

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.1: WORKING DEFINITIONS OF ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER, GUIDELINES FOR DESCRIBING AND MAINTAINING THE ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF LISTED SITES, AND GUIDELINES FOR OPERATION OF THE MONTREUX RECORD

1. CONSIDERING that Article 3.2 of the Convention states that each Contracting Party “shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List [of Wetlands of International Importance] has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference”;
2. RECALLING that Recommendation 4.8 instructed the Bureau to maintain a record of listed sites where change in ecological character had occurred, was occurring, or was likely to occur, and that Resolution 5.4 established guidelines for operating the record, to be known as the Montreux Record;
3. FURTHER RECALLING that Recommendation 5.2 emphasized the need for further studies of the concepts of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character”, and instructed the Bureau, with the support of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and partner organizations, to report to the present meeting on the results of such studies;
4. NOTING the results of the work carried out by the STRP and during Technical Session B of the present meeting;
5. RECOGNIZING the need for definitions and guidelines to assist Contracting Parties with implementation of Article 3.2 and, in particular, with maintaining the ecological character of listed sites;
6. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need for revised guidelines to ensure effective operation of the Montreux Record;
7. NOTING that Resolution VI.13 of the present meeting seeks to address the deficiencies in essential baseline data provided by Contracting Parties in the form of Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands; and
8. AWARE of the existence of many successful environmental monitoring programmes world-wide (including those which rely on the involvement and enthusiasm of local communities) and of the value of Early Warning Systems to allow Contracting Parties to take sufficiently prompt actions to prevent changes in the ecological character of listed sites;

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9. ACCEPTS working definitions, to be assessed further during the 1997-1999 triennium, of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character”, together with the guidelines for describing and maintaining ecological character of listed sites, as contained in the Annex to the present resolution, recognizing that these working definitions are relevant to the management of wetlands in general;
10. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties and the Bureau, with the advice of the STRP, to implement the revised procedure for operation of the Montreux Record, as contained in the Annex to the present resolution;
11. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to support the development, by the relevant authorities within their territories, of Early Warning Systems for detecting, and initiating action in response to, change in ecological character; and
12. INSTRUCTS the STRP, in cooperation with the Bureau and partner organizations, and the wider scientific community, to liaise with the Standing Committee, in order to identify the effects of application of the present resolution, especially at specific sites, and to report accordingly to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex to Resolution VI.1

WORKING DEFINITIONS, GUIDELINES FOR DESCRIBING AND MAINTAINING THE ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF LISTED SITES, AND GUIDELINES FOR OPERATION OF THE MONTREUX RECORD

1. Working definitions

1.1. *Ecological character* :

The “ecological character” is the structure and inter-relationships between the biological, chemical, and physical components of the wetland. These derive from the interactions of individual processes, functions, attributes and values of the ecosystem(s).

1.2. *Change in ecological character* :

“Change¹ in ecological character” of a wetland is the impairment or imbalance in any of those processes and functions which maintain the wetland and its products, attributes and values.

The following notes on wetland processes, functions, values, products and attributes, are derived from the *Ramsar Convention Manual* (Davis, 1994); *Wetland Conservation: A Review of Current Issues and Required Action* (Dugan, 1990); *Building a new approach to the investigation and assessment of wetland ecosystem functioning* in Mitsch, *Global Wetlands: Old World and New* (Maltby, 1994); and *Defining new procedures of functional assessment for European river marginal wetland ecosystems* (Maltby, in press).

¹ Change in the ecological character of a site is interpreted as meaning adverse change, in line with the context of Article 3.2 of the Convention and Recommendation 4.8 (1990), which established the Montreux Record. The definition refers explicitly to adverse change caused by human activities. It excludes the process of natural evolutionary change occurring in wetlands. It is also recognized that wetland restoration and/or rehabilitation programmes may lead to favourable human-induced changes in ecological character.

Processes are changes or reactions which occur naturally within wetland ecosystems. They may be physical, chemical or biological.

Functions are activities or actions which occur naturally in wetlands as a product of the interactions between the ecosystem structure and processes. Functions include flood water control; nutrient, sediment and contaminant retention; food web support; shoreline stabilization and erosion controls; storm protection; and stabilization of local climatic conditions, particularly rainfall and temperature.

Values are the perceived benefits to society, either direct or indirect, that result from wetland functions. These values include human welfare, environmental quality and wildlife support.

Products generated by wetlands include: wildlife resources; fisheries; forest resources; forage resources; agricultural resources; and water supply. These products are generated by the interactions between the biological, chemical and physical components of a wetland.

Attributes of a wetland include biological diversity and unique cultural and heritage features. These attributes may lead to certain uses or the derivation of particular products, but they may also have intrinsic, unquantifiable importance.

2. Guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites

- 2.1. It is essential that the ecological character of a site be described by the Contracting Party concerned **at the time of designation for the Ramsar List**, by completion of an Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (as adopted by Recommendation 4.7). The STRP has proposed some limited modifications to the guidelines for completing the Information Sheet, in order to increase the value of the data provided for assessing ecological character. These proposals are attached below.
- 2.2. Sources of information which might be consulted by Contracting Parties in describing the ecological character of listed sites include international, national and regional scientific inventories of wetlands; already existing site-specific management plans; and other site-specific scientific surveys or reports.
- 2.3. Contracting Parties are requested to verify the data which they have provided on Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands every six years (i.e. every second meeting of the Conference) and to provide the Bureau with updated sheets if necessary. During the intervening period, urgent information on changes at listed sites should be conveyed to the Bureau using the existing mechanisms of regular, day to day contacts and the triennial National Reports.
- 2.4. Change in the ecological character of a listed site should be assessed against the baseline status presented in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, at the time of designation for the List (or at the time the Information Sheet was first provided to the Bureau), together with any information which has been received subsequently.
- 2.5. Assessment should be linked to the Ramsar criterion or criteria fulfilled by the site at the time of designation for the Ramsar List. Use of the criteria indicates certain benefits and values of the wetland which might be lost as a result of change in the ecological

character. However, this forms only part of the assessment needed, since significant degradation of wetland functions and values might occur without any of the designated Ramsar criteria being contravened.

- 2.6. An effective monitoring and survey programme is a prerequisite for assessing whether or not a wetland has undergone a change in its ecological character. Such a programme is an integral component of a wetland management planning (see Annex to Resolution 5.7) and should enable full consideration of the values and benefits of the wetland when the extent and significance of the change is being assessed. A framework which might be of assistance to Contracting Parties in designing effective monitoring programmes is attached below.
- 2.7. Monitoring should establish the range of natural variation in ecological parameters at each site, within a given time frame. Change in ecological character occurs when these parameters fall outside their normal range. Thus, in addition to monitoring, an assessment of the extent and significance of the change is required, taking into account the need for each wetland to have a favourable conservation status.
- 2.8. In some instances a Contracting Party may decide to restore a wetland to re-establish the ecological character that existed prior to the date of designation. In the case of such restoration programmes, a new Information Sheet should be provided, to establish a new baseline for assessing any future change. Information should also be given concerning the target state that any restoration is aiming at.

2.9. **Improvements to the Guidelines for the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands**

2.9.1 Improvements to the Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands are proposed, in order to increase the value of the information collected for describing and assessing ecological character of listed sites. New headings in the guidelines will emphasize the importance of:

- (i) establishing a baseline by describing the functions, products and attributes of the site that give it benefits and values of international importance (necessary because the existing Ramsar criteria do not cover the full range of wetland benefits and values which should be considered when assessing the possible impact of changes at a site);
- (ii) providing information on human-induced factors that have affected or could significantly affect the benefits and values of international importance;
- (iii) providing information on monitoring and survey methods in place (or planned) at the site;
- (iv) providing information on the natural variability and amplitude of seasonal and/or long-term “natural” changes (e.g. vegetation succession, episodic/catastrophic ecological events such as hurricanes) that have affected or could affect the ecological character of the site;

2.9.2 It is recognized that, for many sites, such information will not be known at present, nor be readily available. The sheets will also only provide a snap-shot in time.

However, the level of information in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands is the minimum necessary for determining management steps to maintain the ecological character of a listed site. In gathering new data or assembling existing data, Contracting Parties should give emphasis to sites where there appears to be a high-medium risk of human-induced change with a high-medium ecological impact, likely to result in permanent, long- or medium-term degradation of values and benefits. International technical and/or financial cooperation may be needed to assist in gathering information about listed sites, particularly in developing countries.

2.9.3 All new listed sites should be described according to the revisions set out above. For sites with already submitted Information Sheets, the revisions should be taken into account at the next six-yearly review (see Resolution VI.13). National Reports provide an opportunity for providing information in the meantime.

2.10. A framework for designing an effective wetland monitoring programme

2.10.1 In order to detect actual or potential changes in ecological character, regular monitoring is required. Monitoring is defined in the “Additional Guidance for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept” (Annex to Resolution 5.6) as *“the process of measuring change in ecological character in any wetland over a period of time”*. Monitoring differs from general surveillance in that there is a specific reason and method for collecting particular data or information.

2.10.2 The Additional Guidance also points out that monitoring does not automatically require sophisticated technology or high investment and can be carried out at different levels of intensity. It is emphasized that there are many different monitoring techniques available, and that each Contracting Party should select the technique(s) most appropriate to its priorities and available resources.

2.10.3 A monitoring programme should, ideally, be an integral part of a site-specific wetland management plan, as set out in Resolution 5.7. However, where a management plan does not yet exist, it is still possible to implement a monitoring programme (though without the framework of a management plan, it will be difficult to implement the results of monitoring effectively).

Framework for designing a wetland monitoring programme

The framework set out in this table is not a prescriptive recipe for any particular monitoring programme. It simply provides a series of steps, in a logical sequence, that can be used by wetland managers and planners, working in partnership with local users and managers, to design a monitoring programme based on their particular circumstances and needs. The arrows illustrate the feedback which enables assessment of the effectiveness of the monitoring programme in achieving its objective(s). This framework is based on a text entitled *A Framework for Designing a Monitoring Programme* (Finlayson 1995) prepared for the MedWet Methodological Guide for Monitoring Programmes in Mediterranean Wetlands.

