

**Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**4th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**  
**Montreux, Switzerland**  
**27 June – 4 July 1990**

### **Recommendation 4.1: Wetland restoration**

AWARE that wetland loss is still prevalent and that degradation threatens listed sites;

INFORMED that major restoration schemes are in operation or planned at several listed sites;

ADMITTING that existing manuals are of limited general applicability to wetland restoration schemes;

CONVINCED that maintenance and conservation of existing wetlands is always preferable and more economical than their subsequent restoration;

EMPHASIZING that degraded wetlands should be restored before destroyed wetlands;

RECALLING that restoration schemes must not weaken efforts to conserve existing natural systems;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that

- (a) all Parties examine the possibility of establishing appropriate wetland restoration projects;
- (b) the Agency or Agencies responsible for wetlands in each Contracting Party should have wetland restoration in their mission; and
- (c) opportunities for wetland restoration be sought and put into operation;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties provide the Bureau with available documentation on different stages of wetland restoration projects; and

FINALLY RECOMMENDS that the Standing Committee in its deliberations on necessary scientific work consider the need to prepare a technical manual on wetland restoration with emphasis on evaluation of case studies, and to consider the impact of global warming and sea level rise on wetlands.

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## **Recommendation 4.2: Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance**

RECALLING that the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved Recommendation 3.1 which called for the establishment of a Working Group “to examine the ways in which the criteria and guidelines for identifying wetlands of international importance might be elaborated, and the wise use provisions of the Convention applied, in order to improve the worldwide application of the Convention”;

NOTING that a “Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use” was established by the Standing Committee at its Third Meeting on 5 June 1987, with the participation of seven Contracting Parties (Australia, Chile, Iran, Mauritania, Norway, Poland and USA - one from each of the Standing Committee’s regions);

AWARE that the Working Group met on the occasion of the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee in Costa Rica in January 1988 and elected Norway as Chairman of the Working Group, and that observers from many other Contracting Parties took part in this meeting of the Working Group, as well as in subsequent deliberations;

TAKING NOTE of the Report of the Working Group, circulated to all Contracting Parties with Bureau Notification 1989/3 (31 March 1989), and revised according to comments received from Contracting Parties;

EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to the Working Group and its Chairman for their work in clarifying the criteria and developing the guidelines on wise use;

### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that the “Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance”, contained in Annex I of the Working Group’s report, discussed at the present meeting of the Conference and appended as Annex I to the present document, be used for identification of wetlands to be designated for the List under Article 2 of the Convention;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that, as far as possible, further amendments to these Criteria be avoided so as to facilitate establishing a definite basis for uniform application of the Convention; and

DRAWS SPECIAL ATTENTION to Annex II of the Working Group’s report, also discussed at the present meeting of the Conference and appended as Annex II to the present document, and recommends that the Contracting Parties focus particularly on subsequent action after designation which will maintain the ecological character of designated wetlands.

## **CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE**

### Introduction

Article 2.1 of the Convention states that “Each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a “List of Wetlands of International Importance”. The guidance provided by the Convention text on identification of “wetlands of international importance” is in Article 2.2, which refers to “international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology” and indicates that “In the first instance, wetlands of international importance to waterfowl at any season should be included”. The Criteria set out below, which have been approved by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, are for identifying wetlands of international importance.

### Criteria

A wetland is identified as being of international importance if it meets at least one of the criteria set out below:

#### 1. Criteria for representative or unique wetlands

A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

- (a) it is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural wetland, characteristic of the appropriate biogeographical region;
- or (b) it is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural wetland, common to more than one biogeographical region;
- or (c) it is a particularly good representative example of a wetland, which plays a substantial hydrological, biological or ecological role in the natural functioning of a major river basin or coastal system, especially where it is located in a trans-border position;
- or (d) it is an example of a specific type of wetland, rare or unusual in the appropriate biogeographical region.

#### 2. General criteria based on plants or animals

A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

- (a) it supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant or animal, or an appreciable number of individuals of any one or more of these species;
- or (b) it is of special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region because of the quality and peculiarities of its flora and fauna;

- or (c) it is of special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycle;
- or (d) it is of special value for one or more endemic plant or animal species or communities.

### 3. Specific Criteria Based on Waterfowl

A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

- (a) it regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl;
- or (b) it regularly supports substantial numbers of individuals from particular groups of waterfowl, indicative of wetland values, productivity or diversity;
- or (c) where data on populations are available, it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterfowl.

### Guidelines for Application of the Criteria

To assist Contracting Parties in assessing the suitability of wetlands for inclusion on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, the Conference of the Contracting Parties has formulated the following guidelines for application of the Criteria:

- (a) A wetland could be considered of international importance under Criterion 1 if, because of its outstanding role in natural, biological, ecological or hydrological systems, it is of substantial value in supporting human communities dependent on the wetland. In this context, such support would include:
  - provision of food, fibre or fuel;
  - or maintenance of cultural values;
  - or support of food chains, water quality, flood control or climatic stability.

The support, in all its aspects, should remain within the framework of sustainable use and habitat conservation, and should not change the ecological character of the wetland.
- or (b) A wetland could be considered of international importance under Criterion 1, 2 or 3 if it conforms to additional guidelines developed at regional (e.g. Scandinavian or West African) or national level. Elaboration of such regional or national guidelines may be especially appropriate:
  - where particular groups of animals (other than waterfowl) or plants are considered more suitable as a basis for evaluation;
  - or where waterfowl and other animals do not occur in large concentrations (particularly in northern latitudes);
  - or where collection of data is difficult (particularly in very large countries).

- or (c) The “particular groups of waterfowl, indicative of wetland values, productivity or diversity” in Criterion 3(b) include any of the following:
- loons or divers: Gaviidae;
  - grebes: Podicipedidae;
  - cormorants: Phalacrocoracidae
  - pelicans: Pelecanidae
  - herons, bitterns, storks, ibises and spoonbills: Ciconiiformes;
  - swans, geese and ducks (wildfowl): Anatidae;
  - wetland related raptors: Accipitriformes and Falconiformes
  - cranes: Gruidae
  - shorebirds or waders: Charadrii; and
  - terns: Sternidae.
- or (d) The specific criteria based on waterfowl numbers will apply to wetlands of varying size in different Contracting Parties. While it is impossible to give precise guidance on the size of an area in which these numbers may occur, wetlands identified as being of international importance under Criterion 3 should form an ecological unit, and may thus be made up of one big area or a group of smaller wetlands. Consideration may also be given to turnover of waterfowl at migration periods, so that a cumulative total is reached, if such data are available.

## **DESIGNATION OF WETLANDS FOR THE LIST AND SUBSEQUENT ACTION**

It is important to emphasize that, when a wetland fulfils the “Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance”, it remains the prerogative of the Contracting Party (or Parties), in whose territory (or territories) it is situated, to decide upon its designation for the List. The following considerations may help the Contracting Parties in deciding on designation and action to be taken following designation:

1. The Convention leaves each Contracting Party free to decide on the legal status or protection measures which are appropriate at the time of designation. Contracting Parties have adopted a wide variety of approaches to this matter: among these the following may be mentioned:
  - (a) the wetland may already enjoy legal protection at national level (or at state or provincial level in a Contracting Party with a federal system);
  - (b) the wetland, when legally protected, may include one or more core areas with stricter regulations, and a surrounding buffer zone where regulations are less strict;
  - (c) the wetland need not have specific protection (e.g. as a national park or nature reserve) at national level (or at state or provincial level in a Contracting Party with a federal system); the Convention’s aims can, however, be achieved by applying existing general legislation (e.g. by limiting the discretionary powers of the authorities concerned); and
  - (d) the wetland may be in public or private ownership.
2. The Convention text provides guidance on measures to be taken at a wetland once it has been listed. Article 3.1 states that Contracting Parties “shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List”, while Article 3.2 stipulates that information shall be passed without delay to the Bureau “if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has been changed, is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference”. The principal undertaking of Contracting Parties with respect to listed wetlands is to promote their conservation with the aim of preventing changes to their ecological character.
3. Article 4.1 of the Convention states that “Each Contracting Party shall promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves on wetlands, whether they are included in the List or not”. Establishment of nature reserves (whether strict or less strict) is one way of maintaining the ecological character of listed wetlands. Provided its ecological character is maintained, wise use of the wetland is possible, and indeed maintenance of traditional land use practices and values may be the best way to guarantee ecological character. At each listed wetland, consideration should be given to the need for management; if management measures are deemed appropriate, a management plan should be developed and put into action.

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### **Recommendation 4.3: National Reports**

RECALLING Recommendation 2.1 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the submission of national reports which noted that “the submission of timely and detailed national reports is of vital importance for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the Convention and for the purpose of sharing information on wetland conservation measures taken, on any problems which have arisen and on appropriate methods of dealing with them”;

NOTING that the request for national reports for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties was circulated under cover of Bureau notification 1989/7 dated 19 May 1989 and that reports were requested to be submitted to the Bureau by 27 December 1989;

REGRETTING that only four reports were received by the requested date and that by 1 April 1990 national reports had been received from only 21 Contracting Parties;

EMPHASIZING ONCE AGAIN that national reports to the Conference of the Contracting Parties continue to provide the most detailed and accurate record of the implementation of the Convention;

STRESSING the value of the Overview of National Reports document prepared by the Bureau as a basis for discussion at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

URGES anew the Contracting Parties to submit detailed national reports to the Bureau at least six months prior to each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

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#### **Recommendation 4.4: Establishment of wetland reserves**

RECALLING Article 4.1 of the Convention which provides that “Each Contracting Party shall promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves on wetlands, whether they are included in the List or not, and provide adequately for their wardening”;

RECOGNISING the value of establishing nature reserves at wetlands of diverse types and sizes;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the particular value of reserves in promoting conservation education and public awareness of the importance of wetland conservation and the goals of the Convention;

ACKNOWLEDGING the role of national wetland inventories in aiding the identification of sites in need of protection;

NOTING the necessity of an adequate legal framework for the definition, establishment and protection of nature reserves;

STRESSING the vital importance of developing and implementing integrated management plans;

AWARE that the IVth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas will be held in Venezuela in February 1992;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties establish in their territory national networks of nature reserves covering both listed and non-listed wetlands;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties develop conservation education programmes linked to the establishment of such networks;

URGES Contracting Parties to compile national inventories detailing the location and values of wetlands;

SUGGESTS that Contracting Parties review their legal mechanisms to ensure that there are adequate measures for the establishment and effective protection of wetland nature reserves; and

CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties to participate actively in the IVth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, and the Bureau to provide information and assistance to the organizers as may be requested, to ensure that adequate attention is given to wetland-related issues.



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### **Recommendation 4.5: Education and training**

RECALLING Article 4.5 of the Convention text which states “The Contracting Parties shall promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, management and wardening”;

EMPHASIZING the crucial role of training courses in mobilizing human resources for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

NOTING the existence of organizations and institutions involved actively in conservation training and education throughout the world;

CONSIDERING the emphasis placed on partnership in the “Framework for the Implementation of the Ramsar Convention”;

RECOGNISING the importance of a broad interdisciplinary approach to training that takes account of social and cultural requirements in the countries concerned;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need for adequate financial resources for training programmes and, in particular, the importance of directing resources to developing countries;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties place a high priority on the development and implementation of comprehensive pro-active cross-disciplinary educational strategies which target both the formal school-university systems and non-formal education of youth and adults across the broadest spectrum of the community;

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties place high priority on providing educational programmes at key reserves which are accessible to a wide spectrum of the population;

ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to establish special reserves where education is the main objective;

RECOMMENDS Contracting Parties to provide for adequate training courses at all levels, which, wherever possible, should be established in the country or region concerned;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that full account should be taken of cultural, social and economic circumstances when developing such training courses;

URGES Contracting Parties and other appropriate authorities and organizations to devote a sufficient part of their budgets for wetland conservation to training matters; and

REQUESTS the Convention Bureau to forge partnerships with relevant bodies to ensure that existing training facilities are used as efficiently as possible.

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**Recommendation 4.6: Establishment of national scientific inventories of potential Ramsar sites**

NOTING the criteria for the identification of wetlands of international importance, formally adopted at Cagliari, revised at Regina and further revised by the present Conference;

RECOGNISING the value of establishing national scientific inventories of wetlands on the basis of these criteria for improving the general level of knowledge on the world's wetlands and for facilitating the designation of sites for the List;

ACKNOWLEDGING the progress achieved in many countries towards the development of wetland conservation policies and the increasing awareness, among national, regional and local authorities responsible for water management and land use, of the necessity to conserve wetlands;

CONVINCED that the establishment of inventories carried out on the basis of the best scientific information available at both national and international level constitutes the most effective method to achieve the designation for the List of the largest possible number of sites;

CONSIDERING that REC. 1.4, REC. 2.3 and REC. 3.1 should therefore be supplemented by the following recommendation:

**THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties establish, as far as possible in collaboration with competent national and international bodies, national scientific inventories of wetlands showing, in particular, those which are of international importance according to the criteria adopted by the Conference of the Parties; and

REQUESTS the Bureau to promote the development of these inventories by Contracting Parties and to assist those Contracting Parties that may request it in implementing this recommendation.

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### **Recommendation 4.7: Mechanisms for improved application of the Ramsar Convention**

RECALLING that the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure was established by the Standing Committee at its first meeting after the Regina Conference, in order to give effect to Recommendation 3.9 on Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites;

ACKNOWLEDGING with gratitude the special funding provided for operation of the Monitoring Procedure both by Contracting Parties and by non- governmental organizations, and the many expressions of support for the Monitoring Procedure at the present meeting;

EMPHASIZING the need, as the Ramsar List grows, for the Convention to have a small but effective database, using a standardized data sheet and wetland classification, as provided for in Recommendation 2.3 adopted at the second meeting of the Conference in Groningen;

EXPRESSING its thanks to the Contracting Parties which provided expertise and finance for development and implementation of the database;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

ENDORSES the measure taken by the Standing Committee to establish a Ramsar Monitoring Procedure (the revised text of which is appended as Annex 1 to the present Recommendation), and instructs the Bureau to continue to operate this procedure when it receives information on adverse, or likely adverse changes in ecological character at Ramsar sites;

DETERMINES that Monitoring Procedure reports shall be public documents once the Contracting Party concerned has had an opportunity to study the reports and comment on them;

RECOMMENDS that the data sheet developed for the description of Ramsar sites (the text of which is appended as Annex 2 Part A to the present Recommendation) be used by Contracting Parties and the Bureau in presenting information for the Ramsar database, and as appropriate in other contexts;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that the classification system for “wetland type” developed for the description of Ramsar sites (the text of which is appended as Annex 2 Part B to the present Recommendation) be used by Contracting Parties and the Bureau in presenting information for the Ramsar database and as appropriate for other purposes; and

REQUESTS the Standing Committee to oversee the application of the Monitoring Procedure and the use of the database and classification system for “wetland type”, and to investigate the need for a Convention Scientific Committee, which would review the above matters and other questions as appropriate.

## **MONITORING PROCEDURE**

1. It comes to the attention of the Bureau that the ecological character of a listed wetland is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological development, pollution or other human interference.
2. Where appropriate, the Bureau shall propose to the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to apply the Monitoring Procedure, requesting, at the same time, additional information on the status of the wetland concerned.
3. Where, as a result of this procedure and other information available to the Bureau, the Bureau is of the opinion that there is evidence of significant change or likely change in the ecological character of a listed wetland, the Bureau shall collaborate with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to arrive at an acceptable solution and the Bureau may offer advice and assistance to that Party or those Parties, if required. The Bureau shall inform the Standing Committee of any action it has taken in this connection.
4. If it does not appear that an acceptable solution can be readily achieved, the Bureau shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee, acting through the Chairman and Secretary, provided by the Bureau, may pursue the matter, in direct contact with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned and, where appropriate, with other responsible agencies or bodies, with a view to helping to find a solution.
5. In the event of alterations to the List or changes in ecological character in wetlands included therein, the Standing Committee shall arrange for the information to be circulated for discussion at the next Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in accordance with Article 8 paragraph 2 (d) of the Convention.
6. The Bureau shall periodically review and report progress on the conservation status of sites to which its attention has been drawn under this procedure. To facilitate follow-up, the Bureau shall maintain a register of activities undertaken in this connection.

A. INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR SITES

(NB: more detailed guidelines for completion of the sheet are available)

1. Country
2. Date (or update) of compilation
3. Reference number (for completion by Database Manager)
4. Name and address of compiler
5. Name of wetland
6. Date of Ramsar designation
7. Geographical coordinates
8. General location (nearest large town)
9. Area (in hectares)
10. Wetland type (see part B of this Annex)
11. Altitude (average; or maximum and minimum)
12. Overview of site (thumb-nail sketch in two or three sentences)
13. Physical features
  - geology and geomorphology
  - origins (natural or man-made)
  - hydrology (including seasonal water balance, inflow and outflow)
  - soil type and chemistry
  - water quality (physio-chemical characteristics)
  - depth, fluctuations and permanence
  - tidal variations
  - catchment area
  - downstream area (especially in the case of sites important in flood control)
  - climate
14. Ecological features (main habitats and vegetation types)
15. Land tenure (ownership of site and surrounding areas)
16. Conservation measures taken
  - legal status
  - management category
  - management practices
17. Conservation measures proposed (but not yet implemented)
18. Land use (human population, principal human activities and main forms of land use)
19. Possible changes in land use and proposed development projects (major developments likely to have a serious long-term effect)
20. Disturbances and threats (human activities at the site or catchment area which may have a detrimental effect on natural character)
21. Hydrological and biophysical values (e.g. recharge and discharge of groundwater, flood control, sediment trapping, prevention of coastal erosion)
22. Social and cultural values (e.g. fisheries production, forestry or historical associations, religious significance)
23. Noteworthy fauna
24. Noteworthy flora
25. Scientific research and facilities
26. Conservation education
27. Recreation and tourism

28. Management authority
29. Jurisdiction (territorial e.g. state, region or municipality - and functional e.g. Dept of Fisheries, Dept of Agriculture)
30. References (scientific)
31. Reasons for inclusion (reference to criteria)
32. Outline map of site (to be appended)

## B. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR “WETLAND TYPE”

(NB: the Database Manager will assign the wetland to a wetland type on the basis of the information sheet)

### Marine and Coastal Wetlands

1. Marine waters - permanent shallow waters less than six metres deep at low tide; includes sea bays, straits.
2. Subtidal aquatic beds; includes kelp beds, sea-grasses, tropical marine meadows.
3. Coral reefs.
4. Rocky marine shores; includes rocky offshore islands, sea cliffs.
5. Sand, shingle or pebble beaches; includes sand bars, spits, sandy islets.
6. Estuarine waters; permanent waters of estuaries and estuarine systems of deltas.
7. Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats.
8. Intertidal marshes; includes saltmarshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised saltmarshes, tidal brackish and freshwater marshes.
9. Intertidal forested wetlands; includes mangrove swamps, nipa swamps, tidal freshwater swamp forests.
10. Brackish to saline lagoons with one or more relatively narrow connections with the sea.
11. Freshwater lagoons and marshes in the coastal zone; includes delta lagoon and marsh systems.

### Inland Wetlands

1. Permanent rivers and streams; includes waterfalls.
2. Seasonal and irregular rivers and streams.
3. Inland deltas (permanent).
4. Riverine floodplains; includes river flats, flooded river basins, seasonally flooded grassland, savanna and palm savanna.

5. Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha.); includes large oxbow lakes.
6. Seasonal freshwater lakes (over 8 ha.), floodplain lakes.
7. Permanent and seasonal, brackish, saline or alkaline lakes, flats and marshes.
8. Permanent freshwater ponds (below 8 ha.), marshes and swamps on inorganic soils; with emergent vegetation waterlogged for at least most of the growing season.
9. Seasonal freshwater ponds and marshes on inorganic soil; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.
10. Shrub swamps; shrub-dominated freshwater marsh, shrub carr, alder thicket; on inorganic soils.
11. Freshwater swamp forest; seasonally flooded forest, wooded swamps; on inorganic soils.
12. Peatlands; shrub or open bogs, fens.
13. Forested peatlands; peat swamp forest.
14. Alpine and tundra wetlands; includes alpine meadows, tundra pools, temporary waters from snowmelt.
15. Freshwater springs, oases.
16. Geothermal wetlands.

#### Man-made Wetlands

1. Water storage areas; reservoirs, barrages, hydro-electric dams, impoundments (generally over 8 ha.).
2. Ponds, including farm ponds, stock ponds, small tanks (generally below 8 ha.).
3. Aquaculture ponds; fish ponds, shrimp ponds.
4. Salt exploitation; salt pans, salines.
5. Excavations; gravel pits, borrow pits, mining pools.
6. Wastewater treatment; sewage farms, settling ponds, oxidation basins.
7. Irrigated land and irrigation channels; rice fields, canals, ditches.
8. Seasonally flooded arable land, farm land.

An arrangement of these terms in a hierarchical format is given hereafter.

## CODING SYSTEM FOR WETLAND TYPES

Marine & Coastal	Marine	Subtidal	Aquatic bed Reef	Shallow marine waters
				Marine aquatic beds
		Intertidal	Rocky	Rocky marine shores
			Unconsol	Sand/shingle beaches
	Estuarine	Subtidal	Unconsol	Estuarine waters
				Intertidal mudflats
		Intertidal	Emergent Forested	Salt marshes
				Mangrove, tidal forest
	Lacustrine/ Palustrine	Permanent/ Seasonal		Brackish/saline lagoons
				Coastal fresh lagoons
Inland	Riverine	Perennial	Emergent	Permanent river/stream
				Inland deltas
		Intermitt.	Emergent	Intermittent river/stream
				Floodplain wetlands
	Lacustrine	Permanent Seasonal		Permanent freshwater lakes
				Seasonal freshwater lakes
		Permanent/ Seasonal		Permanent/seasonal saline lakes and marshes
	Palustrine	Permanent	Shrub-dom. Forested	Permanent freshwater ponds and marshes
				Open peat bogs, fens
		Seasonal	Emergent	Alpine/tundra wetlands
Man-made	Geothermal			Geothermal wetlands
	Aquaculture			Fish, shrimp ponds
	Agriculture			Farm ponds, small tanks
				Irrigated land, rice fields
				Seasonally-flooded arable land
	Salt exploitation		Salt pans, salines	
	Urban and			Reservoirs, barrages
			Gravel pits	



Industrial

Sewage farms

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### **Recommendation 4.8: Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites**

RECALLING that Contracting Parties “designate suitable wetlands within their territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” (Article 2.1), “formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List” (Article 3.1) and inform the Bureau “if the ecological character of any wetland in (their) territory and included in the List has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference” (Article 3.2);

EMPHASIZING the fundamental importance of maintaining ecological character of listed sites;

REFERRING to Conference document DOC. C.3.6 of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties which identifies Ramsar sites that have incurred damage, and Recommendation 3.9 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties which calls upon the Contracting Parties concerned to report to the Bureau on actions taken to safeguard these sites;

NOTING the information on Ramsar sites whose ecological character has changed, is changing or is likely to change, as provided by Contracting Parties to the Fourth Meeting of the Contracting Parties, and summarized in document DOC. C.4.18;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

REQUESTS that Contracting Parties, in whose territory are located sites which have incurred or are being threatened by change in ecological character, to take swift and effective action to prevent or remedy such changes;

INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau, in consultation with the Contracting Party concerned, to maintain a record of Ramsar sites where such changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur, and to distinguish between sites where preventive or remedial action has not as yet been identified, and those where the Contracting Party has indicated its intention to take preventive or remedial action or has already initiated such action; and

FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau to give priority to application of the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure, within the limits of budgetary constraints, at sites included in this record.

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### **Recommendation 4.9: Ramsar sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties**

WELCOMING the increase in the number of wetlands designated for the Ramsar List;

NOTING with pleasure the statements made by the delegations of Poland, USSR, Vietnam and Yugoslavia about additional listing;

EXPRESSING CONCERN at the statements made at the Conference or in their national reports about change in ecological character in listed wetlands in their territories by the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, South Africa, Spain and the USA;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

CALLS UPON the Government of Poland to protect the middle reaches of the River Vistula (one of the last unregulated rivers in Europe whose importance for unique plant and animal populations and as a flyway for migratory waterfowl is enormous) by establishing a Landscape Park and designating the area for the Ramsar List;

CALLS UPON the Government of Vietnam to designate for the Ramsar List the Melaleuca forests of U Minh district in the Mekong Delta and to remain in close contact with the Ramsar Bureau concerning assistance with the conservation and wise use of this site;

WARMLY WELCOMES the statement by the delegation of the USSR about plans to establish a new law for protection of Ramsar sites and to designate 16 new Ramsar sites covering 8 million hectares, and urges the Government of the USSR to complete these measures as soon as possible;

RECOMMENDS that the Government of Hungary considers giving year-round Ramsar status to Lake Balaton and Lake Tata as sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

RECOMMENDS that the Government of Yugoslavia take rapid action to designate for the List the two coastal and eight inland sites which have been identified as meeting the Ramsar criteria;

REQUESTS the Governments of Spain, the USA, Jordan, the Federal Republic of Germany and Greece respectively, to take action as specified in Recommendations REC. C.4.9.1 to REC. C.4.9.5;

RECOMMENDS that the Government of Iceland take full note of the results of ecological research into the impact on the Myvatn-Laxa Ramsar site of sediment dredging before deciding to continue this activity;

EXPRESSES concern at the dams built in Afghanistan leading to changes in ecological character at Hamoun Lake in the Islamic Republic of Iran;

PROPOSES that the Monitoring Procedure be applied at this site and requests the Bureau to contact the Government of Afghanistan with a view to obtaining Afghanistan's accession to the Ramsar Convention; and

EXPRESSES its grave concern at the potential impact on the South African Ramsar site of St Lucia of mining for titanium and other heavy metals, and calls upon the South African Government:

- (a) to prohibit any mining activity which will damage the ecological character of the site; and
- (b) to ensure the St. Lucia system is retained as a protected site because of its national and international conservation importance.

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### **Recommendation 4.9.1: Doñana National Park, Spain**

RECOGNISING that Doñana is one of the most important wetlands in Europe and is included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

AWARE that the Spanish authorities have taken many positive measures for the protection of Doñana, including hydrological restoration, the enlargement of the protected area and the substantial reduction of the irrigated area;

NOTING that, in spite of these positive measures, there is still a risk of change in the ecological character of Doñana National Park Ramsar site because of water extraction for agriculture and tourist development, among other problems;

CONSCIOUS of the need for urgent supplementary measures to ensure the conservation of Doñana;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that the Spanish Government and regional authorities:

- (a) ensure that the basin-wide water resources Master Plan being prepared by the Guadalquivir Basin Authority (CHG) will examine the Almonte-Marismas aquifer, the irrigation scheme, as well as tourist and urban demands for water, in order to meet the Doñana National Park's water requirements and to maintain its ecological character;
- (b) ensure that the existing formal consultative bodies for the National Park and Guadalquivir Basin pay special attention to the views of the scientific community and of non-governmental organizations concerned with environmental protection;
- (c) ensure better and stricter control of the extraction of water and the use of chemical products for agricultural purposes; and
- (d) increase conservation measures in the area surrounding Doñana sufficiently to ensure that the ecological character of Doñana is not damaged; enlarge the protected area to cover all the important zones around Doñana in order to protect the National Park from the threat represented by tourist development, particularly the proposed "Costa Doñana" development scheme.

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### **Recommendation 4.9.2: Everglades, USA**

RECOGNISING the international importance of the Everglades National Park as a unique subtropical ecosystem;

NOTING that the Contracting Parties to the Convention recognise and applaud the current and unprecedented legal action instituted by the United States Government in regard to preventing further degradation of the Everglades;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

URGES the United States Government and the State of Florida to undertake the political and financial actions necessary:

- (a) to restore natural waterflows through the wetlands of the Everglades National Park;
- (b) to eliminate the nutrient enrichment that threatens the Park by improving land and water management practices in the Everglades Agriculture Area (EAA), by introducing effective measures for nutrient retention in the EAA and by phasing out agricultural subsidies which result in land uses incompatible with maintenance of the ecological character of the Everglades ecosystem; and
- (c) to ensure that the strongest possible enforcement of available legislation is continually implemented to protect the Everglades National Park.

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### **Recommendation 4.9.3: Azraq Oasis, Jordan**

NOTING that Jordan has designated the Azraq wetland for the List of Wetlands of International Importance established under the Ramsar Convention;

RECOGNISING the importance of maintaining the ecological character of the wetland for the benefit of human society and as a strategically important area for migratory birds;

RECALLING that the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties held at Regina, Canada in 1987 approved Recommendation 3.8, calling for a proper assessment of the environmental impact of water extraction from Azraq to supply water for the Jordanian capital and urging that there be established a long-term water resources plan guaranteeing the maintenance of the natural properties of the wetland;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure was operated at Azraq in March 1990 and that the report made thirteen specific recommendations;

INFORMED by the Jordanian delegation to the present meeting that the ecological character of Azraq Oasis, and especially Azraq Wetland Reserve, is likely to undergo further negative change;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

URGES the Government of Jordan to implement, as a matter of urgency, the recommendations contained in the Monitoring Procedure report;

RECOMMENDS in particular that:

- (a) the total annual exploitation of Azraq's water should not exceed the "safe yield" of 20 million cubic metres identified by the Jordanian Government;
- (b) extraction from private wells be strictly controlled;
- (c) wells should be drilled in the B2/A7 aquifer for the purpose of providing a modest supplement to spring flow to the wetland, which has been diminished by over-exploitation of the separate basalt/B4 aquifer; and
- (d) steps should be taken to construct storage reservoirs to aid groundwater recharge; and

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that full environmental impact studies be undertaken prior to any implementation of points (c) and (d) above, and that the Jordanian authorities remain in close contact with the Convention Bureau with a view to seeking technical assistance funds.

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#### **Recommendation 4.9.4: Conservation of the Leybucht, Federal Republic of Germany**

NOTING that the East Frisian Wadden Sea in Lower Saxony has been designated by the Federal Republic of Germany for the Ramsar List, and includes both Dollart and Leybucht;

RECALLING that this site was mentioned in Regina document DOC. C.3.6 as being likely to incur change in ecological character because of the building of the Dollart harbour;

REGISTERING its satisfaction at information submitted to the present meeting about the abandonment of the harbour construction project, and the consequent maintenance of the ecological character of the Dollart section;

EXPRESSING its appreciation of the many demonstrations made at the present meeting of tripartite cooperation between Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany and The Netherlands for the conservation and wise use of the Wadden Sea;

REGISTERING its concern at actions taken at the Leybucht, involving building of new dikes, including additional activities;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

REQUESTS the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to provide additional information, as has previously been done, on measures being taken at the Leybucht;

TRUSTS that the ecological character of the Ramsar site will be maintained, if necessary by imaginative management or restoration measures; and

CALLS on the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to take, as far as possible, appropriate initiatives for compensatory measures, if sections of the East Frisian Wadden Sea Ramsar Site have their boundaries restricted, in the urgent national interest.



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#### **Recommendation 4.9.5: Greek Ramsar sites**

RECALLING that Greece was the seventh State to become a Contracting Party in 1975, and therefore brought the Convention into force;

NOTING that the boundaries of most Greek Ramsar sites have not been precisely described, nor delimited on maps, as required by Article 2.1 of the Convention;

AWARE that all eleven Greek Ramsar sites were mentioned in Regina document DOC. C.3.6 as having undergone or being likely to undergo change in ecological character;

CONSCIOUS that the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure has been applied in Greece, with the aim, inter alia, of assisting in the determination of the boundaries of Greek Ramsar sites;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

NOTES that the Greek authorities have, since the Regina Conference, provided the Ramsar Bureau with provisional maps showing the boundaries of Greek Ramsar sites and are soon to provide definitive maps for the sites of Amvrakikos Gulf and Mikra Prespa National Park;

TAKES COGNISANCE of the fact that the Greek national report to the present Conference, while indicating measures already taken or to be taken in the near future by the Greek authorities for the protection of Greek Ramsar sites, mentions clearly the threats which affect or are likely to affect in certain ways most of those sites; and

REQUESTS the Greek authorities to take action to delimit precisely the boundaries of nine out of the eleven Greek Ramsar sites and to take appropriate measures to ensure the conservation and wise use of all eleven sites.

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**Recommendation 4.10: Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept**

RECALLING that the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved Recommendation 3.1 which called for the establishment of a Working Group “to examine the ways in which the criteria and guidelines for identifying wetlands of international importance might be elaborated, and the wise use provisions of the Convention applied, in order to improve the worldwide application of the Convention”;

NOTING that a “Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use” was established by the Standing Committee at its Third Meeting on 5 June 1987, with the participation of seven Contracting Parties (Australia, Chile, Iran, Mauritania, Norway, Poland and USA - one from each of the Standing Committee’s regions);

AWARE that the Working Group met on the occasion of the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee in Costa Rica in January 1988 and elected Norway as Chairman of the Working Group, and that observers from many other Contracting Parties took part in this meeting of the Working Group, as well as in subsequent deliberations;

TAKING NOTE of the Report of the Working Group, circulated to all Contracting Parties with Bureau Notification 1989/3 (31 March 1989), and revised according to comments received from Contracting Parties;

EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to the Working Group and its Chairman for their work in clarifying the criteria and developing the guidelines on wise use;

RECONFIRMING that the concept of wise use extends to all phases of wetland conservation including policy development, planning, legal and educational activities, and site specific actions;

NOTING with pleasure the support being provided to the Convention Bureau by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for promoting application of the wise use concept in developing countries;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need for a Convention Working Group to provide guidance to the Bureau in promoting the wise use concept;

**THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

RECOMMENDS that the “Guidelines for implementation of the wise use concept of the Convention”, contained in Annex III of the Working Group’s report, discussed at the present Conference and appended as an Annex to the present document, be adopted and applied by Contracting Parties;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that a Working Group on Wise Use be reconstituted under the supervision of the Standing Committee, with sufficient representation from each of the Convention's regions and assisted by invited experts from concerned organizations, to continue the wise use work of the Convention by:

- (a) overseeing the work of the Bureau in implementing the Netherlands Wise Use project;
- (b) fostering further development and refinement of the "Guidelines for implementation of the wise use concept" contained in the Annex, to apply to a diversity of wetland types, regions, resources and uses, concerning such areas as:
  - 1. organizational and institutional processes;
  - 2. inventory and classification;
  - 3. development of management plans, policies, and alternative conservation strategies;
  - 4. environmental education and outreach programmes;
  - 5. effective training programmes;
  - 6. ongoing monitoring and research programmes; and
  - 7. available partnerships for further assistance;
- (c) disseminating examples of site-specific wise use from regions throughout the world;
- (d) disseminating practical examples of the interrelation between human activities and wetlands; and
- (e) providing information about the process of developing national wetland inventories and policies; and

FINALLY RECOMMENDS that the Working Group report back to the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

## **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WISE USE CONCEPT OF THE CONVENTION**

### Introduction

Article 3.1 of the Convention states that the Contracting Parties “shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory”.

The third meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Regina, Canada from 27 May to 5 June 1987, adopted the following definition of wise use of wetlands:

“The wise use of wetlands is their sustainable utilization for the benefit of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem”.

Sustainable utilization is defined as “human use of a wetland so that it may yield the greatest continuous benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations”.

Natural properties of the ecosystem are defined as “those physical, biological or chemical components, such as soil, water, plants, animals and nutrients, and the interactions between them”.

The wise use provisions apply to all wetlands and their support systems within the territory of a Contracting Party, both those wetlands designated for the List, and all other wetlands. The concept of wise use seeks both the formulation and implementation of general wetland policies, and wise use of specific wetlands. These activities are integral parts of sustainable development.

It is desirable in the long term that all Contracting Parties should have comprehensive national wetland policies, formulated in whatever manner is appropriate to their national institutions. However as recognized by the report of the Workshop on Wise Use of the Regina Meeting, elaboration of national wetland policies will be a long term process, and immediate action should be taken to stimulate wise use. The guidelines presented below therefore include both elements for comprehensive national wetland policies and priority actions.

### Establishment of national wetland policies

National wetland policies should as far as possible address all problems and activities related to wetlands within a national context. These may be grouped in different sections:

1. Actions to improve institutional and organizational arrangements, including:
  - (a) establishment of institutional arrangements which will allow those concerned to identify how wetland conservation can be achieved, and how wetland priorities can be fully integrated into the planning process; and
  - (b) establishment of mechanisms and procedures for incorporating an integrated multidisciplinary approach into planning and execution of projects concerning

wetlands and their support systems, in order to secure wetland conservation and sustainable development.

2. Actions to address legislation and government policies, including:

- (a) review of existing legislation and policies (including subsidies and incentives) which affect wetland conservation;
- (b) application, where appropriate, of existing legislation and policies of importance for the conservation of wetlands;
- (c) adoption, as required, of new legislation and policies; and
- (d) use of development funds for projects which permit conservation and sustainable utilization of wetland resources.

3. Actions to increase knowledge and awareness of wetlands and their values, including:

- (a) interchange of experience and information on wetland policy, conservation and wise use between countries preparing and/or implementing national wetland policies, or pursuing wetland conservation;
- (b) increasing the awareness and understanding of decision-makers and the public of the full benefits and values, within the terms of wise use, of wetlands. Among these benefits and values, which can occur on or off the wetland itself, are:
  - sediment and erosion control,
  - flood control,
  - maintenance of water quality and abatement of pollution,
  - maintenance of surface and underground water supply,
  - support for fisheries, grazing and agriculture,
  - outdoor recreation and education for human society,
  - provision of habitat for wildlife, especially waterfowl, and
  - contribution to climatic stability;
- (c) review of traditional techniques of wise use, and elaboration of pilot projects which demonstrate wise use of representative wetland types; and
- (d) training of appropriate staff in the disciplines which will assist in implementation of wetland conservation action and policies.

4. Actions to review the status of, and identify priorities for, all wetlands in a national context, including:

- (a) execution of a national inventory of wetlands including classification of the sites;
- (b) identification and evaluation of the benefits and values of each site (see 3b above);
- (c) definition of the conservation and management priorities for each site, in accordance with the needs and conditions of each Contracting Party

5. Actions to address problems at particular wetland sites, including:
- (a) integration from the outset of environmental considerations in planning of projects which might affect the wetland (including full assessment of their environmental impact before approval, continuing evaluation during their execution, and full implementation of necessary environmental measures). The planning, assessment and evaluation should cover projects upstream of the wetland, those in the wetland itself, and other projects which may affect the wetland, and should pay particular attention to maintaining the benefits and values listed in 3b above;
  - (b) regulated utilization of the natural elements of wetland systems such that they are not over-exploited;
  - (c) establishment, implementation and, as necessary, periodic revision of management plans which involve local people and take account of their requirements;
  - (d) designation for the Ramsar List of wetlands identified as being of international importance;
  - (e) establishment of nature reserves at wetlands, whether or not they are included in the List; and
  - (f) serious consideration of restoration of wetlands whose benefits and values have been diminished or degraded.

#### Priority actions at national level

Whether or not national wetland policies are being prepared, several actions should receive immediate attention at national level in order to facilitate the preparation of national wetland policies, and to avoid delay in practical implementation of wetland conservation and wise use.

Contracting Parties will naturally select actions, according to their own national priorities and requirements, from those listed above under 'Establishment of national wetland policies'. They may wish to carry on institutional, legislative or educational measures (such as those listed under sections 1, 2, 3 above) and at the same time initiate inventories or scientific work (such as those listed under section 4); in this way the institutional, legislative and educational instruments will be available in time to deal with scientific results.

Equally, Contracting Parties wishing to promote wise use of wetlands without waiting until national wetland policies have been developed, may, based on their situation and needs, wish to

- (i) identify the issues which require the most urgent attention ;
- (ii) take action on one or more of these issues;
- (iii) identify the wetland sites which require the most urgent action; and
- (iv) take action at one or more of these wetlands, along the lines set out under 'Priority actions at particular wetland sites' below.

#### Priority actions at particular wetland sites

As at national level, immediate action may be required in order to avoid destruction or degradation of important wetland values at particular wetland sites. These actions will undoubtedly include some elements listed in section 5 above, and Contracting Parties will select those appropriate to their own national priorities and requirements.

Whenever planning is initiated for projects which might affect important wetlands, the following actions should be taken in order to promote wise use of the wetland:

- (i) integration from the outset of environmental considerations in planning of projects which might affect wetlands (including full assessment of their environmental impact before approval);
- (ii) continuing evaluation during their execution; and
- (iii) full implementation of necessary environmental measures.

The planning, assessment and evaluation should cover projects upstream of the wetland, those in the wetland itself, and other projects which may affect the wetland, and should pay particular attention to maintaining the benefits and values listed, in 3b above.

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### **Recommendation 4.11: Cooperation with international organizations**

WELCOMING the statement by the observer from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concerning OECD projects on wetlands and their economic values;

TAKING NOTE of the statement by the observer from the Commission of the European Communities on the European Economic Community's wetland conservation and wise use activities both in the member States of the Community and in developing countries, notably Contracting Parties to the Lomé Convention;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

CALLS for closer cooperation with OECD, notably as regards exchanges of ideas between ecologists and economists, and the improvement of cost/benefit analysis of projects affecting wetlands;

STRONGLY SUPPORTS the establishment of closer links with the Commission of the European Communities with a view to facilitating combined action for conservation and wise use of wetlands in Community Member States, and provision of technical assistance for wetland conservation and wise use of wetlands in developing countries; and

EXPRESSES INTEREST in developing similar partnerships with other concerned international organizations.



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### **Recommendation 4.12: Cooperation between Contracting Parties for the management of migratory species**

RECOGNISING that Article 5 of the Convention provides that Contracting Parties shall “endeavour to coordinate present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna”;

BEING AWARE that the Contracting Parties have adopted specific criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance based inter alia upon the presence of at least one percent of the population of a species or subspecies of waterfowl;

RECALLING Recommendation 3.2 of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the need for further studies of flyways;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

URGES those Contracting Parties that do not already do so, to participate in internationally coordinated waterfowl surveys, and to undertake special surveys within their territories to identify wetlands of international importance for waterfowl at any time of the annual cycles of these species;

INSTRUCTS the Bureau, within the limitations of the budget, to prepare a report for the Conference of the Contracting Parties, summarizing available information on the current status of migratory waterfowl populations in order to assist the Parties in identifying appropriate wetlands for designation onto the List according to the 1% criterion;

CONGRATULATES Contracting Parties that have entered into bilateral and multilateral agreements for the conservation of migratory waterfowl and encourages other Contracting Parties to take similar action;

SUPPORTS the development of the Western Palearctic Waterfowl Agreement under the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals and urges that similar arrangements be made for other flyways;

APPLAUDS the development of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and recommends that the same approach be used for other flyways; and

URGES Contracting Parties situated along the same flyway to cooperate with regard to financial assistance and the sharing of expertise.

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### **Recommendation 4.13: Responsibility of multilateral development banks (MDBs) towards wetlands**

[Note: For the purposes of this Recommendation the term Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) will be taken to mean the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) and three regional banks - the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank - which combined provide over US\$ 25 billion annually to developing countries.]

RECALLING that the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties adopted Recommendation 3.4 which noted:

- “the potential of wetlands to provide the basis for sustainable development founded on the husbanding of self-renewing natural resources”; and
- “that Development Agencies can play a crucial role in enhancing the capacity of wetlands to contribute to the well-being of people”;

RECALLING FURTHER that the same Recommendation 3.4 of the Conference of Contracting Parties urged the Development Agencies, including the MDBs:

- “to formulate and adopt coherent wetland development policies directed at sustainable utilization, wise management and conservation of wetlands;
- to create special regional wetland programmes in order to ensure the integration of this policy into all their activities;
- to coordinate their programmes at the international level to ensure that their independent activities do not in combination adversely affect wetlands;
- to strengthen ecological expertise in all departments involved in development and implementation of projects affecting wetlands;
- to develop guidelines to ensure the integration of environmental aspects in all stages of the project cycle;
- to ensure that the funding of projects is preceded by an environmental impact assessment, and the implementation of the recommended measures;
- to take appropriate steps for an assessment of their policies at regular intervals; and
- to rehabilitate those wetlands which have become degraded through non-sustainable development;”

RECALLING that the same Recommendation 3.4 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties urged the Development Agencies, including the MDBs, “to use their influence with borrowing or recipient governments:

- to promote the formulation and adoption of national policies for wise use and conservation of wetlands;
- to strengthen the institutional arrangements and the ecological expertise both at the national level and among regional development authorities in the project regions, in order to implement these policies; and
- to train and educate personnel at project implementation level;”

NOTING that in spite of this Recommendation to promote conservation, there are still too many instances of MDB-financed projects leading directly or indirectly to the loss of critical wetlands, and that MDBs are not generally promoting the wise use and conservation of wetlands in developing countries;

CONSIDERING that the United States government has adopted voting standards directing the U.S. representative to the MDBs to oppose projects that have significant adverse impacts on wetlands and their important functions and services;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS ON the Contracting Parties to pursue Recommendation 3.4 in a more rigorous and systematic way;

FURTHER CALLS ON the Contracting Parties to urge MDBs and the other Development Agencies to advance conservation and wise use of wetlands through improved technical assistance, and consideration of these issues early in the planning process; and

URGES Contracting Parties to ensure that their representatives to the MDBs adopt voting standards in support of the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

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### **Recommendation 4.14: Thanks to the hosts**

APPRECIATING the extensive support provided by the Swiss authorities for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

EMPHASIZING the significance of the contribution of Switzerland to the Convention budget, particularly by the provision of voluntary funds to support the conservation of wetlands in developing countries;

NOTING with appreciation the announcement made at the meeting by the Government of Switzerland of the proposed designation of six new sites for the List;

#### **THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES**

EXPRESSES its thanks and appreciation to its Swiss hosts, in particular the Confederation, the canton of Vaud and the city of Montreux;

APPRECIATES the outstanding help for the Conference received from non-governmental organizations, especially for site visits;

EXPRESSES its appreciation for the continuing Swiss support to activities under the Convention; and

ANTICIPATES that the delimitation of the six newly-designated sites in Switzerland will be made pursuant to the ecological criteria established under the Convention.