

**“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.32**

### **Conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources**

1. RECOGNIZING the major importance of the wide range of ecological goods and services provided by mangrove ecosystems, including their vital role in acting as spawning and nursery areas for many species of economic importance, and the economic, social and environmental importance of mangroves for, *inter alia*, fishing, biodiversity, coastal protection, recreational activities, education, and coastal and shelf water quality;
2. ALSO RECOGNIZING that the survival of a large number of local communities and indigenous peoples depends upon the productivity and health of mangrove ecosystems;
3. RECOGNIZING FURTHER that mangrove ecosystems are important for regulation of natural processes and maintaining biological diversity in the coastal zones of the countries in which they occur, and that many species, notably, *inter alia*, fish, molluscs, crustaceans, migratory and resident waterbirds, and aquatic mammals, as well as threatened species, are ecologically dependent upon mangroves and their surrounding areas;
4. AWARE that healthy mangrove ecosystems, in conjunction with their associated coral reefs, seagrass beds, and intertidal flats, can play an important role in mitigating climate change and sea-level rise, including through carbon sequestration and the buffering of sea-level rise and storms, particularly in view of the current extent of coral bleaching and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predictions of future increase in coral bleaching, as is recognized in document COP8 DOC. 11 and Resolution VIII.3;
5. CONCERNED that, despite this widely-recognized importance of mangrove ecosystems, the area of mangrove ecosystems continues to decrease in many countries as the result of destruction and degradation through human activities that use mangroves and their surrounding areas, or that disrupt the flow of freshwater or tidal flows to mangrove ecosystems, without appropriate planning, management and control mechanisms;
6. AWARE of the increasing availability of knowledge about practices related to the sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems by the ancestral communities of users and that experiences and technical knowledge about the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems should receive wide dissemination at the national and global levels;
7. TAKING NOTE of the need to strengthen at the global level the mechanisms for exchanging good practices and technical knowledge about mangrove ecosystems and to benefit from those exchanges, while at the same time promoting and strengthening these activities among local communities, with the cooperation, where appropriate, of local

people and national or international organizations with knowledge or interest in the sustainable use of the biological diversity of mangrove ecosystems;

8. AWARE that Contracting Parties to this Convention have concluded through Action 6.2.3 of its Strategic Plan 1997-2002 that mangrove ecosystems are under-represented in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and that guidance on the identification and designation of mangrove ecosystems has been adopted by this meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Resolution VIII.11);
9. RECOGNIZING that mangrove ecosystems are dependent on ecological processes and influenced by socio-economic processes that occur in river basins and the wider coastal zones in which they occur, and that their capacity to continue to provide their values and functions depends upon sustainable land-use management at the wider scale, as is recognized by Resolution VII.18 concerning river basin management and the guidance adopted by this meeting concerning site-based management planning (Resolution VIII.14), water allocation and management (Resolution VIII.1), and integrated coastal zone management (Resolution VIII.4);
10. RECALLING Resolution VII.21, which specifically refers to mangrove ecosystems as an integral part of intertidal wetlands which have been lost and degraded due to unsustainable activities; and
11. ALSO RECALLING the Annex to Resolution VIII.11 which refers to the principal factors causing loss and damage to mangrove ecosystems worldwide as a result of unsustainable exploitation practices, such as habitat destruction, hydrological changes, pollution, and unsustainable aquaculture;

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12. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with mangrove ecosystems in their territories to review, and as appropriate to modify their national policies and strategies that could have harmful effects on these ecosystems, and to implement measures to protect and restore their values and functions for human populations, recognizing their rights, uses and traditional customs and the maintenance of biodiversity, and to cooperate at the international level to agree regional and global strategies for their protection;
13. ALSO REQUESTS the Contracting Parties with mangroves ecosystems in their territories to promote their conservation, integrated management and sustainable use within the context of the national policies and regulatory frameworks, and in accordance with environmental and strategic assessments of the activities that could affect, directly or indirectly, the structure and function of the mangrove ecosystems;
14. EXHORTS relevant Contracting Parties to update information on mangrove ecosystem cover and their conservation status, as well as the forms and levels of their use, and to provide this information to the Ramsar Bureau and the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) so as to assist their work as called for in Resolution VIII.8 concerning status and trends in wetlands;
15. ALSO EXHORTS those Contracting Parties with mangrove ecosystems within their territories to exchange information relating to their conservation, integrated management,

and sustainable use, especially where this involves the full participation of local communities and indigenous peoples;

16. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau and the STRP, as resources permit, and the Contracting Parties to contribute to the initiatives concerning the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems, and to make this available to the users;
17. ALSO REQUESTS Contracting Parties with mangrove ecosystems within their territories, including those of their dependent territories, according to their capacities and internal regulations, to designate mangrove ecosystems that fulfill the criteria for their inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, in order to create a coherent national and international network of designated Ramsar sites as called for in the Strategic Framework and Vision for the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Resolution VII.11), and in doing so to emphasize particularly those Ramsar sites which are important for local communities and indigenous peoples in terms of their subsistence and cultural values;
18. ALSO REQUESTS all relevant Contracting Parties to recognize the importance of mangrove ecosystems for migratory and non-migratory birds, and to designate such areas as Ramsar sites that qualify under Criteria 4, 5, and 6 of the *Strategic Framework* adopted by Resolution VII.11, in order to contribute to the establishment of coherent flyway-scale networks of Ramsar sites, in line, as appropriate, with the Joint Work Plan of the Ramsar Convention, Convention on Migratory Species, and African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) as endorsed by Resolution VIII.5 and other conventions or related agreements;
19. ENCOURAGES all relevant Contracting Parties to take into account in their management planning for Ramsar sites with mangrove ecosystems, applying the *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* and other guidance adopted by this meeting (Resolutions VIII.1, VIII.4, and VIII.14 ), the ecological and socio-economic factors that occur in river basins and coastal zones to which they are related, and to ensure that their wider land-use planning and management does not adversely affect their mangrove ecosystems, such as through the introduction of pollutants, modification of water flows, sediment inputs, and exotic species;
20. ALSO ENCOURAGES all relevant Contracting Parties to recognize fully the important role mangrove ecosystems can play in mitigating climate change and sea-level rise, especially in low-lying areas and Small Island Developing States, and to plan their management, including required adaptation measures, so as to ensure that the mangrove ecosystems may respond to impacts caused by climate change and sea-level rise;
21. URGES all relevant Contracting Parties to identify the factors degrading their mangrove ecosystems and to seek to restore such ecosystems, using the guidance on this matter adopted by this meeting (Resolution VIII.16), so that they can deliver their range of values and functions; and
22. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to make all possible efforts to secure financial resources and advance technical cooperation for promoting the conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources through

appropriate existing partnerships and agreements with international and regional organizations.