

## **CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Proceedings of the 6<sup>TH</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

### **RESOLUTION VI.19: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

1. NOTING that, while wetlands provide a range of benefits to humankind, their values, both for conservation generally and economically, have not been communicated effectively to decision-makers, stakeholders, community leaders and the public at large, and that only a few programmes of education and public awareness (EPA) specifically in support of wetland conservation have been organized at either national or international level;
2. CONCERNED that initiatives which attempt to conserve wetlands, their biodiversity and their benefits for humankind without the participation of a wide range of people are unlikely to succeed;
3. AWARE that education and public awareness programmes are essential instruments for successful and sustainable wetland management, and are important tools in countering negative attitudes towards wetlands;
4. CONSCIOUS that those involved in the development and implementation of education and public awareness programmes for wetlands are often isolated and, hence, have limited opportunities to share and learn from one another;
5. RECALLING that a Specialist Group on Education and Public Awareness has already been established by Wetlands International, coordinated by the U.K.'s Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and incorporating the Wetland Link International programme of WWT, in response to these concerns, and that this Group has established linkages with like-minded individuals and institutions across the world; and
6. RECOGNIZING the importance of developing further linkages and programmes and a need to coordinate further between those groups involved in education and public awareness in order to facilitate implementation of elements of the Convention's Strategic Plan;

### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

7. AFFIRMS that, to implement effectively the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002, a concerted programme of education and public awareness should be organized and implemented at local, national, regional and global levels so as to increase the knowledge and understanding of wetland values and benefits and so develop action towards the conservation and sustainable management of wetland resources;
8. CALLS ON the Wetlands International Specialist Group on Education and Public Awareness, and other EPA networks operated by the partners, to provide leadership to this programme and act as expert advisory groups to the Ramsar Convention;
9. URGES that the Wetlands International Specialist Group and other specialist networks be asked to work with the Ramsar Bureau so as to:
  - a) develop and maintain an international network of experts on education and public awareness for wetlands;

- b) seek resources, undertake regionally appropriate projects and develop training opportunities which aim to improve the design, implementation and evaluation of education and public awareness campaigns;
  - c) assist the Ramsar Bureau in advising Contracting Parties on the application of education and public awareness programmes in support of national wetland and environmental policies through annual progress reports to the Standing Committee; and
10. URGES all Contracting Parties, partner organizations and interested groups and agencies to support this initiative.