

## **Notification 1998 / 3**

### **Ramsar and Water**

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) presents its compliments and has the honour to refer to the following:

*Through Resolution VI.23, the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties endorsed a range of actions to promote the role of the Convention in integrated water resource management. These actions were further reinforced through Operational Objectives 2.2, 2.4, 2.7, 4.2, 6.3 and 7.2 in the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, as approved under Resolution VI.14 of the same Conference.*

*In accordance with these mandates, the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee approved (Decision 20.30) the theme of "Ramsar and Water" for Technical Session I at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to be held in San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999. It is envisaged that this Technical Session will further elaborate the important role of wetlands in the management of the increasingly threatened water resources of the world.*

*In response to the looming global water crisis, the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, held in June 1997 to evaluate the progress made since the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, decided that water will be one of the priority issues to be considered in 1998 by the Commission on Sustainable Development.*

*The secretariat of the Convention of Wetlands participated in the Expert Group Meeting on Strategic Approaches to Fresh Water Management, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 27-30 January 1998, in preparation for the Sixth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (20 April - 1 May 1998). Also in preparation for this session, the Government of France will host a high level Conference on Water and Sustainable Development from 19-21 March 1998 in Paris. The Bureau of the Convention will participate in the conference and has prepared the attached paper for consideration at that time. The paper argues that a global recognition of the vital functions and services provided by wetlands, and a commitment from Governments to halt all actions resulting in the further destruction of wetlands, should be a recommendation from this conference. The paper also urges recognition from the conference that the restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands is a necessary long-term action in support of sustainable use of water resources.*

*The paper prepared by the Bureau is being communicated to Administrative Authorities at this time to allow for discussion and consideration of its recommendations by the Government delegations that will participate at the Paris Conference on Water and Sustainable Development and the Sixth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York. It is hoped that these delegations will support the recommendations it contains to further the work of the Convention on Wetlands, recognising that it is an established intergovernmental instrument for furthering the ecosystems-based approach to water management which is needed.*

The Bureau of the Convention on Wetlands respectfully requests that the content of the present Note be communicated to the competent national authorities and avails itself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of its highest consideration.

Gland, 19 February 1998