

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: CONSERVATION OF PEATLANDS

1. CONSIDERING that peat-dominated wetland systems, known as “peatlands”, including bogs, fens, carrs, mires, “bofedales”, peatswamp forest, and other similar terms, are important wetland types hitherto under-represented in the work of the Convention;
2. RECALLING that peatlands are included in the Ramsar Convention Classification System for Wetland Type (Annex 2B to Recommendation 4.7) under several Inland Wetland types;
3. AWARE of significant international interest in promotion of the wise use and conservation of peatland ecosystems and their associated natural resources, as exemplified by the Trondheim Declaration of the 1994 6th Symposium of the International Mire Conservation Group held in Trondheim, Norway; the 1994 International Peat Symposium sponsored by the International Peat Society held in Brussels, Belgium; and the Edinburgh Declaration of the 1995 Peatlands Symposium sponsored by the Scottish Wildlife Trust held in Edinburgh, United Kingdom;
4. RECOGNIZING that peatland resources and associated peat products are of significant environmental and economic value to many nations in all regions of the world;
5. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the significant contributions to global peatland conservation by international groups such as the IUCN Ecosystem Management Group, Wetlands International, and the International Mire Conservation Group;
6. WELCOMING national policy documents that incorporate the principles of wise use of wetlands and sustainable development as well as letters from several Contracting Parties (including Norway and Canada) transmitted to the Ramsar Bureau supporting the need for international action on the wise use and conservation of peatlands;
7. FURTHER AWARE of concerns for ongoing degradation and destruction of peatland systems in many areas of the world due to a wide range of land uses, including agricultural and urban development, forestry, energy development, and horticultural harvesting of peat; and
8. NOTING the identification of peatlands in the Ramsar Convention’s Strategic Plan 1997-2002 (Action 6.2.3) as “under-represented wetland types” for designation, when appropriate, in the global network of wetlands of international importance;

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9. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to maintain or give priority to the inventory and evaluation of peatlands in their territories and, where appropriate, to nominate additional peatland ecosystems as Ramsar sites consistent with Resolution 5.6, Section II.1;

10. URGES the development, adoption and implementation of regionally based peatland management guidelines such as the *IUCN Guidelines for the Sustainable Utilization and Integrated Management of Tropical Peatlands*;
11. RECOMMENDS that the “Wise Use Guidelines” of the Ramsar Convention, particularly in relation to development and implementation of national policies for wetland conservation, the evaluation of measures taken, the regular monitoring of the status of these ecosystems, as well as the promotion of scientific research, be fully applied by Contracting Parties for all their wetlands, including peatland types within their territories and such wetlands shared along international borders, particularly in boreal, temperate, and tropical latitude biogeographical regions;
12. FURTHER RECOMMENDS the expansion of international mechanisms for coordination and cooperation for peatland conservation initiatives and programmes by Contracting Parties; and
13. ENCOURAGES support by Contracting Parties for research programmes in particular on peatland functioning and on restoration of degraded peatland ecosystems; for international networks for peatland training and education, and dissemination of the results of research on peatlands to Contracting Parties.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.2: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. CONCERNED that much loss and degradation of wetland functions and values occurs without adequate prior assessment of the potential environmental impact of the relevant plans and projects, and that international standards and consistency of approach to the assessment of environmental effects can help reduce this;
2. RECALLING that successive recommendations and resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties have encouraged the use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures as one means of fostering wise use of wetlands, and noting in particular the principles contained therein which are summarized in the Annex to this recommendation;
3. AWARE that many Contracting Parties already operate legal and administrative systems to give effect to environmental appraisal in various forms, but that many would benefit from new initiatives in this field and in particular the adoption of guidelines on standards, techniques and procedures; and
4. CONSIDERING that attention should be given to EIA objectives in wetland policies, and to wetland conservation objectives in EIA policies;

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5. CALLS ON the Contracting Parties to integrate environmental considerations in relation to wetlands into planning decisions in a clear and publicly transparent manner;
6. INVITES Contracting Parties, national and international organizations to submit to the Bureau available guidelines on environmental appraisal and EIA which may be relevant to wetlands, so that the Bureau may be able to maintain an overview and respond to enquiries on the subject; and
7. REQUESTS the Standing Committee and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, in collaboration with the Bureau and partner organizations, to examine existing EIA guidelines relevant to wetlands and, if necessary, to arrange for the drafting of Ramsar guidelines, as an aid to the wise use of wetlands, in a form suitable for adoption by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Annex to Recommendation 6.2

SUMMARY OF CONVENTION REFERENCES AND PREVIOUS CONFERENCE DECISIONS RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- (i) The obligation to promote conservation and wise use of wetlands, and to act when change is “likely”, entails anticipation, and requires a means of predicting effects (Article 3).
- (ii) Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a recognized field which should be applied to this objective, by being formally enshrined in policy and law (Recommendation 3.3; Resolution 5.6)

- (iii) Equally, the body of thought evolved under the Convention, on e.g. what constitutes wise use, provides a frame of reference to aid judgements made in the course of EIA about environmental effects, where wetlands are concerned (Recommendation 4.10).
- (iv) Competent experts should be involved in the process (Recommendation 1.6).
- (v) EIA should be undertaken early enough to act meaningfully on its results, including refusing authorization for damaging activities (Recommendation 1.6; Resolution 5.6).
- (vi) The process should continue into project implementation stages, so that actual effects can be monitored and compared with predictions (Recommendation 3.3; Recommendation 4.10).
- (vii) EIA should not be restricted to individual projects, but should address the cumulative effects of several projects, and also strategic plans, programmes and policies (Resolution 5.6).
- (viii) EIA should not be restricted merely to the site of the proposed development, or the defined wetland, but should address external (e.g. upstream/downstream) influences, and should have regard to interactions between all components of water systems at the catchment level (Recommendation 4.10; Resolution 5.6).

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RECOMMENDATION 6.3: INVOLVING LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE MANAGEMENT¹ OF RAMSAR WETLANDS

1. RECALLING the “Guidelines for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept” (Annex to Recommendation 4.10) which call for the development of management plans for Ramsar sites which involve local people and take account of their requirements;
2. FURTHER RECALLING the “Additional Guidance for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept” (Annex to Resolution 5.6) which suggests that Contracting Parties establish procedures which guarantee that local communities are involved in the decision-making process related to wetland use, and provide local communities with sufficient knowledge of planned activities to assure their meaningful participation in the decision-making process;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING that local and indigenous people have a particular interest in ensuring that the wetlands within their region are managed wisely and, in particular, that indigenous people have distinct knowledge, experience and aspirations in relation to wetland management;
4. BELIEVING that wise use of wetlands will benefit the quality of life of local and indigenous people and that these people, in addition to their involvement in site management, should derive the benefits that result from conservation and wise and sustainable use of wetlands;
5. NOTING that in some cases local and indigenous people are excluded from the decision-making process by virtue of a lack of appropriate consultative mechanisms or lack of understanding of the issues involved;
6. AWARE that many local and indigenous people, have long associations with the wetlands in their region and can assist with developing management techniques for modern times based on traditional management practices;
7. NOTING that the Technical Session on community-based wetland management held during the present meeting of the Conference disclosed several promising non-government organization models for active and informed participation of local people in the wise use of their wetland resources, such as those initiated by the Caddo Lake Institute in the United States, the IUCN Regional Offices in Senegal and Costa Rica, the Kushiro International Wetlands Centre in Japan, the World Wide Fund for Nature in India (Keoladeo National Park) and in Pakistan (Uchali), and the Ecological Station of Mamirauá (Brazil); and

¹ For the purposes of this recommendation “management” encompasses conservation and wise use.

8. ALSO NOTING that the dissemination of information regarding these and other successful models will both benefit the Contracting Parties and promote the implementation of the Strategic Plan's Operational Objective 2.7 by encouraging community-level non-government partnerships;

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9. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to make specific efforts to encourage active and informed participation of local and indigenous people, at Ramsar listed sites and other wetlands and their catchments, and their direct involvement, through appropriate mechanisms, in wetland management;
10. DIRECTS the Convention Bureau to intensify its efforts to promote through Contracting Parties, on a global scale, the importance of the involvement of local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands, and to seek special sponsorship support to do so;
11. FURTHER CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to recognize the value of the knowledge and skills of local and indigenous people, in relation to wetland management, and to make special efforts to encourage and facilitate from the outset their participation in the development and implementation of wetland policies and programmes;
12. URGES Contracting Parties to consider representation of local and indigenous people on National Ramsar Committees, and, where possible and appropriate, in the national delegations to future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
13. INSTRUCTS the Bureau, in consultation with the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), the Kushiro International Wetlands Centre, the Caddo Lake Institute, IUCN - The World Conservation Union, and Contracting Parties, and other NGOs having relevant regional and local experience, to produce an evaluation of the benefits derived by local and indigenous people from conservation and wise use along with criteria and guidance for involving local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands for consideration at the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
14. FURTHER DIRECTS the Convention Bureau to disseminate by all appropriate means, case studies and other information, demonstrating active and informed participation of local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands; and
15. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to develop appropriate national and local mechanisms, drawing from any existing models, to ensure consultation with local and indigenous people with a view to reflecting their needs and values, traditional and other knowledge and practices in national wetland policies and programmes, and in management planning for Ramsar sites and other significant wetlands.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.4: THE “BRISBANE INITIATIVE” ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK OF LISTED SITES ALONG THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY

1. RECALLING Article 5 of the Convention, which calls for international consultation and coordination in the conservation and management of shared wetland resources;
2. NOTING Recommendations 4.4, which calls for networks of reserves to be established, and 4.12, which recognizes the flyway concept for the conservation of wetland bird species;
3. AWARE of the Kushiro Statement (Resolution 5.1), which calls for the strengthening of regional coordination on wetland issues, cooperation with other conventions and organizations, and the establishment of international networks of wetlands with significant ecological or hydrological links;
4. WELCOMING the proposed development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramsar Bureau and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) as a mechanism to improve international cooperation on the conservation of migratory species;
5. CONVINCED of the need for a concerted multilateral approach involving governments, non-government organizations and local communities to the conservation of migratory waterbirds within each of the major flyways of the globe;
6. FURTHER CONVINCED that such an approach should have as a central feature a network of wetland sites of international importance, as defined by the Ramsar criteria, for the conservation of migratory waterbirds;
7. NOTING the socio-economic and cultural significance of some of these internationally important sites;
8. NOTING the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, developed in the Americas, as a useful model for international cooperation in the conservation of migratory shorebird species;
9. FURTHER NOTING the recent adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds under CMS;
10. NOTING that participants at the regional technical workshop on the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Wetland Habitats held in Kushiro, Japan, in December 1994 supported a concerted multilateral approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, through the development of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, and recommended the immediate establishment of an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network;

11. NOTING that the Delhi Declaration on the Conservation of Wetlands in Asia, adopted at the Ramsar Regional Meeting in March 1995, called for “the support of initiatives to develop frameworks for the coordination of efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds in the Asian flyways”; and
12. CONVINCED that the Ramsar Convention, through the cooperative actions of its Contracting Parties along the major flyways, could facilitate the development of such multilateral approaches to waterbird conservation by supporting the development of networks of wetland sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds;

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13. ADOPTS this Recommendation as the “Brisbane Initiative” which calls for the establishment of a network of Ramsar-listed and other wetlands of international importance for migratory shorebirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, managed to maintain their suitability for migratory shorebirds;
14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider supporting the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy;
15. URGES Contracting Parties within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway to demonstrate their support for an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network by nominating one or more appropriate sites for inclusion in the Network;
16. COMMENDS the “Brisbane Initiative” to other countries or territories along the Flyway who are not yet Contracting Parties, and urges their full participation in the Brisbane Initiative;
17. FURTHER COMMENDS consideration of the flyway site network approach to other species groups of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region and in other flyways; and
18. FURTHER URGES participating countries to work together to maintain and expand such networks in a coordinated manner, and to promote public awareness, training and information exchange and thus contribute to the long-term conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.5: ESTABLISHMENT OF FURTHER WETLAND MANAGER TRAINING PROGRAMMES

