



**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**

**Agenda item XV**

**Ramsar COP11 DR5**

**Draft Resolution XI.5**

**Regional initiatives 2013-2015 in the framework of the Ramsar  
Convention**

1. RECALLING that regional initiatives under the Ramsar Convention are intended as operational means to provide effective support for an improved implementation of the objectives of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in specific geographical regions, through international cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern;
2. AWARE that the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19, 1999) provide the appropriate framework for promoting international collaboration amongst Contracting Parties and other partners;
3. ALSO RECALLING that the Contracting Parties recognized the importance of regional initiatives in promoting the objectives of the Convention in Resolution VIII.30 (2002), and that Resolution IX.7 (2005) both endorsed a number of regional initiatives as operating within the framework of the Convention in 2006-2008 and recognized the potential of a number of other initiatives to become operational within the framework of the Convention;
4. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution X.6 (2008) adopted “Operational Guidelines” for regional initiatives to support the implementation of the Convention, and that these serve as a reference for assessing the operation of regional initiatives and their success (replacing the *Guidelines for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* annexed to Resolution VIII.30);
5. NOTING that during the years 2009-2012, the Standing Committee has examined and approved a number of active regional initiatives as fully meeting the Operational Guidelines and noted the substantial progress made by many of the initiatives during those years, based on their annual reports submitted to the Standing Committee; and
6. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the experience gained through the operational years of those initiatives, both the regional networks and the Ramsar Regional Centres (RRCs); the successful application of the Operational Guidelines in selecting and supporting regional initiatives operating in the framework of the Convention; and the conclusions derived

from the review of their success with a strategic view for the future development of regional initiatives;

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7. REAFFIRMS the usefulness of cooperation at regional level through networks and centres for training and capacity building in providing effective support for improved implementation of the objectives and approaches of the Convention;
8. APPROVES the continued validity and use of the Operational Guidelines for regional initiatives to support the implementation of the Convention, as adopted for 2009-2012 and annexed to Resolution X.6, for the period 2013 to 2015;
9. INSTRUCTS all initiatives approved by the Convention to submit to the Standing Committee annual reports on their progress and operations, and specifically on their success in fulfilling the Operational Guidelines, as well as to forward annual work and finance plans in the format adopted by the Standing Committee;
10. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to continue to assess annually, based on formal reports submitted in time, the extent to which the existing regional initiatives continue to meet the standards of the Operational Guidelines and actively contribute to the implementation of the Convention;
11. Recognizing that many existing regional initiatives benefit from Ramsar support, and aware of the likelihood that there will continue to be budgetary constraints over the next triennium, DECIDES that, in the absence of any unforeseen change in circumstances, a temporary moratorium on new regional initiatives to be considered for financing from the Convention core budget is to be put in place for the 2013-2015 triennium;
- [12. AGREES to earmark financial support in the Convention core budget line “Support to Regional Initiatives”, as listed in Resolution XI.2 on financial and budgetary matters, to be allocated to existing regional initiatives for development activities during the period 2013-2015, provided that they are determined by the Standing Committee to fully meet the Operational Guidelines;]<sup>1</sup>
- [13. DECIDES that the levels of financial support to individual initiatives for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015 through that budget line will be determined by the Standing Committee during its annual meetings, based upon updated financial and work plans to be submitted in the required format not later than two months prior to the annual meetings, and with the benefit of the specific recommendations made by the Subgroup on Finance;]<sup>2</sup>
14. STRONGLY URGES those regional initiatives that receive initial financial support from the core budget to use this support *inter alia* to seek alternative flows of sustainable funding;
15. REAFFIRMS that, in accordance with Resolution X.6, financial support for regional initiatives from the Convention’s core budget will, in principle, only be provided for a

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<sup>1</sup> Square bracketed pending COP11 budget decisions.

<sup>2</sup> Square bracketed pending COP11 budget decisions.

period corresponding to the interval between two meetings of COP, but that, in cases where a Ramsar Regional Centre continues to meet the Operational Guidelines, such support may be continued at the Standing Committee's discretion;

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, intergovernmental agencies, International Organization Partners, national NGOs, private businesses and other potential donors to support regional initiatives seeking financial assistance from the Ramsar Convention with additional voluntary contributions;
17. INSTRUCES both Regional Centres and networks operating in the framework of the Convention to describe themselves as an operational means to provide support for the implementation of the objectives of the Ramsar Convention, but to present themselves with their own independent and individual identities to the public and other partners, in order to avoid any confusion in the public mind between those initiatives and the different roles of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities at national level and the Ramsar Secretariat at international level, and CALLS UPON the Secretariat to support and promote the value of the Regional Centres and networks and facilitate those efforts to the extent possible;
18. URGES coordinating bodies of all regional initiatives to sign a hosting agreement with their host organizations or countries in order to clarify the respective responsibilities in accordance with the Operational Guidelines and paragraph 12 of the annex to Resolution X.6, which states that "the coordination body will be responsible to all members that constitute a regional initiative (Contracting Parties and other members), not only to the host country", and REQUESTS the Secretariat to act as an advisor on that issue, as appropriate;
19. FURTHER INSTRUCES the regional initiatives to maintain active and regular contacts and exchanges with the Secretariat, and to include in their work plans, based on communication with the Secretariat and their governance bodies, the undertaking of an independent evaluation of their operations, outcomes, strengths and weaknesses that makes reference to the Operational Guidelines for regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands, and to share the results of those evaluations with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee;
20. EMPHASIZES the importance for regional initiatives to establish their operational governance structures in a transparent way, based on written terms describing their roles and responsibilities, and to ensure that all members are adequately represented in such structures;
21. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to work with the representatives of the Ramsar Regional Centres to identify and advise on the capacity building needs for RRC staff to optimize their performance;
22. URGES Contracting Parties geographically related to a regional initiative that have not yet done so to provide support to the initiative and to signal this through the provision of formal letters of support and financial support, as appropriate; and
23. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to prepare a summary report, based on its annual assessments, reviewing the operations and success of the regional initiatives operating

during the period 2013-2015 for the Contracting Parties' consideration at the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.