

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

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

A. INTRODUCTION

1. For the purposes of this report, the following countries are included in the Neotropical region (UN Terminology Bulletin N°37) (countries which are Contracting Parties are highlighted): Antigua and Barbuda, **Argentina**, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, **Bolivia**, **Brazil**, **Chile**, Colombia, **Costa Rica**, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, **Ecuador**, El Salvador, Grenada, **Guatemala**, Guyana, Haiti, **Honduras**, Jamaica, Nicaragua, **Panama**, **Paraguay**, **Peru**, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, **Suriname**, **Trinidad and Tobago**, **Uruguay**, and **Venezuela**.
2. Since the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, 1993), the Representative from the Neotropical Region in the Standing Committee has been **Uruguay**, and the Alternate Representative, **Panama**. Dr. Roberto Schlatter (Chile) has been the member of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) for the Neotropical Region.
3. The 2nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Neotropical Region took place in Panama in 1995, in which also participated delegates from the three countries of the North American Region.
4. Two "Carta Circular" have been published, produced by the Regional Representative, Uruguay, and with collaborations from several countries from the region, the member of the STRP, and the Convention Bureau.
5. The information that follows is a summary of the main points included in the 13 National Reports provided by the countries. In the interests of saving space whilst retaining the sense of the information, the Convention Bureau has summarized the paragraphs that it considers will be of special interest for the Conference. Copies of the National Reports are available upon request.
6. It is important to indicate that as of 31 December 1995, the National Report from **Brazil** had not been received. From **Paraguay** no report was expected for this three-year period, since it joined the Convention in 1995. Therefore the Information Sheets for the four Paraguayan Ramsar sites have been used to extract the information included in this summary.

B. BASIC INFORMATION

7. As of 31 December 1995, the Neotropical Region included 15 Contracting Parties, with 37 sites listed in the List of Wetlands of International Importance. The number of Ramsar sites in each country is indicated in parentheses.

Argentina ¹ (5)	Panama (3)
Bolivia (1)	Paraguay (4)
Brazil (5)	Peru (3)
Chile (1)	Suriname (1)
Costa Rica ² (5)	Trinidad and Tobago (1)
Ecuador (2)	Uruguay (1)
Guatemala (2)	Venezuela (1)
Honduras (2)	

8. The countries for which the Convention entered into force after the 5th Convention of Contracting Parties (Kushiro, 1993) have been underlined. Wetlands incorporated to the List since Kushiro include two in **Argentina**, three in **Costa Rica**, one in **Guatemala**, and two in **Panama**.

Non-Contracting Party States in the Neotropical Region

9. The authorities of Belize, Colombia, and El Salvador are in contact with the Convention Bureau; their accession process is well underway and may be completed before the 6th Meeting of Conference of the Contracting Parties.

10. The authorities of other countries, among them Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Saint Lucia, have communicated with the Bureau and expressed their interest and intention to join soon. In addition to Guyana, the rest of the countries that still are not Ramsar members are all Caribbean states: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Contributions to the budget of the Convention

11. In spite of the economic difficulties experienced by the different countries, in greater or lesser degrees, several Contracting Parties have provided assistance to the Convention's core budget during the period 1993-1995. Nevertheless, for the majority of the countries, the economic contribution to the Convention's budget continues to be difficult.

C. INFORMATION ON RAMSAR SITES

Deletion or restriction of boundaries of listed sites

12. In **Uruguay**, Bañados del Este y Franja Costera are in the process of re-delimitation, without implying a reduction of the surface area. Other coastal wetlands not considered before are now being taken into consideration.

13. **Venezuela** indicates that the borders of the Cuare Wildlife Refuge were expanded in 1991 to guarantee the conservation of a mangrove swamp area.

Proposed site designations or boundary extensions

¹ After the National Report was received, Argentina designated as Ramsar sites the Tierra del Fuego Atlantic Coast Reserve and the Llançanelo Lagoon Provincial Reserve. The information included on these two wetlands in this Overview has been extracted from the Information Sheets.

² After the National Report was received, Costa Rica designated as Ramsar sites the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge and the Térraba-Sierpe National Wetland. The information included in this Overview on these two wetlands has been extracted from the Information Sheets.

14. **Chile** has the intention to include at least five wetlands from the high Andean region, in the north of the country.
15. **Panama** indicates that through resolutions from the Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales Renovables (INRENARE, National Institute of Renewable Resources), new protected areas have been declared in the country that will be incorporated in the Ramsar List at a later stage.
16. **Suriname** has presented to the Board of Ministers a proposal to include in the Ramsar List two new sites, Wia Wia and Bigi Pan.

Changes in legal status or degree of protection at listed sites

17. **Argentina** has established Reservas Naturales Silvestres y Educativas (Wild and Educational Nature Reserves) as well as Reservas Naturales Estrictas (Strict Natural Reserves) within the Río Pilcomayo and Laguna Blanca National Parks, and the Laguna de los Pozuelos National Monument.
18. **Chile** has changed the category of protection of Carlos Anwandter - Río Cruces - Ramsar site from Nature Sanctuary to National Reserve.
19. **Costa Rica** indicates that the previous Tamarindo Wildlife National Refuge has had its protection category and name changed recently, and it is currently the Las Baulas de Guanacaste National Park.
20. **Guatemala** is working on declaring Manchón-Guamuchal a Protected Area.
21. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that as of 1993, a Prohibited Area that includes the Proposed National Park and the Scenic Landscape zone was established in Nariva.

