



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

Resolution IX.15

The status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

1. RECALLING Article 2.1 of the Convention, which states that “each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance”, and Resolution VIII.11, in which the Parties established that the Vision of the Ramsar List is to be achieved through the designation of coherent and comprehensive national and international networks of Ramsar sites;
2. AWARE of Article 3.1 of the Convention, which specifies that “the Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory”;
3. CONGRATULATING the 60 Contracting Parties which have designated since COP8 a total of 246 Ramsar sites covering a total of 18,311,510 hectares: Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay;
4. WELCOMING the 15 Contracting Parties that have very recently designated a total of 96 Ramsar sites: Belize, Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, El Salvador, Finland, Guinea, India, Japan, Niger, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom and Zambia;
5. RECOGNIZING however that despite this representing an almost 20% increase in the number of sites included in the List, and in the total area designated since COP8, there remain significant gaps in the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the global network of Ramsar sites and that the 1555 designated Ramsar sites as of the 1st November 2005 falls below the target of 2000 sites by COP9 set by Resolution VII.11;
6. CONCERNED that for 619 Ramsar sites (41% of sites included in the List) in 104 countries (see the Annex to this Resolution), Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) or adequate maps have not been provided or updated RISs and maps have not been supplied

to the Secretariat for more than six years, so that information on the current status of these sites is not available;

7. AWARE of Article 3.2, which provides that “each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the [Ramsar Secretariat]”;
8. RECALLING Resolution VIII.8, which expressed concern that (according to available information, including the National Reports to COP8) many Contracting Parties do not have in place the mechanisms to comply with Article 3.2 or that these are not being implemented, and which urged Contracting Parties, as a matter of high priority, to “put in place mechanisms in order to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau so as to fully implement Article 3.2 of the Convention”;
9. EXPRESSING CONTINUING CONCERN that according to available information (including the National Reports to COP9) this situation does not appear to have improved;
10. AWARE that, despite information provided in their National Reports to COP9 concerning monitoring of the ecological character of Ramsar sites, few Parties have reported to the Ramsar Secretariat issues of change, or likely change, in the ecological character of their designated Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2 of the Convention;
11. ALSO EXPRESSING CONCERN that this lack of Article 3.2 reporting has meant that the Convention’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has been unable to prepare a report to COP9 on the status and trends in the ecological character of Ramsar sites, as requested by Resolution VIII.8;
12. RECOGNIZING that many Ramsar sites have undergone or are undergoing change in their ecological character, or are likely to undergo such change, by virtue of the land use and other pressures affecting them;
13. EXPRESSING CONCERN at the number of reports received by the Ramsar Secretariat from third parties of Ramsar sites facing human-induced change, or likely change, in their ecological character as reported to this Conference in the Report of the Secretary General (COP DOC. 6) in accordance with Article 8.2 (d);
14. NOTING WITH CONCERN some cases involving engineering works, such as the construction of the deep-water Bystroe navigation canal in the Danube Delta, where there is a degree of international concern over the environmental impact (including possible transboundary impacts) of the project which appears to be in conflict also with commitments under several multilateral environmental agreements, and FURTHER NOTING the recommendations of the 2003 joint UNESCO-MAB Programme and Ramsar Convention Advisory Mission to Ukraine (Kylliske Mouth) that the Bystroe route “would represent the worst solution” and that a comprehensive environmental impact

assessment should be undertaken since “the reports already established and presented to the mission do not yet fulfil this need”;

