



## 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

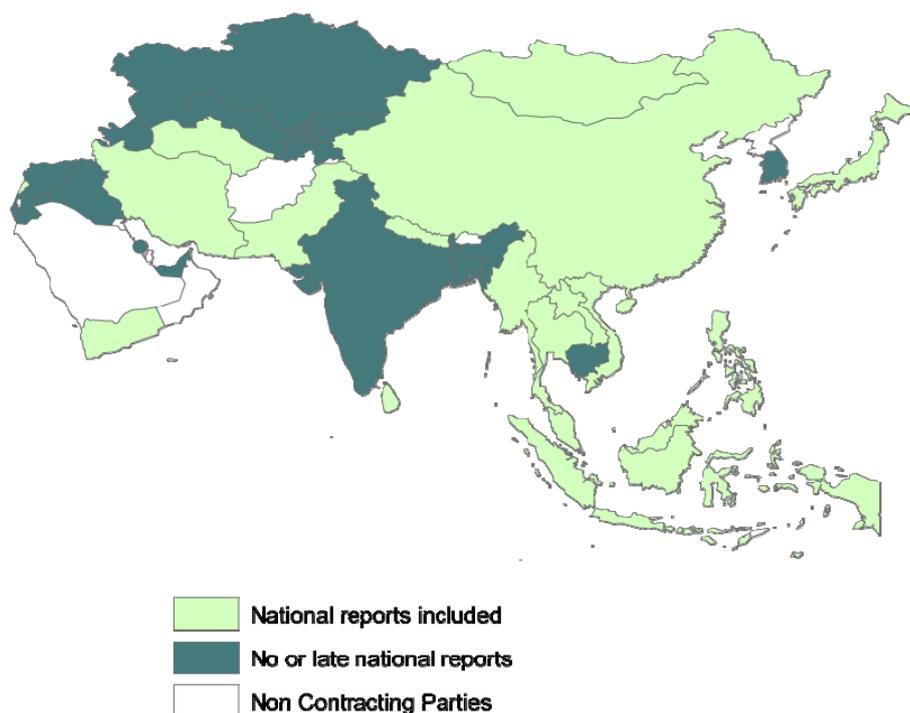
*“Wetlands: home and destination”*

Bucharest, Romania, 6-13 July 2012

**Ramsar COP11 DOC. 10a**  
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### Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in Asia

National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted at  
[http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-natl-rpts-national-reports-2012/main/ramsar/1-31-121%5E25327\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-natl-rpts-national-reports-2012/main/ramsar/1-31-121%5E25327_4000_0__).



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1. **Number of Contracting Parties in Asia (32).** Azerbaijan\*, Bahrain\*, Bangladesh\*, Cambodia\*, China, India\*\*, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq\*, Israel\*, Japan, Jordan\*, Kazakhstan\*, Kyrgyz Republic\*, Lao DPR, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea\*\*, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab

Republic\*, Tajikistan\*, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan\*, Viet Nam, Yemen.

\* Contracting Parties yet to submit National Reports

\*\* Contracting Party whose National Report was submitted too late to be included in the quantitative analysis

2. **Countries not yet Contracting Parties in Asia (11) as of March 2012.** Afghanistan, Bhutan\*, Brunei Darussalam, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, East Timor, Kuwait\*, Maldives, Oman\*, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore. (\*Preparations are being made for accession to the Convention.)
3. The overview below give examples of how the Contracting Parties in Asia have been implementing the Convention since the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP10, 2008) and is based on analysis of the 18 National Reports submitted by the time of the analysis, December 2011. This represents 56% of the Parties in Asia and if looked at on a subregional basis, National Report were received from 75% of the Parties in East Asia, 100% from the ASEAN region, 67% from South Asia, 33% from West Asia, and only 16% from Central Asia. Information for this overview was also collected from the results of regional meetings, communications with the Parties, and other sources.

## Main achievements since COP10 and priorities for 2013-2015

### A/B What steps have been taken to successfully implement the Convention?

4. Since COP10, Asian Contracting Parties (CPs) have taken a variety of new steps at the regional, national, province/state/territory, and site levels to implement the Convention. These range from initiatives that are directly related to implementation of the Convention, to activities that contribute more broadly to the wise use of wetlands.

### *Wise use of wetlands*

#### *Wetland inventory and assessment*

5. A number of Contracting Parties reported that they have developed a national wetland database (4 CPs, 22%) or are carrying out surveys to update their existing wetland database (2 CPs, 11%).

#### *Administrative structure*

6. Contracting Parties have also undertaken administrative changes to help improve and support their work on wetland conservation and implementation of the Convention. This included:
  - establishing national committees for wetlands (2 CPs, 11%);
  - establishing a variety of scientific and technical committees (e.g., on wetland science and technology; wetland parks; and wetland conservation and restoration) with relevant experts to provide advice and support to the Ramsar Administrative Authorities (AAs); and
  - expanding the capacity of the office of the Ramsar AA to implement its work on wetland conservation.

*National Wetland Strategy/ Action Plan*

7. National strategies, action plans, policies and regulations have been developed or are being updated by five Contracting Parties (28%). In China, provincial level wetland conservation regulations have also been promulgated.

*Mainstreaming wetlands into national policies*

8. Some Contracting Parties also reported that they have successfully incorporated wetland conservation issues into other relevant national strategic plans, e.g., for economic and social development, land use, biodiversity conservation, water resources (3 CPs, 16%). In Thailand, regulation has been adopted that recognizes all public wetlands as areas for environmental conservation, particularly for ecosystem services related to water retention and storage
9. Japan strongly supported the drafting and implementation of Resolution X.31, *Enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies as wetland systems* (2008) and, through that work, was not only able to highlight the importance of rice paddies internationally but also, on the national level, was able to bring together a range of government ministries, NGOs, and local community groups to discuss and provide support for the conservation and wise use of rice paddies.

*Financing for wetland conservation*

10. China said that it has established a stable financing mechanism for wetland conservation, monitoring and restoration projects, and, under this mechanism, significant central and local government funding has been provided to implement the National Wetland Conservation Programme.

*Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)*

11. Over 80% of the Contracting Parties reported that they carry out CEPA activities for stakeholders at all levels and sectors of the community, to raise greater awareness of the importance of wetlands and the need for their conservation. This included World Wetland Day (WWD) events, programmes at wetland visitor centres, dedicated websites focusing on wetland issues in the country, and through other opportunities that may occur. China and the I.R. Iran reported they have drafted National CEPA Action Plans.

*Asian Wetland Symposia*

12. Over the past decade, the Ramsar Centre Japan has always organized an 'Asian Wetland Symposium' (AWS) in the year preceding the Ramsar COP, the purpose of which is to bring wetland stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds to exchange experience and raise greater awareness of wetland conservation issues in the region. As COP11 is planned for 2012, it was decided to hold an additional AWS in 2011 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Convention. The first AWS was held in Sabah, Malaysia (July 2011; Appendix 6), and the second was held in Wuxi, China (October 2011; Appendix 7).
13. To further mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ramsar Convention in 2011, I.R. Iran, Japan and Kazakhstan held special celebrations, and the Secretariat would like to express its gratitude to those countries for their generous support.

*Capacity building*

14. Many training courses on a variety of wetland-related topics have been organized across the region over the past triennium, and many Contracting Parties were involved in either organizing or participating in them. In Mongolia, training centres have been established at

the Ogi Lake Ramsar Site with support from Japan's Ministry of Environment and at the Khar Us Lake National Park.

*Ramsar Regional Centres*

15. Many Contracting Parties expressed their appreciation for the work of the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRC) – Central and West Asia and the RRC-East Asia, in organizing wetland training courses and subregional and national workshops to encourage better networking between Contracting Parties in the region. The Secretariat would like to thank the governments of the I.R. Iran and the Republic of Korea respectively for hosting the secretariats of these two Ramsar Regional Centres.

***Conservation and management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands***

16. Since COP10, Asian Contracting Parties have listed 49 new Ramsar Sites, thus increasing the total number of Ramsar Sites in the region to 263 by April 2012, covering a total area of approximately 16 million hectares. This is an area that is larger than that of Bangladesh.

*Benefits of Ramsar Site designation*

17. In their National Report, Indonesia explained the benefits that their wetlands received from designation as Ramsar Sites. These included raising the profile of the site so that with more promotion, it can more easily access support for community development programmes to help raise the welfare of communities living in and around the Ramsar Sites. Designation also helps to obtain full support from local stakeholders, especially the government and communities, to further strengthen the cooperation and collaborative management of the wetlands.

*Future designation of Ramsar Sites*

18. Indonesia said that in the coming triennium, it will designate further Ramsar Sites to create a network of sites which represents all of the country's most important wetlands, especially those that until recently were less well recognized due to lack of knowledge or awareness (e.g., subterranean karst, endemic and endangered species habitat, and sites representative of the biogeographic region). Five other Contracting Parties (28%) also reported that they planned to designate further Ramsar Sites in the coming triennium.

