and mobilization of financial resources for activities on the ground.

<sup>15</sup> The full list of the 48 memorandums of understanding / cooperation signed by the Convention can be found at [http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-mous/main/ramsar/1-31-115\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-mous/main/ramsar/1-31-115_4000_0__)

45. Further cooperation between Contracting Parties can be strengthened through the designation and joint management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites at river, lake and groundwater basin level, with the possible support, upon request, of the Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and IOPs as well as other Contracting Parties and international organizations.

### Capacity Building

46. Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and other partners need to address capacity-building needs of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders in a range of fields, including inventory, wetland management, wetland status monitoring and assessment, communications and promotion of wetlands and wetland values, scientific and technical knowledge and guidance, and knowledge and technology exchange.

### Languages

47. The use of additional languages by the Convention may constitute an important means for extending its reach and visibility in regions of the world where understanding of the work and value of the Convention is currently not well known.

## Goals and Targets 2016 - 2024

The Goals of the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan have been formulated in recognition of the fact that a new approach is needed in order to change the negative direction of the trends described above.

These Goals constitute the four priority areas for the Ramsar Convention for the 2016-2024 period. They include three Strategic Goals and one Operational Goal which supports them.

The Table in Annex 1 presents more details about the goals, including the tools, lead actors, indicators, and baselines for the Goals and Targets outlined below.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1

### Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation

The multiple human impacts on wetlands are growing. Influencing the drivers of wetland degradation and loss and the integration of the role of wetland values (monetary and non-monetary) into planning and decision-making requires the development of a methodology that enables wetland resources and ecosystem benefits to be assessed so that the multiple environmental functions and benefits are understood widely within societies. Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, Regional Initiatives and IOPs will enhance their engagement with relevant stakeholders in order to diminish threats, influence trends, restore wetlands and communicate good practices.

**Target 1** Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.

**Target 2** Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.

**Target 3** The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.

**Target 4** Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

## Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network

Ramsar Sites constitute the largest network of officially recognized internationally important wetland areas in the world. This network constitutes the backbone of a larger network of wetlands. Parties must commit themselves to efforts to protect and effectively manage the existing Ramsar Sites and enable the full and effective participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as to expanding the reach of the Convention by continuously working to add more sites and areas of wetlands recognized under the Convention.

**Target 5** The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.

**Target 6** There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.

**Target 7** Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.



Siberian Crane, Lower Maruyama River and the surrounding rice paddies Ramsar Site, Japan.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3

## Wisely Using All Wetlands

The wise use of all wetlands requires that Parties ensure they are addressing wetlands beyond those currently included in the Ramsar Site network. This work may occur at the national, subnational, regional, and transboundary levels, including at basin level. Mainstreaming recognition of ecosystem functions, services and benefits into a wide range of sectors and with a broad array of actors will help ensure the success of this effort.

**Target 8** National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.

**Target 9** The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.

**Target 10** The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels.

**Target 11** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.

**Target 12** Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**Target 13** Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.

## OPERATIONAL GOAL 4

### Enhancing Implementation

It will be vital for the survival of wetlands and the success of the Convention for Parties to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan. Various approaches will help strengthen the implementation of the three Strategic Goals, and ultimately of the Convention itself. They involve critical actions to be undertaken by Contracting Parties themselves, and in partnership with other Parties and other entities, in particular with regard to scientific and technical advice and guidance, resource mobilization, public awareness, visibility and capacity building. The Ramsar Secretariat will also play a vital role in raising awareness and visibility of the Convention, as well as mobilizing resources to support enhanced implementation.

**Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.

**Target 15** Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.

**Target 16** Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.

**Target 17** Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 from all sources are made available.

**Target 18** International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.

**Target 19** Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is enhanced.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

48. The Table showing Goals, targets, tools, indicators and baseline in Annex 1 can be used as a basis for organizing the implementation of the Strategic Plan at national and other levels. Specific indicators are identified for each of the targets identified. These indicators will be monitored by Contracting Parties as appropriate.

49. The Standing Committee will keep the implementation of the Strategic Plan under review, based on regular reports from the Secretariat and the STRP, and based on National Reports prepared for each reporting cycle.

50. A review of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 will be done and the modalities and scope for this review will be established at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and coordination needs with regards to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

51. Global Indicators: A small, regionally representative expert group meeting back-to-back with the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland in July 2015, including interested Contracting Parties, expert support from STRP, IOPs and other relevant MEAs and international processes will be constituted to develop options, for additional indicators for the Strategic Plan having regard in particular to:

- previous Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties related to indicators, including Resolution IX.1;
- the need for indicators to address outcomes and effectiveness and to be capable of practical implementation;
- the need to minimize cost of indicator implementation by using existing data and information flows, including through national reporting and reporting on Ramsar Sites.