15. RECOGNIZING that some of these sites are parts of transboundary wetlands and river systems, so that change in their ecological character may affect the status of those parts of the wetland, including any Ramsar sites, lying within the territory of neighbouring countries, and RECALLING Article 5 of the Convention which states that “the Contracting Parties shall consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by Contracting Parties”, but;
16. CONCERNED that in the management of some transboundary Ramsar sites, such as those in the Danube Delta, in relation to developments causing or likely to cause change in ecological character, fruitful international cooperation has not been achieved;
17. CONCERNED that of the 57 Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record only three sites, all in Ukraine, have been removed from the Record since COP8;
18. RECOGNIZING the submission of Article 3.2 reports by: the government of Australia concerning damage to part of the Gwydir Wetlands: Gingham and Lower Gwydir (Big Leather) Watercourses Ramsar site and its further reporting of the steps being taken to restore the ecological character of this Ramsar site; the government of Bulgaria concerning current GEF project implementation activities which are intended to improve the ecological character of the Belene Islands Complex Ramsar site; the government of Cyprus concerning lead poisoning of flamingos at the Larnaca Salt Lake Ramsar site, a problem which has now been resolved through the removal of contaminated sediments; the government of the Czech Republic concerning the continuing potential threat of the planned Danube-Oder navigation canal to two Ramsar sites, which have now been placed on the Montreux Record; and the government of Norway concerning a pollution accident linked to works adjacent to the Ilene & Pesterød kilen Ramsar site; and
19. RECALLING that under Article 2.5 a Contracting Party has the right, because of its urgent national interests, to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included in the List, and that the Party shall at the earliest possible time inform the Ramsar Secretariat of any such changes; ALSO RECALLING that Resolution VIII.20 provided “General guidance for interpreting “urgent national interests” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and considering compensation under Article 4.2”, and NOTING that, since COP8, Article 2.5 has been invoked by Georgia concerning construction works started for the Kulevi oil terminal at the Black Sea coast inside the Central Wetlands of Kolkheti Ramsar Site;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

20. REAFFIRMS the commitment made by the Parties in Resolution VIII.8 to fully implement the terms of Article 3.2 on reporting change and to maintain or restore the ecological character of their Ramsar sites, including utilizing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as practicable the matters for which a site may have been the subject of a report pursuant to Article 3.2; and, once those matters have been resolved, to submit a further report, so that both positive influences at sites and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in reporting under Article 3.2 and in the reporting to

meetings of the COP in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar site network at three-year intervals;

21. CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties to adopt and apply, as part of their management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, a suitable monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the annex to Resolution VI.1, and to incorporate within these monitoring regimes the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), so as to be able to report change, or likely change, in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2 of the Convention;
22. ALSO CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfillment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the site would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record, and to request such listing as appropriate;
23. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those 28 Contracting Parties which in their National Reports to this Conference provided information, in relation to Article 3.2 of the Convention, on at least 102 Ramsar sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, namely: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Finland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Gambia, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, Liberia, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, The FYR of Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, and Zambia; and URGES all of these Contracting Parties to consider, at the earliest opportunity, the possible inclusion of these sites onto the Montreux Record, if they are not already included, in line with the further guidance provided in Resolution VIII.8 on the purpose and role of the Record;
24. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with sites on the Montreux Record to regularly provide the Ramsar Secretariat with an update on their progress in taking action to address the issues for which these Ramsar sites were listed on the Record, including reporting fully on these matters in their National Reports to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
25. REQUESTS those Contracting Parties with Ramsar sites for which the Secretary General has received reports of change, or likely change, in their ecological character to advise the Secretary General at the earliest opportunity of steps taken to address these changes, or likely changes, in ecological character;
26. CONGRATULATES Contracting Parties for their statements made concerning addressing site-specific ecological character and boundary issues, notably:
 - a) The government of Australia for its actions taken to resolve and restore damage to the ecological character of part of the Gwydir Wetlands: Gingham and Lower Gwydir (Big Leather) Watercourses Ramsar site;
 - b) The government of Bulgaria for its stated intention to improve the ecological character of the Belene Islands Complex Ramsar site through GEF project implementation activities;
 - c) The government of Cyprus for its actions to resolve lead poisoning of flamingos at the Larnaca Salt Lake Ramsar site through the removal of contaminated sediments;