*Site management committee and working with local communities*

19. Designation as a Ramsar Site is just one part of the process for the long-term conservation of any priority wetland. Contracting Parties also reported establishing broad-based site management committees at their Ramsar Sites (e.g., I.R. Iran and Lao PDR) and working with the local community to develop co-management models that ensure the sustainable use of the wetlands and their resources, e.g., clams and oysters (4 CPs, 22%). Contracting Parties also reported that they are preparing or have developed management plans for their Ramsar Sites (5 CPs, 28%).

*Conservation of other priority wetlands*

20. Contracting Parties have not only made the commitment to manage for the conservation of wetlands that have been designated as Ramsar Sites but also, as far as possible, to ensure the wise use of wetlands throughout their territory. As a result, Parties reported providing protection for their other important wetlands, especially those which are potential future Ramsar Sites (e.g., the coastal lagoon of Las Pinas and Paranaque, Philippines). To ensure the wise use of China's wetlands, there is a programme to develop wetland parks across

the country. These cover a range of wetland habitats and they now playing an important role in the country's wetland conservation system. Some 247 such wetland parks have already been established, covering nearly 1.2 million hectares.

*Ramsar Site restoration*

21. Asian Contracting Parties have also been carrying out restoration of their Ramsar Sites and other important wetlands. Examples include the work at the Alagol, Almagol, Ajigol Ramsar Site (I.R. Iran) such that it has now been successfully removed from the Montreux Record. Another example is the post-war clean-up that has taken place at the Palm Island Nature Reserve (Lebanon). Three other Contracting Parties (17%) also reported carrying out a variety of restoration projects.

*Monitoring and research*

22. A variety of monitoring activities are being conducted at Ramsar Sites to provide regular updated information on their status, including parameters dealing with the water quality and quantity, biodiversity, and socio-economics of the communities living in and around the sites (4 CPs, 22%). Contracting Parties such as China have developed technical guidelines on the monitoring of Ramsar Sites and assessment of the ecological conditions.

***International cooperation***

23. Asian Contracting Parties are working on a range of regional wetland conservation initiatives and projects, such as the 'Coral Triangle Initiative' shared by the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands to safeguard the region's marine and coastal biological resources. Other Parties are already working on, or developing projects in shared river basins, such as:
- to study and assess the impact of climate change and dam construction in the Mekong mainstream on the important wetlands in the Mekong River Delta (Viet Nam); and
  - to address the problem of dust storms in the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin, which are causing socio-economic and environmental problems to the countries in the middle and lower parts of the basin (I.R. Iran).

**C. What have been the greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention?**

*Insufficient human resources*

24. One of the two most common difficulties that Asian Contracting Parties reported in implementing the Convention was not having sufficient staff and capacity (8 CPs, 44%). In many cases, the staff in the offices of the Ramsar AA are already overloaded, with many challenges to deal with. This problem is not just with office staff, however, but also with staff in the field such that Ramsar Sites are often understaffed, or have no staff for wardening at all.

*Lack of awareness*

25. The second most common difficulty was a lack of awareness about the value of wetlands, not only amongst the public, but also amongst the decision makers (8 CPs, 44%). The inadequate recognition of wetland values at the government level leads to wetland conservation needs not being fully integrated into the development plans and strategies across the different government departments, and at the different levels of government. At

the site level, local stakeholders may have a low commitment to wetland conservation which can lead to conflicts with the site management team. A number of Parties recommended that the Convention conduct a study of the economic benefits from wetland conservation which can be used to raise awareness amongst decision-makers, the private sector and other stakeholders about the value of wetland conservation.

*Wetlands outside protected areas*

26. Contracting Parties mentioned other impacts caused by the low awareness of the importance of wetlands (6 CPs, 33%):
- inappropriate developments, e.g., dams and other water control structures, being proposed in the catchment upstream of important wetlands or Ramsar Sites which if approved would have negative impacts on the downstream areas;
  - insufficient legislation and inadequate enforcement of existing legislation to control illegal or inappropriate activities in the buffer zone around wetland protected areas, e.g., inappropriate logging leading to silt, leading to loss of buffer function and silt being washed into the wetland.

*Insufficient funding*

27. Lack of sufficient funding to implement the Convention, e.g., for surveys, site management, monitoring and training, was also cited as being a major difficulty for a number of Contracting Parties (6 CPs, 33%). This is especially true for Parties whose wetlands may be located in remote areas.

*Insufficient coordination*

28. As wetlands are often multiple-use areas, several stakeholder groups, including government agencies, private sector, NGOs and the local community, may have responsibility for the management and use of the site, but in many cases there is insufficient coordination among them (6 CPs, 33%). This situation is sometimes exacerbated because there tends to be a lack of cooperation between government departments, and of trust between the government and the private sector, NGOs, and the community.

*Lack of government policy for wetland conservation*

29. Asian Contracting Parties also reported the problem of the lack of appropriate legislation for the conservation of wetlands, and that existing land and water resources regulations are incompatible with wetland conservation and wise use (6 CPs, 33%). They also reported that the existing legislation was not sufficient for protecting wetlands from harmful investment projects.

*Convention language issues*

30. Over the past triennium, Contracting Parties from both Central and West Asia have reported that the lack of the use of Russian and Arabic (respectively) is hampering their implementation of the Convention. As a result, the Secretariat found funds from various sources, including from the Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia, to translate the Ramsar Handbooks and Manual into Russian and Arabic. However, this problem of language will be a long-term one unless funds are found for the Secretariat to have more translation and interpretation support. The language problem may be one reason why so few National Reports were returned from Central Asia (16%) and from West Asia (33%).

**D. What are the priorities for future implementation of the Convention?**

***Wetland wise use***

*Establishing and updating national wetland inventories*

31. A large number of Contracting Parties recognized the need to conduct surveys and inventories of their important wetland sites (8 CPs, 44%), including information on the communities living in and around them, in order to set up a strong baseline for decision making for the conservation and wise use of the sites. And, in countries where such inventories exist, to update them when necessary.

*National wetland policy*

32. Many Parties mentioned the importance of drafting a national strategy for wetlands that is harmonized with other relevant national strategies, e.g. for water, biodiversity and the environment in general, and to implement that strategy (8 CPs, 44%).

*Coordination and communication*

33. A priority cited by some Parties is to improve coordination and communication between institutions and stakeholders at all levels, in order to avoid duplication of effort and waste of resources. This may include the establishment of a broad-based national wetland committee or equivalent, with membership from all the relevant stakeholders (4 CPs, 22%).

***Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)***

*Raising greater awareness*

34. Contracting Parties believed that there is a strong need to raise greater awareness about the importance of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention from the level of the highest decision makers to the private sector so as to mainstream wetland conservation into economic and social development practices, and also to the level of the local communities, especially those living in the buffer areas around the wetland (8 CPs, 44%).
35. Other CEPA issues that Contracting Parties reported were to complete their national action plans for CEPA (2 CPs, 11%); develop visitor centers at their wetlands (2 CPs, 11%); gain greater access to capacity building activities (2 CPs, 11%); and to attend study tours to other Ramsar Sites to exchange information on best practices.

***Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)***

*Designation of Ramsar Sites*

36. During discussions, a number of Contracting Parties mentioned that whilst they considered the designation of Ramsar Sites to be one of the important 'pillars' of the Convention, the focus should not be on the quantity of Ramsar Sites but on the quality, i.e., to focus on the listing of priority wetlands and those where the management authority is able to find sufficient resources to conserve the sites effectively. In the coming triennium, seven Contracting Parties (39%) said that they aim to designate additional Ramsar Sites.

*Management of Ramsar Sites*

37. Important aspects of the management of Ramsar Sites that were reported included:

- working with local stakeholders to develop and implement a management plan for the site that incorporates its scientific, socio-economic, and cultural values (4 CPs, 22%);
- building the capacity of the site managers in the conservation and wise use of the wetland (2 CPs, 11%); and
- developing visit (tourism) programmes at the Ramsar Site (2 CPs, 11%).

38. Other considerations for site management included:

- the need for a framework for conserving wetlands that are under private ownership;
- determining and ensuring the environmental water requirements for the wetland;
- developing buffer zones that are compatible with the conservation of the Ramsar Site.

### *Cooperation*

39. Contracting Parties mentioned a range of activities that they considered were priorities for future implementation of the Convention. On the national level, this included:

- developing closer cooperative relations with the private sector who have the potential to play an increasingly important role in wetland conservation and wise use through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes;
- working more closely with the scientific and research communities, since they can help to provide information on the country's wetlands; and
- increasingly taking a basin level approach to managing wetlands as natural infrastructures so that they can contribute to tackling issues such as minimizing the impacts from floods and drought.

40. On the regional level, Contracting Parties suggested that the Convention could play a greater role in enhancing transboundary and regional cooperation due to the many upstream/ downstream issues that transboundary wetlands/rivers in Asia are facing at present.

### **E. Does the Contracting Party have any proposals concerning adjustment to the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan?**

41. Most Contracting Parties did not have proposals but there was a suggestion that the Convention should place greater emphasis on the conservation and wise use of regionally significant wetlands which do not yet satisfy the Convention's criteria for international importance.

### **F. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat?**

#### *CEPA*

42. A variety of suggestions were provided relating to improving communication and networking, such as (4 CPs, 22%):

- promote the exchange of experience between Contracting Parties through the organization of subregional workshops for site managers and other stakeholders, e.g., on wetland site management and conservation (3 CPs, 17%);
- strengthen communication and information sharing between the focal points of different MEAs; and
- promote 'sister sites' programmes between Contracting Parties.

