

Ramsar
Handbooks
4th edition

Handbook 21

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015





About the Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) is an intergovernmental treaty whose mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”. As of October 2010, 160 nations have joined the Convention as Contracting Parties, and more than 1900 wetlands around the world, covering over 186 million hectares, have been designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

What are wetlands?

As defined by the Convention, wetlands include a wide variety of habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and coastal areas such as saltmarshes, mangroves, and seagrass beds, but also coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than six metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

About this series of handbooks

This series has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention following the 7th, 8th 9th, and 10th meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP7, COP8, COP9 and COP10) held, respectively, in San José, Costa Rica, in May 1999, Valencia, Spain, in November 2002, Kampala, Uganda, in November 2005, and Changwon, Republic of Korea, October-November 2008. The guidelines on various matters adopted by the Parties at those and earlier COPs have been prepared as a series of handbooks to assist those with an interest in, or directly involved with, implementation of the Convention at the international, regional, national, subnational or local levels. Each handbook brings together, subject by subject, the various relevant guidances adopted by Parties, supplemented by additional material from COP information papers, case studies and other relevant publications so as to illustrate key aspects of the guidelines. The handbooks are available in the three working languages of the Convention (English, French, and Spanish).

The table on the inside back cover lists the full scope of the subjects covered by this handbook series at present. Additional handbooks will be prepared to include any further guidance adopted by future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Ramsar Convention promotes an integrated package of actions to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. In recognition of these integrated approaches, the reader will find that within each handbook there are numerous cross-references to others in the series.

Copyright © 2010, Ramsar Convention Secretariat

Citation: Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010. *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015: Goals, strategies, and expectations for the Ramsar Convention's implementation for the period 2009 to 2015*. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, vol. 21. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland.

Reproduction of material from this publication for educational and other non-commercial purposes is authorized without prior permission from the Ramsar Secretariat, providing full acknowledgement is given.

Series Editor: Dave Pritchard
Series Supervisor: Nick Davidson
Design and layout: Dwight Peck

Cover photo: The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008. (D. Peck / Ramsar)

Handbook 21

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015

Goals, strategies, and expectations for the Ramsar Convention's implementation for the period 2009 to 2015



This 4th edition of the Ramsar Handbooks replaces the series published in 2007. It includes relevant guidance adopted by several meetings of the Conference of the Parties, in particular COP7 (1999), COP8 (2002), COP9 (2005), and COP10 (2008), as well as selected background documents presented at these COPs.

Acknowledgements

This supplementary volume of the Ramsar Handbooks series comprises the text of the Convention's current Strategic Plan 2009-2015, which is intended by the Contracting Parties to provide direction to and common expectations for their work in implementing the Ramsar Convention over the six year period beginning from the end of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, effectively at the end of 2008.

The early drafts of this Strategic Plan were prepared by the Secretariat based upon lessons learnt from the preceding Strategic Plans, additional subjects and emphases derived from Resolutions and Recommendations of the subsequent Conference of the Parties and decisions of the Standing Committee, and additional advice from the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and other knowledgeable members of the Ramsar community.

The Secretariat is grateful for the direction and guidance provided by the Standing Committee's Subgroup on the Strategic Plan and by the Standing Committee itself at its 35th (March 2007), 36th (February 2008), and 37th (June 2008) meetings, as well as to the Parties and interested observers at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Changwon in November 2008.

All Resolutions of the Ramsar COPs are available from the Convention's Web site at www.ramsar.org/resolutions. Background documents referred to in these handbooks are available at www.ramsar.org/cop7-docs, www.ramsar.org/cop8-docs, www.ramsar.org/cop9-docs, and www.ramsar.org/cop10-docs.



The 37th meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee, Gland, Switzerland, June 2008

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Getting the most out of this Handbook	4
Foreword	6
Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 2009-2015	7
The purpose of the Strategic Plan	7
History of the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Planning	7
Use of the Strategic Plan	8
Implementation of the Convention at national level	9
Key issues for the future of the Convention	10
What do we want? - Our Goals	11
GOAL 1. Wise Use	13
GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance	17
GOAL 3. International cooperation	19
GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness	21
GOAL 5. Membership	23
Relevant Resolution	
Resolution X.1 <i>The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015</i>	25

Getting the most out of this Handbook

The Handbooks in general

The purpose of the Ramsar Handbooks is to organize selected guidance material from relevant decisions adopted by the Contracting Parties over the years, according to subject themes. This helps practitioners to implement the internationally-agreed best practice in a way that is convenient to handle and more naturally matches their own everyday working environment.

The intended readership includes national and local staff of the government departments, ministries and agencies that act as Administrative Authorities for the Ramsar Convention in each country. Equally important users in many cases are managers of individual wetland areas, as some aspects of the guidance relate specifically to site management.

The Ramsar guidance has been adopted by member governments as a whole, and increasingly it addresses itself to the crucial roles of other sectors beyond the “environment” or “water” sectors. It is thus very important that these Handbooks should be used by **all** whose actions may benefit from or impact upon the wise use of wetlands.

A vital first step in each country therefore is to ensure adequate **dissemination** of these Handbooks to all who need or can benefit from them. Copies are freely available in PDF format from the Ramsar Secretariat in three languages on CD-ROM or by download from the Convention website (www.ramsar.org).

Other early steps would be, in each particular context, to **clarify** lines of responsibility and **actively check** how to align the terms used and approaches described with the reader’s own jurisdiction, operating circumstances, and organizational structures.

Much of the text can be used in a **proactive sense**, as a basis for framing policies, plans and activities, sometimes by simply importing relevant sections into national and local materials. It can also be used in a **reactive sense** as a source of help and ideas for responding to problems and opportunities, navigating subjects by the need of the user.

Cross-references, original sources, and further reading are liberally cited: the Handbooks will often not be the “last word”, but they provide a helpful “route-map” to further sources of information and support.

Strategic direction in the Ramsar Convention is provided by the Strategic Plan, the latest version of which was adopted by COP10 in 2008 for the period 2009-2015. All thematic implementation frameworks, including the Handbooks, sit within the context of the goals and strategies of this Plan and the priorities it highlights for the period covered.

In this fourth edition of the Handbooks, additions to and omissions from the text of the original guidelines, required by the results of COP8, COP9 and COP10, are shown in square brackets [...].

The Handbook series is updated after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and feedback on user experience is always appreciated in helping to refine each new edition.

This Handbook (The Strategic Plan 2009-2015)

The Strategic Plan 2009-2015 calls for actions to be undertaken by the Secretariat and the International Organization Partners, but it is to the Parties themselves that most of the strategies are chiefly addressed. It is understood that the Parties differ substantially in their situations – in their economic and personnel capacities to carry out activities; in the conservation status and trends of their different types of wetlands; in the public awareness and political will of their electorates; in the abilities of their national Ramsar focal points, the Administrative Authorities, to influence the national and local governments; and in their existing legal and institutional frameworks – and that therefore every Party will examine the Strategic Plan closely and determine its own responses.

As they tailor the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 to their own needs and capacities, Parties will also recall that, though this new Plan helps them by articulating a shorter and more focused list of priority actions agreed by the COP, there are many other goals and actions that the Parties have committed themselves to working towards in the previous Resolutions and guidelines adopted by the COP. Parties should feel free to continue working towards those additional commitments whenever appropriate and feasible.

Taking its goals, strategies, and Key Result Areas together, the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 contributes to:

- a common understanding at global, national, and subnational levels of the Convention's purposes and principles;
- improved implementation of the Resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties through its focus on key elements for this period;
- progress at all levels in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and the related benefits for biodiversity and human well-being;
- international coordination of national and subnational efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention; and
- a raised profile among other sectors and bodies of the Convention and its objectives.

Foreword

The Strategic Plan is intended to provide guidance, particularly to the Contracting Parties but also to the Standing Committee, the Secretariat, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the regional initiatives, and the International Organization Partners (IOPs), as well as the Convention's many other collaborators, on how they should focus their efforts for implementing the Convention on Wetlands over the next two triennia.

The Ramsar Convention's first Strategic Plan, for the period 1997-2002, was negotiated by a wide array of stakeholders during 1995 and adopted by a Resolution of the Parties at the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP6) in Brisbane in 1996. It was a groundbreaking document, the first plan of its kind for a global environmental convention, and it was seen at the time as a model for emulation by the other major environmental instruments.

Since then, a second Strategic Plan period has been concluded, for 2003-2008, and the Convention is now well-embarked upon its third Plan, for 2009-2015, reprinted in this supplementary volume in the Ramsar Handbooks series.

In this third Strategic Plan, Contracting Parties seek to deliver their commitments to wetland conservation and wise use through "three pillars" of action. These are:

- 1) working towards the wise use of their wetlands through a wide range of actions and processes contributing to human well-being (including poverty reduction and water and food security) through sustainable wetlands, water allocation, and river basin management, including establishing national wetland policies and plans; reviewing and harmonizing the framework of laws and financial instruments affecting wetlands; undertaking inventory and assessment; integrating wetlands into the sustainable development process; ensuring public participation in wetland management and the maintenance of cultural values by local communities and indigenous people; promoting communication, education and public awareness; increasing private sector involvement; and harmonizing implementation of the Ramsar Convention with other multilateral environmental agreements;
- 2) devoting particular attention to the further identification, designation and management of a coherent and comprehensive suite of sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List) as a contribution to the establishment of a global ecological network, and ensuring the effective monitoring and management of those sites included in the List; and
- 3) cooperating internationally in their delivery of wetland conservation and wise use, through the management of transboundary water resources and wetlands and shared wetland species, collaboration with other conventions and international organizations, sharing of information and expertise, and increasing the flow of financial resources and relevant technologies to developing countries and countries in transition.

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015

(adopted by Resolution X.1 at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)

Relevant implementation commitments made by Contracting Parties in COP Resolutions

Resolution X.1: The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Secretariat, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and the regional initiatives to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 through its strategies and key result areas;
10. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Plan to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; REQUESTS the Standing Committee to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Plan at each of its meetings; and ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to conduct a mid-term review of progress and to propose adjustments, if necessary, to be submitted to COP11;

The purpose of the Strategic Plan

1. The Strategic Plan 2009-2015 is intended to provide guidance, particularly to the Contracting Parties but also to the Standing Committee, the Secretariat, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the regional initiatives, and the International Organization Partners (IOPs), as well as the Convention's many other collaborators, on how they should focus their efforts for implementing the Convention on Wetlands over the next two triennia.

History of the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Planning

1st Strategic Plan (1997-2002)

2. The Ramsar Convention's first Strategic Plan, for the period 1997-2002, was negotiated by a wide array of stakeholders during 1995 and adopted by a Resolution of the Parties at the 6th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP6) in Brisbane in 1996. It was a groundbreaking document, the first plan of its kind for a global environmental convention, and it was seen at the time as a model for emulation by the other major environmental instruments.
3. Anchored by a clear Mission Statement – an earlier version of the Convention's present statement – the 26-page Plan articulated eight General Objectives that would contribute to fulfilling that mission; it then broke those eight down into 27 Operational Objectives and itemized 125 Actions for meeting them, and it identified the bodies within the Ramsar community that would be responsible for carrying them out, i.e., the Parties,

the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Secretariat, and the International Organization Partners.

4. In the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 it was explicitly acknowledged that each Contracting Party would be free to choose the extent to which it would implement the Plan, the level of resources that it would allocate to doing so, and the pace of its actions, but nonetheless it was agreed that the adoption of the Plan represented a strong commitment on the part of all of the Parties to achieve the Convention's mission across a broad array of concerns and activities. Strategically, a very wide net was cast, but the hierarchical construction of the Plan gave it a certain sense of prioritization amongst so many areas of concern.

