



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.25

Wetlands and “biofuels”

1. ACKNOWLEDGING that the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2008) addressed the issue of biofuels in Decision IX/1, para 31, on agricultural biodiversity, and in Decision IX/2 on agricultural biodiversity and biofuels;
2. RECOGNIZING the potential contribution of the sustainable production and use of biofuels for the promotion of sustainable development and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, but aware of the potential negative environmental and socio-economic impacts from unsustainable production and use of biofuels;
3. RECOGNIZING that attempting to increase energy security and economic development as well as reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is an urgent global priority;
4. AWARE of the increasing global attention to the use of low-emission and renewable sources of energy, including *inter alia* biofuel production;
5. ALSO AWARE that biofuel can be manufactured from many different food and non-food sources, such as sugar cane, corn, beets, wheat and sorghum (grown for conversion to bioethanol) and rapeseed, sunflower, soya, oil palm, coconut and jatropha (grown for conversion to biodiesel), each with different potential impacts on wetlands, including differences between genotypes of the same crop type;
6. RECOGNIZING that the potential positive and negative impacts of the production and use of biofuels on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands depend, *inter alia*, on the feedstocks used, the mode and place of production, the agricultural practices involved and the relevant policies in place;
7. FURTHER AWARE that many parts of the world are now water-stressed and that this demand for water is projected to grow, and RECOGNIZING that 70% of globally abstracted water is already being used for irrigated agriculture, and although not all biofuel crop systems require irrigation, expansion of irrigated agriculture including for biofuel production could increase the threats to water resources and wetlands and biodiversity, including threats to wetlands through their conversion and adverse affects on water quality;

8. RECOGNIZING that biofuel crops vary with regard to their water demands, and that some can be grown on degraded lands and can in some cases assist in the rehabilitation of wetlands, with associated benefits for human populations;
9. AWARE of the work of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International (WI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), among others, on water, wetlands and agriculture in the context of biofuels;
10. TAKING NOTE of the Final Declaration of the “High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy” hosted by the FAO in Rome in June 2008, which stresses, *inter alia*, that it is vital to combine medium- and long-term measures to address the challenges and opportunities posed by biofuels and to foster a coherent, effective and results-oriented international dialogue on biofuels;
11. EXPRESSING CONCERN that with global demand for food and fuel production projected to increase substantially, potential competing demands upon agricultural land for food and biofuel production may lead to pressure for the conversion of wetlands and other threatened ecosystems, including sites previously the subject of restoration programs;
12. ALSO EXPRESSING CONCERN that conversion of wetlands risks releasing high levels of GHGs from the carbon they store, as recognized by Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, and that this is already causing major releases of greenhouse gases from some wetlands; and
13. FURTHER CONCERNED that decisions concerning further conversion of wetlands driven by biofuel production may not necessarily take into account the full range of ecosystem services provided by wetlands, such as carbon storage, flood protection, production of food and fibres, and groundwater recharge;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. RECOGNIZES that biofuel production and use should be sustainable in relation to wetlands;
15. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties, consistent with any applicable national legislation, to assess the potential impacts, benefits and risks, including drainage, of proposed biofuel crop production schemes affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands, particularly the implications for surface and groundwater resources; to apply environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA), as appropriate and in line with Resolution VII.16 and Resolution X.17; and to seek to avoid negative impacts, and where such avoidance is not feasible, to apply as far as possible appropriate mitigation and/or compensation/offset actions, for example through wetland restoration;
16. URGES Contracting Parties to consider formulating appropriate land use policies for the sustainable production of biofuels, recognizing the need for accelerated implementation of policies that promote the positive and minimize the negative impacts of production and use of biofuel feedstocks on wetlands;

17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider the cultivation of biomass on rewetted peatlands (paludiculture) and to promote sustainable forest and agricultural practices that will mitigate any adverse impacts of biofuel production;
18. URGES Contracting Parties to promote sustainable production and use of biofuels through strengthened development cooperation, the transfer of technologies, and information exchange;
19. STRONGLY URGES Contracting Parties to strive to ensure that any policies for biofuel crop production should consider the full range and value of ecosystem services and livelihoods provided by wetlands and the biodiversity they support, and to consider the trade-offs between these services alongside cost benefit analysis and make use of, as appropriate, the application of the precautionary approach as defined in Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
20. INSTRUCITS the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) to:
 - i) review the global distribution of biofuel production in relation to impacts on wetlands;
 - ii) review and collate existing best management practice guidance and social and environmental sustainability appraisals for growing biofuel feedstocks in relation to wetlands, and where appropriate develop such guidance and appraisals in collaboration with other relevant international organizations;
 - iii) consider further discussion between the Contracting Parties on addressing sustainable biofuel issues in relation to wetlands;
 - iv) advise the Standing Committee of its conclusions; and
 - v) work with relevant international bodies dealing with biofuels;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to conduct deeper study and analyses to assess the potential impacts, benefits and risks of proposed biofuel crop production schemes affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands;
22. INVITES the FAO, the IOPs and other interested organizations to contribute to this work and to assist in liaison and communication of the findings to relevant platforms and fora; and
23. INVITES the Executive Secretary of the CBD to include relevant considerations and activities in relation to wetlands, biodiversity and biofuels in the joint work plan between the CBD and Ramsar Conventions, including drawing upon the expertise available through the STRP in the regional workshops convened on the sustainable production and use of biofuels (CBD decision IX/2, para. 12), and INSTRUCITS the STRP to contribute to these processes subject to available resources.