

**“Wetlands: water, life, and culture”**

**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties  
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
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**Ramsar COP8 DOC. 7**

## **Report of the Secretary General on the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development of relevance to the Convention on Wetlands**

### **The Ramsar Bureau participation in the preparatory process**

1. In early 2001, the Bureau commissioned the preparation of a 100-page document entitled “Agenda 21 and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands” (available in the three official languages at [http://www.ramsar.org/key\\_agenda21\\_e3.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/key_agenda21_e3.htm)).
2. The document was transmitted to Contracting Parties under Diplomatic Notification 2001/2 of 6 March 2001, stating that: “The Ramsar Bureau wishes to encourage Contracting Parties, in the context of the national and regional preparatory processes for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, to take into account the contributions made so far by the Convention on Wetlands to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, as well as the potential that the Convention represents as a tool for sustainable development in its specific areas of concern. To this end, the Bureau is pleased to forward to Contracting Parties a copy of the paper entitled: “Agenda 21 and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands”, which was submitted to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs as a contribution to the preparation of the documents for the World Summit. This report has been structured broadly around the advice provided by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the proposed “thematic review” which will be prepared to highlight accomplishments and identify gaps and deficiencies in the approaches being taken to the implementation of Agenda 21. The Bureau very much hopes that this document will be put at the disposal of the lead agency and/or task force responsible for each country’s preparation for the World Summit, so that the role of the Convention on Wetlands is taken into account both in the reports of accomplishments and in the recommendations towards the outputs of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.”
3. The Convention was accepted as an intergovernmental institution observer at the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Summit and was represented at the four meetings of the Committee, on three occasions by the Secretary General and once by the Deputy Secretary General. The Bureau distributed proposals to include issues related to wetlands in general and the role of the Convention in particular in the draft text discussed at these meetings.
4. The Secretary General represented the Convention at the Summit itself and was actively involved in some plenary sessions and in a number of side events.

5. The Secretary General feels that the Bureau efforts were not supported by the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to the extent that it would have been expected, in spite of the fact that the Standing Committee had endorsed and encouraged those efforts. Very few delegations of Ramsar Contracting Parties attending the preparatory meetings for the Summit included representatives that were familiar with the Convention, and with a few exceptions it would appear that delegations had not been briefed about the importance of wetland issues and the relevance of the Convention for the Summit. In this sense, a historical opportunity to have the Convention and its issues more widely recognized by the international community may have been missed.
6. Among the International Organization Partners, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) lobbied very actively during the preparatory process and the Summit itself in favour of a wider recognition of wetland issues and the role of the Convention, through a number of position papers and side events. The Secretary General wishes to express his sincere appreciation to WWF for this strong support.

### **The results for the Convention**

7. In a nutshell, wetland issues received some degree of recognition in the Plan of Implementation adopted by the Summit, and the Convention is alluded to once in the text, in Section IV, under oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas. Unfortunately, there is no section specifically dealing with wetlands (as there are for forests, oceans and mountains, for example), and the significance of the List of Wetlands of International Importance neither recognized nor its further development encouraged.
8. Nevertheless, as shown in the analysis presented in Annex 1, in practically all sections of the Plan of Implementation there are elements that directly or indirectly are relevant to Ramsar.

### **The results of the Summit**

9. In general, the Summit has been given bad press. No one could seriously argue that the Summit was an overwhelming success for the future of the planet, but this almost concerted effort to dismiss the value of the Summit is neither honest nor helpful in advancing the sustainable development agenda in all its components.
10. Thus, the Ramsar Convention, without denying the shortcomings of the Summit, should take a positive approach to it and do its best to capitalize on its achievements. This should help the Convention to achieve its Mission, which, we should not forget, is “the conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation **as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world**” (emphasis added).
11. The Summit recognized that “Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development **are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development**” [emphasis added].

