



“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**

Priorities for wetland inventory

1. RECALLING Recommendation 1.5 which called upon Contracting Parties to prepare inventories of their wetlands “*as an aid to the formulation and implementation of national wetland policies*” to assist in promoting the wise use of wetlands in their territory;
2. RECALLING ALSO Recommendation 4.6, Resolutions 5.3 and VI.12, and Action 6.1.2 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which recognised the value of national scientific inventories for identifying sites suitable for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List) under the Convention;
3. AWARE of Action 6.1.3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which calls upon the Ramsar Bureau and the International Organization Partners to “*utilize information from regional wetland directories, national scientific inventories of wetlands and other sources, to begin development of a quantification of global wetland resources, as baseline information for considering trends in wetland conservation or loss*”;
4. NOTING the report entitled *Global review of wetland resources and priorities for wetland inventory* and its recommendations as prepared and presented by Wetlands International to Technical Session IV of this Conference, in response to Action 6.1.3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002;
5. APPRECIATIVE of the financial support provided for the preparation of the above report by the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom;
6. NOTING WITH CONCERN the findings of the Wetlands International report that, based on the information gathered within the constraints of this project, few countries, if any, have comprehensive national inventories of their wetland resources, and that it is therefore not possible to provide a baseline of the world’s wetland resources with any confidence;
7. RECOGNIZING the priorities for future wetland inventory, both in terms of types and regions, as identified in the report and endorsed by the Second International Conference on Wetlands and Development (Dakar, Senegal, November 1998);
8. CONSIDERING that this Conference has also adopted *Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetlands Policies* (Resolution VII.6), the *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11), and Resolution VII.17 on *Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use*, all of which, as

noted by the previous Resolutions and Recommendations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, would be greatly assisted by the availability of national scientific inventories;

9. TAKING ACCOUNT of the findings given in the report prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and presented to COP7 Technical Session IV entitled *Shared wetlands and river basins of the world*; and
10. NOTING the scope of the proposed Millenium Assessment of the World's Ecosystems, currently under development, to deliver valuable related information of relevance to the application of the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. URGES all Contracting Parties yet to complete comprehensive national inventories of their wetland resources, including, where possible, wetland losses and wetlands with potential for restoration (Resolution VII.17), to give highest priority in the next triennium to the compilation of comprehensive national inventories, in order for related actions such as policy development and Ramsar site designations to be carried out with the best information possible;
12. FURTHER URGES that in undertaking inventory activities Contracting Parties give consideration to affording highest priority to those wetland types identified as at greatest risk or with poorest information in the *Global review of wetland resources and priorities for wetland inventory* report;
13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to give consideration in their inventory activities to adopting a suitable standardised protocol for data gathering and handling, such as that provided by the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), and the use of standardised low-cost and user-friendly Geographic Information System methods;
14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties with shared wetlands or river basins to work cooperatively in the gathering of inventory and related management information, as urged through the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19);
15. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, in collaboration with Wetlands International, the Ramsar Bureau, and other interested organizations, to review and further develop existing models for wetland inventory and data management, including the use of remote sensing and low-cost and user-friendly geographic information systems, and to report their findings to the 8th Meeting of the Contracting Parties with a view to promoting international common standards;
16. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to review the arrangements they have in place for housing and maintaining their wetland inventory data where it exists, and, as necessary, to seek to establish a central repository or to ensure that access to this information resource is possible for all decision-makers, stakeholders and other interested parties, where possible through the World Wide Web and CD-ROM formats;
17. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other interested organizations and funding bodies to provide the resources to allow Wetlands International to complete and

document suitable standardised protocols for data gathering and handling as well as a comprehensive assessment of wetland inventory information, and to develop procedures for regularly updating this information and making it readily available through the World Wide Web and CD-ROM formats;

18. FURTHER CALLS UPON the bilateral and multilateral donors to give priority to supporting the wetland inventory projects submitted by developing countries and those in economic transition, noting, as urged above, the desirability of such projects being undertaken; and
19. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to give special attention to appropriate wetland inventory projects in its consideration of projects submitted to the Ramsar Small Grants Fund.