

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.1: Ramsar sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties

WELCOMING the increase in the number of wetlands designated for the Ramsar “List of wetlands of international importance”;

PAYING SPECIAL TRIBUTE to Japan for designating five new wetlands in its territory for the Ramsar List, and for its strong statements of commitment to its obligations under the Convention, in particular in relation to maintaining the ecological character of its listed sites;

NOTING WITH PLEASURE the statements made (in Plenary Session or national reports) by other delegations, in particular Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chad, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Guinea, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malta, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Kingdom (including Hong Kong), Uruguay and Zambia, concerning the designation, or intended designation, of further sites for the List;

TAKING NOTE of the statements made by the Governments of Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Jordan, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, the United States of America, and Viet Nam about measures taken pursuant to Recommendation REC. C.4.9 and the associated Recommendations REC. C.4.9.1, 4.9.2, 4.9.3, 4.9.4 and 4.9.5, approved at the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Montreux, on the subject of Ramsar sites in their territories;

FURTHER NOTING the statements made at the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, or in national reports, about actual or potential change in ecological character at listed wetlands in their territories by the delegations of Germany, Greece, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Netherlands, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela and the Lower Danube Basin states;

GIVING PARTICULAR WEIGHT to statements made by the delegations of numerous developing countries about the need for much greater financial support for institutional development, capacity building, and training of staff, if additional wetlands in developing countries are to be designated for the List and managed appropriately;

RECALLING Montreux Recommendations REC. C.4.4, which called for networks of reserves to be established, and 4.12, which instructed the Bureau to assist Contracting Parties in identifying appropriate wetlands for listing based on the 1% criterion, as well as the Report of the 1992 Asian Regional Meeting in Islamabad, which called for the designation of additional Ramsar sites covering a representative range of wetlands, including intertidal wetlands;

(IN RELATION TO STATEMENTS ON RECOMMENDATION REC. C.4.9 AND ASSOCIATED RECOMMENDATIONS):

NOTES the compensatory measures being taken at Leybucht (Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer mit Dollart) by the German authorities, following the decision of the European Court of Justice that dyke construction within the site was legal;

WELCOMES the decision by Hungary to enable year-round protection to be given to Old Lake Tata and trusts that similar measures may soon be taken at Lake Balaton, so that both may be given year-round Ramsar status;

EXPRESSES ITS SATISFACTION at the measures taken by Iceland at its two Ramsar sites which enable them to be removed from the Montreux Record;

EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION of the funding provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the restoration and management of the Azraq wetland in Jordan following support from the Ramsar Convention;

REITERATES its appeal in Recommendation REC. C.4.9 to the Government of Poland to protect the middle reaches of the River Vistula, one of the last unregulated rivers in Europe, by establishment of a Landscape Park and designation for the Ramsar List;

LOOKS FORWARD to early designation of 28 new Ramsar sites in the Russian Federation;

RECONFIRMS ITS GRAVE CONCERN at the potential impact on the South African Ramsar site of St Lucia System of mining for titanium and other heavy metals, and calls on the Government of South Africa to give serious consideration to the recommendations in the Ramsar Monitoring Procedure Report No. 28;

WELCOMES the report by the Spanish delegation on measures taken with respect to Recommendation REC. C.4.9.1, in particular the significant decrease in water consumption for agriculture and the definitive rejection of new tourist complexes in the surrounding area, and trusts that funds will rapidly be made available to support the “Strategies for sustainable socio-economic development in the area around Doñana”;

NOTES WITH SATISFACTION the information provided by the United States of America on measures towards restoring the water regime and functional values of the Everglades, and emphasizes the need to continue remedial measures;

REITERATES its call at the Montreux Meeting to the Government of Viet Nam to designate at least one Ramsar site in the Mekong Delta for the Ramsar List, instructs the Bureau to remain in contact with the Vietnamese authorities on this matter, and requests the Government of Viet Nam to complete as soon as possible all necessary arrangements for inclusion of the Tien Hai part of the Red River Estuary in the Ramsar List;

(IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC STATEMENTS AT THE FIFTH MEETING):

EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN about the effects on the Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer mit Dollart in Germany of the Statoil pipeline, of the construction of a new harbour at Emden and of low-flying military aircraft;

ALSO EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN at possible new gas exploitation in the Netherlands sector of the Wadden Sea;

CALLS ON the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to ensure that the route of the inter-Maghreb highway does not pass through, or adversely affect, the Banc d'Arguin National Park;

EMPHASIZES the need to avoid further wetland clearance at Nariva Swamp in eastern Trinidad, Trinidad & Tobago, and the need for the Convention Bureau to assist the Government of Trinidad & Tobago in developing strategies and mechanisms to reverse the conditions which presently contribute to the deterioration of this Ramsar site, if appropriate through operation of the Monitoring Procedure;

REQUESTS the Governments of Greece, Venezuela and the Lower Danube states respectively to take action as specified in the Recommendations 5.1.1 to 5.1.3;

(IN RELATION TO GENERAL STATEMENTS AT THE FIFTH MEETING):

CALLS FOR increased funding to be made available to developing countries to support institutional development, capacity building, and training of staff, so that additional wetlands in developing countries may be designated for the Ramsar List and that their ecological character may be maintained through appropriate management; and

CALLS ON Contracting Parties along the East Asia flyway to designate additional wetlands for the Ramsar List, and in particular to designate additional intertidal wetlands in view of their vital role in sustaining migratory waterfowl, as well as their value for biodiversity and support of fisheries.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.1.1: Greek Ramsar sites

RECALLING Conference Recommendation REC. C.4.9.5, approved at Montreux, which noted that Greece had been the seventh State to become a Contracting Party and had therefore brought the Convention into force in 1975, and called on the Greek Government to provide definitive maps for the eleven Greek Ramsar sites;

NOTING that definitive maps of Amvrakikos Gulf and Mikra Prespa National Park have not as yet been submitted to the Ramsar Bureau as requested in Recommendation 4.9.5;

TAKING ACCOUNT of the statement by the Greek delegation at Kushiro, which indicated that some modifications of the preliminary zoning maps provided in 1987 might occur, mainly with regard to buffer zones;

CONCERNED at reports of damage to the Messolonghi Lagoons and further threats from schemes to divert the Rivers Acheloos and Evinos;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

REQUESTS the Greek Government to take urgent measures to fulfil its obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and in particular by:

- submitting the existing definitive maps for the sites of Amvrakikos Gulf and Mikra Prespa National Park to the Bureau as soon as possible, as well as making definitive delimitations of the other nine Greek Ramsar sites, in accordance with Montreux Recommendation REC. C.4.9.5;
- preparing management plans for these sites in accordance with Kushiro Resolution 5.7;
- ensuring their wise use, in accordance with Montreux Recommendation REC. C.4.10 and Kushiro Resolution RES. C.5.6;

URGES the Greek authorities to consider all possible ways for averting negative impacts from water management projects upon the Messolonghi Lagoons Ramsar Site, and to inform the Ramsar Bureau correspondingly; and

EXPRESSES THE HOPE that, when Turkey becomes a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention, the Convention's Article 5 will be applied at the Evros/Meriç Delta transfrontier wetland.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.1.2: Cuare, Venezuela

NOTING that Cuare has been designated by the Government of Venezuela for the “List of wetlands of international importance” established under the Ramsar Convention;

RECOGNIZING that the site is one of the most important in the country for its flora and fauna, including 315 bird species, among which the population of Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* is outstanding;

APPRECIATIVE of the Government of Venezuela’s contribution to Workshop A on the application of the Monitoring Procedure at Cuare;

CONCERNED by the continuing urgent need for measures to prevent adverse ecological change at the site, mentioned in the Venezuela National Report;

THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

URGES the Government of Venezuela to devise means of preventing damage to Cuare (and the neighbouring Morrocoy National Park), by active implementation of the Land-use Plan for the east of Falcón State, by execution of measures to control negative environmental impacts caused by tourist development to be built in the area, and by establishment in an appropriate site of facilities to harbour increased human population in the area; and

REQUESTS the Bureau to assist the Government of Venezuela in identifying and obtaining sources of funding assistance, necessary for implementing these measures.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.1.3: Lower Danube Basin

NOTING that the River Danube runs through eight states, and includes or is associated with several wetlands of international importance in their own right, including the Ramsar sites of Cicov oxbow lake and Danubian flood plains in the Slovak Republic, Lake Srebarna in Bulgaria and Danube Delta in Romania;

RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention undertake to consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention, especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party, or where a water system is shared;

NOTING the conclusions of the workshop convened under the auspices of the Ramsar and Berne Conventions on Mediterranean type wetlands, and in particular emphasizing the importance of “whole basin” management for the conservation and wise use of such wetlands;

RECALLING that the Donau-March-Auen Ramsar site in Austria was included in the Montreux Record at the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 1990;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Monitoring Procedure has been operated at the Donau-March-Auen Ramsar site in Austria and the Srebarna Ramsar site in Bulgaria;

TAKING NOTE of the contribution by the Austrian delegation in Workshop A on the application of the Monitoring Procedure to Donau-March-Auen;

CONCERNED at the threats to the ecological character of the Danube and various of its associated wetlands from routine pollution, the diversion of the river flow for the Gabčíkovo hydroelectric dam in Slovakia, and the risk of deliberate or accidental release of oil by vessels;

CONVINCED that protection, management and administration of the Danube and its associated wetlands require a cooperative international “whole basin” approach, such as that envisaged by the agreement reached by the meeting of Danubian states in 1991 to develop a Danube Basin Ecological Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS ON the Governments of Slovakia and Hungary to accept as binding the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the Gabčíkovo dam issue, and in any case to work with the international community towards a satisfactory resolution of ecological concerns;

CALLS ON the governments of the riparian states of the Danube to come to an agreement designed to safeguard the best wildlife sites along the Lower Danube within their territories;

RECOMMENDS that the European Economic Community and development assistance agencies provide the financial support requested for the development of an emergency pollution contingency response capability for the Danube in Romania and Bulgaria;

REQUESTS the Convention Bureau to encourage and maintain contact with those developing proposals for a Danube Basin Ecological Convention, with a view to such a Convention, if concluded, taking account of and complementing the Ramsar Convention;

RECOMMENDS that the governments of the riparian states of the Danube consider the need for mandating a Danube Basin Commission or other appropriate body to address the urgent task of establishing a plan for the wise use of the river, including the conservation of its rich wildlife resources and the restoration of natural flood plain features upstream of the delta;

RECOMMENDS that the Government of Romania, as an urgent follow-up to its commitments through accession to the Ramsar, World Heritage and Berne Conventions, create the legal framework to secure the aims and governance of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve for the wise use of this Ramsar site; and

REQUESTS that the Government of Ukraine initiate official and close cooperation with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve authorities to ensure in the shortest time possible the application of wise management for the complete Danube Delta wetland system.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.2: Guidelines for interpretation of Article 3 ('ecological character' and 'change in ecological character')

RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Convention agree, under Article 3.1, 'to formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List';

FURTHER RECALLING that each Contracting Party agrees, under Article 3.2, to 'arrange to be informed at the earliest possible opportunity if the ecological character of any wetland in its 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';

RECALLING Recommendation 3.9, adopted by the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on 'Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites', which noted with regret that 'a number of listed sites have been severely damaged or are under imminent threat of degradation' and urged all Contracting Parties 'to take swift and effective action to prevent further degradation and to restore, as far as possible, the value of damaged sites';

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation REC. C.4.8, adopted by the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, also entitled 'Change in ecological character of Ramsar sites', which, 'emphasizing the fundamental importance of maintaining ecological character of listed sites', once again requested 'Contracting Parties in whose territories 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';

RECORDING WITH APPRECIATION the frank statements made by Contracting Parties in their national reports, and in the Conference Plenary Sessions and Workshops, about the situation at Ramsar sites in their territories and the difficulties experienced in maintaining ecological character;

WELCOMING the contribution made by the Monitoring Procedure and Montreux Record in helping to maintain the ecological character of listed sites;

EMPHASIZING the value of further guidance in interpreting the complex Ramsar concepts of 'ecological character' and 'change in ecological character';

TAKING ACCOUNT of the discussions in Workshop A during the present meeting, and in particular of the presentation by IWRB, on these concepts;

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

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

EMPHASIZES the need for further studies of the concepts of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character” included in the Ramsar Convention; and

INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau, with the support of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and partner organizations, to report to the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the results of such studies.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.3: The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves

RECALLING the multiple values and functions of wetlands for sustainable development and the maintenance of biodiversity;

AWARE that wetlands are highly liable to negative impacts from actions occurring outside their designated boundaries (whether such impacts come from upstream, downstream or other sources), and that because of this essential character - as recognized by the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (Caracas, Venezuela, 1992) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992) - they require particular measures in the field of land-use planning, including integrated management and creation of reserves;

EMPHASIZING that land-use plans need to adopt a catchment approach and to consider the impact on wetland reserves of factors occurring both upstream and downstream;

WELCOMING the measures taken by Contracting Parties to establish wetland reserves on their territory, both in wetlands designated for the Ramsar "List of wetlands of international importance" and at other wetlands;

NOTING that the Ramsar concept of wise use for the benefit of human populations is of relevance in relation to Ramsar sites and other wetland reserves;

RECOGNIZING that zonation related to Ramsar sites and wetland reserves must take account of the size and sensitivity of the wetland in question, and that, while strict protection may be the most appropriate form of wise use for smaller or highly sensitive Ramsar sites or wetland reserves, it alone is not always possible in larger sites where other forms of wise use will be appropriate;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the essential character of wetlands be recognized and that measures (notably inclusion of wetland concerns in land-use and water management planning, adoption of a whole catchment approach and/or creation of buffer zones) be taken to ensure that the ecological character of Ramsar sites and wetland reserves is not placed at risk;

EMPHASIZES the need to develop zoning measures related to larger Ramsar sites and wetland reserves, involving strict protection in key zones and various forms of wise use for the benefit of human populations in other zones; and the need to develop ecological corridors linking Ramsar sites; and

CALLS FOR the establishment of strict protection measures for Ramsar sites and wetland reserves of small size or particular sensitivity.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

**Recommendation 5.4: The relationship between the Ramsar Convention,
the Global Environment Facility, and the Convention on Biological
Diversity**

WELCOMING the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development;

INFORMED of the numerous projects - many of them concerning wetlands, some of which have been designated by Ramsar Contracting Parties for the Ramsar "List of wetlands of international importance" - already supported in the pilot phase (1992-1994) of GEF;

FURTHER INFORMED of initial contacts established between the Convention Bureau, the GEF implementing agencies, and the Office of the Administrator of the GEF;

AWARE that, according to Article 21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the appropriately restructured GEF shall be the international entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism referred to in Article 11 of that Convention on an interim basis;

FURTHER AWARE that, according to Article 39 on Financial Interim Arrangements of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the GEF, provided it has been fully restructured in accordance with the requirements of Article 21 of that Convention, shall be the institutional structure referred to in Article 21 of that Convention on an interim basis;

EMPHASIZING that the Ramsar Convention, together with other international conventions dealing with the conservation and wise use of natural resources, is already in force and could significantly increase its achievements if GEF were to fund projects relating to wise use and conservation of wetlands, submitted by those Ramsar Contracting Parties which are signatory states to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

FURTHER EMPHASIZING that the experience of the Ramsar Convention and of other conventions dealing with conservation and wise use of natural resources could prove of great value to GEF and to the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change when the latter come into force;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS UPON the appropriately restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF) to consider funding projects submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity, where appropriate via the Convention Bureau, by Ramsar Contracting Parties that are also signatory states to the Convention on Biological Diversity, insofar as these projects are related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in wetlands;

CALLS UPON the Ramsar Contracting Parties, in their activities as signatory states to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to pay special attention to the major role of wetlands as habitats for a wide range of endangered species;

CONSIDERS that efforts should be made to strengthen the institutional, human and resource capacity for management of wetlands and conservation projects in recipient countries;

WELCOMES the contacts already established by the Convention Bureau with the three implementing agencies regarding project identification and preparation, and with the GEF Administrator's Office; and

INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau to intensify its contacts with the Interim Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with a view to:

- ensuring Ramsar input to the formulation of priorities for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity through the GEF;
- providing input and relevant guidelines for the financing of projects under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- providing input, as appropriate, to the preparation of wetland projects for submission to GEF by Ramsar Contracting Parties which are signatory states to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- securing GEF support for such wetland projects in accordance with the eligibility criteria of the GEF and its associated conventions; and

REQUESTS the Bureau to inform the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Ramsar Contracting Parties of the implementation of the present recommendation.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.5: The inclusion of conservation and wise use of wetlands in multilateral and bilateral development cooperation programmes

RECALLING that Recommendation REC. C.4.13 of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, held at Montreux, Switzerland in 1990, called on Contracting Parties to pursue Recommendation 3.4 in a more systematic way, and to urge Multilateral Development Banks and Development Agencies to advance conservation and wise use of wetlands through improved technical assistance and consideration of these issues early in the planning process;

AWARE that the Convention on Biological Diversity provides that states have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;

BEARING IN MIND the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) concerning international cooperation on environment and development;

WELCOMING the increasing involvement of Multilateral Development Banks and Development Agencies in these issues over the last three years, as noted in presentations at Workshop D of the present meeting;

CONSIDERING however that this involvement could be further increased;

NOTING the considerable influence and impact of bilateral development assistance on conservation and wise use of wetlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS ON Multilateral Development Banks and Development Agencies to give even greater priority to the formulation and adoption of coherent wetland development policies, procedures and practices directed at sustainable utilization, wise management, and conservation of wetlands;

FURTHER CALLS ON Contracting Parties in developed countries to review their development cooperation policies, in the light of the obligations and opportunities presented by Ramsar, to support country-driven projects with a view to assisting developing countries to fulfil their Ramsar obligations;

URGES Contracting Parties in developed countries to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, also in the field of wetland conservation, with countries whose economy is in transition - with special regard to such future Contracting Parties - as there is a recognized need for financial support for wetland conservation projects in those countries;

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention consider including representatives of ministries responsible for the granting or receipt of development assistance in their delegations to meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and

CALLS ON ministries responsible for environmental issues and/or development assistance, to formulate and coordinate their policies in the light of the present recommendation.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

**Recommendation 5.6: The role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
in the Ramsar Convention**

RECALLING the instrumental role that international Non Governmental Organizations including IUCN, IWRB, ICBP (now “BirdLife International”) and WWF have played in the creation of the Ramsar Convention;

AWARE that these organizations have continued to make important technical, promotional and financial contributions to the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, and to support the Ramsar Bureau;

AWARE that national environmental NGOs can represent influential movements in society and that - through their expertise - they can play an active role in the promotion of wise use, management and conservation of wetlands;

CONSCIOUS that in some countries environmental NGOs require further strengthening and development;

NOTING that Article 6.2 of the Convention envisages expert contributions to the work of the Convention by concerned organizations;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties strongly support and give particular attention to the development and functioning of national and international NGOs that aim for conservation and wise use of wetlands; and

ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consult NGOs, provide them with relevant information and offer them ample opportunities to contribute to the formulation and implementation of governmental wetland policy.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.7: National Committees

WELCOMING all efforts made by Contracting Parties to coordinate implementation of the Convention at national level;

NOTING that a number of Contracting Parties or organizations within them have sought to achieve such coordination by the voluntary establishment of “national Ramsar committees”;

RECOGNIZING that such committees can take a variety of forms according to local need;

CONSIDERING, nevertheless, that all have in common at least the provision of a permanent national focus for matters concerning the Convention;

CONSIDERING that national committees can provide a useful means within individual Contracting Parties, *inter alia* of facilitating liaison between interested persons, making expert input to national reports, coordinating applications to and use of the Wetland Conservation Fund, and reviewing the implementation of the “Monitoring Procedure” and “Montreux Record” and of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to establish, or recognize the establishment of, national committees according to the needs of each Contracting Party, to provide a focus at national level for implementation of the Convention;

URGES that, where this is done, the opportunity be provided for an input from both governmental and relevant non-governmental organizations and/or individuals;

REQUESTS that national committees send the Bureau summary information concerning their establishment, updated with reference to their work in subsequent national reports; and

REQUESTS the Bureau to maintain information on national committees, and to respond, to the extent possible, to reasonable requests for advice on the subject.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.8: Measures to promote public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves

RECALLING the recognition in Montreux Recommendation REC. C.4.4 of the 'particular value of reserves in promoting conservation education and public awareness of the importance of wetland conservation and the goals of the Convention';

WELCOMING the measures already taken by Contracting Parties at wetland reserves to promote public awareness of wetland values;

NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the work already carried out in the field of promotion of public awareness by the Wetland Link International programme, as described by the Pointe-à-Pierre Wildfowl Trust (Trinidad & Tobago) in Workshop C at the present meeting;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS ON Contracting Parties to develop facilities for promoting public awareness of wetland values at wetland reserves in their own territory;

RECOMMENDS that special efforts be made to promote international coordination of measures to further public awareness of wetland values in wetland reserves; and

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that an appropriate share of the Wetland Conservation Fund should be allocated to the development of wetland "Education and Public Awareness" initiatives.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.9: Establishment of Ramsar guidelines on Wetlands of International Importance as fish habitat

RECALLING that the Preamble to the Convention emphasizes the “fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna” and the conviction that “wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable”;

FURTHER RECALLING the importance attached by the Convention to the wise use of renewable natural resources;

NOTING that fishes are the most abundant vertebrates associated with wetlands and may form the basis of valuable fisheries;

AND FURTHER NOTING that coastal wetlands form an important nursery for fisheries, including offshore fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that more effective identification and management of wetlands of importance as fish habitat and as a source of traditional fisheries would improve the quality of life of local people and increase the relevance of the Ramsar Convention to developing countries;

EMPHASIZING the need for much closer cooperation between the Ramsar family and the bodies concerned with the conservation and wise use of fisheries;

RECALLING that Recommendation REC. C.4.2 of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, held at Montreux, Switzerland in 1990, adopted “Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance”;

FURTHER RECALLING that Section 2 of these Criteria, entitled “General criteria based on plants or animals”, recognizes that animals other than waterfowl may be used as a criterion for identifying wetlands of international importance;

TAKING NOTE of the presentations in Workshop D of the present meeting by The Netherlands and South Africa on the role of wetlands in fish ecology;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that criteria and guidelines be developed on the importance of wetlands for fishes, both as regards biodiversity and fishery yields, and taking into account the wise use principle so that fisheries shall have no negative impact on the wetlands;

INSTRUCTS the Convention Bureau, in cooperation with appropriate experts from the Contracting Parties, partner organizations and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, to formulate proposals on criteria to be used when identifying wetlands of international importance as

fish habitat or as a nursery for fisheries, including offshore fisheries, and to develop guidelines for the application of such criteria; and

FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Bureau to present the results of this work to the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.10: The 25th anniversary wetland campaign for 1996

NOTING that the basic object of the Ramsar Convention is to promote the worldwide conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources through international cooperation;

RECOGNIZING the urgent need to build support for conservation and wise use of wetlands at all levels in society;

APPLAUDING the resounding achievements of the City of Kushiro, Prefectural Government of Hokkaido and Government of Japan in promoting the value of wetlands at local, national, continental and global level in conjunction with the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

NOTING that 1996 will be the 25th anniversary of the conclusion of the Ramsar Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties to the Convention, in cooperation with partners and other non-governmental organizations, initiate the development of a public awareness programme on the values and functions of wetlands, and the benefits of their conservation and wise use, towards a concerted global campaign in 1996; and

CALLS ON the Standing Committee to review and adopt a strategy to achieve this end.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.11: The new Bureau headquarters in Switzerland

RECALLING that the offices of the Ramsar Bureau are situated at the Headquarters of IUCN - The World Conservation Union, at Gland, in the Canton of Vaud, Confederation of Switzerland;

GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGING the offer made by the Swiss authorities to provide a permanent headquarters for IUCN - The World Conservation Union, which would include appropriate space for the Ramsar Bureau;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

EXPRESSES ITS SATISFACTION at the reports received at the present meeting that the Convention Bureau was able to occupy its new offices in August 1992;

THANKS IUCN - The World Conservation Union for the arrangements made to provide accommodation of appropriate style and size for the Ramsar Bureau; and

EXPRESSES ITS SPECIAL THANKS to the Swiss authorities at all levels - the Commune of Gland, the Canton of Vaud and the Swiss Confederation - for its generosity in providing the necessary financial support for the splendid new facilities, as well as many other forms of support and services.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.12: Thanks to the Japanese hosts

EXPRESSING ITS DEEPEST APPRECIATION of the generous and unstinting support provided by the Japanese authorities at all levels for the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

PAYING PARTICULAR TRIBUTE to the people and authorities of Kushiro who have had such memorable success in welcoming participants to their city, thus making a unique contribution to the meeting;

EMPHASIZING the significance of the financial contribution by the Government of Japan to the Convention budget, particularly the voluntary provision of an additional sum for the Wetland Conservation Fund;

EXPRESSING ITS GRATITUDE to Japanese non-governmental and business organizations which have made further voluntary contributions to the Wetland Conservation Fund;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECORDS its thanks and appreciation to its Japanese hosts, in particular the Government of Japan, the Government of Hokkaido, the City of Kushiro, the municipal authorities of other cities and towns of Hokkaido, the Regional Promotion Committee for the Ramsar Conference, and many volunteers in Kushiro;

STATES ITS CONVICTION that the Kushiro Statement will provide inspiration and leadership to the wetland conservation community in the years following the Kushiro Conference;

PAYS TRIBUTE to the enormous successes achieved in the promotion of Education and Public Awareness of wetland values, which will guide the Convention's work in this field as it approaches its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1996;

WISHES the people and Government of Japan every success in their quest to promote wider application of the Convention in their own country and on the world scene; and

EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION of continuing Japanese support for the Convention's world-wide activities.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.13: The promotion and strengthening of the Ramsar Neotropical region

CONSIDERING that the Neotropical Region hosts a significant proportion of the most diverse, large and productive wetland ecosystems in the world;

RECOGNIZING the great contribution of wetlands to the quality of life and to the local and national economies of the Neotropical Region and the importance of a proper appreciation of their value, in order to promote their wise use and effective protection;

AWARE of the importance of carrying out actions aimed at the sustainable development and protection of wetlands;

NOTING the substantial progress made in the application of the Convention and the welcome increase in the number of Contracting Parties in the Neotropical Region since the Fourth Meeting of the Conference;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the success and positive reception of the three Ramsar regional meetings held in Caracas, La Paz and Cayenne in 1992 and 1993, in which the representatives of the Neotropical Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention submitted proposals for cooperation and defined regional priorities for action, in order to optimize the wise management of wetlands of international importance in the region, in collaboration with other international organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and Wetlands for the Americas;

NOTING the invaluable support provided to the Contracting Parties of the region by the Ramsar Bureau towards the development of intra-regional coordination mechanisms, which have led to the promotion of joint action;

RECOGNIZING that the management of Ramsar sites and wetlands in general in the Region is not yet supported by sufficient resources of all types to achieve their conservation and wise use;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the Ramsar Bureau carry out the necessary action to continue to promote and support the intra-regional coordination process and thus facilitate cooperation between the Contracting Parties in the region, and between Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Bureau, in close collaboration with partner organizations, especially BirdLife International, IUCN, IWRB, Wetlands for the Americas and WWF, and in particular that a Technical Officer continues to have responsibility for Neotropical regional coordination in the Ramsar Bureau;

FURTHER RECOMMENDS that the necessary funds be provided so as to continue the intra-regional coordination process and the promotion of the Convention, especially for holding periodic regional meetings for the purpose of consultation, promotion of joint action and technical training;

REQUESTS the Bureau to take the necessary steps in order that funds be provided to strengthen the capacity of the Region and of each Contracting Party to promote the protection, management and wise use of Ramsar sites;

URGES all Contracting Parties in the Region to develop coordinated mechanisms to monitor the status of their wetlands, whether or not these wetlands are Ramsar sites; and

URGES all Contracting Parties concerned to act in pursuance of the objectives of Agenda 21 and relevant international agreements, inter alia CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity, regarding trade of natural products obtained from the wise use of wetlands in the Neotropical Region.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.14: Collaboration for Mediterranean wetlands

NOTING with interest the MedWet initiative for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands;

FURTHER NOTING that this initiative is carried out jointly by the Governments of France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, the Commission of the European Communities, the Ramsar Bureau, Fondation de la Tour du Valat, IWRB and WWF-International;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the first 3-year preparatory period of MedWet will be of benefit to all countries around the Mediterranean Basin;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the presentation on MedWet made in Workshop D of the present meeting, as well as the very positive meeting on Mediterranean collaboration within the MedWet context held in Kushiro on 14 June 1993, with participants from 13 Mediterranean countries: Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, from the Commission of the European Communities, from the Ramsar Bureau and from ADAME, IWRB and WWF;

RECALLING Recommendation REC. C.4.5 of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties concerning international collaboration;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

WELCOMES this regional collaboration activity, and considers it to be a very promising approach to wetland conservation at an international level;

URGES the initial ten MedWet partners to make the utmost efforts for present MedWet activities to include all Mediterranean countries;

ENCOURAGES other Mediterranean Contracting Parties to work closely with the present MedWet partners to achieve MedWet's aims and, in particular, to arrest and reverse the degradation and loss of wetlands around the Basin and ensure their wise use; and

REQUESTS the MedWet partners to present a full report on progress of the MedWet initiative at the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1996.

Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
Kushiro, Japan
9-16 June 1993

Recommendation 5.15: Working languages of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

NOTING that the implementation of the Convention in Spanish-speaking countries has been greatly assisted by the provision of interpretation facilities to and from Spanish at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

EXPRESSING ITS GRATITUDE to the host country, Japan, for the arrangements made at the present meeting for Spanish to be a working language;

APPRECIATING the provision at the present meeting of interpretation facilities to and from Japanese, which made the deliberations of the meeting accessible to a much larger number of participants;

EMPHASIZING the need to ensure that interpretation facilities to and from the local vernacular language are available at future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

TAKING NOTE OF the request by the many Arabic-speaking countries attending the present meeting that Arabic should be a working language of the Conference;

AWARE THAT adoption of Arabic as a working language of the Conference would encourage the accession of many new Contracting Parties and the improved implementation of the Convention in existing Contracting Parties;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS THAT the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee and the Bureau ensure that facilities for interpretation to and from the local vernacular language are available at future meetings of the Conference;

CALLS ON the Convention Bureau to investigate the possibility of adopting Arabic as a working language of the Conference and to advise the Standing Committee on the financial and other implications of so doing;

REQUESTS Arabic-speaking Contracting Parties and potential Contracting Parties to assist the Bureau in seeking the necessary funding support for the adoption of Arabic as a working language of the Conference; and

FURTHER REQUESTS existing Arabic-speaking Contracting Parties to encourage other Arabic-speaking countries which are not yet Contracting Parties to join the Convention.