

# IX. Report of the Secretary General: Overview of implementation of the Convention at the global level

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# Introduction

- This report covers 13 July 2012 to 1 March 2015
- General overview of Convention activities
- More detailed presentations follow on specific areas:
  - Report from Chairman of STRP
  - Report on Implementation of CEPA Programme for 2009-2015
  - Standing Committee Financial report for 2012-15
- Current Secretary General took over from Anada Tiega in August 2013
  - Building on considerable work achieved in triennium
- Extensive preparation for SC48 and COP12
  - All SC48 working papers translated into French and Spanish



# Strategic Plan 3 (SP3)

## Review of implementation



- Implementation can best be described as “work in progress”
- Core tasks continue to require attention and action:
  - Identification of potential Ramsar Sites
  - Wise use of wetlands
  - Wetland inventories
  - Preparation and use of management plans
  - Management and Monitoring of Ramsar Site
  - Reporting to Convention
- There is an increasing sense of urgency amongst Parties on the accelerating degradation and loss of wetlands
  - Risk of reduced water availability affecting economy/stability of world





# Strategic Plan 3 (SP3)

## Overview of Strategies:



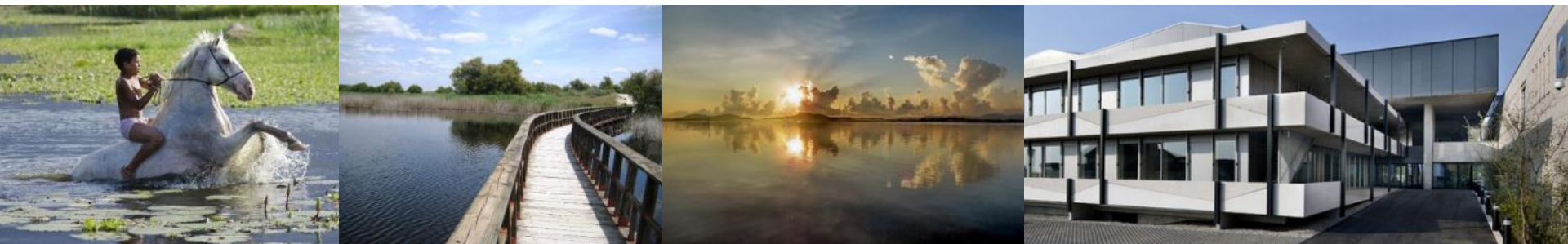
- 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment
- 1.2 Global wetland information
- 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions
- 1.4 Cross-sector recog. of wetl.services
- 1.5 Recognition of role of Convention
- 1.6 Science-based mgmt. of wetlands
- 1.7 Integrated water resource mgmt.
- 1.8 Wetland restoration
- 1.9 Invasive alien species
- 1.10 Private sector

- 2.1 Ramsar Site designation
- 2.2 Ramsar Site information
- 2.3 Mgmt. planning - new Ramsar sites
- 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character
- 2.5 Ramsar Site mgmt. effectiveness

- 3.1 Synergies/partnerships w. MEAs/IGOs
- 3.2 Regional initiatives
- 3.3 International assistance
- 3.4 Sharing information and expertise
- 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species

- 4.1 CEPA
- 4.2 Convention financial capacity
- 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness
- 4.4 Working with IOPs and others

