

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE  
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties  
Brisbane, Australia: 19-27 March 1996**

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**OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN  
THE ASIA REGION**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Bureau has received eight National Reports. These are from China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. In addition, the Regional Representative, India, has incorporated relevant information and comments into the overview prepared by the Bureau. The following is the summary of analysis of these National Reports and the Bureau used other official information resources, mainly country reports for various regional meetings, to complete this report.
2. In accordance with the decisions taken at the Kushiro Conference and at subsequent meetings of the Ramsar Standing Committee, several initiatives were taken in the Asian region to strengthen regional activities for conservation and wise use of wetlands. This is clearly reflected by a series of regional and sub-regional meetings and other wetland-related conferences held in the region.
  - 2.1 The Ramsar South-east Asia (sub-)Regional Workshop was held in Bogor and Pulau Rambut, Indonesia in March/April 1994 (with support from the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Fund) and adopted the Pulau Rambut Statement.
  - 2.2 The Workshop on Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Their Wetland Habitats in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway was held in Kushiro, Japan in December 1994. The second such workshop was held also in Kushiro in September/October 1995 and discussed action plans for Anatidae and cranes.
  - 2.3 The Ramsar Pan-Asia Regional Meeting was held in New Delhi, India, in March 1995 (with support from the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Fund) and adopted the Delhi Declaration which includes 19 action points for conservation of wetlands in the Asian region (attached).
  - 2.4 The International Conference on Wetlands and Development was held in Selangor, Malaysia, in October 1995 and adopted the Kuala Lumpur Statement. On this occasion, an informal Ramsar regional meeting for Asia and Oceania was also held.
  - 2.5 A series of the Regional Workshops on Public Awareness of Biodiversity and Wetlands was held in Indonesia in February 1994, in Thailand in October 1994 and in Japan in October 1995 which adopted the Narashino Statement.

**B. BASIC INFORMATION ON MEASURES TAKEN BY CONTRACTING PARTIES**

New Ramsar sites since December 1992

3. Since the Kushiro Conference, the Philippines and Malaysia became Contracting Parties to the Convention with one Ramsar site each. In addition, five new sites were designated by Japan at the time of the Fifth Conference of the Parties held in Japan in 1993. Mai Po in Hong Kong, designated by United Kingdom in 1995, is the latest Ramsar site in the Asian region and brought the total number of sites in the region to 57.
4. National Reports mentioning possibilities of additional Ramsar sites are: Indonesia (3), Japan (1), Pakistan (3) and Sri Lanka (1).
5. In addition, some non member state governments have officially announced their intention to accede the Convention, namely Cambodia with three candidate sites identified following the WCF project, South Korea, and Thailand with three candidate sites. Countries which have informally informed the Bureau of their intention to accede the Convention are Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Israel, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, and Uzbekistan.
6. In spite of these efforts, we have to admit that the increase of the number of Ramsar sites in the region has been rather slow. Although many became Contracting Parties only recently, seven Contracting Parties out of 13 have so far only one Ramsar site in their territories.

#### **C. FURTHER INFORMATION ON WETLANDS DESIGNATED FOR THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE**

**Information on any wetland which, because of urgent national interest (Article 4.2), has been deleted from the List or had its boundaries restricted.**

7. **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** There was a major drainage project implemented during 1980-82 at the Kamjan Marsh, which caused considerable adverse impact on the wetland ecosystem. There was a suggestion to delete this part of the wetland from the Ramsar List. However, this suggestion was not followed since it is believed that a better solution is to keep it in the List and study to find the best way for the management and sustainable use.
8. N.B. *A Monitoring Procedure mission in 1992 supported retention of Kamjan Marsh in the List.*
9. **PAKISTAN** According to the National Report, three Ramsar sites will be deleted from the List but as a compensation three new sites will be designated.
10. N.B. *Ramsar sites in Pakistan were designated before the Ramsar Criteria were formulated to identify wetlands of international importance. The Ramsar Monitoring Procedure recommended the deletion of four of nine Ramsar sites in Pakistan for not meeting the Ramsar criteria. The Government of Pakistan considers that deletion of the fourth Ramsar site recommended by the Monitoring Procedure is not necessary.*
11. Apart from these cases, there are no other possibilities reported in the Asian region either for deletion from the list or restriction of a site boundary.

