

National Report of Mongolia on the implementation of
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
San Jose', Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

Contracting Party: **Mongolia**

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 sub-regional meetings/consultations, working cooperatively with neighbouring countries on transfrontier wetland sites) to encourage others to join the Convention.

Mongolia has joined the Ramsar Convention from April 8, 1998. During the accession period to the Convention, Mongolia nominated Mongol Daguur as first Ramsar site from Mongolia. After joining the Convention, Mongolia submitted three additional nominations to the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance and received confirmation of their designations from the Ramsar Bureau on 29 July, 1998, bringing the total number of Ramsar sites in Mongolia to four (264,220 hectares) and the number of Ramsar sites in all the 110 Contracting Parties to 927. The additional sites are Mongol Daguur, Ogi nuur, Terkhiin Tsagaan nuur, and Valley of Lakes which includes Boon Tsagaan nuur, Adgim Tsagaan nuur, Orog nuur, Taatsyn Tsagaan nuur and Ulaan nuur.

Among the four sites, there are two sites which are protected areas, one is Mongol Daguur declared as strictly protected area and the other is Terkhiin Tsagaan nuur declared as National Park. The two other sites are very consistent with Action 6.2.4. of the General Objective on Designation of additional sites to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, which states that "Pay particular attention to the designation of new sites currently enjoying no special conservation status at national level."

Mongol Daguur is Mongolian part of the Dauria International Protected Area on which Mongolia, China and Russia concluded tripartite agreement. Two meetings of the parties were organized so far. Mongolia hosted the second Meeting. The Ministry of Nature and the Environment will work on nominating one additional site in 1999 as well as on urging the two other Contracting Parties to cooperate in making a proposal to designate the Dauria International Protected Area as a transboundary Ramsar site between Mongolia, China and Russia.

The Ministry of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia successfully organized the International Workshop on Wetland Conservation in Mongolia and North-East Asia in Ulaanbaatar on 16-19 September, 1997 in close cooperation with, and under the sponsorship of, Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (Japan), Environment Agency of Japan, Development and Environment NGO, and Wetlands International. It was the first international workshop conducted on wetlands in Mongolia and attended by 60 participants from 10 countries. The Workshop requested the Government of Mongolia to prepare specific reserve training and survey proposals to enhance International cooperation at the Mongol Daguur, Daurisky Nature Reserve, and Dalai Nuur Nature Reserve. Moreover, it is stated in the report that priorities for wetland and waterbird conservation in Mongolia identified from this workshop will feed directly into a regional initiative to develop and disseminate "Priorities for Wetland Conservation in North-East Asia". Mongol Daguur is Mongolian part of the Dauria International Protected Area on which Mongolia, China and Russia concluded an tripartite agreement. Two meetings of the Contracting Parties were organized so far. Mongolia hosted the second Meeting. The Ministry of Nature and the Environment will work on nominating one

additional site in 1999 as well as on urging the two other Contracting Parties to cooperate in making a proposal to designate the Dauria International Protected Area as a transboundary Ramsar site between Mongolia, China and Russia.

Ramsar Strategic Plan -General Objectives 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:

a. What are/will be its main features?

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.

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)?

Wetlands in Mongolia are considered important natural resources to conserve, because a considerable part of Mongolia belongs to arid and semi-arid zones. Mongolian dry land ecosystem is virgin and vulnerable to natural and anthropogenic changes. Therefore, it is very important not only not to lose wetlands, but to take appropriate actions and measures in timely fashion to conserve them.

In 1995 Mongolia adopted Law on Water which is the main policy document to regulate relations, regarding water resources use and protection including wise use of wetlands.

There is no specific policy document or action plan on wetlands so far in the country. Therefore, the International Workshop held in Ulaanbaatar in 1997 recommended that Mongolia develop a National Wetland Policy and review existing environmental legislation in Mongolia with regard to wetlands. Following this recommendation, the Ministry of Nature and the Environment is intending to develop a policy document or action plan on wetlands conservation in Mongolia. This document can only be drafted in late 1999, because Mongolia is currently in process of formulating a National Water Policy, which is expected to be adopted in the second half of 1999.

According to the existing legislation, all kinds of policy document are adopted by the Parliament, and action programmes and plans are approved by the Cabinet. After adopting National Water Policy, it will be discussed what documents would be most effective for conserving wetlands in Mongolia.

In any case, priorities will be given in the following order:

- * Reducing threats to wetlands;**
- * Developing wise use and sustainable management of wetlands and their resources;**

- * **Conservation of habitats and bird species of wetlands;**
- * **Research and monitoring;**
- * **Increasing technical training, capacity building and awareness at all levels;**
- * **Participation in international cooperation and treaties for wetland conservation.**

The document will be developed and implemented in close relevance with the following documents:

- * **Mongolian Agenda-21;**
- * **State Ecological Concept;**
- * **Mongolian Environmental Action Plan;**
- * **Mongolia Biodiversity Action Plan;**
- * **Protected Areas Action Plan;**
- * **Desertification Action Plan;**
- * **National Forestry Action Plan;**
- * **National Water Policy (which is under development).**

- 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?
- 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?