12. It should also be noted that throughout the document there is an emphasis on the fact that the three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social progress, and environmental protection – are inseparable. In this sense, WSSD may have contributed to a better, and hopefully lasting, understanding of the inextricable linkages that exist between these three issues, and the consequent need for addressing them jointly.
13. The Summit put special emphasis on five areas identified by the UN Secretary General as the key areas for the future of the planet: **Water** and sanitation; **Energy**; **Health**; **Agricultural productivity**; and **Biodiversity** and ecosystem management – which have come to be known in English as the **WEHAB** issues. Two of them are of direct significance to Ramsar.
14. The Summit results were divided into Type 1 and Type 2 outcomes. Type 1 results are the texts negotiated and adopted by governments: The Plan of Implementation and the Political Declaration. Type 2 outcomes are the series of more than 300 Partnerships agreed in the context of the Summit process, involving large numbers of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, the business sector, and organizations of civil society.
15. For Ramsar, in addition to the three general issues identified in the first three paragraphs of this section – emphasis on poverty eradication, interconnectness of the three pillars of sustainable development, and the priority given to the WEHAB issues – the following agreements under the Plan of Implementation are particularly relevant:
  - Clean drinking water and adequate sanitation are necessary to protect human health and the environment: halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.
  - Governments should give priority to water management and develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005.
  - Develop and implement national/regional strategies, plans and programmes with regard to integrated river basin, watershed and groundwater management.
  - Improve the efficient use of water resources and promote their allocation among competing uses: give priority to basic human needs while attending to the preservation or restoration of ecosystems and their functions, including safeguarding drinking water quality.
  - Support actions to monitor and assess the quantity and quality of water resources.
  - Improve water resource management and the scientific understanding of the water cycle.
  - Increase understanding of the sustainable use, protection and management of water resources to advance long-term sustainability of freshwater, coastal and marine environments.
  - Implement programmes to address deforestation, erosion, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, disruption of water flows and retreat of glaciers.
  - Encourage the application by 2010 of the ecosystem approach for the sustainable development of the oceans, including the implementation of the Ramsar Convention.

- On an urgent basis and where possible by 2015, maintain or restore depleted fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield.
  - Develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, the elimination of destructive fishing practices, the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012.
  - Establish by 2004 a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment.
  - Achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity.
  - Review implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2004.
  - Provide particular support to Africa's efforts to implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which includes a specific wetland component.
  - Recommend to the UN General Assembly that it consider adopting a decade of education for sustainable development, starting in 2005.
  - Reinforce the role of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, including its cooperation with international organizations (e.g., Ramsar).
  - Take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005.
16. The Summit should also have far reaching effects in reinvigorating the dialogue between the various stakeholders, which includes representatives from NGOs, women, youth, indigenous people, business, local authorities, scientists, farmers and trade unions.

(A summary including other aspects of the Summit results is available in the UN Web site at <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>)

### **Ramsar's response to the Summit**

17. The Convention's response to the Summit should be at the international, regional and national levels.
18. At the international level, COP8 constitutes the opportunity to react to the Summit's results and to incorporate them as appropriate in the text of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008, including its implementation in the triennium 2003-2005. To that end, the Bureau is making a number of proposals in the revised text of the Strategic Plan that will be submitted to the Committee that the COP may establish to deal with the draft Plan.
19. In addition, the COP may wish to instruct the Standing Committee to pay attention to developments at the international and regional levels in relation to the application of the Plan of Implementation during the triennium 2003-2005 to ensure that the interests of the Convention, as well as the contributions that the Convention may be in a position to make, are fully taken into account.

20. At the regional level, the Standing Committee, the Bureau and concerned Parties should be attentive to developments in the UN regional commissions which may represent opportunities for the Convention. In the case of Africa, particular attention should be paid to developments in relation to NEPAD, and the Bureau should continue to be actively engaged with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in relation of the wetland component of the Partnership.
21. At the national level, Contracting Parties, and the Ramsar Administrative Authorities and National Ramsar/Wetland Committees in particular, should make full use of the opportunities presented by the application of the Plan of Implementation at national, regional and international levels to address more forcefully that until now wetland issues, including furthering the application of the Convention.

## Annex 1

### The Ramsar Convention and the Plan of Implementation adopted by the WSSD

In the following analysis, the provisional version in English of the Plan of Implementation, as adopted on 5 September 2002, has been used, since by 27 October 2002 the UN has not yet made available the final version, and no translations into the UN official languages have been made available. Thus, the quotations in English correspond to the unedited text available, and their translations into French and Spanish are those of the Ramsar translators, not the official UN text.

What follows is a preliminary analysis of the content of the Plan of Implementation, making specific reference to the contents in each section which are most relevant to the Convention, leaving aside other elements which may be high importance for sustainable development in general but not of direct concern to Ramsar.

#### I. Introduction

*The Convention should take fully into account the issues addressed in the initial paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation.*

1. “2. . . . Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development.

