

"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.41

Establishment of a Regional Ramsar Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in Western and Central Asia

1. AWARE of the importance of training and research as a means of increasing the capacity of Contracting Parties to improve their implementation of the Convention;
2. RECALLING that the Convention was agreed on 2 February 1971 in the city of Ramsar, in the Islamic Republic of Iran;
3. ALSO RECALLING that through Article 4.5 of the Convention, the Contracting Parties “shall promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, management and wardening”;
4. FURTHER RECALLING that Recommendation 6.5 urged Contracting Parties to establish wetland manager training programmes, that Recommendation 6.6 called for the establishment of regionally-based Ramsar liaison officers, and that Actions 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 of the Convention’s Strategic Plan 1997-2002 called for the development of new training activities and provision of opportunities for manager training;
5. NOTING that Wetlands International is developing a “Ramsar Wetland Training Service” designed to provide support to Contracting Parties in their implementation of Operational Objective 20.1 of the Convention’s Strategic Plan 2003-2008 adopted by this meeting; and
6. AWARE that the Ramsar Subregional Meeting for West and Central Asia, hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2-5 February 2002, recognized the special needs of the countries in the region in terms of training and research to meet the major challenges, including drought and other natural disasters, which have caused serious adverse impacts on wetlands and their dependent species, including waterbirds, as acknowledged in Resolution VIII.35 adopted by this meeting, and that establishing mechanisms for cooperation and coordination will play a significant role in assisting Contracting Parties in West and Central Asia to fulfil the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 of the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. WELCOMES the offer of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a Regional Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in Western and Central Asia, in the city of Ramsar, and its intention to develop this Regional Centre, and EXPRESSES its approval for this initiative;

8. ENCOURAGES the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue the process of planning and establishing the Regional Centre, and FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in West and Central Asia, other interested Contracting Parties, as well as the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to advise and contribute to its further development;
9. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), and others to assist and advise the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the technical and operational aspects of the development and establishment of the Regional Centre, and in its management once established;
10. URGES the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure that the programme of training and research developed for the Regional Centre focuses, in particular, on addressing the major challenges for wetland conservation and wise use in Western and Central Asia, including drought and other natural disasters, which have caused serious adverse impacts on wetlands and their dependent species, including waterbirds; and
11. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties, particularly the Parties in the region, donor countries, and relevant interested NGOs to contribute financial support for the establishment of the Regional Centre, in recognition of its potential for acting as a locus for training and exchange of expertise, cooperation, and other related activities in the region.