Please provide details.

- 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 of legislation and practices which impact on wetlands will be carried out by the Ministry of Nature and the Environment early next year.

- 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
 - b. provincial

c. local

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.

No.

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).

Wetlands in Mongolia are mainly threatened to be polluted by application of pesticides and inflow of nutrients from domestic wastes and animal dung. The latter may cause eutrophication which would eliminate the coregonid and salmonid fish fauna and replace it with one dominated by cyprinids.

To protect wetlands from pollution by toxic chemicals and other organic substances the following measures have been taken in Mongolia:

- * Issued regulations on pesticide application;**
- * Established protection (sanitary, sometimes) zones around wetlands;**
- * Prohibition of use of some pesticides;**
- * Set up waste water treatment plants for settlements located close to wetlands;**
- * Closed down factories polluting wetlands. Two cases had been registered.**

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

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

Environmental Impact Assessment has recently become a major tool to control actions potentially impacting on wetlands. Mongolia has adopted Law on Environmental Impact Assessment on 22 January, 1998. EIA legislation which consists of the Constitution of Mongolia, the Law on Environmental Protection, the EIA Law and other legislative acts provides full and adequate basis for applying Environmental Impact Assessment in Mongolia.

The Ministry of Nature and the Environment is responsible for Mongolian Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (MEIAP) and the review of individual projects for their possible environmental impacts, and charged by the EIA Law with the responsibility of developing guidelines and procedures for the Mongolian Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure's implementation. All new projects as well as renovation and expansion of existing production or services and construction activities and use of natural resources are subject to EIA. In addition, environmental

and natural resource's review for each stage of policy, program and plan development must also be conducted in accordance with the EIA procedures.

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. In late 1970s and early 1980s water level of Boon Tsagaan Nuur, Orog nuur, Taatsyn Tsagaan nuur, Adgiin Tsagaan nuur, Ulaan nuur in the Valley of lakes had been substantially reduced. Three of them, namely Taatsyn Tsagaan, Adgiin Tsagaan and Ulaan nuur had completely been dried up and the water level of Boon Tsagaan nuur went down by more than 2 meters due to climate and human influence. The two following measures had been taken to restore or rehabilitate the lakes:

- * Closed up, or temporarily stopped operation of irrigation systems located along rivers contributing to the lakes;**
- * Prohibited bush cutting and hay making around the lakes.**

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).

Specific measures will be taken to encourage local communities to participate in the conservation and wise use of the recently designated four Ramsar sites.

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.

Mongolian private sector is just under formation, since Mongolia has started shifting into market economy a few years ago. The private sector is still weak and incomparable with developed private sectors of other countries. In future the private sector of Mongolia will be encouraged to be involved in the conservation and wise of wetlands.

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)

In 1997, Mongolia adopted National Programme on Public Ecological Education which was developed jointly by the Ministry of Nature and the Environment and the Ministry

of Education. It is a government-run national programme to be implemented and monitored by National Co-ordinating Council on the implementation of the National Programme on Public Ecological Education headed by the Minister of Education. This programme focuses on a broad range of ecological issues including wetlands. The target groups are all public groups including schools, universities, people covered by informal and distance education.

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 specific steps have been taken to include wetlands issues and Ramsar's Wise Use principle as part of the curricula of educational institutions. Steps are considered to be taken to do this under the National Programme on Public Ecological Education.

Ramsar Strategic Plan - General Objectives 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*.

Because of short time past since Mongolia has joined the Ramsar Convention, no appropriate mechanisms have been established to increase cooperation between various institutions to conserve wetlands. Mongolia will soon establish a National Wetlands Committee which can be composed of representatives of Ministry Nature and the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Infrastructure Development, Environment Protection Agency, and local governments.

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.

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

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

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

A brief review was undertaken by the Ministry of Nature and the Environment to identify training needs of institutions and individuals on environment protection in 1997. There were identified training requirements at the following levels:

- * **Local community level;**
- * **Local government level;**
- * **Ministry of Nature and the Environment and Environment Protection Agency levels.**

Top priority is given to training requirements at community level, because they live close to wetlands and must be aware of their international importance. Once they are well aware and trained to protect wetlands, they can easily resist any negative developments which can occur anytime.

Training opportunities for local people are very limited due to financial constraints.

No training modules or a training programmes have been developed for wetland managers yet.

No opportunity has been realised to gain wetland-related training either within or outside the country.

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?
 - b. fully prepared?
 - c. being implemented?

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

Mongolia will develop formal management plans for four recently designated sites.

- 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.

- 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.