“3. . . . Furthermore, the implementation should involve all relevant actors through partnerships, especially between Governments of the North and South, on the one hand, and between Governments and major groups, on the other, to achieve the widely shared goals of sustainable development.”

#### II. Poverty eradication

*The Convention should consider how it could position itself as a tool for poverty eradication in relation to wetland conservation and sustainable use.*

2. In this section the Summit concluded that “Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries.” It also agreed to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than \$1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.
3. The section also deals with poverty reduction strategies and the access by indigenous people to economic activities, recognizing that traditional and direct dependence on renewable resources and ecosystems, including sustainable harvesting, continues to be essential to the cultural, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people.

4. The section also addresses the question of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought and floods through such measures as land and natural resource management and ecosystem conservation, in order to reverse current trends and minimize degradation of land and water resources.
5. The Summit agrees to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation. This should include, *inter alia*, providing support for natural resource management for creating sustainable livelihoods for the poor.

### **III. Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production**

***Some elements of this section should have implications for wetland management and the sustainable use of wetland resources.***

6. Social and economic development should take place within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, delinking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes, and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste.
7. Relevant to the use of and trade in wetland products is the agreement that countries should develop production and consumption policies to improve the products and services provided, while reducing environmental and health impacts, using, where appropriate, science-based approaches, such as life-cycle analysis. They should also develop and adopt, on a voluntary basis, effective, transparent, verifiable, non-misleading and non-discriminatory consumer information tools to provide information relating to sustainable consumption and production. These tools should not be used as disguised trade barriers.
8. In relation to the private sector, the Summit agrees to encourage industry to improve social and environmental performance through voluntary initiatives, including environmental management systems, codes of conduct, certification and public reporting on environmental and social issues.
9. Countries should continue to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the costs of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.
10. They should also promote public procurement policies that encourage development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services and use environmental impact assessment procedures.
11. In the section devoted to energy, there is no specific reference to issues of interest to Ramsar, though a strong connection exists, such as the questions related to hydropower and its possible impact upon wetlands.

12. In the section related to transport, there is no specific reference to issues of direct interest to Ramsar, though there are issues related to infrastructure developments which may affect wetlands.
13. In the section devoted to waste, there are no specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.
14. In the section devoted to chemicals, the Summit reaffirms the precautionary approach “as set out in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development”. The section is relevant to Ramsar in relation to the prevention of chemical pollution of water resources, including wetlands, and in particular the agreement to promote reduction of the risks posed by heavy metals that are harmful to human health and the environment, including through a review of relevant studies, such as the UNEP global assessment of mercury and its compounds.

#### **IV. Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development**

*This section includes issues of direct relevance to the Convention, such as water supply and sanitation, including water resources management, ecosystems and the river basin approach.*

15. The Summit asserts that “Human activities are having an increasing impact on the integrity of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and economic activities. Managing the natural resources base in a sustainable and integrated manner is essential for sustainable development. In this regard, to reverse the current trend in natural resource degradation as soon as possible, it is necessary to implement strategies which should include targets adopted at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels to protect ecosystems and to achieve integrated management of land, water and living resources, while strengthening regional, national and local capacities.”
16. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
  - a) to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water;
  - b) to intensify water pollution prevention to reduce health hazards and protect ecosystems;
  - c) to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, with regard to integrated river basin, watershed and groundwater management;
  - d) to improve the efficient use of water resources and promote their allocation among competing uses in a way that gives priority to the satisfaction of basic human needs and balances the requirement of preserving or restoring ecosystems and their functions, in particular in fragile environments;



- e) to support efforts to monitor and assess the quantity and quality of water resources, including through the establishment and/or further development of national monitoring networks and water resources databases and the development of relevant national indicators;
- f) to improve water resource management and scientific understanding of the water cycle through cooperation in joint observation and research, and
- g) to promote effective coordination among the various international and intergovernmental bodies and processes working on water-related issues, both within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and international financial institutions.

***The section dealing with oceans and coastal zones includes the reaffirmation of the ecosystem approach and is also of particular interest for the Convention.***

17. “Oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical for global food security and for sustaining economic prosperity and the well-being of many national economies, particularly in developing countries.”
18. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
- a) to establish an effective, transparent and regular inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system, and to encourage the application by 2010 of the ecosystem approach;
  - b) to promote integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral coastal and ocean management at the national level, and encourage and assist coastal States in developing ocean policies and mechanisms on integrated coastal management; and
  - c) to assist developing countries in coordinating policies and programmes at the regional and subregional levels aimed at the conservation and sustainable management of fishery resources, and implement integrated coastal area management plans, including through the promotion of sustainable coastal and small-scale fishing activities and, where appropriate, the development of related infrastructure.

