



The Ramsar Pre-COP13 Asia Regional Meeting Chilaw, Sri Lanka, 26 February – 2 March 2018

SUMMARY REPORT

In preparation for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, a meeting for the Asian Contracting Parties to the Convention was held in Chilaw, Sri Lanka, from 26 February to 2 March 2018. The event was jointly organized by the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife of Sri Lanka. A total of 150 participants attended the meeting, including 50 representatives from 26 Ramsar Contracting Parties in the Asia region. Observers, including non-Contracting Parties to the Convention, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as wetland experts and other stakeholders were also present.

The programme of the meeting was arranged in sessions that were mainly focused on introducing and discussing the draft resolutions (DRs) that will be presented at Ramsar COP13, which will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 21 to 29 October 2018. Out of the total 28 DRs proposed for discussion at COP13, the participants discussed 16 DRs that are particularly relevant to the Asian region. The Parties representing Asia in the Standing Committee (Iraq, Nepal and the Republic of Korea) will put forward the comments, concerns and suggestions from the region during the 54th Meeting of the Standing Committee, scheduled to be held from 23-27 April 2018, in Gland, Switzerland.

In addition to the discussions on the DRs, the Asian regional meeting gave the Parties of the region a forum to interact, update and exchange views on their experiences in implementing the Ramsar Convention. The two Asian Contracting Parties that have acceded to the Convention since the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (in 2015), Kuwait and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, were introduced to the existing Parties during the meeting. Representatives of four out of the five Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) operating in the Asia region highlighted their work. These were: East Asian Australian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP); Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI); Ramsar Regional Initiative-Central Asia (RRI-CA); and Ramsar Regional Centre-East Asia (RRC-EA). The Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs) also presented updates of their work and activities in the region.

In addition two parallel sessions were also during the meeting: one focusing on implementation of the Convention in West Asia and progress with preparations for COP13; the other focusing on conservation of the Yellow (West) Sea coastal wetlands. Field visits were organized to two locations: one to the wetlands in and around Colombo City; and the other to the Wilpattu Ramsar Wetland Cluster.

Recognizing the importance of organizing such regional meetings, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat very much appreciated the support of the Government of Sri Lanka in successfully organizing the event.