*Funding support*

43. The Secretariat should support or facilitate Contracting Parties in seeking better access to funding, such as from the GEF, or look into establishing a trust fund to support wetland conservation (3 CPs, 17%).

*Technical guidance and support*

44. Contracting Parties requested access to technical guides for the conservation and wise use of wetland (including Ramsar Sites); the identification of priority wetlands for designation as Ramsar Sites; wetland management planning, monitoring and restoration; and how to draft wetland ecological character descriptions (5 CPs, 28%). They also suggested that the Secretariat could act as an adviser or help to coordinate expert advice, e.g., regarding development projects affecting wetlands (3 CPs, 17%).

*Wetland and climate change*

45. Some Parties suggested that the Ramsar Secretariat should play a more proactive role in UNFCCC processes due to the impacts of climate change on wetlands and the potential of blue carbon in carbon sequestration. The Secretariat should consider allocating resources for mainstreaming climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation as priorities for wetlands.

**G. Does the Contracting Party have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's IOPs?**

46. The main request was for the International Organization Partners (IOPs) to provide more technical and funding support (9 CPs, 50%), e.g., guidance on identifying and mapping key wetland sites and determining their status; advice on site management and restoration techniques, capacity building activities, CEPA activities with local communities in and adjacent to Ramsar Sites to identify means to improve their livelihoods.

**H. How can implementation of the Ramsar Convention be better linked with the implementation of other MEAs, especially those in the 'Biodiversity cluster'?**

47. Contracting Parties admitted that presently the link is weak between implementation of the Ramsar Convention and that of other MEAs in some countries (2 CPs, 11%). However, some Parties are overcoming this difficulty in a number of ways:
- the Administrative Authority for the MEAs (including the Ramsar Convention) being placed in the same ministry (4 CPs, 22%);
  - establishing national (Ramsar/wetland) committees in which the focal points from the relevant MEAs are members (3 CPs, 17%);
  - through the harmonization of national strategic and implementation plans for the MEAs, e.g., National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP), National

Wetland Action Plans, etc. (4 CPs, 22%). This might also lead to harmonization of national reporting to biodiversity-related MEAs in order to reduce reporting burdens.

**I. How can Ramsar implementation be better linked with the implementation of water policy/strategy and other strategies in the country?**

48. The need for better linkage between national Ramsar implementation with that of water policy has already been highlighted by Resolution X.3 *The Changwon Declaration*. In some countries, this has been successfully done by directly incorporating the goals of the Ramsar Convention into the relevant national policy concerning water policy (4 CPs, 22%). In this way, wetland conservation and wise use can be implemented by different stakeholders through a range of programmes. However, some Parties suggested that such policies may not be being implemented effectively in their countries.
49. Other Parties said that it is difficult to integrate Ramsar implementation into water policy because of a lack of understanding of the importance of wetlands and the role of the Ramsar Convention from the central level of government to the local level. As a result, Contracting Parties are trying to overcome this problems by:
- forming national committees responsible for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention that have membership from the different government agencies and organizations with responsibility for the management and use of water and wetlands (e.g., water resources, climate change, poverty reduction, sustainable development, industries, exploitation, agriculture, sanitation, biodiversity, energy), holding regular meetings, and maintaining frequent communication (5 CPs, 28%);
  - organizing regular meetings with other relevant ministries (2 CPs, 11%).
50. Two of the Contracting Parties (11%) noted that implementation of the Ramsar Convention should not only be linked with water policy, but also with poverty reduction, food security, and other related issues.

**J. Does the Party have any other general comments on the implementation of the Convention?**

*Funding mechanism for conservation*

51. Some Parties suggested that the Convention should have a strong financial mechanism to assist developing countries to enhance domestic efforts to conserve and promote wise use of wetlands (4 CPs, 22%).

*Improve communication*

52. Ways should be found to improve communication between Contracting Parties, and between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat (4 CPs, 22%), and this could be facilitated by the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRC). Exchange visits should also be organized to share knowledge and expertise.

*Wetlands and Ramsar Sites*

53. Across much of Asia, Contracting Parties stressed the importance of designating and managing Ramsar Sites not only to benefit the environment but also, and maybe more importantly, to benefit the local communities. Japan observed that the designation and

wise use of a Ramsar Site should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather that it should be part of the strategy for the sustainable development or rejuvenation of a site or region. Indonesia commented that the management of Ramsar Site should be integrated with the management of the buffer zone, both in terms of ecosystem conservation and of improving the welfare of the community.

*Improved sharing of transboundary waters*

54. The Asia region contains some of the most important transboundary rivers in the world, e.g., the Indus, Mekong, Syr Darya, Tigris and Euphrates. With rapid economic development in the region and reduced rainfall in some areas due to climate change, certain countries are constructing dams and other water control structures to generate hydropower and store water. There has also been increasing extraction of water from these rivers for farming and urban uses. As many of the countries that share the basin of these rivers are Ramsar Contracting Parties, the Parties suggested that the Convention should play a greater role in resolving some of the upstream/downstream issues in the region with the support of other regional partners.

## Goal 1. The wise use of wetlands

### STRATEGY 1.1: Wetland inventory and assessment

*National Wetland Inventory (1.1.1 – 1.1.2)*

55. Presently, some Asian Contracting Parties are still relying on the *Directory of Asian Wetlands*, published in 1989, as the basis for the inventory of wetlands in their countries. However, an increasing number of Parties are developing, or have developed, more updated and comprehensive inventories, with the percentage increasing from 40% at COP9 to 50% at COP10 and 53% at COP11. This compares with 43% of Parties worldwide. China reported that in 2008 it launched its second national wetland resource survey, which will be completed in 2012. The I.R. Iran is developing a National Wetlands Database that is based on the MedWet model, and there have been discussions amongst other West Asian Parties to similarly use the MedWet database in order to standardize the system within their subregion.
56. Although some Parties may not have ‘national’ wetland inventories, they are however developing wetland inventories at the states/provinces level, e.g. Malaysia.
57. Over half (59%) of the Asian Parties reported having wetland inventories that are accessible to all relevant stakeholders. Whilst some of this information is in printed form (Indonesia), other inventories are available on the Internet (Iran, Japan, Thailand).

*Condition of Ramsar Sites and wetlands in the country (1.1.3)*

58. When Asian Contracting Parties were asked about the condition of their Ramsar Sites compared with that of other wetlands in the country over the past triennium (table below), a greater percentage of Parties reported that the condition of their Ramsar Sites were improving than that they were deteriorating. For other wetlands in the country, however, the trend was the reverse, with a higher percentage reporting that the condition of their other wetlands was deteriorating. Globally, the trend was similar, with the condition of Ramsar Sites being better than that of their other wetlands.

	% of Asian Contracting Parties reporting	
	Condition improving	Condition deteriorating
Ramsar Sites	41%	12%
Other wetlands	12%	47%

59. The improvement in the condition of the Ramsar Sites was said to have been because of a) greater awareness and participation of local people in management affairs; b) improved capacity of wetland managers; c) availability of additional finances through development projects and donor assistance; and d) improved management based on updated and more reliable information. Where the condition of Ramsar Sites was deteriorating due to a reduction in rainfall because of climate change, the Ramsar AA would take a range of measures to restore the site. This might include diverting water from reservoirs into the site at critical periods (China), or trying to improve water efficiency in the agriculture sector to retain more water for the wetland (Iran). Despite these steps, many Ramsar Sites are still threatened, especially from activities in the catchment outside the site.
60. Parties reported that the main threats to other wetlands in the country was originating in the catchment upstream of the site. They included:
- sedimentation and pollution caused by land use changes (e.g., the conversion of forest area to agricultural farms), inorganic wastes from industrial areas, the increasing nutrient loads from aquaculture and agricultural areas, as well as from municipalities (Indonesia);
  - over-abstraction of water and overfishing (Iran).
61. Whilst heavy rains and floods may have devastating impacts on lives and livelihoods, they may also provide an opportunity to restore the hydrology of wetlands. In addition, wetlands could be seen as a natural infrastructure to store the water from heavy rains, and so prevent flood damage downstream (Pakistan, Thailand).

### STRATEGY 1.3: Policy, legislation and institutions

#### *National Wetland Policy (1.3.1 – 1.3.2)*

62. There has been an encouraging increase in the percentage of Asian Contracting Parties reporting having developed some form of national policy for wetlands from the time of COP9 (36%), to COP10 (58%), and now to COP11 (71%). Whilst some Parties may have a separate 'National Wetland Plan' (5 CPs, 28%), others have included such policy within other policies, such as for biodiversity conservation (Japan). In addition, some Parties have developed action plans for specific wetland types, such as peatlands (Indonesia, Malaysia).
63. Some 59% of the Parties said that their national policy on wetlands incorporated 2002 WSSD targets and actions. For others, however, they replied that their policy on wetlands predated the WSSD and that when their policy on wetlands is updated, it will not only include WSSD targets but also the Aichi Targets on Biodiversity and will address the 'Changwon Declaration'.

