



## The Ramsar Convention

the world's oldest environmental convention signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, brings together 168 countries with a shared mission to ensure the wise use of wetlands, and has a proven track record in working with individual countries, private sector companies and non-governmental organisations to protect and restore wetlands for global water security.

Our strategic goals for 2016-21 - work will continue to focus on:

- 1 Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation
- 2 Effective conservation and management of wetlands of international importance (as designated by the parties to the convention)
- 3 Ensure the wise use of all wetlands
- 4 Enhancing implementation: strengthen capacity, financing, cooperation and awareness to better realise our targets

Progress will be tracked via mutually developed global indicators, and regular national reports from contracting parties.

### Case study

The Ramsar Convention is excited to announce the start of a Global Partnership for Wetlands Restoration. For 2015, the focus will be on the theme of "Cities and Water", and thanks to a generous grant from the Norwegian Government's development agency we will be funding projects in Nepal, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda, working to improve access to good quality drinking water for people in densely populated urban areas.

## How can we manage and restore ecosystems for water services and biodiversity?

Since 1900, over 64% of the world's wetlands have been destroyed, mostly because they are too often viewed as wastelands to be converted for other uses. Moreover there has been a 76% decline in freshwater species in the last 40 years\*

But these are essential ecosystems that work for humanity:

**Fresh water**  
Wetlands provide our daily water

**Biodiversity**  
>100,000 freshwater species live in wetlands

**Food**  
Wetland provide fish, rice and the water for crop irrigation

**Sustainable livelihoods and products**  
As well as transport for millions

**Wetlands services**  
Cleaning and purifying harmful waste from water

**Wetlands act as natural shock absorbers**

Helping mitigate the risks of environmental disasters

**Wetlands combat climate change**

Peatlands store more carbon than all the worlds forests combined

\*According to the WWF's Living Planet Index





Working to preserve wetlands services can play a part in attaining many of the UN Sustainable Development goals for 2015 and beyond. In particular:

**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.**  
 Target 6.6: By 2020 to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

Agencies and organisations work with governments to sign up to and fulfil international agreements.

**End poverty in all its forms everywhere.** Reduce the exposure of the poor and vulnerable to climate-related extreme events, environmental shocks and disasters.

wetlands help to mitigate the effects of flooding; bind the shoreline to help combat coastal

erosion; and mangrove swamps in particular help to counter rising sea levels.

**Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.**

many of these diverse targets can be met at least in part by ensuring governments adhere to their obligations under international agreements.

Dr Ania Grobicki, Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Convention

### Case study

“The UN Sustainable Development Goals give all countries the opportunity to track the extent of wetlands over time. With new technologies this can be done. We need to work together to convince the UN that the extent of wetlands needs to be tracked in order to achieve target 6.6”

The 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum meeting in Korea in 2015 has created discussion groups to address the issues and challenges around water sustainability. For the theme of wetlands the various agencies and organisations pledge to coordinate their efforts in order to:

- 1 **Address the reasons wetlands** are under threat, and ensure the abundance of wetlands given the vital services these ecosystems provide. As a priority, increase water-use efficiency in agriculture; work with governments to ensure public policy in favour of wetlands.
- 2 **Identify key locations** across the world to take action – using satellite imagery and on the ground monitoring to create baselines and track changes, sharing best practice and the latest research in order to preserve and restore wetlands. As a priority, address threats to Ramsar sites that are at risk of losing their fundamental ecological character.
- 3 **Establish national hydrological and wetlands plans** that adhere to Ramsar Convention’s “Wise Use” guidance, support and contribute to efforts to manage, protect and restore wetlands.



2015  
 Daegu & Gyeongbuk,  
 Rep. of Korea