**Information on any change in legal status or degree of protection of listed sites since December 1992.**

12. **INDIA** Action has been initiated to notify all the six Ramsar sites as ecologically fragile areas under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
13. **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** The status of a few Ramsar sites have been upgraded, e.g. from hunting free areas to hunting forbidden areas and from Wildlife refugees to National Parks.

14. **JAPAN** Upon designation as Ramsar sites at the time of the Kushiro Conference, three of five new Ramsar sites obtained the status of Special Protection Area of the National Protection Area for Birds and Mammals. One of them were also upgraded from Class II to Class I Special Zone of quasi-National Park. Regarding other Ramsar sites in Japan, a part of the privately owned area within one of Ramsar sites was purchased by the local government.
15. **SRI LANKA** The core area of the Bundala Ramsar site was upgraded from a Sanctuary to a National Park status.
16. Most of Ramsar sites in Asia have received some degree of legal protection.

**Information as to whether (since December 1992) the ecological character of any listed site `has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference' (Article 3.2).**

17. **JAPAN** (1) Izunuma & Uchinuma: has been polluted, but a countermeasure has been taken by planting wild rice to purify water. (2) Yatsu-higata: siltation and salt concentration, an environmental survey has been carried out. (3) Katano-kamoike: drying and siltation, countermeasures have been taken since 1993.
18. **PAKISTAN** Kheshki Reservoir continued to be a polluted pond rather than a wetland, as reported under the Monitoring Procedure. Plant growth is increasing in Drigh Lake and Haleji Lake. The inflow of water is decreasing in Tanda Dam affecting its ponding area and ecological character.
19. **SRI LANKA** Windmill, oil refinery and hotel projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the Bundala Ramsar wetland which are likely to cause adverse impacts on the wetland.
20. Regarding Ramsar sites which have been already listed on the Montreux Record, the National Report from Jordan describes the rehabilitation activities of its Azraq Oasis supported by GEF and reported some progresses. However, the Bureau understands that Azraq Oasis should still remain in the Montreux Record by considering the National Report.
21. **INDIA** Efforts are being made by India to remove three Ramsar sites viz. Chilka, Keoladeo Ghana National Park and Loktok from the Montreux Record. A draft management action plan on Loktok Lake has been prepared by the Manipur Government under the guidance of Technical Advisory Committee specially constituted for this purpose. The Government of India, in collaboration with International Crane Foundation, conducted an experiment to know the reasons for decrease in the population of Siberian Cranes in Keoladeo National Park, using radiotelemetry and satellite transmitters. They have been able to trace the migratory path of Common Cranes. Introduction of reared Siberian Crane chicks in the wintering grounds of Keoladeo National Park is still going on. In February 1996, four Siberian Cranes have been sighted in the Park. In order to address some critical issues of Chilka Lake, a proposal has been drawn up to seek financial and technical assistance under a bilateral programme.
22. **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** The National Report suggests that Kamjan Marshes should remain in the Montreux Record and the condition of Yadegarlu Lake has been improved, and confirms ecological change in Hamoun-e-Saberi & Hamoun-e-Hemand and Anzali Mordab (Taleb) complex. A national project entitled as "Management and sustainable use of Ramsar sites (Montreux Record)" is going to be carried out.

**Application of Kushiro Resolution RES.C.5.7 (Management Planning for Ramsar Sites and other Wetlands) at listed sites**

23. India has management action plans for 13 wetlands out of 18 identified as a priority for intensive conservation and management. These include five Ramsar sites. Sri Lanka has management plans not only for its only Ramsar site but also for several other wetland sites. An operation plan and another management plan for the only Ramsar site in Nepal are in preparation. Philippines' only Ramsar site has its management plan. Indonesia's second Ramsar site has a management plan. A management plan for Jordan's only Ramsar site is also in preparation. In Pakistan, the preparation of management plans for some sites are under way.
24. China has developed management plans for three out of six Ramsar sites in the country and another important wetland site.