Changes in ecological character at listed sites

22. In Laguna Blanca, **Argentina**, three species of exotic fish have been introduced which are causing a negative impact on the rest of the aquatic fauna (amphibian, birds and zooplankton). The main problem though is the amount of domestic animals (sheep and goats) that cause strong soil erosion, deteriorating especially some scarce and particular habitats (lowlands and shores) used by waterfowl to nest.
23. Pilcomayo has the same problem of over-grazing, and several other associated problems, for instance, use of fire for clearing pasture and poaching. Nevertheless, as of 1992 a series of measures have been implemented to reduce the impact of these activities.
24. In Pozuelos, in addition to grazing, other human activities that are having a negative impact on its ecological character include mining, wood and soil extraction, wildlife harvesting, and use of water for irrigation. These activities are causing accelerated sedimentation in the lagoon. The situation of Pozuelos is a complex one since there are conflicts of interest.
25. In Tierra del Fuego there is potential danger because of the effects of oil activities in the Bay of San Sebastian (i.e., pollution, road tracing, and its consequent erosion, decanting pools), and to a point cattle grazing, uncontrolled recreational activities and sand extraction.
26. In Llanquanelo the main problem is the use of water upstream, but steps are being carried out to ensure a minimum amount of water entering the lagoon; other problems include erosion caused by overgrazing of sheep, poaching, and fishing (under control by the rangers) and, potentially, trash deposit from a uranium treatment plant which could contaminate the underground water

supply (partial) of the lagoon.

27. **Bolivia** requests the removal of the Laguna Colorada from the Montreux Record and has cancelled the application of a Monitoring Procedure to this Ramsar site. The National Report indicates that due to the conservation measures taken thanks to the implementation of the Eduardo Avaroa Andean Fauna National Reserve, and because the environmental impact threat from the geothermal project does not exist anymore (cancelled), the conservation of the Laguna Colorada and other high Andean wetlands of the area is ensured. The only current problem is intensive tourism.
28. **Chile** indicates that, in the future, changes in the ecological character of the Carlos Andwandter -Río Cruces- Ramsar site could occur as a consequence of a cellulose plant upstream. Even though the technology used could ensure a clean operation, the exploitation of the native forests and reforestation with exotic species could affect the water level in the Río Cruces.
29. In **Costa Rica** change in the ecosystem dynamics of Caño Negro is presumed due to erosion upstream resulting in excessive sedimentation at the Ramsar site. With economic assistance from the Embassy of the Netherlands, studies have been initiated to solve the problem.
30. In **Térraba-Sierpe** the use of agrochemicals in cultivations upstream contributes with contaminants to the site, but they have not been quantified, and there are some problems related to the expansion of agriculture and farming.
31. In the surroundings of **Gandoca-Manzanillo**, deforestation by timber dealers and private owners is a problem, as well as the expansion of the road network, which alters the drainage and increases the sediment carried from upstream towards the Ramsar site; in addition, the use of agrochemicals in intensive banana plantations upstream, has caused fish mortality.
32. **Ecuador** reports that **Machalilla** could be affected by pollution from a fish processing factory, fuels discharged at sea and solid waste.
33. The ecological character of **Manglares-Churute** is being modified by the erosion caused by overgrazing, the use of agrochemicals in private farms and river contamination, and could be modified even more if the final stretch of the highway is built through the Reserve.
34. **Guatemala** indicates that the **Laguna del Tigre** is being threatened by illegal hunting and fishing, and if the oil exploitation were to take place it could cause a serious impact at this Ramsar site. Likewise, it is considered essential that a Monitoring Procedure be conducted at this site, which was included in the Montreux Record in 1994.
35. **Honduras** reports that the **Cuero y Salado** and **Jeannette Kawas**³ wetlands have pollution problems due to agrochemicals, and others related to tree felling and burning to clear pastures for cattle, the forestry activity in higher areas - which carry excessive sedimentation to the wetlands, and illegal hunting and fishing - including manatee *Trichechus manatus*.
36. **Paraguay** indicates in the Information Sheets that the **Río Negro** could be affected by the construction of the "Hidrovia"; **Estero Milagro** has problems due to road construction and cattle grazing; **Ypoá** with cattle grazing, timber activity, tourism and drainage projects; and in **Tinfunqué** cattle grazing, timber activity, illegal hunting and the "Hidrovia" project, are the main

³ The National Park Jeannette Kawas, previously called Punta Sal, received its new name in memory of the director of PROLANSTATE, murdered for her activities in promoting the conservation and wise use of the resources of this region in Honduras.

or potential problems.

37.**Peru** indicates that in an area near Paracas the fishing industrialization activities are producing some negative effects, but a probationary period has been given for the companies involved to adapt their production processes to a programme of environmental management.

38.**Suriname** indicates that at this moment there are no activities in Coppenamemonding that may modify the ecological character of the site, since only a little ecological tourism takes place and subsistence fishing by a few fishermen. Nevertheless, if adequate measures are not taken to avoid the impact of the agricultural and oil activities, these could damage the site.

