

**Agenda item 10.3**

**Draft Resolution XI.xx**

**Review and streamlining of procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at designation**

**Submitted by the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

1. RECALLING that the Final Act of the 1971 International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl at Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, noted the value of collecting supplementary descriptive information on sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and that Resolution 4.7(1990) established procedures for the collation of standardised information on Ramsar Sites at the time of their listing, and NOTING that the content and structure of this Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) has been reviewed and revised by the Conference of the Contracting Parties periodically since 1990;
2. ALSO RECALLING that Resolution VI.13 (1996) urged Parties to supply updated information on listed sites whenever there is an actual or potential change in ecological character, and in any case at intervals of no greater than every six years;
3. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution X.15 (2008) established a standardised format for describing and reporting the ecological character of wetlands and outlined the conceptual linkages and overlaps between information on Ramsar Sites collated by different processes established by the Convention;
4. AWARE of the resource requirements associated with collating and reporting information on Ramsar Sites both at the time of their listing and then subsequently, especially for countries with limited capacity or current economic limitations, and thus of the need for reporting processes to be highly prioritised to essential needs;
5. ALSO AWARE, however, that well-organized data and information is fundamental to the delivery of ecologically-effective and cost-effective wetland management measures, thus ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services to human populations which in turn can have significant economic benefits;
6. CONSCIOUS of major advances in information technology and analytical techniques since the establishment of the first RIS format in 1990, and RECALLING, too, that Resolution VIII.13 (2002) requested “the Ramsar Bureau and Wetlands International, working with interested Contracting Parties, to develop protocols for the electronic submission of RISs, where this is possible and desirable, so as to facilitate the supply of data from the information systems of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Sites Database”, and CONCERNED that no progress has yet been made to that end;

7. RECALLING the adoption of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands* by Resolution VII.11 (1999) and the adoption, at subsequent meetings of the COP, of additional guidance related to the selection of Ramsar Sites;
8. ALSO RECALLING that Resolution X.10, *inter alia*, requested the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to:
  - a) review the consistency, logic, and clarity of the targets and guidelines that support Ramsar's site selection criteria;
  - b) seek the views of users of the Convention's guidance on the identification and listing of Wetlands of International Importance;
  - c) review options for revising the format of the RIS seeking to ensure linkages and synergies with other Ramsar instruments to collect and report data and information on listed sites; and
  - d) further consider data and information needs related to the description of ecological character at the point of designation (and assessment of potential change thereafter); and
9. DESIRING to promote synergies and harmonisation between international processes through multiple uses of the same data and information, and NOTING the importance of information on the location, status, and ecological character of Ramsar Sites for the World Database on Protected Areas, the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and other international processes operating at global or regional scales;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. ADOPTS the *Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision* as annexed to this Resolution;
11. ADOPTS the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands – 2012 revision* as annexed to this Resolution as guidance for the future selection and description of Ramsar Sites, both at designation and subsequently;
12. AGREES that this *RIS – 2012 revision* format, and its accompanying *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetland – 2012 revisions* will enter into use from January 2014, thus allowing an adequate period for:
  - a) Contracting Parties to complete any pending Ramsar Site designations which are in preparation using the previous format of the RIS;
  - b) Contracting Parties and others to become familiar with the new format and to allow any adjustments, should these be necessary, to national processes for the completion of such RISs; and
  - c) the Ramsar Secretariat to establish and implement a process to redevelop the Ramsar Sites Database (RSDB) to receive Ramsar Site data and information in the new format;

13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, if they so wish, to submit new Ramsar Site designations and updates of existing designations using the *RIS – 2012 revision* format prior to January 2014, as their capacities allow;
14. ADOPTS for immediate use the short-term target for the Ramsar List in 2015 in the *Strategic Framework – 2012 revision*: “To ensure that the List of Wetlands of International Importance contains at least 2,500 sites covering 250 million hectares by 2015”;
15. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to implement the terms of Resolution VIII.13 para. 11 regarding upgrading the functionality of the RSDB to allow the electronic submission of RISs by Contracting Parties and, in particular, to ensure that the RSDB captures all data and information reported by Contracting Parties in Ramsar Information Sheets and not just a subset of this data and information as at present;
16. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with the CBD, the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and other organizations to ensure that data and information held on the status of Ramsar Sites are fully integrated into other appropriate international processes and assessments;
17. CONFIRMS that the *Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision* and the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands- 2012 revision* as annexed to this Resolution supersede and replace the previously adopted *Strategic Framework*, RIS and other associated guidance on completing the RIS; and
18. EXPRESSES APPRECIATION to the STRP, past and current members of the Secretariat, and all those Contracting Parties and others (notably UK’s Joint Nature Conservation Committee, The Nature Conservancy, Wetlands International, [+ others to be added]) who have contributed to the completion of this task.

[Annex 1. *Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision*]

[Annex 2. *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands- 2012 revision*]