



Tehran Declaration on Wetlands and Sustainable Development

**on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention
on Wetlands**

The Global Forum on Wetlands for the Future to commemorate the 40th anniversary of signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was held in Tehran and Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 5th and 6th March 2011 respectively, attended by ministers, senior officials and high-level representatives from Contracting Parties, international and regional organizations, academic institutions and other partners to the Convention. The forum looked back over the history and work of the Convention and discussed the key areas where the Convention needs to focus its work in the coming years.

From an initial 18 signatory countries, the Convention has now grown to have 160 Contracting Parties who have committed themselves to implement the “three pillars” of the Convention, i.e., to work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; to designate suitable wetlands for the List of Wetlands of International Importance (“Ramsar List”); and to cooperate internationally.

The ministers and heads of delegations participating in the Global Forum on Wetlands for the Future;

Expressing appreciation to the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Global Forum on Wetlands for the Future on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

Bearing in mind that water is the irreplaceable source of life, and that wetlands are the Earth’s primary natural infrastructure for storing and - directly or indirectly - providing water for nearly seven billion inhabitants of the planet,

Aware that over the course of history and to this day, many human communities have developed adjacent to wetlands because of the benefits that they provide, including a reliable supply of freshwater, food from farming and fisheries, fuel and fiber, and protection from storms and floods, and that wetlands play a major role in maintaining the health and livelihood of human communities, thus reducing the risk of hunger and poverty,

Reaffirming that wetlands are also important for their contribution to biodiversity, as well as for addressing the effects of climate change, noting that the wise use of wetlands plays a major role in climate change mitigation and adaptation including through the storage and sequestration of carbon and the regulation of the water cycle,

and that planning at floodplain- and catchment-scale is crucial for effective water supply and flood risk management,

Noting with concern that despite their importance, approximately half of the world's wetlands have already been lost over the last century and that this rate of loss and degradation is continuing at a faster pace than for any other ecosystem, due in part to the ever-increasing need to supply freshwater for a growing human population and for irrigated agricultural systems,

Cognizant of the fact that wetlands are being adversely affected by the demand for land for development, especially in parts of the globe experiencing rapid economic growth, through industry, infrastructure, energy and agriculture projects,

1. *Recognize* the importance of wetlands as a natural infrastructure that stores and delivers water, noting that water is essential for the maintenance of wetlands, and also the multiple functions and benefits that wetlands provide for people and nature;
2. *Acknowledge* the vital role of wetlands in sustainable development and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015;
3. *Stress* the need to promote greater awareness of wetlands through the development by Contracting Parties of programmes of education and awareness building, directed especially towards stakeholder groups and local communities;
4. *Urge* the Contracting Parties with the support of the Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to seek the inclusion of wetlands in the "REDD+" mechanism for reducing carbon emissions from ecosystem destruction and degradation;
5. *Urge* the further streamlining of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in conjunction with other international conventions and processes, so as to meet targets of mutual relevance, such as the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets established by the international community at the Convention on Biological Diversity's tenth Conference of Parties in Nagoya, 2010;
6. *Reiterate* the significance of incorporating economic values of wetlands in development projects so as to ensure that decision-makers better understand the full range of benefits and values provided by wetlands;
7. *Underline* the necessity of formulating action plans and guidelines to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands when developing alternative means of livelihood for local communities;

8. *Insist on* promoting wise use of wetlands and the ecosystem services that wetlands provide, as well as investments and incentives for the conservation of wetlands;
9. *Reaffirm* the crucial role of participatory management of wetlands involving all stakeholders;
10. *Reiterate* the importance of capacity building through financial support and training, as well as sharing data and experiences among the Contracting Parties, and facilitating the transfer of technology and best practices to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
11. *Recognise* the potential benefit for implementation of the Ramsar Convention that could be gained from the formation of a Trust Fund, and *call upon* the international donor community and the private sector to explore the possibilities for contributing to such a Fund;
12. *Call upon* the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development to convey the contents of the present Declaration to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012;
13. *Invite* interested Parties to participate in an eminent persons group to develop further a vision on the role of wetlands in providing ecosystem services for sustainable development in conjunction with STRP, to be completed in time for presentation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012, and *welcome* the invitation by the I.R. Iran to host a meeting of this group in Tehran;
14. *Invite* the Ramsar Convention's Secretariat to further develop the main themes of this Declaration for consideration and endorsement by the forthcoming Conference of the Parties in 2012, and to make all efforts for their practical implementation.

5 MARCH 2011