39.**Trinidad and Tobago** requested the inclusion of Nariva in the Montreux Record in 1993, during the Kushiro Conference. In 1995, the Convention Bureau organized the visit of a mission to apply a Monitoring Procedure.⁴

40.**Uruguay** reports that since a decree was issued in 1991 prohibiting any action related to irrigation or drainage, roads, etc. that could alter the draining system of surface waters and modify the ecological character of the Bañados del Este, no further modifications have occurred.

Status of sites mentioned in Kushiro Recommendation 5.1 - On Ramsar sites in territories of specific Contracting Parties

41.**Venezuela** informs that in Cuare measures are being implemented to reduce the pressure of human activities, starting with the relocation of settlements. Likewise, a resolution regulating fishing activities was dictated, prepared with the assistance of the fishermen.

Implementation of Resolution 5.7 - Management Planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands

42.**Argentina** has completed (1994) the management plan of the Laguna Blanca, and several of the recommendations have already been implemented, for instance, the strict protection of the most important nesting areas for waterfowl, and the planning of sheep grazing. The Pozuelos management plan is well in progress and Pilcomayo's in its initial stage. In Tierra del Fuego the preparation of the management plan has been initiated, and a proposal to elaborate one for Llanquanelo was presented and approved by the province but does not have the necessary funding.

43.In **Bolivia** the Eduardo Avaroa National Andean Wildlife Reserve, where the Laguna Colorada is located, does not have a management plan, but it does have an operating plan, a director, eight rangers and a Management Committee with participation of the local population.

44.**Chile** has a management plan project for the Carlos Andwandter -Río Cruces-, which would be part of a thesis.

45.**Costa Rica** reports that it submitted the final draft of the Caño Negro management plan and that the plan for Palo Verde has been initiated. The first one financed by the U.S. State Department, through the Ramsar Convention Bureau. Térraba-Sierpe has a comprehensive management plan and a tourist carrying capacity study is being conducted. In Gandoca-Manzanillo there is a management plan proposal but it has not been implemented, just as the fishing and hunting regulations.⁵

⁴ The Monitoring Procedure final report has been submitted to the Government for its approval and publication.

⁵ The Bureau reports that after receiving the National Report from Costa Rica, a copy of the new Management Plan for Palo Verde has been received, but it has not yet received the final draft of Caño Negro's.

46. **Ecuador** has management plans for Machalilla (1987, now being implemented), and for Manglares-Churute (to be published shortly).
47. **Panama** has initiated the process of information gathering, with the purpose of integrating both the local authorities and the resource users into the preparation process of the management plans and wise use of the three Ramsar sites of the country.
48. **Paraguay** has a management plan for Estero Milagro.
49. **Peru** has completed the management plan for Paracas, conducted with funds from the U.S. State Department, through the Convention Bureau.
50. **Suriname** informs that it is conducting the management plan for Coppenamemonding.
51. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that it is confident that the Monitoring Procedure will help the country's Government in the preparation of the management plan for Nariva.
52. **Uruguay** received a mission to apply the Monitoring Procedure in Bañados del Este y Franja Costera in 1993. The report was completed and accepted by the Government in 1994, and their recommendations are being taken into consideration in the management plan that is being prepared for the site. The preparation of this plan (soon to be completed) is the responsibility of the Dirección General de Recursos Naturales Renovables (Natural Renewable Resources Division) of the Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca (Ministry of Farming, Agriculture and Fisheries), in collaboration with technicians from the Programa para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad de los Bañados del Este (PROBIDES, Bañados del Este Biodiversity Conservation Program), technicians from the local Government and the Municipality of Rocha.
53. **Venezuela** reports that Cuare has a land use and management plan that began to be applied in 1993. Likewise, there is a regulation for fishing activity.

Additional comments on listed sites

54. **Argentina**: in addition to the indications in other points of this report, the Laguna Blanca, Pilcomayo and Pozuelos now have basic infrastructure for visitors, as well as for control and patrolling.
55. **Suriname** notifies that research is being conducted in Coppenamemonding.
56. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that in Nariva research related to the population recovery of several species is being conducted.

D. WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Progress towards formulation and application of national wetland policies

57. In **Argentina** the constitutional reform of 1994 has incorporated the concept of wise use, which makes it possible for the preparation of national plans, strategies or policies. Likewise, the new constitution arranges hierarchically the international treaties, giving them a higher rank than laws dictated by the National Congress.
58. **Bolivia** has a law proposal for the Conservation of the Biological Diversity that includes two articles that make special reference to wetlands, but the approval of this law does not seem probable in the short term. The National Conservation Strategy is in the design stage, and it is foreseen that it will include the effective protection as well as the concept of wise use of wetlands. The Action

Plan of the Unidad de Vida Silvestre (Wildlife Unit) of the Dirección Nacional de Conservación de la Biodiversidad (National Biodiversity Conservation Office) considers strengthening the national participation in the Ramsar Convention, both in the administrative and technical aspects.

59.**Chile** does not report significant progress made, since the National Wetland Committee is of very recent formation.