#### *Incorporation of wetland issues into other national strategies and planning processes (1.3.3)*

64. A high percentage of Asian Contracting Parties reported having incorporated wetland issues into their national strategies and plans, such as:

- their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) (82%), and coastal and marine resource management plans (82%), but;
  - less so for national forest programmes (65%), water resource management and water efficiency plans (65%), national strategies for sustainable development (59%), and national policies or measures on agriculture (53%);
  - and least for poverty eradication strategies (35%).
65. However, some Parties explained that wetland issues were not well understood among policy and decision makers. There may also be no clear mandate in the government about which agency is responsible for wetlands. While the Ramsar AA may be responsible for Ramsar Sites, they may have no responsibility for other wetlands. They also said that whilst the NBSAP may include a focus on wetlands, the achievement of wetland conservation goals has not been well realized.

*Environmental assessment (1.3.4 – 1.3.6)*

66. Whilst 65% of Asian Parties reported that Environmental Impact Assessments are conducted on projects that have been identified as potentially having an impact on wetlands, only 49% said that Strategic Environmental Assessments are applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may have such an impact. For one Party that recently acceded to the Convention, it was reported that the EIA process was still weak in the country and that wetlands important for flood control surrounding the capital were being developed without any EIA being conducted. Indonesia observed that there needs to be a stronger understanding and recognition of the values of natural ecosystems (including wetlands) to support economic and social development. Environmental factors must always be considered in the process of policy development.
67. The Convention has produced guidance on the EIA process to assist Parties, particularly those with relatively weak EIA legislation, but only 24% of Parties indicated that they have made amendments to existing legislation to reflect Ramsar commitments. However, 35% did say that they were in the process of making amendments, which is a positive sign.
68. Interestingly, Lao PDR reported that they are in the process of assessing the customary laws on natural resource conservation (e.g., sacred sites and animals) practiced by local people in and around the Xe Champhone Ramsar Site. The results of this assessment will likely influence future legislation or future amendments to current legislation.

**STRATEGY 1.4: Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services**

*Assessment of ecosystem benefits/ services provided by Ramsar Sites (1.4.1)*

69. Only 29% of the Asian Contracting Parties mentioned that they have made assessments of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by their Ramsar Sites. However, 47% of Parties said that they are in the process of doing so. Countries and sites where such assessments have been done include China (Dongting Lake, Poyang Lakes) and I.R. Iran (Khorkhoran, Choghakhor, Hamoon, Amirkelaye and Anzali), as well as in Lao, Lebanon, Pakistan and the Philippines.

*Recognition of wetland services (1.4.2 – 1.4.4)*

70. Some 59% of Parties reported that they have included the socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands in the management planning for Ramsar Sites, especially those sites with indigenous communities. A further 47% of Parties said that they have implemented

wetland programmes that contribute to poverty alleviation and/or food and water security plans, and a smaller 35% mentioned having applied the guiding principles on cultural values of wetlands.

### **STRATEGY 1.5: Recognition of the role of the Convention**

#### *Contribution of other MEAs to implementation of the Ramsar Convention (1.5.1)*

71. There was a high (71%) response from Asian Contracting Parties that steps have been taken to ensure that the focal points for other MEAs are contributing to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. This was said to have been through inviting some of the focal points onto the national implementing committee for Ramsar, or through the focal point being based in the same agency. However, other Parties reported that the linkage is still poor and needs to be institutionalized to prevent duplication of effort.

#### *Changwon Declaration (1.5.2 -1.5.3)*

72. The ‘Changwon Declaration on human-well being and wetlands’ (Resolution X.3, 2008) contained key messages about the role of wetland conservation and wise use in contributing towards six areas of sustainable development, i.e., water, climate change, people’s livelihoods, human health, land use change, and biodiversity. The Declaration was also a call to the Ramsar community to reach out to workers in those sectors and include them in the Convention’s work on wetlands. In terms of disseminating the Declaration,
- 53% of Parties said that that they had brought it to the attention of civil society;
  - 41% to the attention of the private sector;
  - 29% to the attention of parliament;
  - 24% to the attention of the head of state; and
  - only 12% mentioned that they used the Changwon Declaration to inform the positions of the national delegation to other external processes.

#### *Translation of the Changwon Declaration (1.5.4)*

73. Under half of the Parties (41%) reported that they had translated and disseminated the Changwon Declaration into local languages for use within the country. This apparently low response may have been due to the Declaration having already been translated into 15 languages which are available on the Ramsar website, so there was no need for some Parties to translate it themselves.

### **STRATEGY 1.6: Science-based management of wetlands**

#### *Research to inform wetland policies and plans (1.6.1)*

74. Asian Contracting Parties reported that they had conducted research to inform wetland policies and plans in the country on a) agriculture-wetland interactions (59%), b) climate change (71%), and c) valuation of ecosystem services (59%). In addition, Parties also mentioned that they have conducted various other studies to inform a range of wetland policies and plans.
75. Only 29% of Parties mentioned that their wetland site management plans had been based on scientific research, although 55% did mention that such research was in progress. However, some Parties said that science was only one consideration in management planning since the process is often a participatory one, through discussion with concerned

stakeholders whose views were taken into account. Other Parties said that they would like to use scientific data, but it is often not available and so it will be considered in later revisions of the plan.

### **STRATEGY 1.7: Integrated Water Resources Management**

#### *Use of the Convention's water-related guidance (1.7.1)*

76. A relatively small number of Contracting Parties (35%) reported having used the Convention's water-related guidance and having found it helpful in informing decision-making related to water resource planning and management. Unfortunately, it is not clear if the low response was due to few Parties having used the guidance or whether few Parties found it useful. In China, the guidance was said to have been applied to the 'National Integrated Water Resources Plan' (2010) and government's Decision on 'Expediting Water Conservancy Reform and Development' (2011). In the Philippines, the guidance was used in the preparation of the 'Integrated Water Resources Management Plan Framework' and the 'Philippine Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plan'.

#### *Treating wetlands as natural water infrastructure (1.7.2)*

77. Just less than half of the Parties (47%) said that their country's water governance and management treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the river basin scale. An example of the Parties that replied in the affirmative was China, which said that the country's Water Administrative Authority had fully recognized the important function of wetlands so that wetland conservation and restoration has been included in the 'National Integrated Water Resource Plan' (2010). This prioritizes the use of water for domestic, production and ecological purposes, and takes into account the amount of water needed for ecological water demand. Similarly, the 'Decision on Expediting Water Conservancy Reform and Development' (2011) was said to be the guiding principle for integrated water resource management. In Viet Nam, however, there is little integration in the management of water resources in the country's river basins because of a lack of close cooperation between the two agencies responsible for managing the country's water resources, the Department of Water Resources and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

#### *Incorporating CEPA into catchment planning (1.7.3)*

78. Over half of the Parties (53%) said that they have incorporated CEPA expertise and tools into catchment/river basin planning and management. In China, for example, the Yangtze River Forum and Yangtze River Wetland Conservation Network have been established to bring together the major stakeholders (e.g., government, research groups and the public) to take a collective approach to tackling the environmental and social issues along the entire Yangtze Basin. In Sabah, Malaysia, the River Environment Education Programme (REEP) is being conducted to conserve the Crocker Range Area.

#### *Use of the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal zone management (1.7.4)*

79. Only 24% of the Parties said that they had applied the Convention's guidance on wetlands and coastal zone management to ICZM planning and decision-making. China said that the country's 'National Marine Development Plan Outline' (2008) incorporated and applied the guidance whilst Malaysia reported that a draft ICZM plan is in progress which incorporates elements from the Convention's guidance. However, the I.R. Iran said that they have taken the guidance into consideration but it did not seem sufficient and needed more work.

*Policies for enhancing the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation (1.7.5)*

80. A small number of Parties (29%) said that they have established policies and guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change.

*Policies for enhancing the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation (1.7.6)*

81. A similar small number of Parties (29%) said that they have formulated plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands and water in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems.

**STRATEGY 1.8: Wetland restoration***Wetland restoration (1.8.1 – 1.8.3)*

82. Some 65% of Asian Contracting Parties reported having identified priority sites for wetland restoration, and 71% said that they had implemented wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes or projects. However, a smaller percentage of Parties (47%) said that they had used Ramsar guidance in designing and implementing the programmes and projects. Such restoration projects were conducted in China (e.g., at Da Jiuhu and Hangzhou Xixi Wetlands Ramsar Site), I.R. Iran (e.g., at Yadegarlou, and at Alagol, Almagol and Ajigol Ramsar Site, which was removed from the Montreux Record), Japan (e.g., Izu-numa, Kushiro-shitsugen), Lebanon (e.g., Palm Islands Nature Reserve), and Malaysia (e.g., Tasek Bera). Such projects were conducted not only by governments but also by NGOs as well as by the local communities.

**STRATEGY 1.9: Invasive alien species***Managing invasive alien species (1.9.1 – 1.9.2)*

83. Only 24% of Contracting Parties reported having a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. A similar percentage (24%) of Parties reported having established national invasive species control and management policies or guidelines for wetlands. The low response may have been because whilst Parties do have inventories or management policy for alien species, those policies are not specifically for wetlands. In Hong Kong (China), a management strategy has been developed and is being implemented to manage the exotic mangrove *Sonneratia* at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site.

