



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

**Creation of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research  
on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere**

1. RECOGNIZING that Article 4.5 of the Convention provides that *“the Contracting Parties should promote the training of scientists for the study, management and conservation of wetlands”*;
2. REFERRING to Recommendation 6.5 and 6.6 on both the establishment of training programmes and the strengthening of the management of the Convention, through liaison points in the Regions;
3. ALSO RECOGNIZING that research, training and the creation of mechanisms for cooperation and coordination are a priority in the Western Hemisphere in order to fulfil the objectives of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention;
4. AWARE of the existence of other training programmes for managers and specialists in the field of wetlands in the Western Hemisphere;
5. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the offer of the Government of the Republic of Panama to create a Regional Ramsar Centre at the site of the City of Knowledge (“Ciudad del Saber”) and WITH REFERENCE to the support expressed for this initiative by the Standing Committee of the Convention at its 21st meeting;
6. ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the support for this initiative expressed by the Contracting Parties in the Western Hemisphere, during the Ramsar Pan-American Meeting, held in San José, Costa Rica, in June 1998;
7. GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGING the technical support offered by the Regional Office for Mesoamerica of IUCN-The World Conservation Union (IUCN-ORMA) and other organizations participating in this initiative;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. EXPRESSES ITS APPROVAL of the initiative of the Government of Panama offering to establish a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere within the activities at the site of the “Ciudad del Saber”;
9. ENCOURAGES the Government of Panama to continue the process of planning for and creating the Centre, with the participation of the Ramsar Contracting Parties in the Western Hemisphere and interested organizations through permanent mechanisms of consultation;

10. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to give its support to the Government of Panama in the study of the technical and operational aspects for the development of the Centre and its management; and
11. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to provide support to the Centre and to participate in its development, taking into account the potential that it represents for creating exchange programmes, cooperation and other complementary activities related to wetlands.