60.In **Costa Rica**, the Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservación (SINAC, Conservation Areas National System) is being developed within the Ministerio del Ambiente y Energía (MINAE, Ministry of Environment and Energy, formerly Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, MIRENEM). The SINAC, together with the Mesoamerican Regional Office (ORMA) of the IUCN, is working on the preparation of the National Strategy for Conservation and Sustainable Development of Wetlands. This strategy, divided into two phases, contemplates among other points to establish the scope, limitations, derogations and discrepancies of the current Wildlife Conservation Law, and the proposed Conservation and Protection of Wetlands Law, and offers a variety of possible alternatives. Currently the strategy is at its second phase of actions and implementation of the results of the first phase.

61.**Ecuador** has Basic Environmental Policies since 1994, among which there are general policies which deal specifically with mangrove swamps. The Regulation for Land Use Planning, Conservation, Management, and Use of Mangrove Swamps Ecosystem will soon be approved.

62.In **Guatemala** the Protected Areas Legislation sets forth policies related to the conservation of wetlands within those areas.

63.**Panama** approved in 1994 a law that requires environmental impact studies for every project or activity carried out by either the public or private sectors, and INRENARE is the institution in charge of their evaluation. In 1995 legislation related to wildlife that regulates its harvesting and promotes conservation of its habitat was passed.

64.In **Peru** the Programa de Conservación y Desarrollo Sostenible de Humedales (Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Development Program) has prepared a "national strategy for the conservation of wetlands and basis for an action plan", that once discussed among governmental organizations and NGOs will be promoted as a national policy on wetlands for the country.

65.**Trinidad and Tobago** has informed the Bureau, after submitting their National Report, that the preparation of a National Wetland Policy is in its final phase and pending ministerial approval.⁶

66.**Uruguay** does not have an explicit wetland policy, but has achieved some progress. For example, the decree on soil and water conservation has been regulated; in 1994 the law on environmental impact assessment was regulated; and a law proposal for protected areas is currently under discussion at the Parliament, which would be the adequate legal frame to prepare a specific policy on wetlands.

67.**Venezuela** indicates that the National Policy on Protected Areas follows the Ramsar guidelines.

Application of Recommendation 5.7 - National Ramsar/Wetland Committees

⁶ These three wetland policies/strategies - Costa Rica, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago - would be the first ones prepared in the Neotropical region following Ramsar wise use guidelines.

68. **Argentina** indicates that since 1986 there is a National Technical Assistance Network on Protected Areas, summoned by the National Parks Administration with the purpose of discussing among officials from provincial governments and the federal government, the planning, management and cooperation in existing and/or potential protected areas. The National Ramsar Committee was created in 1994 by the Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente Humano (Ministry of Natural Resources and Human Environment), based on the Kushiro recommendation. At the moment the Subsecretarías de Recursos Naturales y Relaciones Institucionales (Departments of Natural Resources and Institutional Relations, the National Parks Administration and Wetlands for the Americas participate in this Committee. The Committee is open for the participation of NGOs dedicated to the conservation of wetlands, and representatives of the provinces with designated wetlands on the Ramsar List. Even though it is at its initial stages, the Committee is preparing a list of wetlands of international importance that would qualify as Ramsar sites.
69. In **Bolivia** the formation of a National Wetland Committee is foreseen within the frame of the National Conservation Strategy, which would include the Dirección Nacional de Conservación de la Biodiversidad (National Biodiversity Conservation Office), the Dirección Nacional de Cuencas y Recursos Hídricos (National Watershed and Water Resources Conservation Office), the Dirección de Calidad Ambiental (Environmental Quality Office), the Autoridad Autónoma Binacional (Binational Autonomous Authority) for Lake Titicaca and NGOs such as the Limnologists Association of Bolivia and the Beni Biological Station. Their activities will be set forth in the Strategy.
70. **Chile** has had a National Wetland Committee since September, 1994, with participation from governmental organisms (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores -Ministry of Foreign Relations - which chairs the Committee - the Corporación Nacional Forestal, CONAF -National Forestry Corporation - which acts as secretariat - and the Comisión Nacional de Medio Ambiente - National Environmental Commission), as well as the Universidad Austral de Chile, Comité Nacional pro Defensa de la Fauna y la Flora, CODEFF -National Committee for the Conservation of Fauna and Flora. The Committee was very active when established but has not met recently.
71. **Costa Rica** includes recommendations for the operation of a National Wetland Committee within the Wetland Strategy it is preparing. In this reactivation it is expected to integrate the different official institutions, NGOs, grassroots institutions, as well as the IUCN.
72. **Ecuador** is promoting the interest of governmental and non-governmental organizations through the dissemination of the results of projects sponsored by Ramsar.
73. In **Guatemala** the Ramsar Committee was formed in 1995, with participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations.
74. In **Honduras** the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente (SEMA, Ministry of the Environment) is preparing a draft of a Presidential Agreement for the establishment of the Comisión de Manejo Integral Costero (COMICO, Commission for Comprehensive Coastal Management) that in addition would operate as a Ramsar Committee, and whose functions would be to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It would be comprised of representatives from SEMA, other governmental institutions, NGOs, university and representatives from each Ramsar site in the country.
75. **Peru** has a Programa de Conservación y Desarrollo Sostenible de Humedales (Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Development Program), that also operates as a Ramsar Committee, and is comprised of representatives from governmental organisms, one university, one national and one international NGO. It meets once a month and all topics related to

wetlands are discussed.