1. RECALLING Article 4.5 of the Convention which calls on Contracting Parties to “promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, management, and wardening”;
2. AWARE of the existence of training programmes for wetland managers and of the need to ensure that the benefits of such programmes are enjoyed as widely as possible;
3. RECOGNIZING that, for many developing countries and development agencies, personnel training has a very high priority; and
4. NOTING the development of the concept of Ramsar site twinning arrangements and the related information and personnel exchanges;

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5. URGES Contracting Parties to seek resources from their Governments, through development agencies or other national or regional bodies, to establish wetland manager training programmes;
6. REQUESTS the Convention Bureau to pursue with key aid donors the concept of a global training network for wetland managers, which would encourage the benefits of personnel exchange to be more widely shared;
7. DIRECTS the Convention Bureau to obtain curricula and organizational details from around the world and to advise Contracting Parties of the availability of such information; and
8. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to give priority in funding support under the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use in the 1997-1999 triennium to involvement by developing country representatives in appropriate wetland manager training programmes.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.6: APPOINTMENT OF REGIONALLY-BASED RAMSAR LIAISON OFFICERS

1. RECALLING that at the 4th and 5th Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Convention's core budget was increased, in part, to establish Regional Technical Officer positions based at the Convention Bureau;
2. FURTHER RECALLING the "Additional Guidance for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept" (Annex to Resolution 5.6) which suggests Contracting Parties should cooperate in addressing cross-boundary wetland management issues, including the conservation of migratory species;
3. RECOGNIZING that within Ramsar regions, similar wetland ecosystems with similar management concerns occur, and that increased cooperation at the regional level could result in more effective implementation of the Convention;
4. AWARE that countries which are potentially interested in becoming Contracting Parties to the Convention could be further assisted in this regard with expertise available within their region; and
5. NOTING that, in order to facilitate expansion of the Convention's membership and enhance the level of general support available for Ramsar activities being undertaken in Africa, Asia, the Neotropics and Oceania, regionally-based staff, in addition to those already funded from the core budget, are highly desirable;

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6. URGES Contracting Parties to consider contributing ongoing resources under a special sponsorship arrangement to allow the establishment and maintenance of regionally-based Ramsar Liaison Officers;
7. DIRECTS the Convention Bureau to seek support for such Ramsar Liaison Officers as a way to increase further the effectiveness of implementation, especially in the regions indicated above;
8. CALLS ON partner organizations to examine ways in which they may facilitate this initiative, either through co-location of these staff within their regional premises, or through closer cooperation in terms of their day-to-day activities; and
9. ENCOURAGES the Standing Committee to support this initiative and to examine mechanisms by which Ramsar's capacity to provide regionally-based support and advice could be advanced.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.7: CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF CORAL REEFS AND ASSOCIATED ECOSYSTEMS

1. AWARE of the degradation of many of the world's coral reefs and associated ecosystems, including mangrove forests and seagrass beds;
2. CONSCIOUS of the need to recognize fully the benefits to humankind of coral reefs and associated ecosystems through food production, tourism, recreation, aesthetics, and shoreline protection;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the socio-economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational importance of coral reefs and associated ecosystems for Small Island Developing States and other countries;
4. CONSIDERING that coral reefs and associated ecosystems are important wetland types hitherto under-represented in the work of the Convention;
5. NOTING Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, which identifies coral reefs, mangrove forests, and seagrass beds as marine ecosystems of high biological diversity and production, and recommends that they be accorded high priority for identification and protection;
6. WELCOMING the International Coral Reef Initiative, which is a partnership of governments and international and national non-governmental organizations with the goal of promoting sustainable management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems through more effective research, monitoring, and management, and related capacity-building;
7. RECALLING the definition of wetlands under Article 1.1 of the Ramsar Convention, which includes "areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres"; and Article 2.1 of the Convention, which requires each Contracting Party to designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance; and
8. NOTING the criteria for representative or unique wetlands and the general criteria based on plants or animals set forth in the "Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance", Annex 1 to Recommendation 4.2; and Annex 2B to Recommendation 4.7, which specifically identifies coral reefs in the list of Marine and Coastal Wetlands Types;

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9. URGES Contracting Parties to designate suitable areas of their coral reefs and associated ecosystems for inclusion as Ramsar sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

10. RECOMMENDS that the Convention Bureau foster conservation and wise use of coral reefs and associated ecosystems as a component of an integrated strategy of world-wide wetland conservation;
11. REQUESTS the Convention Bureau to demonstrate the benefits of becoming Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention to States in regions until now under-represented in the Convention, especially in Oceania and the Caribbean;
12. URGES the Convention Bureau to support the International Coral Reef Initiative's Call to Action and Framework for Action in Ramsar activities whenever appropriate, by undertaking research and monitoring as outlined in the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002 that will contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of coral reefs and associated ecosystems; and
13. URGES the Bureau and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to liaise with the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Seas Programme and UNEP's Programme Element 1.1: Caring for Freshwater, Coastal and Marine Resources.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.8: STRATEGIC PLANNING IN COASTAL ZONES

1. NOTING that an estimated 60% of the world's population and many development activities are concentrated along the coastal strip which extends from shoreline to less than 60 km inland, and that increasing population and development are posing immense pressure on coastal wetlands in terms of depletion of living resources, pollution loads, reclamation, land fill, and other uncoordinated development, all of which impact on biological diversity;
2. FURTHER NOTING that coastal wetlands need increased consideration in land-use plans in relation to the protection of overall water resources and cumulative impacts of human activity;
3. NOTING that coastal zone planning should incorporate all types of wetlands and associated shorebird and other waterbird roosting areas including, *inter alia*, associated freshwater wetland systems, coastal lagoons, bays, ocean inlets, mangrove swamps, perched lakes, kelp forests, freshwater swamps, and estuaries, as well as inter- and sub-tidal areas up to six metres deep at zero reference tide mark;
4. ACKNOWLEDGING the economic, ecological, cultural and recreational importance of coastal zones, especially for Small Island Developing States and other countries;
5. NOTING the issues raised in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 regarding integrated coastal zone management and the work of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme to support ecologically sustainable development of the coastal zone as well as Decision II/10 on conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity, taken by the 2nd Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
6. RECOGNIZING the existence of important linkages between catchment management and coastal zone management;
7. RECALLING the recommendation adopted by the Policy Conference on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in East Africa including the Island States held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1993, on the need for including the coastal zone in the national physical planning process, as well as the need for coordinated legislation governing activities with the potential of impacting negatively on coastal wetlands; and
8. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 5.6 which adopted Additional Guidance on Wise Use of Wetlands, involving the application of a holistic and integrative management strategy for wetlands;