# Annex 1 Ramsar Goals and Targets with Relevant Tools, Actors, Baselines and Indicators

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1

### Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation



*Over one billion people depend on rice production for their livelihoods.*

#### Target 1

Wetland benefits are featured in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Engage with natural resource users at river, lake, groundwater basin and national level to integrate there the wetland contributions to water, biodiversity and sustainable development targets of the international community
- Ramsar Handbook 2: National Wetland Policies [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-02.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory Skills [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-07.pdf>]

#### Key Actors (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, key sectors (water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure)

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Baseline

- 19% of Parties have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (National Reports to COP12).
- 70% of Parties have included wetland issues within national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (National Reports to COP12).
- 47% of Contracting Parties have included wetland issues within National Policies or measures on agriculture. (National Reports to COP12).

##### Indicators

- % of Parties that have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have included wetland issues within national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have included wetland issues within National Policies or measures on agriculture. (Data source: National Reports).

## Target 2

Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.



*Delta do Rio Preguiças, Barreirinhas, Maranhão, Brazil (Maria Costa, 2015).*

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Understand the water requirements and river, lake groundwater basin of wetland ecosystem services, and engage with water users at site and river basin and national level to maintain / restore and evaluate necessary water allocations.
- Ramsar Handbook 8: Water-related guidance [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-08.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 9: River basin management [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-09.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 10: Water allocation and management [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-10.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 11: Managing groundwater [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-11.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, productive sectors.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 70% of Parties have included wetland issues into national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Parties that have included wetland issues into national strategies and in the planning processes such as for water resource management and water efficiency plans. (Data source: National Reports).
- Possible further indicators that may be developed
- {% of Ramsar sites which have improved the sustainability of water use in the context of ecosystem requirements}



*Bernard Giraud of the Livelihoods Fund replants a seedling as part of a mangrove restoration project in Senegal funded by Danone and the Livelihoods Fund.*

### Target 3

The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Engage with business sector/private sector.
- Ramsar Handbook 5: Partnerships [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-05.pdf>]

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, business/public/private sector.

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Baselines

- 50% of Parties report actions taken to implement incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).
- 37% of Parties report actions taken to remove perverse incentive measures that discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).
- 60% of Parties report private sector undertaking activities for the conservation, wise use and management of wetlands in general. (National Reports to COP12).
- % of Parties have national Ramsar Committees that include both governmental and non-governmental representation. (Data source: new question for National Reports).

##### Indicators

- % of Parties reporting actions taken to implement incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties reporting actions taken to remove perverse incentive measures that discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties reporting private sector undertaking activities for the conservation, wise use and management of wetlands in general. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties having national Ramsar Committees that include both governmental and non-governmental representation. (Data source: new question for National Reports).

## Target 4

Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.



*Volunteer community members remove invasive species at the Beeshazaar and Associated Lakes Ramsar Site in Nepal.*

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Complete inventory for all sites.
- Prepare management response as appropriate (national policies or guidelines).
- Trends in invasive alien species.
- Red List Indicator.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties (MEA; IGOs, World Conservation Monitoring Centre)

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baselines

- 36% of Parties have established national policies or guidelines on invasive species control and management. (National Reports to COP12).
- 20% of Parties have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Parties that have established or reviewed national policies or guidelines on invasive wetland species control and management. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties having a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Number of invasive species that are being controlled through management actions}
- {Effectiveness of wetland invasive alien species control programmes}

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

## Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network



*In the 40 years since its designation, the ecological character of the Cobourge Peninsula Ramsar Site in Australia has been maintained through its joint management by the traditional owners and the Northern Territory Government (Michelle McAulay, Department of the Environment).*

## Target 5

The ecological character of Ramsar Sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management

## Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Improved management of Ramsar sites and wetlands through managements plans and enhanced resources.
- Ramsar Handbook 16: Impact assessment [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-16.pdf> ]
- Ramsar Handbook 18: Managing wetlands [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-18.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 19: Addressing change in wetland ecological character [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-19.pdf>]

## Key Actors (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IOPs.
- (Cross sectoral and Watershed Committees)

## Indicator(s) and Baselines

## Baselines

- At COP12, 973 Ramsar Sites have implemented management plans. (National Reports to COP12).
- Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented management plans. (Data source: new National Report question).
- 27% of Parties have made assessments of effective management of Ramsar sites. (National Reports to COP12).
- 43% (950 of Ramsar Sites have updated Ramsar Information Sheets. (Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).