***The section devoted to fisheries, including replenishment of fish stocks and the role of coastal wetlands, is of particular relevance to the Convention, with an explicit call for its implementation.***

19. It is agreed, *inter alia*:
- a) to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015, and to support the sustainable development of aquaculture, including small-scale aquaculture, given its growing importance for food security and economic development;

- b) to maintain the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas, including in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction, and to implement the work programme arising from the Jakarta Mandate on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including through the urgent mobilization of financial resources and technological assistance and the development of human and institutional capacity, particularly in developing countries;
- c) to develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, the elimination of destructive fishing practices, the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012 and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds and periods, proper coastal land use, watershed planning and the integration of marine and coastal areas management into key sectors; and
- d) to develop national, regional and international programmes for halting the loss of marine biodiversity, including in coral reefs and wetlands, and to implement the Ramsar Convention, including its joint work programme with the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the programme of action called for by the International Coral Reef Initiative to strengthen joint management plans and international networking for wetland ecosystems in coastal zones, including coral reefs, mangroves, seaweed beds and tidal mud flats.

***In the section on marine pollution from land-based sources, there is a possible role for Ramsar.***

- 20. The section includes the agreement to elaborate regional programmes of action and improve the links with strategic plans for the sustainable development of coastal and marine resources, noting in particular areas which are subject to accelerated environmental changes and development pressures.
- 21. In the section devoted to maritime safety and marine pollution there are no specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.

***In the section on scientific understanding and assessment of coastal ecosystems there is a possible role for Ramsar.***

- 22. The decision is to improve the scientific understanding and assessment of marine and coastal ecosystems as a fundamental basis for sound decision-making. It is agreed, *inter alia*, to build capacity in marine science, information and management, including promoting the use of environmental impact assessments and environmental evaluation and reporting techniques, for projects or activities that are potentially harmful to the coastal and marine environments and their living and non-living resources.

***In the section devoted to natural disasters prevention, there is a specific reference to wetland functions and a possible role for Ramsar.***

23. “An integrated, multi-hazard, inclusive approach to address vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, is an essential element of a safer world.”
24. It is agreed, *inter alia*:
- a) to strengthen the institutional capacities of countries and promote international joint observation and research, through improved surface-based monitoring and increased use of satellite data, dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge, and the provision of assistance to vulnerable countries; and
  - b) to reduce the risks of flooding and drought in vulnerable countries by, *inter alia*, promoting wetland and watershed protection and restoration, improving land-use planning, improving and applying more widely techniques and methodologies for assessing the potential adverse effects of climate change on wetlands and, as appropriate, assisting countries that are particularly vulnerable to those effects.

***The section devoted to climate change is also relevant to the Convention.***

25. “Change in the Earth’s climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind. We remain deeply concerned that all countries, particularly developing countries including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased risks of negative impacts of climate change and recognize that, in this context, the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to water and food and human health remain at the centre of global attention.”
26. It is agreed, *inter alia*:
- a) to promote the systematic observation of the Earth’s atmosphere, land and oceans by improving monitoring stations, increasing the use of satellites, and appropriately integrating these observations to produce high-quality data that could be disseminated for the use of all countries, in particular developing countries; and
  - b) to support initiatives to assess the consequences of climate change, such as the Arctic Council initiative, including the environmental, economic and social impacts on local and indigenous communities.
27. In the section on air pollution there are no specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.

***In the section devoted to agriculture, there are specific references to water management issues and wetlands, and thus there is a possible role for Ramsar.***

28. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
- a) to develop and implement integrated land management and water-use plans that are based on sustainable use of renewable resources and on integrated assessments of socio-economic and environmental potentials, and strengthen the capacity of Governments, local authorities and communities to monitor and manage the quantity and quality of land and water resources;

- b) to increase understanding of the sustainable use, protection and management of water resources to advance long-term sustainability of freshwater, coastal and marine environments;
- c) to promote programmes to enhance in a sustainable manner the productivity of land and the efficient use of water resources in agriculture, forestry, wetlands, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, especially through indigenous and local community-based approaches;
- d) to support the efforts of developing countries to protect oases from silt, land degradation and increasing salinity by providing appropriate technical and financial assistance;
- e) to promote programmes for the environmentally sound, effective and efficient use of soil fertility improvement practices and agricultural pest control; and
- f) to promote the conservation and sustainable use and management of traditional and indigenous agricultural systems and strengthen indigenous models of agricultural production.