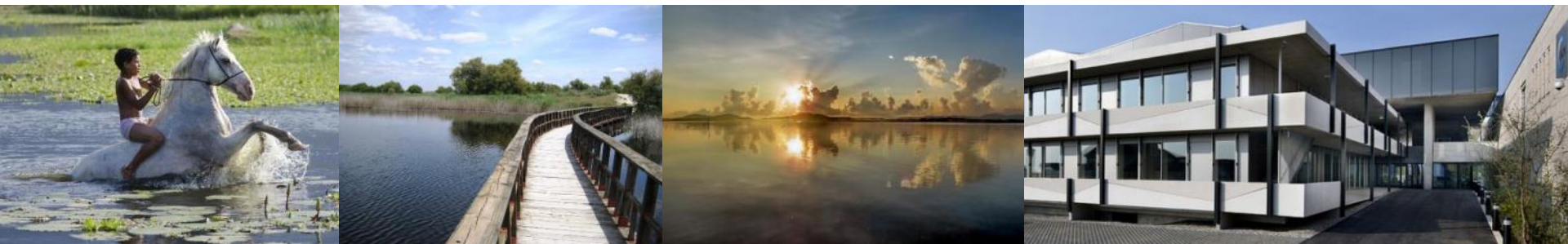
- 5.1 Membership



# This personal report is based on:



- Analysis of status of wetlands today
- Implementation of Convention at national & regional levels
- Progress measured with reference to SP3 Strategies as just outlined
- Structured into the following four topics:
  - I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands
  - II. Communications and outreach
  - III. Helping countries by building capacity
  - IV. Partnerships with other organizations to achieve goals



# The underlying situation

- World population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050
- Rate of wetlands loss since Ramsar's founding is 1% per year
  - Contrast with 0.25% annual loss for forests today (0.33%/yr. at peak in 1980s)
- Water crises rated as “worst in class” of all major global risks
  - *World Economic Forum Global Risks 2015* report
- Despite CEPA efforts, in the public mind, wetlands = wasteland
- Loss and degradation continue; increasing demand for land & water
- Need to learn to balance development against wise use
- Vision for Convention: stop the loss and restore degraded wetlands





# I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

## SP3 strategies

1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment

1.2 Global wetland information

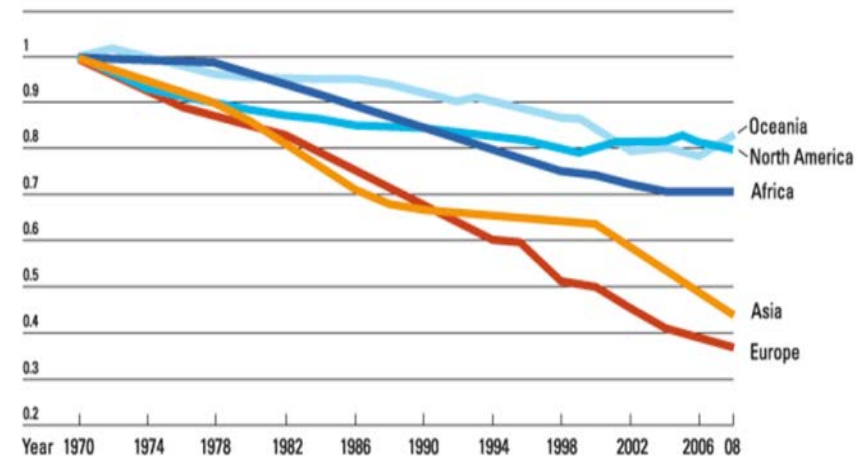
2.1 Ramsar Site designation



# I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

- Improved Convention statistics
- Protected wetland area has risen to 200 million hectares, but new data on loss came to light in 2014
- Davidson:
  - At least 64% wetland loss since 1900
- WWF Living Planet Report:
  - Wetland species populations declined 76% in 40 years
- Wetland Extent Index:
  - 40% loss in area in 1,000 surveyed sites from 1970 to 2008

Wetland Extent Index





# I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

## SP3 strategies

### 5.1 Membership



# Increasing Convention footprint

	2012	2015
Contracting Parties	160	168
Nr. of Ramsar Sites	2006	2186
Ramsar Sites area	192.8 mil. ha.	208.8 mil. ha

- New accessions:
  - Andorra, Bhutan, Grenada, Kiribati, Oman, South Sudan, Swaziland, Zimbabwe
- Number of non-member countries remaining by region:
  - 4 Africa, 9 Asia, 8 Oceania, 2 Europe, 6 Americas



