



“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**

**Incentive measures to encourage the application of the
wise use principle**

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 [of Wetlands of International Importance], and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory*”;
2. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 5.6 on *Additional guidance for the implementation of the wise use concept*, and in particular the references therein to removing tax benefits and subsidies which encourage wetland destruction and conversely, the introduction of incentives “*to encourage activities which are compatible with the maintenance of wetlands, and which promote and contribute to their conservation*”;
3. NOTING that incentive measures form an element of the Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Resolution VII.4) and that this was endorsed by Decision IV/15 of CBD’s 4th Conference of the Parties (COP);
4. ALSO NOTING Decisions III/18 and IV/10a of CBD COP4 on incentive measures, and especially the recognition in the latter decision that “*incentive measures should be designed using an ecosystem approach and with the targeted resource management audience in mind*”;
5. AGREEING with CBD Decision IV/10a when it recognises that “*economic valuation of biodiversity and biological resources is an important tool for well-targeted and calibrated economic incentive measures*”;
6. AFFIRMING the critical importance for the implementation of the Convention and its wise use principle of the design and implementation of measures that act as incentives for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and of the identification and removal of incentives which undermine the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
7. NOTING WITH APPROVAL that CBD’s Decision IV/10a on incentive measures encouraged collaboration among the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the Secretariat of the CBD, and other relevant organizations, to develop a background paper with the aim of developing guidance on this issue for consideration at CBD’s COP5;
8. HAVING CONSIDERED the paper on incentive measures presented to Technical Session III of this Conference;

9. REALIZING the need for incentive measures to be considered as part of the policy and legislative instruments of Contracting Parties implementing the Convention and that this Conference has adopted guidance for Parties on both of these subjects (Resolutions VII.6 and VII.7); and
10. RECOGNIZING the importance of incentive measures for promoting the sustainable use of wetlands among various stakeholders, notably local communities and the private sector, as encouraged by the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8);

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11. URGES Contracting Parties to review their existing, or evolving, policy, legal and institutional frameworks to identify and promote those measures which encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands and to identify and remove measures which discourage conservation and wise use;
12. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties more specifically to ensure that incentive measures are taken into consideration when applying the *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies* (Resolution VII.6) and the *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands* (Resolution VII.7);
13. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties, non-governmental organizations, donor agencies and others, in their application of the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8), to give special consideration to the introduction of incentive measures designed to encourage the wise use of wetlands, and to identify and remove perverse incentives where they exist;
14. FURTHER CALLS UPON Contracting Parties and others to share their experiences and lessons learned with respect to incentive measures and perverse incentives relating to wetlands, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources generally, by providing these to the Ramsar Bureau for appropriate distribution and to be made available through the Wise Use Resource Centre of the Convention's Web site;
15. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Ramsar Bureau, recognizing that financial resources will be necessary for these purposes, to work in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the CBD and the Convention on Migratory Species, OECD, the International Association for Impact Assessment, and IUCN, and with the Contracting Parties and other relevant organizations, to: a) review existing guidelines and available information on incentive measures in order to prepare an Internet-based resource kit, including a catalogue of incentives and case studies; and b) explore the use of impact assessments as tools for identifying opportunities for implementing incentive measures;
16. DIRECTS the STRP and the Ramsar Bureau to prepare a report for Ramsar COP8 on progress in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of incentive measures and the identification and removal of perverse incentives, containing recommendations for specific actions to be taken by the Contracting Parties, governments, and other relevant organizations, as human and financial resources allow; and

17. DECIDES that information on incentive measures taken by the Contracting Parties should be included in National Reports for analysis and reporting by the Ramsar Bureau.