#### **Additional information/comments on listed sites.**

25. **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** The National Report indicates that 18 Ramsar sites in Iran in fact comprise 42 wetland areas and, for example, one of Ramsar site have three separate wetlands that have 20 km distance from each other but they have been designated under one title.
26. **JAPAN** Twinning of wetlands between Ramsar sites in eastern Hokkaido, Japan, namely Kushiro Marsh, Kiritappu Marsh, Lake Akkeshi and Bekambeushi Marsh, and the Kooragang Marsh Ramsar site, Australia, was established in November 1994.

#### **D. WISE USE OF WETLANDS**

##### **Progress towards formulation and application of national wetland policy.**

27. **CHINA** The Chinese Government is now compiling the China Wetland Protection Action Plan in order to determine the goals and priority fields of China's wetland protection. The draft outline of the Action Plan was submitted to the China Wetland Protection in December 1994 for discussion by over 160 national and international experts and governmental officials. 13 Chinese ministries and commissions participated in the Workshop.
28. **MALAYSIA** Its WCF project proposal "Development of a Malaysian National Wetland Policy Framework" was approved for funding by the Ramsar Standing Committee in 1995.
29. **NEPAL** National Wetland Policy has not been formulated. However, some preliminary steps have been started in cooperation with some NGOs.
30. **PAKISTAN** The Government is planning to develop a National Wetland Policy in collaboration with provincial and local governments, NGOs and private sectors.
31. **PHILIPPINES** A draft National Wetland Action Plan has been formulated and is under review.
32. **SRI LANKA** A "Wetland Conservation Strategy" was drafted in early 1995 and accepted at a national workshop on wetland management.
33. *Although no National Wetland Policy has been developed in the region so far, progress has been made in various Contracting Parties as indicated above.*

##### **National Ramsar/Wetland Committees**

34. India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka have their National Ramsar/Wetland Committees. The establishment of such a committee is in progress in Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Philippines. China set up a leading group in August 1994 for the formulation of National Wetland Protection Action Plan.

35. Jordan and Japan has not yet established National Ramsar/Wetland Committees though Jordan has a supervisory committee for its only Ramsar site Azraq.

#### **National scientific inventories of potential Ramsar sites**

36. **INDIA** India has launched a nation-wide project to conduct survey and mapping of wetlands involving remote sensing technology. This includes a detailed study of the Ramsar sites as well as wetlands identified for intensive conservation and management. WWF-India in collaboration with Wetlands International Asia & Pacific (formerly Asian Wetland Bureau) has revised the section dealing with wetlands of India in the Asian Wetland Directory. Information on 40 new sites has been added and information on other sites has been updated.
37. **INDONESIA** From 1987 up to present, the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation with its partner the Asian Wetland Bureau (now Wetlands International Asia & Pacific) has carried out wetlands inventory and during the last 4 years this information has been installed into the Indonesian wetland database. This data currently has records of 256 wetland sites including 137 sites which meet some of the criteria as wetland of international importance or the Ramsar site.
38. **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN** The National Report indicates that the establishment of scientific inventories has been considered as general wetland policy. Although not an exact inventory, the National Report has a one-page table of 18 potential sites.
39. **JORDAN** A comprehensive plan was prepared to monitor several important wetlands in the country. All the wetland sites have been also mapped.
40. **NEPAL** A wetland inventory in the southern plain area was undertaken under the Biodiversity Profiles Project in early 1995. The inventory recommended eight wetlands for Ramsar listing. Other wetland inventories were also undertaken by IUCN-Nepal and universities.
41. **PHILIPPINES** The National Report includes information on three important wetland areas in the Philippines. The Coastal Environment Program established in 1993 has a component on resources inventory including mangrove areas.
42. **SRI LANKA** In addition to its only Ramsar site, Wetland Site Reports and/or Conservation Management Plans have been prepared for 21 wetland areas under Sri Lanka's Wetland Conservation Project.