## Indicators

- Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented management plans. (Data source: National Report).
- Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented management planning2. (Data source: new National Report question).
- % of Parties that have made assessments of effective management of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Ramsar Sites that have updated Ramsar Information Sheets. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).

## Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Coverage of wetland dependent bird populations by designated Ramsar Sites. Indicator from Resolution IX.1 to be developed}.
- {Coverage of wetland dependent non-avian populations by designated Ramsar Sites. Indicator from Resolution IX.1 to be developed}.
- {% loss of IUCN Red Listed species from Ramsar Sites}

## Target 6

There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and transboundary sites



*Under the Convention, more than 2,200 sites around the world, with an area of more than 215 million hectares, have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance.*

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Update the list of Ramsar Sites with under-represented wetland types or transboundary sites.
- Wetlands inventories and other relevant national and international data sources for example the International Waterbirds Census.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IOPs.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- By COP12, 2,186 Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Sites database).
- By COP12 2,085,000 ha of Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Sites database).
- By COP12 [16] transboundary Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Secretariat).
- By COP12, Ramsar Sites have been designated for the following under-represented Ramsar Sites:
  - Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems - [110 Sites]
  - Coral reefs - [96 Sites]
  - Wet grasslands - [517 Sites]
  - Peatlands - [564 Sites]
  - Sea-grass beds - [249 Sites]
  - Mangroves - [280 Sites]
  - Temporary Pools - [729 Sites]
  - Bivalve (shellfish) reefs - [99 Sites](Ramsar Sites database, June 2015).

#### Indicators

- Number of Ramsar sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).
- Total hectares of Ramsar sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).
- Number of transboundary Ramsar Sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).
- Number of Ramsar Sites<sup>3</sup> designated for the following under-represented wetland types:
  - Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems - [XXX Sites]
  - Coral reefs - [XXX Sites]
  - Wet grasslands - [XXX Sites]
  - Peatlands - [XXX Sites]
  - Sea-grass beds - [XXX Sites]
  - Mangroves - [XXX Sites]
  - Temporary Pools - [XXX Sites]
  - Bivalve (shellfish) reefs - [XXX Sites](Data source: Ramsar Sites database).



*A Ramsar Advisory Mission is planned to Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta Ramsar Site, Colombia. The Site is important for its mangrove ecosystem, the largest on the country's Caribbean coast.*

## Target 7

Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Identification and implementation of measures to remove sites from Article 3.2 or Montreux Record.
- Ramsar Advisory missions.
- Ramsar Handbook 18: Managing wetlands [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-18.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 19: Addressing change in wetland ecological character [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-19.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- At COP12, [47] Ramsar Sites (2.2%) are listed on the Montreux Record. (Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).
- 21% of Parties have reported to the Ramsar Secretariat all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (National Reports to COP12).
- [76] Ramsar Sites reported by Parties to the Ramsar Secretariat of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).
- 16% of Parties have taken actions to address the issues for which Ramsar sites have been listed on the Montreux Record. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- Number of Ramsar Sites removed from the Montreux Record. (Data source: Ramsar Site database).
- % of Parties reporting to the Ramsar Secretariat all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: National Reports).
- Number of Ramsar Sites reported by Parties to the Ramsar Secretariat of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have taken actions to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Indicator(s) relating to (numbers of) Ramsar Sites at risk}

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3

### Wisely using all wetlands

#### Target 8

National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.



*A satellite image of the Sierra Leone River Estuary Ramsar Site.*

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Remote sensing data on wetlands.
- Ramsar Handbook 13: Inventory, assessment and management [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-13.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 15: Wetland Inventory [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-15.pdf>]

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, IOPs
- (Secretariat).

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Baselines

- At COP12, 47% of Parties have a complete national wetlands inventory. (National Reports to COP12).
- At COP13, [XX]% of Parties % of Parties have updated their national inventories in the last decade. (New question for National Reports).

##### Indicators

- % of Parties that have complete national wetland inventories. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have updated their national inventories in the last decade. (Data source: new question for National Reports).



