

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: CONSERVATION OF PEATLANDS

1. CONSIDERING that peat-dominated wetland systems, known as “peatlands”, including bogs, fens, carrs, mires, “bofedales”, peatswamp forest, and other similar terms, are important wetland types hitherto under-represented in the work of the Convention;
2. RECALLING that peatlands are included in the Ramsar Convention Classification System for Wetland Type (Annex 2B to Recommendation 4.7) under several Inland Wetland types;
3. AWARE of significant international interest in promotion of the wise use and conservation of peatland ecosystems and their associated natural resources, as exemplified by the Trondheim Declaration of the 1994 6th Symposium of the International Mire Conservation Group held in Trondheim, Norway; the 1994 International Peat Symposium sponsored by the International Peat Society held in Brussels, Belgium; and the Edinburgh Declaration of the 1995 Peatlands Symposium sponsored by the Scottish Wildlife Trust held in Edinburgh, United Kingdom;
4. RECOGNIZING that peatland resources and associated peat products are of significant environmental and economic value to many nations in all regions of the world;
5. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the significant contributions to global peatland conservation by international groups such as the IUCN Ecosystem Management Group, Wetlands International, and the International Mire Conservation Group;
6. WELCOMING national policy documents that incorporate the principles of wise use of wetlands and sustainable development as well as letters from several Contracting Parties (including Norway and Canada) transmitted to the Ramsar Bureau supporting the need for international action on the wise use and conservation of peatlands;
7. FURTHER AWARE of concerns for ongoing degradation and destruction of peatland systems in many areas of the world due to a wide range of land uses, including agricultural and urban development, forestry, energy development, and horticultural harvesting of peat; and
8. NOTING the identification of peatlands in the Ramsar Convention’s Strategic Plan 1997-2002 (Action 6.2.3) as “under-represented wetland types” for designation, when appropriate, in the global network of wetlands of international importance;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to maintain or give priority to the inventory and evaluation of peatlands in their territories and, where appropriate, to nominate additional peatland ecosystems as Ramsar sites consistent with Resolution 5.6, Section II.1;

10. URGES the development, adoption and implementation of regionally based peatland management guidelines such as the *IUCN Guidelines for the Sustainable Utilization and Integrated Management of Tropical Peatlands*;
11. RECOMMENDS that the “Wise Use Guidelines” of the Ramsar Convention, particularly in relation to development and implementation of national policies for wetland conservation, the evaluation of measures taken, the regular monitoring of the status of these ecosystems, as well as the promotion of scientific research, be fully applied by Contracting Parties for all their wetlands, including peatland types within their territories and such wetlands shared along international borders, particularly in boreal, temperate, and tropical latitude biogeographical regions;
12. FURTHER RECOMMENDS the expansion of international mechanisms for coordination and cooperation for peatland conservation initiatives and programmes by Contracting Parties; and
13. ENCOURAGES support by Contracting Parties for research programmes in particular on peatland functioning and on restoration of degraded peatland ecosystems; for international networks for peatland training and education, and dissemination of the results of research on peatlands to Contracting Parties.