Memorandum of Understanding on the "Wetlands for the Future" Initiative

Between the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Government of the United States of America

- 1. RECOGNIZING that the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (hereinafter Ramsar Convention) is the only global conservation treaty dedicated to the sustainable and wise use of wetlands resources;
- 2. NOTING that this goal is fully compatible with the conservation objectives of the Government of the United States of America, which is party to the Ramsar Convention;
- 3. CONSIDERING that the Ramsar Convention has already successfully implemented a Western Hemisphere capacity-building initiative entitled "Wetlands for the Future" with funding provided by contributions from the United States of America over the past fourteen years;
- 4. RECALLING the "Memorandum of Understanding on Ramsar Convention Capacity Building in the Western Hemisphere Between the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Government of the United States of America," signed November 1994; and
- 5. REAFFIRMING that the Government of the United States of America considers the activities of the *Wetlands for the Future* initiative beneficial to the future of wetlands in the Western Hemisphere and consonant with the international environmental goals of the Government of the United States of America.
- 6. The Government of the United States of America and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat declare their intent as follows:
- 7. The purpose of this Understanding is to continue the partnership between the Government of the United States of America and the Ramsar Secretariat established pursuant to the 1994 Memorandum of Understanding for managing the *Wetlands for the Future* initiative.
- 8. This initiative is to focus on the Caribbean and Latin American regions. Funds provided by the United States Government are to be disbursed by the Ramsar Secretariat for meritorious proposals that are intended to: 1) develop human resources needed for the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands; 2) train wetlands managers in the professional and technical skills needed to pursue the goals of the Ramsar Convention; 3) establish regional technical information networks to support conservation and sustainable management of wetlands; 4) develop local, national, or regional awareness of and support for conservation of wetlands; 5) advance ecologically sound community management; or 6) link this initiative to other programs that share the overall goals of wetlands conservation and sustainable management, including addressing climate change.
- 9. Subject to availability of funds, the United States Government may make available to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat additional contributions earmarked for *Wetlands for the Future* to continue this initiative. Any earmarked funds are intended exclusively to finance this initiative consistent with already established practice over the last fourteen years.

- The Ramsar Secretariat, acting through its Secretary General, and the United States Government, acting through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of State, intend to cooperate in the implementation of the Wetlands for the Future initiative and continue to develop appropriate procedures and methods for carrying out this initiative.
- 11. The Ramsar Secretariat should continue to maintain a separate project account for this activity and intends to provide the United States Government with an annual audit of these funds within the context of annual Ramsar accounts audit.
- 12. Funds made available by the United States Government for this initiative may be used by the Ramsar Secretariat for administration, coordination, and evaluation of the initiative. The Ramsar Secretariat may utilize up to 10 percent of the annual disbursement for its related costs.
- The Ramsar Secretariat intends to maintain and continue to fund on an ongoing basis an 13. intern position for the Neotropical Region whose duties would include assistance with the Wetlands for the Future initiative.
- 14. Any publications, slides, videos, or other promotional and information materials specifically related to this initiative should mention the initiative and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of State, and Ramsar Convention and, insofar as practicable, display the logos of these institutions.
- The United States Government and Ramsar Secretariat intend to jointly decide on the 15. activities and grants provided by the Wetlands for the Future initiative. If a joint decision on any issue cannot be reached, Ramsar Secretariat acknowledges that the views of the United States prevail.
- The United States Government and Ramsar Secretariat intend to seek long-term 16. understandings for wetlands conservation and sustainable management in the Western Hemisphere.
- This Memorandum of Understanding is not a legally binding commitment and its terms apply for five (5) years, subject to extension for like periods of time, or until such time as the funds provided have been expended, whichever occurs first. This arrangement becomes operative upon signature, with its terms applying from June 30, 2009.

SIGNATURES

For the Ramsar Convention Secretariat:

Eor the Government of the United States of America: