

Agenda item 15.1

## Update on the status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

**Action requested:** The Standing Committee is invited to take note of the report requested for this meeting, to consider the issues listed below, to advise on activities to be undertaken by regional members of the Standing Committee and those Contracting Parties directly concerned, and to instruct the Secretariat on specific measures to be taken.

Standing Committee members are invited to contact the Parties concerned in their region by any of the issues listed below in order to encourage and to support them in addressing and solving the issues.

### Introduction

1. In the opening operational paragraph 18 of Resolution X.13 (2008), the Contracting Parties reaffirmed their commitment “to implement fully the terms of Article 3.2 [of the Convention] on reporting change and to maintain or restore the ecological character of their Ramsar Sites, including employing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as possible the matters for which a site may have been the subject of an Article 3.2 report; and, once those matters have been resolved, to submit a further report, so that both positive influences at sites and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in reporting to meetings of the Conference of the Parties in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar site network”.
2. The Standing Committee began to monitor this commitment regularly during its meetings following COP9 (2005). It formalized this procedure during its 35<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2007 by taking Decision SC35-28, which determined “that the reporting on the status of Ramsar sites should be an agenda item for every Standing Committee meeting.”
3. This document fulfills this annual reporting requirement and provides an update to the most recent report on the status of Ramsar Sites, which was submitted to the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of Standing Committee (SC41). The document lists changes reported to the Secretariat since SC41 at the end of April 2010 up to mid-March 2011. It also updates any earlier information provided to SC41 in document DOC. SC41-25, or in other documents before, including additional information provided by Parties during the meeting, as listed in the Report of the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of Standing Committee.

### Changes in the ecological character of specific Ramsar Sites

4. Article 3.2 of the Convention stipulates that “Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the

result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8”, i.e. the Ramsar Secretariat.

5. In most cases, information on ecological change at Ramsar Sites, or information on likely change, is provided at an early time to the Secretariat by third parties, e.g. concerned citizens, wetland experts, local people having a professional stake at wetland ecosystem services, or non-governmental organizations. The Secretariat has established a rapid procedure to respond to this and to put these informants in contact with the national Administrative Authorities, notably the designated Ramsar National Focal Points in their country, in order that they are informed as early as possible and are able to fulfill their reporting duties spelt out in Article 3.2.
6. This procedure includes proposing to the informants to contact the Ramsar National Focal Point directly in cases perceived to be of minor gravity or less imminent threat by the Secretariat. These cases, where no direct contact was established between the Secretariat and the Ramsar National Focal Point or the Administrative Authority on the issue, are not listed below, because the Secretariat assumes that it was possible to clarify and solve these cases through the direct contacts between the National Focal Point and the informant.
7. In cases where this was finally not possible, and in all other cases where the Secretariat, based on the information received, perceives the threat of ecological change to be significant at international level, it regularly requests further information from the National Focal Point or the head of the Administrative Authority in the country concerned. This is done to obtain a comprehensive view about the status of the Ramsar Site in question from the Administrative Authority, as required by Article 3.2.
8. This approach, in the majority of cases, helps to clarify the on-site situation rapidly, based on a transfer of relevant information by the National Focal Point to the Secretariat, i) either indicating that the perceived problem was solved in the meantime or ii) that measures to solve it are applied. In more complicated cases, the Secretariat supports the Administrative Authority in its quest to find lasting solutions by providing advice, by putting the authorities in contact with specific experts, or by helping with the preparation of a Ramsar Advisory Mission, i.e. a specific procedure adopted by the Conference of the Parties (through Recommendation 4.7) in which a mission of special experts addresses the problems encountered at a given Ramsar Site in more detail during an on-site visit, with the aim of providing advice to the Administrative Authority of the country concerned on how to find lasting solutions.
9. All Ramsar Sites where relevant information about issues addressed in Article 3.2 was exchanged between the Secretariat and the National Focal Point during the reporting period, and possibly also before, are listed in the following two lists, in alphabetical order by country.
10. The first is a list of “closed files”: cases where perceived or real problems of ecological change at Ramsar Sites were considered to be resolved by the Administrative Authority during the reporting period. The authorities involved are to be congratulated for the efforts they made to solve the issues under consideration. The list mentions all Ramsar

Sites where it was possible to “close” a formerly open Article 3.2 file at the Secretariat during the reporting period, i.e., between May 2010 and early March 2011.

11. The second list of “open files” summarizes all cases where the Secretariat has been informed about occurring or possible ecological change at Ramsar Sites during the reporting period, or before it, and has contacted the Administrative Authority about this. The list includes two situations: i) cases where the Secretariat still expects to receive further information from the national Administrative Authority and ii) cases where the Authority has already informed the Secretariat that efforts to solve the problems that threaten the ecological character of the Ramsar Site are being undertaken. The Secretariat looks forward to resolving all of these issues together with the relevant Administrative Authorities in the near future, notably in cases where the Article 3.2 file has already been “open” for a long time (sometimes dating back several years). The Secretariat is available to provide more detailed information on these cases on request. Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record are dealt with separately below; they are not included in these two lists.