**STRATEGY 1.10: Private sector***Involvement of the private sector in wetland conservation (1.10.1 – 1.10.2).*

84. An equal number of Contracting Parties reported that private sector actors were involved in activities for both Ramsar Sites (65%) and wetlands in general (65%). However, a smaller percentage of Parties (35%) said that they had encouraged the private sector to apply the Ramsar wise use principle and guidance in their activities and investments concerning wetlands.
85. Examples of the involvement of the private sector include:
- China: many privately owned enterprises have participated in the construction of wetland parks. In Hong Kong, the Town Planning Guidelines promote a 'Private-public Partnership' approach for private development proposals in the buffer area

- adjacent to the Ramsar Site, to ensure long-term commitment for wetland conservation and management;
- Lao PDR: MMG has funded crocodile conservation in Xe Champhone Ramsar Site and Beer Lao has funded conservation activities at That Luang marsh, Vientiane;
  - Malaysia: Ricoh (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and Ricoh Japan have contributed to mangrove replanting efforts together with NGOs. The Malaysian Nature Society has worked with Coca Cola to promote the importance of water conservation to schools and local universities. At Tasek Bera, there has been collaboration with plantation companies to develop green practices in the buffer zone and catchment area towards the conservation of the site, e.g., filtering the waste from the plantation before it is flushed into the wetland;
  - Philippines: Unilever-Philippines has supported the conservation of Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary. Other companies who have provided support include San Miguel Corporation, Land Bank of the Philippines, Cyberplex Incorporated, and the Petron Foundation;
  - Thailand: Siam Cement Group, PTT, and the Electricity Production Authority have provided support;
  - Viet Nam: a range of companies have provided support at the Ramsar Sites.
86. Parties also reported (59%) that awareness-raising materials have been made available to enable wetland-friendly consumer choices. For example:
- China: information to the public about not eating waterfowl;
  - Japan: guidebooks have been prepared introducing measures for wet rice cultivation at Ramsar Sites, e.g., Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies;
  - Other governments, e.g., Malaysia, have published many publications on environmentally friendly consumer choices but not specifically for wetlands.

### **STRATEGY 1.11: Incentive measures**

#### *Incentive measures (1.11.1 – 1.11.2)*

87. While 41% of Contracting Parties reported having implemented incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands, only 24% said that they have taken actions to remove perverse incentive measures. In China, the agricultural sector is promoting environment-friendly agriculture, fish farming and animal husbandry while in Japan, there are incentives for farmers who practice rice farming methods that benefit wetlands and the biodiversity they support.

## **Goal 2. Wetlands of International Importance**

### **STRATEGY 2.1: Ramsar Site designation**

#### *The Ramsar List (2.1.1 – 2.1.2)*

88. Fewer than half of the Asian Contracting Parties (46%) reported having used the Strategic Framework to establish their national strategy and priorities for the further designation of Ramsar Sites. 41% of the Parties said that they have submitted all required updates of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands to the Secretariat.

#### *Future designation of Ramsar Sites (2.1.4)*

89. Parties reported that in the next triennium (2013-2015), they are presently planning to designate a total of 60 Ramsar Sites. These include:
- Indonesia: Lake Mesangat because it is one of the last habitats for the Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis* in Indonesia; Karst ecosystems in West Java and East Kalimantan
  - Lebanon: Anjar, Yammouneh, Quamouah, Qaraoun, Kfarzabad
  - Myanmar: Gulf of Martaban
  - Thailand: La and Pra Tong Islands; Kra Island; Mae Rum Peung Peatland; Kok Kam Saltflat; Tai Muang Beach; Kan Tulee Peatland
  - Viet Nam: Ca Mau wetland in 2012 and then a further wetland each year.

#### **STRATEGY 2.2: Ramsar Site information**

90. Some 71% of Contracting Parties reported that they are using the Ramsar Sites Information Service and its tools in national identification of further Ramsar Sites to designate.

#### **STRATEGY 2.3: Management planning – new Ramsar Sites**

91. Only 24% of Contracting Parties said that management planning processes have been established at the sites being prepared for Ramsar designation. For Japan, it was reported that the wetlands being prepared for designation as Ramsar Sites are already protected under Japanese legislation, and the conservation and management activities are conducted based on existing plans. Some of those plans were based on the Convention's guidelines for management planning.

#### **STRATEGY 2.4: Ramsar Site ecological character**

##### *Management plans (2.4.1-2.4.2)*

92. Of the approximately 260 Ramsar Sites that have been designated in Asia at the time of this analysis, some 129 sites (50%) were reported by Parties to have a management plan. Of those sites that have management plans, the plans are being implemented at 120 (93%) of them and for 40 (31%) of the plans, they are being revised or updated. Management plans are being prepared for a further 32 (12%) sites.
93. Of the management plans that exist, Parties mentioned that 76% establish the maintenance of the ecological character as a management objective.

##### *Management committee (2.4.6)*

94. A total of 62 (23%) Ramsar Sites were reported by Contracting Parties to have had a cross-sectoral management committee. This rate is relatively low and, furthermore, they may not be meeting regularly or even be functional at all. However, some Parties are trying to rectify the situation and to make these committees more active.

##### *Ecological character description (2.4.7)*

95. Ecological Character Descriptions have been prepared for 142 (55%) of the Ramsar Sites in Asia, but sometimes the data was reported to be divided in different sources.

### **STRATEGY 2.5: Ramsar Site management effectiveness**

#### *Assessments of Ramsar Site management effectiveness (2.5.1)*

96. Only 29% of the Contracting Parties said that they have made assessments of the management effectiveness of their Ramsar Sites. China mentioned that an assessment of the ecological condition of their Ramsar Sites has been prepared and a report will soon be published internationally. Parties also mentioned that the assessment should not only focus on the effectiveness for conservation of the environment, but should also consider how site designation benefits the local community. This would not only give greater credibility to the work of the Convention but would also give visibility to the importance of wetland conservation.

### **STRATEGY 2.6: Ramsar Site status**

#### *Communication about changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (2.6.1-2.6.2)*

97. Although 61% of the Contracting Parties stated that they have arrangements in place for the Ramsar AA to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (Article 3.2), only 12% of Parties said that they had reported these changes to the Ramsar Secretariat. In the experience of the Secretariat, most of such reports are received from NGOs or private citizens.

#### *Montreux Record (2.6.3)*

98. In the Asia region, 14 Ramsar Sites have been placed on the Montreux Record and, in the past triennium, restoration action has been successfully taken at the Alagol, Almagol, Ajigol Ramsar Site (I.R. Iran) enabling the site to be removed from the Record. However, the Hawizeh Marsh (Iraq) was added to the Record over the same period.

### **STRATEGY 2.7: Management of other internationally important wetlands**

#### *Conservation of other internationally important wetlands (2.7.1)*

99. Whilst one of the pillars of the Ramsar Convention is the List of Wetlands of International Importance, another is for Contracting Parties to promote the wise use of all wetlands in their territory as far as possible (Article 3.1). This is especially important for those wetlands that have not yet been listed as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the Strategic Framework or other similar processes (Ramsar Strategic Plan 2008-2015, Strategy 2.7). In Asia, 41% of the Contracting Parties said that they have taken action to maintain the ecological character of internationally important wetlands that have not yet been designated as Ramsar Sites. Important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites but also being protected as if they were include:

- Lao PDR: Khone Phapheng Waterfall area for the Irrawaddy Dolphin;
- Malaysia: The Matang Mangrove Forest and Peat Swamp Forest has been listed as an Important Bird Area;
- Philippines: St. Paul Subterranean River Natural Park.

## **Goal 3. International cooperation**

### **STRATEGY 3.1: Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs**

*Synergies between the Ramsar Convention and other MEAs (3.1.1-3.1.2)*

100. Asian Contracting Parties (47%) reported that they have mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and 47% said that this was through the national focal points of selected MEAs (especially those for CBD, CITES and CMS) being invited to participate in the National Ramsar/Wetland Committee or other similar committee (e.g., national committee for sustainable development or for biodiversity). In other cases, coordination between MEAs is achieved by them being under the responsibility of one government agency, or one officer being the focal point for a number of MEAs. In Turkmenistan, there is a State Commission on Implementation of UN Environmental Conventions and Programmes which helps to ensure coordination between the different MEAs.
101. Fewer than half of the Parties (41%) reported having mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g., UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO, etc).

**STRATEGY 3.2: Regional initiatives***Development and support of Ramsar Regional Initiatives (3.2.1)*

102. Three Ramsar Regional Initiatives are operating in the Asia region under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. These include two regional centres, the Ramsar Regional Centre (RRC) - Central and West Asia based in the I.R. Iran, and the RRC-East Asia based in the Republic of Korea. The third initiative is the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), which is also based in Korea. Some 53% of the Parties said that they have been involved in the development and implementation of at least one of these initiatives.

*Development and support of other regional initiatives (3.2.2)*

103. A similar number (53%) of Parties said that they have provided support to, or participated in, the development of other regional initiatives such as:
- ASEAN Peatland Management Initiative (Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia);
  - China: the wetland training programme based at the Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hong Kong;
  - Thailand: Mahidol University co-founded 'The University Network for Wetland Research and Training in the Mekong Region', which organizes regional wetland training workshops in the Mekong Region.