***In the section devoted to Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification there are no references to Ramsar, but it is relevant to the Convention in view of the existing MOUs between Ramsar and CCD and Ramsar and CBD.***

29. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:

- a) to encourage the Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification to continue exploring and enhancing synergies; and
- b) to integrate measures to prevent and combat desertification as well as to mitigate the effects of drought through relevant policies and programmes, such as land, water and forest management, agriculture, rural development, early warning systems, environment, energy, natural resources, health and education, and poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies.

***In the section devoted to mountains there is a possible role for Ramsar in view of the draft resolutions on mountains being submitted by Contacting Parties to COP8.***

30. “Mountain ecosystems support particular livelihoods, and include significant watershed resources, biological diversity and unique flora and fauna. Many are particularly fragile and vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and need specific protection.”
31. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*, to implement programmes to address deforestation, erosion, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, disruption of water flows, and retreat of glaciers.

***In the section devoted to sustainable tourism development there is a possible role for Ramsar.***

32. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
- a) to develop programmes, including education and training programmes, that encourage people to participate in eco-tourism, enable indigenous and local communities to develop and benefit from eco-tourism, and enhance stakeholder cooperation in tourism development and heritage preservation, in order to improve the protection of the environment, natural resources, and cultural heritage; and
  - b) to assist host communities in managing visits to their tourism attractions for their maximum benefit, while ensuring the least negative impacts on and risks for their traditions, culture and environment, with the support of the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations.

***In the section on biodiversity, including the reaffirmation of the ecosystem approach, there is a clear role for Ramsar, though no specific reference to the Convention, in view of its Joint Work Plan with CBD.***

33. “Biodiversity, which plays a critical role in overall sustainable development and poverty eradication, is essential to our planet, to human well-being and to the livelihood and cultural integrity of people. However, biodiversity is currently being lost at unprecedented rates due to human activities; this trend can only be reversed if the local people benefit from the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, in particular in countries of origin of genetic resources, in accordance with article 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention is the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources. A more efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity will require the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries.”
34. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
- a) to promote the ongoing work under CBD on the sustainable use of biological diversity, including on sustainable tourism, as a cross-cutting issue relevant to different ecosystems, sectors and thematic areas;
  - b) to encourage effective synergies between CBD and other multilateral environmental agreements, *inter alia*, through the development of joint plans and programmes, with due regard to their respective mandates, regarding common responsibilities and concerns;
  - c) to implement CBD and its provisions and strengthen their integration into relevant cross-sectoral strategies, programmes and policies, including those related to sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as initiatives which promote community-based sustainable use of biological diversity;
  - d) to promote the wide implementation and further development of the ecosystem approach, as it is being elaborated in the ongoing work of CBD;

- e) to promote concrete international support and partnership for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including in ecosystems, at World Heritage sites and for the protection of endangered species, in particular through the appropriate channelling of financial resources and technology to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- f) to effectively conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, promote and support initiatives for hot spot areas and other areas essential for biodiversity, and promote the development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors;
- g) to provide financial and technical support to developing countries, including capacity-building, in order to enhance indigenous and community-based biodiversity conservation efforts;
- h) to strengthen national, regional and international efforts to control invasive alien species, which are one of the main causes of biodiversity loss, and encourage the development of an effective work programme on invasive alien species at all levels; and
- i) subject to national legislation, to recognize the rights of local and indigenous communities who are holders of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, and, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, develop and implement benefit-sharing mechanisms on mutually agreed terms for the use of such knowledge, innovations and practices.