#### **Additional information concerning application of Kushiro Conference Resolution 5.6 (Additional guidance for implementation of wise use concept)**

43. **INDIA** India has prepared guidelines for the formulation of management action plans in regard to wetland and mangrove ecosystems. These guidelines were further elaborated in a Workshop jointly organized by WWF-India and the Government of India.
44. **NEPAL** A WCF project "Fish Stocking and Cage Fisheries Practice in Koshi Tappu" is ongoing. The management of fisheries in a buffer area with formulation of users' group has become very promising regarding wise use of wetlands. Native fish are stocked in the wetland area which are being managed by a users' group. The harvest of fish is believed to raise the income of the local fishermen community.
45. **SRI LANKA** Regarding legislation, the Sri Lanka National Wetland Steering Committee is considering a Wetland Heritage Act based upon the approved national wetland strategy. This

Act would regulate the responsibilities of various agencies involved in management of a certain wetland. A system of wetland valuation was worked out by the Wetland Conservation Project, and applied in all of its Wetland Site Reports and Conservation Management Plans.

46. Although there are many wetland-related projects under way in the region, it seems to be rather difficult to identify which projects and activities are relevant to the wise use concept.

## **E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

### **International consultation on shared wetlands (Article 5)**

47. According to the National Report from Indonesia, negotiation is under way between the Governments of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea over cooperative management activities of a crossboundary wetland area. Papua New Guinea's side has been already designated as a Ramsar site. The Government of Indonesia is considering the designation of an adjacent wetland area in its territory as a Ramsar site.

### **International consultation on shared wetland species (Article 5)**

48. **JAPAN** The Workshop on Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Their Wetland Habitats in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway was held in Kushiro in December 1994. The meeting adopted a summary statement which recommends the establishment of a network of important areas for migratory waterbirds, the development of a strategy for the conservation of migratory waterbirds, and an action plan for the conservation of migratory shorebirds. The second such workshop was held again in Kushiro in September/October 1995 and discussed action plans for Anatidae and cranes. In addition, the compilation of the Red Data Book of Birds in the Asian Region began in 1994.

49. **PAKISTAN** Some progress was made on drafting the Pacific Waterfowl Agreement under the Bonn Convention but this initiative has received some setback.

50. The draft "Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000" will be presented at the Brisbane Conference.

### **Ramsar Wetland Conservation Fund: projects supported since December 1992**

51. **MALAYSIA** "Development of a Malaysian National Wetland Policy Framework" (SFR.40,000)

52. In addition, Kazakhstan has been granted SFR.13,000 in 1995 for its preparation to join the Convention.

53. Since the establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Fund at the Montreux Conference in 1990, several other countries in Asia have benefited from the Fund. These are: Viet Nam (SFR.32,000) in 1991; China (SFR.28,000), Indonesia (SFR.25,000 and SFR.20,000), Pakistan (SFR.23,000) in 1992; Cambodia (SFR.25,000), China (SFR.40,000), Nepal (SFR.40,000) in 1993; China (SFR.11,500), India (SFR.34,600 and SFR.52,000 for the Regional Meeting) in 1994.

### **The role of international funding agencies in conservation and wise use of wetlands**

54. **JAPAN**

- (1) JICA (the Japan International Cooperation Agency) has conducted project formulation studies with the participation of environment specialists at the project research stage where special environmental consideration is required. In addition, experts in charge of environmental consideration have participated in development studies since 1992, with the exception of projects in which no impact on the environment is predicted. JICA has also formulated sectoral guidelines for environmental consideration at the preliminary stage of development studies, with a view to the prompt and effective environmental consideration of development assistance projects, and is conducting such studies from various angles regarding the effects of project implementation on the natural and social environment (such as air and water pollution) which might result from the implementation of projects.
- (2) OECF (the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund) confirms through preliminary project examinations whether developing countries provided environmental consideration at the planning and preparatory stages of the projects for which they had requested assistance. OECF published the OECF Environmental Guidelines in October 1989. Furthermore, environmental issues have been discussed at ODA loan seminars attended by aid officials from developing countries.

