

**Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in general,
and of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 in particular,
during the period since the National Report prepared in 1995
for Ramsar COP6 and 30 June 1998**

Contracting Party: GHANA

Designated Ramsar Administrative Authority

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Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 1

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

- 1.1 Describe any actions your government has taken (such as hosting regional or subregional meetings/consultations, working cooperatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.

We believe that by our active participation in the meetings of the Conference of Parties to the Convention at the Sub-regional, Regional and International levels we are contributing to the realisation of this objective. We have, through dialogue with our neighbouring countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire, Bourkina Faso and Togo, encouraged them to become members of the Convention.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 2

To achieve the wise use of wetlands by implementing and further developing the Ramsar Wise Use Guidelines.

- 2.1 Has a National Wetland Policy/Strategy/Action Plan been developed, or is one being developed or planned for the near future? If so:

We have, by the end of August this year, developed the Draft National Wetlands Strategy. Title: Managing Ghana's Wetlands: Policy, Strategy and Action Plan.

- a. What are/will be its main features?

a) The main features are:

- 1. PART I: BACKGROUND: Wetland Resource; Wetlands Values; Threats to Ghana's Wetlands; Opportunities and Initiatives/Response;*
- 2. PART II: GHANA'S WETLAND: Policy Framework; Policy Statement*
- 3. PART III: ACTION PLANS.*

- b. Was it, or is it, intended that the Policy/Strategy/Action Plan be adopted by the whole of Government, the Minister responsible for Ramsar matters or through some other process. Please describe.

b) It would be adopted by the whole of Government at the end of November, 1998, when it is duly completed.

- a) c. How does it relate/will it relate to other national environmental/ conservation planning initiatives (e.g., National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies)? *The Strategy complements the National Environmental Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Strategy. The Ministry of Lands and Forestry is responsible for its implementation.*

To ensure that wetlands are considered in national planning, we have collaborated with other government agencies to provide input for wetlands conservation in Land Policy, Water Policy and the Forest and Wildlife Policy.

2.2 If a policy is in place, how much progress has been made in its implementation, and what are the major difficulties being encountered in doing so? N/A

2.3 If a Policy/Strategy/Action Plan is in place, is the responsibility for implementing it with :

b. a committee drawn from several Ministries. Yet to be constituted.

Please provide details: *It is intended to form an inter-ministerial National Wetlands Committee. This would involve all stake-holder ministries whose activities impinge on wetlands*

2.4 For countries with Federal systems of Government, are there Wetland Policies/Strategies/Plans in place, being developed or planned for the provincial/state or regional levels of Government? Yes/No

If yes, please give details.

2.5 Has a review of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands been carried out, and if so, has this resulted in any changes which assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Please describe these. *A review has been done but changes would only be made after the strategy is adopted by Government.*

2.6 Describe the efforts made in your country to have wetlands considered in integrated land/water and coastal zone planning and management processes at the following levels:

a. national

We provided input for the conservation of wetlands in the National Land Use Policy and Water Policy covering the land, water and coastal zone planning and management.

b. provincial

In October, 1998, we are organising workshop and seminars at the provincial level to create the awareness for decision-makers and other wetlands stakeholders

c. local

Bye-laws are currently being formulated at the local level to empower traditional authorities and other law enforcement agencies to regulate the use of wetlands resources. Public education programmes are already in place nationwide.

2.7 Have there been any publications produced, or practices documented, which could assist other countries to promote and improve the application of the Ramsar Wise Use of Wetlands Guidelines? *Yes. We have undertaken development option studies so as to identify those economic ventures that are compatible with the conservation of wetlands. This information is provided to local government authorities to guide them in development planning.*

If Yes, please provide details and copies. *Copies enclosed.*

2.8 Noting COP6 Recommendation 6.14 relating to toxic chemicals and pollution, please advise of the actions taken since then “to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands” (Operative paragraph 9). *The Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana has put in place a set of guidelines on the use of chemicals and to ensure pollution control.*

2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions. *A national workshop to introduce wetlands experts and planners to methods of economic valuation of natural resources has been organised by government.*

2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country? *Yes*

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? *Yes*

If Yes, describe the actions that have been taken to identify wetlands in need of these actions and to mobilise resources for restoration or rehabilitation. As a pilot project at wetland restoration, the two most polluted wetlands, Korle and Chemu lagoons, are currently being cleaned up in a bid to rehabilitate them. The Ghana Government has solicited funds from the Kuwaiti government for the exercise.

2.12 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.” (refer to Actions 2.7.1-4 in the Strategic Plan).

For the five (5) coastal Ramsar Sites, Site Management Committees have been constituted.

Membership include all stakeholders especially the local resource users. So they are involved in the planning and conservation of the sites.

