

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 6.10: PROMOTION OF COOPERATION ON THE ECONOMIC VALUATION OF WETLANDS

1. NOTING that, while wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to humankind, their economic value is not well documented or understood, in part because wetland values are not well captured in established monetary indicators;
2. FURTHER NOTING that few studies have been conducted on the non-market values of wetlands, particularly in developing nations;
3. CONCERNED that initiatives which attempt to conserve wetlands without addressing the fundamental forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss are unlikely to succeed in the long run;
4. AWARE that economic valuation of the goods and services that wetlands provide to people can serve as an essential national and international instrument in countering negative impacts on wetlands and an important complement to the precautionary approach;
5. FURTHER AWARE that senior decision-makers often do not have adequate knowledge of the full economic value of wetlands;
6. RECALLING that a number of networks of expertise, such as the Economic Assessment of Wetland Functions and Values Specialist Group of Wetlands International, have already been established in response to the above concerns including wetland valuation experts in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas;
7. FURTHER RECALLING that wetland valuation was a concern at the 1995 International Conference on Wetlands and Development in Malaysia; and
8. RECOGNIZING the importance of establishing further linkages among various interest groups on the subject of wetland valuation and a need to coordinate and collaborate on these initiatives in order to facilitate implementation of elements of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. AFFIRMS that it is vital that all wetland economic values be identified, measured and reported upon to increase national and international awareness of the need for and benefits of wetland conservation;
10. CALLS ON the existing broadly-based networks of expertise to provide leadership on the valuation of wetlands and to act as advisory groups to the Ramsar Convention on this complex subject;
11. URGES these national and international networks to:

- a) further their efforts for cooperation on wetland valuation in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other interested parties;
 - b) shed light on the fundamental economic forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss;
 - c) initiate and/or support ongoing valuation projects in a multidisciplinary fashion to monetarize the unmeasured wealth of goods and services that wetlands provide to Contracting Parties to the Convention, decision-makers, and society in general;
 - d) assist the Ramsar Bureau in advising Contracting Parties on their application of wetland valuation results to national wetland and environmental policies; and
 - e) assist in developing new strategies, training initiatives, and instruments appropriate to facilitate the assessment of economic values of wetland functions and benefits in order to further address wetland conservation needs; and
12. INVITES support for this initiative by all Contracting Parties and interested groups and agencies.