**STRATEGY 3.3: International assistance***Provision of funding for wetland conservation and management in other countries (3.3.1-3.3.2)*

104. From the National Reports received, the development assistance agency in Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has been an important provider of funding support for wetland conservation and management in other countries. Since COP10, JICA have provided technical cooperation in Costa Rica, Iran, Malaysia, Mali, and Uganda. In Indonesia, Myanmar, and Oman, the cooperation was focused on the conservation of mangroves. Japan has also generously provided voluntary contributions to the Ramsar Small Grant Fund (SGF), and the Secretariat would like to express its gratitude

for Japan's strong support. The Secretariat is now in discussion with JICA about signing a Memorandum of Cooperation for collaboration on wetland conservation and wise use activities worldwide.

105. Through JICA's new 'Guidelines for Environment and Social Consideration', there is a mechanism to ensure that environmental and social considerations are reflected at each stage of their projects.

*Receipt of funding support for wetland conservation and management from other countries (3.3.3)*

106. Just fewer than half of Asian Contracting Parties (47%) said that they had received funding support from development assistance agencies for in-country wetland conservation and management. Countries that have received support include China (from Australia, Germany, the EU and GEF), I.R. Iran (from Japan and UNDP/GEF), Lao (from Finland, Japan and the Mekong River Commission), Mongolia (from Japan), and Pakistan (from the Netherlands). Parties also reported that they had received funding support from the Ramsar Small Grants Fund and from the RRC-East Asia.

### **STRATEGY 3.4: Sharing information and expertise**

*Establishment of networks for knowledge sharing and training (3.4.1)*

107. Only 29% of the Asian Contracting Parties reported they have established networks, including twinning arrangements, either nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands. Networks that have been established include:
- China: A wetland nature reserve network involving more than 40 reserves has been established in the Yangtze Basin; many wetland nature reserves participate in the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network, the East Asia Anatidae Site Network, and the North East Asian Crane Site Network; the Hong Kong Wetland Park has twinning arrangements with the London Wetland Centre (UK) and the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (Singapore);
  - Iran: Steps have been taken towards establishing A Community of Practice for Wetland Managers through the holding of an international workshop (2010) attended by about 11 GEF/WWF/UNDP/UNEP wetland project managers from countries in the region who shared their experiences on managing such projects, lessons learned, etc.; and
  - Japan: The twinning of Yatsu-Higata Ramsar Site with Boondall Wetlands (Moreton Bay Ramsar Site, Australia) is intended to raise greater awareness of migratory shorebirds and wetlands.

*Availability of information about wetlands and Ramsar Sites (3.4.2-3.2.3)*

108. A large percentage (88%) of Parties stated that the government and NGOs have made information about the country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites publicly available, usually through publications, information on the Internet, presentations at meetings and other means. A smaller percentage of Parties (53%) said that they had passed information about the country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites to the Ramsar Secretariat for dissemination.

### **STRATEGY 3.5: Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species**

*Identification of transboundary wetlands (3.5.1)*

109. Some 41% of Asian Contracting Parties reported having identified all their transboundary/ shared wetland systems. Examples include:

- Indonesia: through the ‘Heart of Borneo’ programme which involves Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam; and the ‘Tri National Wetlands Programme’ involving Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Australia;
- Iran: Hamoon Wetland and Gwadar Bay have been identified, and some others such as Booralan Wetland and Aras River wetland are being planned;
- Mongolia: Mongol Daguur and Uvs Lake Basin wetland system been identified;
- Thailand and Viet Nam: both Parties have identified the Mekong River.

*Cooperation for the management of shared wetlands (3.5.2)*

110. Only a small percentage (18%) of Parties stated that they have established effective cooperative management for shared wetland systems, e.g., shared river basins and coastal zones. Examples include:

- China: Xingkai Lake Ramsar Site and San Jiang Ramsar Sites in Heilongjiang Province have signed collaborative conservation and management agreements with the adjacent protected areas in Russia;
- Indonesia: Citarum River Basin and its tributaries under the ‘Integrated Citarum Water Resources Management Investment Programme’;
- Iran: At national level, for the management of Lake Urmia whose basin is shared by three provinces, a national committee and a regional council have been set up under the ‘Lake Urmia Basin Integrated Management Plan’. At the international level, some initial steps have been taken for the shared management of Hamoon Wetland with Afghanistan;
- Malaysia: Lower Kinabatangan-Segama River Basin in Sabah, and shared wetlands under the ‘Heart of Borneo’ programme;
- Mongolia: Mongolia Daguur (Mongolia), Daurskii zapovednik (Russia) and Dai Lai Nor (China) have had regular exchange visits and meetings. In 2011, Uvs Lake (Mongolia) and Uvsunurskaya kotlovina (Russia) established an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation;
- Thailand and Viet Nam: Both Parties reported that the Secretariat of the Mekong River Commission has developed management plans for the four countries in the Lower Mekong subregion;
- Yemen: Aden lagoons.

*Participate in networks for wetland-dependent migratory species (3.5.3)*

111. Many Asian Parties (71%) said that they participated in regional networks for a variety of wetland-dependent migratory species. This was especially for networks to conserve migratory waterbirds in a particular flyway (e.g., the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and the Wings Over Wetlands Programme), or to conserve a particular species of waterbirds, e.g., Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* or the Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*. Other networks were for conserving fish, e.g., the Mekong Giant Catfish *Pangasianodon gigas* or dolphins, e.g., Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris*.

## Goal 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness

### STRATEGY 4.1: CEPA

*Establishment of CEPA action plans (4.1.1a-d)*

112. Whilst most of the Asian Contracting Parties are carrying out CEPA activities at all levels, only 41% Parties report that they have drafted CEPA action plans to guide their work at the local/site level. Fewer have drafted such plans at the national level (29%), and even fewer at the subnational (18%) or catchment/basin level (18%). Examples of countries that have developed CEPA action plans for sites include Japan (for Kami Sarobetsu, Kushiro-shitsugen, Sekiseishoko, and Nakaumi), Lebanon (Ammiq Wetland), Turkmenistan (Turkmenbashy Bay), and Yemen (Detwah Lagoon). On the national level, China and Iran have produced CEPA action plans whilst Malaysia is developing such a plan. Viet Nam does not have a separate wetland CEPA action plan but it is integrated into the 'National Wetland Action Plan' and the 'National Action Plan on Biodiversity'.

*Establishment of centres at Ramsar Sites and wetlands (4.1.2)*

113. Asian Contracting Parties reported having established a total of 116 centres at their Ramsar Sites and other wetlands to promote greater awareness of the importance of the site and of wetlands in general. Whilst some centres may be large and well equipped, others are small and simple but can play an equally important role in promoting wetland CEPA. The most important function of these centres is that they provide school students, special interest groups, and all sectors of the community with the opportunity to participate in practical, interesting and fun activities that will show how wetlands work, their importance, wildlife, culture and history, and how visitors can help in their conservation. Depending on the availability of funding, centres may also offer a variety of facilities to visitors, including wildlife viewing areas, walking trails, boardwalks, interpretive signs, classrooms, libraries, and an area where food and drinks are available. In establishing these centres, it must be remembered that they must cater for the cross-section of the community, from young children to decision-makers, from the able-bodied to those less able.

*Promoting participation (4.1.3)*

114. Some 47% of the Contracting Parties in Asia said that they promoted public participation in decision making with respect to wetland planning and management, which is low compared with 70% amongst Ramsar Parties globally. Therefore, Asian Parties should make a greater effort to allow for public participation in wetland issues. At the site level, 53% of Asian Parties said that they involved local stakeholders in the selection and management of Ramsar Sites. This compares favourably with the global response of 56% but greater effort still needs to be made to promote local community participation. In China, the public are invited to participate in relevant meetings, and public opinions are solicited via websites and other media. At the site level, the community is sometimes involved in selecting the Ramsar Site (e.g., Lao PDR) and the drafting of the site management plan (e.g., Lao PDR, Lebanon).

*Training and capacity building (4.1.4 - 4.1.5)*

115. Only a small percentage (18%) of Contracting Parties mentioned that they have made assessments of their national and local training needs to implement the Convention. Parties in Asia also reported a lower number of training opportunities for wetland site managers (21 cases, 12%) than was reported globally by Ramsar Contracting Parties (211). The issues of how to increase the number of training opportunities across the Asia region need to be addressed in the coming triennium.

116. Training and experience sharing opportunities were provided by a range of organizations, such as central and local governments, universities, Ramsar Regional Centres, site wetland centres, NGOs, international organizations and projects, etc. Participants were from a variety of backgrounds, e.g., government officials, site managers, NGOs, journalists, and local communities, and the venue for the training was also varied, being at the level of the site, national, regional and international. The training opportunities were on a wide range of topics related to wetland conservation and wise use, e.g., site management and monitoring.