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9. CALLS on the Contracting Parties to adopt and apply strategic planning and integrated coastal zone management principles to assist sound decision-making on the conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands and other key environmental components; and
10. REQUESTS all Contracting Parties to seek appropriate means to ensure that strategic planning in the coastal zone as well as environmental impact assessments are carried out competently and in a timely fashion so as to ensure that use of wetlands and related environmental components will be wisely managed.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.9: FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL WETLAND POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. RECALLING Recommendation 4.10, which calls on Contracting Parties to formulate National Wetland Policies as an important step towards facilitating conservation and wise use of wetlands and the implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines of the Convention, thus reconfirming that “the wise use concept extends to all phases of wetland conservation, including policy development, planning, legal and educational activities, and site specific actions”;
2. NOTING that Recommendation 4.10 calls on all Contracting Parties to work towards the formulation of comprehensive national policies in the long term and that such policies may be formulated in whatever manner is appropriate to their national institutions;
3. MINDFUL of the direction by the Ramsar Standing Committee to the organizers of Technical Session A at the present meeting to foster: (a) Guidelines that will accelerate the formulation and implementation of such National Wetland Policies, and (b) Guidelines that will promote stronger links between National Wetland Policies and the wise use of wetlands on the one hand with regional planning, especially in coastal zones, on the other; and
4. RECOGNIZING that there are many national models and mechanisms for development and implementation of national wetland policies, and that dissemination of knowledge of national experience in this area would be of significant value to many Contracting Parties considering the development of wetland policies and to the Convention in the implementation of its Strategic Plan 1997-2002;

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5. RECOGNIZES that there is a need for the production of a framework for development and implementation of National Wetland Policies, for use by Contracting Parties which as yet have no policy of this kind, and including examples and illustrations;
6. CALLS on the Ramsar Bureau to produce a report including such a framework and, in addition, an analysis of the status of wetland policies world-wide, together with examples of national processes and considerations for the consultation on, and writing and implementation of, National Wetland Policies, within a range of national political and constitutional situations and with respect to National Biodiversity or Conservation Action Plans or Policies;
7. URGES Contracting Parties to provide summary information and copies of relevant National Wetland Policy documents to the Ramsar Bureau, as source materials for the preparation of this framework;
8. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties with experience in development and implementation of National Wetland Policies to share staff time and expertise with other Ramsar Parties initiating such a policy; and
9. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to coordinate the publication of the report, in cooperation with those partners that may offer to lead or participate in its production and provide resources for this purpose.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.10: PROMOTION OF COOPERATION ON THE ECONOMIC VALUATION OF WETLANDS

1. NOTING that, while wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to humankind, their economic value is not well documented or understood, in part because wetland values are not well captured in established monetary indicators;
2. FURTHER NOTING that few studies have been conducted on the non-market values of wetlands, particularly in developing nations;
3. CONCERNED that initiatives which attempt to conserve wetlands without addressing the fundamental forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss are unlikely to succeed in the long run;
4. AWARE that economic valuation of the goods and services that wetlands provide to people can serve as an essential national and international instrument in countering negative impacts on wetlands and an important complement to the precautionary approach;
5. FURTHER AWARE that senior decision-makers often do not have adequate knowledge of the full economic value of wetlands;
6. RECALLING that a number of networks of expertise, such as the Economic Assessment of Wetland Functions and Values Specialist Group of Wetlands International, have already been established in response to the above concerns including wetland valuation experts in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas;
7. FURTHER RECALLING that wetland valuation was a concern at the 1995 International Conference on Wetlands and Development in Malaysia; and
8. RECOGNIZING the importance of establishing further linkages among various interest groups on the subject of wetland valuation and a need to coordinate and collaborate on these initiatives in order to facilitate implementation of elements of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention.

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9. AFFIRMS that it is vital that all wetland economic values be identified, measured and reported upon to increase national and international awareness of the need for and benefits of wetland conservation;
10. CALLS ON the existing broadly-based networks of expertise to provide leadership on the valuation of wetlands and to act as advisory groups to the Ramsar Convention on this complex subject;
11. URGES these national and international networks to:

- a) further their efforts for cooperation on wetland valuation in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other interested parties;
 - b) shed light on the fundamental economic forces that lead to wetland degradation and loss;
 - c) initiate and/or support ongoing valuation projects in a multidisciplinary fashion to monetarize the unmeasured wealth of goods and services that wetlands provide to Contracting Parties to the Convention, decision-makers, and society in general;
 - d) assist the Ramsar Bureau in advising Contracting Parties on their application of wetland valuation results to national wetland and environmental policies; and
 - e) assist in developing new strategies, training initiatives, and instruments appropriate to facilitate the assessment of economic values of wetland functions and benefits in order to further address wetland conservation needs; and
12. INVITES support for this initiative by all Contracting Parties and interested groups and agencies.

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RECOMMENDATION 6.11: CONTINUING COLLABORATION FOR MEDITERRANEAN WETLANDS

1. RECALLING Recommendation 5.14 on collaboration for the Mediterranean wetlands, which welcomed this regional activity and requested the MedWet partners to report on progress of the MedWet initiative at the present meeting;
2. NOTING with interest the progress made during the first phase of the MedWet initiative for the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands;
3. FURTHER NOTING the extension of MedWet activities through the participation of Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Morocco and Tunisia;
4. EXPRESSING THEIR APPRECIATION to the bodies which have provided funds for the MedWet initiative, notably the European Commission (DG XI), the Governments of France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, WWF, Tour du Valat, Wetlands International, the Ramsar Bureau and the GEF;
5. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Themes for the Future paper from the Government of Italy and the MedWet Coordination Group, entitled "MedWet - a Mediterranean Blueprint for Regional Wetland Cooperation," presented in plenary session of the present meeting on 25 March 1996, and the results of the informal consultations on Mediterranean wetlands held during the present meeting; and
6. BEING INFORMED of the initiative of the MedWet partners and of the Government of Italy to organize an International Conference on Mediterranean wetlands in Venice in June 1996;

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7. WELCOMES this form of concerted and integrated collaboration between government and non-government partners for the conservation and wise use of Mediterranean wetlands and considers it a promising model for wetland activities in other regions;
8. ENCOURAGES the current partners to extend this collaboration to all the countries of the Mediterranean Basin, opening it to all Mediterranean governments and appropriate institutions, bodies and non-government organizations in the region, including the private sector;
9. ENCOURAGES the remaining states of the Mediterranean to participate in this long-term effort through a Mediterranean Wetland Forum or an equivalent body;
10. URGES all government and non-government organizations and individuals concerned with wetlands in the Mediterranean to commit their best efforts for the preparation and implementation of a concerted Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy;
11. CALLS on funding agencies, both multilateral and bilateral, and from the private sector, to continue their essential financial support for coordinated action for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands;

12. REQUESTS that a full report on all further developments of collaboration for wetlands in the Mediterranean during the coming three-year period is presented at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1999; and
13. CALLS on Contracting Parties in the Mediterranean to designate as Ramsar sites those wetlands which meet the approved Ramsar criteria, and in particular those of major significance as links on the migratory route between Europe and Africa.

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Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.12: CONSERVATION AND WISE USE IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDED ACTIVITIES

1. RECALLING the “Guidelines for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept” (Annex to Recommendation 4.10) and the “Additional Guidance for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept” (Annex to Resolution 5.6) which call for actions to address legislation and government policies to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
2. FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 5.5 on the inclusion of conservation and wise use of wetlands in multilateral and bilateral development cooperation programmes;
3. AWARE that private or public funded activities may have negative effects on wetlands in the state itself or in other states or areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
4. FURTHER AWARE that the primary responsibility for the conservation and wise use of wetlands frequently rests with the public authorities, specifically when they direct engineering works and other activities that may negatively affect wetlands;
5. CONVINCED that there are many opportunities, such as by incentives and contractual agreements, to stimulate both the originating and the implementing body to avoid damages and/or to contribute to conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands within the scope of private or public funded operations;
6. NOTING the initiatives taken in the Netherlands to explore these opportunities in a consultation process between public and private sector as well as with NGOs;
7. TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the results of a comprehensive analysis realized by France about the direct and indirect effects of sectoral policies on wetlands; and
8. FURTHER NOTING the operational objectives of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 focusing on this problem, especially to integrate conservation and wise use in planning and decision-making by the public sector (Operational Objective 2.2), to encourage involvement of the private sector (2.8), to develop national education and public awareness programmes (3.2) and to ensure the development assistance community and multinational corporations follow improved wetland practices (7.3);

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9. WELCOMES AND SUPPORTS initiatives to start and/or reinforce a process of consultation and knowledge dissemination between public and private sectors as well as with NGOs in order to promote and enhance wetland conservation and wise use in relation to all kinds of private or public funded activities that may negatively affect wetlands; and
10. CALLS on Contracting Parties to start and/or reinforce a process as mentioned above and to report on the progress and results of this process in their National Reports to the Ramsar Convention.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.13: GUIDELINES ON MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR RAMSAR SITES AND OTHER WETLANDS

1. RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention are requested to designate wetlands within their territory for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of listed sites;
2. REFERRING to Resolution 5.7, which calls on Contracting Parties to:
 - a) develop management plans for each wetland designated for the Ramsar List; and
 - b) consider using the “Guidelines on Management Planning for Ramsar and Other Wetland Sites”, attached as an Annex to Resolution 5.7, to review and, where necessary, update existing management plans;
3. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution 5.7 emphasizes “the need for each Ramsar site to have its own management plan” and requests that “as far as necessary, Contracting Parties apply the Kushiro Guidelines”;
4. AWARE that the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002 states that:
 - a) ten case studies of the best practice of management planning for Ramsar sites at local, regional, and catchment or coastal zone levels should be published for the guidance of Contracting Parties before the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 1999 (Action 5.2.2); and
 - b) management plans or other mechanisms should be in preparation or in place for at least half of the Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party by the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2002 (Action 5.2.3);
5. WELCOMING the initiatives taken by some Contracting Parties to develop management plans in line with the Ramsar Guidelines on Management Planning; and
6. NOTING the conclusion of Technical Session D at this meeting that in general the Ramsar Guidelines provide a suitable model for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands throughout the world;

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7. CALLS ON the Contracting Parties to prepare and implement more management plans for Ramsar sites and other wetlands;

8. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau to promote the development of more management plans, in accordance with the Ramsar Guidelines on Management Planning and their implementation; and
9. REQUESTS the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel to monitor the Ramsar Guidelines on Management Planning, including a review of the most recent advances in the total or integrated catchment approach to management planning, and to report its conclusions, as well as the ten case studies of the best practice of management planning (Action 5.2.2 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 1997-2002), to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.14: TOXIC CHEMICALS

1. AWARE that adverse impacts of pesticides and other toxic chemicals can threaten the survival of populations dependent upon wetlands, including populations of many bird species, amphibians, reptiles, fish and mammals, through a multitude of lethal and sub-lethal impacts;
2. CONCERNED that some synthetic chemical substances regularly released into the environment have the ability to cause interference with the endocrine systems of wildlife and humans;
3. NOTING the growing global concern regarding the effects of toxic chemicals on the environment;
4. FURTHER NOTING the international consensus on the need for international action on certain organic pollutants; and
5. RECOGNIZING the important risk reduction activities recommended by Agenda 21 such as toxic chemical inventories (Pollutant Release & Transfer Registers - PRTRs) and pesticide reduction, and recent international organization guidelines on their implementation;

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6. CALLS on Contracting Parties to recognize that the adverse impact of toxic substances compromises the ecological character of wetlands and that these threats to ecological character are incompatible with the wise use concept;
7. REQUESTS the Bureau to invite appropriate international organizations to accelerate work programmes aimed at collating scientific studies and developing assessment protocols that will further an understanding of endocrine system disruptors;
8. FURTHER REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to report to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the status of the issue of toxic chemicals as they relate to wetlands;
9. URGES Contracting Parties to provide information in their National Reports to the Convention on their efforts to remedy and to prevent pollution impacts affecting Ramsar sites and other wetlands; and
10. RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties recognize the importance of the communities' right to know with respect to hazardous and bioaccumulative chemicals, including pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs).

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.15: RESTORATION OF WETLANDS

1. NOTING that wetlands have been lost and degraded in many countries particularly during the last fifty years with area losses as high as 70 per cent;
2. RECOGNISING that such wetland loss is particularly high in developed countries;
3. RECALLING Operational Objective 2.6 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002: “To identify wetlands in need of restoration and rehabilitation, and to implement the necessary measures”;
4. NOTING that in the European Union (EU) many countries have provided incentives for maintaining, restoring or improving wetland sites that are vital for biodiversity;
5. RECALLING the commitments in the Convention on Biological Diversity (para 8-F) and the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EC of May 1992) for initiatives in the field of *inter alia* nature restoration;
6. FURTHER NOTING that, according to the conclusions of the seminar “Nature Restoration in the European Union” organized by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Denmark, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, held in May 1995 in Copenhagen (in particular point 2), nature restoration, in particular of wetlands, can be an important tool to solve or mitigate water management problems, improve the quality of surface or ground water, and reduce disastrous flooding of downstream areas; and
7. FURTHER NOTING point 4.2 of the same conclusions which states that there is a need to set targets and timetables for implementing nature restoration activities;

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8. CALLS on Contracting Parties to integrate wetland restoration into their national nature conservation, land and water management policies;
9. URGES the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, in collaboration with the Bureau and concerned Contracting Parties and partners, to define guidelines on principles for wetland restoration and monitoring procedures, to produce a list, based on information from Contracting Parties, of key wetland sites in need of restoration, and to report its findings to the Standing Committee with a view to informing the Contracting Parties;
10. FURTHER URGES the Contracting Parties to give higher priority to restoration of wetlands and to take steps to restore, as far as possible, habitat quality in all key sites so identified; and

11. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties to include a section on restoration in their National Reports for the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.16: CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS IN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROGRAMMES

1. RECOGNIZING that the loss of wetlands has reached alarming proportions, initially in developed countries over the last century but also, over the last forty years, in the tropics and sub-tropics, and that improved wetland conservation and management planning at the river basin scale and in coastal zones, will contribute significantly to increase water resource security;
2. RECALLING Recommendation 5.5 on the same subject which:
 - a) called 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; and
 - b) further called 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;
3. WELCOMING the presentation by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at the present meeting of its “Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Wetlands”, prepared for OECD by IUCN - The World Conservation Union, with input from a large number of development assistance agencies, the European Union, the World Bank and non-governmental organizations with expertise on wetland policies and management;
4. RECORDING the generous support from the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA) which has provided the funds for the production of these Guidelines; and
5. NOTING that, according to the Guidelines, these are designed for policy makers, to address national, regional and international environmental issues in the field of conservation and sustainable use of wetlands;

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6. INVITES the Contracting Parties to present their comments on these Guidelines to the Standing Committee by a date to be fixed by the Standing Committee; and
7. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to study the Guidelines based on these comments, and to report the results of such study for consideration by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.17: RAMSAR SITES IN THE TERRITORIES OF SPECIFIC CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. WELCOMING the increase in the number of sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, which has exceeded the figure of 800 sites during the holding of the present meeting of the Conference;
2. PAYING SPECIAL TRIBUTE to Australia, the host of the Conference, which has designated seven new sites for the List and expressed its intention of designating a representative series of wetland types;
3. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION at the statements made at the present meeting on designation of new sites by Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, and Venezuela and welcoming the deposit with the Bureau of descriptions and maps for these sites; and
4. NOTING WITH PLEASURE the statements made (in plenary session or in National Reports) by Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Lithuania, Mauritania, Peru, Slovenia, South Africa, Suriname, and Yugoslavia concerning their intention to designate further sites for the List;

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(IN RELATION TO STATEMENTS ON RECOMMENDATION 5.1 AND ASSOCIATED RECOMMENDATIONS 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3)

5. APPRECIATES the information provided by the Government of Germany in relation to the status of Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer mit Dollart, and in particular the measures taken at the part of the site known as Leybucht, and recommends that this area be subject to ongoing attention to its ecological quality;
6. WELCOMES the response of the Government of The Netherlands to the concern expressed in Recommendation 5.1 over gas exploitation in the Wadden Sea, and notes that a letter detailing the measures being taken to safeguard the environment was transmitted to the Bureau in 1995;
7. FURTHER WELCOMES the statement made by the Government of Venezuela that measures are being implemented at Cuare Ramsar site to reduce the pressure of human activities;
8. ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts made by the Government of Poland to designate protected areas in the Middle Vistula and expresses the hope that the area will be designated as a Ramsar site;

9. CONGRATULATES the Government of the Russian Federation for the designation of 32 new Ramsar sites in 1994 and recommends that steps be taken to develop and implement appropriate management measures;
10. WARMLY CONGRATULATES the Government of South Africa for the steps taken to maintain the ecological character of St. Lucia System Ramsar site, through its decision not to allow mining for heavy metals in the dune cordon known as “Eastern Shores” and, noting that because of the possibility of future applications for mining permits continued vigilance will be required;
11. NOTES the effective application of the Management Guidance Procedure at Nariva Swamp, Trinidad and Tobago, welcomes the statement by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on the value of the Management Guidance Procedure and of the independent perspective it brought to bear on Nariva, and further welcomes the actions already being taken for implementation of the report recommendations;
12. REITERATES its call for the Government of Vietnam to designate at least one site in the Mekong Delta for the Ramsar List and 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; and
13. NOTES WITH SATISFACTION that the Government of Hungary is giving consideration to year-round Ramsar status for Tata Oreg-to and Lake Balaton, and urges the Hungarian authorities to complete this process at the earliest possible time.

(IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC STATEMENTS AT THE PRESENT MEETING)

14. URGES those Contracting Parties which have indicated their intention of listing new sites to do so as soon as possible and to seek assistance from the Ramsar Bureau in case of any difficulty;
15. NOTES the potential for change in ecological character at the Carlos Andwandter Ramsar site in Chile and urges the Chilean authorities to take the measures necessary for avoiding such change;
16. URGES the Governments of Costa Rica and Guatemala to apply the Ramsar Management Guidance Procedure (formerly the Monitoring Procedure) at Palo Verde and Laguna del Tigre respectively, which are included in the Montreux Record;
17. NOTES the decision to permit erection of a steel mill and associated industries at Saldanha near the South African Ramsar site of Langebaan, welcomes the stringent environmental controls (frugal water usage, revised siting of the plant, and pollution controls) to which this permission is subject, and calls on the South African authorities to monitor the effects on the nearby Ramsar site of the steel plant and the harbor development;
18. WELCOMES the information provided by the Government of Bolivia that the risk of change to the ecological character of the Laguna Colorada Ramsar site has been removed following the cancellation of the major geothermal power plant project;

19. NOTES the information provided by Mexico concerning improvements at the Ría Lagartos Ramsar site, thanks to a GEF-supported management plan, which should allow the site to be removed from the Montreux Record;
20. WELCOMES the efforts by the Governments of Bolivia and Peru for the conservation of Lake Titicaca, a transfrontier wetland which is the largest freshwater lake in South America and of vital importance for the subsistence and development of local communities, and calls on the Governments to consider the possibility of designating a transfrontier Ramsar site at Lake Titicaca;
21. REQUESTS the Governments of Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic, in their deliberations on the possible construction of a Danube-Elbe-Oder canal, to give full consideration to the fact that such a canal would cause serious adverse changes to the ecological character of five Ramsar sites in these three countries;
22. CALLS on the Government of Bangladesh to adopt mitigation measures to remedy adverse change to the ecological character of the Sundarbans Ramsar site caused by reduction of freshwater flow through its river system;
23. WELCOMES the proposed new Ramsar site along the upper reaches of the Rhine, to be designated simultaneously on their respective banks by the French and German authorities; and
24. WELCOMES the statement by the USA on the extensive restoration measures under way to restore the ecological character of the Everglades Ramsar site, currently included in the Montreux Record because of disruption of the natural hydrological regime.

(IN RELATION TO GENERAL STATEMENTS AT THE PRESENT MEETING)

25. WELCOMES the approval at the present meeting of the Brisbane Initiative in response to the call in Recommendation 5.1 of the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, Japan, 1993) for designation of additional wetlands for the Ramsar List, and in particular additional tidal wetlands;
 26. WELCOMES the publication of a “Draft Wetlands Conservation Policy for the Commonwealth Government of Australia”; and
 27. EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION at information received from the Government of South Africa on its plans to develop national legislation aimed at safeguarding listed sites against inappropriate physical developments, and invites other Contracting Parties who may be interested to seek further information on this subject from the Government of South Africa, with a view to developing similar legislation in other countries.
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CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.17.1: GREEK RAMSAR SITES

1. RECALLING Recommendation 5.1.1 which requested the Greek Government to take urgent measures to submit definitive maps, to prepare management plans and to ensure wise use of Greek Ramsar sites, and which urged the Greek authorities to consider all possible ways of averting negative impacts from water management projects upon the Messolonghi Lagoons Ramsar site;
2. EXPRESSING satisfaction at the adoption of Ministerial Decisions for the protection of three Greek Ramsar sites;
3. NOTING that Greek Ramsar sites presently lack the protection of Presidential Decrees and management plans;
4. RECOGNIZING the vital importance of ensuring the wise use of Greek wetlands;
5. AWARE of the Greek Government's decision to press ahead with the construction of an Acheloos River diversion scheme in its original dimensions, but also to reduce the quantity of the Acheloos diversion in the proposed scheme from 1.1 billion to 600 million m³ per year; and
6. FURTHER AWARE of continuing concern over the river diversion issue amongst academic and nature conservation organizations and, in particular, of their concern that the diversion of Evinos River has already begun;

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7. CONGRATULATES the Greek Government on the progress made since the last meeting of the Conference to improve the condition of the Greek Ramsar sites, in particular by producing final delineation maps for seven of the sites, and by consulting widely, including with NGOs;
8. URGES the Greek Government to put in place Presidential Decrees for the protection of all Greek Ramsar sites as a matter of urgency;
9. FURTHER URGES the Greek Government to complete mapping of these sites and submit full documentation by April 1997;
10. REQUESTS the Greek authorities to prepare management plans for the sites and to ensure wise use, including the enforcement of already existing regulations;
11. REQUESTS that the Greek Government reconsider the Acheloos diversion project, and consider commissioning a study of the hydrology and management of freshwater resources of the Thessaly Plain and the Aetoloakarnania region; and

12. REQUESTS the Bureau to contact the Greek Government with a view to providing assistance in conservation and wise use of Greek wetlands, if appropriate, through implementation of the Management Guidance Procedure, thus facilitating their removal from the Montreux Record.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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RECOMMENDATION 6.17.2: NATIONAL RESERVE OF PARACAS AND THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS IN PERU

1. RECALLING that Resolution 5.7 called for the development of management plans for each wetland designated for the Ramsar List and, where necessary, for the updating of existing management plans;
2. AWARE of the efforts made by Peru to develop a Master Plan for the National Reserve of Paracas in accordance with the Ramsar Kushiuro Guidelines, as well as to prepare a National Strategy for the Conservation of Wetlands;
3. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to the national and international institutions and bodies that have made it possible to materialize those plans; and
4. NOTING the discussions on the Ramsar Guidelines on Management Planning held during Technical Session D at the present meeting;

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5. WELCOMES the adoption, based on resolutions issued by the Government of Peru, of the Master Plan for Paracas and the National Strategy for the Conservation of Wetlands in Peru; and
6. ENCOURAGES public and private institutions involved in the development of other Ramsar sites and wetlands in Peru to do their utmost to implement these management plans.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.17.3: AZRAQ OASIS, JORDAN

1. RECALLING Recommendation 4.9.3 on Azraq Oasis, Jordan, which has been designated by the Jordanian authorities for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and included on the Montreux Record, because of the the effect on the wetland of pumping of groundwater;
2. FURTHER RECALLING that the Management Guidance Procedure was applied at this site in March 1990; and
3. THANKING the partners of the Azraq Oasis Conservation Project for their extensive efforts for rehabilitation and management of the Azraq Wetland Reserve, and for raising public awareness of the wetland values of the site;

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4. REITERATES its concern at possible change in ecological character of the site;
5. REQUESTS the Government of Jordan to take account of the effect of pumping from Azraq basin on the groundwater of the site; and
6. FURTHER REQUESTS the Global Environment Facility to give further support to the Azraq Oasis Conservation Project for rehabilitation and monitoring of the Ramsar site.

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Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.17.4: AUSTRALIAN RAMSAR SITES

1. RECALLING that, in 1974, Australia was the first state to deposit its instrument of accession to the Ramsar Convention with UNESCO; and
2. AWARE that in the ensuing years 49 Ramsar sites have been designated in all Australian States and Territories, as well as in Australia's island external territories;

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3. CONGRATULATES Australian authorities for commencing management plans or strategies for more than 32 of Australia's Ramsar sites since the last Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
4. REQUESTS the Australian authorities to consider prudent and feasible alternatives to proposed major developments within a number of Australian Ramsar sites or their catchment, where those developments would have significant adverse impacts on the Ramsar sites concerned ;
5. REQUESTS the Australian authorities to consider providing water to a number of Ramsar sites in inland Australia in greater quantity and with timing more closely related to natural environment conditions;
6. CALLS ON the Australian authorities to provide adequate resources to reverse threats to Ramsar sites caused by rising saline groundwater;
7. CALLS ON the Australian authorities to institute appropriate public Environmental Impact Assessment procedures, before permitting the introduction into Australia of live exotic species which have the potential for a significant impact on wetlands;
8. CONGRATULATES the Government of Australia for its joint management with Aboriginal owners in the custodianship and management of Australia's Kakadu Ramsar site;
9. INVITES the Australian authorities to consider inclusion of sites in the Montreux Record, where this would assist substantially in monitoring, maintaining or restoring the ecological character of Ramsar sites under serious threat; and
10. URGES the Australian authorities to take immediate steps to ensure the long-term conservation of its peatlands.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.17.5: THE LOWER DANUBE BASIN

1. RECALLING Recommendation 5.1.3; and
2. NOTING with satisfaction the progress being made in the development of a Danube Basin Ecological Convention;

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3. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties concerned and the Ramsar Bureau to maintain contact so that the proposed new Convention and the Ramsar Convention may complement each other as fully as possible;
4. CONGRATULATES the Romanian Government on establishing the legal framework to secure the protection and management of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar site;
5. REINFORCES its request to the Ukrainian authorities to continue working closely with the Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority to avoid potential threats to the complete Danube Delta, taking into account the successful effort of the Government of Ukraine to extend protected areas in the Danube Delta for wetland restoration and for designation of a Biosphere Reserve.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Proceedings of the 6TH Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Brisbane, Australia, 19-27 March 1996)

RECOMMENDATION 6.18: CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

1. NOTING the Port Moresby Statement arising from the first Workshop on conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Pacific Islands region, held in June 1994;
2. FURTHER NOTING that this workshop has led to the development of a Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands;
3. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the sensitive issues of customary ownership of land and resources for implementation of any wetland conservation initiatives, including management of Ramsar sites in the Pacific Islands region;
4. ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States and its promotion of cross-sectoral, holistic management of island resources, including wetland resources;
5. WELCOMING the initiatives of the Australian Government in its support for wetland conservation in the Pacific Islands region and its pledge of future support, and the contributions of other governments, donor agencies and international organizations in this regard;
6. NOTING that the Ramsar Convention includes coral reefs in its definition, that coral reefs are particularly diverse and extensive in the Pacific Islands region, that the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) will assist in enhancing conservation of reefs and related ecosystems, but that few coral reefs have been included in the Ramsar List so far;
7. RECOGNIZING the limited number of skilled persons and low financial resources available to national conservation agencies in the Pacific Islands region;
8. DETERMINED to enhance the traditional knowledge of wise use of wetland resources and to increase the understanding of best practice within communities; and
9. AWARE that the growing populations of Pacific Island countries and the need for national development are placing great pressure on the small land areas with limited resources, thereby threatening wetland sites and species within national boundaries;

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10. URGES Contracting Parties and international organizations to continue to increase their technical and financial assistance to Pacific Island countries with respect to conservation and wise use of wetlands, consistent with national priorities for environmentally sustainable development;

11. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties and international organizations to support the development of local, national and regional capabilities in regard to wetland assessment, monitoring, management, planning and awareness;
12. DIRECTS the Bureau to allocate time and resources to ensuring that the benefits of Ramsar accession to Pacific Island countries, and wise use principles, are made transparent;
13. FURTHER DIRECTS the Bureau to liaise closely with, and support as appropriate, the existing regional initiatives being undertaken by the Pacific regional and national organizations where these relate to wetlands, including the draft Regional Wetlands Action Plan and the ICRI Pacific Regional Strategy;
14. CALLS ON the Contracting Parties, the Bureau and Ramsar Partners to recognize the critical importance of community consultation as a necessary process in the development of any wetland conservation initiatives in the Pacific Islands region; and
15. ALSO DIRECTS the Bureau, in consultation with Contracting Parties and Ramsar Partners, to communicate with global and regional environment conventions and agencies of relevance to small island nations, to ensure that opportunities for cooperation are maximized.