

**“Wetlands: water, life and culture”**  
**8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**  
**to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002**

## **Resolution VIII.10**

### **Improving implementation of the Strategic Framework and Vision for the 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 that “the boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely . . . delimited on a map”;
2. AWARE of Article 3.1 which specifies that “Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List”;
3. ALSO 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” and that “information on such changes shall be passed without delay” to the Ramsar Bureau;
4. NOTING Recommendation 4.7 which adopted the ‘Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands’ (referred to as ‘Ramsar Information Sheet’, RIS) as the means for presenting site descriptions for the Ramsar Sites Database;
5. FURTHER NOTING Resolutions 5.3 and VI.13, as well as Operational Objective 5.3 of the Convention Strategic Plan 1997-2002, which requested Contracting Parties to ensure that RISs and maps have been submitted for all sites, and to update the RIS and map for each designated site at not more than six-year intervals;
6. RECALLING Resolution VII.11 through which Contracting Parties adopted a *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, whose Vision is “To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the ecological and hydrological functions they perform”, and which indicates that such an international network is to be built from coherent and comprehensive networks of Wetlands of International Importance established within the territory of each Contracting Party;
7. ALSO RECALLING that Resolution VII.11 established that the objectives for the Ramsar List are:
  - a) to establish national networks of Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions;

- b) to contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites;
  - c) to foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation and management of Ramsar sites; and
  - d) to use the Ramsar site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary international treaties.
8. FURTHER RECALLING that Objective 4.1 of the *Strategic Framework* is to “use Ramsar sites as baseline and reference areas for national, supranational/regional, and international environmental monitoring to detect trends in the loss of biological diversity, climate change and the processes of desertification”, and that to achieve this Contracting Parties need to put in place mechanisms for monitoring the ecological character of their Ramsar sites, and to report change in ecological character in line with Article 3.2 of the Convention, as recognized by Resolution VIII.8 adopted by this meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
  9. AWARE that Contracting Parties are urged in the “Guidelines for adopting a systematic approach to identifying priority wetlands for designation under the Ramsar Convention” (Section IV of the Annex to Resolution VII.11) to consider the opportunities that Ramsar site designations may provide for contributing to other initiatives under related international and regional environmental conventions and programmes, and that this includes attention to site networks for migratory waterbirds and other migratory species through, *inter alia*, the Convention on Migratory Species and its Agreements such as the African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA), the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy;
  10. ALSO AWARE that the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19) call upon Contracting Parties to give special attention to identifying shared wetlands and wetland-dependent species, harmonizing implementation of the Ramsar Convention with other conventions and programmes, and working cooperatively with these programmes and organizations to pursue the actions recommended by the guidelines on international cooperation, which include identification and designation of all sites which satisfy the waterbird criteria for Ramsar site designation and the establishment of site networks for shared species;
  11. RECOGNIZING that a coherent national and international network of Ramsar sites and their sustainable management can provide a powerful demonstration and important contribution to countries achieving their sustainable development goals, through the recognition and maintenance of wetland values and functions and the goods and services they provide in water and food security and poverty eradication, especially for local communities and indigenous people;
  12. ALSO RECOGNIZING that the policy paper presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August 2002) jointly by the government of Switzerland, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Ramsar Bureau (COP8

