



11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands: home and destination”

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Agenda item XV

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Agriculture-wetland interactions: rice paddy and pesticide usage

Prepared by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, submitted by the Standing Committee

1. CONCERNED that, as indicated by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), certain agricultural practices continue to be a major driver of the loss of, and change to, the ecological character of wetlands through *inter alia* direct wetland conversion for food production, abstraction of water for crop irrigation, and the impacts of the use of agro-chemicals, including fertilizers and pesticides, on water quality and wetland biodiversity;
2. NOTING the relevance of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Decisions X/34 on agricultural biodiversity, X/28 (notably paragraphs 10e and 18) on inland waters biodiversity, and X/32 on sustainable use and the Satoyama Initiative;
3. RECALLING that Ramsar Resolution VIII.34 (2002) addressed the overall issue of agriculture and wetland linkages and interdependencies;
4. RECOGNIZING the relevance of the work of the “Guidelines in Agriculture, Wetlands and Water Resource Management Interactions” project (GAWI), designed to support implementation of Resolution VIII.34, summarized in COP10 DOC. 26 and available in the 2008 report *Scoping agriculture-wetland interactions. Towards a sustainable multiple response strategy* (available as FAO Water Report no. 33, www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/WaterReports33.pdf), and NOTING that the work of the GAWI consortium is ongoing and covers all types of agriculture-wetland interactions, including those concerning rice cultivation;
5. RECOGNIZING that irrigated rice fields are a major wetland type under the Ramsar Convention which directly delivers food production from wetlands, and that consequently there is a particularly close relationship between the benefits of sustainable management of rice paddy for wetland biodiversity and the potential negative impacts on this biodiversity from aspects of rice production practices, and AWARE that rice paddy is included as “rice fields” in the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type as a human-made wetland (“Type 3 Irrigated land; includes irrigation channels and rice fields”);

6. AWARE that in Resolution X.23 (2008) the Ramsar Convention has recognized the linkages between food security and human health, poverty reduction, and sustainable wetland management; AWARE, too, of the global importance of rice production in supporting over half of the world's population and the dependence of many communities on reliable, safe and cost-effective food supplies, particularly in less developed regions; and ALSO AWARE of the importance to local livelihoods in some regions of fisheries in rice paddy;
7. NOTING the urgent concerns of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in relation to global food security, the immediate need to increase available supplies of various food commodities, and the pivotal role of rice production in food security; and AWARE of the challenges in selecting development options which both increase rice production (through both intensification and extensification) and are also ecologically, socially, and economically feasible and sustainable;
8. RECALLING that the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2008), in Resolution X.31, recognized the importance of biodiversity specifically within rice paddies, that sustainable use of rice paddies can provide valuable wetland habitat in landscapes especially where intensive and/or extensive agriculture has been responsible for the loss of wetlands, and that the benefits of sustainable use of rice paddies extend to communities, not only in terms of the maintenance of biodiversity, but also in the conservation of cultural, social, and economic values;
9. RECALLING Resolution X.19 on wetlands and river basin management, and RECOGNIZING that integrated river basin management needs to ensure not only that rice paddies are not degraded by upstream land uses and practices but also that rice farming practices should not negatively affect the ecological character of downstream areas, especially wetlands;
10. ALSO AWARE of evidence from the FAO, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and others of continuing increases in the use, over-use, and inappropriate use of pesticides in some rice-production regions as part of attempts to maintain and increase rice production;
11. RECOGNIZING that some countries have put in place mechanisms which are reducing levels of such pesticide usage, but CONCERNED that continuing patterns of pesticide use are threatening not only rice paddy ecosystem services and biodiversity, but also food security and human health and livelihoods, through impacts on predators of rice pest species, the risk of increasing resistance to pesticides in such pest species, and the increased occurrence of pest and disease outbreaks, as well as the potential adverse downstream impacts on wetland ecosystems through changes in water quality from pesticide run-off (see COP11 DOC. xx);
12. ALSO CONCERNED that in some rice-growing countries the regulation of rice pesticide use remains underdeveloped and that the risks of the overuse or inappropriate use of such pesticides to human health, rice pest control by natural predators, and overall wetland biodiversity, including that depended upon by local communities for their livelihoods, such as from fisheries, are not always well recognized by stakeholders;

13. RECOGNIZING that there are alternative management systems to pesticide usage which maintain biodiversity, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and **integrated management of rice paddy biodiversity** for the control of rice pests; and
14. RECALLING the relevance to this Resolution of the objectives of the *Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands* (Resolution X.3) that emphasized the need for engagement with audiences beyond the Ramsar Convention itself, as well as the key role of Ramsar Administrative Authorities (National Focal Points) in developing partnerships with other relevant sectors, including *inter alia* agriculture and fisheries;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

15. URGES Contracting Parties to seek to ensure that the ecosystem services provided by rice paddies, including *inter alia* groundwater recharge and flood control, are fully considered in Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) processes, including through the appropriate use of the Convention's guidance on wetlands and river basin management (Resolution X.19), and that the biodiversity of these rice paddy systems is not compromised in decisions relating to agricultural intensification, including those concerning pesticide usage;
16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to review, revise, and/or formulate policies for the appropriate governance, regulation, and use of pesticides in rice production, recognizing the need for accelerated implementation of policies that can minimize the negative impacts of their use on wetlands, human health, and food security, including through the development/application of:
 - i) monitoring programmes for the impact of rice pesticide use on wetland biodiversity and the evaluation of the effectiveness of regulations; and
 - ii) data collection and dissemination of good practice on managing rice paddy biodiversity for the control of rice crop pests;
17. URGES Contracting Parties to integrate, where appropriate, relevant issues related to pesticide usage in rice paddy into their national policies and strategies (or equivalent) for wetlands, their national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), and national strategies for the implementation of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to work with the rice and pesticide industries, research institutions and the biodiversity and human health sectors to address inadequate practices; eliminate perverse incentives; secure the provision of financial resources and technical assistance from developed to developing countries in relation to rice pest management, taking into account the specific economic and social conditions of developing countries; and incorporate the use of pest management strategies such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), the integrated management of biodiversity in rice paddies, and the optimal time of planting, which capitalize on the capacity of rice paddy biodiversity as pest control mechanisms;
19. URGES Contracting Parties to strengthen the role of communications, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA) in working with local communities to improve

available information and enhance community understanding of the risks to wetland ecological character and ecosystem services from the overuse of pesticides, and to raise awareness of the need for the careful use of pesticides in rice farming and of the biodiversity-based alternatives for pest control;

20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to conduct further study and analyses to assess the potential impacts of overuse or inappropriate use of rice pesticides affecting Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, and to communicate such findings to relevant platforms and fora, including to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP); and
21. INVITES UNEP, FAO, IRRI, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), and other interested organizations to:
 - i) review the adequacy of available guidance and governance for appropriate pesticide usage in rice farming, with particular emphasis on maintaining a balance between food security, human health, and wetland biodiversity;
 - ii) exchange information on best practice guidance and governance systems for appropriate rice pesticide usage in relation to wetlands, including the use of rice paddy biodiversity in pest management strategies, taking into account the different contexts and circumstances of countries;
 - iii) develop, where appropriate, further guidance in collaboration with other relevant international organizations; and
 - iv) advise the STRP, the Standing Committee, and the Conference of the Contracting Parties of their findings and advice.