- d) The government of Ukraine for its successful application of the Montreux Record procedure and the subsequent removal of three Ramsar sites (Karkinitzki & Dzharylgatska Bays, Tendrivska Bay, and Yagorlytska Bay) from the Montreux Record;
 - e) The government of Algeria for its stated intention to remove the Oasis de Ouled Saïd Ramsar site from the Montreux Record, following improvements to its ecological character;
 - f) The government of Poland for its stated intention to remove two Ramsar sites (Jezioro Siedmiu Wysp and Slonsk Reserve) from the Montreux Record, following improvements in their ecological character; and
 - g) The government of Spain (in the context of Resolution VIII.10, paragraph 42d) for the steps taken to revise its National Hydrological Plan so as to manage rivers in an integrated way that will better conserve wetlands, such as the Ebro River Delta Ramsar site, and also Spain's designation of 14 Ramsar sites since COP8;
27. RECOMMENDS, pursuant to Article 8.2 (e), the following with respect to alterations to the List or changes in the ecological character of specific Ramsar sites and other wetlands included in the Report of the Secretary General to this Conference (COP9 DOC.6) or otherwise brought to the attention of this Conference:
- i) that the government of Australia prepare and make available to all Contracting Parties advice on lessons learned from the application of national legislation in addressing issues of change in the ecological character of part of the Gwydir Wetlands: Gingham and Lower Gwydir (Big Leather) Watercourses Ramsar site;
 - ii) that the government of Germany submit an updated Ramsar Information Sheet and map for the Mühlenberger Loch Ramsar site showing the reduced boundaries of the site, and a consolidated report on the compensation measures taken under Article 4.2 and their effectiveness in line with Resolution VIII.20;
 - iii) that the government of Georgia submit an updated Ramsar Information Sheet and map for the Central Wetlands of Kolkheti Ramsar site showing the reduced boundaries of the site, and a consolidated report on the compensation measures taken under Article 4.2 and their effectiveness in line with Resolution VIII.20;
 - iv) that, in respect of the development of the deep water Bystroe navigation channel in the Danube Delta, the government of Ukraine:
 - a) suspend further works pending a full environmental impact assessment being conducted and its findings acted upon;
 - b) make available full documentation including the findings of the environmental impact assessment for Phase II of the project to all stakeholders, including the government of Romania as a potentially affected state;

- c) ensure that compensatory provision is made for any damage to the ecological character of designated Ramsar sites and other wetlands caused by the works which have already been carried out;
 - d) establish, in cooperation with relevant international organizations and the government of Romania, a programme of international monitoring of the ecological character of the Ramsar sites and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, in line with the Convention's guidance on wetland monitoring (Annex to Resolution VI.1; Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 8); and
 - e) in line with Article 5 of the Convention, apply international norms in the provision of information, consultation and involvement in decision-making processes of all stakeholders concerning Phase II of the project;
- v) that the government of Peru advise the Secretary General of steps taken to maintain the ecological character of the Paracas Ramsar site in relation to the construction of the port facility in Lobería beach within the buffer zone of the Ramsar site;
 - vi) that the government of Colombia advise the Secretary General of steps taken to maintain the ecological character of the Sistema Delta Estuarino del Río Magdalena, Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta Ramsar site in relation to the development of a multi-purpose port facility in Palermo;
 - vii) that the government of Kenya advise the Secretary General of the implications for the maintenance of the ecological character of the Lake Naivasha Ramsar site of the court action halting implementation of the management plan for the site, and the steps taken to resolve this matter;
 - viii) that the government of Chile advise the Secretary General of the steps being taken, including establishment of monitoring programmes, to restore the ecological character of the Carlos Anwandter Sanctuary Ramsar Site, and evaluate the possibility of inscribing this site on the Montreux Record in order to facilitate and obtain all the necessary assistance to develop actions to restore the ecological characteristics of the site;
 - ix) that the government of the Dominican Republic advise the Secretary General of the current situation concerning the enactment of legislation weakening the status of protected areas, including Ramsar sites;
 - x) that the government of the Republic of Korea advise the Secretary General of the current situation concerning the sea-wall construction and reclamation of the Saemangeum coastal wetlands, and the impact of the construction works undertaken to date on the internationally important migratory waterbird populations dependent upon these wetlands;
 - xi) that the government of Greece advise the Secretary General on the general steps being taken to restore the ecological character of the seven Greek Ramsar sites included in the Montreux Record with a view to removing these sites from the Record, and further advise the Secretary General of steps taken to maintain the

ecological character of the three sites removed from the Montreux Record in 1999;
and