76. **Suriname** has multidisciplinary groups of advisers created for the different protected areas in the country, which could turn in the future to a national wetland committee.
77. **Trinidad and Tobago** established the National Wetland Committee in 1995, and identified as its main objective the preparation of the National Wetland Policy. It has representatives from several governmental organisms (e.g., Wildlife, National Parks, Fisheries, Water Management, Town and Country Planning Sections) from several ministries, the University of the West Indies, the Institute for Marine Affairs, and NGOs.
78. **Venezuela** has a National Ramsar Committee since 1992, formed by representatives from the Servicio Autónomo PROFAUNA (Autonomous Agency), other offices of the Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales Renovables (Ministry of Environment and Natural Renewable Resources); representatives from the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Relations) and NGOs. Currently it is inactive, but it is foreseen to reactivate it through a resolution or decree.

Application of Recommendation 4.6 - National scientific inventories

79. In **Argentina** there are no scientific inventories that follow Recommendation 4.6, nevertheless a systematic inventory was published (R. Quiros, et al. 1983, Geographic Dictionary of Continental Wetlands of the Republic of Argentina. Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Pesquero) which includes some basic data.
80. **Bolivia** has plans to update the inventory of wetlands in Bolivia.
81. **Chile** has plans to prepare a wetlands inventory by stages; the first one includes the Puna region in the north.
82. **Costa Rica** has plans to work on an inventory by sub-regions and generate a database within the wetlands strategy.
83. **Ecuador** is conducting a partial inventory on wetlands with assistance from Ramsar.
84. **Guatemala** has plans to conduct a wetlands inventory but still lacks the necessary funding, even though it has requested funds (from Peregrine Fund, USA).
85. **Peru** has partial wetland inventories.
86. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that it lacks a comprehensive national inventory of all wetlands in the country, but does have one with partial information, and studies of several individual wetlands. In addition it indicates that the wetland, waterfowl and shorebird evaluation project conducted by the Wildlife Section since 1985, is used and updated constantly. Likewise, the University of the West Indies is working on an inventory of wetlands that require restoration.
87. In **Uruguay**, once the Bañados del Este y Franja Costera management plan is completed, will carry out biodiversity inventories at wetlands with potential to become Ramsar sites.
88. **Venezuela** lacks a complete wetland inventory, but has a partial one that identifies 53 coastal wetlands. In addition another inventory is being conducted in the State of Guarico.

Additional information on application of the Wise Use `guidelines' and `additional guidance'

89. In **Argentina** the Pozuelos draft management plan proposes a change in the management categories in the watershed, in such a way that its conservation be compatible with the concept of wise use of its resources. This proposal is considered feasible since it does not imply modifications in the land tenure, but rearranging of the activities only.
90. **Bolivia** contemplates the use of the guidelines for wise use from Ramsar, in the preparation of the management plan of Eduardo Avaroa Andean Wildlife National Reserve (Laguna Colorada).
91. In **Costa Rica** the consolidation of SINAC is part of the strategies presented by the Costa Rican Government for sustainable development. Progress is being made in the participation in conservation issues by local communities, both outside and inside protected areas.
92. **Honduras** is promoting, through SEMA, a Comprehensive Coastal Management Plan, based on the wise use concept.
93. **Panama** is developing a turtle management proposal (including captive breeding) at San San Pond-Sak, with support from local conservation groups.
94. In **Peru** the Paracas management plan was prepared following the Ramsar wise use guidelines, and is being implemented with great support from the local fishermen.
95. **Suriname** has decided that, due to difficulties for management of the protected coastal areas, it is better to include them in the category of Multiple Use Management Area. This type of category allows the wise use of resources; at the same time more fragile areas are protected and local communities are involved in the process, especially indigenous communities.
96. **Uruguay** established in 1994 the development of water regulation works for the Merin lagoon basin (where Bañados del Este y Franja Costera are located) with the objective to allow the use of water in the region, through a master plan which in turn contemplates the conservation of wetlands still unmodified. The Ramsar wise use guidelines have been used as a framework.
97. **Venezuela** indicates that the State is obliged by a governing principle of its Carta Magna to regulate the use and management of its natural renewable resources, and that this implies the wise use of wetlands.

E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Miscellaneous

98. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that in 1994 the Wetland Study Group was created at the University of the West Indies, which conducts research in cooperation with other institutions (e.g., the universities of Glasgow, East Anglia, Dalhousie, and Philippines, as well as with Wetlands International).

Consultations on shared wetlands

99. In **Argentina**, and related to the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR, South American Common Market), a Reunión Especializada en Medio Ambiente (Environment Specialized Meeting) was established, with the responsibility of preparing proposals and impact assessments on the economic integration policies of shared resources. In Tierra del Fuego, the provincial authorities have established the first contacts with Chilean authorities responsible for the conservation and management of Bahía Lomas to propose bilateral cooperation in managing these two neighbouring wetlands.

