

Wuxi Declaration

Asian Wetland Symposium
Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, P.R. of China
11 - 13th October 2011

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands promotes the conservation of wetland habitats, the wise use of wetland resources, and regional exchanges and cooperation to support ecological security, economic development, and human wellbeing.

Wetlands provide many products that are essential for human wellbeing: China's wetlands store about 2.7 trillion tonnes of fresh water, accounting for 96% of the total available fresh water nationwide. China's Zoige Wetland stores about 1.9 billion tonnes of peat; and on average each hectare stores 4130 tonnes of carbon. 300 million people in China depend directly on wetland products. The Government of the P.R. of China has enacted laws and regulations on wetland conservation and in the last five years has completed 205 conservation projects and restored nearly 80,000 hectares of wetlands.

The AWS Wuxi 2011 was hosted by the State Forestry Administration of the P.R. of China, Jiangsu Province People's Government, Wetlands International and the Ramsar Center Japan. It was organized by the Wuxi Municipal People's Government, Forestry Department of Jiangsu Province, Office of Wetlands Conservation and Management of the State Forestry Administration of the P.R. of China, and sponsored by the Ministry of Environment Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and others.

The participants of the AWS Wuxi 2011 call for the following actions to be taken for wetland conservation and wise use:

1. Incorporate wetland priorities into legislation, and policies and plans for economic and social development; promote scientific innovation; encourage greater cooperation between various government agencies; and increase financial allocations for wetland management.
2. Manage wetland resources in a holistic and comprehensive manner to improve the livelihoods of people, and to support sustainable development.
3. Strengthen the capacity of countries in Asia by promoting high-level dialogues, technological cooperation, and the sharing of knowledge. Establish a cooperative mechanism for wetlands conservation and wise use in Asia.
4. Protect the remaining natural wetlands and restore degraded wetlands to enhance the resilience of people and ecosystems to natural disasters and to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
5. Act to mitigate the ecological impacts of invasive species on the health and integrity of wetlands.

6. Maintain the ecological character of rice paddy ecosystems and other wetland agricultural ecosystems, e.g. by avoiding the overuse of pesticides, to secure food security, enhance biodiversity and protect human health.
7. Conserve, manage, and where necessary, restore urban and peri-urban wetlands to maximize the ecosystem services they provide for human wellbeing, and establish wetland parks and centers, where appropriate, to raise understanding about the benefits provided by wetlands.
8. Recognize the role of traditional/local ecological knowledge and practices (such as in the Sacred Forest in Hani Village in China), and incorporate these cultural values into the management of wetlands.
9. Invest in communications, education and training at the local level to help communities understand the benefits that wetlands provide, and to provide them with the tools to manage their wetlands sustainably.
10. Establish, protect and where possible and relevant, enhance an inter-connected network of habitats for migratory waterbirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, especially the tidal-flats around the Yellow Sea and Bo Sea.

The participants of this meeting undertake to promote the uptake of the "Wuxi Declaration" through their networks and, as far as possible, to implement the actions in their work. The meeting seeks the assistance of the Government of the P.R. of China and the Ramsar Secretariat to convey the "Wuxi Declaration" to the Asia Regional Ramsar Meeting to be held in Jakarta in November 2011, the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to be held in Romania in June 2012, and the 11th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in India in October 2012.

Note: Two Asian Wetland Symposia have been held in 2011 to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands. The AWS Sabah 2011 was held in Malaysia in July 2011, with the theme "Integrated Biodiversity Conservation: Linking Forests and Wetlands".