

National Report of Malaysia for COP7

National Report prepared for the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

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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.

The Asian Regional Meeting planned for February 1998 in Malaysia is postponed to February 1999 to be held in Manila.

**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?

It is being developed – final stages before acquiring approval from the Government

a. What are/will be its main features?

The draft policy document contains:

The goal statement, which is to sustainably manage wetlands for their environmental and socio-economic functions to ensure the continual progress and well-being of the nation, followed by five main objectives, 9 guiding principles and 10 strategies for sustainable use of wetland resources and conservation of wetlands. For each strategy stated there is a corresponding action plan.

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.

It is intended that the policy be adopted by the whole of Government.

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)?

It relates more closely to the National Policy on Biological Diversity (1998) Policy of which is geared towards sustainable development in critical ecosystems and the action plans for effective management of biological diversity.

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 :

- a. a single Government Ministry,
- b. a committee drawn from several Ministries, or
- c. a cross-sectoral committee?

N.A.

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.

Yes, they will be developed at a later stage, after the National Policy on Wetlands document is accepted and approved by the Government

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.

Review of some practices carried out on wetlands have been carried out, e.g.

- I. Use of mangrove ecosystem for brackish water aquaculture-guidelines for best practice.**
- II. Conversion of wetlands for urbanization and agriculture use resulting in great loss of mangroves**
- III. Addressing the issue of several coastal erosion through prioritizing areas for a National Research and Development programme on mangrove ecosystem.**

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 **Yes**
 - i. Guidelines from the Department of Irrigation and Drainage to control erosion arising from development if in Coastal Areas (1997).**
 - ii. Guidelines for Planning and Development in and along Coastal Areas by the Department of Town and Country Planners (1997).**
 - iii. Currently the Department of Town and Country Planners are looking into the approach and general guidelines to develop ecologically critical or sensitive areas like wetlands.**
- b. State: **Yes. Intercoastal Zone management Project in 4 states in Malaysia.**
- c. Local : **No**

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/No If Yes, please provide details and copies.

Proceedings of the seminar on wise use of wetlands held in Kuala Lumpur during 21-22 August 1997.

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).

In the Integrated Management Plan for Tasek Bera (Ramsar site) which is being formulated includes recommendations to combat non-point source pollution from neighbouring buffer zone.

2.9 Describe what steps have been taken to incorporate wetland economic valuation techniques into natural resource planning and assessment actions.

In the formulation of the draft Malaysian National Conservation Strategy volume 4 National Resource Accounting was carried out for timber and this is an example of a wetland resource and how deforestation has caused rapid decline of timber stocks.

2.10 Is Environmental Impact Assessment for actions potentially impacting on wetlands required under legislation in your country? Yes/No

Yes.

2.11 Is wetland restoration and rehabilitation considered a priority in your country? Yes/No. 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.

Yes. For an example, we have a site in the State of Selangor, which was formerly a tin mining area and due to mining activities the wetland was degraded. But now there is a project to rehabilitate this wetland area and the government envisages to portray this site as a restored wetland showcase to the world. This site is now called "Paya Indah" which means beautiful swamp.

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).

Community Development Strategic Plan/ as part of the Management Plan which provides a framework for the involvement of local people at Tasek Bera. To raise their economic status especially women in making and selling handicraft made from natural resources of the wetland ecosystem and training the local community to be park guides, and other related ecotourism fields.

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.

None.

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/No? If yes, what are the priority actions under this programme and who are the target groups? (Refer also to question 9.4)

Yes. Certain elements have been incorporated in the formal primary education system but not in detail.

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.

Teachers' kit including wise use of wetlands and wetland conservation has been developed for the primary schools in District of Bera around the Ramsar site. However, this has not been introduced and formally part of the school curriculum.

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*.

National Ramsar Committee

i. Composition

5 Ministries and Central Agencies

6 Departments and 1 Research Institution

5 State Governments

3 Universities

1 NGO

ii. Functions

To provide a coordinating mechanism at national level for the implementation of Malaysia's obligations under the RAMSAR Convention.

iii. Modus Operandi

The national committee would meet at least two terms a year and may establish one or several working groups to advise or implement programmes on specific issues.

4.2 Of the following, indicate which have been undertaken:

a. a review to identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands Yes/No? If yes, please indicate the major findings of the review.

Training done by NGOs in collaboration with MOSTE.

b. a review to identify training opportunities for these people both within your country and in other countries. Yes/No?

Bogor, before COP 6 in Brisbane.

c. the development of training modules or a training programme specifically for wetland managers. If yes, please give details.

Integrated Management plan for Ramsar site has training programme especially for the wetland manager.

d. people from your country have gained wetland-related training either within or outside the country. Yes/No? If yes, please give details.

Yes. 101 Module - Wetlands International-Asia Pacific

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:

a. being prepared?

Tasek Bera, Pahang-only one Ramsar site so far for Malaysia

b. fully prepared?

N.A.

c. being implemented?

N.A

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.

Integrated Management of Tasek Bera has a monitoring scheme to detect ecological changes of the site.

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? Yes/No. If Yes, please give details.

No.

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?

N.A

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.

N.A

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? Yes/No.

Yes. Finalized in 1987.