100. In **Bolivia** the Autoridad Autónoma Binacional (Autonomous Binational Authority) for Lake Titicaca has presented to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) a project for the conservation of the biodiversity in Bolivia. The Pilcomayo watershed has been the subject of several meetings with Argentina and Paraguay, and several joint projects have been executed. A jointly protected area with Paraguay has been proposed. The Pantanal, on the border with Brazil and Paraguay, is being considered a centre for development by the three countries.

101. **Costa Rica** conducts bilateral activities with Nicaragua, through the SI-A-PAZ (YES-TO-PEACE) agreement, and recently a binational workshop on wetlands was conducted. In the Information Sheet for Gandoca-Manzanillo it is indicated that this new Ramsar site presents the possibility to join with Panama's San-San Pond Sak, and therefore promote the creation of a binational Ramsar site.

102. **Guatemala** seeks bilateral agreements with Mexico for the protection of the Laguna del Tigre and its area of influence.

103. **Peru** has brought forth to the Ministry of Foreign Relations a proposal to create a binational Peru-Bolivia Titicaca lake reserve.

Consultations on shared species

104. **Chile** indicates that only at an informal level consultations have been conducted with Peruvian, Bolivian, and Argentinian scientists, on flamingo conservation activities. There have been some activities carried out between NGOs and Argentinian provincial authorities for the conservation of *Chloephaga rubidiceps* (endangered in both countries).

105. **Peru** reports that it continues to collaborate with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

106. **Suriname** has a Memorandum of Understanding with Canada (Suriname Forest Service and Canadian Wildlife Service) to cooperate in the conservation of migratory shorebirds. In addition they are preparing another agreement between the governments of Suriname and France for conservation, in general, including wetlands.

Wetland Conservation Fund - projects supported since December 1992⁷

107. **Argentina** received assistance in 1992 for "Actions on Environmental Education and Nature Interpretation in current Ramsar sites in Argentina", and in 1993 for "Evaluation of the conservation status of the Laguna de los Pozuelos Natural Monument and preparation of conservation and management proposals for the Pozuelos basin and other Puna wetlands".

108. **Bolivia** received assistance in 1991 for "Technical Meeting of Ramsar sites managers", in 1994 for "Information Update on the ichthyofauna of the Titicaca Lake", and in 1995 for "Designation of a new Ramsar site: Montes de Oro".

109. **Brazil** received support in 1993 for "Ecological study of the mangrove swamps on the western coast of the State of Maranhao".

⁷ The Bureau informs that projects on training and capacity building are being supported in various countries of the region through Wetlands for the Future, an initiative of the Department of State and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States of America, and the Ramsar Convention. As of 31 December 1995 eight projects have been approved for funding.

110. **Chile** received support in 1991 for “Re-delimitation, implementation, and abiotic aquatic studies for the Ramsar site near Valdivia”, and in 1993 for “Establishment of Ramsar sites on the Andean region on the north of Chile”.
111. **Costa Rica** received assistance in 1993 for “Zoning of the Tamarindo National Wildlife Refuge”, and emergency assistance the same year for “Restoration of the Palo Verde Swamp”. Additionally, it received economic support, with special funding, from the U.S. State Department for the “Development of a Management Plan for Caño Negro”.
112. **Ecuador** in 1995 received support for “Inventory and identification of the conservation status of the wetlands in Ecuador. Phase I - lentic wetlands of the provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabí”.
113. **Guatemala** obtained support in 1992 for “Strengthening of the protection of the biotope Laguna del Tigre”, and in 1994 for “Evaluation and delimitation of the distribution of vegetation types at the Manchón-Guachumal wetland”.
114. **Honduras** received support in 1993 for “Protection of the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge”, in 1995 emergency assistance for “Land tenure surveys in Jeannette Kawas National Park”.
115. **Paraguay** obtained funding for “Conservation of the Biodiversity of the lake Ypoá wetlands” in 1995.
116. **Peru** received aid in 1992 for “Strengthening of Management of the Lagunas de Mejía National Sanctuary”; in 1993 for an expansion of the same project; in 1995 for “Preparation of Information Sheets for inclusion on new Ramsar sites in Peru”. Additionally it received economic aid, with special funding, from the U.S. Department of State for “Development of the Paracas Management Plan”.
117. **Venezuela** received support in 1995 for “Population status of *Callinectes spp* at the Cuare Wildlife Refuge” and for “Evaluation of the fisheries at the Cuare Wildlife Refuge”.

Role of international funding agencies (Recommendations 4.13 and 5.5)

118. **Argentina** reports that the GEF supports two projects related to conservation of wetlands, “Management Plan for the Coast of Patagonia” and “Improving the system of protected areas and creation of new areas” (preparation in progress). The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) finances the “Construction and Improvement of basic Infrastructure” in several areas, including the Llanquanelo Ramsar site.
119. **Chile** stresses the importance of obtaining economic support to allow carrying out at least three important activities (a) establishing a national wetland policy on wetlands; (b) conducting an inventory; and (c) preparing management plans for at least the higher priority wetlands to guarantee their ecological character and wise use of resources.
120. **Costa Rica** received economic support from the Japanese Government in 1994 and 1995 to strengthen the Conservation Areas, which implies the preparation and/or implementation of management plans for several wetlands, including Palo Verde, Gandoca-Manzanillo, Arenal and Tortuguero. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has also provided support for activities at Arenal, and the European Community at Tortuguero.
121. **Ecuador** informs that the GTZ (Germany) is financing a Proyecto de Apoyo a las Políticas Forestales (Support Project for Forestry Policies), which includes the preparation of policies to manage the mangrove swamps of the country. It has also financed an education workshop. The GEF is financing a Master Plan for the Protection of Biodiversity through Strengthening the

National System of Protected Areas.

122. **Honduras** indicates that with the support of the Quebec Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Red Ecologista Hondureña para el Desarrollo Sostenible (REHDES, Honduran Ecological Network for Sustainable Development) prepared an analysis of the situation at several protected areas on the Atlantic coast of the country. In addition it has received support from IDB for the creation of a Multiple Use Marine Park surrounding the Bay Islands.
123. **Suriname** received aid for the preparation of management plans - for Coppenamemonding as well as for other wetlands still not included in the Ramsar List - from several international organizations, for instance, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), World Wide Fund (WWF), the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP).
124. **Trinidad and Tobago** has received a loan from IDB to establish a National Park at Caroni; the Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust obtained funding from the Canadian Government to build an interpretation centre and prepare educational material.

F. WETLAND RESERVES AND TRAINING

Application of Recommendation 4.4 - Establishment of wetland reserves

125. **Argentina** recently included within the system of protected areas part of the delta of the Paraná river, in the Pre-Delta National Park (Diamante) and also plans to include the Mburucuyá as a protected area. In the Strict, Wildlife and Educational Natural Reserve of Otamendi (1990) public education and awareness programs concerning wetlands are carried out with the support of the private sector, in an original manner which makes them the best example of activities of this nature in the country. There are 37 identified protected areas (at the national, provincial or private level) that include wetlands.
126. **Costa Rica** has a protection category of National Wetland, within which 12 areas are included to date, one of them Térraba-Sierpe.
127. In **Panama**, the INRENARE has identified at least 30 wetlands which could become part of a future National Wetland Network, some of which are part of the Central American Biological Corridor of Protected Areas and under the obligations assumed by this country with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Protection of Priority Wildlife Areas in Central America.
128. **Honduras** is in the process of designating three new wetland reserves, Islas de la Bahía, La Mosquitia (the result of the interest and initiative of the Indian support group MOPOWI) and the Manglar y Lagunas de Invierno.
129. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that besides Nariva it has only one wetland reserve, Caroni Swamp. Nevertheless the local NGO, Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust manages a reserve that includes two lagoons.

Implementation of Recommendation 5.3 - Zonation of wetland reserves, and Recommendation 5.8 - Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves

130. In **Argentina**, Pilcomayo and Laguna Blanca have zoning but not Pozuelos since it only includes the lagoon. Nevertheless, Pozuelos and its watershed are part of the Biosphere Reserve, managed by the Corporación para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca de Pozuelos (CODEPO, Corporation for the Development of the Pozuelos Watershed).

131. In relation to public awareness activities, the Administration of National Parks is carrying out activities, which include interpretation panels on wetland values, pamphlets and visitor centres at the Ramsar sites under its responsibility.
132. **Bolivia** has been working since 1992 on the implementation of the National System of Protected Areas, which protects wetlands in all proposed areas. At least nine have administration, protection and management plans either completed or in force, including not only Laguna Colorada and Montes de Oro, but also the Ulla Ulla Wildlife Reserve and Noell Kempff National Park.
133. **Chile** has created the Nevado de Tres Cruces National Park, which includes several important wetlands and two “no hunting areas” in the Name marshes (1995) and Lake Budi (1993) which could be declared Private Reserves, perhaps soon. The Laguna de Mantagua was declared a National Sanctuary in 1994.
134. **Ecuador** reports that both Machalilla and the Manglares-Churute have zoning, including areas for conservation, management and use.
135. **Guatemala** has offered training workshops for environment extension officials, organised by the Fundación Interamericana de Investigaciones Tropicales (FIIT, Interamerican Tropical Research Foundation).
136. **Honduras** reports that Cuero y Salado and Jeannette Kawas have zoning. In Jeannette Kawas, the NGO in charge of managing the site carries out public awareness activities.
137. **Peru** has zoned Paracas within its management plan and has identified actions to promote public awareness pertaining to conservation of wetlands.
138. **Trinidad and Tobago** reports that Nariva enjoys zoning designed for land use and resource conservation, and that in very general terms it includes six clearly defined zones. In relation to public awareness, these activities are mainly carried out at Caroni and Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust where the amounts of visitors make it possible.
139. **Uruguay** informs that for the redelimitation of Bañados del Este y Franja Costera, core areas have been defined and are being used as a starting point for the zoning of the remaining area, using the watersheds as the basic unit.
140. In **Venezuela** law dictates the creation of legal instruments for zoning and regulation of use and activities in Areas Bajo Régimen de Administración Especial (Areas Under Special Administration Regulation).

