



“People and Wetlands: The Vital Link”
7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies

1. RECALLING Article 3.1 of the Convention, which states that Contracting Parties “*shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory*”;
2. FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 4.10 and Resolution 5.6, and their annexes, which provide *Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept* and *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept* respectively, and, in particular, urged Contracting Parties to develop and apply National Wetland Policies as an important step towards achieving the wise use of wetlands;
3. AWARE that Recommendation 6.9 called for the production of a framework for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies and an analysis of the status of wetland policies worldwide;
4. ALSO AWARE that Operational Objective 2.1, Action 2.1.2, of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 urged Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Bureau, and Partner Organizations to “*promote much greater efforts to develop national wetland policies, either separately or as a clearly identifiable component of other national conservation planning initiatives*”;
5. NOTING WITH PLEASURE the advice given in the National Reports to this Conference of the Contracting Parties that 77 Parties have National Wetland Policies or Strategies in place or under development;
6. FURTHER NOTING that Technical Session II of this Conference, on National Planning for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use, had presented to it and considered in detail the annex to this decision entitled *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies*;
7. RECOGNIZING that the development of policies and related initiatives may require efforts to build capacity where human, technical and financial resources need to be augmented; and
8. EXPRESSING ITS THANKS to the authors of the annex to this Resolution for providing their combined advice, based on experience, so that Contracting Parties preparing or considering the preparation of such Policies can finalise or undertake the task with improved efficiency and effectiveness;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. ADOPTS as guidance for the Contracting Parties the annex to this Resolution entitled *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies* and URGES those Parties that have yet to develop such Policies to give this activity their highest attention;
10. URGES Contracting Parties to note and apply with equal vigour the related guidance provided as an annex to Resolution VII.7, *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands*, aware of the close relationship between policy instruments and legislation;
11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognise the benefits of incorporating into National Wetland Policies appropriate measures to ensure that wetland restoration is given priority consideration in the administration of programmes and government expenditure, and in the promotion of local actions to rehabilitate degraded wetlands;
12. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to integrate into their National Wetland Policies, wherever possible, the elements of the other guidance adopted under the Convention such the *Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept* (Recommendation 4.10) and *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept* (Resolution 5.6), the *Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution 5.7), the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), and the Convention's Outreach Programme (Resolution VII.9), having regard also to Resolutions VII.16 on impact assessment and VII.15 on incentives; and
13. FURTHER URGES, in accordance with the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), Contracting Parties with experience in the development and implementation of National Wetland Policies to promote opportunities for the sharing of this knowledge and experience with other Ramsar Parties initiating such a process.