



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Agenda item XV

Ramsar COP10 DR 28

Draft Resolution X.28

Wetlands and poverty reduction

Submitted by the Standing Committee

1. AWARE that Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 is to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” with a target of reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015; and ALSO AWARE that the implementation of the wise use provisions of the Ramsar Convention can contribute to poverty reduction and hence the achievement of this MDG and others, including MDG7 on ensuring environmental sustainability;
2. RECOGNIZING the vital role that many wetlands and their ecosystem services play in supporting people’s food security, livelihoods and human well-being, including through *inter alia* provision of food, fiber and other products, water for sanitation, drinking, irrigation and other purposes, and other services such as flood and storm surge protection; but CONCERNED that the continuing loss and degradation of wetlands reported by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and other recent assessments is placing the continued provision of such services, and hence people’s health, livelihoods and well-being, at further risk;
3. ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of understanding poverty reduction issues and opportunities in relation to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation for wetlands, including through wetland restoration activities, as indicated in Resolutions VIII.3 (2002) and [COP10 DR24] concerning climate change and wetlands;
4. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.14 (2005) on *Wetlands and poverty reduction* the Contracting Parties provided an overarching framework for Parties to address issues of poverty reduction in relation to wetland conservation and wise use, including through working in partnerships with UN agencies, the Ramsar International Organisation Partners (IOPs), national and international NGOs, and others;
5. RECOGNIZING the contribution to poverty reduction issues in relation to wetlands of the work of the partnerships between the Convention’s IOPs and others, including *inter alia* Wetlands International’s Wetlands and Poverty Reduction Project (WPRP) and Green

Coast Project, and the Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group (WLWG), especially through capacity-building and awareness raising with local communities;

6. NOTING that Resolution IX.14 did not identify all priority issues and responses relevant to poverty reduction in relation to wetlands, and that that Resolution, whilst providing a framework for action by Contracting Parties and others, did not provide guidance on ways and means of implementing such actions, and did not indicate the appropriate spatial scale(s) for implementation of different actions; and
7. THANKING the governments of Ghana, Mali and Benin, as well as Wetlands International, for their support and work in developing this Resolution;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to identify ways and means of further implementing the framework for action on wetlands and poverty reduction adopted in Resolution IX.14, and particularly action to reduce poverty amongst communities living in and around Ramsar sites, and to report on their successes, challenges, constraints and opportunities in achieving action on wetlands and poverty reduction;
9. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, the IOPs, and others to provide to the Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) examples that demonstrate that the wise use of wetland resources by local communities can provide a significant contribution to poverty reduction;
10. URGES Contracting Parties, in relation to the framework of actions set out in Resolution IX.14, also to:
 - i) continue to seek to integrate wetland wise use and management, including wetland restoration as appropriate, into all relevant national and regional policies, including in Poverty Reduction Strategies, National Climate Change Strategies (NAPAs), and water and sanitation plans and strategies, taking into account the need to base such strategies on an understanding of specific wetlands' current and projected future productivity, particularly where such wetland services may change over time;
 - ii) recognize in their planning and land management policies and strategies the role of wetlands in sanitation and human health, particularly in relation to water-borne and water-related diseases, as well as the increased risks to human health caused by degraded wetlands, as described in [COP10 DR 23] on "Wetlands and human health";
 - iii) respect and incorporate traditional knowledge and practices and local perspectives into national wetland management and sustainable livelihood initiatives, as appropriate, in order to ensure enhanced acceptance by local community groups;
 - iv) establish early warning systems and contingency plans to safeguard people against natural disasters such as cyclones, storm surges, droughts, floods, tsunamis, and take measures to protect against impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and saline intrusion, in implementation of Resolution VIII.35 (2002) on *The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems*;

- v) collaborate with relevant institutions in developing suitable ecotourism activities in wetlands in general, and especially in designated Ramsar sites, in order to provide opportunities to reduce poverty, whilst also taking into consideration the possible negative impacts of such tourism on wetland integrity and on local cultures;
 - vi) collate knowledge on best practices and promote its transfer for the wise use, extraction, processing and marketing of wetland products in order to reduce pressures on the natural resources in wetlands by adding value to enhance poverty reduction;
 - vii) establish financial incentives or investments such as micro-credit schemes including revolving funds and seed funding, especially in partnership with the private sector, that improve wetland management and contribute to tangible poverty reduction in the short and medium term, with the aim of promoting self-sufficiency and equitable benefit sharing in the long term;
 - viii) recognize the importance of identifying existing marketing networks and ways to access these before introducing any new financial incentives or investments for income-generating activities that may contribute to poverty reduction in wetlands;
 - ix) take measures to safeguard peoples' livelihoods derived from wetlands in areas where mining and other extractive industries are taking place, or are likely to take place, including in the decommissioning phases of the extractive activities, in relation to the implementation of [COP10 DR26] "Wetlands and extractive industries";
11. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel working with the IOPs and other interested organizations and networks to review the framework for actions set out in Resolution IX.14 and the additional actions identified in the present Resolution, and on the basis of these to include in its future work plan the development of specific guidance for Contracting Parties to support the implementation of these Resolutions, which might include *inter alia*:
- i) development of an integrated framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty reduction, including the identification of the most appropriate scale at which each type of poverty reduction action should take place;
 - ii) identification and development of indicators relating wetland wise use with livelihoods and poverty reduction;
 - iii) development of a practical structured 'guide to the available guidelines and tools' for addressing poverty reduction in relation to wetlands; and
 - iv) collation and review of examples of how wetland degradation affects people's livelihoods and how maintenance or restoration of the ecological character of wetlands can contribute to poverty alleviation, including from the case studies called for in paragraph 9 above; and
12. CALLS UPON development banks and other donors to support the implementation by Contracting Parties of this Resolution, including through supporting capacity-building for

governments, establishing cross-sectoral approaches to addressing poverty reduction in wetlands, and encouraging climate-related investment programmes.