Some members of the local communities have been constituted into co-operatives or local resource use groups and are being empowered through education to own and use the resources judiciously. They have been provided with credit facilities to undertake biodiversity projects such as tree-planting and mangrove regeneration ventures. In this way they are involving in both the decision-making, management and conservation processes.

2.13 Describe what actions have been taken to “encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands” (refer to Actions 2.8.1-4 in the Strategic Plan). Has this included a review of fiscal measures (taxation arrangements, etc.) to identify and remove disincentives and introduce incentives for wetlands conservation and wise use? *Yes/No*

If yes, please provide details. Details are contained in the Development Option Studies reports.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 3

To raise awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels

3.1 Is there a government-run national programme for Education and Public Awareness in your country which focuses on, or includes, wetlands? *Yes.*

If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4). A local non-governmental organisation, Ghana Wildlife Society, has been contracted to carry out conservation education in the Ramsar Sites. The priority actions are to form conservation societies in schools and local task forces in the communities in order to create awareness and empower the people to prevent any further loss of wetlands.

With financial assistance from the Ramsar Bureau, a nationwide conservation education programme has been initiated to create awareness through the publication of articles in the national dailies and organisation of field trips for decision-makers such as the parliamentarians

- 3.2 Describe the steps taken to have wetlands issues and Ramsar's Wise Use principles included as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Has this been at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult)? Please give details. *No attempts have been made yet even though it has been planned for.*

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 4

To reinforce the capacity of institutions in each Contracting Party to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

- 4.1 Describe the mechanisms in place, or being introduced, to increase cooperation between the various institutions responsible for actions which can have an impact on the conservation and wise use of wetlands. If one of the mechanisms is a National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee, please describe its composition, functions and *modus operandi*. *A National Wetlands Committee which would be a technical committee within the Ministry of Lands and Forestry would facilitate inter-ministerial, inter-departmental, inter-district and other forms of collaboration and coordination of stakeholders.*
- 4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:
- d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. *Yes. If yes, please give details. Five (5) members of staff of the Wildlife Department have attended the six-week International Course on Wetlands Management in Holland. One other has pursued an MSc in Tropical Coastal Zone Management in United Kingdom.*

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 5

To ensure the conservation of all sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List).

- 5.1 Of the Ramsar sites in your country, how many have formal management plans:
?
c. being implemented? *All Six (6)*

Please indicate in the attached table of Ramsar sites which sites these are and what category they fall into.

- 5.2 Of the management plans referred to above, which ones have included a monitoring scheme or programme to allow changes in ecological character to be detected? Please indicate this in the attached table of Ramsar sites also. *Keta Lagoon Complex, Songor, Muni-Pomadzi, Densu Delta and Sakumo Ramsar Sites*
- 5.3 Has there been a change in the ecological character (either positive or negative) at any of your Ramsar sites or is this likely to occur in the near future? No. If Yes, please give details.
- 5.4 In the case of Montreux Record Ramsar sites where the Management Guidance Procedure has been applied, what is the status of the implementation of the MGP report recommendations? What is the expected time-frame for removing the site from the Montreux Record?

- 5.5 For those countries referred to in COP6 Recommendations 6.17.1-4, “Ramsar sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties”, please provide advice on the actions that have been taken in response to the issues raised at that time.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 6
To designate for the Ramsar List those wetlands which meet the Convention’s criteria, especially wetland types still under-represented in the List and transfrontier wetlands.

- 6.1 Has a national inventory of wetlands been prepared for your country? No.

If no, are there plans for this to be done? Yes

Where a national inventory exists please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept and what information it contains.

- 6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of “important” wetlands for your country or region? No.

If yes, please provide details of when it was finalised, where it is kept, what criteria for “important” were used, and the types of information it contains.

- 6.3 If it is known, please provide an estimate of the area of wetlands in your country at present and any information on rates of loss or conversion to other activities.

If this information is available, please indicate what definition of “wetland” was used.

- 6.4 Have any actions been taken in response to the COP6 Resolutions and Recommendations that Contracting Parties should give priority to listing Wetlands of International Importance which:
- meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
 - meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),
 - are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
 - are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
 - are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
 - are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3)

Yes. If yes, please describe these actions. *After about three years of sea-shore bird monitoring, the 1% criteria was used to designate the current six (6) Ramsar Sites.*

- 6.5 If your government indicated at COP6 that it would be proceeding to list further specific sites, please advise of the status of this action. *After the implementation of the National Wetlands Strategy, it is intended to inventorise and identify other wetlands of international importance.*

- 6.6 Please advise which of the sites included in the Ramsar List from your country are transfrontier wetlands (Refer also to 7.1).