- DOC. 32) encourages an ecosystem approach to the conservation and management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands in the context of basin-scale management as a contribution to sustainable development;
13. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the designation of a Ramsar site is only the starting point, and that implementation of appropriate management planning for all sites is essential to securing their sustainable use, and that this meeting has adopted *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14);
  14. AWARE of the target established in the Convention's Work Plan 2000-2002 of the designation of 2000 Ramsar sites by the time of COP9;
  15. NOTING that (as of 15 September 2002) 208 new Ramsar sites covering 31,928,333 ha had been designated since COP7 by 56 Contracting Parties, which represents only an 8% increase in the number of sites, but a 45 % increase in the total area designated; but CONCERNED that this is only just over half the number of the new sites pledged at COP7 for designation (Resolution VII.12);
  16. APPLAUDING the support of International Organization Partners and others to Contracting Parties which are developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to non-Parties preparing for accession to the Convention, for making significant new designations of Ramsar sites;
  17. AWARE that the Ramsar subregional meeting for North and Central Africa (Algiers, 20-22 March 2002) proposed that a Resolution be adopted by the Conference of the Parties encouraging all Contracting Parties to communicate, at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, their minimum plans for the designation during the succeeding triennium of new Ramsar sites, including the number of sites and the total area to be designated; and ALSO AWARE that this proposal was endorsed by the subregional meeting of the Ramsar Convention for West Africa, Madagascar and the Comores (Cotonou, 5-7 June 2002);
  18. CONCERNED that 77 Contracting Parties (including 58 Parties which acceded to the Convention prior to COP7) have not made any new Ramsar site designations since COP7, although RECOGNIZING that certain countries with small territories may have no further wetlands which qualify for designation;
  19. ALSO CONCERNED that 32 Parties have not made any new Ramsar site designations since their accession to the Convention, in some cases over 20 years ago;
  20. FURTHER CONCERNED that for 503 Ramsar sites in 73 countries, RISs have not been provided or updated RISs and maps have not been supplied to the Ramsar Bureau for more than six years; and that adequate maps have yet to be supplied for 411 sites in 52 countries;
  21. NOTING that, in their National Reports to COP8, only 29 Parties have indicated that they have a comprehensive national wetland inventory, so that most Parties lack the essential basis for identification and designation of their coherent and comprehensive national network of Ramsar sites, as indicated by Resolution VII.20, and also that a similarly small number of Parties report having national wetland databases;

22. PARTICULARLY CONCERNED that although in their National Reports to COP8, 73 Parties indicated that they have applied a systematic approach to Ramsar site designation, and 74 Parties reported having a directory of potential Ramsar sites, few countries have the comprehensive inventory information that forms the necessary precursor to establishing such a systematic approach, and that in very few countries is there clear evidence of the establishment of the coherent national network of Ramsar sites which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions, or a strategy for achieving this network, as is called for in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*;
23. NOTING that, from their National Reports to COP8, only 24 Parties have management plans in place for all their Ramsar sites, that overall only 513 (45%) Ramsar sites have management plans in place, that this falls significantly short of the targets established by the Convention's Work Plan 2000-2002, and that levels of implementation of existing management plans are still low;
24. AWARE that, despite information provided in their National Reports to COP8 concerning monitoring of the ecological character of Ramsar sites, few Parties have reported to the Ramsar Bureau issues of change, or likely change, in the ecological character of their designated Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2 of the Convention;
25. HAVING CONSIDERED the Resolutions adopted by this meeting of the Conference which provide further guidance to Contracting Parties on the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance, namely Resolution VIII.11, which provides additional guidance for identifying and designating under-represented wetland types (mangroves, coral reefs, peatlands and wet grasslands) as Ramsar sites; Resolution VIII.33, which provides similar guidance for temporary pools; Resolution VIII.38 concerning waterbird population estimates and the application of Criterion 6 of the Strategic Framework; Resolution VIII.13 concerning enhancing the information on Ramsar sites; Resolution VIII.21 on defining Ramsar site boundaries more accurately in Ramsar Information Sheets; and Resolution VIII.22 about issues concerning Ramsar sites that cease to fulfil or never fulfilled the Criteria for designation as Ramsar sites; and
26. ALSO HAVING CONSIDERED the Discussion Paper COP8 DOC. 31 concerning the further elaboration of the Ramsar Criteria and guidelines for the future development of the List, in relation to harmonization with the indicative features of biological diversity established by the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the issue of socio-economic and cultural importance of wetlands;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

27. CALLS UPON all Contracting Parties to renew their efforts to apply the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11), including, as a matter of priority, the establishment of a strategy and priorities for the further designation of Ramsar sites so as to achieve, as soon as possible, the coherent national networks called for in the Vision for the List;
28. ALSO CALLS UPON all Contracting Parties to identify all wetlands which potentially qualify for designation as Ramsar sites, as a concrete output of their strategy and priorities called for in the preceding paragraph, and to establish targets for future designation in

terms of number of sites to be designated, and to communicate these targets to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the Ramsar Bureau as part of their triennial implementation plan for the Convention;