#### 55. SRI LANKA

- The Dutch Government supports the Wetland Conservation Project since 1991.
- The Norwegian Government (NORAD) supports local wetland conservation activities and coastal zone planning.
- USAID supports a community-based wetland conservation in southern Sri Lanka.
- FAO supports a mangrove project.
- A UNDP-GEF capacity building project for biodiversity is in its third year of implementation including wetland conservation.

#### F. WETLAND RESERVES AND TRAINING

##### Implementation of Montreux Recommendation 4.4 (Establishment of wetland reserves)

56. **CHINA** At present, China has established over 130 wetland type nature reserves with an area of more than 37.52 million hectares.

57. **INDONESIA** The total area of protected areas is about 19 million hectares, which covers 9.7% of Indonesia's surface area in the form of 32 National Parks, 293 terrestrial nature reserves and 24 marine nature reserves of which some are wetland ecosystems. By the year 2000, the government also wishes to increase the total area of conservation areas to more than 30 million hectares and wetlands will also be a priority.

58. *Although not specified in this item 5.1 of National Reports, most of Ramsar sites in Asia enjoy some status of protection. Many protected areas in the region do include wetland habitats, though specific efforts have not necessarily been made to establish wetland-oriented reserves.*

##### Implementation of Kushiro Recommendations 5.3 (Essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves) and 5.8 (Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves)

59. **CHINA** The Government has launched publicity activities on a large scale for wetland protection through radio, TV, board newspaper, wall poster and lectures, to popularize the benefits of wetlands and the significance of wetland protection, in addition to annual activities, such as the Bird Love Week and the Month of Publicity for Wild Animals, aiming to raise people's awareness of the significance of wetland protection.

60. **INDIA** WWF-India has published booklets on the six Indian Ramsar sites, giving topographical, biological & ecological information, and highlighting the issues and priorities from the management perspective.
61. **INDONESIA** The Indonesian Government and some NGOs have made available awareness material on coastal and wetland conservation for the public in the form of posters, wetland environmental education material for teachers, newsletter, slide kit and some other materials.
62. **JAPAN** Most Ramsar sites have their own visitor centers or waterfowl observatories. Educational and promotional activities have been intensified in all sites either by the central government, local governments or NGOs especially since the Kushiro Conference.
63. **JORDAN** The Azraq Conservation Project has undertaken various steps in the field of public awareness, such as liaison with the Charitable Woman Association in the area, conducting a three-day summer camp, organizing visits to the site by school children, preparing a video on the site, preparing a booklet and posters on the conservation of the site.
64. **NEPAL** Awareness programs regarding values of wetlands and their wise use are being conducted in the Ramsar site. A video spot on wetland conservation has been prepared for a national TV. A visitor center will be established in the Ramsar site the Park and People Project in 1996.
65. **SRI LANKA** A visitor center for its Bundala Ramsar site is being planned with GEF assistance. Another visitor center at a wetland site as well as a country-wide wetland awareness programme is planned by Sri Lanka's Wetland Conservation Project.
66. *Unfortunately, no information is available on zonation of wetland reserves in the region within National Reports submitted to the Bureau. On the contrary, a lot of information is available on public awareness campaign throughout the region.*
67. *Apparently public awareness activities in the region have been intensified before and after the Kushiro Conference in spite of the language barrier. However, considering the diversity of not only languages but also cultures, religions, and wetland types, we still need further efforts in this field.*

