

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
46th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 8th - 12th April 2013

Secretary General's statement for the Ramsar Convention's 46th Standing Committee meeting

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Honourable members of the Ramsar Standing Committee and Ramsar Partners,
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all in Gland for the 46th Session of our Standing Committee.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Dr Mihail Faca, our Chairman of the Ramsar Standing Committee, to all Standing Committee members, all Contracting Parties, our IOPs, the STRP, all participants and the Secretariat.

Let me also welcome three staff members who are attending their first Standing Committee meeting:

Marcela Bonells, Scientific and Technical Officer (STRP)
Laura Maíz-Tomé, Assistant to the Senior Regional Advisor, Europe
Sara Casallas, Assistant to the Senior Regional Advisor, Americas

This is my last opportunity to renew the appreciation and the gratitude of the whole Ramsar Secretariat for your continued support, your guidance and the actions you are taking to enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

I particularly wish to express our gratitude to all Contracting Parties who consistently provided their annual contributions to the Ramsar core budget and to all donors for their precious voluntary financial contributions to our Small Grant Fund as well as the Wetlands For the Future, Swiss Grant for Africa, Danone Fund for Water, our regional meetings and COPs, Ramsar Advisory Missions and the STRP. We thank all other supporting Parties and organizations, including UNEP, Ramsar Regional centres and the countries hosting our Regional Initiatives.

We thank Switzerland and IUCN for hosting the Secretariat.

We thank the Republic of Korea and Romania for hosting respectively COP10 and COP11 and Uruguay for offering to host COP12.

I am pleased to announce that the Ramsar family has grown from 162 to 165 Contracting Parties following the accession of three more countries since COP11 and I would like to welcome Andora from Europe; Zimbabwe and Swaziland from Africa. It is also worth mentioning that Oman from Asia and Kiribati from Oceania are close to accession as well as South Sudan from Africa.

Over the last six years my work as Secretary General and the whole Secretariat has paid particular attention to the need to take all possible actions to implement the 204 Resolutions and Recommendations adapted from COP1 to COP11.

As you can see from these slides, our Convention has made considerable efforts to provide Contracting Parties with guidance to help prepare and adopt policies and to implement them through tangible actions on the ground.

This confirms that Ramsar remains a Convention attached to the ground, caring for both environmental conservation and sustainable development from the site level to the global dimension.

However, many of the available guidelines are yet to be used effectively. Capacity building remains an urgent need to facilitate and enhance the use of these guidelines.

Our collaborative work with the Ramsar International Organizations Partners is an asset to bring into play, together with all Contracting Parties and other partners to consider how the current and emerging opportunities can enhance the implementation of the Convention.

The Ramsar Secretariat strongly believes that over the next 40 years our collective efforts should enhance the recognition of wetlands by decision makers as water providers for vital needs of human societies, especially human health, food security, energy, biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as overall socio-economic development.

We are hopeful that the Ramsar Contracting Parties and partners will adopt a Vision that ensures, through the work of all stakeholders, that vital services provided to human societies by wetlands through water are recognized, maintained, restored and sustainably used by governments (global-national-local), communities, industry, business, agriculture, etc.

We hope that the strong set of Resolutions and related documents that are already available will be a foundation for the future strategic and operational direction of the Convention.

I would like most sincerely to wish a successful tenure to my successor and I wish to encourage all Ramsar Contracting Parties and partners to provide their full and continued support.

Thank you.

Anada Tiega