- 6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1). We have made contact with the national authority for Ramsar in Cote d’Ivoire

concerning the joint management of Aby Lagoon, a transfrontier wetland between our two countries.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 7

To mobilise international cooperation and financial assistance for wetland conservation and wise use in collaboration with other conventions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

7.1 Briefly describe any bilateral or multilateral activities that have been taken, are under way, or are planned for the management of transfrontier wetlands or their watersheds/catchments (Refer also to 6.6 and 6.7). *So far we have collaborated with scientist in Cote d'Ivoire in combating some algal bloom in the Aby Lagoon. We are now engaged in dialogue as to joint management.*

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are "twinned" with others, either nationally or internationally? *No.*

If yes, please give details.

7.3 Where your country is also a signatory of any of the following Conventions, describe what mechanism(s) exist to assist regular dialogue and cooperative actions between the personnel responsible for their implementation and the Ramsar Administrative Authority:

- a. Convention on Biological Diversity
- b. Framework Convention on Climate Change
- c. Convention to Combat Desertification
- d. Convention on Migratory Species
- e. World Heritage Convention

The Wildlife Department, which is also the national authority for the Bonn Convention is represented on the national Committees of all the other conventions. So there is adequate dialogue with regards to their implementations

7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? *Yes.*

If yes, please provide details. *We have, with the assistance of the World Bank, acquired a grant of US\$7.1m, since 1993, for the management of five (5) coastal Ramsar Sites up to December, 1998*

7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? *Yes*

If yes, please provide details. *The Global Environment Facility has assisted Ghana with a grant of US\$7.1m. The Ramsar Bureau has also provided us with a grant of US\$30,000.00 to carry out public awareness which is currently being implemented.*

7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? *Yes*

If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget? *Yes. Specific allocation to the Coastal Wetlands Management Project.*

- 7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries? *No*. If yes, please give details.
- 7.8 Is there a formal process in place for consultation between the Ramsar Administrative Authority and the development assistance programme in your country, where one exists? *No*

If yes, what is that process.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objective 8
To provide the Convention with the required institutional mechanisms and resources.

- 8.1 Has your government made voluntary financial contributions, other than the invoiced contributions or to the Small Grants Fund, to further the work of the Convention globally?
No.

If yes, please provide details.

- 8.2 If your country is in arrears with the payment of its annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention, please indicate the reasons for this situation and the prospects for paying these arrears in the near future. *No Arrears*.

Optional section - Participation of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention

These are **optional** questions relating to cooperation with and involvement of non-government organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

At COP6 some 42 NGOs made the “Brisbane NGO pledge of support for the Ramsar Convention”. The Standing Committee agreed that for COP7 there should be an effort made to gauge the level and type of cooperation which is occurring between government Administrative Authorities and the national and international NGOs with an interest in wetlands issues.

In this **optional** section of the National Report, you are asked to describe the nature of the cooperation and relationship with any other international, regional, national and provincial NGOs operating within your country.

- 9.1 Approximately how many NGOs have wetlands as part of their regular “business” in your country?

Please break this down between international, regional and national/provincial organizations.

International : 2 *BirdLife International and Wetlands International;*

National : 1, *Ghana Wildlife Society*

- 9.2 Is there a regular forum or mechanism through which these NGOs express their views on wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation:

- a. to each other? *Yes.*
- b. to the government? *Yes.*

If yes in either case, please give details.

- a. *Ghana Wildlife Society is the national counterpart of both BirdLife and Wetlands International.*
- b. *The Ghana Wildlife Society holds annual mock parliamentary sessions to inform government about the views of the youth concerning conservation of wetlands.*

- 9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? *Yes.*

- 9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? *Yes. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1). The Ghana Wildlife Society is actively engaged in Education and Public Awareness in schools and the local communities within the five (5) coastal Ramsar Sites. They also produce a wetlands magazine NKO*

- 9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? If yes, please give details. *The Ghana Wildlife Society is represented on the Site Management Committee of each of the five (5) Ramsar Sites*

- 9.6 Describe the themes of the Convention (refer to General Objectives 1-8 of the Strategic Plan) where you perceive the national/provincial NGOs to be most active. *They are most active in awareness creation.*

Final comments:

- 10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.
- 10.2 Observations concerning the functioning of, relations with, and services provided by:
- a. The Ramsar Standing Committee
 - b. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel: *provide guidelines on Wise Use*
 - c. The Ramsar Bureau: *National Wetlands Policy*
 - d. The Ramsar NGO partners
- 10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

Ramsar Bureau should provide technical assistance to contracting parties in Africa by collaborating with Wetlands International and the Netherlands based Wetlands Training and Advisory Centre to organise short courses in wetlands conservation and management at some regional centres.

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