2nd Strategic Plan (2003-2008)

5. The second Strategic Plan, for 2003-2008, adopted by a Resolution of COP8 (Valencia, 2002), organized the work and aspirations of the Convention under five broad General Objectives and specified 21 Operational Objectives that were intended to achieve them. Within these Operational Objectives there were 177 Actions to be undertaken, again with roles assigned to each of the Convention bodies. The list of actions was remarkably thorough.
6. Subsequently, however, many Parties expressed the feeling that the Plan was in fact too thorough, and that a more rigorous prioritization, as well as a tighter focus upon the most pressing issues, would serve the Convention better than an exhaustive list of desirable actions would.

3rd Strategic Plan (2009-2015)

7. Accordingly, with the advice of the Parties at COP9, subsequent Standing Committee meetings, and the SC Subgroup on the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan for 2009-2015 sets out five "Goals" – essentially the same five General Objectives as previously (wise use of wetlands, development of the Ramsar List, international cooperation, implementation capacity, and membership in the Convention) – but within those, it is now more tightly focused upon 28 "strategies" that represent a general consensus of the most important priorities for most Parties.

Use of the Strategic Plan

8. As before, the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 calls for actions to be undertaken by the Secretariat and the International Organization Partners, but it is to the Parties themselves that most of the strategies are chiefly addressed. It is understood that the Parties differ substantially in their situations – in their economic and personnel capacities to carry out activities; in the conservation status and trends of their different types of wetlands; in the public awareness and political will of their electorates; in the abilities of their national Ramsar focal points, the Administrative Authorities, to influence the national and local governments; and in their existing legal and institutional frameworks – and that therefore every Party will examine the Strategic Plan closely and determine its own responses.
9. It cannot be said of any such Plan that "one size fits all" at the global level; each Party will wish to establish its own priorities within the Plan's

agreed priorities, develop its own work plan for implementing them, and consider its own use of its resources. And when later reporting upon its successes and, perhaps, its shortcomings, each Party will wish to explain its results in implementing the Convention in terms of its own decisions and circumstances.

10. As they tailor the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 to their own needs and capacities, Parties will also recall that, though this new Plan helps them by articulating a shorter and more focused list of priority actions agreed by the COP, there are many other goals and actions that the Parties have committed themselves to working towards in the previous Resolutions and guidelines adopted by the COP. Parties should feel free to continue working towards those additional commitments whenever appropriate and feasible.

Implementation of the Convention at national level

11. It has become increasingly clear in recent years that one of the greatest obstacles to improving the implementation of the Convention and achieving its mission is the fact that the people who are knowledgeable about wetlands and the Ramsar Convention and dedicated to the wise use of wetlands are not always in a position to ensure that national commitments will be carried out.
12. More than ever, it is essential that designated Ramsar authorities in national governments redouble their efforts to ensure that personnel in other sectors of government are made aware of the national commitments to wetland conservation and wise use and the rationales for them. Non-governmental organizations, and particularly the International Organization Partners, can also be instrumental in helping to spread that word amongst government officials at national, state, and local levels.
13. Similarly, it is increasingly important for Parties to broaden their representation in Ramsar implementation, and frequently to raise the level of that representation, to involve those other sectors of government more closely in working towards the Convention's mission. In some Parties, the Ramsar authorities may come from essentially a niche office in some larger agency, possibly an agency not directly involved with environmental policy-making. In those cases Parties should take steps to include higher-level decision-making officials in their wetland policy-making deliberations.
14. The importance of having active, broad-based National Ramsar Committees or National Wetland Committees for this purpose cannot be emphasized too strongly. Active NRCs composed of officials from all relevant sectors who are sufficiently highly placed to be able to implement the Committee's decisions, and ideally including representatives of academia and the NGOs where appropriate, can significantly widen the sense of commitment and ownership and multiply all of the factors for success.
15. It is also essential to share widely the knowledge about wetlands and encourage all relevant players to make the best use of the various tools developed by the Convention.

Convention implementation achievements and progress during the 2002-2008 period

16. A summary analysis of the achievements and progress of the Convention under its Strategic Plan 2002-2008 is provided to the Conference of the Parties as information papers (COP10 DOCs. 6, http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/cop10/cop10_doc06_e.pdf, and 7, http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/cop10/cop10_doc07_e.pdf) in English, French, and Spanish, following compilation and study of the COP10 National Reports.

Key issues for the future of the Convention

17. What is the broad context for the problems and challenges we continue to face in striving to secure future conservation and sustainable use of wetland ecosystems (both inland and coastal) and their services to people?
18. In the 1960s the driving force behind the establishment of the Ramsar Convention was concern over the continuing destruction of wetlands and the impact of this destruction on populations of waterbirds. Yet, almost 35 years on, in 2005 the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) concluded that “degradation and loss of wetlands (both inland and coastal) is continuing more rapidly than for other ecosystems”.
19. It is clear that the underlying problem remains – economic development and consequent land-use change often remain higher priorities than ecosystem maintenance, despite the fact that these are closely interlinked and that continuing to destroy ecosystems and their services is essentially “biting the hand that feeds us”.
20. Amongst key issues that are driving continued change, deterioration and loss of wetlands and their services, are:
 - the inadequate availability of water to wetlands, in relation to wetlands’ key roles in the global hydrological cycle;
 - increasing demands for water abstraction, particularly for irrigated agriculture;
 - the impacts of a changing and increasingly extreme and unpredictable climate; and
 - the lack of a good understanding of the value of wetlands and their services (wetland valuation) to underpin sound decision-making and trade-offs.
21. There is, therefore, a key urgency for national environmental governance to shift from sectoral, demand-driven approaches to an ecosystem-based approach to policy and decision-making that affects the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character and recognizes the important role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.
22. The future implementation of the Convention to address such drivers requires that Ramsar Contracting Parties and their appointed Administrative Authorities responsible for leading national implementation engage with and work in close partnership with other sectors of government, focal points of other MEAs, and civil society in order to ensure that the role and

importance of wetlands to their businesses is fully recognized when there are hard choices to be made.

23. The Ramsar Convention works increasingly closely with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through a joint work plan and acts as the CBD's lead implementation partner for wetlands. Yet much of this collaboration to date with CBD, and with other biodiversity and environment conventions and agreements, such as the Convention on Migratory Species and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), has been through global-scale mechanisms – secretariats, scientific subsidiary bodies, etc. – and there is an urgent need for closer communication and collaboration between convention national focal points to achieve joint on-the-ground implementation.

Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 2009-2015

24. The Strategic Plan 2009-2015 contributes to:
- a common understanding at global, national, and subnational levels of the Convention's purposes and principles;
 - improved implementation of the Resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties through its focus on key elements for this period;
 - progress at all levels in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and the related benefits for biodiversity and human well-being;
 - international coordination of national and subnational efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention; and
 - a raised profile among other sectors and bodies of the Convention and its objectives.
25. Externally, the Strategic Plan also contributes to, *inter alia*, achievement of Millennium Development Goals; the programme of the 5th World Water Forum in Turkey 2009; achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity targets; achievement of the 2012 target for Marine Protected Areas; providing responses to the key issues of climate change; and implementation of decisions from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD13) policies on water and sanitation.



WHAT ARE WE ABOUT? – THE MISSION OF THE CONVENTION

“Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.”

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – OUR GOALS

Implementing the Convention

GOAL 1. Wise Use. To work towards achieving the wise use of all wetlands by ensuring that all Contracting Parties develop, adopt and use the necessary and appropriate instruments and measures, with the participation of the local indigenous and non-indigenous population and making use of

traditional knowledge, while at the same time ensuring that conservation and wise use of wetlands contribute to poverty eradication, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as well as prevention of disease and of natural disasters. Delivers Articles 3.1, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 of the Convention.

OUTCOME SOUGHT:

The wise use of all wetlands being achieved in all Parties, including more participative management of wetlands, and conservation decisions being made with an awareness of the importance of the ecosystem services provided by wetlands.

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance. To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands that are important for the conservation of global biological diversity, including waterbird flyways and fish populations and for sustaining human life, by ensuring that all Contracting Parties appropriately implement the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* and by appropriate management and wise use of those internationally important wetlands that are not yet formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified as qualifying through domestic application of the *Strategic Framework* or an equivalent process. Delivers Articles 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2 of the Convention.

OUTCOME SOUGHT:

Parties designating and managing Ramsar Sites within their territories with a view to supporting an international network of Wetlands of International Importance, fully implementing their reporting commitments under Articles 3 and 8.2, and using the Montreux Record as part of the Convention's governance process, as appropriate.

GOAL 3. International cooperation. To enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands using effective international cooperation, through *inter alia* the active application of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*. Delivers Article 5 of the Convention.

OUTCOME SOUGHT:

Parties developing their coherent national approaches to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in such a way as to benefit from developing effective partnerships with related conventions and international agencies and with other Parties to the Convention on Wetlands.

Managing the Convention

GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness. To progress towards fulfillment of the Convention's mission by ensuring that it has the required mechanisms, resources, and capacity to do so. Delivers Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the Convention.

OUTCOME SOUGHT:

Increasing success of the Convention in achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands, as measured by agreed effectiveness indicators, and increased recognition of the Convention's achievements by other sectors of governments and civil society.

GOAL 5. Membership. To progress towards universal membership of the Convention. Delivers Articles 2.4 and 9 of the Convention.

OUTCOME SOUGHT:

All countries eligible for accession to have joined the Ramsar Convention by 2015.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE OUR GOALS? – STRATEGIES & KEY RESULT AREAS

GOAL 1. Wise Use

To work towards achieving the wise use of all wetlands by ensuring that all Contracting Parties develop, adopt and use the necessary and appropriate instruments and measures, with the participation of the local indigenous and non-indigenous population and making use of traditional knowledge, while at the same time ensuring that conservation and wise use of wetlands contribute to poverty eradication, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as well as prevention of disease and of natural disasters.

STRATEGY 1.1 Wetland inventory and assessment

Describe, assess and monitor the extent and condition of all types of wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention and wetland resources at relevant scales, in order to inform and underpin implementation of the Convention, in particular in the application of its provisions concerning the wise use of all wetlands. (CPs, advised by STRP and assisted by IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 1.1.i All Parties to have completed national wetland inventories in line with the Ramsar *Framework for Wetland Inventory* and as far as possible to have disseminated comprehensive national wetland inventories, including information on wetland importance, potential Ramsar Sites, wetlands for restoration, location of under-represented wetland types, and the ecosystem services provided by wetlands. (National: CPs)
- 1.1.ii An easily accessible Web-based metadatabase in place, managed by the Secretariat, populated with information on all national wetland inventories, and linked to national and other international relevant databases. (Global: Secretariat)

STRATEGY 1.2 Global wetland information

Develop a global wetland information system, through partnerships, to be covered by voluntary contributions, to increase accessibility of data and information on wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat, advised by STRP and assisted by IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 1.2.i Global wetland distribution and status data and information available through Web-portal mechanisms. (Global: STRP)
 - 1.2.ii Global wetland observing system(s) reporting on changes in wetland status. (Global: STRP)
-

STRATEGY 1.3 Policy, legislation and institutions

Develop and implement policies, legislation, and practices, including growth and development of appropriate institutions, in all Contracting Parties to ensure that the wise use provisions of the Convention are being effectively applied. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

1.3.i National Wetland Policy or equivalent instruments fully in place alongside and integrated with other strategic and planning processes by all Parties, including poverty eradication strategies, water resources management and water efficiency plans, coastal and marine resource management plans, national forest programmes, national strategies for sustainable development, and national policies or measures on agriculture. (National: CPs)

