



Beyond the tsunamis; a way forward...

Declaration of Principles from the Participants at the World Wetlands Day Forum on Natural Mitigation of Natural Disasters

We, the participants at the World Wetlands Day Forum on Natural Mitigation of Natural Disasters recognize that:

In extreme events we cannot count only on natural systems to mitigate the effects, but, with the increasing frequency of unusual climatic events, healthy natural systems have key roles to play.

For natural disasters in general we must develop multipurpose strategies which incorporate the resilience of natural systems. Part of the multipurpose strategy must include rational land use planning which incorporates communities' views, sensitivity and livelihoods.

This planning must be based on an ecosystem approach which incorporates conservation and wise use of natural resources. An ecosystem approach includes adaptive management.

In order to implement such a strategy, more data, knowledge and understanding are needed and efforts must be made to obtain knowledge on dynamics and ecosystem functions and services. Such data must be made freely available.

Education, training and capitalization on past experiences and a comprehensive outreach programme must be part of the strategy.

There is a clear need to utilize existing legislation through better enforcement and, where necessary, strengthen the legislation.

All participating organizations agreed that continued inter-institutional cooperation, particularly in the recovery phase, will be critical. The Ramsar Convention will promulgate its existing knowledge and management advice through its Contracting Parties and more widely through the international system.

Participants agreed that networks established following the tsunamis should be strengthened and maintained during and beyond the restoration and rehabilitation phase.

Gland (Switzerland), 2nd February 2005

Participating organizations: The Ramsar Convention, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization/Global Water Partnership (WMO/GWP) Associated Programme on Flood Management, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), International Association of Hydrologists, IUCN - The World Conservation Union, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), BirdLife International, Wetlands International, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), European Space Agency.