

Agenda item 9

## **Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Ramsar Convention**

### **Submitted by Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Parties**

1. RECALLING that during the 4<sup>th</sup> Pan-American Ramsar Regional Meeting (2007) and the Caribbean Regional Meeting on the Implementation of the Convention (2008), the Caribbean States all supported the conclusion that they should be viewed as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and in terms of their vulnerability to development, climate change, and loss of wetlands;
2. AWARE that funding support from the Ramsar Convention is presently based on the Parties' economic status by reference to the OECD Developing Assistant Committee list and that the Parties at those meetings believe that such support for SIDS should be based upon their vulnerability to climate change, as is the case with similar environmental conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity;
3. RECOGNIZING that among the expected impacts due to climate change are sea level rise, intensification of the global hydrological cycle, increased frequencies and intensities of extreme weather events, and increased vulnerability of coastal areas to flooding, erosion, loss of wetlands and mangroves, and seawater inundation into freshwater sources;
4. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.10 (2005) the Parties acknowledged that "both conservation of natural wetland ecosystems such as mangroves, as well as wise use of such wetlands in the coastal zone, contribute to natural flood prevention" and recognized "the significance of synergies with the other multilateral environmental agreements and agencies with a particular focus on the impacts of natural disasters, especially the joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit and including the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), The World Health Organization (WHO), The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) . . . the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, [and] the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and also [recognized] the role that can be played in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster by . . . non-governmental organizations (NGOs) . . . especially the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs)"; and
5. RECOGNIZING that one of the Key Messages of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Wetlands & Water* (2005) indicates that "The degradation and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that of other ecosystems. Similarly, the status of both freshwater and coastal wetland species is deteriorating faster than those of other ecosystems";

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat to consider the Caribbean Islands as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for their vulnerability to climate change and loss of wetlands;
7. URGES that the Island State Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention be viewed based on their vulnerability and not solely on their economic status, in a manner similar to that employed by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others; and
8. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to ensure that the Convention's activities pay particular attention to the vulnerable areas of the world, prior to the adverse climate effects that will ultimately affect the economic status of those territories and their wetlands.