- xii) that the governments of the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of COP9 DOC.6, and which have not already done so, make a report to the Ramsar Secretariat without delay under Article 3.2 concerning reports of change or likely change to the ecological character of those Ramsar sites listed in this Annex;
28. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to use the revised format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) prepared by the Secretariat to incorporate the amendments introduced by Resolution IX.1 – Annex B in their designations of new sites, extensions to existing sites, and updated information on existing sites;
29. STRONGLY URGES those Parties within whose territories lie Ramsar sites for which official descriptions have not been provided in one of the three working languages of the Convention, and/or for which suitable maps have not yet been submitted, to submit those materials to the Secretariat as a matter of the highest priority;
30. INSTRUCES the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the Contracting Parties listed in the Annex to this Resolution and request them to provide or update, as a matter of high priority, Ramsar site descriptions (Ramsar Information Sheets and/or maps), using the Ramsar Information Sheet as revised to incorporate the amendments introduced by Resolution IX.1 Annex B, in one of the Convention's official working languages;
31. WELCOMES the statements made in the National Reports to COP9 or during this meeting concerning planned extensions to existing Ramsar sites, and future designations of new or extended Ramsar sites, from the following 49 Contracting Parties: Albania, Argentina (1 site), Armenia (1 site), Bahamas (2 sites), Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso (3 sites), Cambodia (1 site), Canada, Chile, Congo (5 sites), Ecuador (3 sites), El Salvador (5 sites), Estonia (13 sites), France (4 sites), Georgia (3 sites), Germany, Ghana (1 site), Guatemala (3 sites), Honduras (4 sites), Indonesia (2 sites), Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica (2 sites), Kenya (3 sites), Lesotho, Liberia (4 sites), Malaysia (4 sites), Mauritius (1 site), Morocco (20 sites), Mozambique, Nepal (10 sites), Netherlands, Norway (20 sites), Paraguay (2 sites), Peru (3 sites), Poland, Republic of Moldova (1 site), Samoa (1 site), Seychelles (3 sites), Slovak Republic, Slovenia (1 site), Sweden, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago (2 sites), Tunisia (15 sites), Turkey (8 sites), Togo (2 sites), Uganda (15 sites), and Vietnam; and
32. INSTRUCES the Ramsar Secretariat to consider options for assisting and encouraging Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in ecological character within the context of paragraph 20 of Resolution VIII.8.

Annex

List of Contracting Parties from which one or more Ramsar Information Sheets or updated Sheets are needed as a matter of priority

ALBANIA	HONDURAS
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	HUNGARY
ARGENTINA	ICELAND
ARMENIA	INDIA
AUSTRALIA	INDONESIA
AUSTRIA	IRELAND
BAHAMAS	ISRAEL
BAHRAIN	ITALY
BELARUS	JAMAICA
BELGIUM	JAPAN
BENIN	JORDAN
BOLIVIA	LEBANON
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	LESOTHO
BOTSWANA	LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA
BRAZIL	LIECHTENSTEIN
BULGARIA	LITHUANIA
BURKINA FASO	LUXEMBOURG
CAMBODIA	MADAGASCAR
CHAD	MALAWI
CHILE	MALAYSIA
CHINA	MALTA
COMOROS	MEXICO
CONGO	MONGOLIA
COSTA RICA	MAURITANIA
CROATIA	MAURITIUS
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF	MOZAMBIQUE
CONGO	NAMIBIA
ECUADOR	NETHERLANDS
EGYPT	NORWAY
EL SALVADOR	PAKISTAN
ESTONIA	PALAU
FRANCE	PANAMA
GABON	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
GAMBIA	PARAGUAY
GEORGIA	PERU
GERMANY	PHILIPPINES
GHANA	POLAND
GREECE	PORTUGAL
GUATEMALA	ROMANIA
GUINEA.	RUSSIAN FEDERATION
GUINEA-BISSAU	SAINT LUCIA

SAMOA
SENEGAL
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
SIERRA LEONE
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
SLOVENIA
SOUTH AFRICA
SPAIN
SURINAME
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
THAILAND
THE FYR OF MACEDONIA
TOGO
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
TUNISIA
TURKEY
UGANDA
UKRAINE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VENEZUELA
VIETNAM