29. URGES all Contracting Parties, as part of their identification of wetlands which potentially qualify for designation as Ramsar sites, and in line with Resolution VII.19 on *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*, to collaborate in the identification and designation as Ramsar sites of national and international site networks for migratory species, including migratory waterbirds, as a contribution to other initiatives under related international and regional environmental conventions and programmes, including, *inter alia*, the Convention on Migratory Species and its Agreements such as the African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) and other existing arrangements such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy;
30. INSTRUCTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, interested Contracting Parties, and other relevant organizations to develop, for consideration at COP9, additional criteria and guidelines for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites concerning socio-economic and cultural values and functions that are relevant to biological diversity, as listed in Annex 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would be applied on each occasion in conjunction with one or more existing criteria for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites; and to include in this work a full analysis of the implications for Contracting Parties of the implementation of such criteria for the management of Ramsar sites, including Contracting Party obligations and responsibilities for maintaining the ecological character of any such sites so selected;
31. REQUESTS all Contracting Parties to use the revised format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) as adopted by Resolution VIII.13 in their designation of new sites, extensions to existing sites, and updates of existing sites;
32. URGES Contracting Parties when completing or updating an RIS to document fully the ecological, hydrological, socio-economic and cultural importance of the site, using the appropriate sections of the RIS for this purpose, as the basis for identifying processes and features that should be addressed in the management planning process for the site, as outlined in the *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* adopted by this meeting (Resolution VIII.14);
33. EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN that there remain a large number of Ramsar sites for which an official description has not been provided or updated, or has not been provided in one of the three official working languages of the Convention, and/or for which a suitable map has not been submitted;
34. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau 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 by Resolution VIII.13, in one of the Convention's official working languages;

35. URGES Contracting Parties to continue to establish full management planning processes for their Ramsar sites, applying the guidance provided in Resolution VIII.14, and to seek to have these plans being implemented in full, and to establish and report targets for the preparation and implementation of management plans for their Ramsar sites;
36. WELCOMES the statements made in the National Reports to COP8 or during this meeting concerning the number of impending, or planned, extensions to existing Ramsar sites, and future designations of new or extended Ramsar sites, from the following 76 Contracting Parties: Albania (6 sites), Algeria (30 sites), Argentina (3 sites), Armenia (3 sites), Australia (1 site), Austria (3 sites), Belgium (6 sites and 1 extension), Benin (3 sites), Bolivia (2 sites), Botswana (4 sites), Brazil (2 sites), Cambodia (1 site), Chad (3 sites), Chile (2 sites), China (80 sites), Colombia (6 sites), Comoros (1 site) Costa Rica (2 sites and 1 extension), Côte d'Ivoire (4 sites including 1 transboundary with Ghana), Cuba (3 sites), Czech Republic (2 sites), Djibouti (3 sites), Ecuador (1 site), El Salvador (2 sites), Estonia (14 sites), Finland (50 sites), Gambia (2 sites), Georgia (1 site), Ghana (2 sites including 1 transboundary with Côte d'Ivoire), Greece (2 extensions), Guatemala (4 sites), Guinea (5 sites), Hungary (1 site), India (6 sites), Indonesia (3 sites), Italy (4 sites), Jamaica (1 site), Japan (11 sites), Jordan (2 sites), Kenya (3 sites), Latvia (3 sites), Lithuania (5 sites), Madagascar (7 sites), Mali (4 sites), Malawi (1 site), Malaysia (5 sites), Mauritania (3 sites), Mongolia (3 sites), Nepal (7 sites), Nicaragua (2 sites), Niger (8 sites), Nigeria (14 sites), Pakistan (10 sites), Panama (1 site), Papua New Guinea (1 site), Paraguay (1 site), Peru (3 sites), Poland (5 sites), Portugal (5 sites), Slovak Republic (1 site), Spain (14 sites and 2 extensions), Sri Lanka (4 sites), Suriname (3 sites), Syrian Arab Republic (2 sites), Thailand (20 sites), The FYR of Macedonia (3 sites), Togo (3 sites), Trinidad and Tobago (2 sites), Tunisia (4 sites), Turkey (5 sites), Uganda (5 sites), United Republic of Tanzania (3 sites), Uruguay (2 sites), Venezuela (2 sites), and Zambia (5 sites, and 2 extensions); ENCOURAGES these Contracting Parties to forward completed Ramsar Information Sheets and boundary maps for these 8 site extensions and 451 new sites to the Bureau, if they have not already done so; and ALSO WELCOMES the statements made in the National Reports to COP8 concerning an unspecified number of future designations of new Ramsar sites by the following additional countries: Bulgaria, Canada, Congo, Egypt, Iran, Islamic Republic of, Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Yugoslavia;
37. WELCOMES the statements made by the Independent State of Samoa and by Sudan concerning their imminent accession to the Convention and their plans to designate three sites and one site, respectively, for the Ramsar List;
38. CONGRATULATES International Organization Partners and others, and in particular the Living Waters Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) for their support to Contracting Parties and non-Parties in preparing the designation of Ramsar sites, and URGES the WWF to continue to provide and to enhance this support as a contribution towards their objective of achieving a total area of Ramsar sites of at least 250 million ha by 2010;
39. 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 provided by Resolution VI.1, and to incorporate within these monitoring regimes the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution

VII.10), so as to report change, or likely change, in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2 of the Convention;

40. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those 50 Contracting Parties which in their National Reports to this Conference provided information, in accordance with Article 3.2 of the Convention, on 153 Ramsar sites where human-induced changes in ecological character that have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, namely: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Bulgaria, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia; 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;
41. URGES Contracting Parties and donor organizations to give priority for support to the development of coherent national and international networks of Ramsar sites and their effective management, in recognition of their essential values and functions in combating poverty through the sustainable use of their ecosystems and their role in maintaining the quality and quantity of water, including at the basin scale; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee to give priority to projects addressing these issues in the future operation of the Small Grants Fund; and
42. CONGRATULATES Contracting Parties for their statements made concerning addressing site-specific management and boundary issues, notably:
  - a) The Government of Greece for its stated intention to take appropriate action in line with Resolution VIII.16 on *Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration* for the restoration of Lake Koronia, part of Lakes Volvi and Koronia Ramsar Site, taking into consideration environmental constraints, based on the availability of natural resources, socio-economic characteristics and other peculiarities of the catchment;
  - b) The Government of Iceland for its stated intention to inform the Ramsar Bureau in the near future of the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment carried out on the effects of a planned dam at Thjorsarver Ramsar Site;
  - c) The Government of Trinidad & Tobago for the successful application of the Montreux Record procedure to the Nariva Swamp Ramsar Site and its subsequent removal from the Record, following Ramsar Advisory Missions and implementation of key recommendations; and
  - d) The Government of Spain for the recent designation of 11 new Ramsar sites; and ASKS this Government to ensure the full implementation of the Convention in its national water policies and programmes.

## Annex

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

Albania	Latvia
Argentina	Lebanon
Austria	Libya
Azerbaijan	Lithuania
Bangladesh	Malawi
Belgium	Mali
Bulgaria	Malta
Burkina Faso	Mauritania
Burundi	Morocco
Canada	Nepal
Chad	Netherlands
Chile	Norway
Comoros	Pakistan
Costa Rica	Panama
Côte d'Ivoire	Papua New Guinea
Croatia	Paraguay
Czech Republic	Peru
Denmark	Philippines
Estonia	Poland
Finland	Portugal
France	Romania
Gabon	Senegal
Georgia	Slovakia
Germany	Slovenia
Ghana	South Africa
Guatemala	Sweden
Guinea	Switzerland
Guinea Bissau	Tajikistan
Honduras	Togo
Hungary	Turkey
Iceland	Uganda
India	USA
Indonesia	Venezuela
Ireland	Viet Nam
Japan	Yugoslavia