*Local fisherman practicing sustainable fishing on a Congolese river.*

## Target 9

The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Promoting wise use, integrated water resources management, and integration of wetlands in other sectoral policies, plans or strategies.
- Participatory platforms at wetland, river, lake, groundwater basin, national and other appropriate levels are joined or created to engage with concerned stakeholders.
- Wetland/ wetland related governance platforms at basin level are in place.
- Ramsar Handbook 1: Wise use of wetlands [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-01.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 9: River basin management [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-09.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 12: Coastal management [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-12.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 16: Impact assessment [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-16.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, national and local stakeholders.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 55% of Parties have adopted wetland policies or equivalent instruments that promote the wise use of their wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).
- 71% of Parties consider wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basin. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Parties that have adopted wetland policies or equivalent instruments that promote the wise use of their wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that consider wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basin. (Data source: National Reports).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Involvement of stakeholders in various aspects of wetland and/or basin-scale management}

## Target 10

The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory skills [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-07.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Initiatives, Regional Centres, wetland managers and users, MEAs.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Possible use or further development of indicator(s) linked to work currently being undertaken to develop indicator(s) for related Aichi Target 18 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity}.



*An array of traditional nets in the backwaters of Cochin, Kerala, India (Joseph Kakkassery, 2015).*

## Wetlands: why should I care?

Humans often equate wetlands with wasteland: a place to be drained, filled in, burnt off and re-purposed. In fact, scientific studies show that 64% of the world's wetlands have disappeared since 1900. Measured against 1750, an estimated 87% have been lost.

Why is this such an alarming trend? And why are wetlands crucial to our sustainable development for the future?

### Wetlands are everywhere

Wetlands are found everywhere that are saturated or flooded with water, either permanently or seasonally. From wetlands in coastal areas, marshes, swamps, lakes, rivers, streams, floodplains, and estuaries. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, mangroves, seagrasses, lagoons and coral reefs.

### Wetlands ensure fresh water for all of us

Over 70% of the world's water is fresh, and most of that is in rivers. The only freshwater resources that flow to us are in the form of rain. Wetlands provide the water needed to replenish the groundwater supplies that are an important source of fresh water for humans.

### Wetlands guarantee our food supply

Humans consume 10kg of fish each day on average. More than 50% of fish caught in coastal wetlands are part of their diet. Rice, grown in wetland fields, is the staple food of nearly three billion people, and accounts for 20% of the world's nutritional intake.

### Wetlands purify and filter harmful wastes from water

Many of the pollutants from agriculture, industry and mining, including heavy metals and toxins, are absorbed by wetland sediments, plants and animals.



## Target 11

Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Promoting wise use, integrated water resources management, and integration of wetlands in other sectoral policies, plans or strategies.
- TEEB report, assessment of ecosystems services.
- Implementation of programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation.
- Ramsar Handbook 6: Wetland CEPA [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-06.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IPBES, IOPs.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 19% of Parties have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar sites. (National Reports to COP12).
- 39% of Parties have incorporated wetlands issues into poverty eradication strategies. (National Reports to COP12).
- 42% of Parties have implemented programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Parties that have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have incorporated wetlands issues into poverty eradication strategies. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have implemented programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans. (Data source: National Reports).

The Ramsar Fact Sheets summarize wetland-related issues in accessible language and reach a broad audience.

## Target 12

Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Restoration initiatives taken, projects, programmes implemented.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties, IOPs
- (STRP; Secretariat).

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 68% of Parties have identified priority sites for restoration. (National Reports to COP12).
- 70% of Parties have implemented restoration or rehabilitation programmes. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Parties that have established restoration plans [or activities] for sites. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have implemented effective restoration or rehabilitation projects. (Data source: National Reports).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Outcome-based indicators(s) related to (extent of) wetland restoration possibly including remote sensing as appropriate}.



*Local community members plant mangrove seedlings as part of a mangrove restoration project.*



*A coastal wetland integrated into an urban area in Brazil (Paulo Jailton, 2016).*

### Target 13

Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Indicators related to the relevant sectors especially using or linking to relevant Aichi Target indicators and other relevant international processes}.

## OPERATIONAL GOAL 4 Enhancing Implementation

### Target 14

Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- STRP leads with support from Secretariat in producing guidance.

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- STRP

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Baseline

- In 2015, [543] 'hits' on scientific and technical guidance pages of the Ramsar web-site. (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015).
- In 2015, [60] 'hits' on STRP briefing notes from the Ramsar web-site. (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015).
- In 2015, [176] 'hits' of relevant Ramsar Handbooks downloaded from the Ramsar web-site (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015)
- In 2015, [150] practical tools and guidance documents for wetland conservation and wise use, and other key scientific documentation, which has been developed by either STRP, Parties and others, and is available via the Ramsar website. (Data source: Ramsar web-site).

##### Indicator

- Number of 'hits' on scientific and technical guidance pages of the Ramsar web-site and associated subtotals by country and Ramsar Region of the source of these hits. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).
- Number of STRP briefing papers downloaded from the Ramsar web-site and subtotals by country and Ramsar Region of the source of these downloads. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).
- Number of relevant Ramsar Handbooks downloaded from the Ramsar web-site and subtotals by country and Ramsar Region of the source of these downloads. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).
- Number of practical tools and guidance documents for wetland conservation and wise use, and other key scientific documentation, which has been developed by either STRP, Parties and others, and is available via the Ramsar website. (Data source: Ramsar web-site).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Indicator(s) related to the use of guidance and availability in various language versions}.



*The Briefing Notes are prepared by the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel to share scientific and technical information on wetlands with a broad audience.*



*The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative implements the Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan in 26 countries of the Mediterranean region (MedWet, 2016).*

## Target 15

Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baselines

- By COP12, [15] Regional Initiatives are in operation under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. (Ramsar Secretariat).
- 68% of Parties have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- Number of Regional Initiatives successfully implemented. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (Data source: National Reports).

## Target 16

Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.



School children celebrating World Wetlands Day 2016 in Sri Lanka.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- The Secretariat's CEPA programme will deliver high profile media and public awareness placements and programs to raise the convention's image.
- Ramsar Handbook 6: Wetland CEPA [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-06.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat and IOPs

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baselines

##### *World Wetland Day*

- 89% of Parties have branded World Wetlands Day activities. (National Reports to COP12).
- In 2015 884 World Wetland Day activities or events reported to the Secretariat. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat CEPA program)
- In 2015, [379] internet references (in the press) to World Wetland Day activities. (Data source: Meltwater internet analysis).
- In 2015, [58, 566] individual visits to the World Wetlands Day website. {Data source: worldwetlandsday.org website }.
- In 2015 Social media links to World Wetland Day: 16,135,974 people reached in Facebook. (Data source: <https://www.facebook.com/RamsarConventionOnWetlands>) .
- 795 views of WWD message from Youtube channel (Data source Ramsar Youtube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/RamsarConvention>)
- 292,100 reached in Twitter (Data source <https://twitter.com/RamsarConv>)

##### *CEPA programmes*

- 80% of Parties with a) a governmental CEPA National Focal Point and 69% of Parties with b) a non-governmental National Focal Point. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat Data Base and National Reports to COP12).
- 27% of Parties have established national action plans for wetland CEPA. (National Reports to COP12).

##### *Visitor centres*

- By COP12, 636 centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established in Ramsar sites. (National Reports to COP12).
- By COP12, 309 centres established at other wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

##### *World Wetland Day*

- % of Parties that have branded World Wetlands Day activities. (Data source: National Reports).
- Number of World Wetland Day activities or events reported to the Secretariat. (Data source: Ramsar CEPA program).

- Number of internet references to World Wetland Day activities. {Data source: internet analysis}.
- Number of internet references to the Ramsar Convention. {Data source: internet analysis}.
- Number of social media links to World Wetland Day. {Data source: social media analysis}.

*CEPA programmes*

- % of Parties with a) a governmental CEPA National Focal Point and b) a non-governmental National Focal Point (Data source: National Reports).

*Visitor centres*

- Number of centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established in Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).
- Number of centres at other wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).

**Possible further indicators that may be developed**

- {Indicator(s) related to whether and how wetland conservation and wise-use issues are included formal education programmes}.

## Target 17

Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the four Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 from all sources are made available

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- The Secretariat's Partnership team will raise non-core funds to fund priority convention activities.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, development assistance agencies.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 21% of Contracting Parties have provided additional financial support through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities. (National Reports to COP12).
- 40% of Contracting Parties have received funding support from development assistance agencies for national wetlands conservation and management. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicators

- % of Contracting Parties that have provided additional financial support through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities. (National Reports to COP12).
- % of Parties that have received funding support from development assistance agencies for national wetlands conservation and management. (Data source: National Reports).

#### Possible further indicators that may be developed

- {Indicator(s) related to flows of financing related to different aspects of Strategic Plan implementation}.



*Working with financial and other resources to implement the Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 in Ras Al Khor Ramsar Site, Dubai.*



Acting Secretary General Ania Grobicki and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Chief Executive Martin Spray sign a Memorandum of Cooperation on 15 June 2016.

## Target 18

### International cooperation is strengthened at all levels

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Regional Initiatives, multilateral and bilateral agreements, Memorandums of Understanding.
- Ramsar Handbook 5: Partnerships [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-05.pdf>]
- Ramsar Handbook 20: International co-operation [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-20.pdf> ]

#### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Centres, MEAs.