1.3.ii Parties to have Strategic Environmental Assessment in place for policies, programmes and plans impacting on wetlands. (National: CPs)

STRATEGY 1.4 Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services

Increase recognition of and attention in decision-making to the significance of wetlands for reasons of biodiversity conservation, water supply, coastal protection, integrated coastal zone management, flood defense, climate change mitigation and/or adaptation, food security, poverty eradication, tourism, cultural heritage, and scientific research, by developing and disseminating methodologies to achieve wise use of wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat, STRP, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

1.4.i Development and implementation of wetland programmes and projects that contribute to poverty eradication objectives and food and water security plans at local and national levels. (National: CPs)

1.4.ii An analysis of the ecosystem services and their values of wetlands (especially Ramsar Sites) achieved for all Parties. (National: CPs)

1.4.iii The socio-economic and cultural heritage value of wetlands fully taken into account in wetland wise use and management. (National: CPs; Subnational: wetland managers)

STRATEGY 1.5 Recognition of role of the Convention

Raise the profile of the Convention by highlighting its capacity as a unique mechanism for wetland ecosystem management at all levels; promote the usefulness of the Convention as a possible implementation mechanism to meet the goals and targets of other global conventions and processes. (CPs, Secretariat, STRP, IOPs)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

1.5.i Global environmental organizations and conventions aware of and applying the mechanisms developed by the Ramsar Convention for wetland ecosystem management, wise use, and conservation. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs)

STRATEGY 1.6 Science-based management of wetlands

Promote successful implementation of the wise use concept by ensuring that national policies and wetland management plans are based on the best available scientific knowledge, including technical and traditional knowledge. (CPs, Secretariat, STRP, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 1.6.i High quality research completed, widely disseminated in appropriate formats and styles and applied concerning areas of key importance for wetland sustainability, such as agriculture-wetland interactions, climate change, and valuation of ecosystem services. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs, IOPs)
- 1.6.ii All wetland management plans founded on sound scientific research, including research on potential threats. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs, IOPs)

STRATEGY 1.7 Integrated Water Resources Management

Ensure that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are, included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management, coastal and nearshore marine zone planning, and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation activities. (CPs, STRP, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 1.7.i All Parties to have made available the Ramsar guidance on water allocation and management for ecosystems to support decision-making on water resource management, as a contribution to achieving the WSSD target on water resources management and water efficiency plans. (National: CPs)
- 1.7.ii All Parties, in their water governance and management, to be managing wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins. (National: CPs)
- 1.7.iii National policies or guidelines enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change in progress or completed. (National: CPs)
- 1.7.iv The Convention's role in encouraging IWRM planning established as part of international environmental efforts. (Global: Secretariat, STRP)
- 1.7.v Parties to have formulated plans to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems. (National: CPs)

STRATEGY 1.8 Wetland restoration

Identify priority wetlands and wetland systems where restoration or rehabilitation would be beneficial and yield long-term environmental, social, or economic benefits, and implement the necessary measures to recover these sites and systems. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

1.8.i All Parties to have identified priority sites for restoration; restoration projects underway or completed in at least half the Parties. (National: CPs)

1.8.ii New case studies and methods added to Ramsar wetland restoration pages on the Web site. (Global: STRP; National: CPs)

STRATEGY 1.9 Invasive alien species

Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN's Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems. (CPs, STRP, other agencies, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

1.9.i All Parties to have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological characters of wetlands, especially Ramsar Sites. (National: CPs)

1.9.ii Parties to have identified more comprehensively the problems posed by invasive species in wetland ecosystems within their territories. (National: CPs)

1.9.iii National invasive species control and management policies or guidelines in place for wetlands. (National: CPs)

1.9.iv Comprehensive and up-to-date global guidance on invasive species, in cooperation with GISP, available to all stakeholders. (Global: STRP)

1.9.v Increased collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity on actions to address gaps in international regulations relating to invasive alien species. (Global: Secretariat)

STRATEGY 1.10 Private sector

Promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

1.10.i Significant progress in the private sector applying the concepts and approaches for conservation and wise use of wetlands contained in Ramsar guidance (Ramsar Handbooks 1 to 17, 3rd edition) and other relevant guidelines in their activities and investments affecting wetlands. (Global to Subnational: private sector)

1.10.ii Increased private sector engagement in the wise use of wetlands and in the management of Ramsar Sites. (Subnational: private sector)

1.10.iii Awareness-raising material made available to the public to enable wetland-friendly consumer choices. (National: private sector & CPs)

STRATEGY 1.11 Incentive measures

Promote incentive measures that encourage the application of the wise use provisions of the Convention. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

- 1.11.i Better design and implementation of incentive measures of relevance to wetlands taking place in all Parties, and better monitoring and assessment of both positive and perverse incentives affecting wetlands in place in all Parties. (National: CPs)

GOAL 2. Wetlands of International Importance

To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands that are important for the conservation of global biological diversity, including waterbird flyways and fish populations and for sustaining human life, by ensuring that all Contracting Parties appropriately implement the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* and by appropriate management and wise use of those internationally important wetlands that are not yet formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified as qualifying through domestic application of the *Strategic Framework* or an equivalent process.