*“Closed files” – closed during the period May 2010-March 2011*

**Ramsar Sites with no longer occurring ecological change (or likely change)**

12. For 15 Ramsar Sites situated in nine Parties the Administrative Authorities were able, since May 2010, to inform the Secretariat that no ecological change was any longer occurring or was any longer likely to occur. Thus, the Secretariat now considers these eleven cases “closed”:

- Australia (Bowling Green, Gippsland Lake/Macleod Morass, Corner Inlet/Nooramunga, Western Port)
- Barbados (Graeme Hall Swamp)
- Cape Verde (Lagoa de Pedro Badejo)
- Japan (Nishinoko-part of Biwa-ko)
- Mali (Delta intérieur du Niger)
- Morocco (Merja Sidi Boughaba)
- South Africa (Langebaan)
- Sweden (Umeälv Delta)
- United Kingdom (Exe Estuary, Lewis Peatlands, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg, Strangford Loch)

*“Open files” – as of 4 March 2011*

**Ramsar Sites where ecological change is taking place or is likely to take place**

13. For the following 96 Ramsar Sites situated in 48 Parties, the Secretariat has not yet received sufficient information from the Administrative Authority, reporting that the real or perceived problem of ecological change, or likely ecological change, has been successfully addressed or solved. The Secretariat looks forward to clarifying these cases through further exchanges with the Administrative Authorities, hopefully prior to COP11:

- Albania (Butrint, Lake Shkodra and River Buna)
- Armenia (Lake Sevan)
- Austria (Stauseen am Unteren Inn, Untere Lobau)
- Australia (Gippsland Lakes, Great Sandy Strait, Pulu Keeling National Park, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet, Maquarie Marshes)
- Belarus (Osveiski, Yelnia, Sporovsky Biological Reserve, Zvanets)
- Belgium (Marais d'Harchies)
- Bosnia & Herzegovina (Hutovo Blato)
- Bulgaria (Belene Islands Complex)
- Colombia (Sistema Lagunar Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta)
- Costa Rica (Caribe Noreste – Ramsar Advisory Mission in November 2010)
- China (Dalai Lake)
- Congo (Cayo-Loufoualeba)
- Croatia (Delta Neretve)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (Parc National des Virunga)
- Denmark (Nissum Fjord, Ulvedybet & Nibe Bredning, Vadehavet, Heden on Jameson Land in Greenland)
- Estonia (Endla Nature Reserve)
- France (Camargue)
- Georgia (Ispani Mire, Wetlands of Central Kolkheti)
- Germany (Mühlenberger Loch)
- Greece (Artificial lake Kerkini, Evros Delta, Lake Mikri Prespa)
- India (East Calcutta Wetlands, Sambhar Lake)
- Iceland (Gunnafjörður, Myvatn-Laxá region, Thjörsárver)
- Jamaica (Palisadoes)
- Kazakhstan (Ural River Delta and adjacent Caspian Sea coast)
- Mexico (Marismas Nacionales - Ramsar Advisory Mission in June 2010, Playa Tortuguera X'cachel-X'cachelito, Parque Nacional Cabo Pulmo)
- Moldova (Lower Prut Lakes)
- Montenegro (Skadarsko Jezero)
- Morocco (Embouchure de la Moulouya)
- Mozambique (Marromeu Complex)
- Nepal (Gosaikunda and Associated Lakes)
- Netherlands (Bargerveen, Naardermeer)
- Nicaragua (Refugio de Vida Silvestre Río San Juan – Ramsar Advisory Mission in March 2011)
- Norway (Åkersvika – Ramsar Advisory Mission in April 2010, Froan Nature Reserve & Landscape Protection Area, Giske Wetland System, Ilene & Pesterødskilen, Kurefjorden Nordre Øyeren, Øra)
- Pakistan (Kinjhar (Kalri) Lake, Haleji Lake)
- Peru (Paracas)
- Poland (Biebrzanaki National Park, Milicz Fishponds Nature Reserve)
- Romania (Danube Delta, Small Island of Braila)
- Russian Federation (Moroshechnaya River, Selenga Delta, Volga Delta, Torey Lakes)
- Serbia (Slano Kopova, Stari Begi/Carska Bara Special Nature Reserve)

