



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Resolution X.18

**The application of response options from the Millennium
Ecosystem Assessment (MA) within the Ramsar Wise Use Toolkit**

1. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) were recognized by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) as key intergovernmental end-users of its findings and advice;
2. RECALLING that the MA also prepared for the Ramsar Convention the *Ecosystems and Human Well-being. Wetlands and Water, Synthesis* report, with input from members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and Ramsar Secretariat; FURTHER RECALLING that that report only became available at the time of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 2005, and only in English, so that further advice to Parties on its implications and the application of its findings, including response options, could not be provided at that time; and NOTING that that report has subsequently become available in Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese as well, although not yet in French;
3. FURTHER NOTING that, because the MA Synthesis report to the Ramsar Convention was prepared at the same time that the full MA reports were also being finalised, it was not possible to review thoroughly all other MA volumes for relevant response options for inclusion in the Synthesis report;
4. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.1 Annex A (2005) the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention recognized and adopted the MA's Conceptual Framework for ecosystems and human well-being as a framework for the delivery of the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character, and for the application of the Ramsar 'toolkit' of Wise Use Handbooks;
5. AWARE that the STRP recommended that its 2006-2008 task concerning reviewing the MA's response options in relation to Ramsar's current Conceptual Framework for wise use and the wise use responses available in the Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks should be a high priority, and that this was approved by Standing Committee Decision SC35-15;
6. ALSO AWARE that, at the request of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP undertook a detailed assessment (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/13) of the use and impact of the MA from the point of view of stakeholders, including national decision makers, which

indicated a limited uptake of the concepts and findings of the MA among decision makers, including its findings in relation to responses, in the limited time following the publication of the MA reports and completion of the project;

7. NOTING that Decision IX/15 of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Bonn, Germany, May 2008) emphasizes the importance of promoting the application of the MA framework, methodologies, and findings at national and subnational levels as appropriate, and emphasizes the urgent need for capacity building in this regard;
8. AWARE of the ongoing discussions concerning the new Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), as a follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and the consultative process towards and International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB), which may strengthen the science input to international work on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
9. THANKING the STRP and its Wise Use Working Group for undertaking a comprehensive review of MA response options relevant to the Ramsar Convention;
10. NOTING the key findings of the STRP review, which include that:
 - i) the Ramsar definition of ‘wetlands’ was not applied consistently in the MA’s work and reports, which has resulted in the terms ‘wetlands’ and ‘inland waters’ being used interchangeably throughout and often in association with other wetland habitat types – e.g., “wetlands and mangroves” and “lakes, rivers, wetlands, and shallow groundwater aquifers”;
 - ii) the MA outputs concerning responses contained little detail on the wise use of wetlands; and where wetland wise use was treated in the response options, they were largely focused on addressing direct drivers of change (e.g., water abstraction, unsustainable harvest, and resource consumption);
 - iii) the MA outputs concerning responses contain few relevant options that address indirect drivers of change (e.g., economic and socio-political drivers) and a limited number that deal with trade-offs in decision-making relating to wetland wise use;
 - iv) the majority of the response options that address direct drivers of change in wetlands are already articulated within Ramsar’s existing toolkit of Wise Use Handbooks or can readily be added to future revisions of this toolkit;
 - v) exceptions to that, however, are response options that are contained within the underlying MA chapters that deal with ecosystem services (e.g., nutrient cycling, food, human health, and climate change and air quality) and some MA chapters that deal with natural and human-made systems (e.g., urban systems, cultivated systems and dryland systems); and
 - vi) some of the MA’s response options additional to responses already covered by Ramsar’s Wise Use Handbooks have already been included in STRP products being considered at COP10 and/or published as Ramsar Technical Reports, such as that on “Wetlands and human health and well-being” (Resolution X.23);

11. ALSO NOTING that the full report of the STRP's review of MA response options will be published as a Ramsar Technical Report to serve as a guide to Contracting Parties and others on the application of the MA response options to enhance the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level; and
12. FURTHER NOTING that the information provided in the UNEP 4th Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-4, 2007) extends the analyses undertaken by the MA with an emphasis on the entire water cycle rather than individual systems or services, and so provides further relevant material for potential inclusion in the Ramsar Technical Report;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilise, as appropriate, the MA response options relevant to their implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level, as provided in the forthcoming Ramsar Technical Report ;
14. ALSO ENCOURAGES the Ramsar Secretariat and Contracting Parties to collaborate with the secretariats and national focal points of other MEAs in pursuing implementation actions based on the MA outputs and on the STRP review of MA response options, and REQUESTS the Secretariat to make the STRP review available to the subsidiary bodies of those MEAs;
15. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat, with the advice of the STRP, to incorporate information on relevant MA response options, as provided in the forthcoming Ramsar Technical Report, into the appropriate Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks in any revisions and publication of a further edition following COP10;
16. INSTRUCTS the STRP to prepare further advice for Contracting Parties, as a high priority, concerning how to apply MA response options identified in the forthcoming Ramsar Technical Report that address broad implementation themes not currently covered by the toolkit of Ramsar Wise Use Handbooks, including *inter alia* nutrient cycling, food, and climate change; and
17. ALSO INSTRUCTS the STRP, in the context of the Resolution VIII.34 on *Agriculture, wetlands and water resource management*, to prepare further advice to the Contracting Parties on the interrelated Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (IWMI, CGIAR initiative) and Global Environment Outlook-4 (GEO-4) of UNEP.