# I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

SP3  
strategies

2.2 Ramsar Site information

2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character





# Ramsar Site information not adequate



- After Ramsar Site designation, Parties commit to obligatory reporting on their status and any change in ecological character
  - Update Site information every 6 years – or more often as needed
- Site reporting actually falls far short of Resolution VI.13
  - For 1,238 sites, (57%) information is out of date or missing
  - 725 Sites (33%) have had no updates for 12 years or more
  - 51 Sites lack minimum information at all (RSIS sheet or map)
- New RSIS launched in August 2014
- Critical area for action given seriousness of wetland decline



# I. Measurement of the status and values of wetlands

## SP3 strategies

2.5 Ramsar Site mgmt. effectiveness

1.8 Wetland restoration



# Quantifying loss and damage to sites

## Setting targets for restoration



- IUCN World Heritage Outlook reports on 228 natural heritage and mixed UNESCO sites:
  - By extrapolation, this study indicates 30-40% of Ramsar Sites at significant risk, need immediate attention (c. 750 Sites)
- Initiatives to reverse loss and degradation
  - Bonn Challenge: restore 150 mil ha. degraded land by 2020
  - New York Declaration on Forests: restore 200 mil ha. Forests by 2030
  - Both need to include wetland area commitments
- Alliance with UN Convention to Combat Desertification
  - Work together to restore wetland and dryland





# Fundamental issue: lack of an accurate baseline on wetlands

- After 44 years, there is still no reliable map or full data on the global extent of wetlands
  - Only a few wetland types – e.g. peatlands and corals – are fairly well mapped
  - Extent of groundwater aquifers especially challenging to quantify
- Variety of estimates
  - Finlayson 1999: surface wetlands at 12.8 million km<sup>2</sup>
  - Lehner and Doll 2004: 10.0 million km<sup>2</sup>
- Ramsar definition of wetlands is wider than many others
  - Coastlines, river basins, flooded forests, coral reefs, aquifers, beaches, etc.



# Initiatives to help establish an accurate global baseline



- STRP focussing on assessment of wetlands with range of partners
  - Build on existing work of Global Wetland Observation Service (GWOS) and Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS)
- Combination of data from space agencies
  - European Space Agency (ESA)
  - Japanese Space Exploration Agency (JAXA)
  - US National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA)
  - National Geomatics Center of China (NGCC)
- JAXA collaboration to map mangroves using LANDSAT data
- ESA funding Globwetlands III to map all African wetlands



# Placing a monetary value on wisely used wetlands

- **Valuation of ecosystems: The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (2013)**
  - Useful data on valuation of wetlands and cost of degradation /loss
  - UNEP work at country level to provide more data for scenario analysis
- **Promoting wetlands as “natural infrastructure” in DRR**
- **Commercially viable solutions in water and wetland management**
  - Water Funds in Latin America pilot the idea of payment for ecosystem services (PES)
  - Evian watershed management
  - Livelihoods Fund as Private Sector transformational initiative





## II. Communications and outreach

### SP3 Strategies

#### 4.1 CEPA

#### 1.5 Recognition of the role of the Convention



## II. Communications and Outreach

**Challenge: the general public still equate wetland with wasteland**

**Need to explain the simple, clear message that**

- Wetlands are the source of water for us all, and other vital benefits
- Safeguard our food supply, provide coastal protection, carbon storage
- Yet they are in very grave danger

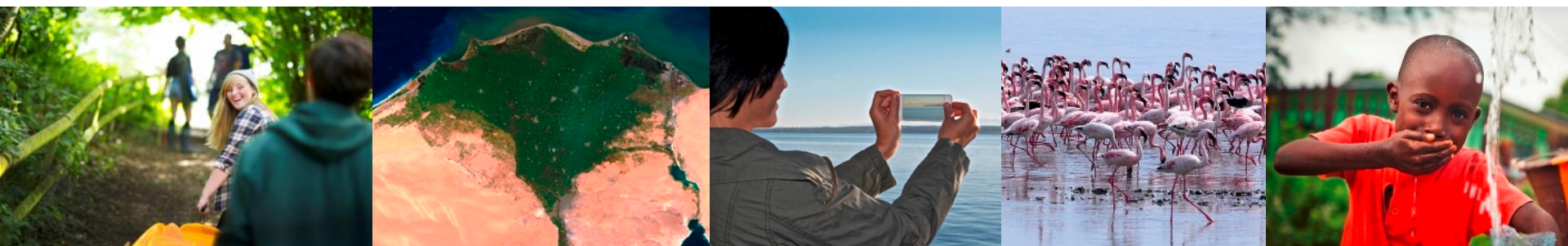
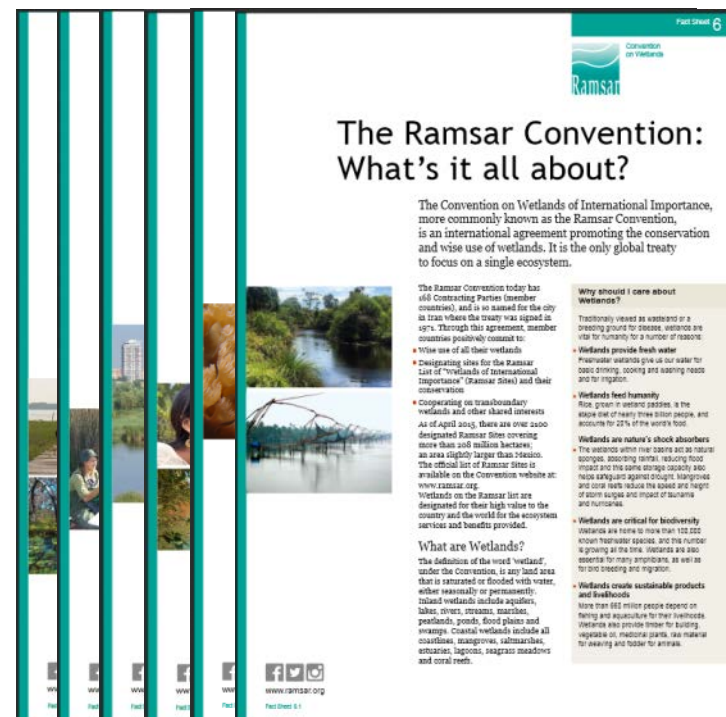
**Convention must harness a range of groups to echo the message:**

- Key Ramsar Secretariat audiences
- Vacationers and sports enthusiasts
- Youth aged 15-24
  - For 2015, World Wetlands Day re-oriented to promote personal encounters with wetlands



# Range of communication, education, participation and awareness activities

- **CEPA Action Plan**
  - Made available for SC and COP
- **Series of Fact Sheets issued**
  - Cover essential, key public questions
- **Proposed: Ramsar Effect**
  - Ten illustrated stories on Convention and its importance for Parties in a selected region
- **Proposed: Ramsar Collection**
  - Folder of one-page summaries of Ramsar Sites in a country/region





# III. Helping countries by building capacity

## SP3 strategies

### 3.4 Sharing information and expertise



# III. Helping countries by developing capacity

- Parties have heavy burden in meeting decisions and resolutions
- Secretariat has maintained its size for many years
  - Considerable increase in calls on its time; not able to respond more
- Secretary General believes it is time to increase strength of Secretariat to respond to increased calls from Parties for:
  - Help with RSIS and related Site information issues
  - Analysis and investigation
  - Organizing and funding regional initiatives
- Build network of wetland practitioners- Explore shared needs
  - Offer online courses, webinars, guides and manuals based on country input
  - Draw on resources of major learning institutions



# IV. Partnerships with other organizations to achieve goals

## SP3 strategies

- 4.2 Convention financial capacity
- 4.4 Working with IOPs and others

- 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs
- 3.2 Regional initiatives





## IV. Partnerships with other organizations to achieve goals



### **New funds secured in 2014-2015**

- CHF 400,000 from Mava Foundation
  - Revitalize/grow Ramsar Culture Network
- CHF 850,000 (six-month commitment) Govt of Norway (NORAD)
  - Focus on restoring wetlands that provide urban water services
- CHF 50,000 from Government of Norway (NORAD)
  - Clean up and improve categorization of Ramsar Sites on World Database of Protected Areas
- These new funds complement existing voluntary support from:
  - Danone Evian (communications, World Wetlands Day)
  - Star Alliance (travel cost needs)
  - USA (Wetlands for the Future Fund)
  - Switzerland (Swiss Grant Fund for Africa)



# Inclusive Partnership approach

- Seek two-way, mutually productive partnerships with groups affecting and affected by wetlands and their wise use, such as:
  - Water and sanitation (WASH) sector
  - Agriculture sector
  - Governance of transboundary aquifers
- Increase engagement with, and commitment of, IOPs
  - Working from strong base; already essential to Ramsar implementation
  - Intensify these collaborative efforts
- Four Regional Centres and 11 Regional Networks
  - Move towards self-support for Centres; key for building capacity
  - Key role for Regional Initiatives



# IV. Partnerships with other organizations to achieve goals



## SP3 strategies

- 1.4 Cross sectoral recognition of wetland services
- 1.7 Integrated water resource mgmt.
- 1.8 Wetland restoration
- 1.10 Private sector collaboration





# Engaging with SDG process to promote cross-sectoral, integrated approach



- Priorities and goals of Ramsar are relevant to a wide range of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
  - Water and wetlands seen in 7 Goals and 27 Targets
  - Ramsar engaging with vast array of current and potential partners under banner of UN Water
  - Plan to use Wetland Extent Index as one of key indicators in Water SDG 6.6
- Working to engage with wide variety of indicators that capture many ecosystem services: integrated water resource management
  - Water delivery and management, purification
  - Livelihoods, biodiversity, carbon capture, DRR, climate change resilience



# Global Wetlands Restoration Partnership



- Massive scale in wetland losses requires wide range in responses
- Inspired by positive examples in the drive to reverse forest loss:
  - Bonn Challenge and private sector “zero deforestation” supply chain goals
  - UNFCCC-designed framework for mobilising finance and actions
- Large volume of wetlands initiatives *are* already happening
  - Not always aimed at highest priority sites or coordinated with Ramsar
  - Not added up to assess how actions support Bonn Challenge targets
- First reactions to the concept from Parties are positive
- Current needs:
  - Develop plan, consult and refine it with Parties and build the coalition
  - Secure support from governments, potential launch as inclusive global initiative



# Private sector collaboration: Danone-Evian



- Partnership has been sustained for 15 years; based on joint need for greater outreach
  - Danone-Evian funding enables World Wetlands Day
- Recent change in Danone leadership in past year; new focus in partnership efforts has met with warm response
  - Link to Ramsar on new line of bottles
- Working with Danone and IUCN on new Water Management Tool to be best practice example
  - Local taxes support wise management of Evian Impluvium
- Livelihoods Venture
  - €40 million invested in mangrove reforestation and improved cookstoves in Senegal, India, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Indonesia and Guatemala





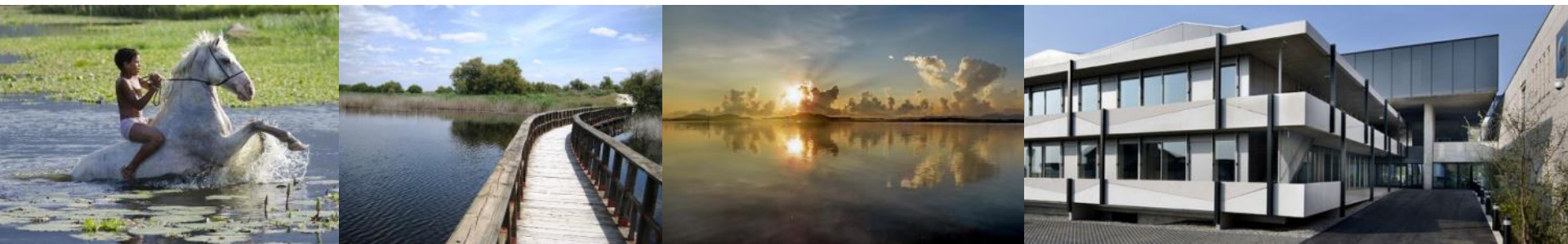
# IV. Partnerships with other organizations to achieve goals



## SP3 strategies

### 4.4 Working with IOPs and others

### 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs



# Collaboration with IUCN



- IUCN shares HQs with the Ramsar Convention and supports it
  - Recent support has enabled Ramsar to renovate its offices, add entrance sign
  - IT services less satisfactory in absence of leader at IUCN
- High-level contacts meeting held twice annually
- Three issues need attention:
  - Delivery of financial services particularly unsatisfactory in 2014; no monthly accounts provided from January to mid-September 2014
  - Lack of budgetary information necessitated financial caution >> once accounts were provided, it was no longer feasible to use the available funds
  - SC48 mandated renegotiation of Services Agreement with IUCN; expect satisfactory outcome on renegotiation of services fee (which rose despite dissatisfaction)



# Collaboration with UNECE



- SG and relevant staff attended all relevant UNECE meetings on transboundary waters
  - Regional convention moving towards a global one
  - Ramsar will assist with its network as UNECE expands worldwide
- UNWATERS meeting in Geneva provided forum for closer cooperation amongst all water-related organizations
  - Text of SDGs was collaboratively supported and handled with all UN bodies present
  - Led to a useful text that positions water issues implicitly or explicitly in 7 Goals and 27 Targets under the current OWG draft





# Collaboration with UNESCO



- Relations strengthening in water issues
  - SG attended Council, had input to International Hydrology Programme
  - Held other meetings to extend collaboration on Mediterranean, GEF funds
- Ramsar Chair on Wise Use of Wetlands at UNESCO Water Training Center in Delft
  - Max Finlayson will fulfill this role for first three years of the Chair
- Growing cooperation on World Heritage, Geoparks & MAB Sites
  - Setting up substantial equivalence in how to deal with threats and challenges
  - Joint Korean/IUCN/UNESCO project on managing multiple designation sites
- IUCN work on Conservation Outlook provides a new perspective
  - Surveyed 222 World Heritage Sites including 49 Ramsar Sites



# Collaboration with UNEP



- **SG visited UNEP in Nairobi, attended first UN Environment Assembly**
  - Following up on joint MoU developed between Ramsar and UNEP
  - See next Assembly meeting as opportunity to rally support for global action on wetlands
- **UNEP-GRID has successfully developed new RSIS**
  - Closer relations with UNEP centres in Cambridge (WCMC) and Nairobi enable us to consider how to integrate big data and satellite imagery
- **Aim to further collaboration on many areas of mutual interest**
  - Supporting their normative work on wetlands and their support for countries to internalize wetland issues into national planning (NBSAP)



# Collaboration with UNDP

- SG has helped build up relations
  - Secured help for colleagues and promise to work together in the planning strategy for GEF 6
  - Inclusion in meetings such as GEF extended constituency workshops in 2015
- Ramsar has access to total portfolio of UNDP projects
  - Better position to inform countries of funds being deployed on wise use
  - Use as a basis for getting more wetlands-related people involved in project preparation for different bodies
- Meetings ongoing between regional team members in Ramsar and UNDP





# Collaboration with MEAs and other intergovernmental bodies



- Parties supporting resolutions X.11 and Xi.6 for enhanced synergies
  - Secretariat working closely with Biodiversity Liaison Group Council and ensuring that STRP is embedded in work of IPBES as it develops its system
- Attended COPs of CBD and CMS
  - Strategic Plan that addresses Aichi Targets, promotes cooperation on achieving SDGs
- MEA Information and Knowledge Management Initiative with UNEP
- Alliance with UNCCD to work jointly on Bonn Challenge
  - Help restore 150 million hectares of wetland and dryland
- Ongoing meetings - both set and informal - with vast range of actors
  - Met with Nature Conservancy, WHO, GEF, WRI, WWT among many others
  - Held key meeting of IOPs and water related organizations in London



# Thank you!