#### **Implementation of Montreux Recommendation 4.5 (Education and training)**

68. **CHINA** With the support of WWF, several training courses for wetland management have been conducted in Hong Kong and other places which have trained over 200 Chinese personnel. The Training Course on National Wetland Survey has been also carried out.
69. **INDIA** India in collaboration with WWF-India has conducted a training course (with support of WCF) for planning and management of six Ramsar sites in early 1995. Subsequently WWF-India also conducted a Workshop for the presentation of a management action plan on Keoladeo National Park, involving the local community.
70. **INDONESIA** There is still a strong need to strengthen training in wetland management. This can be done at technical training implementation units called Forestry Training Centers. There are eight Forestry Training Centers implementing training courses. At one of centers there is a School of Environmental Conservation Management which was established in 1978 and is responsible for conservation and management of protected areas. The Wetland Conservation Management Course, organized in 1989/1990 and 1991/1992, included theoretical and practical training in Indonesia and U.K. The Asian Wetland Bureau (now Wetlands International) - Indonesia has implemented several short courses related to wetland management.



71. **JAPAN** (1) The Japanese Environment Agency in collaboration with national and international NGOs have held a series of bird-banding training workshops in Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. (2) JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Training Courses for wetland managers in Asia have been carried out since 1992. In addition, various educational activities have been carried out in all nine Ramsar sites in Japan.
72. **SRI LANKA** The Wetland Management Training Programme is being organized under the GEF, but advanced level training is needed.
73. One of major priorities identified by a series of regional consultations is the need for training appropriate government officers and wetland managers in the region. Again, there is a language barrier and the vast variety of wetland types throughout the region makes it difficult to develop a standard training course to cover all the region. However, some initiatives have been undertaken and their usefulness has been highly appreciated by all the involved.
74. *N.B. A part of Item 5.2 on public awareness and Item 5.3 on education is sometimes difficult to consider separately - often referred to EPA (Education and Public Awareness as indicated in the Ramsar Strategic Plan). Therefore, it might be possible to integrate these two questions into one from the next Conference.*

## **G. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE CONVENTION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Wider issues concerning future activities under the Convention**

75. **CHINA** The Ministry of Forestry set up a Wetland Monitoring Center in February 1995.
76. **JAPAN** As follow-up to the Kushiro Statement (Resolution 5.1), the National Report from Japan specifies the following four activities: (1) International cooperation on wetland conservation -the Environment Agency's project has entered the second stage in the Philippines and Thailand; (2) The Workshop on Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Their Wetland Habitats in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway -; (3) Bilateral migratory birds conventions and agreements - with USA, Australia, China and Russia; (4) Red Data Book of Birds in the Asian Region.
77. In addition, the Kushiro International Wetland Center was established in January 1995, based on the spirit of the Kushiro Statement to develop international promotion of wetland conservation and wise use. The Environment Agency also established the Kushiro Marsh Protection Center in May 1993.
78. **NEPAL** Assistance of the Ramsar Bureau is essential for the formulation of a national wetland policy which can give a major thrust to wetland conservation in Nepal.
79. Funding support is very crucial for the effectiveness of the Convention. Therefore, the Bureau should explore funding possibilities by establishing a close relation with funding agencies such as GEF.

80. The Regional Representative, the Government of India, has summarized the priorities for future activities from the Asian region under the Convention as follows:

- Formulation of National Wetland Policies.
- International cooperation on wetland conservation.
- Conservation of migratory waterfowl and their wetland habitats in the East Asian- Australasian flyway.
  - Bilateral migratory birds conservation and agreements.
  - Red data book of birds in Asian region.
  - Increasing the number of Contracting Parties under the Ramsar Convention.
  - Increasing the number of Listed sites under the Convention.
- Development of regional database including, inter alia, cooperation on development of management techniques, sharing of information and expertise, training and research and exchange of information regarding technical institutions, training organizations and research studies.
- Efforts to generate support from bilateral and multilateral funding agencies for conservation and wise use of wetlands.

