



## Closing statement from Secretary of State, Mr Corneliu Mugurel Cozmanciuc, 13 July 2012

*Translation from Romanian into English according to the copy*

Mr. General Secretary,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to close, as host-country, the 11th Meeting of the Conference for the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention on International Importance Wetlands (COP11).

As an international tool for wetland protection, especially of aquatic birds habitats, Ramsar Convention on International Importance Wetlands to which Romania has acceded offers an extremely significant mechanism for biodiversity and ecosystem protection, as well as protection of spectacular regions by everything that they give.

We are crossing a difficult period from an economic and social point of view. In such times, we are especially bound to accountably turn our attention to the sustainable use of natural resources, to renewable resources, to stimulating the “green” economy which generates growth with full respect for the environment and creates extremely valuable jobs. Sustainable development should include efforts to protect, conserve and develop natural heritage, to improve general environmental factors by reducing or eliminating pollution, to conserve and protect biodiversity, to preserve and expand woodlands, parks and urban green areas.

Romania’s involvement in wetlands protection is shown by the designation of eight wetlands of international importance, up to this date, namely “Danube Delta” Biosphere Reserve with a surface of 580,000 ha, the Small Island of Brăila, with a surface of 17,586 ha, Mureş Floodplain Natural Park, with a surface of 17,166 ha, Dumbrăviţă fishing complex, with a surface of 413.5 ha, Techirghiol lake with a surface of 1462 ha, the Iron Gates Natural Park with a surface of 115,666 ha, Comana Natural Park with a surface of 24,963 ha and Poiana Stampei Peat Bog with a surface of 640 ha.

Within this Convention, four additional areas were designated as Ramsar sites: **Bistreţ lake** with a surface of 27,482 ha, **Olt – Dunăre confluence** with a surface of 7,302 ha, **Iezer Călăraşi lake** with a surface of 681 ha and **Suhaia lake** with a surface of 19,594 ha.

During the meeting held in Bucharest, I approached a very important topic both from the perspective of wetlands conservation, as well as that of the “green” economy- tourism, as ecosystem service offered by wetlands. Touristic activities are natural and desirable for people to enjoy the treasures of biodiversity and fascinating landscapes offered by these regions. Furthermore, by promoting eco-



tourism we will highlight those particular natural areas and create an income source for the administrations of protected areas, as well as the local communities in the areas.

Nonetheless, in order to firmly ensure their conservation, we must clearly define the limits of touristic activities. Given that these areas are so sensitive and require the most efficient and comprehensive protection, we must take action to promote environmental friendly tourism activities that are sustainable and responsible.

As we already know, in order to become a Ramsar site, an ecosystem must be designated by national authorities and fulfil one of the agreed criteria. By means of this intervention, we express our desire to promote and, further on, to designate as Ramsar sites other wetlands within Romania, highly important for the corresponding habitats, for the local population, for our country and those intending to visit or research them.

I strongly believe that promoting these actions will contribute to regional development, will stimulate environmental research, eco-tourism or other environmental friendly activities in these areas and will contribute to a better understanding of the need to protect biodiversity. At the same, this will allow people to enjoy the treasures offered by nature, preserving them with determination and care for future generations.