#### Indicator(s) and Baselines

##### Baselines

##### *Regional Initiatives*

- By COP12, [15] Regional Initiatives are in operation under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. (Ramsar Secretariat).
- 68% of Parties have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).

##### *Other aspects of co-operation*

- 35% of Parties have established networks including twinning arrangements nationally or internationally for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features. (National Reports to COP12).
- 33% of Parties have effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example in shared river basins and coastal zones). (National Reports to COP12).
- [XX]% of Parties have co-ordination mechanisms for the implementation of MEAs existing at a national level. (Data source: new question for National Reports).
- At COP12, 168 Parties have acceded to the Ramsar Convention. (Report of the Secretary General to COP12 on the implementation of the Convention, COP12Doc8).
- At COP12, [16] transboundary Ramsar Sites. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat).

##### Indicators

##### *Regional Initiatives*

- Number of Regional Initiatives successfully implemented. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (Data source: National Reports).

##### *Other aspects of co-operation*

- % of Parties that have established networks including twinning arrangements nationally or internationally for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features. (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties that have effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example in shared river basins and coastal zones). (Data source: National Reports).
- % of Parties where co-ordination mechanisms for the implementation of MEAs exist at a national level. (Data source: new question for National Reports).
- Number of Parties which have acceded to the Ramsar Convention. (Data Source: National Reports).
- Total number of transboundary Ramsar Sites. (Data source: Ramsar Sites Database).

## Target 19

Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is enhanced.

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Projects, programmes and events that promote wise use of wetlands with the active involvement of wetland managers and users.
- CEPA plans, World Wetlands Day, training courses.
- Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory skills [<http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-07.pdf>]

### Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)

- Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Initiatives, Regional Centres, wetland managers and users, MEAs.

### Indicator(s) and Baselines

#### Baseline

- 20% of Parties have made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).

#### Indicator

- % of Parties that have made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).



*The Ramsar Regional Center for the Western Hemisphere (CREHO) organizes international capacity building courses in Panama (Photo: CREHO).*

## Annex 2 Synergies between CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Ramsar Targets

Ramsar Goals and Targets 2016-2024	Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2010-2020
<p><b>Strategic Goal 1</b></p> <p>Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 5</b></p> <p>By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.</p>
<p><b>Target 1</b></p> <p>Wetlands benefits are features in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 2</b></p> <p>By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.</p>
<p><b>Target 2</b></p> <p>Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 7</b></p> <p>By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 8</b></p> <p>By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>Target 3</b></p> <p>The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 4</b></p> <p>By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 3</b></p> <p>By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.</p>

	<b>Aichi Target # 7</b> same as above
	<b>Aichi Target # 8</b> same as above
<b>Target 4</b> Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.	<b>Aichi Target # 9</b> By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.
<b>Strategic Goal 2</b> <b>Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network</b>	<b>Aichi Target # 11</b> same as above
<b>Target 5</b> The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management	<b>Aichi Target # 11</b> By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
	<b>Aichi Target # 12</b> By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.
	<b>Aichi Target # 6</b> By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
<b>Target 6</b> There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network in particular underrepresented types of wetlands including in underrepresented ecoregions and trans-boundary sites	<b>Aichi Target # 11</b> same as above

	<p><b>Aichi Target # 10</b></p> <p>By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.</p>
<p><b>Target 7</b></p> <p>Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 12</b></p> <p>Same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 5</b></p> <p>By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 7</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 11</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
<p><b>Strategic Goal 3</b></p> <p>Wisely using all wetlands</p>	
<p><b>Target 8</b></p> <p>National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 14</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 18</b></p> <p>By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 19</b></p> <p>By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 12</b></p> <p>same as above</p>

<p><b>Target 9</b></p> <p>The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 4</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 6</b></p> <p>By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 7</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
<p><b>Target 10</b></p> <p>The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 18</b></p> <p>By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.</p>
<p><b>Target 11</b></p> <p>Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 13</b></p> <p>By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 1</b></p> <p>By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps taken to conserve and use it sustainably.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 2</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 14</b></p> <p>By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.</p>

<p><b>Target 12</b></p> <p>Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 15</b></p> <p>By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has 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.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 14</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
<p><b>Target 13</b></p> <p>Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries fisheries, agriculture and ecotourism practices when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 6</b></p> <p>By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 7</b></p> <p>By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>Operational Goal 4</b></p> <p><b>Enhancing Implementation</b></p>	
<p><b>Target 14</b></p> <p>Scientific and technical guidance at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 19</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
<p><b>Target 15</b></p> <p>Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.</p>	
<p><b>Target 16</b></p> <p>Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 1</b></p> <p>same as above</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 18</b></p> <p>same as above</p>

