



"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**

Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands

1. RECOGNISING the critical economic, social and environmental values of intertidal wetlands, including tidal flats, salt marsh, mangrove and seagrass beds, especially for fisheries, biodiversity, coastal protection, recreation, education, and in relation to water quality;
2. AWARE that the livelihood of substantial numbers of people around the world depend on the productivity and values of intertidal wetlands;
3. CONCERNED that a large proportion of intertidal wetlands and their values have already been lost or degraded, notably due to reclamation, unsustainable aquaculture, and pollution, and that, in some regions, the scale of reclamation continues to increase;
4. NOTING that there is growing scientific evidence of, and awareness by, local communities of the productivity and values of intertidal wetlands, in particular of tidal flats, and that the experiences and expertise in dealing with the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands at local and national levels is rapidly increasing;
5. FURTHER NOTING that there are not adequate mechanisms at the global level to share and benefit from these experiences and this expertise;
6. RECALLING Recommendation 5.1, which "*calls on Contracting Parties along the East Asia flyway to designate additional wetlands for the Ramsar List, and in particular to designate additional intertidal wetlands*"; and NOTING that yet these wetlands are still under-represented in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
7. FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 6.4, which urges countries to work together in the area of information exchange in order to contribute to the long-term conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats; and noting that many such migratory waterbird populations dependent upon intertidal wetlands are globally threatened yet remain poorly represented on existing Ramsar sites;
8. DRAWING ATTENTION TO Recommendation 7.3 of this Conference which calls upon Contracting Parties to support the development of a multilateral agreement to provide a long-term conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats which is inclusive of all Asia-Pacific countries;
9. NOTING that Recommendation 6.7 urges Contracting Parties to designate suitable areas of their coral reefs and associated ecosystems, including mangrove forests and seagrass beds, for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance; and

10. FURTHER NOTING that Recommendation 6.8 on Strategic Planning in Coastal Zones calls for sound decision-making on the conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands and other key environmental components;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. CALLS upon Contracting Parties to document the extent of loss of intertidal wetlands that has occurred in the past and to inventory those intertidal wetlands which remain, and their conservation status;
12. REQUESTS Contracting Parties, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, International Organization Partners, and relevant groups, to develop initiatives which enable dissemination of information on the extent of loss of intertidal wetland area and its impacts, and on alternative development strategies for remaining intertidal areas that assist in maintaining their ecological character;
13. URGES Contracting Parties to review and modify existing policies that adversely affect intertidal wetlands, to seek to introduce measures for the long-term conservation of these areas, and to provide advice on the success, or otherwise, of these actions in their National Reports to Ramsar COP8;
14. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to identify and designate as Wetlands of International Importance a greater number and area of intertidal wetlands, especially tidal flats, giving priority to those sites which are important to indigenous people and local communities, and those holding globally threatened wetland species, as encouraged by Resolution VII.11; and
15. ALSO URGES all Contracting Parties to suspend the promotion, creation of new facilities, and expansion of unsustainable aquaculture activities harmful to coastal wetlands until such time as assessments of the environmental and social impact of such activities, together with appropriate studies, identify measures aimed at establishing a sustainable system of aquaculture that is in harmony both with the environment and with local communities.