*National committee for Ramsar and wetlands (4.1.6)*

117. The percentage of Asian Contracting Parties reporting that they have operational national committees for Ramsar or wetlands has increased from 13% (COP9, 2005) to 33 (COP10, 2008) and now 71% (COP11, 2012 Annex 3). Examples of functioning committees include:

- China: The 'National Implementing Ramsar Convention Committee' consists of 16 different ministries and administrations, and it meets at least annually to coordinate and guide relevant departments in implementing the Convention, and to coordinate the work of international wetland projects;
- Iran: the National Ramsar Committee is composed of a broad range of ministries and stakeholders, and it holds regular meetings;
- Nepal: There is no national committee for wetlands but there is a National Lakes Committee.

*Other communication mechanisms to share Ramsar information (4.1.7)*

118. In terms of Parties explaining that they have mechanisms to share information concerning the Ramsar Convention with other stakeholders:

- 59% said that they have such a mechanism to share with Ramsar Site managers;
- 59% said they have such mechanisms with relevant ministries, departments and agencies; and
- 47% said they have communication mechanisms with other MEA focal points (3.1.1).

*World Wetland Day activities (4.1.8)*

119. World Wetland Day (WWD) events are popular with Asian Contracting Parties, with 88% of the Parties reporting that celebrations have been organized since COP10 by either the central or local governments, NGOs, or the Ramsar Site management agencies. A variety of topics have been organized as part of the WWD celebrations, e.g., a celebrity or a high level minister distributing prizes to winning candidates in a competition, such as photography or painting; WWD kits produced and distributed; schools producing a wetland education package; wetland visits; exhibitions and displays. The target audience for WWD celebrations also varies, from decision makers, representatives from other relevant government agencies, other MEA focal points, planners, to research organizations, teachers, students and local communities.

*Other wetland CEPA activities (4.1.9)*

120. Apart from WWD events, 82% of Parties in Asia said that they have carried out other campaigns, programmes, and projects to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands. Examples include:

- holding stakeholder forums and meetings, such as the Asia Wetland Symposia that were held in Sabah, Malaysia (July 2012) and Wuxi, China (October 2012); the ‘Yangtze River Wetland Conservation Network Annual Meeting’ to forge wide consensus on Yangtze River wetland conservation (China); and the ‘China Wetland Culture Festival’;
- constructing facilities, such as wetland visitor/education centres and museums;
- establishing special websites to communicate wetland messages;
- organizing special programmes, such as the ‘2010 Coastal Wetland Ten Thousand Li (5000 km) Tour’ and the ‘Wetland Ambassador Action’ (China); and awarding communities and community networks that significantly contribute to conservation of wetlands in Khao Sam Roi Yod Ramsar Site (Thailand);
- developing wetland wildlife monitoring programmes, e.g., the Winter Waterbird Count (many countries in Asia) and an otter (*Lutra lutra*) monitoring programme organized by a national NGO with the involvement of the local communities (I.R. Iran); and
- producing of a variety of materials on wetlands, e.g., posters, leaflets, books, video, etc.

#### **STRATEGY 4.2: Convention financial capacity**

##### *Annual Ramsar contribution (4.2.1)*

121. Over the past triennium, 47% of Parties in Asia reported having paid their contributions in full. For those Parties that are late in payment, they explained that this was due to coordination issues between the Ramsar AA and the government body responsible for the payment.

##### *Voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities (4.2.2)*

122. Apart from their annual contributions, the Ramsar Small Grant Fund has received annual financial support from Japan, and Bangladesh has provided support for one year (2009). Iraq has provided a contribution to the budget to support the attendance of eligible Parties to COP11. To all these Parties the Secretariat would like to express our sincerest gratitude.

#### **STRATEGY 4.3: Convention bodies effectiveness**

##### *Ramsar National Report used in monitoring implementation of the Convention (4.3.1)*

123. Just under half of the Parties in Asia (47%) stated that they have used their previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring their implementation of the Convention.

##### *Updating changes in AA (4.3.2)*

124. Many of the Asian Contracting Parties (82%) reported that they have provided updates to the Secretariat on any changes to the Administrative Authority focal points, including CEPA and STRP National Focal Points.

#### **STRATEGY 4.4: Working with IOPs and others**

*Assistance received from the Convention's IOPs (4.4.1)*

125. Some 59% of the Contracting Parties reported that they have received assistance from one or more of the Convention's International Organization Partners in their implementation of the Convention. Examples include:

- China: Extensive collaboration with WWF (e.g., in jointly organizing the annual Yangtze Basin Wetland Conservation Network meetings and WWD celebration; management of the Mai Po Nature Reserve in Hong Kong) and Wetlands International (e.g., in wetland conservation and wise use projects; joint organization of the AWS in Wuxi);
- Japan: Birdlife and Wetlands International organize the annual Asian Waterbird Census which allows changes in waterbird populations to be quantified, with confirmation of the 1% criteria for individuals at a particular wetland for identifying potential Ramsar Sites;
- Malaysia: Joint partnership with Wetlands International on the Asian Wetland School Networks. In addition, BirdLife International, via the Malaysian Nature Society, assisted the AA to produce the National Ramsar Information Toolkit;
- Myanmar: Birdlife International organized a multistakeholder workshop which allowed a strategy for biodiversity conservation, including wetlands, to be formulated;
- Viet Nam: Birdlife, IUCN and WWF work closely with the AA to develop technical guidelines and organize activities for wetland conservation and sustainable use, including awareness raising and compilation of Ramsar Site profiles;

In addition, the following Parties also reported receiving support from IOPs: Lao PDR (IUCN and WWF), Sri Lanka (IUCN, IWMI), and Thailand (WWF).

*Assistance provided to the Convention's IOPs (4.4.2)*

126. Compared to receiving support from IOPs, a smaller percentage of Asian Parties (35%) mentioned that they had provided assistance to the IOPs. Examples of support provided included:

- China: The Ramsar AA provides funding to Wetlands International-China for the production of its newsletter so that it can be distributed free of charge. The Hong Kong SAR government provides about 230 hectares of land at a nominal annual fee and some HK\$1.6 million annually to WWF Hong Kong to carry out wetland habitat management at the Mai Po Nature Reserve;
- Japan: Provided a voluntary financial contribution to IUCN's 'Action Plan for Protected area in East Asia'.

Iran mentioned that they would be keen to work with the Ramsar IOPs but they are not active in the country at present.

## Annex 1

### General overview of answers to selected indicators

★ “yes” ○ “in progress”, “partly”, or “planned”, × “no”

#### Goal 1: Wise Use of Wetlands

- 1.1.1 Does the country have a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory?  
 1.3.1 Is a National Wetland Policy (ore equivalent instrument) in place?  
 1.3.5 Are EIA made for those development projects that may affect wetlands?  
 1.6.2 Have all wetland management plans been based on sound scientific research?  
 1.8.2 Have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes been implemented?  
 1.11.1 Have actions been taken to encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands?

#### Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance

- 2.1.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for further wetland designation?  
 2.2.1 Are the Ramsar Sites (RS) Information Service and its tools being used in national identification of new sites?  
 2.3.1 Have the management planning processes been established for sites on designation process?  
 2.4.5 Do the RS management plans establish the maintenance of the ecological character as a management objective?  
 2.5.1 Have any assessments on the effectiveness of the site management been carried out?  
 2.6.1 Are arrangements in place for reporting the change of ecological character of the RS?

Contracting Party	Goal 1: Wise Use of Wetlands						Goal 2: Wetlands of International Importance					
	1.1.1	1.3.1	1.3.5	1.6.2	1.8.2	1.11.1	2.1.1	2.2.1	2.3.1	2.4.5	2.5.1	2.6.1
<b>Asia</b>												
China	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	○	★	★	★
Indonesia	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
I.R. Iran	★	★	★	○	★	○	★	★	○	★	○	★
Japan	★	★	○	○	★	★	★	×	★	★	○	★
Lao PDR	★	○	○	○	×	×	×	★	×	★	×	○
Lebanon	×	×	○	★	★	×	×	×	×	★	×	○
Malaysia	○	○	★	○	★	×	★	★	○	★	×	★
Mongolia	★	★	★		×	★	○	○	×	×	×	×
Myanmar	★	×	★	×	×	×	×	★	×		×	×
Nepal	○	★	★	○	★	★	○	★	★	★	★	○
Pakistan	★	★	○	○	★	○	★	★	○	★	○	○
Philippines	○	★	★	★	★	★	○	★	○	★	★	★
Sri Lanka	○	★	★	○	★	○	★	★	×	★	×	○
Thailand	★	★	★	×	★	×	★	★	○		×	×
Turkmenistan	×	★	○	★	○	○	○	○	×	★	×	×
Viet Nam	○	★	★	○	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Yemen	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	○	○	○	○	○

## Annex 2

## General overview of answers to selected indicators

★ “yes” ○ “in progress”, “partly”, or “planned” , × “no”

**Goal 3: International Cooperation**

3.1.1 Are mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs?

3.1.3 Are mechanisms in place for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and focal points of UN and other global agencies?

3.4.1 Have networks for wetlands sharing common features been established, nationally or internationally, for knowledge sharing and training?

3.4.2 Has the wetland related information of your country been made publicly available?

3.5.1 Have all transboundary/shared wetland systems been identified?

3.5.2 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems?

**Goal 4: Implementation Capacity**

4.1.1a Has an Action Plan for wetland CEPA been established at the national level?