Implementation of Recommendation 4.5 - Education and Training

141. In **Costa Rica** training and participatory workshops have been organised in the preparation of management plans for Caño Negro, Térraba-Sierpe and Gandoca-Manzanillo. Additionally, the Wetland Strategy was completed based on multidisciplinary workshops with the participation of various institutions. Térraba-Sierpe has had an environmental education programme since 1989.
142. **Ecuador** has offered a workshop on sustainable use for community development in Machalilla, as well as a course on environmental monitoring for conservation officials. A course on environmental impact assessment was offered in the Manglares-Churute.
143. In **Panama** field personnel from three Ramsar sites are constantly carrying out education tasks at

the community and local group level.

144. **Peru** has produced audiovisual materials for children and teenagers on wetland conservation. This material was specifically designed for the Arequipa region (where Lagunas de Mejía are located).
145. **Suriname** is preparing education materials for schools and audiovisual presentations as part of the activities directed towards environmental education, training and public awareness included in the Action Plan for the Conservation of Suriname.
146. **Trinidad and Tobago** receives economic aid from the IDB for the development of an interpretation centre in Caroni and also received support from the Government of Canada for the creation of the centre at Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust. They point out that no training courses for park rangers have been developed but that they would be very necessary.

G. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE CONVENTION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Effectiveness of the Convention; problems encountered in implementation etc.

147. In **Argentina**, there are not enough elements to allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. Nevertheless, one of the tasks of the National Ramsar Committee is to promote the concept of wise use and the instruments of the Convention for their application. By these means, provincial governments are beginning to realise the potential of Ramsar as an instrument for the conservation, management and wise use of their wetlands.
148. The technical instruments of the Convention should be reinforced, offering support for securing financial resources for projects concerning wetlands.
149. **Bolivia** believes that the Convention could help the Lake Titicaca Binational Authority secure the necessary funding. They also point out that the deep economic and social problems the government must solve prevent them from paying the required attention to international conservation obligations (Ramsar, CITES, Biological Diversity).
150. **Chile** considers that in order to comply with all the obligations accepted when becoming a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention, economic aid is necessary since governments face more urgent priorities (poverty, education, health). Special help is needed for training of professionals and technicians as well as for the development of some of the priority projects. It is also pointed out that political decision is necessary to pledge legal resources and methods in order to implement the principles of conservation and wise use of wetlands.
151. **Costa Rica** points out that some of the difficulties in implementing the Convention result from the lack of a management category in the national legislation and the kind of use allowed.
152. **Guatemala** reports that the Ramsar and CITES authority, in this country, lies with the same person, resulting in a close relationship between both Conventions.
153. **Honduras** believes that the Convention is the main legal tool used to prevent the turning of some coastal wetlands into agricultural lands. It also indicates that greater emphasis must be placed on the wise use of wetlands in order to secure their conservation; it recommends that Ramsar develop a strategy to incorporate local communities in the search for economic activities that consider wise use of wetlands, and offers itself as an "experimental" centre. In addition, the National Report expresses the need for better coordination of activities between Ramsar, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the GEF and UNESCO, especially the World Heritage Sites program.

154. **Trinidad and Tobago** points out that, in spite of having joined Ramsar only recently (1993), the Convention is widely recognized as the mechanism through which to advance in wetland conservation work in the country, both at the governmental and NGO levels. The implementation of the Convention is not difficult, since it receives great political support; of special mention is the work carried out at Nariva which has, even at the general public level, promoted conservation of wetlands. It is important to promote the Convention within the Caribbean region in order to increase the number of Contracting Parties in this area, and to promote the Convention as a catalyser in the search for funds. The relationship with other conventions is also important, and Ramsar could help countries in complying with certain international obligations as it allows for sustainable development.
155. **Venezuela** points out that it is necessary to give the Wetland Conservation Fund a financial stimulus, and even though the Convention is not a funding organization, it would wish to receive more technical and financial assistance. It requests that the Convention intercede or serve as a bridge to secure financial assistance from the GEF. It also states that closer links with the Convention on Biological Diversity are needed, since Ramsar can and should play a major role in matters concerning the conservation of biodiversity in wetlands, and that projects related to wetlands are allowed to receive help from the financial sources foreseen for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Futures activities under the Convention

156. **Bolivia**: biodiversity conservation project in Lake Titicaca watershed; pollution study in Lake Poopo; training of local population in Uru-Murato related to the sustainable management of wildlife (stemming from the slaughter of thousands of flamingos on Lake Poopo); waterfowl census program.
157. **Chile** emphasizes the importance that Ramsar act as a bridge between countries and GEF for securing the necessary economic resources to facilitate the development of wetland projects. It also considers very important that the different Conventions keep a permanent and close working relation to avoid duplicating efforts and wasting resources. A coordinated effort between conventions could facilitate access to international funds.
158. **Costa Rica** indicates that the SINAC along with IUCN-ORMA expects to begin work on the subregional phase of the wetland strategy by mid 1996.
159. **Ecuador** requests that the General Secretary of the Convention contact the GEF Chief of Mission in order to coordinate their activities and those of the Convention in Ecuador.
160. **Suriname** reports that it is promoting the approval of the Paris Protocol and the Regina Amendments, as well as the inclusion of Wia Wia and Bigi Pan to the Ramsar List.

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