Among the four sites designated as Ramsar sites, the Valley of Lakes is most vulnerable in terms of changes in the ecological character. At the beginning of 1980s three of the five lakes in the valley were completely drying up. The water tables of the two other lakes were much reduced. Now the situation is better. Conservation plans are required for all the sites.

- 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? Yes/No.

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.

No national inventory has been prepared for Mongolia. The Ministry is planning to prepare a national inventory for the country before 2000.

- 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.

Mongolia needs to develop a national list or directory of important wetlands on appropriate formats. It can be done in 1999.

- 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.

According to a Directory of Asian Wetlands Mongolia has about 70 wetlands. The total area is still unknown. However, the area of 25 significant wetlands out of about 70 wetlands is approximately 1.5 million hectares.

- 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/No? If yes, please describe these actions.

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

Mongol Daguur protected area, the first Mongolian Ramsar site is a potential candidate for transfrontier wetlands. Mongolia has an tripartite agreement with Russia and China to protect the site. Mongolia would be grateful to discuss any proposal or initiative to make the site as transfrontier Ramsar wetlands.

- 6.7 Describe any plans, or actions being taken for further transfrontier sites to be listed (Refer also to 7.1).

Mongolia will be nominating several places to be designated as Ramsar sites in coming years. Among them there are wetlands which can be declared as transfrontier sites, e.g. Boir nuur lake.

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).

Since 1990 Mongolia has concluded the following intergovernmental agreements with Russia and China to protect the environment and transboundary water courses:

- * Intergovernmental agreement on environment protection between Mongolia and China;**
- * Intergovernmental agreement on transboundary waters between Mongolia and China;**
- * Intergovernmental agreement on environment protection between Mongolia and Russia;**
- * Intergovernmental agreement on transboundary water courses between Mongolia and Russia;**

There is an tripartite agreement between Mongolia, Russia and China on international protected areas. Mongol Daguur Ramsar site is covered by the agreement from Mongolian side.

- 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:
- Convention on Biological Diversity
 - Framework Convention on Climate Change
 - Convention to Combat Desertification
 - Convention on Migratory Species
 - World Heritage Convention

Mongolia is a party to Convention on Biological Diversity, Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention to Combat Desertification and World Heritage Convention. The Ministry of Nature and the Environment is in charge of implementing these conventions, except World Heritage Convention. The personnel responsible for all the conventions are the staff of the Ministry. Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry is responsible to coordinate activities to implement the conventions including the Ramsar convention.

- 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.

Mongolia is a member of East Asia Crane network. Mongolia also expressed her intention to join East Asia Anatidae Site Network.

- 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.

The Global Environment Facility is supporting a Biodiversity Conservation Project in Eastern Mongolia which significantly contributes to implement the Ramsar Convention, particularly to conserve Mongol Daguur Ramsar site.

- 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?

The government makes an annual budgetary allocation on environment protection including wetlands. No specific allocation is made for wetlands.

- 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.

UNDP is the only development assistance programme. There are no specific funds for wetland conservation.

- 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.

No formal process has been established yet on wetlands conservation issues between Ramsar Administrative Authority and UNDP.

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.

No.

Optional section - Participation of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention.

- 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.

Only one NGO named "Development and Environment NGO" is actively being involved in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Mongolia. The Development and Environment NGO organized the International Workshop on Wetland Conservation in Mongolia and North-East Asia in Ulaanbaatar, from 16 to 19 September, 1997. The Development and Environment NGO has been participating in the implementation of a grant approved by the Ramsar Standing Committee in support to Preparing accession of Mongolia to the Ramsar Convention.

The Wetlands International is the main partner cooperating with the Ministry of Nature and the Environment on wetland conservation. Wetlands International-Japan is another organization cooperating with Mongolia.

- 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

b. to the government? Yes/No

If yes in either case, please give details.

The Development and Environment NGO is provided direct access to the Ministry to express its views and initiatives on wetlands conservation.

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

Mongolia will participate in COP7 for first time. Mongolia will be in a position to include NGO representatives in its official delegation to COPs.

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).

The Development and Environment NGO has launched Public Awareness Programme on wetlands in January, 1998. A series of lectures on wetlands were given to different groups of people including government officials, research workers and students of universities.

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

Mongolia has yet to establish Ramsar site management advisory committees, and NGO representatives will be invited to join the committee.

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.

NGOs involved in wetlands issues must be active on practical measures of wetlands conservation, public awareness raising, support for wetlands management, etc.

In conclusion, it has to be noted that Mongolia is a member of the Ramsar Convention only from April, 1998. Therefore, she needs sometime (at least 1-2 years) to achieve certain results. During the preparation of this report, it was our feeling that there were much to do for Mongolia than to report activities implemented for the past short period.

It is our sincere hope that we will prepare very good report for COP 8, since Mongolia will be, by that time, deeply involved in the cooperation for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

**Prepared by:
Ministry of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia**

October 12, 1998

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia