

Compilation of COP12 Resolutions

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12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.1

Financial and budgetary matters

1. RECALLING the budgetary provisions established by paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 6 of the Convention on Wetlands;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the prompt payment by the majority of Contracting Parties of their contributions to the core budget of the Convention, but NOTING WITH CONCERN that a number of Parties still have significant outstanding contributions (COP12 DOC.15 Rev1);
3. NOTING WITH GRATITUDE the additional voluntary financial contributions made by many Contracting Parties through their Ramsar Administrative Authorities and other agencies, including some development assistance agencies, and also the contributions made by non-governmental organizations and private companies for activities undertaken by the Secretariat, but NOTING WITH CONCERN the continuing decline in such voluntary contributions;
4. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the financial and administrative services provided to the Secretariat by IUCN, underpinned by the Services Agreement between Ramsar and IUCN revised in 2009;
5. NOTING that Contracting Parties have been kept informed of the financial situation of the Secretariat through the audited annual financial statements for the years from 2011 to 2014 and the reports of the Standing Committee meetings in 2012, 2013 and 2014; and
6. RECOGNIZING the need to continue to strengthen financial partnerships with relevant international organizations and other entities and to explore additional funding opportunities through their existing financial mechanisms;

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7. ACKNOWLEDGES that since the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP11) in 2012 the Secretariat has managed the Convention's funds prudently, efficiently and openly;
8. EXPRESSES ITS GRATITUDE to the Contracting Parties that have served in the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee during the past cycle, and in particular to Canada, which has acted as Chair of the Subgroup;
9. DECIDES that the Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 (1993) shall be applied *in toto* to the 2016-2018 cycle;

10. FURTHER DECIDES that the Subgroup on Finance, as established by Resolution VI.17, is to continue to operate under the aegis of the Standing Committee and with the roles and responsibilities specified in that Resolution;
11. NOTES that CHF 115,000 of 2013-2015 reserve funds was used to sponsor eligible COP12 delegates in order to ensure all parties could participate effectively; and FURTHER NOTES that this does not represent a precedent for the Convention and is seen as a one-time special exception to the normal practice given the global economic climate and the difficulty in securing voluntary funds from Contracting Parties and other external sources;
12. REQUESTS the Secretary General to continue efforts to solicit external funds to repay the funds used from the reserve under these extraordinary circumstances and to report back at future meetings of the Subgroup on Finance on progress in this regard; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretary General to ensure that COP13 delegate sponsoring is a priority for fund-raising to avoid this situation in the future;
13. NOTES that the 2016-2018 budget includes a core element funded by contributions from Contracting Parties, prepared on the basis that there are no fundamental changes to the operation of the Secretariat during 2016-2018, and a non-core unfunded element to be financed by voluntary contributions, and APPROVES the combined budget for the 2016-2018 cycle as attached in Annex 1 to enable the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention;
14. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to revise core budgetary allocations between budget lines in the light of significant positive or negative changes during the cycle to costs, rates of inflation, interest and tax income projected in the budget, without increasing the contributions of Parties or increasing the charges paid to IUCN above the budgeted 13% maximum;
15. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to revise non-core budgetary allocations and priorities depending upon the success of the Secretariat in securing voluntary funding for these activities;
16. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to the core budget (other than those making only voluntary contributions) should be in accordance with the scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly, which for those only paying voluntary contributions is applied on an indicative basis, and except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale, could make annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention core budget of less than CHF 1,000, in which case the annual contribution will be that amount;
17. URGES all Contracting Parties to pay their contributions promptly by 1 January of each year, or as soon thereafter as that country's budget cycle will permit;
18. URGES Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to make a renewed effort to settle them as expeditiously as possible to enhance the financial sustainability of the Convention through contributions by all Contracting Parties, and REQUESTS the Secretariat to contact Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions in excess of three years and work with them to identify appropriate options and actions for addressing the situation and initiating a plan for making payment of contributions, and to report back to each Standing Committee meeting and meeting of the Conference of the Parties on activities taken in this regard and results achieved;

19. NOTES with concern the continued decline in voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties and URGES Contracting Parties and others to seek to reverse this trend in order to fund the important non-core element of the 2016-2018 combined budget, and WELCOMES voluntary contributions from any donor for activities not mentioned in Annex 3, but which support the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
20. REQUESTS that the Secretariat continue to develop new approaches and tools, including signature initiatives, as appropriate, to secure voluntary financial support for currently unfunded priority projects, as listed in Annex 3;
21. REAFFIRMS its conviction that the Convention's Small Grants Fund is of great value in terms of the implementation of the Convention, and URGES Parties and others to find CHF 1,000,000 over the next triennium (Annex 3) to secure the efficient operation of this programme;
22. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee review the operation of the programme during the triennium and definitively conclude whether the Parties should continue or cease the Small Grants Fund for the consideration of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
23. EXPRESSES GRATITUDE to the governments of Switzerland and the United States of America and to the Danone and MAVA Foundations for their voluntary contributions to non-core activities of the Convention; namely, the Swiss Grant for Africa, Wetlands for the Future, World Wetlands Day, and the Ramsar Culture Network, respectively;
24. REAFFIRMS the decision taken at COP11 (Resolution X1.2) that the Reserve Fund:
 - a. provides for unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures;
 - b. receives realized core budget surpluses (or is applied to deficits);
 - c. should not be lower than 6% of the annual core budget of the Convention and not greater than 15%;
 - d. should be administered by the Secretary General with the approval of the Subgroup on Finance as established by the Standing Committee;
25. REQUESTS the Secretariat to endeavour to maintain the Reserve Fund over the 2016-2018 triennium in accordance with this budget and to report annually to the Standing Committee on the status and propose to its Subgroup on Finance for its concurrence prior to any uses of the Fund;
26. APPROVES the staffing table for the Secretariat in terms of staff numbers and position (according to the IUCN Human Resources Function Group) for the triennium, as contained in Annex 4, and NOTES that any requested changes to staff numbers or function group of staff is to be discussed with the Executive Team for its concurrence;
27. REQUESTS that the Secretary General does not use consultants on a regular basis as a way of delivering core Secretariat functions and that all consultants are used for very short-term, fixed tasks deemed necessary to deliver on the implementation of the Convention, and FURTHER REQUESTS that anything beyond this normal practice be discussed with the Executive Team;
28. REQUESTS the Secretariat to utilize the UN Conference on Trade and Development's list of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) when determining eligibility for sponsorship for delegate

travel and to consider SIDS as eligible for support whether or not they are formally classified as such on economic grounds in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list;

29. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to ensure that COP13 is prepared in such a way as to enable negotiations on the draft resolutions to commence as early as possible and no later than the afternoon of the first day of COP; and
30. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to make all efforts to ensure that revised draft resolutions are translated into all official languages during COP13 to enable full and effective participation by all delegations.

Annex 1	Combined budget for 2016-2018
Annex 2	Illustrative core budget contributions by Contracting Party for 2016-2018
Annex 3	Analysis of 2016-2018 budgeted non-core items, in order of priority
Annex 4	Approved Secretariat staff (core) for 2016-2018

Annex 1

Combined budget for 2016-2018

2016-2018 Combined Budget		2016		2017		2018	
CHF 000'S		Core	Non-Core	Core	Non-Core	Core	Non-Core
INCOME							
Parties' Contributions		3,779		3,779		3,779	
Voluntary contributions		1,065		1,065		1,065	
Income Tax		225		225		225	
Income Interest		12		12		12	
TOTAL INCOME		5,081		5,081		5,081	
EXPENDITURES							
A. Secretariat Senior Management		798		798		798	
B. Partnership Coordinator		250		250		250	
C. Regional Advice and Support		1,342		1,342		1,342	
D. Support to Regional Initiatives		120		120		120	
E. Scientific and Technical Services		212		212		212	
F. Communications		569		569		569	
G. Administration/RSIS/Web		896		896		896	
H. Operating Costs		95		95		95	
I. Standing Committee Services		150		150		150	
J. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (maximum)		540		540		540	
K. Provisions, Legal		110		110		110	
1. Ramsar Advisory Missions			200		200		200
2. STRP 2016-2018 Programme			100		100		100
3. RSIS, IM and IT (Website)			58		58		59
4. Pre-COP13 Regional Meetings			217		217		216
5. COP13 (2018) Sponsorship (eligible delegates)			200		200		200
6. Arabic Language Translation			83		83		84
7. Small Grants Funds			333		333		334
8. Regional Initiative Networks and Centres			50		50		50
9. Ramsar CEPA Programme (2016-2021)			100		100		100
10. On-line system for National Reports			58		58		59
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		5,081	1,399	5,081	1,399	5,081	1,402
TOTAL SALARY COSTS – staff salaries and related costs		3,429		3,429		3,429	
		67%		67%		67%	
TOTAL TRAVEL COSTS		155		155		155	
		3%		3%		3%	

Annex 2

Illustrative core-budget contributions by Contracting Party for 2016-2018

Illustration based on:			
Membership as at 1 January 2015	2016 Core Contribution	2017 Core Contribution	2018 Core Contribution
UN Scale of Assessments 2015*	CHF	CHF	CHF
Albania	1,000	1,000	1,000
Algeria	6,686	6,686	6,686
Andorra	1,000	1,000	1,000
Antigua & Barbuda	1,000	1,000	1,000
Argentina	21,082	21,082	21,082
Armenia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Australia	101,215	101,215	101,215
Austria	38,944	38,944	38,944
Azerbaijan	1,952	1,952	1,952
Bahamas	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bahrain	1,903	1,903	1,903
Bangladesh	1,000	1,000	1,000
Barbados	1,000	1,000	1,000
Belarus	2,733	2,733	2,733
Belgium	48,704	48,704	48,704
Belize	1,000	1,000	1,000
Benin	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bhutan	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bolivia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,000	1,000	1,000
Botswana	1,000	1,000	1,000
Brazil	143,184	143,184	143,184
Bulgaria	2,294	2,294	2,294
Burkina Faso	1,000	1,000	1,000
Burundi	1,000	1,000	1,000
Cambodia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Cameroon	1,000	1,000	1,000
Canada	145,624	145,624	145,624
Cape Verde	1,000	1,000	1,000
Central African Republic	1,000	1,000	1,000
Chad	1,000	1,000	1,000
Chile	16,300	16,300	16,300
China	251,231	251,231	251,231
Colombia	12,640	12,640	12,640
Comoros	1,000	1,000	1,000
Congo	1,000	1,000	1,000
Costa Rica	1,854	1,854	1,854
Côte d'Ivoire	1,000	1,000	1,000
Croatia	6,149	6,149	6,149
Cuba	3,367	3,367	3,367

* Revised UN Scale will be applied, when released.

** As previously, 22% of total contributions from Parties.

Illustration based on:			
Membership as at 1 January 2015	2016 Core Contribution	2017 Core Contribution	2018 Core Contribution
UN Scale of Assessments 2015*	CHF	CHF	CHF
Cyprus	2,294	2,294	2,294
Czech Republic	18,837	18,837	18,837
Democratic Republic of Congo	1,000	1,000	1,000
Denmark	32,941	32,941	32,941
Djibouti	1,000	1,000	1,000
Dominican Republic	2,196	2,196	2,196
Ecuador	2,147	2,147	2,147
Egypt	6,539	6,539	6,539
El Salvador	1,000	1,000	1,000
Equatorial Guinea	1,000	1,000	1,000
Estonia	1,952	1,952	1,952
Fiji	1,000	1,000	1,000
Finland	25,328	25,328	25,328
France	272,947	272,947	272,947
Gabon	1,000	1,000	1,000
Gambia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Georgia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Germany	348,492	348,492	348,492
Ghana	1,000	1,000	1,000
Greece	31,135	31,135	31,135
Grenada	1,000	1,000	1,000
Guatemala	1,318	1,318	1,318
Guinea	1,000	1,000	1,000
Guinea-Bissau	1,000	1,000	1,000
Honduras	1,000	1,000	1,000
Hungary	12,981	12,981	12,981
Iceland	1,318	1,318	1,318
India	32,502	32,502	32,502
Indonesia	16,885	16,885	16,885
Iran, Islamic Republic of	17,373	17,373	17,373
Iraq	3,319	3,319	3,319
Ireland	20,399	20,399	20,399
Israel	19,325	19,325	19,325
Italy	217,069	217,069	217,069
Jamaica	1,000	1,000	1,000
Japan	528,668	528,668	528,668
Jordan	1,074	1,074	1,074
Kazakhstan	5,905	5,905	5,905
Kenya	1,000	1,000	1,000
Kiribati	1,000	1,000	1,000
Kyrgyz Republic	1,000	1,000	1,000
Lao Peoples Republic	1,000	1,000	1,000
Latvia	2,294	2,294	2,294
Lebanon	2,050	2,050	2,050
Lesotho	1,000	1,000	1,000

* Revised UN Scale will be applied, when released.

** As previously, 22% of total contributions from Parties.

Illustration based on:			
Membership as at 1 January 2015	2016 Core Contribution	2017 Core Contribution	2018 Core Contribution
UN Scale of Assessments 2015*	CHF	CHF	CHF
Liberia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Libya	6,930	6,930	6,930
Liechtenstein	1,000	1,000	1,000
Lithuania	3,563	3,563	3,563
Luxembourg	3,953	3,953	3,953
Madagascar	1,000	1,000	1,000
Malawi	1,000	1,000	1,000
Malaysia	13,713	13,713	13,713
Mali	1,000	1,000	1,000
Malta	1,000	1,000	1,000
Marshall Islands	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mauritania	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mauritius	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mexico	89,893	89,893	89,893
Monaco	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mongolia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Montenegro	1,000	1,000	1,000
Morocco	3,026	3,026	3,026
Mozambique	1,000	1,000	1,000
Myanmar	1,000	1,000	1,000
Namibia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Nepal	1,000	1,000	1,000
Netherlands	80,718	80,718	80,718
New Zealand	12,347	12,347	12,347
Nicaragua	1,000	1,000	1,000
Niger	1,000	1,000	1,000
Nigeria	4,392	4,392	4,392
Norway	41,530	41,530	41,530
Oman, Sultanate of	4,978	4,978	4,978
Pakistan	4,148	4,148	4,148
Palau	1,000	1,000	1,000
Panama	1,269	1,269	1,269
Papua New Guinea	1,000	1,000	1,000
Paraguay	1,000	1,000	1,000
Peru	5,710	5,710	5,710
Philippines	7,515	7,515	7,515
Poland	44,946	44,946	44,946
Portugal	23,132	23,132	23,132
Republic of Korea	97,310	97,310	97,310
Republic of Moldova	1,000	1,000	1,000
Romania	11,029	11,029	11,029
Russian Federation	118,978	118,978	118,978
Rwanda	1,000	1,000	1,000
Saint Lucia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Samoa	1,000	1,000	1,000

* Revised UN Scale will be applied, when released.

** As previously, 22% of total contributions from Parties.

Illustration based on:			
Membership as at 1 January 2015	2016 Core Contribution	2017 Core Contribution	2018 Core Contribution
UN Scale of Assessments 2015*	CHF	CHF	CHF
Sao Tome and Principe	1,000	1,000	1,000
Senegal	1,000	1,000	1,000
Serbia	1,952	1,952	1,952
Seychelles	1,000	1,000	1,000
Sierra Leone	1,000	1,000	1,000
Slovakia	8,345	8,345	8,345
Slovenia	4,880	4,880	4,880
South Africa	18,154	18,154	18,154
South Sudan, Republic of	1,000	1,000	1,000
Spain	145,087	145,087	145,087
Sri Lanka	1,220	1,220	1,220
Sudan	1,000	1,000	1,000
Suriname	1,000	1,000	1,000
Swaziland, Kingdom of	1,000	1,000	1,000
Sweden	46,850	46,850	46,850
Switzerland	51,095	51,095	51,095
Syrian Arab Republic	1,757	1,757	1,757
Tajikistan	1,000	1,000	1,000
Thailand	11,664	11,664	11,664
The FYR of Macedonia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Togo	1,000	1,000	1,000
Trinidad and Tobago	2,147	2,147	2,147
Tunisia	1,757	1,757	1,757
Turkey	64,809	64,809	64,809
Turkmenistan	1,000	1,000	1,000
Uganda	1,000	1,000	1,000
Ukraine	4,831	4,831	4,831
United Arab Emirates	29,037	29,037	29,037
United Kingdom	252,743	252,743	252,743
United Republic of Tanzania	1,000	1,000	1,000
Uruguay	2,538	2,538	2,538
Uzbekistan	1,000	1,000	1,000
Venezuela	30,599	30,599	30,599
Viet Nam	2,050	2,050	2,050
Yemen	1,000	1,000	1,000
Zambia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Zimbabwe	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total	3,778,744	3,778,744	3,778,744
Other contributions			
United States of America**	1,065,799	1,065,799	1,065,799
Grand Total	4,844,543	4,844,543	4,844,543

* Revised UN Scale will be applied, when released.

** As previously, 22% of total contributions from Parties.

Annex 3**Analysis of 2016-2018 budgeted non-core items, in order of priority**

No.	NON-CORE FUNDS 2016 – 2018	3 Year Funding Requirement (CHF)
1	Ramsar Advisory Missions for Parties requiring assistance	600,000
2	STRP 2016-2018 programme of work support	300,000
3	RSIS, IM/IT (Website) Continuing Development	175,000
4	Pre-COP13 regional meetings (delegates support and meeting costs for preparatory meetings)	650,000
5	COP13 (2018) sponsorship to eligible delegates	600,000
6	Arabic language introduction and translation support	250,000
7	Small Grants Funds for protection and wise use of wetlands	1,000,000
8	Regional Initiative Networks and Centres support (priority activities).	150,000
9	Ramsar CEPA Programme (2016-2021), exclusion of World Wetlands Day	300,000
10	On-line system for National Reports, reporting and indicators development	175,000
	TOTAL	4,200,000

Annex 4**Approved Secretariat staff (core) for 2016-2018**

Team	2015	2016	2017	2018
ASMGT	S, M2, P1	S, M2, P1	S, M2, P1	S, M2, P1
BPART	M1	M1	M1	M1
CREGS	M1 (4), P1, Interns (4)	M1 (4), P1, Interns (4)	M1 (4), P1, Interns (4)	M1 (4), P1, Interns (4)
ESTRP	P1	P1	P1	P1
FCOMM	M1, P2, P1	M1, P2, P1	M1, P2, P1	M1, P2, P1
GADMI	P2, P1 (2), A3 (3)	P2, P1 (2), A3 (3)	P2, P1 (2), A3 (3)	P2, P1 (2), A3 (3)

*2015 staff numbers and position (according to the IUCN Human Resources Function Group) shown for reference.

**Team refer to the categorization of Expenditures as listed in Annex 1: Secretariat Senior Management (ASMGT); Partnership Coordinator (BPART); Regional Advice and Support (CREGS); Scientific and Technical Services (ESTRP); Communications (FCOMM); Administration/RSIS/Web (GADMI).



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.2

The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

1. RECALLING the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 by Resolution X.1 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during the previous two triennia;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that wetlands are the ecosystem with the highest rate of loss and degradation, the need for continuing the implementation of the Convention under the direction of a renewed Strategic Plan that reflects the current wetland conservation challenges, and AWARE that indicators of current trends suggest pressures on biodiversity and other wetland services will increase over the next years;
3. RECOGNIZING the reference to the water and wetlands contained in the proposal of the open working group of the Sustainable Development Goals and RECOGNIZING that all wetlands including the Ramsar Site network will have a direct relevance to the achievement of any Sustainable Development Goals which are related to poverty eradication, food and nutrition, healthy living, gender equality, water quality and supply, water security, energy supply, reduction of natural disasters, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure, sustainable human settlements, adaptation to climate change, oceans, seas and marine resources, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems;
4. RECALLING the RIO+20 outcome, that states that water is at the core of sustainable development, RECOGNIZING the key role that wetlands play in maintaining water quantity and quality, among others, and the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution A/RES/68/157 which recognizes the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which is essential for the full enjoyment of life and of all human rights;
5. NOTING Decision III/21 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and thus RECALLING the role of the Ramsar Convention as lead partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the CBD and RECOGNIZING the important contribution that the Ramsar Convention has made, in implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020¹;
6. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the implementation by Contracting Parties and other stakeholders of Strategic Plans has facilitated over time a progressive delivery of the goals of the Convention, but ALSO RECOGNIZING that, 44 years after the adoption of the Convention, many increasingly urgent challenges remain, to which the Convention will have to adapt and respond in order to consistently achieve wetland conservation and wise use across a changing world;

¹ CBD Decision X/2

7. AWARE of an increasing sense of urgency amongst Contracting Parties in the face of accelerating degradation and loss of wetlands, and RECOGNIZING that more effective responses are needed to prevent, stop and reverse loss and degradation;
8. NOTING that the Strategic Plan identifies priority actions for the next nine years to prevent, stop and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands, by addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation, effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network in an integrated and sustainable way, and promoting the wise use of all wetlands and fostering the accomplishment of these actions by further enhancing implementation of the Convention;
9. AWARE that National Reports provide the opportunity for Contracting Parties to report on implementation progress and any implementation difficulties, and THANKING all those Contracting Parties that have provided their National Reports to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP12);
10. NOTING that challenges for achieving wise use of wetlands differ substantially between regions and nations and that the Contracting Parties differ substantially in their situations and in their capacities; but also NOTING that the cost of inaction is anticipated to be higher in the long term;
11. NOTING that the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 has been prepared by the Strategic Plan Working Group of the Standing Committee with the support of the Secretariat through a wide consultative process with Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other stakeholders, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
12. AWARE of the potential to learn from current international activity in relation to the development of biodiversity indicators; and
13. NOTING the need for additional inter-sessional work to strengthen the suite of materials to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including further possible indicators, and also guidance to Parties based on available tools;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. APPROVES the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 as annexed to this Resolution as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during this period, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to disseminate it widely to other stakeholders concerned with its implementation;
15. URGES all Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the CEPA Oversight Panel and the Secretariat, and INVITES the Convention's IOPs and the Regional Initiatives to take on the renewed challenge of implementing the Strategic Plan through its goals and targets;
16. INVITES other stakeholders such as, *inter alia*, other multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations including financial organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, scientific academies and research institutions, professional scientific and technical bodies, donors, and private companies to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan;

17. REQUESTS the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to develop the COP13 National Report Template to provide a more user- friendly instrument that reflects the goals and targets of the new Ramsar Strategic Plan, for consideration at the 51st Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC51);
18. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and in line with the reporting requirements to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including with regards to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Plan in their National Reports and to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee on the basis of the information provided to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Plan at its meetings;
19. ENCOURAGES Parties to promote, recognize and strengthen active participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, as key stakeholders for conservation and integrated wetland management;
20. RECOGNIZES that the wise and customary use of wetlands by indigenous peoples and local communities can play an important role in their conservation, ENCOURAGES relevant parties to provide that information to the Secretariat and REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to compile the data as an initial report on the relationship of indigenous peoples and local communities with wetlands;
21. ENCOURAGES Parties to allocate from national budgets financial resources for the implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan for wetlands and report on this as appropriate in the National Report to COP13, and further URGES the Secretariat to mobilize additional resources to support the Contracting Parties for effective implementation of the Strategic Plan in the context of Resolution XII.7;
22. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to develop and submit to the Secretariat on or before December 2016, and according to their national priorities, capabilities and resources, their own quantifiable and time-bound national and regional targets in line with the targets set in the Strategic Plan;
23. RECOGNIZES that several Contracting Parties have established national biodiversity targets and action plans in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and URGES such Contracting Parties to integrate and harmonize national implementation of the Strategic Plan with implementation of National Biodiversity Action Plans;
24. REQUESTS the Secretariat, in accordance with Decision SC47-24, to submit to IPBES a request for a thematic assessment on the current status and trends of wetlands, including their condition, and explore further how the Convention can contribute to the work of IPBES, including the regional and global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to inform the Conference of the Parties on the progress of this action;
25. ENCOURAGES the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, including the Ramsar Regional Centres, to develop work plans for assisting the Parties in their respective regions to effectively implement the Strategic Plan;

26. DECIDES to undertake a review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account *inter alia* the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to facilitate this;
27. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to convene, initially, a small, regionally representative expert group back-to-back with the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland in July 2015, including interested Contracting Parties, expert support from the STRP, IOPs and other relevant MEAs and international processes to develop options, for additional indicators for the Strategic Plan having regard in particular to:
 - previous Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties related to indicators, including Resolution IX.1;
 - the need for indicators to address outcomes and effectiveness and to be capable of practical implementation;
 - the need to minimize cost of indicator implementation by using existing data and information flows, including through national reporting and reporting on Ramsar Sites; and
28. REQUESTS the expert group to report on possible indicators to the Standing Committee; and INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee, as a high priority, to refine the potential indicators and present the proposal to COP13 for approval.

Annex

4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat – the “Ramsar Convention”

The Mission of the Ramsar Convention

Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

To achieve this Mission it is essential that vital ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature are fully recognized, maintained, restored and wisely used.

Rationale

A Vision for the 4th Strategic Plan

“Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all”

Background

1. This is the 4th Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention, the first of which was prepared in 1997². The work of the Convention has since 1997 been organized around three pillars: i) the wise use of all wetlands through national plans, policies and legislation, management actions and public education; ii) the designation and sustainable management of suitable wetlands for inclusion on the list of Wetlands of International Importance; and iii) international cooperation on transboundary wetlands and shared species.
2. The **wise use of wetlands** is the key concept orienting the work of the Ramsar Convention. “Wise use of wetlands” is defined as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. Wise use therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of people and nature.
3. In the context of implementation of wetland activities under the Convention on Biological Diversity the Ramsar Convention is recognized as the lead and both conventions are striving to strengthen the cooperation and explore possibilities of synergy. In 2014 the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited the Ramsar Convention to provide elements of advice concerning the funding that may be referred to the Global Environmental Facility through the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity³.

Importance of Wetlands

4. The Ramsar Convention is the first Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) at the global level, adopted in 1971. The Ramsar Sites network constitutes the largest network of officially recognized internationally important areas in the world. This network of wetlands, comprising 2,208 Ramsar Sites covering 210.7⁴ million hectares as of 8 June 2015, constitutes the backbone of a global network of wetlands that maintain vital functions and provide ecosystem services for both people and nature. The identification and the management of these wetlands, for conservation and sustainability, is a core purpose of the Convention, essential for the realization of long-term benefits for biological diversity and people taking into account different approaches and visions.
5. Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.

² Between 1997 and 2015, three Strategic Plans have been implemented: SP1 (1997 – 2002); SP2 (2003 – 2008); SP 3 (2009 – 2015)

³ CBD Decision XII/30

⁴ see <http://www.ramsar.org/>

6. Wetlands deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water supply, water purification, climate regulation, flood regulation, coastal protection, useful fibres, spiritual and cultural inspiration and tourism.
7. Wetlands play a key role in economic activity linked to transportation, food production, water risk management, pollution control, fishing and hunting, leisure and the provision of ecological infrastructure.
8. Most of the water we collect and use comes from wetlands⁵. However, water is unevenly distributed and today, over 700 million people live without access to safe drinking water. In addition 2.5 billion people lack sanitation impacting further on wetlands⁶.
9. Wetlands are too often equated with wastelands and there is little awareness of the vital services that wetlands bring.

Trends in Wetlands

10. At a global level, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment⁷ found that inland and coastal wetland ecosystems were (in 2005) being lost at a rate faster than that of any other ecosystem, and the trend towards loss of wetlands resources has not been reversed since. The primary indirect drivers of this degradation and loss are identified as population growth and change in economic activity; the primary direct drivers of degradation and loss are identified as infrastructure development, land conversion, water use, eutrophication and pollution, overharvesting, overexploitation of wetland resources, climate change and invasive alien species.
11. A recent study⁸ of long-term and recent trends in global wetland area, based on a review of 189 reports of change in wetland areas finds that the reported long-term loss of natural wetlands averages between 54% and 57% but that loss may have been as high as 87% since 1700 AD. There has been a much (3.7 times) faster rate of wetland loss during the 20th and early 21st centuries, with a loss of 64% to 71% of wetlands since 1900. Conversion of coastal natural wetlands has accelerated more than that of inland natural wetlands in the 20th century and that conversion and loss is continuing in all parts of the world, and particularly rapidly in Asia.
12. In the report *Changes in the Global value of Ecosystem Services*⁹, the costs of loss of freshwater wetlands worldwide from 1997 to 2011 has been valued at US\$2.7 trillion per year, the costs of loss of tidal marshes / mangroves has been estimated at US\$7.2 trillion per year and the loss of coral reefs has been estimated at US\$11.9 trillion.
13. The report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands*¹⁰ notes that values of inland and coastal ecosystems services are typically higher than for other ecosystem types, that the “nexus” between water, food and energy is one of the most fundamental

⁵ Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, UNICEF, WHO, 2012

⁶ See http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/wash_statistics.html

⁷ See <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.358.aspx.pdf>.

⁸ N. Davidson, How much wetland has the world lost? Long-term and recent trends in global wetland area, CSIRO Publishing, Marine and Freshwater Research, 2014, 65, 934 – 942, September 2014

⁹ R. Costanza et al., Changes in the Global value of ecosystem services, Global Environmental Change 26 (2014) 152 - 158

¹⁰ Russi D., ten Brink P., Farmer A., Badura T., Coates D., Förster J., Kumar R. and Davidson N. (2013) The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands. IEEP, London and Brussels; Ramsar Secretariat, Gland.

relationships – and increasing challenges – for societies, that wetlands provide ecological infrastructure that can help to reach a range of policy objectives, that wetland loss can lead to significant loss of human well-being and have negative economic impacts on communities, countries and businesses, and that wetlands-related and water-related ecosystem services need to become an integral part of water management in order to make the transition to a resource-efficient, sustainable economy.

14. The Convention on Biological Diversity's *Global Biodiversity Outlook 4*¹¹ also indicates that the trend of wetland loss and degradation is worsening. In contrast to natural wetlands, however, it notes that the area of human-made wetlands tends to be increasing, but the quality of these may be lower than that of the ones destroyed. Despite the partly good progress, additional action is required to achieve global Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2020. For achieving the 2050 vision of an end to biodiversity loss in conjunction with key human development goals for climate change, combating desertification and land degradation, requires changes in society including much more efficient use of land, water, energy and materials, rethinking our consumption habits and in particular addressing trends in food production.

Global Context

15. **Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.** It is anticipated that all wetlands and the Ramsar Sites network will have a direct relevance for any Sustainable Development Goals which are related to water quality and supply, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, healthy living, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements, poverty eradication, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure.
16. The Ramsar Sites network, and the effective management of Ramsar Sites and more widely the wise use of rest of the world's wetlands is an essential contribution to the work of not only the Convention on Biological Diversity but also the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the water-related Conventions.

Review¹² of Progress in the Implementation of the Third Strategic Plan

17. A review of progress with implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan was made on the basis of National Reports to COP11 and responses by Contracting Parties and Ramsar partners to a questionnaire on the Strategic Plan in 2014.
18. The main conclusion of the review of implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan was that at an overall, global level, the implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan can be characterized as a work in progress. It is noted that a number of core aspects of the Convention, such as the wise use of wetlands identification of potential Ramsar Sites, inventories, preparation of management plans, monitoring of Site status and ecological character, and reporting under the Convention continue to require regular attention and action.
19. The other main finding is that there is an increasing sense of urgency amongst Contracting Parties in the face of accelerating degradation and loss of wetlands and that responding to this

¹¹ Report "Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: An Assessment of Biodiversity Trends, Policy Scenarios and Key Actions" available at <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4advance>.

¹² A review of the implementation of the 3rd Strategic Plan has been completed and is available at http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605_4000_0.

requires enhanced engagement with drivers of loss and degradation in order to prevent, stop and reverse degradation through a mainstreaming of wetland values in public and private investments and management of wetlands.

Priority Areas of Focus¹³ for the Convention in the Next Nine Years

20. This summary of priority focus areas of the Ramsar Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Convention in the 2016 – 2024 period is drawn from National Reports to COP11, from the questionnaire on the 4th Strategic Plan completed by many Contracting Parties and partners in 2014, and from feedback received during the Pre-COP regional consultations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe in October and November 2014.
21. **Preventing, stopping and reversing the loss and degradation of wetlands:** The largest changes in loss of wetlands continue to be from unsustainable agriculture, forestry and extractive industries, especially oil, gas and mining, the impacts of population growth (including migration and urbanization) and changes in land use that override environmental considerations. Addressing and engaging the drivers behind these pressures on wetlands is a condition for limiting, adapting to, and mitigating their impacts. Realization of this fact and its consideration in planning and decision-making requires that wetland resources and wetland ecosystem benefits are measured, valued and understood widely within societies.
22. **Science-based advice and guidance:** Enhancing the generation and delivery of science based advice and guidance to practitioners and policy makers through the STRP and CEPA processes.
23. **Climate change and wetlands:** The critical importance of wetlands for climate change mitigation and adaptation is understood.
24. **Information about ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature:** The services, benefits, values, functions, goods and products that wetlands provide have not yet been integrated in national development plans. The lack of recognition of the role of wetlands to be able to exercise fully the human right to water and poverty reduction, is an important factor in its reduction as well as in the modesty of the efforts invested in restoring wetlands. The integral values and benefits, both material or non-material for people and nature, in a non-consumptive approach include spiritual, existential and future-oriented values.
25. **Communicating ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature:** Mainstreaming wetland values and enhancing the visibility of the Convention through reaching out with effective communications to decision makers and the wider public. This should contribute to an enhanced understanding of the contribution of wetland values to people's livelihoods and health, economic development and biodiversity, soil and water.
26. **Enhancing cooperation:** Coordinating / participating in cooperation platforms¹⁴ (site level, city, river, lake and groundwater basins, national, regional and global levels), to promote mainstreaming of wetland values within water, soil and biodiversity management and public and private investments bringing together site and other managers, key private and public stakeholders.

¹³ Particular challenges and conditions are described for each region in the COP 11 Regional Overviews and in the responses to the Questionnaires to Contracting Parties and partners (see http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-strategicplansc47/main/ramsar/1-31-605_4000_0__

¹⁴ National Wetland Committees; biodiversity, water, regional bodies

27. **Implementing the Convention:** Improving compliance with Ramsar provisions concerning Ramsar Site updates, inventories of all wetlands and Wetlands of International Importance, maintenance of ecological character and management of sites, improving the ecological character where not good enough, especially on the Montreux Record, the preparation of management planning processes for all Ramsar Sites, and implementation of such management planning on the ground through the presence of staff, appropriate infrastructure and other resources.
28. **Identifying and designating wetlands as Ramsar Sites and transboundary Ramsar Sites,** based on national inventories to ensure their protection for the future and the inclusion of under-represented wetland types in the Ramsar Site network.
29. **Wise use of wetlands:** Wetlands that are providing local, basin-level, national, regional and global benefits, are well and actively managed to ensure that the ecological functions are maintained.
30. **Invasive alien species:** Acting to limit and eradicate invasive species in wetlands.
31. **Strengthen and support the full and effective participation** and the collective actions of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, for the existence of sustainable, comprehensive and wise use of wetlands.
32. **Synergies¹⁵:** Enhancing efforts to streamline procedures and processes including reporting and to facilitate data sharing amongst parties responsible for – or cooperating in – the implementation of this and other MEAs and related agreements. Through cooperation, aim to increase the identification of synergies with collaborating MEAs and other international processes at national and global levels.
33. **Financing:** Financing is needed to manage wetlands. The cost for non-action may be severe. Adequate financing is a particular challenge in many countries, especially developing countries.
34. **Basin perspective:** Analysing and expressing wetland functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature at river, lake and groundwater basin level, engaging with the stakeholders is necessary to recognize wetlands as part of a wider water cycle.

Implementing the 4th Strategic Plan

35. The 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 calls for actions to be undertaken by the Contracting Parties, supported by the Secretariat, the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the CEPA (Communications, Education, Participation and Awareness) network, and in collaboration with International Organization Partners (IOPs) and other international and intergovernmental organizations and MEAs.
36. Contracting Parties should implement the Strategic Plan at national and regional levels by developing national wetlands policies, strategies, action plans, projects and programmes or other appropriate ways to mobilize action and support for wetlands. This can be part of or supplement to the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan.

¹⁵ Annex 2 shows convergence between Ramsar Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets.

37. It is understood that the Contracting Parties differ substantially in their situations and in their ability to implement the Convention. Each Party is encouraged to establish its own priorities within the Strategic Plan, develop its own work plan for implementing them, and consider its own use of its own resources. This strategic plan should be implemented as a contribution to the other internationally agreed environmental goals and targets.
38. Contracting Parties are encouraged to synergize their efforts aimed at implementing the Convention with measures that they take to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention on Migratory Species, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and other regional and global MEAs as they deem appropriate.

Enabling Conditions for Implementation

39. The successful achievement of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan depends on the commitment and engagement of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders. Based on views expressed by Contracting Parties during the consultative process for the preparation of this Strategic Plan, a certain number of factors that will enable and facilitate implementation have been identified. Contracting Parties and Convention partners are urged to cooperate in the implementation of these measures.

Resource Mobilization

40. International and national funding sources committed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands have been facilitated through private, public, national and international resources from all sources including the Global Environmental Facility. Despite this development, the funds available are insufficient to achieve the full suite of goals and targets expressed in this plan. Effective mobilization of additional resources for wetland conservation and wise use, and for engaging with drivers of wetland degradation and loss, is required at local, national, regional and global levels. This mobilization can be achieved through the Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework and the efforts of Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and the Secretariat's Partnership Unit.

Outreach and Promotion of the 4th Strategic Plan

41. The Secretariat's activities in Communications will be enhanced, including CEPA (communications, education, participation and awareness raising), to enable the Convention to be better known and its mission more widely recognized, as well as increasing involvement of the target audience in wetlands issues. These efforts will support the CEPA Focal Points network and the outreach and promotion activities of Contracting Parties.

Partnerships

42. The wise use of wetlands and their resources will ultimately involve a range of actors well beyond those responsible for the management and maintenance of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands. This holds at local, national, regional and global levels where existing partnerships with Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and MEAs should be strengthened and new partnerships with civil society and the business sector forged in order to enhance Convention implementation and reverse the rates of loss and degradation of wetlands.

International Cooperation

43. The Ramsar Convention has put in place a series of arrangements for international cooperation in order to link Ramsar with global debates and processes related to sustainable development including water, livelihoods, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, resilience and carbon sinks. These relationships will be consolidated over the coming period.
- The Ramsar Convention is the lead partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has a responsibility to offer political, technical and scientific advice and guidance to the CBD and enhance cooperation between the two conventions at all levels.
 - The Parties to the Ramsar Convention have granted IOP status to six leading organizations (Birdlife International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) which are actively contributing in all the regions and on a regular basis to the further development of policies and tools of the Convention and their application at the national and local levels, particularly by assisting Contracting Parties to deliver conservation and wise use on the ground and meet their obligations under the Convention.
 - The Ramsar Convention participates in the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) bringing together the heads of the Secretariats of seven biodiversity-related conventions (the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals (CMS); the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
 - Memorandums of understanding and cooperation have been signed¹⁶ with 48 partners.

Regional and Bilateral Cooperation

44. Regional and bilateral cooperation should be strengthened to enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources. The Ramsar Regional Initiatives are effective mechanisms to promote and support regional and bilateral cooperation, capacity-building, technology and knowledge exchanges, wetland related information, communications and mobilization of financial resources for activities on the ground.
45. Further cooperation between Contracting Parties can be strengthened through the designation and joint management of Transboundary Ramsar Sites at river, lake and groundwater basin level, with the possible support, upon request, of the Ramsar Secretariat, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and IOPs as well as other Contracting Parties and international organizations.

Capacity Building

46. Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, IOPs and other partners need to address capacity-building needs of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders in a range of fields, including inventory, wetland management, wetland status monitoring and assessment, communications and promotion of wetlands and wetland values, scientific and technical knowledge and guidance, and knowledge and technology exchange.

¹⁶ The full list of the 48 memorandums of understanding / cooperation signed by the Convention can be found at http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-mous/main/ramsar/1-31-115_4000_0__

Languages

47. The use of additional languages by the Convention may constitute an important means for extending its reach and visibility in regions of the world where understanding of the work and value of the Convention is currently not well known.

Goals and Targets 2016 – 2024

The Goals of the 4th Strategic Plan have been formulated in recognition of the fact that a new approach is needed in order to change the negative direction of the trends described above.

These Goals constitute the four priority areas for the Ramsar Convention for the 2016 – 2024 period. They include three Strategic Goals and one Operational Goal which supports them.

The Table in Annex 1 presents more details about the goals, including the tools, lead actors, indicators, and baselines for the Goals and Targets outlined below.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation

The multiple human impacts on wetlands are growing. Influencing the drivers of wetland degradation and loss and the integration of the role of wetland values (monetary and non-monetary) into planning and decision-making requires the development of a methodology that enables wetland resources and ecosystem benefits to be assessed so that the multiple environmental functions and benefits are understood widely within societies. Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, Regional Initiatives and IOPs will enhance their engagement with relevant stakeholders in order to diminish threats, influence trends, restore wetlands and communicate good practices.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Target 1: | Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level |
| Target 2: | Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale <i>inter alia</i> at the basin level or along a coastal zone. |
| Target 3: | The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands. |
| Target 4: | Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment. |

Goal 2: Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network

Ramsar Sites constitute the largest network of officially recognized internationally important wetland areas in the world. This network constitutes the backbone of a larger network of wetlands.

Parties must commit themselves to efforts to protect and effectively manage the existing Ramsar Sites and enable the full and effective participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as to expanding the reach of the Convention by continuously working to add more sites and areas of wetlands recognized under the Convention.

Target 5: The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.

Target 6: There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.

Target 7: Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.

Goal 3: Wisely Using All Wetlands

The wise use of all wetlands requires that Parties ensure they are addressing wetlands beyond those currently included in the Ramsar Site network. This work may occur at the national, subnational, regional, and transboundary levels, including at basin level. Mainstreaming recognition of ecosystem functions, services and benefits into a wide range of sectors and with a broad array of actors will help ensure the success of this effort.

Target 8: National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.

Target 9: The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, *inter alia*, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.

Target 10: The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels.

Target 11: Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.

Target 12: Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Target 13: Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.

Operational Goal

Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation

It will be vital for the survival of wetlands and the success of the Convention for Parties to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan. Various approaches will help strengthen the implementation of the three Strategic Goals, and ultimately of the Convention itself. They involve critical actions to be undertaken by Contracting Parties themselves, and in partnership with other Parties and other entities, in particular with regard to scientific and technical advice and guidance, resource mobilization, public awareness, visibility and capacity building. The Ramsar Secretariat will also play a vital role in raising awareness and visibility of the Convention, as well as mobilizing resources to support enhanced implementation.

- Target 14: Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
- Target 15: Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.
- Target 16: Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.
- Target 17: Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.
- Target 18: International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.
- Target 19: Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The Table showing Goals, targets, tools, indicators and baseline in Annex 1 can be used as a basis for organizing the implementation of the Strategic Plan at national and other levels. Specific indicators are identified for each of the targets identified. These indicators will be monitored by Contracting Parties as appropriate.
2. The Standing Committee will keep the implementation of the Strategic Plan under review, based on regular reports from the Secretariat and the STRP, and based on National Reports prepared for each reporting cycle.
3. A review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 will be done and the modalities and scope for this review will be established at COP13, taking into account *inter alia* the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and coordination needs with regards to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
4. **Global Indicators:** A small, regionally representative expert group meeting back-to-back with the meeting of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in Switzerland in July 2015, including interested Contracting Parties, expert support from STRP, IOPs and other relevant MEAs and international processes will be constituted to develop options, for additional indicators for the Strategic Plan having regard in particular to:

- previous Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties related to indicators, including Resolution IX.1;
- the need for indicators to address outcomes and effectiveness and to be capable of practical implementation;
- the need to minimize cost of indicator implementation by using existing data and information flows, including through national reporting and reporting on Ramsar Sites.

Annex 1: Ramsar Goals and Targets with Relevant Tools, Actors, Baselines and Indicators

Strategic Goals				
Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation				
No	Targets	Tools, actions and resources (non-exhaustive)	Key Actors (non-exhaustive)	Indicator(s) and Baselines
1	Wetland benefits are featured in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level	<p>Engage with natural resource users at river, lake, groundwater basin and national level to integrate there the wetland contributions to water, biodiversity and sustainable development targets of the international community</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 2: National Wetland Policies [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-02.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory Skills [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/library/hbk4-07.pdf]</p>	Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, key sectors (water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure)	<p>Baseline</p> <p>19% of Parties have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (National Reports to COP12¹⁷).</p> <p>70% of Parties have included wetland issues within national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>47% of Contracting Parties have included wetland issues within National Policies or measures on agriculture. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have included wetland issues within national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have included wetland issues within National Policies or measures on agriculture. (Data source: National Reports).</p>

¹⁷ Information based on 131 National Reports received to COP 12.

2	Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.	<p>Understand the water requirements and river, lake groundwater basin of wetland ecosystem services, and engage with water users at site and river basin and national level to maintain / restore and evaluate necessary water allocations.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 8: Water-related guidance [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-08.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 9: River basin management [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-09.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 10: Water allocation and management [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-10.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 11: Managing groundwater [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-11.pdf]</p>	Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, productive sectors.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>70% of Parties have included wetland issues into national strategies and planning processes such as water resource management and water efficiency plans. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have included wetland issues into national strategies and in the planning processes such as for water resource management and water efficiency plans. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{% of Ramsar sites which have improved the sustainability of water use in the context of ecosystem requirements}</p>
3	The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.	<p>Engage with business sector/private sector.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 5: Partnerships [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-11.pdf]</p>	Contracting Parties, with support of Secretariat, IOPs, business/public/private sector.	<p>Baselines</p> <p>50% of Parties report actions taken to implement incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>37% of Parties report actions taken to remove perverse incentive</p>

		b/hbk4-05.pdf		<p>measures that discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>60% of Parties report private sector undertaking activities for the conservation, wise use and management of wetlands in general. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>% of Parties have national Ramsar Committees that include both governmental and non-governmental representation. (Data source: new question for National Reports).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties reporting actions taken to implement incentive measures that encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties reporting actions taken to remove perverse incentive measures that discourage conservation and wise use of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties reporting private sector undertaking activities for the conservation, wise use and management of wetlands in general. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties having national Ramsar Committees that include both governmental and non-governmental representation. (Data source: new question for National Reports).</p>
4	Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.	<p>Complete inventory for all sites.</p> <p>Prepare management response as appropriate (national policies or guidelines).</p> <p>Trends in invasive alien species.</p> <p>Red List Indicator.</p>	Contracting Parties (MEA; IGOs, World Conservation Monitoring Centre)	<p>Baselines</p> <p>36% of Parties have established national policies or guidelines on invasive species control and management. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>20% of Parties have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p>

				<p>% of Parties that have established or reviewed national policies or guidelines on invasive wetland species control and management. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties having a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Number of invasive species that are being controlled through management actions}</p> <p>{Effectiveness of wetland invasive alien species control programmes}</p>
Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network				
5	The ecological character of Ramsar Sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management	<p>Improved management of Ramsar sites and wetlands through managements plans and enhanced resources.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 16: Impact assessment [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-16.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 18: Managing wetlands [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-18.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 19: Addressing change in wetland ecological character [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/</p>	<p>Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IOPs.</p> <p>(Cross sectoral and Watershed Committees)</p>	<p>Baselines</p> <p>At COP12, 973 Ramsar Sites have implemented management plans. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented management plans. (Data source: new National Report question).</p> <p>27% of Parties have made assessments of effective management of Ramsar sites. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>43% (950 of Ramsar Sites have updated Ramsar Information Sheets. (Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented management plans. (Data source: National Report).</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites that have effective, implemented</p>

		default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-19.pdf		<p>management planning¹⁸. (Data source: new National Report question).</p> <p>% of Parties that have made assessments of effective management of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Ramsar Sites that have updated Ramsar Information Sheets. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Coverage of wetland dependent bird populations by designated Ramsar Sites. Indicator from Resolution IX.1 to be developed}.</p> <p>{Coverage of wetland dependent non-avian populations by designated Ramsar Sites. Indicator from Resolution IX.1 to be developed}.</p> <p>{% loss of IUCN Red Listed species from Ramsar Sites}</p>
6	There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and transboundary sites	<p>Update the list of Ramsar Sites with under-represented wetland types or transboundary sites.</p> <p>Wetlands inventories and other relevant national and international data sources for example the International Waterbirds Census.</p>	Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IOPs.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>By COP12, 2,186 Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>By COP12 2,085,000 ha of Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>By COP12 [16] transboundary Ramsar Sites have been designated. (Ramsar Secretariat).</p> <p>By COP12, Ramsar Sites have been designated for the following under-represented Ramsar Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems – [110 Sites] Coral reefs – [96 Sites] Wet grasslands – [517 Sites]

¹⁸ Actions for appropriate wetland management that are not necessarily in the context of a formal management plan – Resolution VIII.14

				<p>Peatlands – [564 Sites] Sea-grass beds – [249 Sites] Mangroves – [280 Sites] Temporary Pools – [729 Sites] Bivalve (shellfish) reefs – [99 Sites] (Ramsar Sites database, June 2015).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>Number of Ramsar sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>Total hectares of Ramsar sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>Number of transboundary Ramsar Sites that have been designated. (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites¹⁹ designated for the following under-represented wetland types: Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems – [XXX Sites] Coral reefs – [XXX Sites] Wet grasslands – [XXX Sites] Peatlands – [XXX Sites] Sea-grass beds – [XXX Sites] Mangroves – [XXX Sites] Temporary Pools – [XXX Sites] Bivalve (shellfish) reefs – [XXX Sites] (Data source: Ramsar Sites database).</p>
7	Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.	<p>Identification and implementation of measures to remove sites from Article 3.2 or Montreux Record.</p> <p>Ramsar Advisory missions.</p>	Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat	<p>Baseline</p> <p>At COP12, [47] Ramsar Sites (2.2%) are listed on the Montreux Record. (Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).</p>

¹⁹ Totals relate to number of sites containing the relevant habitat site: some sites may contain more than one habitat type and so be counted under each habitat

		<p>Ramsar Handbook 18: Managing wetlands [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-18.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 19: Addressing change in wetland ecological character [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-19.pdf]</p>		<p>21% of Parties have reported to the Ramsar Secretariat all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>[76] Ramsar Sites reported by Parties to the Ramsar Secretariat of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 COP12 Doc.7).</p> <p>16% of Parties have taken actions to address the issues for which Ramsar sites have been listed on the Montreux Record. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites removed from the Montreux Record. (Data source: Ramsar Site database).</p> <p>% of Parties reporting to the Ramsar Secretariat all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Sites reported by Parties to the Ramsar Secretariat of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites pursuant to Article 3.2. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have taken actions to address the issues for which Ramsar Sites have been listed on the Montreux Record. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Indicator(s) relating to (numbers of) Ramsar Sites at risk}</p>
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Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands				
8	National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.	<p>Remote sensing data on wetlands.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 13: Inventory, assessment and management http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-13.pdf</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 15: Wetland Inventory http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-15.pdf</p>	Contracting Parties, IOPs (Secretariat).	<p>Baselines</p> <p>At COP12, 47% of Parties have a complete national wetlands inventory. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>At COP13, [XX]% of Parties % of Parties have updated their national inventories in the last decade. (New question for National Reports).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have complete national wetland inventories. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have updated their national inventories in the last decade. (Data source: new question for National Reports).</p>
9	The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.	<p>Promoting wise use, integrated water resources management, and integration of wetlands in other sectoral policies, plans or strategies.</p> <p>Participatory platforms at wetland, river, lake, groundwater basin, national and other appropriate levels are joined or created to engage with concerned stakeholders.</p> <p>Wetland/ wetland related governance platforms at basin level are in place.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 1: Wise use of wetlands http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-01.pdf</p>	Contracting Parties, national and local stakeholders.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>55% of Parties have adopted wetland policies or equivalent instruments that promote the wise use of their wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>71% of Parties consider wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basin. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have adopted wetland policies or equivalent instruments that promote the wise use of their wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that consider wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basin. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p>

		<p>Ramsar Handbook 9: River basin management [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-09.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 12: Coastal management [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-12.pdf]</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 16: Impact assessment [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-16.pdf]</p>		{Involvement of stakeholders in various aspects of wetland and/or basin-scale management}
10	The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.	<p>Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory skills [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-07.pdf]</p>	Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Initiatives, Regional Centres, wetland managers and users, MEAs.	<p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Possible use or further development of indicator(s) linked to work currently being undertaken to develop indicator(s) for related Aichi Target 18 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity}.</p>
11	Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented	Promoting wise use, integrated water resources management, and integration of wetlands in	Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat, IPBES, IOPs.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>19% of Parties have made assessment of ecosystem services of</p>

	and disseminated.	<p>other sectoral policies, plans or strategies.</p> <p>TEEB report, assessment of ecosystems services.</p> <p>Implementation of programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 6: Wetland CEPA [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-06.pdf]</p>		<p>Ramsar sites. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>39% of Parties have incorporated wetlands issues into poverty eradication strategies. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>42% of Parties have implemented programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have made assessment of ecosystem services of Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have incorporated wetlands issues into poverty eradication strategies. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have implemented programmes or projects that contribute to poverty alleviation objectives or food and water security plans. (Data source: National Reports).</p>
12	Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation	Restoration initiatives taken, projects, programmes implemented.	Contracting Parties, IOPs (STRP; Secretariat).	<p>Baseline</p> <p>68% of Parties have identified priority sites for restoration. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>70% of Parties have implemented restoration or rehabilitation programmes. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Parties that have established restoration plans [or activities] for sites. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have implemented effective restoration or rehabilitation projects. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Outcome-based indicators(s) related to (extent of) wetland</p>

				restoration possibly including remote sensing as appropriate}.
13	Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods			<p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Indicators related to the relevant sectors especially using or linking to relevant Aichi Target indicators and other relevant international processes}.</p>
Operational Goal				
Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation				
14	Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language	STRP leads with support from Secretariat in producing guidance.	STRP	<p>Baseline</p> <p>In 2015, [543] 'hits' on scientific and technical guidance pages of the Ramsar web-site. (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015).</p> <p>In 2015, [60] 'hits' on STRP briefing notes from the Ramsar web-site. (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015)).</p> <p>In 2015, [176] 'hits' of relevant Ramsar Handbooks downloaded from the Ramsar web-site (Data source: Google Analytics Ramsar web-site, May-June, 2015)</p> <p>In 2015, [150] practical tools and guidance documents for wetland conservation and wise use, and other key scientific documentation, which has been developed by either STRP, Parties and others, and is available via the Ramsar website. (Data source: Ramsar web-site).</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Number of 'hits' on scientific and technical guidance pages of the Ramsar web-site and associated subtotals by country and Ramsar</p>

				<p>Region of the source of these hits. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).</p> <p>Number of STRP briefing papers downloaded from the Ramsar web-site and subtotals by country and Ramsar Region of the source of these downloads. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).</p> <p>Number of relevant Ramsar Handbooks downloaded from the Ramsar web-site and subtotals by country and Ramsar Region of the source of these downloads. (Data source: Ramsar web-site analytics).</p> <p>Number of practical tools and guidance documents for wetland conservation and wise use, and other key scientific documentation, which has been developed by either STRP, Parties and others, and is available via the Ramsar website. (Data source: Ramsar web-site).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Indicator(s) related to the use of guidance and availability in various language versions}.</p>
15	Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.			<p>Baselines</p> <p>By COP12, [15] Regional Initiatives are in operation under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. (Ramsar Secretariat).</p> <p>68% of Parties have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>Number of Regional Initiatives successfully implemented. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (Data source: National Reports).</p>

16	Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.	<p>The Secretariat's CEPA programme will deliver high profile media and public awareness placements and programs to raise the convention's image.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 6: Wetland CEPA [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/hbk4-06.pdf]</p>	Contracting Parties with support from Secretariat and IOPs	<p>Baselines</p> <p><i>World Wetland Day</i> 89% of Parties have branded Word Wetlands Day activities. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>In 2015 884 World Wetland Day activities or events reported to the Secretariat. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat CEPA program)</p> <p>In 2015, [379] internet references (in the press) to World Wetland Day activities. (Data source: Meltwater internet analysis).</p> <p>In 2015, [58, 566] individual visits to the World Wetlands Day website. {Data source: worldwetlandsday.org website }.</p> <p>In 2015 Social media links to World Wetland Day: 16,135,974 people reached in FaceBook . (Data source: https://www.facebook.com/RamsarConventionOnWetlands) .</p> <p>795 views of WWD message from Youtube channel (Data source Ramsar Youtube Channel https://www.youtube.com/user/RamsarConvention)</p> <p>292,100 reached in Twitter (Data source https://twitter.com/RamsarConv)</p> <p><i>CEPA programmes</i> 80% of Parties with a) a governmental CEPA National Focal Point and 69% of Parties with b) a non-governmental National Focal Point. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat Data Base and National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>27% of Parties have established national action plans for wetland CEPA. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p><i>Visitor centres</i> By COP12, 636 centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established in Ramsar sites.</p>
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				<p>(National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>By COP12, 309 centres established at other wetlands. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p><i>World Wetland Day</i></p> <p>% of Parties that have branded World Wetlands Day activities. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Number of World Wetland Day activities or events reported to the Secretariat. (Data source: Ramsar CEPA program).</p> <p>Number of internet references to World Wetland Day activities. {Data source: internet analysis}.</p> <p>Number of internet references to the Ramsar Convention. {Data source: internet analysis}.</p> <p>Number of social media links to World Wetland Day. {Data source: social media analysis}.</p> <p><i>CEPA programmes</i></p> <p>% of Parties with a) a governmental CEPA National Focal Point and b) a non-governmental National Focal Point (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have established national action plans for wetland CEPA. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p><i>Visitor centres</i></p> <p>Number of centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) have been established in Ramsar Sites. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Number of centres at other wetlands. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p>
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				{Indicator(s) related to whether and how wetland conservation and wise-use issues are included formal education programmes}.
17	Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available	The Secretariat's Partnership team will raise non-core funds to fund priority convention activities.	Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, development assistance agencies.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>21% of Contracting Parties have provided additional financial support through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>40% of Contracting Parties have received funding support from development assistance agencies for national wetlands conservation and management. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>% of Contracting Parties that have provided additional financial support through voluntary contributions to non-core funded Convention activities. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>% of Parties that have received funding support from development assistance agencies for national wetlands conservation and management. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>Possible further indicators that may be developed</p> <p>{Indicator(s) related to flows of financing related to different aspects of Strategic Plan implementation}.</p>
18	International cooperation is strengthened at all levels	<p>Regional Initiatives, multilateral and bilateral agreements, Memorandums of Understanding.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 5: Partnerships [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-05.pdf]</p>	Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Centres, MEAs.	<p>Baselines</p> <p><i>Regional Initiatives</i> By COP12, [15] Regional Initiatives are in operation under the framework of the Ramsar Convention. (Ramsar Secretariat).</p> <p>68% of Parties have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).</p>

			<p>Ramsar Handbook 20: International co-operation [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-20.pdf]</p>	<p><i>Other aspects of co-operation</i> 35% of Parties have established networks including twinning arrangements nationally or internationally for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>33% of Parties have effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example in shared river basins and coastal zones). (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>[XX]% of Parties have co-ordination mechanisms for the implementation of MEAs existing at a national level. (Data source: new question for National Reports).</p> <p>At COP12, 168 Parties have acceded to the Ramsar Convention. (Report of the Secretary General to COP12 on the implementation of the Convention, COP12Doc8).</p> <p>At COP12, [16] transboundary Ramsar Sites. (Data source: Ramsar Secretariat).</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p><i>Regional Initiatives</i> Number of Regional Initiatives successfully implemented. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have been involved in the development and implementation of a Regional Initiative under the framework of the Convention. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p><i>Other aspects of co-operation</i> % of Parties that have established networks including twinning arrangements nationally or internationally for knowledge sharing and training for wetlands that share common features. (Data source: National Reports).</p> <p>% of Parties that have effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example in shared river basins and coastal zones). (Data source: National Reports).</p>
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				<p>% of Parties where co-ordination mechanisms for the implementation of MEAs exist at a national level. (Data source: new question for National Reports).</p> <p>Number of Parties which have acceded to the Ramsar Convention. (Data Source: National Reports).</p> <p>Total number of transboundary Ramsar Sites. (Data source: Ramsar Sites Database).</p>
19	Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.	<p>Projects, programmes and events that promote wise use of wetlands with the active involvement of wetland managers and users.</p> <p>CEPA plans, World Wetlands Day, training courses.</p> <p>Ramsar Handbook 7: Participatory skills [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-07.pdf]</p>	Ramsar Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs, Regional Initiatives, Regional Centres, wetland managers and users, MEAs.	<p>Baseline</p> <p>20% of Parties have made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>% of Parties that have made an assessment of national and local training needs for the implementation of the Convention. (National Reports to COP12).</p>

Annex 2: Synergies between CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Ramsar Targets

Ramsar Goals and Targets 2016 - 2024			Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2010 - 2020
<i>Ramsar Strategic Goals</i>			
Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation		Aichi Target # 5	By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
Target 1	Wetlands benefits are features in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level	Aichi Target # 2	By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.
Target 2	Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.	Aichi Target # 7	By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
		Aichi Target # 8	By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.
Target 3	The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.	Aichi Target # 4	By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.
		Aichi Target # 3	By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.
		Aichi Target # 7	same as above
		Aichi Target # 8	same as above
Target 4	Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.	Aichi Target # 9	By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network		Aichi Target # 11	same as above
Target 5	The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management	Aichi Target # 11	By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
		Aichi Target # 12	By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.
		Aichi Target # 6	By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
Target 6	There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network in particular underrepresented types of wetlands including in underrepresented ecoregions and transboundary sites	Aichi Target # 11	same as above
		Aichi Target # 10	By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.
Target 7	Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.	Aichi Target # 12	Same as above
		Aichi Target # 5	By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
		Aichi Target # 7	same as above
		Aichi Target # 11	same as above

Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands			
Target 8	National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.	Aichi Target # 14	same as above
		Aichi Target # 18	By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.
		Aichi Target # 19	By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.
		Aichi Target # 12	same as above
Target 9	The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, <i>inter alia</i> , within a river basin or along a coastal zone.	Aichi Target # 4	same as above
		Aichi Target # 6	By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
		Aichi Target # 7	same as above
Target 10	The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.	Aichi Target # 18	By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.
Target 11	Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.	Aichi Target # 13	By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic

			erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.
		Aichi Target # 1	By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps taken to conserve and use it sustainably.
		Aichi Target # 2	same as above
		Aichi Target # 14	By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.
Target 12	Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation	Aichi Target # 15	By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.
		Aichi Target # 14	same as above
Target 13	Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries fisheries, agriculture and ecotourism practices when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods	Aichi Target # 6	By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
		Aichi Target # 7	By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
Operational Goal			
Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation			
Target 14	Scientific and technical guidance at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language	Aichi Target # 19	same as above
Target 15	Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.		
Target 16	Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.	Aichi Target # 1	same as above

		Aichi Target # 18	same as above
Target 17	Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available	Aichi Target # 20	By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.
Target 18	International cooperation is strengthened at all levels		
Target 19	Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.	Aichi Target # 17	By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.
		Aichi Target # 1	same as above



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.3

Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

1. RECALLING that Resolution XI.1 in paragraphs 17 and 18 instructed the Standing Committee and Contracting Parties to develop strategies that explore the accommodation of UN languages into the Convention, the elevation of the Convention's visibility and stature, including *inter alia* through enhancing high-level political engagement in its work at national, regional, and global levels, the enhancement of synergies with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other international entities including through regional initiatives, and the increased involvement in the initiatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
2. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution XI.1 called for the establishment of a working group to develop such strategies and report on its progress to each Standing Committee meeting including any implications such as financial ones and recommendations, and also requested that the Standing Committee submit a report including its recommendations to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12);
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the reports of the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee on the above matters and EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the significant work carried out during the triennium;
4. APPRECIATING the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group in ensuring that the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan presents strategies on these issues for Parties' consideration;
5. NOTING the interest of all Parties in enhancing the visibility and stature of the Ramsar Convention and increasing synergies with other MEAs and with UNEP, and in supporting the development and implementation of the Convention, including *inter alia* by potentially introducing other official UN languages into its operations;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING that the accommodation of additional languages into the daily work of the Convention could foster the engagement of more Contracting Parties to the Convention;
7. NOTING the expressed interest in accession to the Ramsar Convention by a growing number of Arabic-speaking countries and the increasing interest in implementation of the Convention by Arabic-speaking Contracting Parties;
8. APPRECIATING the range of distinct wetland types such as wadis, sabkhas and oases in Arabic-speaking countries and their under-representation among Ramsar Sites in the network, and the presence of organizations and individuals in the region with expertise in the conservation and

wise use of wetlands, whose contribution would be beneficial to the further implementation of the Convention;

9. UNDERSTANDING the range of pressing wetland issues in Arabic-speaking and other countries, in light of the increasing demand from the region's growing population and changes in water availability due to changing rainfall, unsustainable use patterns, and climate changes;
10. RECALLING that the Standing Committee in Decision SC47-07 instructed the Secretariat to prepare a draft text for a Resolution in response to Resolution XI.1 for its consideration at the 48th Meeting of the Standing Committee, addressing accommodation of the Arabic language into the Convention, to be supported by an analysis of legal considerations in relation to the Convention text as well as existing COP Resolutions and the Rules of Procedure, and options for a phased introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources;
11. APPRECIATING the results achieved by the Standing Committee in addressing the longstanding differences in treatment of the three official Convention languages;
12. WELCOMING the Secretariat's progress in preparing a memorandum of understanding with UNEP to enhance collaboration on areas of common interest;
13. NOTING the project undertaken by UNEP "Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies" and its results through *inter alia* the source book;
14. ACKNOWLEDGING existing efforts to establish synergies with other MEAs, *inter alia*, Resolution 5.19 *Encouragement of further joint implementation of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)*;
15. WELCOMING Decision XII/6 by the 12th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to hold workshops to explore ways for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies and improve efficiency among them, without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources of these conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels;
16. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the quality of the cooperation between the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Secretariat as part of the Ramsar-IUCN Task Force, and progress which they have together made in enhancing support to the operations of the Secretariat and thus the implementation of the Convention;
17. NOTING that one possible way to increase the global, regional, and national profiles of the Ramsar Convention could be the establishment of a high level ministerial segment at the COP addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the COP and with a more general approach towards synergies with other biodiversity related MEAs;
18. RECOGNIZING that wetlands related activities could occur in transboundary as well as municipal areas, Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the Conference of the Parties are also invited to consider including transboundary cooperation as well as "Cities and Wetlands" round tables and/or summits in support of the implementation of wetland conservation activities;

19. RECOGNIZING the role of communities in the wise use of wetlands and the reliance of such communities, particularly in developing countries, on wetlands' natural resources, and the importance of conservation activities and sustainable management undertaken by such communities, URGES Parties to take account of, and where appropriate incorporate traditional and ancestral knowledge, available in their respective countries in implementing the Strategic Plan and encouraging the active participation of such communities in the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands;
20. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention is a biodiversity-related and water-related convention which contributes to the implementation of sustainable development through the wise use of wetlands;
21. RECOGNIZING the ongoing process under the United Nations General Assembly regarding the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals;
22. ANTICIPATING that some of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and their targets, if and when adopted, may be directly relevant to wetlands;
23. RECALLING that a number of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) played a significant role in the inception of the Convention, and AWARE that these and an increasing number of other INGOs and intergovernmental organizations are contributing to, or have the potential to contribute to, the development and implementation of the Convention's mission at local, national and global scales;
24. ALSO RECALLING that in Resolution VII.3 *Partnerships with International Organizations*, the Contracting Parties established rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention, and conferred this status on BirdLife International, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Wetlands International, and WWF, and that in Resolution IX.16, the Parties recognized the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) as the fifth International Organization Partner; and
25. NOTING that the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) has applied for International Organization Partner status and meets the criteria established by the rules in Resolution VII.3;

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Concerning accommodation of UN languages:

26. REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop a strategy to be presented at SC51 and REQUESTS the Standing Committee to monitor progress and advise as necessary, subject to the availability of resources, outlining the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention, which:
 - a. Classifies the language needs of the Convention according to the short-, medium- and long-term work of the Convention;
 - b. Identifies barriers to effective translation, publishing and interpreting of the three official languages of the Convention, and actions needed to overcome them including identification of additional resource needs and sources to accommodate inclusion of additional languages;

- c. Proposes ways forward to engage relevant Contracting Parties in finding a step by step integration and financing of translations at meetings, of meeting documents and as appropriate of important Ramsar information documents into additional languages;
 - d. Proposes a potential timeline for phased integration of procedural changes, key indicators, and milestones for any UN languages added;
 - e. Prepare a draft text for a Resolution addressing accommodation of the Arabic Language into the Convention, outlining in detail the financial implications, including any implications for the core budget, of further phased integration of existing Convention languages in line with the scale of existing resources, and options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention subject to the availability of resources;
27. RECOGNIZES that a phased approach would be needed to integrate any new language into the Convention as an “official” and “working” language, with a related need for identification of sources for gradual increase in extra-budgetary funding, capacity and outputs and address potential resulting impacts on funding for other budgetary items in order to accommodate any new language(s);
28. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee, through the Management Working Group, to monitor the progress made in the drafting of the strategy pertaining to a phased approach to language integration, including efforts to fully integrate Spanish and French into the work of the Convention, in accordance with COP decisions;
29. ALSO REQUESTS the Standing Committee to submit a report and its recommendations to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, containing the strategy with a view to address accommodation of the Arabic language into the Convention supported by a financial mechanism and options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention subject to the availability of resources;
30. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to provide translation of the most important Ramsar information documents into their own official languages and to make the translation publicly accessible on the Ramsar website;
31. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, with the assistance of Contracting Parties and Regional Centres and guided by the Management Working Group, to build up an online library of official and non-official government translated Ramsar documents to be publicly accessible, and report the status of progress to COP13, and REQUESTS Parties to provide such documents to the Secretariat;

Concerning visibility and stature, and increasing synergies:

32. INVITES all Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the COP to consider including a high-level ministerial segment during the Conference addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the COP as a possible means to improve the visibility, political support and impact of the Convention, and taking into account other possible events in the concurrent international biodiversity agenda in order to enhance cooperation and collaboration with other biodiversity related MEAs;

33. REQUESTS the Secretariat to consult MEAs about their experiences in hosting high-level ministerial segments, so as to identify possible ways to utilize such opportunities to improve the visibility, political support and impact of the Convention;
34. INVITES Parties to work to raise the visibility of the Convention at the national, local, sub-national, and regional levels, *inter alia* through inviting ministers for roundtables or at conferences as keynote speakers;
35. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to explore other means to increase the visibility of the Convention;

Concerning improvement of synergies:

36. TAKES NOTE OF the recommendations in the UNEP report “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” and its results, through *inter alia* the Sourcebook, to promote synergies within the cluster of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements;
37. ENCOURAGES all Ramsar National Focal Points to increase their efforts to coordinate with their national counterpart Focal Points of other Conventions and relevant international agreements, and with all wetland practitioners including Ramsar Site managers, to inform them of Ramsar activities and learn from them about processes and issues of common interest;
38. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to activate and develop networking mechanisms, such as Ramsar National Wetlands Committees, to ensure collaboration with national ministries, departments and agencies, and global and regional bodies including UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and other Regional Economic Commissions of the UN, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF) and World Bank, to enhance the wise use of wetlands;
39. REQUESTS Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to continue to implement the Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (Resolution VII.19);
40. URGES Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and global and regional partners to continue supporting Ramsar Regional Initiatives and applying the Operational Guidelines 2016-2018 for regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands (approved through Resolution XII.8 *Regional initiatives 2016-2018 in the framework of the Ramsar Convention*) to foster increased national- and regional-level political engagement and implementation of the Convention;
41. REQUESTS the Secretary General to report to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the opportunities for the Convention to further strengthen its contribution to the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, as they relate to wetlands;
42. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to report annually on progress on implementing Resolution XI.6 on *Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions* to the Standing Committee;

43. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue working to strengthen collaboration with IUCN World Heritage Outlook, UNEP, UNEP-GRID, UNDP, UNESCO, Regional Economic Commissions of the UN, the World Bank, WHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), FAO, GEF, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and others, and report on progress to the Standing Committee and the Contracting Parties on a regular basis;
44. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its work with the Biodiversity Liaison Group to enhance coherence and cooperation and to continue efforts to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication at all relevant levels among the biodiversity-related conventions, including:
 - a. To increase cooperation, coordination and attention to synergies in the exploration of reporting systems, including future online reporting systems and indicators, as a means to increase synergies in national reporting under the biodiversity-related conventions;
 - b. To consider ways and means to increase cooperation on outreach and communication strategies;
 - c. Options for enhanced cooperation with regard to work on cross-cutting issues;
45. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with UNEP on the implementation of their memorandum of cooperation and report to the Standing Committee on the progress of the activities concerned;
46. REQUESTS the Secretary General and the Standing Committee to facilitate the selection of the representatives to participate in the workshops led by the biodiversity convention exploring synergies among the conventions;
47. REQUESTS that the Secretariat, under the Joint Work Plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention, continue their cooperative partnership to promote awareness of, and capacity-building for, ecosystem-based solutions for water management as a contribution to sustainable development in line with CBD Decision XI/23, and consider the possibility of supporting the organization of a side event about the Ramsar Convention at the next COP of the CBD;
48. REQUESTS the Secretariat and STRP to continue the cooperation with IPBES both on requests from Ramsar to IPBES and the use of the outcomes from IPBES in the work of the Convention.
49. REQUESTS the STRP assisted by the Secretariat to establish guidelines for formulation, approval and transmission of requests from Ramsar to IPBES and submit this to the next Conference of the Contracting Parties for adoption, as requested by COP11 in XI.6;
50. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to implement the Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands (Resolution IX.1 Annex A) the Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance (Resolution IX.1 Annex C) and Resolution XI.21 *Wetlands and sustainable development*, and INVITES the Convention's partners and other interested stakeholders to support implementation of these resolutions as well;
51. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to contribute to implementing the CBD's Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to indicate as appropriate, through their national reports, how the actions they undertake for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention contribute to achievement of the Aichi Targets;

52. REQUESTS the STRP, in collaboration with relevant partners, to explore how it might contribute on wetland issues to any eventual monitoring and indicator framework for relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets;
53. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to estimate the costs of options for working with relevant partners (e.g., UNEP-GRID) and for strengthening Parties' access to such data and monitoring tools;
54. ENCOURAGES Parties and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to integrate wetland management plans into integrated water resources management plans and efficiency plans at basin level, as well as into spatial planning/land-use plans;
55. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the Parties and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to communicate on the values of ecosystem services of wetlands in other sectors' strategies, plans and regulations, and integrate them into a basin approach to land-use plans and other relevant local, national and global decisions;
56. NOTES the references to wetlands contained in the proposals of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and URGES Contracting Parties to include, under their own national targets, priorities for management and restoration of wetlands in line with sustainable development;
57. RECOGNIZES the collaboration between the Secretariat and IUCN and the progress made to evaluate the work already achieved, and URGES the Secretariat to update all agreements and guidelines with IUCN in cooperation with the Management Working Group and in line with Resolution IX.24 on improving management of the Ramsar Convention; and ENCOURAGES them to collaborate further to continue to enhance the implementation of the Convention;
58. REQUESTS, in order to facilitate further collaboration between the Secretariat and IUCN, the Standing Committee to establish at its 50th meeting a mechanism of the Contracting Parties with balanced regional participation that will, taking into account the needs of the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat, facilitate discussions between the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN, in order to seek ways of improving the current operations of the Secretariat and enhancing the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, and to provide the Standing Committee with a report on these discussions at its 51st meeting and at each Standing Committee meeting thereafter; and
59. APPROVES the status of International Organization Partner for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.4

The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention

1. RECOGNIZING the value of keeping under periodic review the terms of Resolution XI.19 (2012) so as to ensure that the work of the Standing Committee continues to be delivered in as effective and cost-efficient a manner as possible;
2. RECALLING that Resolution IX.24 (2005) established a Management Working Group reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties and that Resolution X.4 (2008) also established a Transition Committee of the Management Working Group;
3. RECOGNIZING that aspects of the work of these groups are also embodied in the roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee itself;
4. AWARE of the intersessional Standing Committee oversight of the Secretariat, which is now conducted on its behalf between meetings of the Standing Committee by its Executive Team (Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of Subgroup on Finance) with the Secretary General; and
5. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the members of the Management Working Group for their work;

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6. EXPRESSES its gratitude to the coming Chair and members of the Standing Committee for their support and willingness to take upon them the responsibility to govern the activities and the implementations of the Convention for the coming triennium;
7. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to focus on the decisions of the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and all preceding COP decisions by:
 - a. Strengthening transparency within the work of the Convention to enhance sharing information and communication as well as facilitating the evolution of decisions, guidance and implementation of the Convention in cooperation with Parties, IOPs and stakeholders;
 - b. Improving existing management instruments between IUCN, the Standing Committee and the Secretary General to facilitate that the Secretariat effectively serves the Contracting Parties in their activities and implementation through clear, effective and understandable rules and procedures as a follow up to a Standing Committee 48 decision *"to initiate a process led by the Management Working Group to review agreements, policies, guidelines and other mechanisms that regulate the relations between and the*

division of responsibilities between the Standing Committee, the Executive Team, the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Secretary General and IUCN, including in relation to managing the Secretariat including staff management”;

- c. Developing and immediately implementing a system of reports – the first being sent by 15 September 2015, and whose frequency will be established by the Executive Team – from the Secretary General to the Executive Team, IUCN General Director and interested Standing Committee members and Observer Parties, containing information on the progress of work of the Secretariat with focus on the main priorities adopted by the COP, the Secretariats’ travelling and meetings etc., as well as the status of the core and non-core budget, and including an overview of the staff and consultancy contracts;
 - d. Overseeing the preparation of the 13th Conference of the Parties between the next host country of the Conference of Parties in 2018 and the Secretariat;
 - e. Guiding the Secretariat’s activities including its fundraising to implement the Strategic Plan, the STRP activities and the CEPA action plan, Ramsar Advisory Missions and other approved non-core budget activities;
 - f. Guiding the Secretariat’s efforts in improving the Ramsar website and related services and the use of the RSIS database;
 - g. Responding to the request from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to provide elements of advice, as appropriate, concerning the funding that may be referred to the Global Environment Facility through the CBD Conference of the Parties, and to oversee that the Secretary General transmits this advice in a timely manner to the Executive Secretary of the CBD; and
 - h. Guiding the Secretary General’s development of the strategy outlining the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention;
8. REQUESTS the Secretary General to develop a work plan based on these COP12 decisions to be submitted to the Standing Committee before the end of October 2015 and presented by the Secretary General at the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee for its consideration;
 9. DECIDES that the current Executive Team (Romania, South Africa, and Canada) continue its tenure and continue to oversee the completion of the 360 degree evaluation process of the Secretary General and inform the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation to the Transition Committee of the Management Working Group (established under Resolution X.4) by 15 September 2015; and further REQUESTS the incoming Executive Team to explore the means of implementing the recommendations stemming from the 360 degree in advance of the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee and report on the findings, recommendations and their implementation at that meeting;
 10. DECIDES that the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee is to be held before the end of 2015 and REQUESTS that the Standing Committee develops a preliminary schedule for Standing Committee meetings for the coming triennium;
 11. ADOPTS the text in Annexes 1-4, based upon amendments that update Resolution XI.19 (2012) on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and its appended list of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties belonging to the six

Ramsar regional groups; and

12. CONFIRMS that this updated text and its annexes supersede those adopted as Resolution XI.19, which is replaced by the present Resolution.

Annex 1

The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. Considering that it is useful for the effective functioning of the Ramsar Convention that Contracting Parties should have a clear process for the operation of its Standing Committee, in Resolution VII.1 (1999) the Conference of the Contracting Parties adopted guidelines on the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the Standing Committee and the regional categorization of countries under the Convention. In Resolution XI.19 (2012), the Parties amended that text and the list of countries and Contracting Parties assigned to each of the six Ramsar regions in order to bring them up to date.
2. The Ramsar Convention will have the following regional groups:
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Oceania
 - Europe
 - Latin America and the Caribbean
 - North America
3. Contracting Parties and those countries that are eligible to join the Convention are assigned to the above regional groups, but those Contracting Parties which are geographically near to the boundaries of the allocated region, as given in Annex 2, can at their own request, based on the existence of similar natural conditions, participate within a neighbouring alternative region, while remaining a member of their geographical region, upon formal notification of this intent to the COP.¹
4. The composition of the Standing Committee will be determined by means of a proportional system, by which each regional group in paragraph 2 above will be represented by voting members in the Standing Committee according to the following criteria:
 - a. one representative for regional groups with 1 to 12 Contracting Parties;
 - b. two representatives for regional groups with 13 to 24 Contracting Parties;
 - c. three representatives for regional groups with 25 to 36 Contracting Parties;
 - d. four representatives for regional groups with 37 to 48 Contracting Parties; and
 - e. five representatives for regional groups with 49 to 60 Contracting Parties.
5. Each region can decide to appoint an Alternate Member or Members pro rata with their appointed Members with full power to represent the region, if the representative member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Standing Committee.
6. The host countries of the most recent and the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) are also voting members of the Standing Committee.
7. The regional representatives and their alternate Party representatives will be elected by the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the basis of nominations received from the regional

¹ See resolution XI.19. "Participate" is defined in this context as different from membership within the alternative region. Participation confers to the state the right to be present in meetings, to speak, to exchange information, to submit reports, to cooperate on a scientific and practical level, and to contribute to joint projects. It does not include the right to be a representative of this alternative region nor to participate in the nomination of its representative(s). It does not confer the right to vote within the alternative region.

groups established in paragraph 2 above. Initial consideration of nominations by regional groups will be undertaken at any intersessional regional COP preparatory meetings which may take place, and finalization of nominations will be made by regional groups in their regional meetings at the COP venue immediately prior to the opening of the COP, so that appointments of the new members of the Standing Committee can be made as early as possible in the COP proceedings, thus permitting the members of the new Committee to participate in Conference Bureau meetings during the COP.

8. The terms of office of the regional representatives will commence at the close of the meeting of the COP at which they have been elected and will expire at the close of the next ordinary meeting of the COP, and each Contracting Party may serve on the Standing Committee for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
9. Contracting Parties that are voting members of the Standing Committee will convey to the Secretariat, through their diplomatic channels, the name of the officer(s) in the designated national Ramsar Administrative Authority who act as their delegates on the Standing Committee, as well as the name of their substitutes, should they be needed.
10. The Contracting Party acting as host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat will continue to have the status of permanent observer in the Standing Committee. If the host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat stands for, and is elected as, a member of the Standing Committee representing its regional group, it will have voting status for that triennium in lieu of its permanent observer status.
11. The Secretariat will continue to notify all Contracting Parties of the date and agenda of meetings of the Standing Committee at least three months in advance of each meeting, so that they may, as appropriate, make arrangements to be represented at the meeting as observers.
12. Countries that are not Contracting Parties but have expressed an interest in joining the Convention may also be admitted as observers at meetings of the Standing Committee.
13. The Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel will be invited as an observer to Standing Committee meetings, as well as other experts and/or institutions that the Standing Committee may deem appropriate for assisting in its consideration of particular agenda items.
14. International organizations which are official International Organization Partners in the work of the Convention will be invited to participate as observers in meetings of the Standing Committee.
15. If an extraordinary meeting of the COP is held between two ordinary meetings, the host country will participate as an observer in the work of the Committee on matters related to the organization of the meeting, provided that the country in question is not already present in the Committee as a member or permanent observer.
16. The Contracting Parties in regional groups with one representative in the Standing Committee will use a rotation system for the nomination of the regional representative, and in regional groups with two or more representatives the selection will be made in such a manner as to achieve a balance in relation to biogeographical, geopolitical, and cultural considerations.
17. At its first meeting immediately after the close of the COP the Standing Committee will elect

its Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the members and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance established by Resolution VI.17 (1996).

18. The Standing Committee will meet normally once each year, normally at the seat of the Convention Secretariat, according to the indicative schedule provided as the Annex 4 to this Resolution. A further meeting of the Subgroups on COP and Finance may be envisaged during the year before COP, if required and if sufficient funds are available, in order to ensure the timely and efficient preparation of the COP. The costs of participation of Committee members eligible for sponsorship will be borne by the Convention.
19. Within the policies agreed by the Conference of the Parties, the functions of the Standing Committee will be to:
 - a. carry out, between one ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next, such interim activity on behalf of the Conference as may be necessary, giving priority to matters on which the Conference has previously recorded its approval and noting that the Standing Committee is not mandated either to take decisions that would normally be taken by the Conference of the Contracting Parties or to amend any decision taken by the Conference of the Parties;
 - b. make preparations on issues, including *inter alia* draft Resolutions and Recommendations, for consideration at the next COP;
 - c. supervise, as a representative of the Conference of the Parties, the implementation of activities by the Secretariat, the execution of the Secretariat's budget, and conduct of the Secretariat's programmes;
 - d. provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention, on the preparation of meetings, and on any other matters relating to the exercise of its functions brought to it by the Secretariat;
 - e. act as Conference Bureau at COPs in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
 - f. establish subgroups as necessary to facilitate the carrying out of its functions;
 - g. promote regional and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
 - h. approve the work plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) on the basis of the decisions of the COP, receive the reports of the STRP on the progress made with its implementation, and provide guidance for its future development;
 - i. adopt for each triennium the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use and decide on the allocation of funds;
 - j. review each triennium the criteria for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award established by Resolution VI.18 and select the laureates; and
 - k. report to the COP on the activities it has carried out between ordinary meetings of the Conference.

20. The tasks of the Regional Representatives elected to serve in the Standing Committee will be those contained in Annex 3 of this document.
21. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, shall take into consideration, within available resources, the need of having interpretation for its Subgroup meetings when it is requested by its members.
22. The Contracting Parties and the Secretariat will endeavour to secure additional voluntary funding to enable simultaneous interpretation at meetings of the Subgroup on Finance and Subgroup on COP.
23. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, will be governed, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference (see COP12 DOC.3).

Annex 2

Allocation of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties to the six Ramsar regional groups

NOTE: Names of countries in capital and bold letters denote Contracting Parties to the Convention at the time of approval of this Resolution.

AFRICA

ALGERIA

Angola

BENIN

BOTSWANA

BURKINA FASO

BURUNDI

CAMEROON

CABO VERDE

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CHAD

COMOROS

CONGO

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DJIBOUTI

EGYPT

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Eritrea

Ethiopia

GABON

GAMBIA

GHANA

GUINEA

GUINEA-BISSAU

KENYA

LESOTHO

LIBERIA

LIBYA

MADAGASCAR

MALAWI

MALI

MAURITANIA

MAURITIUS

MOROCCO

MOZAMBIQUE

NAMIBIA

NIGER

NIGERIA

RWANDA

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

SENEGAL

SEYCHELLES

SIERRA LEONE

Somalia

SOUTH AFRICA

SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN

SWAZILAND

TOGO

TUNISIA

UGANDA

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

ZAMBIA

ZIMBABWE

ASIA

Afghanistan

BAHRAIN

BANGLADESH

BHUTAN

Brunei Darussalam

CAMBODIA

CHINA

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

INDIA

INDONESIA

IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF

IRAQ

JAPAN

JORDAN

KAZAKHSTAN

Kuwait

KYRGYZSTAN

LAO, PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

LEBANON

MALAYSIA

Maldives

MONGOLIA

MYANMAR

NEPAL

OMAN

PAKISTAN

PHILIPPINES

Qatar

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Saudi Arabia

Singapore

SRI LANKA

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

TAJIKISTAN

THAILAND

TURKMENISTAN

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

UZBEKISTAN

VIETNAM

YEMEN

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Cook Islands

FIJI

KIRIBATI

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Nauru

NEW ZEALAND

Niue

PALAU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SAMOA

Solomon Islands

Timor-Leste

Tonga

Tuvalu

Vanuatu

EUROPE

ALBANIA
ANDORRA
ARMENIA
AUSTRIA
AZERBAIJAN
BELARUS
BELGIUM
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
BULGARIA
CROATIA
CYPRUS
CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK
ESTONIA
FINLAND
FRANCE
GEORGIA
GERMANY
GREECE
Holy See
HUNGARY
ICELAND
IRELAND
ISRAEL
ITALY
LATVIA

LIECHTENSTEIN
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBOURG
MALTA
MOLDOVA, REPUBLIC OF
MONACO
MONTENEGRO
NETHERLANDS
NORWAY
POLAND
PORTUGAL
ROMANIA
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
San Marino
SERBIA
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
SLOVENIA
SPAIN
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA
TURKEY
UKRAINE
UNITED KINGDOM

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

ARGENTINA

BAHAMAS

BARBADOS

BELIZE

BOLIVIA

BRAZIL

CHILE

COLOMBIA

COSTA RICA

CUBA

Dominica

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ECUADOR

EL SALVADOR

GRENADA

GUATEMALA

Guyana

Haiti

HONDURAS

JAMAICA

NICARAGUA

PANAMA

PARAGUAY

PERU

Saint Kitts and Nevis

SAINT LUCIA

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

SURINAME

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

URUGUAY

VENEZUELA

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

MEXICO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Annex 3

Tasks of Contracting Parties elected as Regional Representatives in the Standing Committee

The Contracting Parties that have accepted to be elected as Regional Representatives on the Standing Committee will have the following tasks:

1. To designate their delegates to the Standing Committee taking into account their significant responsibilities as Regional Representatives, according to paragraph 11 of this Resolution, and to make every effort that their delegates or their substitutes attend all meetings of the Committee.
2. When there is more than one Regional Representative in a regional group, to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the other Regional Representative(s).
3. To maintain regular contacts and consultations with the Contracting Parties in their regional group, and to use the opportunities of travel within their regions and of attending regional or international meetings to consult about issues related to the Convention and to promote its objectives. To this effect, when there is more than one Regional Representative, they will agree among themselves which Contracting Parties will be the responsibility of each Regional Representative.
4. To solicit the opinions of the Contracting Parties in their regional group before meetings of the Standing Committee.
5. To advise the Secretariat in setting the agenda of regional meetings.
6. To assume additional responsibilities by serving as members of the subgroups established by the Standing Committee.
7. To provide advice as requested by the Chairperson and/or the chairs of subgroups and/or the Secretariat of the Convention.
8. In the regions concerned, to make deliberate efforts to encourage other countries to join the Convention.

Annex 4

Indicative schedule for Standing Committee intersessional meetings post-2015, and for the 2016-2018 triennium

Note. This schedule is predicated on future cycles being three calendar years, with the meetings of the Conference of the Parties in May/June of the final year of each cycle.

	General timelines, post-2015	2016-2018 triennium
First full meeting	6 months after COP	SC51 – November/December 2015
Second full meeting	20 months after COP	SC52 – February 2017
Subgroup on COP (if required)	1 year before COP	Subgroup on COP13 (if required) – June 2017
Third full meeting	5 months before COP	SC53 – January 2018
Pre-COP meeting	Immediately prior to COP, at COP venue	SC54 – June 2018



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.5

New framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention

1. RECALLING the establishment by Resolution 5.5 (1993) of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention as a subsidiary body of the Convention to provide scientific and technical guidance to the Conference of the Parties, to the Standing Committee, and to the Ramsar Secretariat;
2. ALSO RECALLING Resolutions VI.7, VII.2, VIII.28, IX.11, X.9, and XI.18 on this same matter, which made successive modifications to the way in which the STRP and its work were organized;
3. THANKING all members of the STRP and its observer organizations and invited experts for their contributions since the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and for their expert advice on numerous scientific and technical issues of importance to the implementation of the Convention;
4. ALSO THANKING the many governments which have supported the work of the STRP with financial contributions, and EXPRESSING GRATITUDE to observer organizations and the Convention's International Organization Partners for their sustained contributions to the work of the Panel;
5. RECALLING that through Resolution XI.16 the Contracting Parties decided to undertake a review of the delivery, uptake and implementation of scientific and technical advice and guidance to the Convention, for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
6. WELCOMING the report of the review committee established by the Standing Committee in its Decision SC46-25 and the findings of the review which it undertook and which is posted on the Ramsar website (at http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/final_report_and_components_ramsar_scientific_technical_advice.pdf);
7. RECOGNIZING that the review and the recommendations of the review committee revealed that, while Ramsar scientific and technical guidance is well appreciated and has contributed to scientific and technical knowledge on wetlands, it does not reach all of its intended audiences, and therefore does not fully respond to the needs of Contracting Parties and people in their countries who may contribute to the implementation of the Convention;
8. NOTING the ten specific challenges which were identified through the review process and the 30 recommendations outlined in the report of the review committee on the Ramsar website proposed to respond to these challenges;

9. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the recommendations of the review committee to amend the structure and processes of the STRP and thereby make it more responsive to the current and future needs of Contracting Parties;
10. EXPRESING GRATITUDE to the authors and institutions providing inputs and support to the State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People, based on a compilation of recent analyses; and
11. ALSO RECOGNIZING the potential of a report on the State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People to promote the objectives of the Convention, in particular to strengthen broader attention to wetlands in other forums and to assess progress on delivery of aspects of the Conventions Strategic Plan;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. DECIDES to restructure the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) as established by Resolution V.5 and amended by successive Resolutions, to further help Contracting Parties respond to challenges of wetland conservation and wise use with an integral, holistic and inclusive focus, by providing scientific and technical guidance to the COP and regionally and as appropriate nationally, in an efficient, timely and effective manner, following the processes described in Annex 1;
13. RECOGNIZES the traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, as one of the knowledge bases of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel work;
14. REAFFIRMS the critical importance to the Convention of the work of the STRP in developing and providing scientific and technical guidance, linking wetland science to effective technical communications, and building understanding of the target guidance needs of the audiences;
15. AFFIRMS that this Resolution supersedes all previous Resolutions on matters of the STRP and the successive modifications on the way in which the STRP and its work have been organized;
16. CONFIRMS that the organization and the processes of the STRP adopted by this Resolution will apply for the 2016-2018 triennium and beyond unless amended by subsequent COP decisions as a result of a future review;
17. FURTHER CONFIRMS that the Conference of Parties will approve the STRP priority thematic work areas for each triennium, that the Standing Committee will continue to have overall responsibility for the delivery of this programme, and that the Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on the Panel's progress with tasks, and propose for the consideration of the Standing Committee any adjustments to the programme which the Panel considers necessary;
18. DECIDES that the priority thematic work areas for the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium are identified in Annex 3;
19. DECIDES to dissolve the STRP Oversight Committee and INSTRUCTS the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee to take over the role of the STRP Oversight Committee which was established in Resolution IX.11, and to oversee the work of the STRP as indicated in Annex 1 to this Resolution;

20. INSTRUCTS the STRP to develop its work plan/ work programme for the 2016-2018 triennium for the Standing Committee's approval and in full coherence with the 2016-2024 Strategic Plan of the Convention;
21. DECIDES that the Standing Committee at its 51st meeting will approve the STRP work programme for the coming triennium, built around the priority thematic work areas determined and approved by the Conference of the Parties, in line with the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024;
22. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue to provide support to the STRP as detailed in Annex 1;
23. RECOGNIZES the continuing need to ensure both that the Panel has the resources to undertake its work effectively and that the Secretariat has sufficient capacity to support this work, and URGES Contracting Parties in a position to do so and others to assist in securing continuity of such funding;
24. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to mobilize additional resources for implementation of technical guidance and advice, and including for supporting Contracting Parties' implementation of recommendations for conservation and wise use of Ramsar wetlands;
25. REQUESTS the STRP and the Secretary General, subject to the availability of resources, to finalize the production of the current version of *The State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People* and to explore modalities for its subsequent improvement and updating as a periodic flagship report of the Convention and thereby also contributing to the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* of the Convention on Biological Diversity and report on progress in this matter to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
26. INVITES Contracting Parties, other governments and funding agencies to provide financial and other support to *The State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People*;
27. APPROVES the list, in Annex 2 of this Resolution, of bodies and organizations which may be invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP and INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to amend the list during the triennium as appropriate¹; and
28. INVITES the bodies and organizations listed in Annex 2 to consider establishing close working arrangements with the STRP on matters of common interest, particularly in relation to priority thematic areas identified in Annex 3 during the 2016-2018 triennium.

¹ Its participation will be subject to the Secretariat's receipt of a response to the letters sent.

Annex 1

How the Scientific and Technical Review Panel works

Purpose of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

1. The purpose of the STRP is to provide scientific and technical guidance and advice to the Ramsar Contracting Parties, the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the Ramsar Secretariat and to other wetland users working on wetlands issues, in order to foster the implementation of the Convention.
2. The STRP should provide in an efficient, timely and effective manner, global, regional and where possible national specific scientific and technical advice, guidance and tools to enable these audiences to respond to the opportunities, challenges and emerging issues of wetland conservation and wise use.

Oversight of the STRP

3. The priority thematic work areas of the STRP and the budget to implement the work planned will be approved at each meeting of the COP. The Standing Committee at a subsequent meeting will approve the STRP work plan for the coming triennium. The work plan will be built around the priority thematic work areas determined and approved by the Conference of the Parties, in line with the current Strategic Plan.
4. Between the COPs, the Standing Committee and Management Working Group will continue to direct and oversee the implementation of the programme, review priority tasks and amend them as necessary, and approve the allocation of funds. The Chair of the STRP will report to each Standing Committee meeting on the Panel's progress and recommend for the consideration of the Standing Committee any adjustments as necessary.
5. The Standing Committee's Management Working Group will oversee the work of the STRP, replacing the STRP Oversight Committee, according to the terms defined for that Committee in Resolution IX.11 and with the following responsibilities:
 - i) to appoint the members of the STRP and appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair from among them;
 - ii) to oversee the implementation of the STRP's programme, and report progress to each Standing Committee with recommendations for action as required;
 - iii) to guide and support the Panel as required;
 - iv) to recommend the allocation of funds for STRP tasks to the Standing Committee Sub-group on Finance; and
 - v) to work with the Secretariat to oversee STRP expenditures.
6. The Secretariat will continue to support the STRP. Relevant staff includes the Deputy Secretary General, Senior Regional Advisors, the Head of Communications and the Scientific and Technical

Support Officer. The Head of Communications will serve as the CEPA expert defined in Resolution IX.11. The Secretariat's responsibilities include:

- i) facilitating the work of the STRP, including by organizing and administering its meetings and maintaining the STRP Workspace;
- ii) fostering opportunities for collaboration with other conventions, international organizations, including financial organizations, intergovernmental institutions, and national and international NGOs, and facilitating such collaboration as required;
- iii) facilitating linkages between potential experts within countries, regions and globally, including indigenous peoples and local communities;
- iv) identifying the needs of potential audiences and thematic priorities in different countries or regions to suggest to the Parties for their consideration;
- v) creating a comprehensive database of contacts including Administrative Authorities, STRP CEPA and general National Focal Points, National Ramsar Committees, managers of Ramsar Sites, wetland organizations, past STRP members and other relevant contacts and other relevant organizations and conventions and disseminating to them Ramsar decisions, Resolutions and Recommendations of the COP and the Standing Committee;
- vi) keeping the Contracting Parties, the Ramsar community, and the public informed of developments related to the Convention, including the availability of finalized STRP products;
- vii) ensuring all written materials from the STRP that are developed for target audiences are clear and readable;
- viii) publishing and disseminating the guidance, materials and products of the STRP, ensuring that policy-makers and other identified audiences have timely and accessible clear guidance they need on identified priority issues; and
- ix) monitoring the application of the guidance.

Structure of the Panel

7. The Scientific and Technical Review Panel will be made up of 18 members with appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, plus observers representing the International Organization Partners (IOPs), scientific and technical expert(s) recommended by Contracting Parties and other organizations recognized by the COP. They will include:
 - i) six scientific members² (academic community);
 - ii) 12 technical expert members³ (practitioners), including six regional expert representatives and six other experts on issues identified for action during the triennium;

² Responsible for providing advice on the strategic direction of scientific work needed to enhance the development of STRP products, and ensure the scientific quality of the finished products.

³ Responsible for preparation of technical products in the form of guidance, technical briefing notes, Ramsar Technical Reports, etc., and solicit input and feedback on these from stakeholders and partners in all the Ramsar regions.

- iii) one observer representative of each of the Convention's International Organization Partners;
 - iv) a small number of observer experts from scientific and technical organizations and networks recognized by the COP (and listed in Annex 2), who may be invited to support the work of the Panel as appropriate.
 - v) The chairs of scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and relevant secretariat staff of other multilateral environmental agreements will continue to be invited to participate as observers.
8. The IOPs, and other organizations in Annex 2 where appropriate, will be asked to nominate a representative who is able to access the organization's national, regional and international networks of wetland experts and who is committed to serve for the entire triennium to ensure continuity of participation.
 9. Contracting Parties may suggest scientific and technical experts to participate as observers in meetings or intersessional processes of the STRP with the approval of the STRP chair.
 10. Representatives of other organizations not included in Annex 2 requesting to participate as observers in meetings or intersessional processes of the STRP may do so with the approval of the STRP Chair.
 11. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected from among the appointed members to the Panel.

Role and responsibilities of the STRP members

12. The main collective responsibilities of the Panel members are to:
 - i) establish the scope, deliverables and approach to delivery for each assigned task, including through scoping workshops as appropriate, and in so doing ensure input from the network of STRP National Focal Points, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and any other relevant organizations;
 - ii) ensure appropriate peer review of draft materials, and consult with peers and the Communications team of the Secretariat on how best to ensure their effective communication and implementation;
 - iii) review all scientific and technical materials drafted by Convention bodies, consulting with STRP Focal Points as required, before they are shared with Parties and the Conference of the Parties and thereafter, in line with the terms of Resolution VIII.45;
 - iv) encourage their own national and international networks of wetland experts to contribute more widely to the work of the Panel and disseminate its final products;
 - v) Assist the Ramsar Secretariat with scientific and technical issues upon request and on Ramsar Advisory Missions, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources; and
 - vi) To avoid any conflict of interest, STRP members will not be compensated for their contributions to the STRP. Members preparing substantive work should not be involved in

reviewing it. All members should sign a “conflict of interest” declaration when they accept the nomination to the panel.