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

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

Department of Wildlife and National Parks, MOSTE.

- a. Data sheets of all important wetland sites with description of site, principal vegetation, soil suitability, land use, land tenure, conservation measures taken, conservation values, disturbance and threats.**
- b. Definitions of different wetland types, maps and the legislation and administrative framework.**

6.2 Does there exist a list or directory of "important" wetlands for your country or region? Yes/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.

Yes.

Finalized in 1993.

Kept at MOSTE and Wetlands International-Asia Pacific.

Criteria used: Ramsar criteria for Identifying wetlands of International Importance.

Data of each site including location, area, description of site, economic/ social values, fauna and flora, disturbances and threats and conservative measures taken, conservation measure proposed.

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.

Area of wetlands is estimated at 700,000 ha presently. Rate of loss of wetland is 0.9 % per year.

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:

- a. meet the criteria for fish habitat (Resolution VI.2),
- b. meet the 1% criterion for waterbird populations using data provided by the International Waterfowl Census (Resolution VI.4),
- c. are subterranean karst or cave wetland systems (Resolution VI.5),
- d. are peatland ecosystems (Recommendation 6.1)
- e. are coral reefs and associated systems (Recommendation 6.7)
- f. are under-represented wetland types (which apart from d. and e. above include mangroves and sea grass beds) (Strategic Plan Action 6.2.3)

Under-represented wetland type-mangrove

Yes.

Action taken: provincial state of Johor has undertaken a study of designate a 600 ha mangrove island as wetland of International Importance.

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.

Yes.

Action taken: Chief Ministers of all states urged to carry out studies to designate more important wetlands as Ramsar sites.

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

N.A.

6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also

to 7.1).

N.A.

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).

N.A.

7.2 Do you have Ramsar sites that are "twinned" with others, either nationally or internationally? Yes/No. If yes, please give details.

No.

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

The above two Convention's focal point is MOSTE which is also the focal point for Ramsar

- b. Convention to Combat Desertification

Coordinated at the moment by Ministry of Foreign Affairs(MFA), regular meetings are carried out by MFA where MOSTE is also a member

- c. Convention on Migratory Species

N.A

- e. World Heritage Convention

Coordinated at the moment by Ministry of Education and MOSTE is a member of the Steering Committee.

7.4 Is your country cooperating as part of any bilateral or multilateral activities directed at the conservation of migratory wetland species? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

No.

7.5 Are there multilateral and/or bilateral donors supporting projects which contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention in your country? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

Yes.

DANCED-Danish Government contributing to the Malaysian government and assisting in the development of the Integrated Management Plan of the Ramsar site in Tasek Bera.

Darwin Initiative from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions United Kingdom supporting Biodiversity and wise use of Peat swamp forest.

GEF : Conservation and Sustainable Use of Peat Swamp forest (project being finalised)

7.6 Does your government make an annual budgetary allocation to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands within your country? Yes/No. If yes, is this a specific allocation to a wetlands programme or as part of a larger environment or natural resource management budget?

Yes.

It is a part of a larger environment management budget.

7.7 If your country has a development assistance programme, does it include funds earmarked for wetland conservation and wise use in other countries? Yes/No. If yes, please give details.

Yes, Malaysia is providing the support and playing a coordination role for the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan in the Asian Region.

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? Yes/No. If yes, what is that process.

Yes. Time to time the Asian Coordinator from Ramsar Bureau has consultations with the Malaysian government on the development assistance.

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? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

No.

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.

Malaysia is not arrears with annual payment to the Ramsar convention.

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.

- i. World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, Malaysia)-national**
- ii. Wetlands International-Asia Pacific (International)**
- iii. Malaysian Nature Society (MNS, Malaysia) - national**

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/No **Yes**
- b. to the government? Yes/No **Yes**

Through regular meetings with Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment and at provincial level with the State Executive Committee when implementing conservation projects on wetland ecosystems.

9.3 Does your government include one or more NGO representatives on its official delegation to Ramsar COPs? Yes/No

NGO's are at COP as observers

9.4 Do any of the NGOs run programmes aimed at Education and Public Awareness about wetlands in your country? Yes/No. If yes, please give details (Refer also to question 3.1).

Yes.

Wetlands International-Asia Pacific runs a programme sponsored by the private sector by featuring four page articles one a month in the National English Daily on wetland conservation issues in Malaysia.

9.5 Where they exist, do Ramsar site management advisory committees include NGO representatives? If yes, please give details

Yes. Wetlands International-Asia Pacific in cooperation with Provincial state of Pahang for Tasek Bera Ramsar site.

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.

The NGOs are mainly concerned with raising awareness of wetland values and functions throughout the world and at all levels and ensure the conservation of all sites included in the list of wetlands of International Importance.

Final comments:

10.1 General comments on implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Ramsar Strategic Plan outlines priorities in wetland which is used as a basic for further conservation and international cooperation, strengthening the role of major groups especially NGOs in Malaysia.

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
- c. The Ramsar Bureau
- d. The Ramsar NGO partners

The functioning and service provided by the Ramsar Bureau has been effective and useful such as funding support for formulating the National Wetland Policy and helping Malaysian to play an important coordinating role for the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan.

10.3 Any other general observations and/or recommendations for the future.

None.