<p><b>Target 17</b></p> <p>Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 from all sources are made available</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 20</b></p> <p>By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.</p>
<p><b>Target 18</b></p> <p>International cooperation is strengthened at all levels</p>	
<p><b>Target 19</b></p> <p>Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is enhanced.</p>	<p><b>Aichi Target # 17</b></p> <p>By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.</p>
	<p><b>Aichi Target # 1</b></p> <p>same as above</p>

# Appendix 1 Resolution XII.2

## The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

- 1 RECALLING the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 by Resolution X.1 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during the previous two triennia;
- 2 ACKNOWLEDGING that wetlands are the ecosystem with the highest rate of loss and degradation, the need for continuing the implementation of the Convention under the direction of a renewed Strategic Plan that reflects the current wetland conservation challenges, and AWARE that indicators of current trends suggest pressures on biodiversity and other wetland services will increase over the next years;
- 3 RECOGNIZING the reference to the water and wetlands contained in the proposal of the open working group of the Sustainable Development Goals and RECOGNIZING that all wetlands including the Ramsar Site network will have a direct relevance to the achievement of any Sustainable Development Goals which are related to poverty eradication, food and nutrition, healthy living, gender equality, water quality and supply, water security, energy supply, reduction of natural disasters, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure, sustainable human settlements, adaptation to climate change, oceans, seas and marine resources, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems;
- 4 RECALLING the RIO+20 outcome, that states that water is at the core of sustainable development, RECOGNIZING the key role that wetlands play in maintaining water quantity and quality, among others, and the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution A/RES/68/157 which recognizes the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which is essential for the full enjoyment of life and of all human rights;
- 5 NOTING Decision III/21 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and thus RECALLING the role of the Ramsar Convention as lead partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the CBD and RECOGNIZING the important contribution that the Ramsar Convention has made, in implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 ;
- 6 FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the implementation by Contracting Parties and other stakeholders of Strategic Plans has facilitated over time a progressive delivery of the goals of the Convention, but ALSO RECOGNIZING that, 44 years after the adoption of the Convention, many increasingly urgent challenges remain, to which the Convention will have to adapt and respond in order to consistently achieve wetland conservation and wise use across a changing world;
- 7 AWARE of an increasing sense of urgency amongst Contracting Parties in the face of accelerating degradation and loss of wetlands, and RECOGNIZING that more effective responses are needed to prevent, stop and reverse loss and degradation;

- 8 NOTING that the Strategic Plan identifies priority actions for the next nine years to prevent, stop and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands, by addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation, effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network in an integrated and sustainable way, and promoting the wise use of all wetlands and fostering the accomplishment of these actions by further enhancing implementation of the Convention;
- 9 AWARE that National Reports provide the opportunity for Contracting Parties to report on implementation progress and any implementation difficulties, and THANKING all those Contracting Parties that have provided their National Reports to the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP12);
- 10 NOTING that challenges for achieving wise use of wetlands differ substantially between regions and nations and that the Contracting Parties differ substantially in their situations and in their capacities; but also NOTING that the cost of inaction is anticipated to be higher in the long term;
- 11 NOTING that the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 has been prepared by the Strategic Plan Working Group of the Standing Committee with the support of the Secretariat through a wide consultative process with Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other stakeholders, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- 12 AWARE of the potential to learn from current international activity in relation to the development of biodiversity indicators; and
- 13 NOTING the need for additional inter-sessional work to strengthen the suite of materials to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including further possible indicators, and also guidance to Parties based on available tools;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

- 14 APPROVES the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 as annexed to this Resolution as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during this period, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to disseminate it widely to other stakeholders concerned with its implementation;
- 15 URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the CEPA Oversight Panel and the Secretariat, and INVITES the Convention's IOPs and the Regional Initiatives to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan through its goals and targets;
- 16 INVITES other stakeholders such as, inter alia, other multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations including financial organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, scientific academies and research institutions, professional scientific and technical bodies, donors, and private companies to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- 17 REQUESTS the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to develop the COP13 National Report Template to provide a more user-friendly instrument that reflects the goals and targets of the new Ramsar Strategic Plan, for consideration at the 51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC51);