13. The STRP Chair must have broad knowledge of wetland issues and be familiar with the work of the Panel and the Convention. The Chair will:
 - i) prepare the agendas for STRP meetings. The Chair also prepares relevant meeting papers with the assistance of the Secretariat and Vice-Chair;
 - ii) chair plenary sessions of STRP meetings and oversee the conduct of all aspects of those meetings;
 - iii) manage the implementation of the STRP work plan and ensure timely delivery of the STRP’s products;
 - iv) lead the STRP’s work and coordinate the Panel’s advice to the next COP concerning new and emerging priorities the Parties may wish to consider for the Panel’s work in the next triennium;
 - v) appoint leads and co-leads of any thematic working groups established by the Panel, and advise them on the membership of groups;
 - vi) with the STRP Vice-Chair, agree upon the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the thematic working groups or specific task groups established by the Panel;
 - vii) coordinate inputs from the Panel, its thematic working groups and the Secretariat on new and emerging priorities and with the assistance of the panel, identify priority tasks and draft the priority thematic areas of the STRP work plan for the coming triennium with the STRP members, for approval by the Standing Committee;
 - viii) report to each meeting of the COP and the Standing Committee the progress of the STRP work plan and the priority tasks included in it, and STRP-related matters, and provide feedback and guidance to the STRP;
 - ix) resources permitting, represent the STRP at meetings of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other processes and initiatives relevant to the STRP’s work, such as meetings of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions (CSAB) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
 - x) at the request of the Secretary General represent the Convention’s scientific and technical work externally by maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating in scientific forums and conferences;
 - xi) recommend to the Standing Committee Management Working Group for its consideration the names of members eligible for reappointment for a subsequent triennium based on their contributions to the STRP’s work and the relevance of their expertise to the COP-assigned priority tasks; and
 - xii) maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, to facilitate reporting of inputs.

14. The STRP Vice-Chair must also have broad knowledge of wetland issues and be familiar with the work of the Panel and the Convention. The Vice Chair will:

- i) help the Secretariat and STRP Chair prepare agendas and other papers for STRP meetings;
- ii) substitute for the STRP Chair in chairing plenary sessions of STRP meetings and overseeing the conduct of all aspects of STRP meetings;
- iii) advise, along with the STRP Chair and the Secretariat, the leads and co-leads of working groups on the membership of groups;
- iv) with the STRP Chair, agree upon the division of responsibilities regarding oversight of the thematic working groups or specific task groups established by the Panel;
- v) resources permitting, substitute for the Chair in representing the STRP at meetings of other MEAs and relevant processes and initiatives;
- vi) represent the Convention's scientific and technical work externally, through maintaining relationships with partner organizations and, resources permitting, by participating at scientific forums and conferences; and
- vii) when requested, substitute for the STRP Chair in any other of his or her functions; and maintain records of the hours devoted to contributing to the work of the Panel, to facilitate reporting of inputs by the STRP Chair.

15. The members will:

- i) ensure the scientific quality of finished products;
- ii) provide independent advice to the Secretary General and STRP Chair on emerging scientific issues;
- iii) support and champion the STRP and its work;
- iv) prepare guidance to inform policy-makers and practitioners, and seek input and feedback on these from stakeholders and partners in all the Ramsar regions; and
- v) assist CEPA as appropriate with the review, dissemination, promotion and implementation of guidance in relevant networks, countries and regions.

16. IOP nominees should be wetland experts and have a role within their IOPs for maintaining and accessing the wetland conservation and wise use expertise of their organization's regional and global networks. The STRP's IOP observers are expected, in addition to the role for all STRP Members (above), to:

- i) seek the views of experts within their organizations (including relevant specialist groups and networks) of the work plan of the STRP;
- ii) participate in working groups and task forces established by the Panel;

- iii) ensure that the scientific and technical capacity of their organization's networks of wetland experts is available to the Panel, and establish mechanisms to identify and engage experts from their networks in the work of the STRP; and
- iv) leverage the outreach capacity of their organization to promote and disseminate the outputs of the STRP.

17. Representatives of Observer Organizations are invited to:

- i) ensure that the scientific and technical capacity of their organizations' national, regional and international networks of wetland experts (where applicable) are available to the Panel, and establish mechanisms to identify and engage experts from their networks in the work of the STRP;
- ii) identify to the Panel and its working groups any work relevant to STRP tasks already in existence or underway through their processes and initiatives;
- iii) advise on emerging and priority development issues and trends;
- iv) participate in any relevant working group and task forces established by the Panel;
- v) support and promote the STRP's work;
- vi) create opportunities for partnerships, collaborations and financing; and
- vii) leverage the outreach capacity of their organization to share information about and help disseminate STRP products after they are finalized.

18. The STRP National Focal Points of each Contracting Party act as a liaison between their national wetland practitioners, other Ramsar Focal Points and the STRP. They are appointed to the role for their scientific and technical expertise in wetland conservation, management and wise use. The Secretariat should ensure a more effective link between STRP and national STRP Focal Points in such a way that Parties technical needs be addressed in the STRP work plan and are expected to:

- i) provide technical and scientific input and support to the implementation of the work plan of the STRP;
- ii) maintain regular contact with other Ramsar National Focal Points in their country (Ramsar Focal Point and CEPA Focal Points);
- iii) mobilize local capacity and, to the extent possible, consult with and seek input from other experts and bodies and wetlands centres in their country, including focal points of other MEAs;
- iv) the STRP National Focal Points should provide advice to, and participate in, meetings of the National Wetland/Ramsar Committee or similar bodies (e.g., National Biodiversity Committees) where they exist, and provide advice in the preparation of National Reports to Conferences of Contracting Parties. They should also assist in disseminating information on the work of the STRP, interpreted as appropriate to the national context, to relevant individuals and bodies in their countries;

- v) provide technical support to national wetland activities such as the preparation of wetland inventory; and
- vi) help disseminate STRP products and information on its work, adapted as appropriate to the national context.

Selection of Panel members

19. Immediately after the COP, the Secretariat will make a call for nominations of the STRP members for the coming triennium, which includes information on the specific profiles required for the technical and scientific members.
20. The members and observer representatives for each triennium will be appointed by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee as soon as possible after the COP, from the candidates nominated according to the process below.
21. Administrative Authorities from each region will reach agreement internally and nominate one technical expert for each region who will be accepted automatically.
22. Administrative Authorities will nominate member per needs as identified and the nominations will then be reviewed and shortlisted by region by the Standing Committee members.
23. Administrative Authorities of Contracting Parties will also make nominations for the six scientific members and six technical members, and may identify candidates for STRP Chair and Vice-Chair, including from candidates nominated under paragraph 21.
24. IOPs and observer organizations will make nominations for the six scientific and six technical members.
25. STRP members will be appointed in their personal capacity for their scientific and technical expertise, and will not represent any organization or government in their interaction with the STRP. Selections will be made to secure the scientific and technical expertise required for the STRP's work during the triennium, and ensure regional and gender balance.
26. Each International Organization Partner will nominate its representative member. IOP observers may serve for more than one triennium.
27. Any observer organization may nominate a representative as observer to the Panel. Observer organizations may serve for more than one triennium.
28. Organizations nominating members or observers must provide a letter of recommendation summarizing the expertise of the candidate and the relevance of their work to the Panel's work plan.
29. Nominees will provide a curriculum vitae and a declaration that they are willing to be considered for appointment to the Panel and that they have, where relevant, the required support of their organizations on a voluntary basis to deliver the work expected of Panel members and the time and availability for meetings. They will note whether they will need any financial support to participate in meetings and will provide a brief summary of how their skills and expertise might contribute to the Panel's work.

30. The Secretariat will forward all nominations and make recommendations for appointments for consideration by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee, which will reach its decisions through electronic communication and teleconferences as soon as possible after each COP, to enable the Panel to start work as early as possible.
31. If a vacancy for a member of the Panel arises between COPs, the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee will review among the other proposed nominations and appoint a replacement member as soon as practicable.
32. Candidates for appointment as members of the STRP must have the following:
 - i) capacity and experience in local, national and international networking with wetland conservation and wise use experts, including when appropriate STRP National Focal Points;
 - ii) recognized experience and expertise in one or more aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, particularly those relevant to the identified priorities for the forthcoming work of the Panel;
 - iii) full access to electronic mail and the online systems which the Panel will use;
 - iv) proficient comprehension of at least one of the three official languages of the Convention; and
 - v) commitment to undertake the work of the Panel and its working groups, and the support, where relevant, of their organization, enabling them to deliver the work expected of Panel members on a voluntary basis.

Term of Panel membership

33. Beginning with the 2016-2018 triennium, membership of the panel will not in principle be for more than one triennium with the possibility to be reelected for a second term, to allow rotation in the panel composition. However, those experts whose experience is considered relevant for the tasks of the STRP could be reelected for a third term. The maximum tenure of any member including the Chair and Vice-chair will be three triennia (nine years).
34. For each triennium, whenever possible at least six members of the outgoing STRP will be retained to ensure continuity. On each occasion, the STRP Chair and Vice-Chair and the Secretariat will propose the STRP members for reappointment, based on the priority thematic work areas for endorsement by the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee.
35. Members being proposed for reappointment must have demonstrated the ability to contribute effectively to the work of the Panel and must confirm their willingness to be reappointed.

Operation of the STRP

36. The STRP will develop collaborative relationships with the International Organization Partners, thematic experts and regional organizations relevant to its priority work areas, and where feasible, directly with wetland managers and users of wetlands.

37. The STRP and the communications team of the Secretariat will also work with Administrative Authorities and CEPA Focal Points, with IOPs and other bodies, to build up a network of wetland practitioners and users, and the Secretariat will maintain regular contact with them.
38. The STRP will meet face-to-face annually to review progress on identified tasks, to consider urgent emerging issues and, in the year leading up to the COP, to discuss the areas of work to recommend to the Conference of Parties for its consideration for the next triennium.
39. The appointed STRP members will, where appropriate and with the assistance of the Secretariat, establish working groups at the start of each triennium and lead or co-lead them as appointed by the STRP Chair.
40. Meetings of the STRP will operate in the three official Convention languages and meeting documents will be made available in the Convention languages, subject to the availability of resources.

The STRP's three-year cycle of work

41. There are six stages in the STRP's triennial cycle of work. Each has specific targets to be met before the STRP can progress to the next stage.

Stage 1: Setting the priorities for the coming triennium

42. The STRP will report to the final full meeting of the Standing Committee before each COP on the status of issues addressed in the triennium, including all tasks agreed by Contracting Parties in previous COPs.
43. The STRP will propose how it will complete any remaining tasks, or propose alternative solutions if necessary.
44. The STRP, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee, will identify scientific and technical priorities for the coming triennium, and funding needs, and indicate potentially relevant partner organizations, for the consideration of the Conference of Parties.
45. The list of priorities will reflect the content of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for the coming triennium, resolutions of the last COP, and other priority issues which have been identified by regional or global wetland networks.

Stage 2: COP approval of priorities for STRP programming

46. A draft resolution will be presented to the COP which reports on the products delivered during the last triennium, and proposes a list of potential themes for the coming triennium (Annex 3) and a revised list of potential observer organizations (Annex 2).
47. The COP will approve a maximum of five priority thematic work areas for each triennium, and approve an appropriate allocation of core funds. Selection of these five areas of work will take into account their relationship and alignment with the Strategic Plan and tasks already assigned by the previous COP.

Stage 3: Convening the STRP

48. The STRP will convene as soon as possible after the COP. The Management Working Group of the Standing Committee will select the STRP members intersessionally, as soon as possible after

receiving the nominations from the Secretariat. The Management Working Group will first select the Chair and Vice-Chair, who will participate in the selection of the other members.

Stage 4: Developing the STRP work plan

49. The STRP will examine the table in Annex 3 and make recommendations on specific tasks to facilitate Parties' implementation of the actions identified in the related Strategic Plan goal / target / indicator. The resulting products will be aimed at target audiences identified in paragraph 54 (Annex 1) and produce the types of guidance identified in paragraph 55 (Annex 1) with support from the Secretariat's CEPA programme .
50. In developing these recommendations the STRP will (1) undertake a literature survey of available STRP guidance and other relevant information and (2) consult with STRP National Focal Points, the Secretariat CEPA programme and the Senior Regional Advisors, who will be responsible for securing data and information from their respective regions' Administrative Authorities and National Focal Points.
51. The first task of the new STRP will be to develop the work plan, in consultation with the Secretariat (Secretary General / Deputy SG, Senior Regional Advisors and communications team), based on the thematic work areas selected by the Contracting Parties and taking into account ongoing scientific work in other international processes, in particular IPBES.

Stage 5: Approval by the Standing Committee of the work plan

52. The STRP Chair will present the work plan to the Standing Committee at its first full meeting after the COP.

Stage 6: Deliver and disseminate the products

53. The various scientific and technical products will be prepared and communicated to target audiences during the triennium, with assistance from the Secretariat's communications team.

Target audiences and the process of developing guidance materials

54. Two target audience categories have been identified for the materials to be developed by the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium (subject to future review):
 - i) Policy-makers, including those from the environment and water sectors and other related sectors such as energy, health and sanitation, agriculture, infrastructure; and
 - ii) Practitioners and in particular wetland managers and stakeholders, but also others from related fields, such as protected area managers and staff of wetland education centres.
55. The STRP will produce the following types of guidance:
 - i) Scientific guidance, which provides the basis for technical guidance for policy makers and practitioners.
 - ii) Science-based technical guidance, which responds to specific methodological needs of policy-makers and practitioners with each receiving a different type of technical guidance.
56. The main audience for the scientific guidance will be practitioners. The STRP guidance will draw on published peer-reviewed research and other scientific sources to help advance implementation of the Convention.

57. Technical guidance will be the main focus for STRP products. All STRP guidance will be science based.
58. The main audience for the technical guidance will be policy-makers and practitioners, while users of wetlands may also benefit from it. It will be delivered through formats including handbooks, manuals, fact sheets, webinars and videos with support of the Secretariat's CEPA programme.
59. Contracting Parties will request scientific and technical guidance from the STRP through the Secretariat and STRP Chair which will facilitate the fulfilment of the support requested by parties, as appropriate.
60. The approach to the development of guidance will reflect national needs but also seek a regional approach. Senior Regional Advisors and the STRP National Focal Points will collaborate to define national and regional priorities and needs.
61. The Secretariat's communications team will ensure all materials are clear and accessible, and relevant to targeted audiences. It will monitor and evaluate the reach and impact of the products, and report its findings to the STRP.
62. The process for developing guidance will be as follows:
 - i) The Contracting Parties will identify the audience for each of the proposed technical products, and the Secretariat will help to define the needs of each audience group.
 - ii) The Secretariat will work with the STRP members to determine the type, content, format and design for each technical product.
 - iii) The STRP members will identify sources of information and existing guidance, and then develop the guidance, in line with the thematic priorities and the current Strategic Plan.
 - iv) Additional explanatory summaries, and interpretive information related to the technical guidance directed at policy-makers, will be developed by the Secretariat's communications team.
 - v) The Secretariat will communicate and distribute the guidance, with assistance from STRP members, International Organization Partners, STRP National Focal Points and other partners.
 - vi) The Secretariat will lead on monitoring the application of the guidance and report on this to the STRP and the Standing Committee.
 - vii) The Secretariat will commission a periodic review of the use of the guidance and report on this to the Standing Committee.

Annex 2

Bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium

Observer organizations are defined as global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, global intergovernmental organizations and processes (IGOs), regional intergovernmental organizations and processes (IROs), international organization and other NGOs and organizations devoted to wetlands.

They include, but are not restricted to:

- Conservation International (CI)
- Consultative Group on Biological Diversity
- Ducks Unlimited (DU)
- Environmental Law Institute
- Group on Earth Observation – Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON)
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability [Reserve made by Argentina]
- Inter American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Flora and Fauna International [Reserve made by Argentina]
- NatureServe
- Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica
- The Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program (BPOP)
- The Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- The Coordinating Committee for the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (GGAP-coco)
- The European Space Agency – ESRIN (ESA-ESRIN)
- The Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)
- The International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE)
- The Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility
- The Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (SC of CMS)
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- The Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group of the Arctic Council
- The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)
- The Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)

- The Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- The Technical Committee of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)
- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
- The World Bank
- The World Health Organization (WHO)
- Tour du Valat Research Centre for the Conservation of Mediterranean wetlands
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- United Nations Regional Economic Commissions

Annex 3

STRP priority thematic work areas for 2016-2018

STRP priorities were selected based on the following criteria (a) the ones with the most overlap in prioritization across regions that provided views (Africa, Americas and Asia) combined with (b) the strongest case vis-à-vis matching the strategic plan goals and targets.

STRP Thematic Work Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024	Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024 [Strategic Goals in Resolution XII.5 have been updated in line with the outcome of the discussion on Resolution XII.2]
Best practice methodologies / tools to monitor Ramsar Sites, including surveying, mapping, and inventorying recognizing traditional practices of indigenous peoples and local communities.	<p>Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network</p> <p>Target 5 The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management</p> <p>Target 7 Sites that are at risk of loss of ecological character have threats addressed</p> <p>Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands</p> <p>Target 10 The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.</p> <p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p> <p>Target 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>
Best practices for developing and implementing management plans, action plans and other tools for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands.	<p>Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands</p> <p>Target 8 National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p>

	<p>Target 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, <i>inter alia</i>, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p> <p>Target 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p> <p>Target 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p> <p>Target 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>
<p>Methodologies for the economic and non-economic valuation of the values of the goods and services of wetlands.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation.</p> <p>Target 1 Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.</p> <p>Target 3 The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.</p> <p>Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands</p> <p>Target 8 National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p> <p>Target 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, <i>inter alia</i>, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p>

	<p>Target 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p> <p>Target 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p> <p>Target 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>
<p>Balancing wetland conservation and development e.g. infrastructure, urbanization, forestry, extractive industries, and agriculture.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation.</p> <p>Target 1 Wetland benefits are featured in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.</p> <p>Target 3 The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.</p> <p>Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands</p> <p>Target 8 National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p> <p>Target 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p> <p>Target 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p> <p>Target 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority</p>

	<p>to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Target 13 Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.</p> <p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p> <p>Target 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>
Climate change and wetlands: innovative methodologies for wetlands restoration.	<p>Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands</p> <p>Target 8 National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p> <p>Target 9 The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, <i>inter alia</i>, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p> <p>Target 11 Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p> <p>Target 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p> <p>Target 14 Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels is developed on relevant topics and is available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.6

The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

1. RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Ramsar Sites for the consideration and recommendations by the Parties at ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) on these matters, and Article 6.2(d) concerning the competence of the COP to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;
2. CONGRATULATING the Contracting Parties on the designation, between 13 July 2012 and 28 August 2014, of 149 new Ramsar Sites;
3. CONCERNED that for 1,238 Ramsar Sites, representing 57% of 2,188 Sites, either Ramsar Information Sheets or adequate maps have not been submitted, or relevant Ramsar Information Sheets or maps have not been updated for over six years, such that information on the current status of these Sites is not available;
4. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported to the Secretariat in updated Ramsar Information Sheets can only include extensions or recalculations of areas including through more precise boundary delineations;
5. RECALLING that in Resolution VIII.8 (2002) the COP expressed concern that many Contracting Parties do not have in place the mechanisms to fulfil Article 3.2 of the Convention, and urged Contracting Parties to promptly “put in place mechanisms in order to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau so as to implement fully Article 3.2 of the Convention”;
6. NOTING that 73% of the Contracting Parties reported to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) that they have arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories in line with Article 3.2, but AWARE that fewer than 21% have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;
7. FURTHER NOTING that Contracting Parties have placed no additional Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record since COP11 and ENCOURAGING Contracting Parties that have any concerns over the management of their Ramsar Sites to continue to use the tools of the Ramsar Convention that are available to them, for instance the Montreux Record;

8. CONCERNED that of all Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record as of 28 August 2014, only one Site has been removed from the Record since COP11;
9. CONCERNED about the average four years that it has taken to close Article 3.2 files, the continuing lack of information on the status of many open Article 3.2 files, and the lack of response by Contracting Parties to some concerns of potential changes to Sites raised by third parties; and
10. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a tool for Contracting Parties who are seeking to quickly evaluate the situation in their Ramsar Sites which are in war or conflict zones after a conflict has been resolved, and the importance in such instances of the Ramsar Secretariat informing all Contracting Parties involved in the conflict of the findings of the Ramsar Advisory Mission;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. EXPRESSES APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have brought their Ramsar Information Sheets up to date for all the Ramsar Sites within their territory;
12. URGES the Parties listed at Annex 3a of the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (document COP12 DOC.7), in whose territories lie Ramsar Sites for which the Ramsar Information Sheet or map have not been submitted since the time of designation, to provide such information as a matter of urgency and in advance of the 51st meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee, and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact all relevant Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3a on all outstanding cases at least once a year;
13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of the report of the Secretary General to fulfil, as a matter of urgency, the terms of Resolution VI.13 and submit updated information of Ramsar Sites at least every six years using the most up-to-date format of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS), now available online through the new Ramsar Sites Information Service, and also to use this RIS for designating new Sites and extending existing Sites;
14. REAFFIRMS the commitment made by the Parties in Resolution VIII.8 to implement fully the terms of Article 3.2 on reporting change, and to maintain or restore the ecological character of Ramsar Sites by employing all appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve as soon as possible any matters leading to Article 3.2 reports; and subsequently to submit a further report on the outcomes of those mechanisms, so that both positive outcomes and changes in ecological character may be fully reflected in reports to meetings of the COP in order to establish a clear picture of the status and trends of the Ramsar Site network;
15. CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties to adopt and apply, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 (1996), which incorporates the Convention's Wetland Risk Assessment Framework (Resolution VII.10), in order to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar sites in line with Article 3.2;
16. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties which have provided Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat about Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 4a of the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2;

17. REQUESTS those Contracting Parties with Ramsar Sites for which the Secretariat has received reports of change or likely change in their ecological character (listed in Annexes 4a and 4b of the Report of the Secretary General) to submit information to the Secretariat in response to such reports, including as appropriate information on steps taken or to be taken to address these changes, or likely changes, in ecological character in advance of the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee and each subsequent Standing Committee meeting;
18. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to consider options for assisting and encouraging Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, such as direct advice, when requested, on the application of the wise use principles, or, when relevant, proposing to Parties to add the Site(s) to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission;
19. REITERATES ITS ENCOURAGEMENT to Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record, and to request such listing as appropriate;
20. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties to use the redesigned Montreux Record questionnaire at Annex 1 of the present Resolution to determine the inclusion or removal of a listed Site in the Montreux Record;
21. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to investigate the costs of options for working with UNEP-GRID to assist Parties who wish to do so to access such data and monitoring tools, for example by working with the Standing Committee and Parties to investigate the potential value and feasibility of gathering satellite data on changes to Sites; and
22. Encourages Contracting Parties to use tools and information provided by technical partners in assessing changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites.

Annex 1: Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

Section One: Information for assessing possible inclusion of a listed Ramsar Site in the Montreux Record

Nature of the change

1. Name of Site.
2. Ramsar Criteria for listing the Site as internationally important.
3. Summary statement of ecological character description.
4. Ecological components, processes and services affected by adverse human-induced change/likely change (list relevant code numbers from the ecological character description).
5. Nature and extent of the change / likely change to ecological character (use threat categories in RIS Guidance Appendix F, Resolution XI.8 Annex 2).
6. Reason(s) for the change / likely change described above.

Management measures in place

7. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
8. Monitoring programme in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives, and nature of data and information gathered) – refer to RIS section 5.2.7 (Resolution XI.8 Annex 1 RIS field 34).
9. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
10. Ameliorative and restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.
11. Any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes activated or planned, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements.
12. List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable).
13. List of attachments provided by the Ramsar Secretariat (if applicable).

Section Two: Information for assessing possible removal of a listed Site from the Montreux Record

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
2. Monitoring programme in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives and nature of data and information gathered) – refer to RIS section 5.2.7 (Resolution XI.8 Annex 1 RIS field 34).
3. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
4. Ameliorative and restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

5. Success of ameliorative, restoration or maintenance measures (if different from those covered in Section One of this questionnaire).
6. Proposed monitoring and assessment procedures (if different from those in Section One of this questionnaire).
7. Extent to which the ecological components, processes and services of the Site have been restored or maintained (provide details).

8. Rationale for removing the Site from the Montreux Record (refer to Guidelines for Operation of the Montreux Record, the specific issues identified in Section One of this questionnaire, and any advice given by the STRP or arising from a Ramsar Advisory Mission, where applicable).
9. Status of any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements, and details of how Montreux Record removal will be harmonized with these.
10. Measures that the Contracting Party will implement to maintain the ecological character of the Site with clear indicators for follow up.
11. List of further attachments (if applicable).



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.7

Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention

1. WELCOMING Resolution XII.2 approving the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during the next two triennia; and NOTING the expressed need to mobilize resources and engage partners to achieve the full suite of goals and targets expressed in the Strategic Plan;
2. RECALLING that Contracting Parties sought through Resolution XI.3 and Resolution XI.6 to support effective collaboration with related Conventions and organizations for implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan;
3. ALSO RECALLING that Resolution X.12 establishes principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector including criteria for due diligence;
4. ALSO RECALLING that Resolution XI.20 calls for Contracting Parties to promote investment and policy decisions which encourage the wise use of wetlands;
5. ALSO RECALLING Decision III/21 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognizing the Ramsar Convention as the lead partner for implementation of activities related to wetlands; and RECALLING the role of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as one of the most important mechanisms for financing the implementation of wetland priorities in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
6. RESPONDING to Decision XII/30 of the CBD, which invites, among others, the governing body of the Ramsar Convention to provide elements of advice, as appropriate, concerning guidance on funding that may be referred to the GEF through the Conference of the Parties to the CBD;
7. RECOGNIZING the importance of the Secretariat focusing on priorities and raising funds;
8. RECOGNIZING the importance of actively supporting efforts to mobilize financial resources in support of the successful implementation of the Convention's objectives; and
9. REAFFIRMING the commitment of Parties to meet their obligations to pay their annual contributions;

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10. RECOGNIZES the need for focused fundraising activities in support of the implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan;

11. REQUESTS the Secretary General to prioritize fundraising activities to fund non-core budget activities from all sources, with a view to significantly increasing non-Party contributions, and to report regularly to the Standing Committee, including on funds raised;
12. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to identify potential partners, donors and other financing organizations and make that information available to Parties, in particular developing countries, and to facilitate capacity building to assist such Parties to engage in partnerships;
13. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee establish, at its 50th meeting, a mechanism of the Contracting Parties and Secretariat to develop a Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework and Work Plan, to include development of fundraising targets and timetables for the Secretariat to deliver on the non-core priorities set out in Annex 3 of Resolution XII.1, and to present it to the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee for its consideration;
14. REQUESTS the Standing Committee as a high priority task and with the committed assistance of the Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to respond to the invitation from the Parties to the CBD to provide elements of advice, as appropriate, concerning funding of national and transboundary wetlands initiatives, that may be referred to the GEF through the Conference of the Parties to the CBD;
15. REQUESTS the Secretary General to transmit this advice in a timely manner to the Executive Secretary of the CBD;
16. ENCOURAGES eligible Parties to incorporate national wetlands priorities into their national biodiversity strategies and action plans as part of the process for national wetlands priorities to receive financial support through the GEF;
17. ENCOURAGES Parties to consider allocating, from national budgets, financial resources for the implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan and to explore funding opportunities to enhance national implementation of the Convention, taking into account national circumstances and priorities;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties from developed countries and other Parties in a position to do so, and INVITES donor agencies, to explore significant new and additional financial resources including by facilitating funding from all sources to support and enhance the implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan, in particular by developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing states and countries with economies in transition;
19. ENCOURAGES Parties to enter into north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation for the successful implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan;
20. REQUESTS Parties and INVITES non-governmental organizations and financial institutions in a position to do so to provide voluntary contributions to support the implementation of the 4th Strategic Plan and other Convention activities;
21. REQUESTS the Secretariat to strengthen partnerships with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as *inter alia* the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the CBD and others, in order to enhance synergies and sharing of resources, avoid duplication and enhance implementation, respecting the mandate of each Convention; and REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide to the Standing Committee at its 51st meeting a plan on

how to increase cooperation with other MEAs and report regularly actions to the Standing Committee; and

22. ENCOURAGES Parties to channel financial resources to on-the-ground projects which provide concrete results in the implementation of the Convention.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.8

Regional initiatives 2016-2018 in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING that regional initiatives under the Ramsar Convention, which include centres for training and capacity building and networks which facilitate cooperation, are intended as operational means to provide effective support for an improved implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in specific geographic regions, through international cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern;
2. NOTING that the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19, 1999) provide a framework for promoting international collaboration between Contracting Parties and other partners;
3. ALSO RECALLING that the Contracting Parties recognized the importance of regional initiatives in promoting the objectives of the Convention in Resolution VIII.30 (2002), and subsequently through Resolutions IX.7 (2005), X.6 (2008) and XI.5 (2012), and endorsed a number of regional initiatives as operating within the framework of the Convention in 2013- 2015;
4. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution X.6 (2008) adopted *Operational Guidelines 2009-2012 for regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* to support the implementation of the Convention, and that these *Operational Guidelines* as subsequently amended by Standing Committee for the triennium 2013-2015 serve as a reference for assessing the operation and effectiveness of regional initiatives, replacing the *Guidelines for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* annexed to Resolution VIII.30;
5. NOTING that during the years 2013-2015, the Standing Committee approved a number of active regional initiatives as fully meeting the *Operational Guidelines*, and noted the substantial progress made by many of the initiatives, based on the annual reports which they submitted during those years;
6. FURTHER NOTING that new regional initiatives will be developed during the 2016-2018 triennium, such as the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI), bringing together Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, which will be starting to operate during the second half of 2015; and
7. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the experience gained through the operational years of those regional initiatives, the application of the *Operational Guidelines* in selecting and supporting Initiatives, and the conclusions derived from the review of their effectiveness;

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8. REAFFIRMS the effectiveness of regional cooperation, through networks and centres, in supporting improved implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan;
9. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to undertake a review of the *Operational Guidelines for regional initiatives to support the implementation of the Convention*, as adopted for 2013- 2015 through Standing Committee Decision SC46-28 and published on the Ramsar website, taking into account issues, among others, of governance, capacity, fundraising, and programmatic approach in alignment with the Ramsar Strategic Plan, and adopt the necessary amendments no later than the 52nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC52);
10. APPROVES the validity and use of the *Operational Guidelines for regional initiatives*, as adopted for 2013-2015, for the period 2016-2018, until the amendments requested are adopted by the Standing Committee;
11. INSTRUCTS all regional initiatives endorsed by the Convention to continue to submit to the Standing Committee annual reports on their progress and operations, and specifically on their success in fulfilling the *Operational Guidelines*, and to continue to submit annual plans according to the timetable and format adopted by the Standing Committee;
12. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to continue to assess annually, based on the reports submitted, according to the format adopted through Standing Committee Decision SC41-21, the functioning of Ramsar regional initiatives in relation to the *Operational Guidelines*, the implementation of the Convention and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, seeking support from the CEPA Oversight Panel as required;
13. EMPHASIZES the importance for regional initiatives to establish governance and financial structures which are transparent, accountable, and permit and motivate the participation and representation of all their relevant parties, including the participation of government agencies and non-governmental organizations;
14. DECIDES to include financial support in the Convention core budget line “Support to Regional Initiatives”, as listed in Resolution XII.1 on financial and budgetary matters, to support running costs of operational regional initiatives during the period 2016-2018 which fully meet the *Operational Guidelines*;
15. FURTHER DECIDES that the levels of financial support from the Convention core budget to individual regional initiatives for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 will be determined annually by the Standing Committee, based on the most recent reports and updated work plans to be submitted according to the required format and timetable, and informed by the specific recommendations made by the Subgroup on Finance;
16. STRONGLY URGES those regional initiatives that receive financial support from the core budget to use part of this support to seek sustainable long-term funding from other sources, particularly during the second triennium in which they qualify for such support;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other potential donors to support regional initiatives, whether or not they are also receiving funding through the Convention’s core budget, and URGES Contracting Parties geographically related to a regional initiative that have not yet done so to provide formal letters of support as well as financial support;
18. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to publicize at global level regional initiatives as an operational means to provide support for the implementation of the objectives of the Ramsar

Convention to complement the efforts of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities at national level and the regional initiatives themselves;

19. REQUESTS the regional initiatives to maintain active and regular contact with the Secretariat, to ensure that the global Ramsar guidelines are applied and that the strategic and operational objectives of regional initiatives are in full harmony with the Convention's Strategic Plan, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to support and advise regional initiatives, according to its means, to reinforce their capacity and effectiveness;
20. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue publishing information provided by the regional initiatives, including reports on their success in fulfilling the *Operational Guidelines* and work plans, on the Convention's website, to make it accessible for the parties and the public;
21. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat i) to assess the achievements of regional initiatives in delivering technical, administrative and collaborative benefits to the Parties in their regions, as well as their effectiveness and efficiency, ii) to analyse weaknesses, strengths and difficulties of regional initiative implementation and management, and iii) to formulate recommendations for improving the Operational Guidelines for regional initiatives to support the implementation of the Convention;;
22. URGES STRP members and National Focal Points to apply experiences of regional initiatives in their work;
23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES international organizations and regional and subregional multilateral agreements to identify, for possible inclusion among regional initiatives, transboundary river/groundwater basin organizations;
24. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to prepare a summary of its annual assessments, which reviews the operations and success of the regional initiatives operating during the period 2016-2018, for Contracting Parties' consideration at the 13th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties; and
25. TAKES NOTES of the dialogue and coordination to be established between Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, in accordance with their possibilities and financial capacities, to develop an integrated vision for the Pantanal region; and ENCOURAGES, given the important role of the conservation and sustainable development of the Pantanal region for the maintenance of ecosystem functions in the countries of the La Plata river basin, this dialogue and the generated efforts to be integrated into the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of the Plata River Basin in coordination with Argentina and Uruguay.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.9

The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024

1. RECALLING that the Contracting Parties through Resolution X.8 adopted the third CEPA Programme for the Convention (for the term 2009-2015) and introduced participation as an important component of CEPA programmes in recognition of the role that participation can play in building awareness, engagement and capacity;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Ramsar Convention's stakeholders recognize that CEPA has an important role to play in the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
3. RECOGNIZING that as of 1 June 2014, 129 Contracting Parties had designated Government CEPA Focal Points and 98 Parties had designated national Non-governmental Organization CEPA Focal Points, but CONCERNED that that this represents a reduction in designations since the last triennium, and so limits the opportunities for coordinating CEPA delivery, and indeed broader implementation of the Convention;
4. CONGRATULATING the 30% of Contracting Parties which have reported carrying out CEPA activities at Site level and particularly those which have incorporated these into wetland management plans, the 66% of Parties which have developed wetland centres at some Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, the 70% of Parties which promote participation in wetland planning and management, and the 90% of Parties which reported celebrating World Wetlands Day, but NOTING the number of Parties that still have to make significant progress in many of these areas;
5. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE to the Danone Group for its continuing sponsorship of outreach activities under the Convention, and particularly the support for the annual World Wetlands Day campaign; and
6. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the work done by the Ramsar Secretariat and the CEPA Oversight Panel in developing the new programme and the Panel's oversight of the implementation of CEPA programmes since 2005;

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7. ADOPTS the Convention's *Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024* which is at Annex 1 to this Resolution, as an instrument to provide guidance to Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Secretariat, the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs), NGOs, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders in the development of appropriate actions to engage, enlist and enable people to

act for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

8. CONFIRMS that this Resolution and its Annex incorporates the key recommendations from Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31, and X.8;
9. REQUESTS the Standing Committee at its 51st Meeting to establish a mechanism of the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat which will guide the communication activities of the Secretariat, including setting priorities and guiding the design of the Secretariat's CEPA Action Plan, monitor the effectiveness of the Plan, and report to the Management Working Group at each of its meetings, and FURTHER REQUESTS that the resulting mechanism work to develop with advice of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) a new approach for advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention to be submitted to the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP13).
10. CONFIRMS that this Resolution incorporates advice on participation provided in Resolutions VII.8 and VIII.28;
11. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to continue to monitor and report on CEPA issues at the national level within the Convention and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme as established by this Resolution, and to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on the CEPA work priorities at the national and international levels;
12. URGES all Contracting Parties that have yet to do so to nominate as a matter of priority suitably qualified Government and Non-governmental Organization Focal Points for wetland CEPA and to inform the Ramsar Secretariat accordingly, and URGES Parties to ensure that the CEPA Focal Points are members of the National Ramsar/Wetlands Committee where these exist;
13. INVITES all Contracting Parties, as suggested in Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31, X.8 and in the CEPA Programme 2016-2024, to formulate their Wetland CEPA Action Plans (at national, subnational, catchment, or local levels) for priority activities that address international, regional, national, and local needs, and as appropriate to provide copies of these to the Ramsar Secretariat as a part of their national reporting, in order for these to be shared as examples of good practice, and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to provide relevant information to the Regional Initiatives on priorities and activities, to support delivery of the CEPA Programme;
14. ENCOURAGES all Contracting Parties to seek to develop and implement their Wetland CEPA Action Plans and planning as integrated components of their broader environment, biodiversity, wetland and water management, education, health, and poverty reduction policy instruments and mainstreamed in relevant programmes, at decentralized level where appropriate, and to ensure that CEPA is recognized as underpinning the effective delivery of these activities;
15. CALLS UPON those Contracting Parties with Wetland CEPA Action Plans to evaluate the effectiveness of those Plans on a regular basis, including how the people are appreciative of the values of wetlands, the challenges they face, and the steps they can take to conserve and use wetlands sustainably, and to amend their priority actions where necessary;
16. REITERATES the call to multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector sponsors to support appropriate actions as set out in the Ramsar CEPA Programme 2016-2024;
17. REQUESTS the Secretariat subject to available resources to assist in strengthening the capacity of the CEPA Focal Points through the provision of training, toolkits, and templates for CEPA

action planning, and further URGES the Secretariat to provide technical support for CEPA National Focal Points through the establishment of a network for their knowledge sharing;

18. REQUESTS the Secretariat to seek improved cooperation between Multilateral Environmental Agreements, through the Biodiversity Liaison Group, to deliver capacity building;
19. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to accelerate its efforts in facilitating the mobilization of resources through its partnership coordination mechanism to ensure adequate resourcing of the implementation of the CEPA Programme;
20. RECOGNIZES the growing celebration of World Wetlands Day in a large number of countries, and URGES Contracting Parties to continue, or to begin, to use this occasion to bring attention to their achievements and continuing challenges in wetland conservation and wise use;
21. ENCOURAGES those Contracting Parties with established, or proposed, wetland education centres and/or similar facilities to support the development of those centres as key places of learning and training about wetlands and wetland-related CEPA and to support their participation in global networks of such centres and RECOGNIZES the importance of adequate human resources in successful implementation of CEPA Programme not only via such centres, but also other means (e.g. interpretation programmes) and further REQUESTS the Secretariat to compile a list of global networks and make it available on the Ramsar website.
22. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilize and support the capacity of the Ramsar Regional Centres in wetland training in their respective regions both for their staff, other wetland professionals and a wider public audience;
23. INVITES the IOPs, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and other organizations with which the Ramsar Secretariat has collaborative agreements to support the implementation of the CEPA Programme at the global, regional, national or local levels, as appropriate, with the expertise, networks, skills and resources they have at their disposal;
24. INVITES the Ramsar CEPA National Focal Points and the CEPA Oversight Panel to promote synergies with other Conventions' CEPA programmes and with programmes and initiatives of other governmental and non-governmental actors at the international, regional, national and local levels;
25. INVITES those Parties with other national and local languages than the three official languages of the Convention to consider translating key Ramsar guidance and guidelines as well as communication, capacity building and educational materials as appropriate into those languages in order to make them more widely available through, for example, the Ramsar Regional Centres and the Ramsar website, and INVITES the IOPs and Ramsar Regional Centres also to make a contribution to such translations;
26. REQUESTS the Secretary General to improve the current Ramsar official website in cooperation with Standing Committee and other interested Parties and bodies of the Convention to serve the purpose of the different targeted audiences including, for example, the bodies of the Convention, the Regional Centres, Site managers and donor organizations; and
27. REQUESTS the Secretary General to report on the progress of improving the Ramsar website to the Standing Committee and to COP13.

Annex 1

The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024

Background

This is the Convention's fourth CEPA Programme and it will operate for a nine-year period. It has been developed in conjunction with the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention adopted at COP12 and is consistent with this document. It replaces the annexes to Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31 and X.8. Appendix 1 includes an explanation of the key terms associated with this Programme, including communication, education, participation, awareness, and capacity building. Appendix 2 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the CEPA National Focal Points. Appendix 3 includes the possible target groups and stakeholders of Ramsar's CEPA programme for 2016-2024.

Promoting ecosystem functions and services and supporting Contracting Parties with high quality guidance to manage wetlands wisely are central to the Ramsar Convention. The Convention considers communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness as important tools to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan. The Convention recommends that communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness are employed in all areas and at all levels. This programme provides a set of strategies to guide the delivery of that recommendation. The commitment of the Contracting Parties in the last triennium is reviewed in detail in Ramsar COP11 DOC.14.

Support for the CEPA Programme should therefore be seen as an investment which aims to help decision-makers and mobilise local and national-scale actions directed at achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands, in support of the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Vision

The vision of the Ramsar Convention's CEPA Programme is the same as the vision of the Strategic Plan:

"Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all"

The over-arching Goal of the Ramsar Convention's CEPA Programme

"People taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands"

Goals and targets

This Programme identifies the vision through nine Goals and the results that should be achieved by means of 43 targets. The programme covers full range of CEPA actors but not all goals and targets apply at every level.

Goal 1 Ensure leadership to support effective implementation of the Programme by providing institutional mechanisms and establishing and supporting relevant networks.
Supports Goal 4 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024

- Goal 2 Integrate CEPA processes, where appropriate, into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.
Supports Goal 4 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 3 Provide support to implementers of wise use principles, especially those with a direct role in site management.
Supports Goal 3 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 4 Build the individual, institutional and collective capacity of people with a direct responsibility for Ramsar implementation.
Supports Goal 2 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 5 Develop and support mechanisms to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in wetland management.
Supports Goal 2 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 6 Implement programmes, projects and campaigns targeting diverse sectors of society to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide.
Supports Goal 3 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 7 Recognize and support the role of wetland centres and other environmental centres as catalysts and key actors for activities that promote Ramsar objectives.
Supports Goal 3 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 8 Support the development and distribution of education materials that build awareness of ecosystem values and services and the value of wetlands for use in formal education settings, at Ramsar Sites and by all Ramsar actors.
Supports Goal 3 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024
- Goal 9 Ensure that the guidance and information provided by the STRP is developed in line with adopted Resolution and in close collaboration with the CEPA programme and dissemination to the identified target audiences is ensured through the most effective communications channels.
Supports Goals 1 and 4 of the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024

Implementation of the Programme must be undertaken by a number of responsible bodies and partners of the Convention including, *inter alia*:

- AA: Administrative Authority in each country, including the AA National Focal Points
- CEPA: Convention's CEPA National Focal Points, both government and NGO
- NRC: National Ramsar Committees / National Wetlands Committees (or equivalent bodies), where they exist
- RamSec: Ramsar Convention Secretariat
- STRP Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel
- STRP NFP STRP National Focal Points
- IOPs: International Organization Partners, at present BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN, Wetlands International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- RRCs: Ramsar Regional Centres endorsed by the Convention as Ramsar Regional Initiatives
- SM: Site managers

WEC:	Wetland education/visitor centres
PS:	Private sector organizations whose activities directly or indirectly affect wetlands
CSO:	Civil Society Organizations such as national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs)
RRI:	Ramsar Regional Initiatives

This is an indicative list of key actors that may change during the life of the Programme and will undoubtedly vary to some extent from one country to another. As a broad guide to actors that could contribute to achieving the results, suggested implementers of each target are indicated below using the abbreviations above, for example {AA}.

Goals and targets

Goal 1	Ensure leadership to support effective implementation of the Programme by providing institutional mechanisms and establishing and supporting relevant networks.
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- 1.1 Appropriately experienced people to fill the roles of National Government and Non-governmental Organization CEPA Focal Points (see Appendix 2) nominated by Contracting Parties and communicated to the Ramsar Secretariat. {AA , CSO}
- 1.2 National Ramsar/Wetland Committees established to collaborate with relevant government departments and institutions to mainstream wetlands and their ecosystem services. {AA, NRC}
- 1.3 National Focal Points (AA, CEPA and STRP) included as members of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees where these exist. {AA, NRC}
- 1.4 Email networks that connect and support Administrative Authorities, National Focal Points, Site managers and other Ramsar implementers established and supported at global and national levels. {RamSec, AA, STRP, IOPs}
- 1.5 Relationships developed and maintained with those organizations that can support Ramsar objectives through their expertise, their traditional knowledge, their human resources or through funding established and fostered. {RamSec, AA, IOPs}
- 1.6 Effectiveness of strategies, especially regarding development and distribution of materials on wetland education and management, the success of campaigns under WWD evaluated. {RamSec, AAs, NRC, NFPs}

Goal 2	Integrate CEPA processes, where appropriate, into all levels of policy development, planning and implementation of the Convention.
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- 2.1 CEPA expertise involved in the development of guidance by the Convention's bodies including the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and Standing Committee (SC). {RamSec, STRP}
- 2.2 Wetland communication (CEPA) plans developed at the appropriate level by Parties (national, basin or site) to support Ramsar implementers. {AA, NRC, CSO}
- 2.3 Where appropriate, wetland CEPA integrated into national policy and planning relevant to wetlands. {AA, CEPA, NRC}

Goal 3	Provide support to implementers of wise use principles, especially those with a direct role in site management.
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- 3.1 The Strategic Plan 2016-2024 adopted by COP12 disseminated and promoted.
- 3.2 Appropriate guidance materials that support and encourage the wise use of wetlands produced for use at Ramsar Sites and other wetlands and by wetland networks. {RamSec, STRP, IOPs, CSO}
- 3.3 Websites, including the Convention's website, to be further developed to be fit for purpose and be a useful platform for the sharing of information and resources, including the sharing of information and experiences among CEPA National Focal Points. {RamSec, STRP, AA}
- 3.4 Appropriate Ramsar Sites and other wetlands to be celebrated as "demonstration sites" for the wise use principle, and these sites suitably equipped in terms of capacity, signage, and interpretive materials. {AA, CEPA, IOPs, CSO, STRP NFPs}
- 3.5 Secretariat requested to share CEPA stories which illustrate how integration of CEPA can improve wetland management. {RamSec}
- 3.6 Collaboration on CEPA with other Conventions, Ramsar's IOPs, other NGOs, UN agencies and others ensured through sharing of CEPA experiences and the encouragement of synergies. {RamSec, IOPs, CSO, AA, CEPA}

Goal 4	Build the individual, institutional and collective capacity of people with a direct responsibility for Ramsar implementation.
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- 4.1 Site managers supported to build communication, education, participation and awareness into their management plans. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, RRCs, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 4.2 Current needs and capacities of wetland site managers and National Focal Points assessed and the results used to define training and capacity-building priorities at regional and national levels. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, RRCs, STRP NFP}
- 4.3 Resources provided to produce appropriate wetland management training and capacity building materials and carry out the prioritized training and capacity building as identified in 4.2. {RamSec, AA, CEPA, STRP, SM, RRCs, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 4.4 A network of Ramsar Regional Centres working to agreed standards (such as peer reviewed materials) supported to deliver capacity building to site managers, National Focal Points and other relevant stakeholders. {RamSec, RRCs, STRP}
- 4.5 Partnerships with tertiary education institutions and other relevant organisations are developed to support the production and delivery of wetland management training and capacity building materials and programmes. {RamSec, STRP, RRCs, CSO, PS, AA, CEPA, STRP NFP}
- 4.6 National strategic plans that strengthen the technical capacity and management of local authorities to incorporate environmental benefits and services of wetlands as strategies for local and regional development promoted. {AA, CEPA}

Goal 5	Develop and support mechanisms to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in wetland management.
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- 5.1 Participation of major stakeholders used by site managers and others as an effective process for selection of Ramsar Sites and management of all wetlands, including at basin level. {AA, SM, CEPA, CSO, STRP NFP}
- 5.2 Participation in wetland management of stakeholder groups with cultural, spiritual, customary, traditional, historical and socio-economic links to wetlands or those communities who depend on wetlands for their livelihoods is given a high priority. {AA, SM, CEPA, CSO, RRI}
- 5.3 The use of practices and traditional knowledge systems that embody appropriate wetland cultural management by indigenous peoples and local communities recovered, strengthened and encouraged. {AA, CEPA}
- 5.4 Encourage community participation in wetlands through volunteer programmes which support the delivery of management objectives. {AA, SM, CSO}
- 5.5 Relationships with the private sector are sought and developed, including non-traditional sectors and those sectors whose activities have a major impact on wise use of wetlands. {AA, NRC, SM, PS}

Goal 6	Implement programmes, projects and campaigns targeting diverse sectors of society to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide.
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- 6.1 Wide-reaching programmes, projects and campaigns, including World Wetlands Day, undertaken with diverse partners to raise awareness, build community support, and promote stewardship approaches and attitudes towards wetlands, in particular through the use of social media. {RamSec, AA, NRC, CEPA, SM, IOPs, RRCs, PS, CSO}
- 6.2 Awareness enhanced on the monetary and non-monetary values of wetlands and their ecosystem services to improve understanding of the benefits which wetlands provide. {RamSec, STRP, AA, CEPA, SM, STRP NFP}
- 6.3 Photo libraries, promotional videos and other similar tools developed and/or maintained to support awareness raising and appreciation of wetlands and their ecosystem services. {RamSec, AA, CEPA}
- 6.4 Collaboration with the media, including social media, carried out to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and recognition of their ecosystem services to decision-makers, key wetland users and the broad public. {RamSec, AA, CEPA}

Goal 7	Recognize and support the role of wetland centres and other environmental centres as catalysts and key actors for activities that promote Ramsar objectives.
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- 7.1 Wetland education/interpretation or visitor centres and similar facilities established in all countries as resources permit. {AA, IOPs, WEC}

- 7.2 National CEPA Focal Points communicating directly with wetland education/visitor centres to support their delivery of Ramsar messages. {AA CEPA, WEC}
- 7.3 Wetland education/visitor centres linked nationally and internationally through, global mechanisms and national expertise in CEPA, to share experience and resources, for example through the Wetland Link International (WLI) programme of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, WWT (UK) and other initiatives. {AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 7.4 Partnerships established with other education centres that could play a role in promoting wetlands and Ramsar objectives. {AA, CEPA, RRCs, WEC}
- 7.5 A comprehensive database of wetland education centres set up, to be managed through the WLI network. Contracting parties to be encouraged to provide information on wetland centres as part of their national reporting. {RamSec, CEPA, IOPs, CSO, STRP NFPs}

Goal 8	Support the development and distribution of education materials that build awareness of ecosystem values and services and the value of wetlands for use in formal education settings, at Ramsar Sites and by all Ramsar actors.
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- 8.1 Wetland education materials that build awareness of the values of wetlands and their ecosystem services developed, promoted and distributed among relevant target audiences. {STRP, AA, CEPA, WEC, STRP NFP}
- 8.2 Tertiary education institutions, especially those with water and wetland programmes, contributed to the production of targeted wetland education materials. {STRP, AA, CEPA, WEC}
- 8.3 Cultural and traditional wetland knowledge and practices are incorporated into wetland education materials. {WEC, CEPA}
- 8.4 Key messages about wetlands and their ecosystem services regularly reviewed through dialogue and feedback with all Ramsar actors. {RamSec, AA}.

Goal 9	Ensure that the guidance and information provided by the STRP is developed in line with adopted Resolution XII.5 and in close collaboration with the CEPA programme and dissemination to the identified target audiences is ensured through the most effective communications channels-
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- 9.1 A series of information fact sheets developed based on identified and agreed large scale questions as key awareness raising outreach tools. {RamSec, STRP}.
- 9.2 The Ramsar Briefing Notes and Ramsar Technical Reports developed and disseminated as pragmatic, working advisory documents targeting policy-makers or wetland practitioners and to ensure consistency and Ramsar branding. {RamSec, STRP}
- 9.3 The content of Wise Use Handbooks reconfigured as training resource materials that summarize wise use site management and effective policy-making. {RamSec}.
- 9.4 The current STRP website integrated into the Ramsar website. {RamSec}.

Appendix 1

Definitions and principles underpinning CEPA

In applying this Programme, it is important that Contracting Parties and other interest groups share a common understanding of what is meant by the concepts that underpin the acronym CEPA.

Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness are all processes that can be used for specific purposes and specific target audiences to deliver CEPA aims.

Definitions and principles provided here have been used in formulating this programme and are drawn from recognised sources and practitioners in this field. The sources are provided at the end of the document.

Definitions

Communication under the Ramsar Convention can be defined as the interactive process between stakeholders to exchange information, knowledge and skills on the conservation and wise use of wetlands to ensure that all stakeholders are able to make informed decisions.

Capacity building, also referred to as **Capacity development**, concerns institutional change. It is a process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge to improve their ability, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives (OECD, 2006).

Education in its broadest sense is a life-long learning process that can inform, motivate, and empower people to support wetland conservation, not only by fostering changes in the way that individuals, institutions, businesses and governments operate, but also by inducing lifestyle changes. It may take place in both formal and informal settings (e.g., interpretation programmes).

Training is the process of increasing or strengthening an individual's specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that can be taken back to the workplace. It may take place in both formal and informal settings.

Awareness-raising is an agenda-setting and advocacy exercise that triggers your target group to understand why wetland issues are important to address and what they can do to improve the situation at stake. It is a constructive and potentially catalytic force that is ultimately aimed at stimulating your target group (which could include a multitude of stakeholders) to take action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands (based on Sayer, 2006).

Participation is the involvement of "stakeholders" in the common development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Levels of involvement and kinds of participation can be highly variable, depending upon both the specific context and the decisions of the individuals, groups and institutions leading the process. An indicative list of the range of possible levels and kinds of participation is shown in Box 1 below.

Box 1: Levels of participation**Self-Mobilization**

In this model, people participate by taking initiatives to change systems independently of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power, but they do tend to foster the most long-lasting sense of “ownership” in the outcomes.

Interactive Participation

People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans, and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation may be seen as an inherent right, not just as a means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources should be used, they often feel an increasing stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Functional Participation

Participation is sometimes seen by the relevant authorities chiefly as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision making, but it frequently tends to arise only after the most important decisions have already been made by the authorities.

Participation for Material Incentives

People can participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labour, for example, whilst not being directly involved in experimentation or the process of learning. It is not uncommon to see this called ‘participation’ in a full sense, but in this case people typically have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.

Participation by Consultation

People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. Project authorities define problems and information-gathering processes, and thus tend to control analysis of the responses. Such a consultative process often does not imply a share of participants in decision making, and project staff are not under an obligation or do not feel obliged to take people’s views on board.

Passive Participation or Participation by being given Information

People participate by being informed on what has been decided or has already happened. It tends more to involve announcements by an administration or project management than to reflect active attention to other people’s ideas and responses. The information being shared tends to belong only to project staff.

Manipulative Participation

At this extreme, participation is simply a pretence, with ‘people’s’ representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power.

Adapted from: *Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development*, Environmental Planning Issues No. 7, May 1995 by Stephen Bass, Barry Dalal-Clayton and Jules Pretty, Environmental Planning Group, International Institute for Environment and Development.

Principles

The CEPA Toolkit developed for CBD National Focal Points introduces CEPA as a tool to effectively engage and manage multi-stakeholder dialogue to plan and implement policy. With appropriate handling (i.e. actively and effectively applying communication, education, participation and awareness principles), these processes develop a sense of ownership of problems. The principles listed below do not form an all-inclusive list but are provided to assist you in developing strategies in your own context.

Communication principles

Some general essential principles on communication:

- Effective communication requires trust between parties or at least mutual respect, therefore, first of all know your audience.
- Effective communication depends on clarity and simplicity: avoid the use of jargon and buzz words; communicate a little at a time; present information in several ways and use multiple communication techniques.
- Know your purpose and know your topic and be prepared to back up with stories or facts.
- One of the major barriers to communication is our own ideas and opinions: listen to the actual message rather than to your own assumptions.
- The meaning of the message is “in the receiver” not in the sender.
- Getting and giving feedback is one of the most crucial parts of effective communication. Like any other activity, there are specific skills that can enhance feedback and listening is a key skill.
- Develop practical and useful ways to get feedback.
- Selling new ideas takes a lot of time and a lot of effort before they can be implemented.

Principles on capacity building and education

- Capacity building takes place within individuals or groups of people and cannot be forced upon them: you cannot “do” capacity building for others, it is an internal process.
- Adults are far more likely to reject information that contradicts their own life experiences or beliefs (Sayers, 2006).
- Everybody learns differently: capacity building requires multiple strategies, methods and techniques to serve multiple needs.
- Developing capacity is impacted significantly by the learning environment: create a stimulating learning environment.
- Adults especially need to understand the big picture to recognize the value of each piece of information they encounter.
- Establish connections between information received and knowledge already possessed.
- Participants’ feedback is vital for the effective building of capacity.

Participation Principles

- Encourage active participation of stakeholders in selection and management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands.
- In considering participation of stakeholders, it is recommended to carefully consider the appropriate level of participation. See Levels of participation, Box 1.
- Create, as appropriate, the legal, policy and institutional system to facilitate stakeholder involvement in national and local decision-making for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- Wise use of wetlands is synonymous with mutual benefits for the wetlands and for human well-

- being; this cannot be achieved without participation of stakeholders.
- Traditional knowledge and experience of wetland systems should be used to assist in management of wetlands and complements scientific knowledge.
- Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities with a cultural, spiritual, historical and/or economic interest in a particular wetland is integral to the development of sustainable management systems.
- Participation supports building awareness, knowledge and management skills over time.
- Ensuring participation of stakeholders increases commitment and ownership.

Principles on Awareness-raising

- Ensuring that awareness is raised on a certain wetland issue or challenge does not simply mean to inform people, it means addressing people's beliefs and convictions.
- If awareness is raised it does not necessarily lead to people taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Long lasting change requires skills and incentives to change.
- People taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands requires 7 steps:
 - a. Knowledge: your target group knows there is an issue;
 - b. Desire: your target group imagines a different future;
 - c. Skills - your target group knows what to do to achieve that future;
 - d. Optimism - your target group has confidence or belief in success;
 - e. Facilitation - your target group has the resources and supportive infrastructure to take action;
 - f. Stimulation - your target group receives compelling stimuli that promote action;
 - g. Reinforcement - your target group receives messages regularly that reinforce the original message or messages (Robinson (1998), cited in Sayers (2006)).
- Keep the target group you wish to address as specific as possible: more focus often has more impact.
- From awareness-raising to people taking action for the conservation and wise use of wetlands requires continuous planning, monitoring, evaluation and facilitation.

Principles are based on:

Castello, Riccardo Del and Paul Mathias Braun, (2006). Framework on Effective Rural Communication for Development. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). Rome, 2006.

CBD, UNESCO, Commission on Education and Communication, IUCN, (no year). Mainstreaming Biological Diversity. The role of communication, education and public awareness. http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/cec_mainstreaming_biological_diversity_cepa_eng.pdf.

Hesselink, Frits, Wendy Goldstein, Peter Paul van Kempen, Tommy Garnett and Jinie Dela, (2007). Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). A toolkit for National Focal Points and NBSAP coordinators (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and IUCN: Montreal, Canada.

Gevers, Ingrid and Esther Koopmanschap, (2012). Enhancing the Wise Use of Wetlands. A Framework for Capacity Development. Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research centre. ISBN 978-94-6173-406-8. <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/cop11/doc/cop11-doc34-e-capacity.pdf>

Lucas, Robert W. (2003). The creative training idea book: inspired tips and techniques for engaging

and effective learning. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. ISBN 0-8144- 0733-1.

OECD, (2006). DAC Guidelines and Reference Series Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment: Good Practice Guidance for Development Co-operation, OECD, Paris.

Sayers, Richard.(2006). Principles of awareness-raising: Information literacy, a case study. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2006. 124 pages. 1. Information literacy. 2. Public awareness. ISBN 92-9223-082-4. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001476/147637e.pdf>

Appendix 2

Roles and responsibilities of the CEPA National Focal Points

1. In Resolution IX.18 adopted at COP9 in November 2005, the Parties instructed the Standing Committee at its 34th meeting (SC34) to establish a CEPA Oversight Panel, one of the key tasks of which would be to clarify the broad roles of the two Government and Non-governmental CEPA National Focal Points (NFPs) nominated by each Party. (Full details on the task of the CEPA Oversight Panel are available at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_oversight_panel.htm.)
2. The roles and responsibilities of the CEPA NFPs were discussed at the first meeting of the CEPA Panel in May 2006 and endorsed by SC35. The text below reflects their deliberations and should be used by Parties to guide their decisions on the nomination, roles, and responsibilities of their CEPA NFPs.
3. The rationale for the nomination of CEPA NFPs and key factors to be taken into consideration by Contracting Parties:
 - It is important that both CEPA NFPs be nominated since they bring different skills to the CEPA Programme.
 - Nominating a representative of an active NGO engages the NGO members in the CEPA Programme, gives recognition to their work, and can often bring additional funding to a CEPA programme.
 - While it is preferable that the Government NFP should be a CEPA expert, it is recognized that many Parties may not be willing to nominate a person outside of their Administrative Authority, which frequently means that the nominated person will not be a CEPA expert *per se*.
 - Some Government NFPs are nominated from within their Administrative Authority and are not necessarily CEPA experts, which allows for the inclusion of broader skill sets and knowledge.
 - Maintaining continuity in the national CEPA programmes is important, and with frequent Government NFP changes, the less frequent changes in the NGO NFP representation could help provide some continuity.
 - Collaboration between the two NFPs on their country's CEPA programme is actively encouraged.
 - The NFPs have a key role as members of the National Ramsar/ Wetland Committee, where these exist, promoting close contact with other key Administrative Authority personnel (such as the Daily Contact and the STRP NFP).
 - Close consultation is desirable between the CEPA NFPs and the Administrative Authority during the completion of the CEPA-related questions in the National Reports to the COPs.
4. It is ultimately the task of each Contracting Party to agree precise roles and responsibilities for their nominated CEPA National Focal Points (NFPs). These roles and expectations must reflect the capacity to operate at different levels and the resourcing of the individuals filling the positions. The Contracting Parties should provide some information to potential NFPs of the expected time required to fulfill their role and responsibilities.
5. **Suggested major roles and responsibilities of the CEPA NFPs.** In providing a supportive environment in which wetland CEPA planners and practitioners can develop their work, NFPs should:

- provide leadership for the development and implementation of a wetland CEPA Action Plan at an appropriate level (national, subnational, local) as described in this Resolution and annexed Programme;
- be the main points of contact on CEPA matters between a) the Secretariat and the Contracting Party and b) between Contracting Parties;
- be key members of the National Ramsar/Wetland Committees (if such a body exists) or similar national structures;
- assist in the practical CEPA implementation at the national level and in national reporting on CEPA activities to the Ramsar Conference of the Parties;
- ensure a high, positive public profile for the Ramsar Convention and its conservation and wise use goals;
- be active spokespersons for wetland CEPA; and
- establish and maintain any contacts, networks, structures and mechanisms necessary to ensure the effective communication of information between relevant actors at all levels and in all sectors.

Appendix 3

Possible target groups and stakeholders of the Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024

1. There are a large number of possible target groups for this CEPA Programme which fall within the broadest category of the general community or civil society. This Appendix identifies 27 subgroups of civil society which can make a significant and immediate difference in the status and long-term sustainability of wetlands.
2. Contracting Parties and others are urged to take this Appendix into consideration for their own situations in determining which of these are their highest priority target groups in developing CEPA planning and action.
3. A fundamental assumption of the CEPA Programme is that the actions taken in response will result in an increasing number of "actors" who become agents, ambassadors or advocates for the Convention on Wetlands and its principles. Support for the CEPA Programme should therefore be seen as an investment which aims to help decision-makers and mobilize local and national-scale actions directed at achieving the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

A. GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale for engagement
Environmental policy makers and planners within local administrations, provincial/state and national government administrations	As key decision-makers at the local, sub-regional and national scales their actions can impact wetlands positively or negatively at the local level or catchment/river basin scale.
Wetland site managers (wardens, rangers, etc.) within local, provincial/state, national government administrations, including catchment or river basin authorities	These individuals are key to effective management and to gaining local support and participation.
National Administrative Authorities of the Ramsar Convention	They take the lead at the national level in implementing the Convention.
National Administrative Authorities and Focal Points for other environment-related conventions	They have the capacity to help deliver a more integrated approach to managing land and water resources, including wetlands.
National Ramsar Committees and other similar consultative and advisory committees for Ramsar	They have an important role in advising governments on implementation of Ramsar and the other conventions.
Ministers responsible for sustainable development and education portfolios and environment-related conventions as well as Members of Parliament – national, state/provincial and local.	Their direct input to policy setting, budget allocation, etc. can be important for supporting Ramsar implementation. Members of Parliament in the opposition parties may be in this position in the future.
National aid agencies, bilateral donors	They deal with governments on a range of sustainable development issues.
Ambassadors and the staff of overseas missions.	They can assist in ensuring that national governments are better informed about Ramsar.

B. THE EDUCATION SECTOR AND LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale for engagement
Education ministries, curriculum development authorities, examination boards and universities, in-service trainers, etc.	All these sectors in education can assist in including wetland conservation and wise use issues in school and other formal curricula.
National and international teachers' associations	In some countries the incorporation of Ramsar/wetland principles into curricula and learning programmes generally can be accelerated through working collaboratively with teacher associations.
National and international networks, associations and councils of environmental education	Wetlands and water issues can be incorporated into the curricula and other materials being developed by these organizations.
Wetland/environment centres, zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens, etc.	These institutions have the capacity to promote the Ramsar message to a broad range of visitors.
National and international networks of libraries	Library networks provide an excellent avenue for making information on Ramsar and wetlands more accessible to the general community.

C. CIVIL SOCIETY

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale for engagement
Landowners (especially those who are responsible for managing wetlands)	They make decisions which impact directly upon wetlands.
National and local non-government organizations	They can be vital for achieving action at national and local level.
Indigenous peoples and local communities	They may have useful knowledge of sustainable wetland management and may have an ongoing cultural association with wetlands.
Women	In many cultures women tend to be more entrepreneurial in the family unit, more amenable to changing lifestyle habits, and may communicate more often with the children within the family.
Children, youth	Children are the next generation of environmental managers and caretakers.
Those responsible for electronic and print media	They have the capacity to convey positive and informative messages about wetlands at local, national or international levels.
Community leaders and prominent people – athletes, sports people, religious leaders, artists, royalty, teachers, opinion leaders, etc.	Community leaders can use their public profile to draw attention to issues; and celebrity figures may be ideal ambassadors to promote the Ramsar message.

D. THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale for engagement
Potential sponsors, supporters	Business sponsors and supporters can assist the Convention develop wise use materials and activities at international, national and local levels and also ensure that their business activities are not contrary to the objectives of the Convention.
Key business sectors such as water and sanitation; irrigation and water supply; agriculture; mining; forestry; fishing; tourism; waste disposal; energy	They have the potential to have significant negative impacts on wetlands.
Professional Associations	Some of these will have the potential to have major negative impacts on wetlands.

E. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Target Group/Individuals	Rationale for engagement
Global organizations – World Bank, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Global Water Partnership, etc.	They work with governments on a range of sustainable development issues and may have access to funding programmes.
Regional organizations – South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, European Commission, Southern Africa Development Community, Regional Development Banks, ASEAN Environmental Programme, etc.	As above.
Global NGO partners (BirdLife, IWMI, IUCN, Wetlands International, Wetlands & Wildfowl Trust, and WWF) and other international and regional NGOs	While Ramsar's six official NGO partners are active in promoting the Ramsar Convention, there is a need to involve more regional and international NGOs in communicating the Ramsar message.
The secretariats of other environment-related instruments (CBD, UNCCD, CMS, UNFCCC, CITES, World Heritage, MAB)	Working with selected Secretariats can increase synergy among the conventions at the global and national scales bringing benefits for Ramsar.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.10

Wetland City¹ Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING the commitments made by Contracting Parties to achieving the wise use of all wetlands in their territory and to maintaining the ecological character of designated sites for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;
2. RECALLING also that Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization* underlined the importance of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments, and of their wise use;
3. FUTHER RECALLING Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* which detailed the objectives, principles, opportunities and potential solutions for the wise use of urban wetlands and requested the Convention to explore establishing a “wetland city accreditation” scheme, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands;
4. RECALLING that the Information Document 23 submitted to the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) entitled *Background and context to the development of principles and guidance for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* noted that more than 50% of the Earth’s population now resides in cities, towns and urban settlements; that this shift to a predominantly urban population is predicted to continue at rates up to almost 4% per annum, with the rate of increase in urban populations being greatest in the least developed nations; that some estimates suggest that, by 2030, 80% of the human population will dwell in urban areas; and that whilst cities currently only occupy 2% of the Earth’s surface, they use 75% of the world’s natural resources and generate 70% of all the waste produced globally;
5. NOTING also that with the increasingly rapid urbanization, wetlands are being threatened in two principle ways:
 - a. through direct planned or unplanned conversion of wetlands to urban areas, leading to acute problems associated with polluted drainage, direct habitat loss, overexploitation of wetland plants and animals by urban and peri-urban residents, and the increased prevalence of non-native invasive species, uncontrolled waste disposal etc.; and
 - b. through the watershed-related impacts of urban development, including increased demands for water, increased diffuse and point source pollution, the need for greater agricultural production, demands on the extractive industries to supply materials to support the development of urban infrastructure, and the water requirements of energy production to support the burgeoning urban population;

¹ A city as defined in this Resolution refers to a settlement which has its own governing system (i.e. a municipal authority or authorities).

6. CONSIDERING that with the growing impact of urbanization on wetlands the importance of urban and peri-urban wetlands for biodiversity as well as the quality of urban life becomes even more significant;
7. AWARE of the huge potential of urban areas in terms of education and public awareness related to wetlands conservation, including through wetland education centres, guided tours for the public in general and schools in particular, and various communication means such as World Wetlands Day celebration, production of film documentaries, media events, etc.;
8. FURTHER AWARE that Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness and attracting support for the wise use and conservation of wetlands and other sustainable development initiatives; and
9. TAKING into account the recommendations of workshops considering a city accreditation mechanism held in Morocco in 2012 and in the Republic of Korea and in Tunisia in 2014;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. APPROVES the establishment of a voluntary Wetland City accreditation system, which is Annexed to this Resolution;
11. DECIDES to review implementation progress and financing of the framework and the voluntary accreditation system at COP13;
12. INVITES Contracting Parties to propose for accreditation as a Wetland City those cities in their territory which are located close to Ramsar Sites and/or other significant wetlands that satisfy the criteria outlined below;
13. REQUESTS Contracting Parties which are interested to submit proposals for candidate cities consistent with the attached framework for the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention;
14. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat, through their relevant Senior Regional Advisors, to submit the nominations received to the Independent Advisory Committee for its consideration;
15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and their agencies including local stakeholders, local governments, or relevant equivalents, non-governmental organizations and other partners to disseminate information on the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention through communication and awareness materials, events, celebrations and media channels;
16. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to develop a global online network of cities which have obtained the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention; and
17. INVITES the International Organization Partners and other partners to promote the Ramsar Convention's branding through the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention, and promote local efforts to gain and maintain this branding, including through participation in and support to local management committees.

Annex

Framework for Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention

Introduction

1. At the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11), Resolution XI.11 was adopted on the *Principles for the sustainable planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands*. The Resolution recognizes that the Principles can also be applied to spatial planning and management in rural areas, as appropriate, and it urges Contracting Parties and other governments to act upon these Principles, further disseminate them to other interested parties (including through translation into local languages), and seek to ensure that they are taken up by the sectors and levels of government responsible for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban environments.
2. Resolution XI.11 also asked the Convention to explore establishing a “wetland city accreditation” system, which may in turn provide positive branding opportunities for cities that demonstrate strong and positive relationships with wetlands.
3. During the 47th meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee (SC47), the Republic of Korea presented a report on the workshop it organized on Ramsar city accreditation. Through Decision SC47-27, the Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to prepare a document for SC48 taking into account this report. In addition, it invited Tunisia, WWF, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and the Republic of Korea to prepare a draft resolution related to wetland city accreditation.
4. It is within this context that this Framework for the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention was developed.
5. This accreditation would encourage cities that are close to and depend on wetlands, primarily Wetlands of International Importance, but also other wetlands, to establish a positive relationship with these wetlands through increased participation and awareness and consideration of wetlands in local planning and decision making.
6. The Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention is so labelled in order to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands and regional and international co-operation, as well as to generate sustainable socio-economic benefits for the local populations.
7. A candidate city for the Wetland City accreditation would be approved as an accredited Wetland City by the Independent Advisory Committee, after being proposed by the Contracting Party on whose territory it stands and completing the accreditation procedure described below. Newly accredited cities join the global network of Wetland Cities established by this framework. Accreditation as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention is not intended to confer any legal rights or legal obligations on the city or the Contracting Party.
8. The aim of this Framework is to improve the local authority or authorities’ work with wetlands. This includes promoting conservation and wise use of wetlands within the local authorities’ boundaries, and when relevant, Ramsar Sites.

9. This framework establishes the procedure for the Wetland City accreditation and for its support and promotion. Each Contracting Party, as appropriate, is encouraged to consider local conditions when implementing the international criteria for the Wetland City accreditation.
10. The accredited Wetland Cities are intended to act as models for the study, demonstration and promotion of the Ramsar Convention's objectives, approaches, principles and resolutions.
11. An accredited Wetland City (urban or rural) is one which, through its inhabitants, its local government and its resources, continuously promotes the conservation and wise use of any Ramsar Site(s) and other wetlands within or nearby the limits of the city, respecting its physical and social environment and its heritage, while supporting the development of a sustainable, dynamic and innovative economy as well as educational initiatives in connection with these wetlands.
12. An eligible city for the Wetland City accreditation may be a city or any other type of human settlement according to the definitions given by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, with its own governance system.

Criteria

13. To be formally accredited, a candidate for the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention must satisfy the national standards used to implement each of the following international criteria:
 - a. It has one or more Ramsar Sites or other significant wetlands fully or partly situated in its territory or in its close vicinity, which provide(s) a range of ecosystems services to the city;
 - b. It has adopted measures for conservation of wetlands and their services including biodiversity and hydrological integrity;
 - c. It has implemented wetland restoration and/or management measures;
 - d. It considers the challenges and opportunities of integrated spatial/land-use planning for wetlands under its jurisdiction;
 - e. It has delivered locally adapted information to raise public awareness about the values of wetlands, and encouraged the wise use of wetlands by stakeholders through, for example, establishing wetland education/information centres; and
 - f. It has established a local Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention committee with appropriate knowledge and experience on wetlands and representation of and engagement with stakeholders to support the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention submission and the implementation of proper measures for fulfilling the obligations under the accreditation.
14. Examples for satisfying the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention criteria may include the following approaches:
 - a. Appropriate standards regarding water quality, sanitation and management in the entire area under the city's jurisdiction;

- b. Sustainable agricultural, forest, fish, aquaculture, tourism and pastoral production systems contributing to the conservation of the Ramsar Site(s);
- c. Evaluations of the socio-economic and cultural values as well as the ecosystem services of the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands, and good practices to conserve them; and
- d. Where appropriate, plans for disaster prevention and management which address hazards which relate to the Ramsar Site(s) and other significant wetlands such as accidental pollution or flooding.

Accreditation procedure

15. A city will be recognized as a Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention by the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the following procedure:
 - a. Any Contracting Party that wishes to participate in the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention shall undertake a national review to determine which cities to propose to the Independent Advisory Committee based on the proposed cities' compliance with the criteria outlined in paragraph 13 of this Framework ;
 - b. Any proposals from Contracting Parties shall be submitted to the Independent Advisory Committee within one year of the closing of the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - c. The Independent Advisory Committee shall review the applications and decide whether to accredit proposed cities, and report its decision at least 60 days in advance of the final full meeting of the Standing Committee prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - d. The Standing Committee shall review the report of the Independent Advisory Committee listing those cities approved for accreditation and transmit it to the Conference of the Parties;
 - e. The Secretary General shall provide the Contracting Party with an accreditation certificate, containing the Ramsar Convention logo, for the Wetland City, which is valid for six years; and
 - f. The status of each accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention can be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Committee upon the relevant Contracting Party's request every six years.

Independent Advisory Committee

16. It is proposed that the composition of the Independent Advisory Committee shall be chosen by the Standing Committee from the following:
 - a. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), who shall act as Chair of the Committee;
 - b. A representative of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) ;

- c. A representative of the Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners;
 - d. A Standing Committee member representative from each of the six Ramsar regions, selected by the regions;
 - e. One representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention;
 - f. A representative of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel of the Ramsar Convention;
 - g. The Ramsar Secretary General or his/her designated representative;
 - h. The Ramsar Senior Advisor for the concerned region (rapporteur); and
 - i. The coordinator of the Regional Initiative concerned, if any.
17. The Independent Advisory Committee may develop its own work plan and procedures for completing accreditation decisions within the timeframe and using the criteria outlined in paragraphs 13 and 15 of this Framework.
 18. The accredited Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention and the Contracting Party concerned are encouraged to disseminate information on the Wetland City accreditation, both locally and more widely, through events or national or international celebrations (World Wetlands Day, World Water Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, etc.) and through diverse media channels.
 19. Any costs for preparing and approving the Wetland City accreditation shall not be borne by the core budget of the Secretariat.
 20. The benefits of the Wetland City accreditation are to support the implementation of the principles adopted in Resolution XI.11 by (i) delivering the wise use of wetlands and avoiding any further degradation or loss of wetlands as a result of urban development or management, and (ii) promoting the contribution that wetlands make to the social and environmental sustainability of a Wetland City.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.11

Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention

1. RECOGNIZING that the ecological functions and ecosystem services performed by wetlands, including peatlands in all geographical regions, which contribute to human well-being, including of indigenous peoples and local communities, can be seriously degraded if the ecosystem is not managed wisely and AWARE that increased attention of the Ramsar Convention may be required to address this threat;
2. RECALLING that paragraph 13 of Resolution XI.14 recognized that scientific reports indicate that degradation and loss of many types of wetlands is occurring more rapidly than in other ecosystems and that climate change is likely to exacerbate this trend, which will further reduce the mitigation and adaptation capacity of wetlands and since the conservation and wise use of wetlands have the potential to halt this degradation, the designation of Ramsar Sites together with their effective management, as well as that of other wetlands, can, in some regions, play a vital role in carbon sequestration and storage and therefore in the mitigation of climate change;
3. RECALLING that paragraph 29 of Resolution XI.14 encouraged Contracting Parties and their representatives to reach out to their counterparts in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its relevant subsidiary bodies, in order to initiate and foster greater information exchange on the actual and potential roles of wetland conservation, management, and restoration activities in implementing relevant strategies, as appropriate, in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through enhancing carbon sequestration and storage in wetlands;
4. ALSO RECALLING paragraphs 32, 35 and 38 of Resolution X.24, which urged relevant Contracting Parties to take urgent action as far as possible and within national capacity, to reduce degradation, promote restoration, improve management practices of peatlands and other wetland types that are significant greenhouse gas sinks, and to encourage expansion of demonstration sites on peatland restoration and wise use management in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation activities; called on Ramsar Administrative Authorities to provide expert guidance and support, where appropriate, to the respective UNFCCC focal point, within the context of UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.13 on the joint policies and measures that are aimed to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from wetlands, such as peatlands where practical; and encouraged Contracting Parties to utilize peatlands to showcase the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness activities for implementation of the Convention in the context of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change;
5. FURTHER RECALLING that paragraph 4 of Resolution VIII.17 recognized the importance of peatlands for global biodiversity and for the storage of the water and carbon that is vital to the

world's climate system, and that paragraph 3 of the Annex to Resolution VIII.17 states that peatlands are recognized throughout the world as a vital economic and ecological resource;

6. NOTING that paragraph 17 of Resolution X.25 encouraged Contracting Parties to consider the cultivation of biomass on rewetted peatlands (paludiculture), and AWARE that the sustainable rewetting and restoration of peatlands, while maintaining their sustainable productive use, is a promising option to enhance the climate change mitigation potential of peatlands;
7. ALSO NOTING that in its Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that most global estimates do not include emissions from peat burning or decomposition after a land use change; and that particularly, the decomposition of carbon in wetlands and peatlands is not reflected in models despite the large amount of carbon stored in these ecosystems and their vulnerability to warming and land use change;
8. AWARE that the IPCC has completed the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands* (Wetlands Supplement) and the *2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance Arising from the Kyoto Protocol*, providing detailed guidance on methods for estimating anthropogenic emissions and removals of greenhouse gases from wetlands and drained soils including by rewetting and restoration of drained peatlands; and ALSO AWARE that the IPCC refers to the Ramsar Convention as a global and regional online resource providing for metadata sets for developing an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from wetlands and organic soils;
9. AWARE of the adoption by the UNFCCC through Decision 2/CMP.7 of a new activity "*Wetland Drainage and Rewetting*" for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, which enables Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that have joined the second Commitment Period to account for anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks resulting from wetland drainage and rewetting;
10. NOTING the summary of the findings of the global *Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change* as referred to in part D of Decision IX/16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity on *Biodiversity and Climate Change*;
11. FURTHER NOTING Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – Aichi Target 15): "*By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification*";
12. AWARE of Resolution 1/8 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on ecosystem based adaptation;
13. RECOGNIZING that peatland drainage may lead to rapid soil degradation and the loss of productive land and AWARE of the role that wetlands, including peatlands, play in reducing the impacts of natural disasters;
14. RECOGNIZING the efforts and successes of many Contracting Parties in rewetting and restoring degraded peatlands, the benefits of sharing practical methods and experiences and of having knowledge-based best-practice guidance;

15. ACKNOWLEDGING the Wetlands Supplement, which provides methods for estimating anthropogenic emissions and removals of greenhouse gases from lands with wet and drained soils and constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment, and that Box 1.1 of the Wetlands Supplement recognizes that rewetting can also restore wetlands to a state where net CO₂ emissions are greatly reduced or even become negative, causing the wetlands to function as a net remover of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere;
16. FURTHER AWARE that Paragraph 10 of Resolution VIII.11 *Guidance for identifying and designating peatlands, wet grasslands, mangroves and coral reefs as Wetlands of International Importance* acknowledges the capacity of peatlands to regulate local and regional climates and that Paragraph 139 of Ramsar Handbook 17: *Designating Ramsar Sites* (Ramsar Handbooks 4th edition, 2010) refers to the hydrologic role of wet peatlands in regulating the local and regional climate via evapo-transpiration cooling;
17. ACKNOWLEDGING the distinct mandates and independent legal status of conventions and AFFIRMING that the UNFCCC and IPCC are the key references for the terms *mitigation, adaptation, carbon sequestration, emissions reductions, greenhouse gas emissions* and *carbon storage* used in this Resolution, as they pertain to climate change;
18. RECOGNIZING the UNFCCC as the primary multilateral forum on addressing climate change and the IPCC as the leading international body for the scientific assessment of climate change;
19. REAFFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention is the primary multilateral forum on addressing wetland issues; and
20. NOTING the Policy Brief on *Peatlands, climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation* and the report *Peatlands and Climate Change in a Ramsar context – a Nordic Baltic Perspective* developed under the Ramsar regional initiative NorBalWet as inspiration for other Ramsar regional initiatives and Parties, as appropriate;

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21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to consider limiting activities that lead to drainage of peatlands and may cause subsidence, flooding and the emission of greenhouse gases and URGES greater international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address this;
22. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties as appropriate to designate as Wetlands of International Importance at least one peatland area that is also suitable for communication, education and awareness raising about the conservation, restoration and wise use of peatlands and the services they provide, such as their role in relation to climate change, the protection of habitats for rare and threatened species and the provision of water supplies;
23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and other organizations to facilitate information exchange and cooperation among the administrative or managing bodies of these sites;
24. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) with respect to its Work Plan related to the 4th Strategic Plan, consider in conjunction with interested Contracting Parties and Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs):

- a. developing guidelines for inventories of peatlands for their designation as Wetlands of International Importance;
 - b. developing guidelines for the further application, as regards peatlands, of Criterion 1 for the selection of Wetlands of International Importance and in particular paragraph 121 of Annex 2 to Resolution XI.8 as pertinent to this Resolution;
 - c. evaluating the progress made with the implementation of the “Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands”; and
 - d. advising the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on practical methods for rewetting and restoring peatlands;
25. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to utilize their national and regional inventories to map the distribution of their peatlands with a view to determining the extent to which they sequester carbon;
 26. REQUESTS the Secretariat to facilitate national and regional capacity building to enable Contracting Party experts to create inventories of peatlands;
 27. INVITES the STRP National Focal Points to contribute to this work of the STRP in order to provide national and regional perspectives and contribute expertise from their in-country networks of peatland scientists and other experts;
 28. REQUESTS the Secretariat, working with the STRP, IOPs and other stakeholders, to compile best practices in peatland restoration techniques to support the work of wetland managers and share them through the official Ramsar Convention website;
 29. ENCOURAGES Ramsar bodies to collaborate with relevant international conventions and organizations including UNFCCC bodies, within their respective mandates, on the relationship between peatlands and climate change; and
 30. INVITES the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.12

Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future

1. RECALLING the Preamble of the Convention, which recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic fauna and flora, especially waterfowl;
2. RECOGNIZING that wetlands have vital ecosystem functions and provide a wide range of ecosystem services, which contribute to human well-being and the state of the environment, and that consequently their conservation and wise use are fundamental in order to continue to offer these services;
3. BEARING IN MIND that the report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands* highlights that ecosystems, in particular wetlands are essential in providing water-related ecosystem services and SIMILARLY, that it urges a major shift in attitudes to wetlands, to recognize both their value in delivering water, raw materials and food which are essential for life, and the crucial role they play in maintaining people's livelihoods and the sustainability of the world's economies;
4. NOTING Decision X/28 of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) on *Inland waters biodiversity*, and, in particular, AWARE of the concern regarding major anthropogenic changes that are ongoing in the Earth's water cycle on global, regional and local scales, due to the excessive and inefficient use of water and land-use change; that the limits of sustainability of both surface water and groundwater resources have already been reached or surpassed in some regions; that these trends are becoming more pronounced in some areas through climate change; and that the water-related stresses on biodiversity and ecosystem changes are rapidly escalating;
5. RECALLING the Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands (Resolution X.3), which recognizes explicitly that the increasing demands for, and over-use of, water jeopardize human well-being as well as the environment, and that there is often not enough water to meet our direct human needs or to maintain the wetlands we require, and ALSO RECALLING the issues of fundamental importance for the future of the Convention indicated in Resolution X.1, which identifies the lack of water resources for wetlands and the increasing demand for water extraction as the main factors that generate continuous change and lead to the deterioration and disappearance of wetlands and their services;
6. AWARE of Resolution XI.10 that revealed concern over the globally increasing number of energy development plans that, by changing water fluxes and sediment transport, interrupting connectivity, and creating barriers for species migration, could have adverse effects on the ecological character of wetlands, including on wetland species and ecosystems, on the potential

for wetlands to produce a wide range of ecosystem services, on their biodiversity, and on the status of water quantity and quality;

7. RECOGNIZING the need to balance the multiple functions provided by water which include human consumption, food production, energy services as well as the support of wetland ecosystems, fisheries and biodiversity conservation;
8. RECALLING the Outcome of the Rio +20 Conference (Brazil, 2012) which recognized that energy plays a critical role “in the development process, as access to sustainable modern energy services contributes to poverty eradication, saves lives, improves health and helps provide for basic human needs”, and which emphasized the need to take further action to provide these services in a “reliable, affordable, economically viable and socially and environmentally acceptable manner in developing countries”;
9. CONSIDERING Resolution VIII.34, which CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to ensure that management plans for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands are developed within wider integrated catchment management approaches, which duly acknowledge the need for the appropriate implementation of practices and policies that are compatible with wetland conservation and wise use;
10. ALSO CONSIDERING Resolution VIII.1, which explicitly recognizes that wetland ecosystems require water of adequate quantity, quality and timing in order to maintain their ecological characteristics and establish guidelines for the process of allocating and managing water resources to this end, and ALSO AWARE of Resolution VIII.40, which recognizes that maintenance of the ecological integrity of most wetlands, especially those located in arid or semi-arid zones, is closely linked to the supply of groundwater;
11. NOTING the fact that ensuring the availability of the water required by wetlands will promote both their biodiversity and the sustainable use of their components, in addition to achieving the targets of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (Aichi Targets); and STRESSING, in particular, that knowing wetlands’ water requirements will favour the integration of biodiversity values into development planning processes and strategies, contribute to the sustainable management of water in agricultural areas, and maintain the impacts of the use of natural resources within ecological limits in order to guarantee biodiversity conservation;
12. RECOGNIZING that the allocation and protection of the water requirements of wetlands can help improve the integrated management of water resources (Resolution VII.18¹), and in particular river basins, by harmonizing water-use and land-use strategies, maintaining the renewal of the water cycle and the link existing between ground and surface water, both enabling their management, and helping to establish adaptation conditions that allow climate variability;
13. RECALLING that Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands* (2008) recognizes the potentially serious impacts of climate change for ensuring the continued conservation and wise use of wetlands and similarly, that it calls on the Contracting Parties to manage their wetlands in such a way as to increase their adaptation to climate change and extreme climatic events, and to ensure that in their climate change responses, such implementation does not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;

¹ Replaced by Resolution X.19 as the guidance in the annex wholly supersedes VII.18.

14. NOTING Resolution VII.7 on *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote conservation and the wise use of wetlands*, which URGES each Contracting Party to review its laws and institutions to ensure they are aimed not only at the wise use of wetlands and eliminating obstacles to conservation, but also at adopting measures that can serve as positive incentives for the effective implementation of the wise use obligation, such as the allocation of water to wetlands;
15. ALSO RECOGNIZING the need for the Contracting Parties to replicate successful examples of the determination, allocation and protection of wetlands' water requirements in order to maintain their ecological, food production and energy functions, enhance cooperation on water issues, improve the resilience of wetlands to climate change, and to safeguard the ecosystem services that wetlands offer society;
16. NOTING Resolution IX.3 on the *Engagement of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in ongoing multilateral processes dealing with water*, which AFFIRMS that the conservation and wise use of wetlands is critical for the provision of water for people and nature, and that wetlands are a source, as well as a user, of water, as well as supplying a range of other ecosystem benefits/services;
17. NOTING that the Post-2015 Development Agenda is currently under discussion and aware of the role water will likely play in the Goals eventually agreed for improving the sustainable use and development of water resources and the conservation of wetland ecosystems, in order to promote decisions and actions that take into account both human and environmental water requirements, as well as the need to increase the long-term viability of natural supply systems;
18. NOTING that the need to allocate a sufficient volume water of adequate quantity, quality and timing to enable the sustainable functioning of ecosystems is established in the laws of several of the world's nations and is being increasingly considered an issue that requires coordinated action at the international level; and
19. ECHOING the Changwon Declaration's call to action, which presents an overview of the priority action steps that together show how to deliver some of the world's most critical environmental and sustainability goals, including the wise use and protection of our wetlands – seeking to ensure that the latter have water of adequate quantity, quality and timing to support biodiversity, food production, drinking water and sanitation;

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20. RECOGNIZES AND REITERATES that the lack of water in wetlands is a far-reaching global problem with serious consequences for ecosystems and people's livelihoods, in particular in vulnerable communities that depend on wetlands, and NOTES that this problem will tend to be aggravated in the future due to the growing demand for water and other natural resources and the effects of climate change;
21. WELCOMES the process carried out in Mexico for the creation of water reserves for wetlands, described in the Annex to this Resolution;
22. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to consider the possibility of using Mexico's approach, as appropriate, to identify the opportunities to act preventatively, and adapting it as necessary in order to address national and regional conditions and circumstances, within the framework of

existing regional initiatives and commitments and within the context of sustainable development;

23. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties, and invites other governments and other stakeholders, to increase their efforts in order to ADDRESS water requirements of wetlands, in particular identifying opportunities to anticipate the negative impacts of human activities on the amount of water devoted to wetlands; and
24. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness Oversight Panel consider drawing up, in cooperation with existing networks and initiatives, guidelines for the elaboration of national action plans, to conserve the water necessary to maintain the wise use of wetlands, which may be implemented at the regional and/or national level, in line with the 4th Strategic Plan, and INVITES interested Contracting Parties to adopt national action plans, taking in to account:
 - a. Integration with other global initiatives, in particular on the contribution of wetlands to any Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) eventually agreed;
 - b. Assessment of the situation regarding wetland water requirements;
 - c. Strategies and tools for the determination and allocation of water to wetlands on a national scale;
 - d. A programme for monitoring the water requirements of wetlands on a national scale and hydrographic basins, as appropriate;
 - e. International cooperation for the creation and strengthening of existing research networks and specialized regional centres and for institutional capacity building; and
 - f. Communication, education and raising public awareness about the need to consider ecological flows for maintaining habitats and ecosystems, as well as the benefits for the environment and human health that these wetlands offer.

Annex

WATER IS REQUIRED FOR THE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

1. The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". Wise use of wetlands is understood in general terms² as sustainable use and "the maintenance of their ecological character", which involves conserving interactions between the various individual processes, functions, attributes and values of the ecosystems.
2. From an ecological perspective, there is no doubt that the processes that govern wetlands (including the recycling of nutrients, productivity, succession processes, competition between species, etc.) are to a large extent controlled by their water regime. In this sense, it can be said that one of the Convention's key missions is to provide guidance to countries to help guarantee the conservation or restoration of water regimes in accordance with the maintenance of the biological, chemical and physical components characteristic of each wetland.
3. The Convention's definition of wetlands encompasses a large number and wide variety of ecosystems across the globe, since it includes "areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres".
4. Naturally, with its respective location and characteristics, each wetland has its own individual water regime, which is variable over time but with variability patterns and ranges that condition its evolution. The conservation of the water regimes characteristic of each wetland thus becomes of key importance for their conservation and wise use, something that the COP itself has recognized. Thus, for example, Resolution VIII.33 protects the maintenance of the specific hydrological functioning upon which temporary pools depend, including their dependence on permanent surface waters, in order to ensure the sustainable management of the temporary pools.
5. The importance of an adequate water regime for the conservation of wetlands has been highlighted in several Resolutions. The Annex to Resolution VIII.1 indicates that "to maintain the natural ecological character of a wetland, it is necessary to allocate water as closely as possible to the natural regime". In the guidelines for Contracting Parties for the integration of conservation and wise use of wetlands into river basin management (Resolution X.19), it is also recommended that the precautionary principle be used to maintain the natural state as closely as possible in situations where available information on the environmental water requirements of wetlands is inadequate.
6. Despite the fact that the natural water regime constitutes a valuable reference for conservation and wise use, it should be pointed out that wetlands' water requirements are not all identical, and we should be aware of this in order to maintain their individual ecological character. In general terms, wetlands that are listed due to the fact they are very natural, should have natural or almost natural water regimes, whilst semi-natural or artificial wetlands may have regimes that involve the sustainable extraction of resources.

² According to the definition at Annex A of Resolution IX.1

SEVERAL CHALLENGES FOR GUARANTEEING THAT WETLANDS HAVE ALL THE WATER THEY NEED

7. According to the Status Report on the Application of Integrated Approaches to Water Resources Management, over 75% of the countries studied considered that “Water for environment” was a priority in their respective countries, whilst only 5% of the countries considered that this issue was “not a problem”.
8. Water use trends and concern about water issues contrast with the major challenges involved in ensuring ecosystems have all the water they require. In this respect, there are at least four major factors that allow us to visualize these great challenges:
 - a. **Most wetlands have no water monitoring system to assess changes in their functioning and identify the required corrective actions.**
9. The monitoring of water resources and their use is an enormous challenge, especially given the renewable character and the general complexity of knowledge about the water cycle. This great challenge contrasts with the fact that our knowledge of water resources and the use of water is probably diminishing due to the decrease in the availability of data on national water services (Figure 1). A similar situation occurs with the monitoring of groundwater, despite its importance for the world’s supply of fresh water and the maintenance of ecosystems.

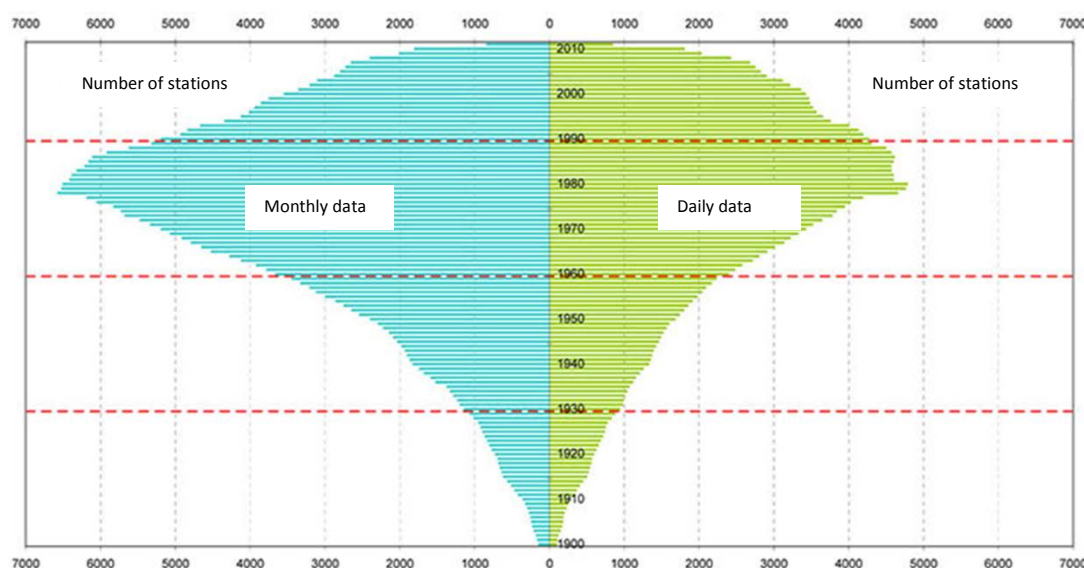


Figure 1. Availability of historical discharge data in the Global Runoff Data Centre (GRDC) database at the German Federal Hydrology Institute, Koblenz, Germany, 2012. Source: GRDC available at <http://grdc.bafg.de>

10. According to the UN Status Report of the Application of Integrated Approaches to Water Resources Management (2012), only 22.5% of all countries studied have fully implemented a monitoring programme on the use of water, and around 30% have not begun to implement one. Due to a lack of data on water monitoring in wetlands (flow, groundwater levels, extraction, etc.) and the abstractions that affect them, it is impossible to know whether wetlands have all the water they require. One particular challenge is the maintenance of a regular comparable database for monitoring changes and trends in the different water parameters (flow, groundwater levels, etc.) over time.

b. The scientific methods for determining the water needs of wetlands are very limited, bearing in mind the broad range of both Ramsar wetlands and biological groups requiring water.

11. Most methods for calculating environmental flow focus basically on flowing water ecosystems (rivers), whilst these systems only represent 10% of all Ramsar wetlands (see Figure 2). Moreover, in many cases the methods used to calculate the water requirements of the ecosystems have been designed to determine river types, and are not suitable for other regions (for example the habitat simulation models frequently used in some countries are extremely limited in the case of large tropical rivers).

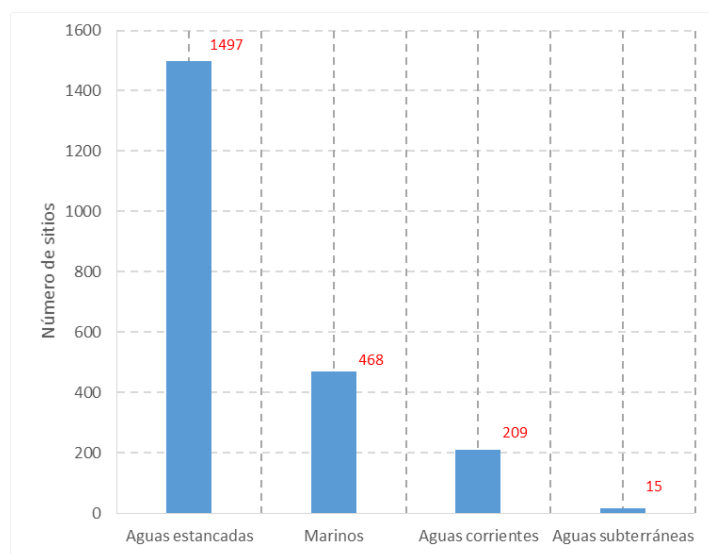


Figure 2. Wetland types presented in Ramsar sites in accordance with their general water characteristics. Source: Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) available at: rsis.ramsar.org

12. Moreover, most methods used to calculate environmental flow are fundamentally based on the water requirements of fish, and in many cases only the species of greatest economic interest. However, there are other biological groups that justify the designation of wetlands as sites of international importance. For example, 92% of the sites have been added to the Ramsar List because of the birds that use these wetlands. One major challenge is to increase scientific knowledge in order to obtain more detailed information about the water requirements of different types of Ramsar Sites and all the species that justify their designation. In this sense, it is necessary to develop a monitoring of hydrological and ecological variables, including water quality that will set a baseline for the application of environmental flows.

c. For most of the Contracting Parties, the legal frameworks do not recognize explicitly the need to allocate water to wetlands and/or provide the legal mechanisms to do so effectively.

13. As recognized by the Annex to Resolution VIII.1, in order to make decisions on the water allocations for wetland ecosystems, an enabling policy environment is required, supported both by adequate and appropriate legal tools, which clarify the legal situation of water and water resources, and by a framework for assessing the merits of different allocation options.
14. The legal allocation of water resources to wetlands requires far-reaching reforms for many countries, with changes in both environmental and water policies, legislation and planning. For

some countries this is complicated by the fact that water resources are the responsibility of lower administrative levels such as the state, province or municipality. In these cases, it is essential that the countries identify alternatives to rectify this situation and to be able to plan for water allocation/demand processes.

15. According to the Status Report on the Application of Integrated Approaches to Water Resources Management (2012), 45.4% of the countries surveyed implement to some extent programmes for the allocation of water resources, which take environmental considerations into account. However, only 12.3% have fully completed this type of programme. Moreover, in the countries that have introduced environmental flow programmes, there is little information on how successful they have been, since there are no clear assessment criteria.
- d. **The Contracting Parties are still a long way from adopting the Integrated Water Resources Management tools. These are the very tools that can allow for the proper integration of wetland water requirements into resource management.**
16. Strategy 1.7 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 consists of ensuring “that policies and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), applying an ecosystem-based approach, are included in the planning activities in all Contracting Parties and in their decision-making processes, particularly concerning groundwater management, catchment/river basin management”, and includes the Key Result Area 1.7ii (planned for 2015), which states: “All Parties, in their water governance and management, to be managing wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins”.
17. Resolution X.19 highlighted the fact that in the longer term it is not sufficient to integrate wetland management objectives into land use management plans. In turn, land and water resource management plans need to be integrated to ensure that these plans reflect common, agreed management objectives for the wetlands in a river basin. The aim should be to match water resources strategies with land use strategies, so that these can be implemented jointly to support the maintenance of healthy, functional wetlands that provide a range of benefits for people (including water supply).
18. According to the results of the survey on the application of IWRM, clear progress has been made in the adoption of integrated approaches to water resources on a global scale. Water resource management programmes (including allocation systems, groundwater management, environmental impact assessment, demand control, etc.) are being applied in 84% of the countries with the highest Human Development Index, though only in around 40% of the other countries. This same survey reveals that 50% of the countries have implemented neither an integrated water resources management plan at a national or federal level nor any equivalent strategic plan.

NEED FOR GLOBAL ACTION AND ITS STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

19. According to the United Nations 5th *World Water Development Report* (WWDR), global water demand (in terms of water withdrawals) is projected to increase by some 55% by 2050. As a result, freshwater availability will come under increasing strain over this period, with 40% of the global population projected to be living in areas of severe water stress by 2050. There is also clear evidence that groundwater supplies are diminishing, with an estimated 20% of the world’s aquifers being over-exploited, some critically so.

20. The enormity of this challenge calls for urgent coordinated global action, in preparation for the growing pressure for this resource, in order to guarantee the water required by wetlands, including strategic guidelines on:
- Legal and institutional frameworks: to develop national legal and institutional tools that are in line with the urgent need to ensure the water requirements of the ecosystems and capable of anticipating the growing demand for this resource.
 - Monitoring: to generate basic information to support the decision making process with regard to wetlands.
 - Tools: to support the knowledge and development of tools for calculating and allocating the water required by ecosystems and suitable for its rapid use.
 - Education, awareness raising and capacity building: to promote the importance of the allocation of water to wetlands through education, the public media and capacity building.
21. A series of actions on these strategic areas could create the right environment for taking urgent action and generating the changes required to promote sustainable development compatible with water, fulfil basic human activities and guarantee the protection of wetlands.

INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TO GUARANTEE THE WATER REQUIRED BY WETLANDS

22. Mexico has been a Contracting Party of the Ramsar Convention since 1986, and to date has 142 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, which cover a total area of 8.4 million hectares, making it the contracting country with the second highest number of designated Ramsar Sites in the world. In Mexico, the management of wetlands is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, SEMARNAT) and its decentralized bodies: the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, CONAP), focal point for the Ramsar Convention and the body that coordinates the execution of actions involved in complying with the Convention's commitments; and the National Water Commission (Comisión Nacional del Agua, CONAGUA) the federal body responsible for the administration of Mexico's water resources.
23. In Mexico, the allocation of water for the environment has been recognized since the publication of the National Water Law (Ley de Aguas Nacionales, LAN) in 1992. However, it was not until recently that two national initiatives were undertaken that represent major progress in guaranteeing the water resources required by wetlands: the publication of the "Mexican law for the determination of environmental flow" and the "National Water Reserve Programme" (Programa Nacional de Reservas de Agua, PNRA).

The Mexican Environmental Flow Standard

24. With the publication of the LAN, the Mexican water administration took on the challenge of building the water concession administration system, which is based on establishing the water balance in each river basin or administrative unit, and granting concessions to each water user, recognizing in advance the various documents issued by the competent authority, authorizing the use of water. In this process, the requirement for allocating water to the environment was postponed, since it was claimed that insufficient information on water requirements was available, and that there was uncertainty over the application of scientifically appropriate and economically accessible methodologies for determining a reliable ecological flow. As a result, in many of the country's basins, water concessions have been granted for 100% or more of the measured or estimated mean annual runoff, and without considering water allocated to the

environment. This situation has constituted one of the causes of the severe over-use of water resources in 8 out of 13 hydrological regions, in which 75% of the country's gross domestic product is produced.

25. Concern over this situation led to a long participatory process aimed at establishing the means of calculating the water requirements of ecosystems. The process was enhanced by the practical experiences of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in association with the Gonzalo Río Arronte Foundation, which allowed the bases and methods for calculating environmental flows to be established, an action essential for protecting the country's water security. The Mexican Environmental Flow Standard was approved in 2012, establishing the methodologies for determining environmental flow, as a means of regulating the exploitation, use and conservation of water to protect ecosystems and favour sustainable development.
26. The importance of this tool consists of integrating the ecological, social and economic significance into the determination of the flow in the following terms.
 - It establishes the scientific bases that should guide all environmental flow proposals. It is explicitly recognized that a variable water regime is necessary (beyond minimum flows), with different components (low flows, flood regime, etc.) responsible for the ecosystem dynamics. Some of the basics mentioned explicitly as guiding principles are the paradigm of the natural flow regime³ and the biological condition gradient⁴.
 - It recognizes that there are very diverse situations in the country where we need to find a balance between the pressure caused by the extraction of water and the conservation of environmental conditions. This leads to the establishment of environmental objectives, which allow environmental flows to be adjusted in accordance with the ecological importance of the sites and the pressure created by water use.
 - It integrates social assessment of water in the environment and ensures its availability for consumption by and the well-being of rural communities.
 - It establishes a hierarchical condition for the application of methodologies in accordance with pressure due to water use, and a reference framework for the assessment of large projects, such as hydroelectric power generation, within the scope of environmental impact assessment.

The National Water Reserve Programme

27. The National Water Reserve Programme (Programa Nacional de Reservas de Agua, PNRA) is an initiative undertaken by CONAGUA in collaboration with the WWF-Gonzalo Río Arronte Foundation Alliance and supported by the Inter-American Development Bank, in which academic institutions and civil society organizations have participated actively.
28. The PNRA's objective is to establish water reserves for the environment legally, so that this volume of water is excluded from the total amount liable to be allocated in concessions. The water reserve is a legal figure provided for by the LAN, for the conservation or restoration of vital ecosystems. The Programme's additional objectives include proving the benefits of water reserves as a tool to guarantee the functionality of the water cycle and its environmental services, and its application as a means of adapting to climate change and creating the capacities in the country for the determination, implementation and monitoring of environmental flows.

³ Poff N.L., J.D. Allan, M.B. Bain, J.R. Karr, K.L. Prestegard, B. Richter, R. Sparks and J. Stromberg. 1997. The natural flow regime: a new paradigm for riverine conservation and restoration. *BioScience* 47:769-784.

⁴ Davies S.P. and Jackson S.K. 2006. The Biological Condition Gradient: A Descriptive Model for Interpreting Change in Aquatic Ecosystems. *Ecological Applications*: Vol. 16, No. 4 pp. 1251–1266.

29. In Mexico, the main obstacle hindering the implementation of an environmental flow proposal is the lack of water; in other words when what remains after the water concessions already granted is zero or when it does not comply with the requirements corresponding to the ecological importance of the area. The still-developing institutional capacities for determining environmental flow with sufficient ecological and economic support constitute another obstacle. In order to remove these obstacles, work was carried out to identify those river basins with sufficient water and of clear environmental importance, in order to develop the necessary capacities and learn to deal with more complex river basins. Thus, 189 of the country's 731 river basins were identified as potential water reserves. The PNRA's initial strategy⁵ focused on these 189 river basins, which were not subject to a great deal of pressure from water use and benefited from the presence of protected natural areas, Ramsar Sites, or another officially recognized ecological value (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Potential water reserves and pilot working zones

30. The aim of the first phase of the Programme is to ensure that by 2018 reserve decrees have been issued for the 189 river basins identified as priority. The direct benefits of the PNRA for the whole country include guaranteeing the water required by 97 protected natural areas, 55 Ramsar Sites and over 78,500 km² of zones that enjoyed no official protection and had hydrological conditions that were unaltered or virtually unaltered. These figures reveal the great strategic value of the integrated management of water resources, and water reserves, for biodiversity protection in Mexico, and its potential for integrating water and land-use management policies.
31. In a second phase, based on this experience, there are plans to tackle the allocation of water to the river basins with highest pressure, in which the remaining 87 Ramsar wetlands are located,

⁵ UNEP 2012. The UN-Water Status Report on the Application of Integrated Approaches to Water Resources Management

and where the strategy will be to determine the water requirements as environmental flow and to proceed to rescue the volumes earmarked for other uses.

32. Studies started in six pilot working areas (Figure 3) present the following scope and results:
 - They include 43 river basins with a total surface area of 92,000 km² (4.5% of the national territory) in which the longitudinal, vertical and lateral connectivity will be maintained for 4,500 km of main water channels, 31 aquifers, 17 Protected Natural Areas and 13 Ramsar Sites.
 - On average, the reserve water volume represents 53% of the mean annual runoff, and in total amounts to 49,000 hm³ per annum, which represents around 11% of the mean annual national runoff.
 - In terms of their biological significance, these water reserves will guarantee the water requirements of 546 species that enjoy some kind of protection category, and 99 of these species will be used directly in the analyses to determine environmental flows.
 - The capacity of 58 institutions will be strengthened, including government agencies, academic institutions and civil society organizations, and a total of 138 experts will participate in the development of studies and proposals on environmental flow.
33. On 15 September 2014, the first reserve decree was signed by the President of Mexico, including 11 river basins in the river San Pedro Mezquital hydrologic subregion, which supplies water to the Marismas Nacionales Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar Site. This decree establishes the reserves for the environment, domestic and urban public use, and the generation of electricity for public use, for the next 50 years. It sets out the conditions for authorizing these uses and for guaranteeing that they act in a complementary and synergistic manner.

Recommendations and lessons learned

34. Mexico's creation and consolidation of its own IWRM, and in particular the process of ensuring that water is available for the environment and wetlands, has given rise to a series of experiences leading to the following recommendations.
35. To date, the PNRA as a Mexican strategy for guaranteeing the water required by wetlands has made it possible:
 - To understand the validity of different methodologies for determining environmental flow and to develop a reference framework for their application on a national level.
 - To establish a gradual capacity-building process for each of Mexico's regions.
 - To act immediately in those river basins where the water regime is currently conserved in its natural state, or with few changes, and where the establishment of an environmental flow does not create conflict.
 - To understand that the real impact of environmental flow on water availability for other uses is minimized by water commitments with users downstream, due to adjustments in the operation of infrastructure, or to the synergy with reserves for domestic use and energy generation.
 - To establish a reference framework for the objective discussion of projects that alter the water regime, in particular hydroelectric projects.
36. In regions unaffected by development or in those where development is just starting, it is very important to take preventative action in order to avoid future conflict over demands for this resource, in particular disputes between potential users over water allocated to the environment. Many of these sites coincide with regions of great ecological value, due to their biodiversity and the environmental services they provide. This is a great opportunity for

establishing sustainable limits for water extraction, for conserving biodiversity and its services and guaranteeing water security conditions in the future.

37. The permanence of water in the environment ensures the supply of services of use to IWRM, such as the replenishing of aquifers, the fertility of flood plains and agricultural land, the conservation of the hydraulic capacities of water channels, the improvement in water quality, etc. The IWRM has great potential for biodiversity conservation if it internalizes these services.
38. Water reserves have turned out to serve as a measure for adaptation to climate variability. The percentage of the mean annual runoff which a reserve represents buffers the impacts, helps manage the risks of climate uncertainty and creates conditions of resilience.
39. For developing countries, the challenge of the implementation of environmental flows is not a matter of capacities, but instead one of water security, of the future and the safeguarding of the national heritage.
40. In the development of this initiative, the creation of a relationship of trust between government, civil society and academia has been decisive. Civil society organizations are IWRM's ally in the recognition of the needs for allocating water for the environment, and thus in the strengthening of the management.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.13

Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

1. RECALLING Resolution VIII.35 on *The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems* and Resolution IX.9 on *The role of the Ramsar Convention in the prevention and mitigation of impacts associated with natural phenomena, including those induced or exacerbated by human activities* which, respectively, recognized the role of wetlands in providing water during times of drought and in preventing and mitigating the impacts from natural phenomena, including those induced or exacerbated by human activities, but RECOGNIZING that there exists no specific framework to operationalize this urgent role;
2. RECALLING Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, that affirmed the role of healthy wetlands in increasing resilience to climate change and extreme weather events, as well as ensuring climate change responses that would not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;
3. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution X.3 on *The Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands* and Resolution X.23 on *Wetlands and human health and well-being* emphasized the importance of sustainable wetland management and the restoration of wetlands to ensure future human well-being;
4. ALSO RECALLING Decision X/28 of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that encourages recognition of the role of healthy ecosystems, and in particular wetlands, in protecting human communities from some natural disasters and to integrate these considerations into relevant policies;
5. AWARE of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), and RECALLING Resolution VII.8 on *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* that recognized the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities in the management and wise use of wetlands;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING the vital role of wetland ecosystems, most especially healthy and well-managed wetlands, in reducing disaster risk, by acting as natural buffers or protective barriers, for instance through mitigating land erosion, the impact from dust and sand storms, floods, tidal surges, tsunamis and landslides, and by storing large volumes of water, thereby reducing peak flood flow during the wet season, while maximizing water storage during the dry season; and FURTHER RECOGNIZING that fully functioning wetland ecosystems enhance local resilience against disasters by providing fresh water and important products and by sustaining the lives and livelihoods of local populations and biodiversity;
7. AWARE that the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment recognized the significant services that ecosystems, including wetlands, provide to human communities in regulating the frequency and

magnitude of hazard events such as floods, fires and droughts, and in providing natural barriers that can mitigate the adverse impacts of hazards and protect communities, but also recognized that there was a continuing and accelerated loss of these vital ecosystem functions and services in wetlands;

8. AWARE that the 2011 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, the 2012 RIO+20 Declaration “The Future We Want”, and similar UN and global coordinating bodies call for addressing disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development, and for increased coordination at national, regional and international levels to enable a robust response to environmental emergencies and improved forecasting and early warning systems;
9. CONSIDERING that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 acknowledges declining ecosystems as an underlying disaster risk driver, and recognizes the importance of strengthened sustainable use and management of ecosystems and the implementation of integrated environmental and natural resource management approaches that incorporate disaster risk reduction;
10. CONCERNED that the devastating impacts of disasters on the delivery of ecosystem services, and thus on the maintenance of the ecological character of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and other wetlands in affected countries, have had serious effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people and on biodiversity, and have caused major environmental, social and economic impacts;
11. AWARE that disaster risk reduction requires the reduction of exposure and vulnerabilities through enhancing the capacity of people to prepare for, withstand and cope or recover from disasters and through sustainable management and use of land and water resources to reduce, buffer and in certain circumstances to mitigate disaster risk; and
12. RECOGNIZING that wetlands in all parts of the world play an important role in disaster risk reduction if the wetlands are effectively managed and restored where necessary;

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13. AFFIRMS the need to develop and implement management plans for wetlands or adapt them in instruments designed for the management of existing natural resources, especially Ramsar Sites, that integrate the principles of ecosystem-based management and adaptation against natural hazards such as dust and sand storms, floods, droughts, fires, landslides, coastal erosion, tsunamis, hurricanes, storms, and storm surges, and also against accelerated sea level rise, and STRONGLY ENCOURAGES the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction measures in these management plans and into all relevant policies, action plans and programmes;
14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to integrate wetland-based disaster risk reduction and management into national strategic plans and all relevant policies and planning and environmental and water management at all levels of government, including in vulnerability analysis, poverty reduction strategies, emergencies committee and natural resource management plans, land-use and water-use plans and sectors, and in multi-sector policies and plans;
15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure disaster risk planning does not compromise the internationally important values and ecological character of Ramsar Sites;

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to integrate wetland management plans, or other broader water and landscape management plans, into land-use and development plans, and FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to integrate ecosystem management related considerations, in particular relating to wetland and water management, in their national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to assess disaster risk to wetland ecosystems at the appropriate social and spatial scale to enable the designing of effective disaster risk reduction interventions including ecosystem-based solutions and approaches to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of people and ecosystems;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that necessary development activities in and adjacent to wetlands are sustainable and will maintain and conserve ecosystem services including the role of wetlands in reducing impacts of disasters;
19. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to incorporate financial and other resource requirements, as appropriate, for wetland conservation, restoration and management activities related to disaster risk reduction into long-term investment programming, while ensuring the inclusion of measures to prevent adverse environmental or social impacts;
20. INVITES Contracting Parties and partners to ensure that the implementation of wetland ecosystem-based management and restoration projects and programmes are conducted appropriately to ensure ecological integrity and original functioning of specific ecosystems;
21. RECALLING CBD Decision XII/19 on *Ecosystem conservation and restoration* which emphasizes the critical importance of coastal wetlands for ecosystem services including those for disaster risk reduction and biodiversity conservation, WELCOMES initiatives that support the conservation and restoration of coastal wetlands, including options to build a “Caring for Coasts” initiative as part of a global movement to restore coastal wetlands and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider engaging in the development and implementation of the proposed initiative;
22. RECOGNIZING the references to disaster risk reduction contained in the proposals of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat to emphasize the importance of conserving, restoring and wise use of wetlands for disaster risk reduction in these discussions;
23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to understand the predicament of, and recognize the roles and challenges of the indigenous peoples and local communities and, where applicable, their experience, knowledge, ancestral rights, methods and approaches in wetland management and disaster risk reduction, making possible their participation through the effective use of different strategies, such as councils, meetings and all the plans and programmes which are at the disposal of national governments;
24. ALSO URGES the Contracting Parties to adopt approaches to disaster risk reduction to ensure the rights of wetland-dependent displaced persons;
25. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to consider reviewing and compiling existing guidance on wetland ecosystem-based adaptation concerning disaster risk reduction in the development of their programme of work in line with the 4th Strategic Plan in order to

present a set of practical policies and guidance which can be initiated by governments, for the management and wise use of wetlands to build resilience to natural hazards, especially dust and sand storms, floods, drought, fire, landslides, coastal erosion, tsunamis and storm surges, as well as to accelerated sea level rise, and which include the use of risk-based approaches in line with the *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* approved through Resolution VII.10, and to develop appropriate indicators and baseline information for demonstrating progress towards the integration of wetland management in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies in such a way that the aforementioned guidelines are incorporated in existing national strategic spatial planning instruments;

26. URGES the Secretariat to build a strategic partnership with related international bodies and conventions, namely the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), to establish an appropriate platform for cooperation aiming at providing scientific and technical support as well as easing the access to financial resources for affected countries;
27. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to consider the role of wetland conservation, restoration and wise use in disaster risk reduction and in addressing the impacts of climate change in coordination with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as identify economic valuation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the development of their programme of work in line with the 4th Strategic Plan;
28. REQUESTS the STRP to consider monitoring the discussions, developments and trends in international fora on the role of wetland conservation, restoration and wise use in disaster risk reduction and in climate change adaptation in the development of their work in line with the 4th Strategic Plan;
29. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP, if this work is approved by the Standing Committee, to keep Contracting Parties informed of these discussions, developments and trends through the STRP report at future Standing Committees;
30. FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP to consider supporting the capacity-building activities of wetland managers on disaster risk reduction in the development of their programme of work in line with the 4th Strategic Plan;
31. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, especially their Ramsar CEPA National Focal Points, to establish or strengthen CEPA programmes and increase awareness of the role of wise use, management, conservation and restoration of wetlands in disaster risk reduction and on the role of wetlands in contributing to reducing vulnerabilities and mitigating disasters;
32. ENCOURAGES governments to integrate ecosystem-based approaches with traditional approaches, to take into consideration biodiversity safeguard measures to disaster risk reduction so as to address the underlying drivers of water related risks in the landscape alongside measures for preparedness and early warning;
33. ENCOURAGES national disaster management agencies and river basin authorities to collaborate or other ways of managing wetlands, as appropriate, with coastal managers and other authorities responsible for natural resource management and national and, as appropriate, international humanitarian organizations, when developing and implementing laws, policies and plans, including contingency plans, to integrate ecosystem-based approaches, including sustainable infrastructure, in disaster risk reduction, and that the product of those

investigations be incorporated in the structure of different existing strategic tools in accordance with national laws and legislations;

34. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to collaborate with universities and research institutions to carry out long-term research on wetlands and disaster risk management;
35. REQUESTS that the Ramsar Secretariat liaise with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction of the United Nations, in highlighting the importance of wetlands in climate change adaptation, especially for countries identified as vulnerable to climate change; and ALSO REQUESTS that the Ramsar Secretariat establish strategic partnerships to ensure collaboration and access to global trust funds; and
36. REQUESTS multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector sponsors to support the implementation of necessary and appropriate actions related to wetlands and disaster risk reduction particularly for developing countries.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.14

Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

1. AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is a global biodiversity hotspot and hosts one of the largest groups of islands in the world with a rich history and varied cultural values;
2. ALSO AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is one of the leading tourist destinations in the world and that its coastal and island ecosystems are facing intense and multiple pressures from this sector;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the crucial role of Mediterranean island wetlands in protecting these islands against the impacts of climate change and desertification, and their critical significance for a variety of threatened and endemic species of flora and fauna and an important number of migratory species;
4. CONCERNED that Mediterranean island wetlands increasingly face serious pressures, such as the spread of urban and coastal developments that threaten to undermine their ecological character and lead to the increased degradation of wetland areas and, subsequently, to ecosystem fragmentation;
5. AWARE of the fact that small island wetlands are extremely vulnerable and could be easily destroyed, including by non-intentional actions and/or lack of awareness of their significance;
6. ALSO CONCERNED that several Mediterranean island wetlands have already been partly or fully drained, or are increasingly water-stressed, and AWARE that the demand for fresh water for human use on these islands continues to grow;
7. RECALLING the commitments made by the Contracting Parties to achieving the wise use of all wetlands in their territories;
8. ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 6.11, which encouraged continuing collaboration for Mediterranean wetlands and urged all government and non-government organizations and individuals concerned with wetlands in the Mediterranean to commit their best efforts for the preparation and implementation of a concerted Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy;
9. NOTING that the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) has successfully contributed to the protection of Mediterranean wetlands for more than 20 years and it is anticipated that it will continue to do so;
10. ALSO NOTING the efforts made by organizations and initiatives directly focusing on the Mediterranean, such as the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against

Pollution (the Barcelona Convention) and its Mediterranean Action Plan, the Union for the Mediterranean and others;

11. FURTHER RECALLING that the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (as adopted through Resolution VII.11 (1999) and amended through Resolution XI.8 *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates* (2012) indicates that smaller wetlands should not be overlooked for designation as Wetlands of International Importance and that such wetlands may be especially important in maintaining habitat or ecological community-level biological diversity; and
12. ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 5.3 (1993), which called for the establishment of strict protection measures for Ramsar Sites and wetland reserves of small size or particular sensitivity;

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13. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties in and around the Mediterranean to address urgently the significant human-induced pressures threatening island wetlands through effective and decisive legislative or executive measures and other actions which apply a precautionary approach that would prevent the destruction of island wetlands, while developing more long-term and integrated strategies or plans;
14. ALSO CALLS UPON Mediterranean Contracting Parties to grant clear and effective legal protection to Mediterranean island wetlands, so as to ensure the conservation of their biodiversity, and the maintenance of their hydrological, cultural and social values;
15. REQUESTS that Mediterranean Parties continue to designate under-represented types of wetlands as additional Wetlands of International Importance;
16. URGES Mediterranean Contracting Parties in the framework of the MedWet Initiative, to produce or update as a matter of high priority a complete, science-based inventory of their island wetlands, based on appropriate methodologies, and to share it with neighbouring countries, for example, through a MedWet database;
17. REQUESTS Mediterranean Contracting Parties to ensure effective and long term conservation and whenever applicable the restoration of their island wetlands, including by incorporating them in territorial planning and/or land use and development plans, as well as in their integrated water resources plans and water efficiency plans, and by considering designating key small island wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
18. ALSO REQUESTS that Mediterranean Contracting Parties provide the Ramsar Secretariat with regular updates on all Mediterranean island wetlands, whether or not they have been designated as Ramsar Sites, through the triennial National Reports, including information on their number, extent, biodiversity, current conditions and protection status, and where possible on the ecosystem services which they perform;
19. INVITES the Contracting Parties in and around the Mediterranean, with the support as appropriate of the Ramsar Secretariat, to:
 - a. further promote the importance of the conservation and restoration needs of the Mediterranean island wetlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and to global

trade, tourism and transport organizations and other relevant international institutions, organizations and initiatives, so as to ensure that the degradation of these fragile aquatic ecosystems is stopped and reversed;

- b. share this Resolution with Conventions, organizations and initiatives directly focusing on the Mediterranean, such as the Barcelona Convention and its Mediterranean Action Plan, the Union for the Mediterranean and others, to ensure cooperation with existing programmes and to initiate new partnerships;
 - c. develop, share and disseminate case studies, with the help of the MedWet Initiative and other partners, where Mediterranean island wetlands have been:
 - i. negatively affected by human interventions, including through the spread of invasive species; and
 - ii. effectively protected or restored, through particular measures and through their designation as Ramsar Sites and/or other forms of protection;
20. PARTICULARLY INVITES non-Mediterranean Contracting Parties to give also special attention to their own island wetlands, taking into account their regional specificities, in recognition of their fragility and special conservation and management needs; and
21. INVITES all Contracting Parties to report on their island wetlands conservation results in their National Reports.



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.15

Evaluation of the management and conservation effectiveness of Ramsar Sites

1. THANKING the Government of Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Gyeongnam Province (R.O. Korea) and the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia for their generous sponsorship and organization of a workshop in Bangkok in June 2014 that laid the ground for the text of this Resolution;
2. RECALLING Article 3.1 of the Convention, which states that “Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List” of Wetlands of International Importance;
3. RECALLING that the designation of a wetland for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) is one of the various components of a long-term international commitment to its conservation and wise use, through the maintenance of its ecological character as well as the ecosystem services and benefits it provides;
4. RECOGNIZING the important role played by indigenous peoples and local communities subject to the respective national laws of the Contracting Parties in the management and wise use of wetlands and the *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities’ and indigenous people’s participation in the management of wetlands* (Resolution VII.8, Annex);
5. RECALLING that Resolution 5.7 *Management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* called for Contracting Parties to establish appropriate legal and administrative structures for the application of management planning, funding for the implementation of the plans, and training of the necessary staff;
6. APPRECIATING the guidance detailed in Resolution VIII.14 *New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands*, which calls for the development of management plans or management planning processes with clear objectives using simple and measurable indicators for each Ramsar Site, and which also highlights the importance of adaptive management, including both planning and evaluation, to create effective management outcomes;
7. RECALLING the publication by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), WWF and IUCN in 2008 of *Wetland Management Planning – a guide for site managers*, a practical guide to Ramsar’s management planning based on Resolution VIII.14¹;

¹ http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wetlands_management_guide_2008.pdf

8. RECALLING that Strategy 2.5 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009 – 2015 (Resolution X.1) called on Contracting Parties to “Review all existing Ramsar Sites to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements, in line with the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*”;
9. NOTING however that not all Contracting Parties have tools in place for effective management planning;
10. RECALLING that Annex E of Resolution IX.1 provided an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring, but AWARE that there is currently no agreed process for evaluating the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management and its outcomes;
11. NOTING the adoption and use of Protected Area Management Evaluation (PAME) tools by networks of protected areas such as World Heritage Sites and ASEAN Heritage Parks, and by institutions with a role in supporting their effective management, such as the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility;
12. FURTHER NOTING the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Decision X/31 of 2010, that called for the institutionalization of management effectiveness assessment, for 60% of the total area of protected areas to be assessed by 2015, and for the results of the assessments to be implemented; and
13. ALSO RECALLING CBD Decision XI/24 which invited the Ramsar Convention and other partners to align their activities to best support the implementation of national work programmes on protected areas;

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Ramsar Site management planning:

14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote and support the Ramsar Site authorities responsible for management to develop an integrated planning, management and evaluation system which promotes the wise use of all their Sites in close alignment with the targets of the Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
15. INVITES Ramsar Site management authorities to assess and measure the services that their Site provides (such as the storage, treatment and provision of water, support to the livelihoods and health of human communities, disaster risk reduction, climate regulation, biodiversity conservation, tourism and education) and ensure the maintenance of these services in their management processes;
16. INVITES Contracting Parties to support the translation of *Wetland Management Planning – a Guide for Site Managers* into languages which are not official languages of the Ramsar Convention;
17. REAFFIRMS the long-term value of taking a participatory approach involving indigenous peoples and local communities subject to the respective national laws of the Contracting Parties when designating and managing Ramsar Sites;
18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to support or establish appropriate mechanisms or modes of interactions between different Ramsar Site management authorities in order to allow them to

communicate on issues of common interest and to coordinate with the Ramsar Administrative Authorities;

19. URGES Contracting Parties to encourage Ramsar Site management authorities to use Ramsar communication tools including websites and social media to exchange and promote good practice on wetland management practice more widely;
20. ENCOURAGES Parties when monitoring the condition of Ramsar Sites to ensure that such assessments not only include biological and hydrological components but also consider the socio-economic status of any indigenous peoples and local communities, subject to the respective national laws of the Contracting Parties;

Evaluating the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management:

21. EMPHASIZES the importance of evaluating the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites and, where mechanisms are not already in place, that some Contracting Parties on a voluntary basis may find it useful to refer to appropriate Protected Area Management Evaluation (PAME) tools for effective management over time; and URGES the Ramsar Secretariat, STRP, International Organization Partners (IOPs), Ramsar Regional Centres and other partners to consider supporting the Contracting Parties in their efforts, including capacity building to apply management effectiveness tools;
22. APPROVES the Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (R-METT) annexed to this Resolution, as a voluntary self-assessment tool for evaluating the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands; ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that do not already have effective mechanisms in place for effective management planning of their Ramsar Sites, to consider using the R-METT; and CONFIRMS that this Resolution does not create additional reporting obligations for Parties;
23. ENCOURAGES Ramsar Site management authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of each of their Ramsar Sites in collaboration with relevant stakeholders as appropriate;
24. ENCOURAGES Parties when undertaking voluntary management effectiveness assessments to use the data and information so gathered to update the relevant sections of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) for the Site concerned so as to inform these RIS updates;
25. ENCOURAGES those Ramsar Site management authorities who use the R-METT to also refer to the *Integrated Framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring* approved as Annex E of Resolution IX.1, and other relevant Ramsar guidelines, when making these assessments;
26. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, where appropriate, to utilise R-METT when preparing their National Reports and describing the status of Sites on the List; and
27. INVITES Contracting Parties to seek opportunities to report the results of any evaluation of the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management to UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), who host of the global database on protected area management effectiveness, so they may summarize global and regional trends in protected area management effectiveness.

Annex 1

Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (R-METT)

1. The process by which Ramsar Contracting Parties identify wetlands within their territories for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and then ensure the long-term management and conservation of those 'Ramsar Sites', is one of the cornerstones of the implementation of the Convention. As of 2015, over 2,200 Sites had been designated, making this the largest network of wetland conservation areas worldwide.
2. For the wise use of Ramsar Sites to be ensured, Site managers must be able to anticipate new issues and to respond to them rapidly and effectively. To make this possible, they should conduct regular and open assessments of the effectiveness of the management of the Site, and learn from both successes and failures. The Ramsar Convention acknowledges the importance of management effectiveness evaluation through Resolution IX.1 Annex D, which provides ecological 'outcome-oriented' indicators for assessing the implementation effectiveness of the Convention.
3. A range of Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) assessment tools are available. One of the longest-serving of these is the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) published by WWF and the World Bank in 2003². In 2005³ and 2008⁴, studies found the METT suitable to evaluate the management effectiveness of Ramsar Sites.
4. In June 2014, a workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand, to look further into the Ramsar Convention adopting a PAME tool for use at Ramsar Sites. It was hosted by the Government of Thailand and supported by the Government of the R.O. Korea, Gyeongnam Province (R.O. Korea) and the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia; participants from each of the Ramsar regions as well as STRP Focal Points and other Ramsar partners. They acknowledged that certain Contracting Parties had already adopted a PAME tool, and recommended that others adopt a Ramsar-adapted version of the METT for use at their Ramsar Sites.
5. The METT is designed to be a simple and rapid site assessment system that over time has been adapted for use by different organizations depending on the national or regional circumstances. It contains a set of questions that have been designed to be easily answered by the management authority without any additional research. Usually, the questions in the METT would be answered by a group consisting of staff from the management authority and other stakeholders with an interest in the conservation and wise use of the wetland.
6. The Ramsar-adapted METT, or R-METT, comprises the following sections:
 - *Data Sheet 1a: Contextual Information.* This records basic information about the Site, such as its name, size and location.

² Anon., 2007. *Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool Reporting Progress at Protected Area Sites: Second Edition*. WWF International and World Bank.

³ Chatterjee, A. and Pittock, J. 2005. *Piloting the management effectiveness tracking tool in Ramsar sites. A report from WWF to the Ramsar Convention and its Scientific and Technical Review Panel*. WWF. Gland, Switzerland.

⁴ UNEP-WCMC, 2008. *Effectively managing the world's wetlands: An analysis of applications of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool in Ramsar sites*. UNEP-WCMC. Cambridge, U.K.

- *Data Sheet 1b: Identifying and describing values from the Ecological Character Description and the Ramsar Information Sheet.* This provides information on the ecological character of the Site including the ecosystem services that it provides, and the Criteria under which the Site qualifies as a Wetland of International Importance.
- *Data Sheet 2: National and International Designations.* This records information on international designations: i.e. UNESCO World Heritage, Man and Biosphere sites and Ramsar wetland sites.
- *Data Sheet 3: Ramsar Sites Threats.* This provides a generic list of threats which Ramsar Sites can face with an indication of the relative extent of that threat to the ecological character of the Site.
- *Data Sheet 4: Assessment form.* The assessment is structured around 33 questions presented in table format which includes three columns for recording details of the assessment.

Further explanation on the application of Data Sheet 4

Questions and scores: the assessment is made by **assigning a simple score ranging between 0 (poor) to 3 (excellent)**. A series of four alternative answers are provided against each question to help assessors to make judgements as to the level of score given. In addition, there are supplementary questions which elaborate on key themes in the previous questions and provide additional information and points.

This is, inevitably, an approximate process and there will be situations in which none of the four alternative answers appear to fit conditions in the protected area very precisely. You should choose the answer that is nearest and use the comment/explanation section to elaborate. **Questions that are not relevant to a particular protected area should be omitted**, with a reason given in the comment/explanation section (for example questions about use and visitors will not be relevant to a protected area managed according to the IUCN protected area management Category Ia).

The maximum score of the 33 questions and supplementary questions is 101. A final total of the score from completing the assessment form can be **calculated as a percentage of 101 or of the total score from those questions that were relevant to a particular protected area**. (As noted above if questions are believed to be irrelevant, this should be noted in the comment/explanation column). Thus if a protected area scores 65 out of a maximum score of 87 the percentage can be calculated by dividing 65 by 87 and multiplying by 100 (i.e. $65 \div 87 \times 100 = 75\%$).

The whole concept of “scoring” progress is however fraught with difficulties and possibilities for distortion. The current system assumes, for example, that all the questions cover issues of equal weight, whereas this is not necessarily the case. Scores will therefore provide a better assessment of effectiveness if calculated as a percentage for each of the six elements of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Area (WCPA) Framework (i.e. context, planning, inputs, process, outputs and assessments).

Comment/explanation: a box next to each question allows for **qualitative judgements to be explained** in more detail. This could range from local staff knowledge (in many cases, staff knowledge will be the most informed and reliable source of knowledge), a reference

document, monitoring results or external studies and assessments – the point being to give anyone reading the report an idea of why the assessment was made.

It is **very important** that this box be completed – it can provide greater confidence in the results of the assessment by making the basis of decision-making more transparent. More importantly, it provides a reference point and information for local staff in the future. This column also allows for **comments**, such as why a particular question was not answered, to be included when completing the questionnaire.

Next Steps: for each question respondents are also asked to identify any intended actions that will improve management performance.

- *Data Sheet 5: Trends in Ramsar Ecological Character (including ecosystem services and community benefits)*⁴ This section provides information on trends over the past five years in the ecological character of the Site including the ecosystem services that it provides, and the Criteria under which the Site qualifies as a Ramsar Site.
7. Data Sheets 1 to 4 are adapted from the METT¹, but Data Sheet 5 is adapted from the IUCN Conservation Assessment⁵ for World Heritage Sites. While Data Sheets 1 to 4 focus mainly on the **context, planning, inputs, process** and **outputs** sections of the management effectiveness cycle⁶, Data Sheet 5 focuses on **outcomes**.
 8. Note that Data Sheets 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 contain information that is common with elements of the Ramsar Information Sheet, which may provide a valuable resource for informing a more detailed RIS assessment.

⁵ IUCN, 2012, *IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessments - Guidelines for their application to natural World Heritage Sites. Version 1.3*. IUCN. Gland, Switzerland.

⁶ Hockings, M., Stolton, S., Dudley, N., Leverington, F. and Courrau, J., 2006. *Evaluating effectiveness: a framework for assessing the management of protected areas*. Second edition. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

Data Sheet 1a: Contextual Information

This Sheet records basic information about the Site, such as its name, size and location.

Name, affiliation and contact details for person responsible for completing the METT (email etc.)				
Date assessment carried out				
Name of Ramsar Site		Country:		
Date when Ramsar Site listed:		Total Area of Ramsar Site (ha):		
Ramsar Site number (see http://ramsar.wetlands.org/Database)				
Location of Ramsar Site (province and if possible map reference of centre point)				
List any other International Designations e.g. World Heritage (and fill in section 2 where relevant):				
Ownership details (please tick all that apply):	State	Private	Community	Other
Management Authority:				
Number of staff:	Permanent		Temporary	
Total annual budget (US\$) for Ramsar Site– excluding staff salary costs:	Recurrent (operational) funds:		Project/ other supplementary funds:	
Under which Ramsar criteria was the site designated?				
List the management objectives of the Ramsar Site	Management objective 1: Management objective 2: etc.			
No. of people involved in completing assessment				
Including: (tick boxes)	PA manager <input type="checkbox"/>	PA staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other PA agency staff <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Local community <input type="checkbox"/>	Donors <input type="checkbox"/>	External experts <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Ramsar Site manager <input type="checkbox"/>		Government representative <input type="checkbox"/>	
Please note if assessment was carried out in association with a particular project, on behalf of an organisation or donor.				

Data Sheet 1b: Identifying and describing values from the Ecological Character Description and the Ramsar Information Sheet

PART A: RAMSAR CRITERIA – reflects the criteria used for site designation			
No.	Key values	Description	Ramsar Criterion
1i	e.g. Only known breeding area for the New Zealand crane	e.g. Large freshwater wetland areas immediately above high tide provide nesting sites and food for rearing chicks. Island location means no interference from feral animals or from vehicles.	e.g. Criterion 2
PART B - OTHER IMPORTANT FEATURES – from the Ecological Character Description or other knowledge of site managers.			
Vn°	Key values	Description	ECD group
Vx	Key area for community- based fishing industry	Provides primary food source for local population of approx. 2000 villagers	Ecological services and benefits

Data Sheet 2: National and International Designations

Nationally designated Protected Areas which fall within the boundaries of the Ramsar Site (add extra columns as required):					
Name	Designation	IUCN category	Area (ha)	Date of Establishment	WDPA code

UNESCO World Heritage site (see: whc.unesco.org/en/list)				
Site name	Site area (ha)	Date Listed	Geographical co-ordinates	WDPA Code
Criteria for designation (i.e. criteria i to x)				
Statement of Outstanding Universal Value				

UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves (see: www.unesco.org/mab/wnbrs.shtml)						
Site name	Date listed	Site area (ha):				Geographical co-ordinates
		Total:	Core:	Buffer:	Transition	
Criteria for designation						
Fulfillment of three functions of MAB (conservation, development and logistic support.)						

Please list other designations (i.e. ASEAN Heritage, Natura 2000) and any supporting information below	
Name:	Details:

Data Sheet 3: Ramsar Sites Threats

Please tick all relevant threats (both current and potential) as either of high, medium or low significance. Note that some of the activities listed are not always threats – only tick them if they threaten the site's integrity in some way. Threats ranked as of high significance are those which are seriously degrading values; medium are those threats having some negative impact and those characterized as low are threats which are present but not seriously impacting values or N/A where the threat is not present or not applicable in the Ramsar Site.

1. Residential and commercial development within a Ramsar Site

Threats from human settlements or other non-agricultural land uses with a substantial footprint

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				1.1 Housing and settlement	
				1.2 Commercial and industrial areas	
				1.3 Tourism and recreation infrastructure	

2. Agriculture and aquaculture within a Ramsar Site

Threats from farming and grazing as a result of agricultural expansion and intensification, including silviculture, mariculture and aquaculture

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				2.1 Annual and perennial non-timber crop cultivation	
				2.1a Drug cultivation	
				2.2 Wood and pulp plantations	
				2.3 Livestock farming and grazing	
				2.4 Marine and freshwater aquaculture	

3. Energy production and mining within a Ramsar Site

Threats from production of non-biological resources

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				3.1 Oil and gas drilling	
				3.2 Mining and quarrying	
				3.3 Energy generation, including from hydropower dams, wind farms and solar panels	

4. Transportation and service corridors within a Ramsar Site

Threats from long narrow transport corridors and the vehicles that use them including associated wildlife mortality

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				4.1 Roads and railroads (include road-killed animals)	
				4.2 Utility and service lines (e.g. electricity cables, telephone lines,)	
				4.3 Shipping lanes and canals	
				4.4 Flight paths	
				4.5 Ports with large scale loading and unloading of products	

5. Biological resource use and harm within a Ramsar Site

Threats from consumptive use of "wild" biological resources including both deliberate and unintentional harvesting effects; also persecution or control of specific species (note this includes hunting and killing of animals)

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				5.1 Unsustainable and illegal hunting, killing and collecting terrestrial (native) animals (including killing of animals as a result of human/wildlife conflict)	
				5.2 Gathering terrestrial (native) plants or plant products (non-timber)	
				5.3 Logging and wood harvesting	
				5.4 Fishing, killing and harvesting (native) aquatic resources	

6. Human intrusions and disturbance within a Ramsar Site

Threats from human activities that alter, destroy or disturb habitats and species associated with non-consumptive uses of biological resources

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				6.1 Recreational activities and tourism	
				6.2 War, civil unrest and military exercises	
				6.3 Research, education and other work-related activities in Ramsar Site	
				6.4 Activities of site managers (e.g. construction or vehicle use, artificial watering points and dams)	
				6.5 Deliberate vandalism, destructive activities or threats to protected area staff and visitors	

7. Natural system modifications

Threats from other actions that convert or degrade habitat or change the way the ecosystem functions.

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				7.0 Habitat clearing	
				7.1 Fire and fire suppression (including arson)	
				7.2 Dams, hydrological modification and water management/use	
				7.3a Increased fragmentation within Ramsar Site	
				7.3b Isolation from other natural habitat (e.g. deforestation, dams without effective aquatic wildlife passages)	
				7.3c Other 'edge effects' on wetland values	
				7.3d Loss of keystone species (e.g. top predators, pollinators etc)	

7a. Hydrological change

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				7a.1 Dams within or upstream of site altering hydrological regime	
				7a.2 Water extraction/diversion within site or catchment	
				7a.3 Excess ponding of water in site (e.g. for flood storage)	
				7a.4 Loss of hydrological connectivity (e.g. via stop banks)	
				7a.5 Drought conditions	
				7a.6 Desertification	

8. Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Threats from terrestrial and aquatic non-native and native plants, animals, pathogens/microbes or genetic materials that have or are predicted to have harmful effects on biodiversity following introduction, spread and/or increase

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				8.1 Invasive non-native/alien plants (weeds)	
				8.1a Invasive non-native/alien animals	
				8.1b Invasive native species (plants or animals)	
				8.1c Pathogens (non-native or native but creating new/increased problems)	
				8.2 Introduced genetic material (e.g. genetically modified organisms)	

9. Pollution entering or generated within Ramsar Site

Threats from introduction of exotic and/or excess materials or energy from point and non-point sources

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				9.1 Household sewage and urban waste water from outside the Ramsar Site	
				9.1a Sewage and waste water from Ramsar Site facilities (e.g. toilets, hotels etc)	
				9.2 Industrial, mining and military effluents and discharges (e.g. unnatural temperatures, de-oxygenated, higher salinity, other pollution)	
				9.3 Agricultural and forestry effluents (e.g. excess fertilizers or pesticides)	
				9.4 Garbage and solid waste	
				9.5 Air-borne pollutants	
				9.6 Excess energy (e.g. heat pollution, lights etc)	

10. Geological events

Geological events may be part of natural disturbance regimes in many ecosystems but they can be a threat if a species or habitat is damaged and has lost its resilience and is vulnerable to disturbance. Management capacity to respond to some of these changes may be limited.

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				10.1 Volcanoes	
				10.2 Earthquakes/Tsunamis	
				10.3 Avalanches/ Landslides	
				10.4 Erosion and siltation/ deposition (e.g. shoreline or riverbed changes)	

11. Climate change and severe weather

Threats from long-term climatic changes which may be linked to global warming and other severe climatic/weather events outside of the natural range of variation

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				11.1 Habitat shifting and alteration	
				11.2 Droughts	
				11.3 Temperature extremes	
				11.4 Storms and flooding	

12. Specific cultural and social threats

High	Medium	Low	N/A	Threat	Notes
				12.1 Loss of cultural links, traditional knowledge and/or management practices	
				12.2 Natural deterioration of important cultural site values	
				12.3 Destruction of cultural heritage buildings, gardens, sites etc	

Data Sheet 4: Assessment form

Answer all questions that relate to the Site. Do not answer questions that are not relevant to the Site.

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
1. Legal status	The Ramsar Site is not legally protected	0			
Does the Ramsar Site have legal status (or in the case of private reserves is covered by a covenant or similar)?	There is agreement that the Ramsar Site should be legally protected but the process has not yet begun	1			
	The Ramsar Site is in the process of being legally protected but the process is still incomplete (includes sites designated under international conventions, such as Ramsar, or local/traditional law such as community conserved areas, which do not yet have national legal status or covenant)	2			
	The Ramsar Site has been formally legally protected	3			
<i>Context</i>					
2. Ramsar Site regulations	There are no regulations for controlling land use and activities in the Ramsar Site	0			
Are regulations in place to control land use and activities (e.g. hunting)?	Some regulations for controlling land use and activities in the Ramsar Site exist but these are major weaknesses	1			
	Regulations for controlling land use and activities in the Ramsar Site exist but there are some weaknesses or gaps	2			
	Regulations for controlling inappropriate land use and activities in the Ramsar Site exist and provide an excellent basis for management	3			
<i>Planning</i>					
3. Law enforcement	The staff have no effective capacity/resources to enforce Ramsar Site legislation and regulations	0			
Can staff (i.e. those with responsibility for managing the site) enforce Ramsar Site rules well enough?	There are major deficiencies in staff capacity/resources to enforce Ramsar Site legislation and regulations (e.g. lack of skills, no patrol budget, lack of institutional support)	1			
	The staff have acceptable capacity/resources to enforce Ramsar Site legislation and regulations but some deficiencies remain	2			
	The staff have excellent capacity/resources to enforce Ramsar Site legislation and regulations	3			
<i>Input</i>					
4. Ramsar Site objectives	No firm objectives have been agreed for the Ramsar Site	0			
	The Ramsar Site has agreed objectives, but is not managed according to these objectives	1			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
Is management undertaken according to agreed objectives? <i>Planning</i>	The Ramsar Site has agreed objectives, but is only partially managed according to these objectives	2			
	The Ramsar Site has agreed objectives and is managed to meet these objectives	3			
5. Ramsar Site design Is the Ramsar Site the right size and shape to protect species, habitats, ecological processes and water catchments of key conservation concern? <i>Planning</i>	Inadequacies in Ramsar Site design mean achieving the major objectives of the Ramsar Site is very difficult	0			
	Inadequacies in Ramsar Site design mean that achievement of major objectives is difficult but some mitigating actions are being taken (e.g. agreements with adjacent land owners for wildlife corridors or introduction of appropriate catchment management)	1			
	Ramsar Site design is not significantly constraining achievement of objectives, but could be improved (e.g. with respect to larger scale ecological processes)	2			
	Ramsar Site design helps achievement of objectives; it is appropriate for species and habitat conservation; and maintains ecological processes such as surface and groundwater flows at a catchment scale, natural disturbance patterns etc	3			
6. Ramsar Site boundary demarcation Is the boundary known and demarcated? <i>Process</i>	The boundary of the Ramsar Site is not known by the management authority or local residents/neighbouring land users	0			
	The boundary of the Ramsar Site is known by the management authority but is not known by local residents/neighbouring land users	1			
	The boundary of the Ramsar Site is known by both the management authority and local residents/neighbouring land users but is not appropriately demarcated	2			
	The boundary of the Ramsar Site is known by the management authority and local residents/neighbouring land users and is appropriately demarcated	3			
7. Management plan Is there a management plan and is it being implemented? <i>Planning</i>	There is no management plan for the Ramsar Site	0			
	A management plan is being prepared or has been prepared but is not being implemented	1			
	A management plan exists but it is only being partially implemented because of funding constraints or other problems	2			
	A management plan exists and is being implemented	3			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
Additional points: <i>Planning</i>					
7a. Planning process	The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan	+1			
7b. Planning process	There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan	+1			
7c. Planning process	The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into planning	+1			
8. Regular work plan	No regular work plan exists	0			
Is there a regular work plan and is it being implemented	A regular work plan exists but few of the activities are implemented	1			
	A regular work plan exists and many activities are implemented	2			
	A regular work plan exists and all activities are implemented	3			
<i>Planning/Outputs</i>					
9. Resource inventory	There is little or no information available on the critical habitats, species and cultural values of the Ramsar Site	0			
Do you have enough information to manage the area?	Information on the critical habitats, species, ecological processes and cultural values of the Ramsar Site is not sufficient to support planning and decision making	1			
	Information on the critical habitats, species, ecological processes and cultural values of the Ramsar Site is sufficient for most key areas of planning and decision making	2			
	Information on the critical habitats, species, ecological processes and cultural values of the Ramsar Site is sufficient to support all areas of planning and decision making	3			
<i>Input</i>					
10. Protection systems	Protection systems (patrols, permits etc) do not exist or are not effective in controlling access/resource use	0			
Are systems in place to control access/resource use in the Ramsar Site?	Protection systems are only partially effective in controlling access/resource use	1			
	Protection systems are moderately effective in controlling access/resource use	2			
	Protection systems are largely or wholly effective in controlling access/resource use	3			
<i>Process/Outcome</i>					
11. Research	There is no survey or research work taking place in the Ramsar Site	0			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
Is there a programme of management-orientated survey and research work? <i>Process</i>	There is a small amount of survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of Ramsar Site management	1			
	There is considerable survey and research work but it is not directed towards the needs of Ramsar Site management	2			
	There is a comprehensive, integrated programme of survey and research work, which is relevant to management needs	3			
12. Habitat management	No active management of critical habitats, species, ecological processes and/or cultural values is being undertaken	0			
Is active habitat management being undertaken? <i>Process</i>	Very few of the requirements for active management of critical habitats, species, ecological processes and/or cultural values are being implemented	1			
	Many of the requirements for active management of critical habitats, species, ecological processes and/or cultural values are being implemented but some key issues are not being addressed	2			
	Requirements for active management of critical habitats, species, ecological processes and/or cultural values are being substantially or fully implemented	3			
13. Staff numbers	There are no staff	0			
Are there enough people employed to manage the Ramsar Site? <i>Inputs</i>	Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management activities	1			
	Staff numbers are below optimum level for critical management activities	2			
	Staff numbers are adequate for the management needs of the Ramsar Site	3			
14. Staff training	Staff lack the skills needed for Ramsar Site management	0			
Are staff adequately trained to fulfil management objectives? <i>Inputs/Process</i>	Staff training and skills are low relative to the needs of the Ramsar Site	1			
	Staff training and skills are adequate, but could be further improved to fully achieve the objectives of management	2			
	Staff training and skills are aligned with the management needs of the Ramsar Site	3			
15. Current budget	There is no budget for management of the Ramsar Site	0			
Is the current budget sufficient?	The available budget is inadequate for basic management needs and presents a serious constraint to the capacity to manage	1			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
<i>Inputs</i>	The available budget is acceptable but could be further improved to fully achieve effective management	2			
	The available budget is sufficient and meets the full management needs of the Ramsar Site	3			
16. Security of budget	There is no secure budget for the Ramsar Site and management is wholly reliant on outside or highly variable funding	0			
Is the budget secure?	There is very little secure budget and the Ramsar Site could not function adequately without outside funding	1			
<i>Inputs</i>	There is a reasonably secure core budget for regular operation of the Ramsar Site but many innovations and initiatives are reliant on outside funding	2			
	There is a secure budget for the Ramsar Site and its management needs	3			
17. Management of budget	Budget management is very poor and significantly undermines effectiveness (e.g. late release of budget in financial year)	0			
Is the budget managed to meet critical management needs?	Budget management is poor and constrains effectiveness	1			
	Budget management is adequate but could be improved	2			
<i>Process</i>	Budget management is excellent and meets management needs	3			
18. Equipment	There are little or no equipment and facilities for management needs	0			
Is equipment sufficient for management needs?	There are some equipment and facilities but these are inadequate for most management needs	1			
	There are equipment and facilities, but still some gaps that constrain management	2			
	There are adequate equipment and facilities	3			
<i>Input</i>					
19. Maintenance of equipment	There is little or no maintenance of equipment and facilities	0			
Is equipment adequately maintained?	There is some <i>ad hoc</i> maintenance of equipment and facilities	1			
	There is basic maintenance of equipment and facilities	2			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
<i>Process</i>	Equipment and facilities are well maintained	3			
20. Education and awareness	There is no education and awareness programme	0			
Is there a planned education programme linked to the objectives and needs?	There is a limited and <i>ad hoc</i> education and awareness programme	1			
	There is an education and awareness programme but it only partly meets needs and could be improved	2			
	There is an appropriate and fully implemented education and awareness programme	3			
<i>Process</i>					
21. Planning for land and water use	Adjacent land and water use planning does not take into account the needs of the Ramsar Site and activities/policies are detrimental to the survival of the area	0			
Does land and water use planning recognise the Ramsar Site and aid the achievement of objectives?	Adjacent land and water use planning does not take into account the long term needs of the Ramsar Site, but activities are not detrimental the area	1			
	Adjacent land and water use planning partially takes into account the long term needs of the Ramsar Site	2			
	Adjacent land and water use planning fully takes into account the long term needs of the Ramsar Site	3			
<i>Planning</i>					
Additional points: Land and water planning					
21a: Land and water planning for habitat conservation	Planning and management in the catchment or landscape containing the Ramsar Site incorporates provision for adequate environmental conditions (e.g. volume, quality and timing of water flow, air pollution levels etc) to sustain relevant habitats.	+1			
21b: Land and water planning for connectivity	Management of corridors linking the Ramsar Site provides for wildlife passage to key habitats outside the Ramsar Site (e.g. to allow migratory fish to travel between freshwater spawning sites and the sea, or to allow animal migration).	+1			
21c: Land and water planning for ecosystem services & species conservation	"Planning addresses ecosystem-specific needs and/or the needs of particular species of concern at an ecosystem scale (e.g. volume, quality and timing of freshwater flow to sustain particular species, fire management to maintain savannah habitats etc.)"	+1			
22. State and commercial	There is no contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land and water users	0			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
neighbours	There is contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land and water users but little or no cooperation	1			
Is there co-operation with adjacent land and water users?	There is contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land and water users, but only some co-operation	2			
	There is regular contact between managers and neighbouring official or corporate land and water users, and substantial co-operation on management	3			
<i>Process</i>					
23. Indigenous peoples	Indigenous peoples have no input into decisions relating to the management of the Ramsar Site	0			
Do indigenous peoples resident or regularly using the Ramsar Site have input to management decisions?	Indigenous peoples have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct role in management	1			
	Indigenous peoples directly contribute to some relevant decisions relating to management but their involvement could be improved	2			
	Indigenous peoples directly participate in all relevant decisions relating to management, e.g. co-management	3			
<i>Process</i>					
24. Local communities	Local communities have no input into decisions relating to the management of the Ramsar Site	0			
Do local communities resident or near the Ramsar Site have input to management decisions?	Local communities have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct role in management	1			
	Local communities directly contribute to some relevant decisions relating to management but their involvement could be improved	2			
	Local communities directly participate in all relevant decisions relating to management, e.g. co-management	3			
<i>Process</i>					
Additional points <i>Indigenous peoples and local communities</i>					
24 a. Impact on communities	There is open communication and trust between indigenous peoples and local communities, stakeholders and Ramsar Site managers	+1			
24b. Impact on communities	Programmes to enhance community welfare, while conserving Ramsar Site resources, are being implemented	+1			
24c. Impact on communities	Indigenous peoples and local communities actively support the Ramsar Site	+1			
25. Economic benefit	The Ramsar Site does not deliver any economic benefits to local communities	0			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
Is the Ramsar Site providing economic benefits to local communities, e.g. income, employment, payment for environmental services? <i>Outcomes</i>	Potential economic benefits are recognised and plans to realise these are being developed	1			
	There is some flow of economic benefits to local communities	2			
	There is a major flow of economic benefits to local communities from activities associated with the Ramsar Site	3			
26. Monitoring and evaluation	There is no monitoring and evaluation in the Ramsar Site	0			
Are management activities monitored against performance?	There is some <i>ad hoc</i> monitoring and evaluation, but no overall strategy and/or no regular collection of results	1			
	There is an agreed and implemented monitoring and evaluation system but results do not feed back into management	2			
	A good monitoring and evaluation system exists, is well implemented and used in adaptive management	3			
<i>Planning/Process</i>					
27. Visitor facilities	There are no visitor facilities and services despite an identified need	0			
Are visitor facilities adequate?	Visitor facilities and services are inappropriate for current levels of visitation	1			
	Visitor facilities and services are adequate for current levels of visitation but could be improved	2			
	Visitor facilities and services are excellent for current levels of visitation	3			
<i>Outputs</i>					
28. Commercial tourism operators	There is little or no contact between managers and tourism operators using the Ramsar Site	0			
Do commercial tour operators contribute to Ramsar Site management?	There is contact between managers and tourism operators but this is largely confined to administrative or regulatory matters	1			
	There is limited co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences and maintain Ramsar Site values	2			
	There is good co-operation between managers and tourism operators to enhance visitor experiences, and maintain Ramsar Site values	3			
<i>Process</i>					
29. Fees	Although fees are theoretically applied, they are not collected	0			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
If fees (i.e. entry fees or fines) are applied, do they help Ramsar Site management? <i>Inputs/Process</i>	Fees are collected, but make no contribution to the Ramsar Site or its environs	1			
	Fees are collected, and make some contribution to the Ramsar Site and its environs	2			
	Fees are collected and make a substantial contribution to the Ramsar Site and its environs	3			
30. Condition of key management targets What is the condition of the important values of the Ramsar Site as compared to when it was first designated? (this answer should be a conclusion from datasheet 5) <i>Outcomes</i>	Many important biodiversity, ecological or cultural values are being severely degraded	0			
	Some biodiversity, ecological or cultural values are being severely degraded	1			
	Some biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are being partially degraded but the most important values have not been significantly impacted	2			
	Biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are predominantly intact	3			
Additional questions specific to Ramsar Sites					
31: Ecological Character Description	Work on the description of the ecological character of the Ramsar Site has not begun	0			
	Work has begun to create a description of the ecological character of the Ramsar Site, but no draft is yet available	1			
	A description of the ecological character of the site has been drafted, but is incomplete or out of date	2			
	A description of the ecological character of the site has been completed	3			
32: Cross sectorial Management Committee	No cross-sectorial management committee is in place	0			
	Potential stakeholders for the creation of a cross-sectorial management committee have been identified, but no management committee has been established	1			

Issue	Criteria	Score: Tick only one box per question		Comment/Explanation	Next steps
	A management committee has been established, but is not significantly involved in the management of the site	2			
	A functioning cross-sectorial management committee is in place	3			
33. Communication mechanisms with Ramsar administrative authority	There are no mechanisms in place for communication between the Ramsar Administrative authority and site managers	0			
	Communication between the Ramsar Administrative authority and site managers exists but is ad-hoc and poorly developed	1			
	Communication mechanisms are in place but could be improved	2			
	Mechanisms are in place for communication between the Ramsar Administrative authority and site managers and function well	3			

34. Of the 33 questions above, please list in order of importance the five that reflect the major constraints to effective management of your Ramsar Site	Question number	Why is this a major constraint to effective management

35. Of the 33 questions above, please list in order of importance the five greatest strengths of your current management of your Ramsar Site	Question number	Why do you think this has become a strength of current management? (e.g. due to manager's efforts or government commitment?)

Data Sheet 5: Trends in Ecological Character

Key values for the Ramsar Site should be copied from Datasheet 1b. This section provides information on trends at the site since the last evaluation concerning the criteria under which the site was designated as a Ramsar Site and the services that it provides

Note: The current state of values is assessed against five ratings: **Good, Low Concern, High Concern, Critical** and **Data Deficient**. The baseline for the assessment should be the condition at the time of designation, with reference to the best-recorded historical conservation state. Trend is assessed in relation to whether the condition of a value is **Improving, Stable, Deteriorating** or **Data Deficient**, and is intended to be snapshot of recent developments over the last three years.

PART A: RELEVANT QUALIFYING FEATURE RELATED TO RAMSAR CRITERIA – reflects the criteria used for site designation	Assessment					Trend				Justification for Assessment
	Good	Low Concern	High Concern	Critical	Data Deficient (DD)	I ↑	S ↔	D ↓	DD	
Relevant qualifying feature related to Ramsar Criteria including brief description of how the site fulfills each Criterion (from RIS)										Brief description to explain the basis of the <i>Assessment</i> and <i>Trend</i> columns
PART B - OTHER IMPORTANT FEATURES – from the Ecological Character Description or other knowledge of site managers.										
Assessment of the overall current state and trend of Ramsar Site ecological character:										



12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Resolution XII.16

Thanks to the Host Country, Uruguay, and the “Declaration of Punta del Este”

1. HAVING MET for the first time in South America, in Punta del Este, Uruguay;
2. FULLY AWARE of the significant effort required for the organization of a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), with, on this occasion, more than 800 participants, including delegations from 141 Contracting Parties and 2 Observer States;
3. RECOGNIZING Uruguay’s long-term commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through their actions for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, including recent efforts such as:
 - a. Removing Bañados del Este y Franja Costera from the Montreux Record;
 - b. Completing the National Wetlands Inventory, which aims to allow the development of additional environmental policies in order to protect wetlands, other related ecosystems and aquatic resources in general; and
 - c. integrating scientific and technical knowledge into wetland managements plans, aiming to achieve an adequate balance between their necessary protection and their productive use;
4. NOTING the request to designate Laguna de Rocha as a new Uruguayan Ramsar Site;
5. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION that all resolutions considered at this Conference of the Parties were approved by consensus;
6. WELCOMING and APPRECIATING the initiative of the Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay to prepare the “Declaration of Punta del Este” attached to this Resolution as Annex 1;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. CONGRATULATES Uruguay for a successful COP12 and RECORDS its thanks to the President, the Alternate President and the Vice-Presidents of COP12 for their commitment to ensuring efficient and effective conduct of the plenary sessions;
8. EXPRESSES its thanks and appreciation to Uruguay, and in particular to the Ministry of Housing, Land Planning and Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their efficient, comprehensive and thorough preparations which ensured the COP and all its associated events ran smoothly;
9. FURTHER EXPRESSES its heartfelt thanks to the people of Uruguay for their warm and gracious welcome and hospitality;

10. EXPRESSES its appreciation for the crucial role played by the COP12 volunteers that have contributed to the many aspects of the COP's success;
11. GREATLY APPRECIATES the numerous side events and cultural events that provided a wonderful opportunity for technical and cultural exchanges between delegates and Uruguayan citizens;
12. LOOKS FORWARD to working ever more closely with the government and people of Uruguay to harness the interest and energy generated in the framework of COP12 for the benefit of wetland conservation locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;
13. RECOGNIZES that the "Declaration of Punta del Este" will enhance the visibility of the Convention and the advances made during the 12th Conference of Parties showing the strong commitment of the Parties with the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024, the strong relationship between wetlands and other environmental issues, and the need to strengthen the collaborative association of the Convention with other instruments, organizations and stakeholders;
14. DRAWS ATTENTION to the "Declaration of Punta del Este" that emerged from COP12 in the Annex;
15. RECOMMENDS that the Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay on behalf of all Contracting Parties submit this declaration to all members and observers of the United Nations for their consideration.

Annex

“Declaration of Punta del Este”

1. WE, the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), gathered in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 1 to 9 June 2015 on the occasion of the 12th Conference of the Contracting Parties under the slogan “Wetlands for our Future”;
2. STRESSING the vital ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services that all wetlands provide to people and nature such as water supply, water purification, climate and flood regulation, coastal protection, and in spiritual, cultural and tourist services;
3. RECALLING with concern that since 1900 over 64% of the world’s wetlands have been destroyed, representing a reduction in access to fresh water for two billion people, and a real threat to the preservation of the above mentioned ecosystem functions and ecosystem services;
4. RECOGNIZING the progress made in the implementation of the third Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2009-2015 adopted by Resolution X.1;
5. RECALLING that the “Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands” (Resolution X.3), adopted for the purpose of complementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, serves as the basis for decision-making processes and national policies of the Contracting Parties, other governments and stakeholders, and addressed the relationship between water and wetlands, climate change and wetlands, livelihoods of people and wetlands and among changes in land use, biodiversity and wetlands;
6. AWARE of the report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands* (Ramsar, 2013), which notes the values of wetlands and their vital role in safeguarding and regulating water resources, specially: the “nexus” between water, food production and the energy sector, which constitutes one of the fundamental relationships for societies; and the fact that wetlands provide ecological support that underpins sustainable development and that their loss can lead to significant negative impacts on human well-being, communities, countries and businesses;
7. NOTING the outcome of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which recognized degradation of wetlands as a root cause of increasing frequency and impact of water-related disasters and which also recognized that sustainable management and restoration of wetlands is a means to build resilience to disasters;
8. RECALLING ALSO the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and REAFFIRMING the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio +20”, reflected in the final document “The Future We Want”;
9. WELCOMING the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals, especially the proposed goals related to the mission of the Ramsar Convention: Goal 2, to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 6, to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 11, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12, to ensure

sustainable consumption reduction patterns; Goal 13, to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and Goal 15, to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

10. RECOGNIZING the importance of technical guidance established by the Ramsar Convention, which is highly relevant for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
11. OBSERVING that all wetlands, including the Ramsar Site network, will have a direct relevance to the achievement of any Sustainable Development Goal related to the quality and supply of water for different uses, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, healthy living, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements, poverty reduction, as well as the innovation and the development of adequate infrastructure;
12. OBSERVING that the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2016-2024 will be the basis for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention for the next three triennia for the Contracting Parties, Convention bodies and other stakeholders; and
13. NOTING the Ministerial Declaration of the 7th World Water Forum, Republic of Korea, April 2015.

WE DECLARE THAT:

14. WE REAFFIRM our commitment to sustainable development, the preservation and wise use of all wetlands and the Ramsar Site network, for their direct relevance to the quality and supply of water, food and water security, adaptation to climate change, energy supply, human health, biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainable human settlements and poverty eradication.
15. WE WELCOME the adoption of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for 2016-2024, based on four strategic priorities: addressing the factors driving the loss and degradation of wetlands, conservation and effective management of the Ramsar Site network, wise use of all wetlands, including the integrated management of resources at the level of watersheds, and improvement of the implementation of the Convention.
16. WE DECIDE to inform our partners, stakeholders, and others to consider the guidelines of Ramsar's 4th Strategic Plan, with due regard to their different situations and capacities, setting the corresponding national goals and strengthening international cooperation in the management of wetland ecosystems and water resources, when designing, planning and implementing their policies, strategies, action plans, projects and programmes at local, national and regional levels linked directly or indirectly to wetlands; and
17. WE HIGHLIGHT the need for and importance of strengthening partnerships with individuals and organizations beyond those responsible for the management of the Ramsar Sites and important wetlands, especially through the strengthening of existing linkages with International Organization Partners, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the United Nations system and regional and global initiatives and debates on sustainable development processes, including water, livelihoods of people, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, resilience, and climate change, as a means to create conditions that allow and promote the implementation of the Convention.