STRATEGY 2.1 Ramsar Site designation

Apply the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Handbook 14). (CPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 2.1.i All Parties to have prepared, using the *Strategic Framework*, a national plan and priorities for the designation and management of Ramsar Sites, including where appropriate for shared wetlands in collaboration with neighboring Parties. (National: CPs)
- 2.1.ii Completed, and as appropriate updated, Ramsar Information Sheets submitted for all Ramsar Sites. (National: CPs)
- 2.1.iii At least 2,500 Ramsar Sites designated worldwide, covering at least 250 million hectares. (National: CPs)
- 2.1.iv Contracting Parties to have considered designating Ramsar Sites from among wetland types under-represented in the Ramsar List. (National: CPs)

STRATEGY 2.2 Ramsar Site information

Ensure that the Ramsar Sites Information Service, including the Ramsar Sites Database, is available and enhanced as a tool for guiding the further designation of wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and for research and assessment, and is effectively managed by the Secretariat. (STRP, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 2.2.i Ramsar Site data and information services reviewed, restructured and further developed for Web-accessibility to stakeholders, and linked to a global information and observing system for all wetlands. (Global: STRP, Secretariat, IOPs)
- 2.2.ii The Ramsar Sites Information Service delivering a range of tools and support to Contracting Parties to aid their identification of gaps and priorities for further Ramsar Site designation. (Global: Secretariat, IOPs)

STRATEGY 2.3 Management planning – new Ramsar Sites

While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for development of effective site management plans, generally encourage the philosophy that all new Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before designation, as well as resources for implementing such management. (CPs, IOPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

- 2.3.i Adequate management planning processes established and submitted with all or most new site designations or a commitment made to work towards that goal, taking into account the possible lack of financial and human resources to fulfill this objective, and recognizing that the designation of a site can work as an incentive for the establishment of future management planning. (National: CPs; subnational: wetland managers)

STRATEGY 2.4 Ramsar Site ecological character

Maintain the ecological character of all designated Ramsar Sites, through planning and management. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 2.4.i Progress in developing effective management plans for all Ramsar Sites within each Party's territory. (National: CPs; Subnational: wetland managers)
- 2.4.ii Management objectives, as part of management planning, for ecological character maintenance established for all Ramsar Sites. (Subnational: wetland managers)
- 2.4.iii Zoning measures to be put in place for larger Ramsar Sites, wetland reserves, and other wetlands (Recommendation 5.3 and Resolution VIII.14) and strict protection measures to be enacted for certain Ramsar Sites and other wetlands of small size and/or particular sensitivity. (Subnational: wetland managers)
- 2.4.iv Cross-sectoral site management committees in place for Ramsar Sites, involving relevant government agencies, citizens and local communities, and other stakeholders, including the business sector as appropriate, in place, including as a mechanism for dispute settlement. (Subnational: wetland managers)
- 2.4.v Statements of ecological character finalized for all Ramsar Sites and used as a basis for implementing Article 3.2 of the Convention. (Subnational: wetland managers)

STRATEGY 2.5 Ramsar Site management effectiveness

Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*. (CPs, STRP)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

- 2.5.i All Parties, using the *Strategic Framework*, to have reviewed all existing Ramsar Sites and confirmed that all Ramsar Sites fulfill the provisions of

the *Strategic Framework* or to have identified those sites that do not do so for remedial actions. (National: CPs; Subnational: wetland managers)

STRATEGY 2.6 Ramsar Site status

Monitor the condition of Ramsar Sites and address negative changes in their ecological character, notify the Ramsar Secretariat of changes affecting Ramsar Sites, and apply the Montreux Record, if appropriate, and Ramsar Advisory Mission as tools to address problems. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 2.6.i All Parties with Ramsar Sites whose ecological character has changed, is changing or is likely to change owing to human-induced actions to have reported this to the Ramsar Secretariat, in line with the requirements of Article 3.2 of the Convention. (National: CPs)
- 2.6.ii For all sites on the Montreux Record that have not been the subject of a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM), intended to provide advice on the steps needed to remove those sites from the Record, Parties to request such a Mission. (National: CPs)
- 2.6.iii Implementation of relevant STRP ecological outcome-oriented indicators of effectiveness of the Convention. (Global: STRP; National: CPs)

STRATEGY 2.7 Management of other internationally important wetlands

Appropriate management and wise use achieved for those internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar Sites but have been identified through domestic application of the *Strategic Framework* or an equivalent process. (CPs)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

- 2.7.i Ramsar guidance on the maintenance of ecological character to be have been applied with a priority upon recognized internationally important wetlands not yet designated as Ramsar Sites. (National: CPs; Subnational: wetland managers)

GOAL 3. International cooperation

To enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands using effective international cooperation, through *inter alia* the active application of the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*.

STRATEGY 3.1 Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs

Work as partners with international and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental agencies (IGOs). (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs, STRP)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 3.1.i CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan and CMS/AEWA/Ramsar Joint Work Plan being implemented and participation continued in the CBD Biodiversity Liaison Group. (Global: Secretariat, STRP; National: CPs)

- 3.1.ii Joint activities developed with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as appropriate, including through participation in the Joint Liaison Group. (Global: Secretariat, STRP)
- 3.1.iii The Action Plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to have fully incorporated Ramsar issues and mechanisms and being implemented by relevant Parties. (Regional: Secretariat; National: CPs, IOPs)
- 3.1.iv Additional partnership approaches initiated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UNECE Water Convention, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the UN Forum on Forests with its Collaborative Partnerships on Forests, the European Community, ASEAN, APEC, BIMSTEC, SAARC, and other relevant United Nations agencies and regional bodies, as well as through UN Water. (Global: Secretariat, STRP and National Regional: CPs with IOPs support)
- 3.1.v Harmonized information management and reporting systems available and widely used at national level with the appropriate MEAs. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs)

STRATEGY 3.2 Regional initiatives

Support existing regional arrangements under the Convention and promote additional arrangements. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Area

By 2015:

- 3.2.i Development of viable regional arrangements under the Convention, applying the *Operational Guidelines 2009-2012 for regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* (Annex to Resolution X.6), resulting in the establishment of new regional initiatives, where appropriate, and the strengthening of existing initiatives. (Global: Secretariat, Standing Committee; Regional: regional initiatives with IOPs support)

STRATEGY 3.3 International assistance

Promote international assistance to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while ensuring that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 3.3.i Parties with bilateral donor agencies to have encouraged those agencies to give priority for funding for wetland conservation and wise use projects in relation to poverty eradication and other relevant international targets and priorities. (National: CPs)
- 3.3.ii Proposed grants, loans, and development projects from international development agencies, including banks, financial institutions and private investors and developers, to include environmental safeguards and

environmental assessments of possible impacts. (Global: Secretariat, development agencies)

STRATEGY 3.4 Sharing information and expertise

Promote the sharing of expertise and information concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 3.4.i Less time required from Parties on managing information for national reports, but better quality and more timely reports produced. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs)
- 3.4.ii Increased flow of information made available by the Parties (e.g., Ramsar-related policies, Ramsar Site management plans, Ramsar Site monitoring, etc.) to the Secretariat for dissemination via the Ramsar Web site and other means. (National/Regional : CPs with IOPs support)
- 3.4.iii Relevant research findings that have been evaluated by the STRP promoted and made widely available through Ramsar Technical Reports, Ramsar and IOP Web sites, and other means. (Global: Secretariat, STRP, IOPs; National: CPs)

STRATEGY 3.5 Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species

Promote inventory and cooperation for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins, including cooperative monitoring and management of shared wetland-dependent species. (CPs, Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 3.5.i Where appropriate, all Parties to have identified their shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species, and Parties to have identified collaborative management mechanisms with one another for those shared wetlands and river basins. (National: CPs)
- 3.5.ii Where appropriate, Parties with shared basins and coastal systems to consider participation in joint management commissions or authorities. (National: CPs)
- 3.5.iii Regional site networks and initiatives in place for additional wetland-dependent migratory species, as exemplified *inter alia* by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Central Asian Flyway Initiative. (Global: STRP, Secretariat, other MEAs; National: CPs)

GOAL 4. Institutional capacity and effectiveness

To progress towards fulfillment of the Convention's mission by ensuring that it has the required mechanisms, resources, and capacity to do so.

STRATEGY 4.1 CEPA

Support, and assist in implementing at all levels, where appropriate, the Convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness Programme (Resolution X.8) for promoting the conservation and wise use of

wetlands through communication, education, participation, and awareness (CEPA) and work towards wider awareness of the Convention's goals, mechanisms, and key findings. (CPs, Secretariat, training centres, IOPs, Advisory Board on Capacity Building)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 4.1.i All Parties to have established national (or subnational, catchment or local level, as appropriate) Ramsar CEPA action plans. (National: CPs)
- 4.1.ii All Parties to have established at least one wetland education centre at a Ramsar Site. (National: CPs)
- 4.1.iii All Parties to have established practices that ensure the participation in the development and implementation of wetland management plans of stakeholder groups with cultural or economic links to wetlands or those communities that depend on the wetlands for their livelihoods. (National: CPs)
- 4.1.iv At least half of the Parties to have assessed their national and local training needs with respect to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (National: CPs)
- 4.1.v The Advisory Board on Capacity Building to have provided practical advice to Parties to assist them in their training and broader capacity building planning and implementation activities. (Global: Advisory Board)
- 4.1.vi Convention mechanisms for wetland management, wise use, and conservation applied by a wide range of stakeholders on global, regional, national, and subnational levels. (Global to Subnational: all implementers)
- 4.1.vii The Convention's products reaching and adopted by a wide range of target groups, including such products as decision-making frameworks, networks, and technical documents. (Global: Secretariat; National/Regional: CPs with support from IOPs)
- 4.1.viii A significant proportion of Parties to have assessed their capacity and training needs with respect to implementation of the policy, legislation, and institutional governance mechanisms noted in Strategy 1.3. (National: CPs)

STRATEGY 4.2 Convention financial capacity

Provide the financial resources necessary for the Convention's governance, mechanisms and programmes to achieve the expectations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, within the availability of existing resources and by the effective use of such resources; explore and enable options and mechanisms for mobilization of new and additional resources for implementation of the Convention. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 4.2.i Adequate resources and supporting financial policies in place to enable the Convention to discharge its responsibilities and priorities, as determined by the Conference of the Parties, in an effective manner. (Global: Secretariat; National: CPs)

- 4.2.ii Clear and unambiguous budgetary preparation and management for the Convention, with the Secretariat putting the budget allocated by the Conference of the Parties to practical use in the most effective manner possible. (Global: Secretariat)

STRATEGY 4.3 Convention bodies' effectiveness

Ensure that the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Secretariat are operating at a high level of effectiveness to support the implementation of the Convention. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 4.3.i All Contracting Parties to have designated CEPA and STRP National Focal Points (by COP11), and to have kept the Secretariat updated in a timely manner on any changes in Administrative Authority focal points and daily contacts. (National: CPs)
- 4.3.ii National Reports used to evaluate and report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan at each meeting of the COP. (Global & Regional: Secretariat)
- 4.3.iii The bodies of the Convention to have adequate funding and logistic support by utilizing available resources wisely to deliver their *modi operandi* and work plans, as adopted by the Conference of the Parties. (Global: Secretariat & CPs)
- 4.3.iv The Secretariat, with the advice of the Standing Committee, fully managing its staffing priorities and capacities to respond to key issues of wetland conservation and wise use as they emerge. (Global: Secretariat)

STRATEGY 4.4 Working with IOPs and others

Maximize the benefits of working with the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others. (Secretariat, IOPs)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 4.4.i By COP11, each IOP to have updated its MOU with the Secretariat, possibly including some joint actions by several IOPs, and by 2015 to have reviewed and as necessary revised its MOU. (Global: Secretariat, IOPs)
- 4.4.ii Support for the Convention's scientific, technical and policy work integrated into the ongoing programmes of the IOPs. (Global: IOPs)
- 4.4.iii Efforts made by IOPs and others to help mobilizing partnerships for high priority issues for the Convention. (Global: Secretariat, IOPs; National: IOPs, CPs)

GOAL 5. Membership

To progress towards universal membership of the Convention.

STRATEGY 5.1 Membership

Secure universal membership of the Convention and provide an appropriate level of service. (CPs, Secretariat)

Key Result Areas

By 2015:

- 5.1.i Achieve membership in the Convention of at least 170 Parties by COP11 and of all eligible nations by COP12. (Global: Secretariat, Standing Committee)
- 5.1.ii Strive to make resources available to provide servicing for Parties, especially recently acceded Parties, to assist them in implementing this Strategic Plan. (Global: Secretariat, Standing Committee, donor CPs)



A community meeting in Niger with wetland advisors from WWF International and the Ramsar Convention

Relevant Resolution

Resolution X.1

(adopted by the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015

1. RECALLING the adoption of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 by Resolution VI.14 and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 by Resolution VIII.25 as the basis for the future implementation of the Convention;
2. RECOGNIZING that the implementation by Contracting Parties and others of these Strategic Plans has facilitated an increasingly coherent and effective delivery of the Convention, but ALSO RECOGNIZING that there remain many and increasing challenges to achieving consistent delivery of wetland conservation and wise use in a changing world;
3. AWARE that to achieve wetland conservation and wise use, a broader and multisectoral approach to wetland conservation and sustainable development is needed, especially in relation *inter alia* to poverty eradication and food and water security, integrated approaches to water management, climate change and its predicted impacts, increasing globalization of trade and reducing of trade barriers, the increasing role of the private sector, and the increasing influence of development banks and international development agencies;
4. EMPHASIZING the need for policies and actions to achieve wetland conservation and wise use to be fully integrated with actions to deliver biodiversity conservation and good environmental management, as reflected in the holistic ecosystem approach of the Convention on Biological Diversity (decision V/6), and seeking to ensure that the actions of this Strategic Plan are delivered as one component of these wider approaches, YET CONSCIOUS that such wider approaches to environmental management may constrain the easy collation and reporting of wetland-specific actions and policies, and that this will need to be reflected in Ramsar reporting formats;
5. FURTHER AWARE of the many challenges that still require urgent attention in order to achieve wetland wise use under the Convention, including *inter alia* inventory; assessment and monitoring; institutional frameworks, laws and policies; integration of wetland wise use into local, national and international planning and decision-making; the role of wetlands and their ecosystem services in supporting human well-being and alleviating poverty; climate change mitigation and adaptation; restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands; invasive alien species; agricultural influence and impact; management by local communities and indigenous people; cultural issues; involvement of the private sector; incentive measures; communication, education, participation and awareness, including training and capacity-building; strategic designation of Wetlands of International Importance; enhancing cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements; catalyzing funding for wetland work; collaboration with the Convention's partner organizations, scientific networks and other stakeholder groups; and universal membership of the Convention;
6. RECOGNIZING that each Contracting Party is free to choose the extent to which it will implement the Strategic Plan, the resources it will allocate to its implementation, and the timeframes to be used; and
7. NOTING that the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 has been prepared by the Standing Committee with the help of the Secretariat through a wide consultative process with Contracting

Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners and other partners, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

8. APPROVES the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 as annexed to this Resolution as the basis for the future implementation of the Convention, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to finalize the text of the Plan to take into account the Resolutions adopted by the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and to make the finalized text of the Plan available to Contracting Parties and all others concerned with its implementation;
9. URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Secretariat, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and the regional initiatives to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 through its strategies and key result areas;
10. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Plan to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; REQUESTS the Standing Committee to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Plan at each of its meetings; and ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to conduct a mid-term review of progress and to propose adjustments, if necessary, to be submitted to COP11;
11. INVITES other multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations, scientific academies and research institutions, professional scientific and technical bodies, the donor community, and the private sector to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015; and
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to consolidate, as necessary, into this Resolution any text language adopted by other Resolutions adopted by the Conference of the Parties so as to achieve consistency of terminology.

Careful allocation of water resources is especially important in arid areas, as at this High Andean Ramsar site in Chile, the Salar del Huasco. *Photo: Luis Sanchez A.*



The Ramsar Convention 'toolkit' for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, 4th ed. (2010)

Convention pillar 1: Wise Use

Handbook 1	Wise use of wetlands Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands
Handbook 2	National Wetland Policies Developing and implementing National Wetland Policies
Handbook 3	Laws and institutions Reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands
Handbook 4	Avian influenza and wetlands Guidance on control of and responses to highly pathogenic avian influenza
Handbook 5	Partnerships Key partnerships for implementation of the Ramsar Convention
Handbook 6	Wetland CEPA The Convention's Programme on communication, education, participation, and public awareness (CEPA) 2009-2015
Handbook 7	Participatory skills Establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands
Handbook 8	Water-related guidance An Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance
Handbook 9	River basin management Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management
Handbook 10	Water allocation and management Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands
Handbook 11	Managing groundwater Managing groundwater to maintain wetland ecological character
Handbook 12	Coastal management Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management
Handbook 13	Inventory, assessment, and monitoring An Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment, and monitoring
Handbook 14	Data and information needs A Framework for Ramsar data and information needs
Handbook 15	Wetland inventory A Ramsar framework for wetland inventory and ecological character description
Handbook 16	Impact assessment Guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment

Convention pillar 2: Ramsar sites designation and management

Handbook 17	Designating Ramsar Sites Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance
Handbook 18	Managing wetlands Frameworks for managing Ramsar Sites and other wetlands
Handbook 19	Addressing change in wetland ecological character

Convention pillar 3: International cooperation

Handbook 20	International cooperation Guidelines and other support for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
-------------	--

Companion document

Handbook 21	The Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 2009-2015 Goals, strategies, and expectations for the Ramsar Convention's implementation for the period 2009 to 2015
-------------	---

Ramsar
Handbooks
4th edition

Handbook 21

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015



Ramsar Convention Secretariat
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0170
E-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org
Web: <http://www.ramsar.org>