- 18 URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and in line with the reporting requirements to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including with regards to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Plan in their National Reports and to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee on the basis of the information provided to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Plan at its meetings;
- 19 ENCOURAGES Parties to promote, recognize and strengthen active participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, as key stakeholders for conservation and integrated wetland management;
- 20 RECOGNIZES that the wise and customary use of wetlands by indigenous peoples and local communities can play an important role in their conservation, ENCOURAGES relevant parties to provide that information to the Secretariat and REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to compile the data as an initial report on the relationship of indigenous peoples and local communities with wetlands;
- 21 ENCOURAGES Parties to allocate from national budgets financial resources for the implementation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan for wetlands and report on this as appropriate in the National Report to COP13, and further URGES the Secretariat to mobilize additional resources to support the Contracting Parties for effective implementation of the Strategic Plan in the context of Resolution XII.7;
- 22 ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to develop and submit to the Secretariat on or before December 2016, and according to their national priorities, capabilities and resources, their own quantifiable and time-bound national and regional targets in line with the targets set in the Strategic Plan;
- 23 RECOGNIZES that several Contracting Parties have established national biodiversity targets and action plans in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and URGES such Contracting Parties to integrate and harmonize national implementation of the Strategic Plan with implementation of National Biodiversity Action Plans;
- 24 REQUESTS the Secretariat, in accordance with Decision SC47-24, to submit to IPBES a request for a thematic assessment on the current status and trends of wetlands, including their condition, and explore further how the Convention can contribute to the work of IPBES, including the regional and global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to inform the Conference of the Parties on the progress of this action;
- 25 ENCOURAGES the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, including the Ramsar Regional Centres, to develop work plans for assisting the Parties in their respective regions to effectively implement the Strategic Plan;
- 26 DECIDES to undertake a review of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to facilitate this;

27 INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to convene, initially, a small, regionally representative expert group back-to-back with the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland in July 2015, including interested Contracting Parties, expert support from the STRP, IOPs and other relevant MEAs and international processes to develop options, for additional indicators for the Strategic Plan having regard in particular to:

- previous Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties related to indicators, including Resolution IX.1;
- the need for indicators to address outcomes and effectiveness and to be capable of practical implementation;
- the need to minimize cost of indicator implementation by using existing data and information flows, including through national reporting and reporting on Ramsar Sites; and

28 REQUESTS the expert group to report on possible indicators to the Standing Committee; and INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee, as a high priority, to refine the potential indicators and present the proposal to COP13 for approval.



## Ramsar Handbooks, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

N	Title	Relevant 4 <sup>th</sup> edition Handbooks	Resolutions (COP11 and COP12)	4 <sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan targets
1	An Introduction to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	The Ramsar Convention Manual		
2	The Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024	21 The Ramsar Strategic Plan		
3	Wise use of wetlands, sustainable development and poverty eradication	1 Wise use of wetlands	XI.13 XI.20 XI.21 XI.7	1.1 1.3 3.10 3.13 4.14
4	National wetland policies, laws and institutions	2 National wetland policies 3 Laws and institutions		
5	Implementing CEPA with participatory skills	6 Wetland CEPA 7 Participatory skills	XII.9	3.11 4.16
6	Avian influenza and wetlands	4 Avian influenza		1.4 4.14
7	Partnerships	5 Partnerships	XII.3 XII.7 XI.6	4.17
8	Freshwater-related guidance	8 Water-related guidance 9 River basin management 10 Water allocation and management 11 Managing groundwater	XII.12	1.2 3.9 4.14
9	Managing wetlands in the coastal zone and small islands	12 Coastal management	XII.14	4.14
10	Inventory, assessment and monitoring	13 Inventory, assessment and monitoring 14 Data and information needs 15 Wetland inventory	(with additional input from STRP Task no. 1.7)	3.8 4.14
11	Impact assessment	16 Impact assessment		4.14
12	Designating Ramsar sites	17 Designating Ramsar sites	(with additional input from STRP Item 2.5)	2.6 4.14
13	Managing wetlands	18 Managing wetlands	XII.15	4.14
14	Addressing change in wetland ecological character	19 Addressing change in wetland ecological character		2.5 2.7 4.14
15	International cooperation	20 International cooperation		4.18
16	Ramsar Regional Initiatives	Covered in 20 International cooperation	XII.8 XI.5	4.15
17	Wetland Education Centres	Handbook on the Best Practices for Planning, Design and Operation of Wetland Education Centres		3.11 4.14
18	Wetlands, incl. peatlands, climate change and disaster risk reduction		XII.11 XII.13 XI.14 Res. X.24	3.12 4.14
19	Wetland City Accreditation		XII.10 XI.11	
20	Wetlands and Health		XI.10 XI.12 XI.15	3.12



Convention on Wetlands

Convention sur les zones humides

Convención sobre los Humedales

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