- Slovenia (Lake Cerknica and its environ, Skocjan Caves, Secovlje salt pans)
- South Africa (Ndumo Game Reserve)
- Spain (Albufera de Valencia, Laguna y Arenal de Valdoviño, Marjal de Pego-Oliva, Mar Menor, Ria del Eo, Saladar de Jandía, S'Albufera de Mallorca – Ramsar Advisory Mission in October 2010, Txingudi)
- Syria (Sabkhat al-Jabbul Nature Reserve)
- Thailand (Thale Noi)
- The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Prespa Lake)
- Turkey (Gediz Delta, Lake Seyfe, Lake Uluabat, Sultan Marshes)
- Ukraine (Kyliske Mouth, Northern Part of the Dniester Liman, Tendrivska Bay and Yagorlytska Bay)
- United Kingdom (South East Coast of Jersey)

#### **Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record of wetland sites with ecological changes**

14. Currently the Montreux Record includes 51 Ramsar Sites that were listed because of human-induced threats creating ecological change. Some of them have been included in the Record for many years (some in fact up to twenty years), according to the public list provided at [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org) (> About Ramsar > Ramsar Sites > Montreux Record).
15. The table below summarizes the current status of the Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record. During the reporting period (May 2010-March 2011), no Ramsar Site has been removed from the Record; the Secretariat hopes, however, that in the time before COP11, the ongoing process to remove the seven sites listed in column A of the table can be finalized. These sites are close to removal, and the Secretariat remains at the disposal of the respective national Administrative Authorities to bring the removal process to a rapid conclusion.
16. Progress with work concerning another six sites allowed moving them, since the last report in early 2010, from column C to column B in the table below. This indicates that solutions to deal with their problems of ecological change are now actively being addressed. The Secretariat hopes to be in a position to report on the conclusions of this work before COP11.
17. For the remaining 35 Ramsar Sites, listed in column C in the table below, the Secretariat hopes to receive information from the Administrative Authorities in time before COP11, clarifying whether these sites can be removed from the Record because the problems causing their ecological change were resolved in the meantime or, on the contrary, if the problems remain and still need to be actively addressed. Again, the Secretariat hopes that these questions can be clarified well in time ahead of COP11.
18. During the reporting period (May 2010-March 2011), one Ramsar Site was newly included in the Montreux Record: the Administrative Authority of the Iraq listed Hawizeh Marsh on 28 April 2010. The ecological character of this Ramsar Site is changing due to a lowering water level in the marsh as a consequence of excessive drainage in the 1990s, which subsequent restoration efforts have failed to fully reverse. Furthermore, the construction of upstream dams has decreased the water flow from the rivers that enter the marsh. The absence of an agreement with riparian states over the sharing of water

resources entering the marsh is another reason for the lowering water level, which is exacerbated by a decrease in rainfall in the catchment basin due to climate change.

### Status of Ramsar Sites listed on the Montreux Record as of 17 March 2011

Contracting Parties	A: Ramsar Sites with an ongoing process for removal from the Montreux Record	B: Ramsar Sites where the change in ecological character is being actively addressed	C: Ramsar Sites in need of clarification if they should be removed or if the causes of their ecological change still need to be addressed
Argentina		Laguna de Llanquanelo	
Austria			Donau-March-Thaya-Auen
Azerbaijan			Kirov Bays
Belgium			De Ijzerbroeken te Diksmuide en Lo-Renige; Schorren van de Beneden Schelde
Bulgaria	Srebarna		Durankulak Lake
Chile		Carlos Anwandter Sanctuary	
Costa Rica		Palo Verde – Ramsar Advisory Mission planned for April 2011	
Croatia			Kopacki Rit
Czech Republic			Litovelske Pomoravi; Floodplain of lower Dyje River; Poodří; Trebon fishponds
Democratic Republic of Congo			Parc national des Mangroves
Denmark		Ringkøbing Fjord	
Egypt	Lake Bardawil		Lake Burullus
Germany	Wattenmeer, Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart		
Greece			Amvrakikos gulf; Axios Ludias Aliakmon delta; Kotychi laggons; Lake vistonis Porto Lagos Lake Ismaris & adjoining lagoons; Lakes Volvi & Koronia; Messolonghi lagoons; Nestos delta & adjoining lagoons
Guatemala		Laguna del Tigre – Ramsar Advisory Mission in May 2010	
India			Koleado National Park; Loktak Lake
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Anzali Mordab complex; Shadegan Marshes & Mudflats of Khor-al Amaya & Khor Musa; Shurgol Yadegarlu & Dorgeh Sangi Lakes		Hamun-e-Puzak south end; Hamun-e-Saberi & Hamun-e-Helmand; Neyriz Lakes & Kamjan Marshes
Iraq (Islamic Republic of)			Hawizeh Marsh
Jordan			Azraq Oasis
Kazakhstan			Lakes of the lower Turgay & Irgyz
Kyrgyz Republic			Isyk-Kul State Reserve with the Lake Isyk-Kul

