



9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”

Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

Ramsar COP9 DOC. 28

[English only]

The Kampala Declaration

Note from the Secretariat

1. The “Kampala Declaration” is an initiative of the Ugandan Government. As of 6 October 2005 there is this draft in English, which may undergo further revisions before being translated and made available for discussion at the Ramsar COP9 Technical Session on 12 November 2005. On the same day it will also be available for review and comment by the informal ministerial dialogue that is being sponsored by the Government of Uganda.
2. On 13 November the Conference Committee will review the draft declaration and collate comments made at those sessions, or informally by Parties at other times during the COP. The Conference Committee will then take a decision on the form and content of any declaration which may be submitted to the plenary for discussion and possible adoption in the closing days of the COP.

The Kampala Declaration

WE, the delegates to the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) gathered in Kampala, Uganda, from 8 to 15 November 2005,

RECALLING that the **Ramsar Convention** was created in 1971, in response to a then growing global concern that wetland losses were rapidly increasing and causing, *inter alia*, lack of opportunities for staging, feeding and breeding sites for many species of migratory waterfowl, and

NOTING that the Ramsar Convention actively supported the **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment of 2005**, which found, for wetland ecosystems, that:

- Wetlands encompass a significant proportion of the area of the planet; the global estimate is 1280 million hectares and is recognized as an under-estimate.
- A cross-sectoral focus is urgently needed from policy- and decision-makers that emphasizes securing wetland ecosystem services in the context of achieving sustainable development and improving human well-being.

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- The degradation and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that for other ecosystems. Similarly, the status of both freshwater and coastal species is deteriorating faster than those of other ecosystems. Wetland-dependent biodiversity in many parts of the world is in continuing and accelerating decline.
- The projected continued loss and degradation of wetlands will result in further reduction in human well-being, especially for poorer people in less developed countries where technological solutions are not as readily available.
- The priority when making choices about wetland management decisions is to ensure that the ecosystem services of the wetland are maintained. This can be achieved by application of the wise use principle of the Ramsar Convention.

WE AFFIRM, as it is becoming critical thus to redress this situation of continuing loss and degradation of wetland ecosystems globally and the impacts of these losses on people,
THAT:

1. to achieve a full balance between people and wetlands a new commitment is needed to enhance conservation, develop communication and increase capacity in Contracting Parties to the Convention, as well as in nations not yet Contracting Parties;
2. the role of wetlands in supporting people's livelihoods is best achieved through the active participation and involvement of local communities, although governments have a key role in influencing the wise use and conservation of wetland resources and, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society, also have a role in mobilizing funding for wetlands, to promote and sustain the wise use concept;
3. as wetlands play a key role in biodiversity conservation, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation urges countries to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, there is a need for a clear strategy to address this commitment in the context of the general attempt to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010;
4. wetlands, with surrounding ecosystems, are essential in mitigating against and adapting to global change;
5. where destroyed, wetlands can be rehabilitated and restored, especially in coastal systems and lake shores, and such rehabilitated wetlands continue to enhance and sustain benefits for people;
6. wetland wise use and conservation can be achieved by appropriately valuing wetland resources, adding value to wetland products, and enabling smart marketing for wetland products;
7. to obtain the best ecological outcomes for wetlands, there is a need for harmonizing and de-sectoralising the development and implementation of

policies at all levels, international, regional, national to local, and blending water and biodiversity policies;

8. the development of approaches to the management of wetland ecosystems which cross national boundaries, or systems which have shared resources, even if spatially disjunct, remains a priority;
9. the good management of sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance remains key to achieving wise use of wetlands globally; and the List should be augmented by nominations from wetland types which are under-represented, in order to produce a List which is balanced, representative and comprehensive; and
10. in the African context there is a need for a coordinated approach to wetland initiatives under AMCEN, NEPAD, AMCOW, and other growing policy initiatives.