4.1.1b Has an Action Plan for wetland CEPA been established at the sub-national level?

4.1.3a Does the CP promote public participation in decision-making with respect to wetland planning and management?

4.1.6 Do you have an operational National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee?

4.3.1 Has the CP used its previous Ramsar National Reports in monitoring its implementation of the Convention?

4.4.1 Has your country received assistance from the Convention’s IOPs on the implementation?

Contracting Party	Goal 3: International Cooperation						Goal 4: Implementation Capacity					
	3.1.1	3.1.3	3.4.1	3.4.2	3.5.1	3.5.2	4.1.1 <sup>a</sup>	4.1.1b	4.1.3a	4.1.6	4.3.1	4.4.1
<b>Asia</b>												
China	★	★	★	★	○	○	★	○	★	★	★	★
Indonesia	○	★	★	★	★	○	★	○	★	★	★	★
I.R. Iran	★	★	★	★	★	○	○	×	○	★	★	×
Japan	×	×	★	★			○	○	○	★	★	★
Lao PDR	×	×	×	★	×	×	×	×	★	★		★
Lebanon	×	×	×	★			×	×		×	×	×
Malaysia	★	★	×	★		★	○		★	★	★	★
Mongolia	○	○	★	○	×	○	×	×	○	★	×	★
Myanmar	×	★	×	★	×	×	○	○	○	×		★
Nepal	★	○	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	×	×
Pakistan	★	★	○	★	★	×	○	○	★	★	★	×
Philippines	×	×	×	★			○	○	★	×	★	×
Sri Lanka	★	★	○	★	○	○	★	★	○	★	○	★
Thailand	×	×	★	★	★	★	×	×	×	★	×	★
Turkmenistan	★	○	×	★	★	×	×	×	○	★		×
Viet Nam	★	×	★	★	★	○	★	★	★	×	★	★
Yemen	○	○	×	○	×	○	×	○	○	○	×	×

### Annex 3

#### Summary statistics

The table provides a general overview of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Asia Region during the period between COP8 to COP11, using data submitted in the National Reports. Insufficient National Reports were received on time before COP9 to make an analysis of the progress of implementation at that stage.

The table also shows whether particular actions are more (or less) widely addressed in the Asia Region, compared to the global average; based on the percentages of the Contracting Parties having answered positively.

(Abbreviations: ★ = Progress; ☆ = no change; × = regression)

Strategy	Indicator	Affirmative countries (%)				Progress in Asia since COP10
		Asia COP 9	Asia COP10	Asia COP11	Global COP11	
1.1	<b>Inventory and Assessment:</b> country has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1.)	40	50	53	43%	•
1.3	<b>Policy and legislation:</b> National Wetland Policy (or equivalent) in place (1.3.1)	36	58	71	51%	★
1.8	<b>Wetland restoration and rehabilitation:</b> wetland restoration/ rehabilitation programmes or projects implemented (1.8.2)	80	71	71	69%	•
2.1	<b>Ramsar Site designation:</b> strategy and priorities established for further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the Strategic Framework (2.1.1)	60	54	53	42%	•
2.6	<b>Condition of Ramsar Sites:</b> all cases of change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites reported to the Secretariat (Article 3.2) (2.6.1)	27	13	41	62%	★
3.1	<b>Collaboration:</b> mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Ramsar AA and the focal points of other MEAs (3.1.1)	53	50	47	66%	•
3.4	<b>Sharing expertise and experience:</b> networks established for knowledge sharing and training (3.4.1)	13	33	47	39%	★
4.1	<b>National Wetland Committee:</b> National Ramsar/Wetlands cross-sectoral Committee (or equivalent body) operational (4.1.6)	13	33	71	54%	★

## Annex 4

## Asian Ramsar Sites designated since COP10

	Country	Number of sites	Total area of new sites (ha)
1	China	11	772,372
2	Indonesia	3	308,180
3	Iran, Islamic Rep.of	2	2,614
4	Japan	4	352
5	Kazakhstan	7	2,250,057
6	Korea, Republic of	9	9,527
7	Kyrgyz Republic	1	36869
8	Lao P.D.R.	2	14,760
9	Malaysia	1	78803
10	Nepal	1	90
11	Sri Lanka	2	23,850
12	Thailand	1	2200
13	Turkmenistan	1	267,124
14	United Arab Emirates	1	12700
15	Uzbekistan	1	527100
16	Viet Nam	2	10048
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4,316,646</b>

## Annex 5

## Number of Asian Ramsar Sites for which information is not up to date

Country	Number of sites	Country	Number of sites
AZERBAIJAN	2	LEBANON	4
BAHRAIN	2	MALAYSIA	5
BANGLADESH	2	MONGOLIA	11
CAMBODIA	3	MYANMAR	1
CHINA	30	NEPAL	4
INDIA	25	PAKISTAN	19
INDONESIA	2	PHILIPPINES	3
IRAN, ISLAMIC REP.	21	SRI LANKA	3
IRAQ	1	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	1
ISRAEL	2	TAJIKISTAN	5
JAPAN	32	THAILAND	10

JORDAN	1	UZBEKISTAN	1
KAZAKHSTAN	1	VIET NAM	2
KOREA, R.O.	3	YEMEN	1
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	2		
LAO P.D.R.	2		

This table also consists of a) RISs that need to be updated since 2005, b) RISs that are being updated, and c) RISs which have never been submitted.

## Annex 6

### **Sabah Call for Action** ***Integrated Biodiversity Conservation: Linking Forests and Wetlands***

Asian Wetland Symposium (AWS Sabah 2011)  
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia  
18 – 20 July 2011

The world entered into a new era of biodiversity conservation with the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan in October 2010. These targets are expected to be achieved during the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011–2020). The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) recognizes the significant role that sustainable forest management has in development, poverty reduction and the achievement of international aspirations, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The basic tenet of the Ramsar Convention, the wise use of wetlands and their resources, identifies their importance in supporting human well-being.

Enhancing synergy in the implementation of the CBD, Ramsar Convention and other initiatives such as the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests is critical to achieving the “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” and the MDGs, and a key aim of the AWS Sabah 2011. This year also marks the 40th anniversary of both the Ramsar Convention and UNESCO MAB Programme, and the United Nations International Year of Forests.

Water, through the natural infrastructure provided by wetlands, is one of the main unifying factors for these international initiatives. In the face of the increasing pressures on water quality and quantity caused by the continued degradation and loss of wetlands, and existing and emerging challenges such as climate change, there is a need for better integration of such initiatives at the local, national and regional levels, and to identify innovative approaches for sustainable development, financing, human well-being and biodiversity conservation.

The 322 participants of the AWS Sabah 2011 identified a number of strategies and mechanisms that should be taken to address these challenges, and propose that policy- and decision-makers and wetland user groups give them priority attention.

1. Promote integrated management systems that incorporate socio-economic priorities, the rights and responsibilities of local communities, and innovative technologies and approaches in the restoration and conservation of forests and wetlands. Encourage the application of land and seascape planning tools such as the UNESCO MAB Programme to integrate human dimensions into the conservation of biodiversity in forests and wetlands.
2. Undertake or update national wetland inventories and conduct research on issues related to forests, and use them to guide landscape planning and decision-making processes related to the utilization of wetland and forest resources.

3. Develop more synergy and coordination in the management of forests and wetlands through greater cooperation at the national level, e.g. between the National Focal Points for the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and UNFF.
4. Mainstream forests and wetlands conservation into national and local planning processes, such as poverty reduction strategies, economic development plans, climate change strategies, and disaster management plans. Give priority to ensuring that revisions of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) incorporate conservation and wise use of wetlands.
5. Promote investments in forest and wetland conservation through funding mechanisms and initiatives, such as the regional development banks and the proposed Green Climate Change Fund (GCF) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and encourage investments in applied research programmes to provide sound scientific information and tools.
6. Enhance partnerships with and investments by the private sector in forest and wetland conservation efforts, including the development of sustainable business strategies.
7. Incorporate the values of forest and wetland ecosystem services in financial, economic and investment planning and policies, and the economic costs associated with forest and wetland degradation and loss. Use economic and financial tools, e.g. payments for ecosystem services (PES), biodiversity offsets and environmental-fiscal reforms to provide incentives for the conservation of forests and wetlands.
8. Recognize the natural and cultural capital provided by forests and wetlands to support livelihoods in order to meet the daily needs of local people and rural communities.
9. Strengthen existing Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) programmes to empower specific target groups such as communities, youths, educators, business people, decision-makers and the media to take effective actions for forest and wetland conservation. Recognize the importance and effectiveness of involving the young generation in wetland CEPA activities.
10. Ensure that planning and research processes integrate cultural and heritage values, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), traditional landscape approaches such as the *Satoyama* Initiative, and local initiatives such as the *Tagal* system in Sabah in the conservation and wise use of forests and wetlands.

The AWS Sabah 2011 was hosted by the State Government of Sabah, in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia, the JICA-Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation (BBEC) Phase II Programme, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and the Ramsar Center Japan.

The participants of this meeting seek the assistance of the Government of Malaysia and the Ramsar Secretariat to convey the “Sabah Call for Action” 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 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.

## Annex 7

### 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 40<sup>th</sup> 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”.*