

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 6.17: RAMSAR SITES IN THE TERRITORIES OF SPECIFIC CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. WELCOMING the increase in the number of sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, which has exceeded the figure of 800 sites during the holding of the present meeting of the Conference;
2. PAYING SPECIAL TRIBUTE to Australia, the host of the Conference, which has designated seven new sites for the List and expressed its intention of designating a representative series of wetland types;
3. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION at the statements made at the present meeting on designation of new sites by Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, and Venezuela and welcoming the deposit with the Bureau of descriptions and maps for these sites; and
4. NOTING WITH PLEASURE the statements made (in plenary session or in National Reports) by Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Lithuania, Mauritania, Peru, Slovenia, South Africa, Suriname, and Yugoslavia concerning their intention to designate further sites for the List;

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(IN RELATION TO STATEMENTS ON RECOMMENDATION 5.1 AND ASSOCIATED RECOMMENDATIONS 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3)

5. APPRECIATES the information provided by the Government of Germany in relation to the status of Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer mit Dollart, and in particular the measures taken at the part of the site known as Leybucht, and recommends that this area be subject to ongoing attention to its ecological quality;
6. WELCOMES the response of the Government of The Netherlands to the concern expressed in Recommendation 5.1 over gas exploitation in the Wadden Sea, and notes that a letter detailing the measures being taken to safeguard the environment was transmitted to the Bureau in 1995;
7. FURTHER WELCOMES the statement made by the Government of Venezuela that measures are being implemented at Cuare Ramsar site to reduce the pressure of human activities;
8. ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts made by the Government of Poland to designate protected areas in the Middle Vistula and expresses the hope that the area will be designated as a Ramsar site;

9. CONGRATULATES the Government of the Russian Federation for the designation of 32 new Ramsar sites in 1994 and recommends that steps be taken to develop and implement appropriate management measures;
10. WARMLY CONGRATULATES the Government of South Africa for the steps taken to maintain the ecological character of St. Lucia System Ramsar site, through its decision not to allow mining for heavy metals in the dune cordon known as “Eastern Shores” and, noting that because of the possibility of future applications for mining permits continued vigilance will be required;
11. NOTES the effective application of the Management Guidance Procedure at Nariva Swamp, Trinidad and Tobago, welcomes the statement by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on the value of the Management Guidance Procedure and of the independent perspective it brought to bear on Nariva, and further welcomes the actions already being taken for implementation of the report recommendations;
12. REITERATES its call for the Government of Vietnam to designate at least one site in the Mekong Delta for the Ramsar List and to complete as soon as possible all necessary arrangements for inclusion of the Tien Hai part of the Red River Estuary in the Ramsar List; and
13. NOTES WITH SATISFACTION that the Government of Hungary is giving consideration to year-round Ramsar status for Tata Oreg-to and Lake Balaton, and urges the Hungarian authorities to complete this process at the earliest possible time.

(IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC STATEMENTS AT THE PRESENT MEETING)

14. URGES those Contracting Parties which have indicated their intention of listing new sites to do so as soon as possible and to seek assistance from the Ramsar Bureau in case of any difficulty;
15. NOTES the potential for change in ecological character at the Carlos Andwandter Ramsar site in Chile and urges the Chilean authorities to take the measures necessary for avoiding such change;
16. URGES the Governments of Costa Rica and Guatemala to apply the Ramsar Management Guidance Procedure (formerly the Monitoring Procedure) at Palo Verde and Laguna del Tigre respectively, which are included in the Montreux Record;
17. NOTES the decision to permit erection of a steel mill and associated industries at Saldanha near the South African Ramsar site of Langebaan, welcomes the stringent environmental controls (frugal water usage, revised siting of the plant, and pollution controls) to which this permission is subject, and calls on the South African authorities to monitor the effects on the nearby Ramsar site of the steel plant and the harbor development;
18. WELCOMES the information provided by the Government of Bolivia that the risk of change to the ecological character of the Laguna Colorada Ramsar site has been removed following the cancellation of the major geothermal power plant project;

19. NOTES the information provided by Mexico concerning improvements at the Ría Lagartos Ramsar site, thanks to a GEF-supported management plan, which should allow the site to be removed from the Montreux Record;
20. WELCOMES the efforts by the Governments of Bolivia and Peru for the conservation of Lake Titicaca, a transfrontier wetland which is the largest freshwater lake in South America and of vital importance for the subsistence and development of local communities, and calls on the Governments to consider the possibility of designating a transfrontier Ramsar site at Lake Titicaca;
21. REQUESTS the Governments of Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic, in their deliberations on the possible construction of a Danube-Elbe-Oder canal, to give full consideration to the fact that such a canal would cause serious adverse changes to the ecological character of five Ramsar sites in these three countries;
22. CALLS on the Government of Bangladesh to adopt mitigation measures to remedy adverse change to the ecological character of the Sundarbans Ramsar site caused by reduction of freshwater flow through its river system;
23. WELCOMES the proposed new Ramsar site along the upper reaches of the Rhine, to be designated simultaneously on their respective banks by the French and German authorities; and
24. WELCOMES the statement by the USA on the extensive restoration measures under way to restore the ecological character of the Everglades Ramsar site, currently included in the Montreux Record because of disruption of the natural hydrological regime.

(IN RELATION TO GENERAL STATEMENTS AT THE PRESENT MEETING)

25. WELCOMES the approval at the present meeting of the Brisbane Initiative in response to the call in Recommendation 5.1 of the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, Japan, 1993) for designation of additional wetlands for the Ramsar List, and in particular additional tidal wetlands;
 26. WELCOMES the publication of a “Draft Wetlands Conservation Policy for the Commonwealth Government of Australia”; and
 27. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION at information received from the Government of South Africa on its plans to develop national legislation aimed at safeguarding listed sites against inappropriate physical developments, and invites other Contracting Parties who may be interested to seek further information on this subject from the Government of South Africa, with a view to developing similar legislation in other countries.
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