***In the section on forests, there is a possible role for Ramsar in view of the following wetland types under the Convention's Classification system: I – Intertidal forested wetlands; includes mangroves swamps, nipah swamps and tidal freshwater swamp forests; Xf – Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands; includes freshwater swamps forests, seasonally flooded forests, wooded swamps on inorganic soils; and Xp – Forested peatlands; peatswamps forests.***

35. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:

- a) to enhance political commitment to achieving sustainable forest management by endorsing it as a priority on the international political agenda, taking full account of the linkages between the forest sector and other sectors through integrated approaches;
- b) to support the United Nations Forum on Forests, with the assistance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as key intergovernmental mechanisms to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of sustainable forest management;
- c) to take immediate action to promote and facilitate the means to achieve sustainable timber harvesting;
- d) to recognize and support indigenous and community-based forest management systems to ensure their full and effective participation in sustainable forest management; and

- e) to implement CBD's expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity, in close cooperation with the Forum, Partnership members and other forest-related processes and conventions, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

36. The section on mining does not have specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.

#### **V. Sustainable development in a globalizing world**

37. This section, while of significance to all issues, does not contain specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.

#### **VI. Health and sustainable development**

38. This section does not contain specific references to issues of interest to Ramsar.

#### **VII. Sustainable development of small island developing States**

*This section is of relevance to Ramsar in view of COP7 Recommendation 7.2 on Small Islands Developing States, island wetland ecosystems and the Ramsar Convention.*

39. "Small island developing States are a special case both for environment and development. Although they continue to take the lead in the path towards sustainable development in their countries, they are increasingly constrained by the interplay of adverse factors clearly underlined in Agenda 21, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and the decisions adopted at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly."

40. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:

- a) to accelerate national and regional implementation of the Programme of Action, with adequate financial resources, including through GEF focal areas, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and assistance for capacity-building from the international community;
- b) to provide support, including for capacity-building, for the development and further implementation of
  - i) small island developing States-specific components within programmes of work on marine and coastal biological diversity;
  - ii) freshwater programmes for small islands developing States, including through the GEF focal areas; and
- c) to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2004.

### VIII. Sustainable development for Africa

*This section is relevant to the Convention in view of its emerging involvement with NEPAD, which includes a component devoted to wetlands.*

41. “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is a commitment by African leaders to the people of Africa. It recognizes that partnerships among African countries themselves and between them and with the international community are key elements of a shared and common vision to eradicate poverty, and furthermore it aims to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, while participating actively in the world economy and body politic.”
  
42. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
  - a) to provide financial and technical support to strengthen the capacity of African countries to undertake environmental legislative policy and institutional reform for sustainable development and to undertake environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, to negotiate and implement multilateral environment agreements;
  
  - b) to develop projects, programmes and partnerships with relevant stakeholders and mobilize resources for the effective implementation of the outcome of the African Process for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment;
  
  - c) to provide financial and technical support for Africa’s efforts to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification and promote better land and watershed management practices, including through improved agricultural practices that address land degradation;
  
  - d) to promote integrated water resources development and optimize the upstream and downstream benefits therefrom, the development and effective management of water resources across all uses and the protection of water quality and aquatic ecosystems, including through initiatives at all levels, to, *inter alia*:
    - i) develop and implement integrated river basin and watershed management strategies and plans for all major water bodies;
    - ii) strengthen regional, subregional and national capacities for data collection and processing, and for planning, research, monitoring, assessment and enforcement, as well as arrangements for water resource management; and
    - iii) protect water resources, including groundwater and wetland ecosystems, against pollution; and
  
  - e) to support Africa’s efforts to attain sustainable tourism with specific emphasis on marketing African tourism products, such as adventure tourism, eco-tourism and cultural tourism, and on establishing and supporting national and cross-border conservation areas to promote ecosystem conservation according to the ecosystem approach.



## VIII.bis Other regional initiatives

*The sections devoted to sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, West Asia, and the Economic Commission for Europe region are all relevant, since there is a possible role for the Convention in all of them.*

## IX. Means of implementation

*The Summit reaffirms the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which is relevant to the Convention in view of its “Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention” (Resolution VII.19). A number of subsections are relevant to the Convention.*

43. “The implementation of Agenda 21 and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration as well as in the present plan of action, require a substantially increased effort, both by countries themselves and by the rest of the international community, based on the recognition that each country has primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized, taking fully into account the Rio principles, including, in particular, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which states:

“States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.”

44. The Summit agrees, *inter alia*:
- a) to facilitate greater flows of foreign direct investment (FDI); and
  - b) to recognize that a substantial increase in official development aid (ODA) and other resources will be required if developing countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. To this end it is agreed to cooperate to further improve policies and development strategies, with actions to make available the increased ODA commitments announced by several developed countries at the International Conference on Financing for Development, and to urge the developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP as ODA to developing countries, and effectively implement their commitment on ODA to the least developed countries as contained in paragraph 83 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. Developing countries are encouraged to build on progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets in accordance with the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

45. The Summit welcomed the successful and substantial third replenishment of the GEF, which will enable it to address the funding requirements of new focal areas and existing ones and continue to be responsive to the needs and concerns of its recipient countries, in particular developing countries, and further encourage GEF to leverage additional funds from key public and private organizations, improve the management of funds through more speedy and streamlined procedures, and simplify its project cycle.
46. The Summit also agreed to encourage exploring innovative mechanisms to comprehensively address the debt problems of developing countries, including middle-income countries and countries with economies in transition. Such mechanisms may include debt-for-sustainable-development swaps.
47. It was also agreed to continue to enhance the mutual supportiveness of trade, environment and development with a view to achieving sustainable development, and to encourage the voluntary use of environmental impact assessments as an important national-level tool to better identify trade, environment and development interlinkages.
48. The Summit agrees to promote mutual supportiveness between the multilateral trading system and the multilateral environmental agreements, consistent with sustainable development goals, in support of the work programme agreed through WTO, while recognizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of both sets of instruments.
49. The Summit also agrees to improve the transfer of technologies to developing countries, in particular at the bilateral and regional levels, including through urgent actions at all levels to, *inter alia*, improve interaction and collaboration, stakeholder relationships and networks between and among universities, research institutions, government agencies and the private sector.
50. Other areas of interest to the Convention in this section deal with: building capacity to access a larger share of multilateral and global research and development programmes; building greater capacity in science and technology for sustainable development; improving policy and decision-making at all levels, including the formulation and implementation of policies for environmental management and protection; establishing regular channels between policy makers and the scientific community for requesting and receiving science and technology advice for the implementation of Agenda 21; using information and communication technologies as tools to increase the frequency of communication and the sharing of experience and knowledge; supporting the use of education to promote sustainable development; encouraging further work on indicators for sustainable development; promoting the development and wider use of earth observation technologies; supporting efforts to prevent and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters; and developing and promoting the wider application of environmental impact assessments.

## **X. Institutional framework for sustainable development**

### **Strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the international level**

*Ramsar participated in the work of the Environment Management Group and has been involved, although only occasionally, in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Thus, this section is also relevant to the Convention.*

51. The Summit agrees to strengthen collaboration within and between the United Nations system, international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, and WTO, utilizing the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the United Nations Development Group, the Environment Management Group, and other inter-agency coordinating bodies. Strengthened inter-agency collaboration should be pursued in all relevant contexts, with special emphasis on the operational level and involving partnership arrangements on specific issues to support, in particular, developing countries' efforts in implementing Agenda 21.

#### **Role and function of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

52. The Summit agrees that the Commission should place more emphasis upon actions that enable implementation at all levels, including promoting and facilitating partnerships involving Governments, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders for the implementation of Agenda 21.
53. The Summit also requests that the Commission continue to provide for more direct and substantive involvement of international organizations and major groups in its work.
54. The Summit stresses the need for international institutions both within and outside the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, WTO and GEF, to enhance, within their mandates, their cooperative efforts to:
  - a) promote effective and collective support to the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels; and
  - b) enhance the effectiveness and coordination of international institutions to implement Agenda 21, the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, relevant sustainable development aspects of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, and the outcomes of the fourth WTO ministerial meeting, held in Doha in November 2001.
55. The Summit also requests that, in order to promote effective implementation of Agenda 21 at the international level, the following should also be undertaken:
  - a) streamline the international sustainable development meeting calendar and, where appropriate, reduce the number of meetings, the length of meetings, and the amount of time spent on negotiated outcomes in favour of more time spent on practical matters related to implementation;
  - b) encourage partnership initiatives for implementation by all relevant actors to support the outcome of the Summit; and
  - c) make full use of developments in the field of information and communication technologies.

**Strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable development at the regional level**

56. Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit should be effectively pursued at the regional and subregional levels, through the regional commissions and other regional and subregional institutions and bodies.

**Strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development at the national level**

57. States should:
- a) continue to promote coherent and coordinated approaches to institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all national levels;
  - b) take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005; and
  - c) further promote the establishment or enhancement of sustainable development councils and/or coordination structures at the national level.

**Participation of major groups**

58. The Summit agrees to enhance partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors, including all major groups, as well as volunteer groups, on programmes and activities for the achievement of sustainable development at all levels.