Nicaragua			Sistema de Humedales de la Bahía de Bluefields
Senegal			Bassin du Ndiel
South Africa			Blesbokspruit; Orange River Mouth
Spain		Doñana – Ramsar Advisory Mission in January 2011	Las Tablas de Daimiel
Tunisia			Ichkeul
Uganda			Lake George
United Kingdom		The Dee Estuary; Ouse Washes	
USA		Everglades	
Uruguay		Bañados del Este y Franja Costera	

### Regular updating of Ramsar Sites information

19. The Contracting Parties have established a system of recording the most important data on Ramsar Sites in the “Ramsar Site Information Sheet” (RIS). With Resolution VI.13 adopted at COP6 (1996), Parties urged themselves “to revise the data provided at least every six years (i.e., every second Meeting of the Conference) for monitoring purposes.”
20. With the increasing number of listed Ramsar Sites, and the limited capacities (of both Parties and the Secretariat) to revise, update and integrate Ramsar Site information in the Ramsar Sites Information System (publicly accessible through [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)), the Secretariat suggests that Parties revise and update Ramsar Site information on a “rolling” basis, i.e. site by site whenever a particular opportunity or need arises. Such a rolling update is preferable to undertaking major revisions and updates for all Ramsar Sites at national level only every six years.
21. Providing updated Ramsar Site information to the Secretariat individually for each site, whenever the need for an update arises, at intervals no longer than six years, allows better spreading of the efforts needed for revision and update across time. This helps to avoid the need to find additional resources to undertake substantial revision and updating campaigns at national level, particularly for Parties that have designated a large number of Ramsar Sites.
22. Annex 1 of Resolution X.13 listed 123 Parties (77% of all Parties at that time) from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated sheets were needed as a matter of priority in November 2008. Since then, the Secretariat has received such information from Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, the Bahamas, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Denmark, Estonia, France, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Lithuania, Malaysia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America.
23. For the remaining Parties, the Secretariat recalls the strong urge expressed in paragraph 31 of Resolution X.13 for “those Parties within whose territories lie designated Ramsar Sites for which official descriptions have still not been provided, and/or for which suitable maps have still not yet been submitted, to provide as a matter of the greatest urgency the Ramsar Information Sheets and/or maps in one of the convention’s official working languages”.

24. The Secretariat continues to contact regularly those Parties which were not yet able to do so completely, as instructed through paragraph 31 of Resolution X.13. The list below provides an update of the list in Annex 1 of Resolution X.13. Currently, the list still contains 125 Parties (78% of all 160 Parties at the time of writing).

**List of Contracting Parties from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated Sheets are needed as a matter of priority**

**(as at 17 March 2011)**

ALBANIA	GAMBIA
ALGERIA	GEORGIA
ARGENTINA	GERMANY
ARMENIA	GHANA
AUSTRALIA	GREECE
AUSTRIA	GUATEMALA
AZERBAIJAN	GUINEA
BAHRAIN	GUINEA-BISSAU
BANGLADESH	HONDURAS
BARBADOS	ICELAND
BELARUS	INDIA
BELGIUM	IRAN, I. R. OF
BELIZE	IRAQ
BENIN	IRELAND
BOLIVIA	ISRAEL
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	ITALY
BRAZIL	JAMAICA
BULGARIA	JAPAN
BURKINA FASO	JORDAN
CANADA	KAZAKHSTAN
CAPE VERDE	KENYA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	KOREA, REPUBLIC OF
CHAD	KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
COLOMBIA	LATVIA
COMOROS	LEBANON
CONGO	LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA
CONGO, D.R. OF	LIECHTENSTEIN
CROATIA	LITHUANIA
CZECH REPUBLIC	LUXEMBOURG
DENMARK	MACEDONIA, THE F.Y.R. OF
DJIBOUTI	MADAGASCAR
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MALAWI
ECUADOR	MALTA
EGYPT	MAURITANIA
EL SALVADOR	MAURITIUS
ESTONIA	MEXICO
FIJI	MOLDOVA
FRANCE	MONGOLIA
GABON	MONTENEGRO



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NEPAL  
NETHERLANDS  
NEW ZEALAND  
NICARAGUA  
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NIGERIA  
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PAKISTAN  
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PANAMA  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
PARAGUAY  
PERU  
PHILIPPINES  
PORTUGAL  
ROMANIA  
RUSSIAN FED.  
RWANDA  
SAINT LUCIA  
SAMOA  
SAO TOME & PRINCIPE  
SENEGAL  
SERBIA

SIERRA LEONE  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
SLOVENIA  
SOUTH AFRICA  
SPAIN  
SRI LANKA  
SURINAME  
SWEDEN  
SWITZERLAND  
SYRIAN ARAB REP  
TAJIKISTAN  
TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF  
THAILAND  
TOGO  
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VIET NAM