**DELHI DECLARATION  
ON THE  
CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS IN ASIA**

The participants from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, Contracting Parties from the Asian region to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention), together with participants from Hong Kong (included under the United Kingdom's ratification of the Convention) and the Russian Federation, and from Cambodia, the Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates, experts from international organizations, environmentalists, wildlife experts, foresters and NGOs both from India and abroad;

**Having** met at the Asian Regional Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and the Ramsar Convention Bureau, held in New Delhi from 23-25 March 1995;

**Recognizing** the importance of wetlands in Asia as life support systems in sustaining the human population;

**Aware** that wetlands in Asia have a very high biological diversity and productivity;

**Noting** the high levels of threat to wetlands throughout the region from encroachment, degradation of catchments and pollution;

**Acknowledging** that wetlands contribute to the quality of life of the people by regulating water supply, improving water quality and flood control;

**Recalling** the commitment of all countries to the Conventions adopted at UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, and to Agenda 21, as also the provisions on wise use of wetlands under the Ramsar Convention;

**Acknowledging** the urgent need for international and regional cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

**Strongly reaffirm** the need for adequate new and additional financial resources on a predictable basis from developed countries, multilateral agencies and other international organizations for promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

**Call upon** the national governments in collaboration with each other and with international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as others concerned with conservation and wise use of wetlands, to undertake the following actions:

1. The implementation of their obligations under the Ramsar Convention by all Contracting Parties in the region;
2. Serious consideration by all States in the region which are not yet Contracting Parties to becoming a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention as soon as possible;
3. The development of regional and national wetland policies and strategies, as provided in the Ramsar "Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept";

4. The development of adequate administrative, financial and legislative measures for wetlands and their wise use, including the involvement of the corporate sector, to serve the objectives of the Convention;
5. The enhancement of knowledge on wetlands and their values through inventories, monitoring, research, training, education and public awareness programmes, including organization of national or global awareness campaigns;
6. The preparation and updating of National Wetland Directories/National Wetland Database/Asian Wetland Directory, emphasizing identification of problems, biodiversity, current use, resource utilization, baseline information for land use and management planning, monitoring and research;
7. An increase in the number of Listed sites designated by Contracting Parties for the "List of wetlands of international importance";
8. The effective conservation and management of Listed sites, particularly those included in the Montreux Record;
9. The development of programmes for monitoring possible changes in the ecological character of Listed sites and the identification of parameters to detect such changes;
10. The strengthening of cross-sectoral coordination, environmental impact assessment, monitoring and control mechanisms to enhance the wise use of wetlands;
11. The identification of appropriate mechanisms for regional cooperation and the development of regional wetland databases (including *inter alia*, cooperation on development of management techniques, sharing of information and expertise, training and research), and the exchange of information regarding technological institutes, training organizations and research studies;
12. The sharing and integration of strategies in various sectors (such as agriculture, fisheries, catchment area development, and water resources) for wise use of wetlands;
13. The augmentation of activities which reinforce cooperation among various complementary Conventions such as the Conventions on Biological Diversity, World Heritage, Climate Change, Migratory Species, CITES and other international agreements;
14. The augmentation of efforts to generate support from bilateral and multilateral funding agencies for conservation and wise use of wetlands;
15. The identification of wetland conservation and wise use as a priority area for their programmes with development assistance agencies;
16. The strengthening of EIA standards for assessing the environmental impacts of development projects on wetland ecosystems;
17. The augmentation of efforts to involve local communities in the planning and implementation of wetland management plans, and to formulate and implement schemes by which economic benefits from wetland conservation and their wise use accrue to local communities;
18. The encouragement of greater involvement of non-government organizations in wetland conservation activities and in facilitation of the Ramsar Convention's objectives;

19. The support of initiatives to develop frameworks for coordination of efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds in the Asian Flyways;

**Further resolve** to request that the organizers of the meeting circulate the Delhi Declaration together with the recommendations of the two working groups, to the Ramsar Contracting Parties in the Asian region, other countries of Asia, and major international, inter-governmental and regional organizations, including financial institutions;

**Request** the Secretary General of the Ramsar Bureau to circulate the Delhi Declaration as a document of the Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, to be held in Brisbane in March 1996.