Problems/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State clearly and unambiguously - State the known extent and most likely cause - Identify the baseline or reference situation
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Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides the basis for collecting the information - Must be attainable and achievable within a reasonable time period
Hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assumption against which the objectives are tested - Underpins the objective and can be tested
Methods & variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific for the problem and provide the information to test the hypothesis - Able to detect the presence, and assess the significance, of any change - Identify or clarify the cause of the change
Feasibility / cost effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine whether or not monitoring can be done regularly and continually - Assess factors that influence the sampling programme: availability of trained personnel; access to sampling sites; availability and reliability of specialist equipment; means of analyzing and interpreting the data; usefulness of the data and information; means of reporting in a timely manner - Determine if the costs of data acquisition and analysis are within the existing budget
Pilot study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time to test and fine-tune the method and specialist equipment - Assess the training needs for staff involved - Confirm the means of analyzing and interpreting the data
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff should be trained in all sampling methods - All samples should be documented: date and location; names of staff; sampling methods; equipment used; means of storage or transport; all changes to the methods - Samples should be processed within a timely period and all data documented: date and location; names of staff; processing methods; equipment used; and all changes to the protocols - Sampling and data analysis should be done by rigorous and tested methods
Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The analyses should be documented: date and location (or boundaries of sampling area), names of analytical staff; methods used; equipment used; data storage methods
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpret and report all results in a timely and cost effective manner

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The report should be concise and indicate whether or not the hypothesis has been supported- The report should contain recommendations for management action, including further monitoring |
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3. **Guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record**

3.1. The Montreux Record is the principal tool of the Convention for highlighting those sites where an adverse change in ecological character has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur, and which are therefore in need of priority conservation attention. It shall be maintained as part of the Ramsar Database and shall be subject to continuous review.

3.2. The following procedure should be observed when considering the possible inclusion of a listed site in the Montreux Record:

3.2.1 A Contracting Party may request inclusion of a site in the Montreux Record, because of potential or actual adverse change in its ecological character, in order to draw attention to the need for action or support. Alternatively, the Bureau, on receipt of information on actual or possible adverse change from partner organizations, other international or national NGOs, or other interested bodies, may draw the attention of the Contracting Party concerned to this information and enquire whether a Ramsar site should be included in the Montreux Record. A site can only be included in the Record with the approval of the Contracting Party concerned.

3.2.2 The Bureau will pass the information received from partner organizations, other international or national NGOs, or other interested bodies, to the Contracting Party, together with a concise, voluntary questionnaire (see “Montreux Record - Questionnaire” below) normally to be returned to the Bureau within three months. However, this deadline should be flexible to take into account the circumstances of developing countries and Contracting Parties whose economies are in transition.

3.2.3 The completed questionnaire will, with the agreement of the Contracting Party, be forwarded by the Bureau to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) for advice in line with the “Working Definitions and Guidelines for Describing and Maintaining the Ecological Character of Listed Sites”. The Bureau will, with the agreement of the Contracting Party, relay the completed questionnaire to the original source of the information. If the Contracting Party is not able to agree to this, the Bureau will relay the Contracting Party’s decision.

3.2.4 Any technical comment or advice provided by the STRP will be forwarded by the Bureau to the Contracting Party and to the source of the information first received by the Bureau (if different from the Contracting Party).

3.2.5 The Bureau will discuss the STRP’s comments and advice with the Contracting Party concerned, with the aim of determining what steps might be taken, including a decision as to whether the site should be included in the Montreux Record. The STRP and other interested bodies will, where appropriate, be informed of the decision made by the Contracting Party, in consultation with the Bureau.

3.2.6 Within the framework of their triennial National Reports, Contracting Parties shall provide a report to the Convention Bureau on the conservation status of any sites included in the Montreux Record. If necessary, further information will be provided to the Bureau on request.

- 3.3. The following procedure should be observed when considering the removal of a listed site from the Montreux Record:

3.3.1 The Bureau is requested to remove a listed site from the Montreux Record by the Contracting Party in whose territory the site is included. The Bureau may also receive information from other sources, suggesting that there is no longer a risk of change in the ecological character of the listed site.

3.3.2 The Bureau will submit the concise questionnaire (see “Montreux Record - Questionnaire” below) to the Contracting Party and forward the completed questionnaire to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) for advice in line with the “Working Definitions and Guidelines for Describing and Maintaining the Ecological Character of Listed Sites”.

3.3.3 Any requests from the STRP for further information, together with the STRP’s technical comments or advice, will be forwarded by the Bureau to the Contracting Party. The Bureau may also request information from other sources.

3.3.4 At the invitation of the Contracting Party, the Bureau may organize a site visit, ideally by the relevant Bureau staff member, the regional member of the STRP, and other appropriate experts.

3.3.5 A wetland will be removed from the Montreux Record based on the request of the Contracting Party and after consideration of advice and/or comment from the STRP. The final decision will be made by the Contracting Party.

3.3.6 The Bureau will, unless the Contracting Party concerned objects, provide information on the decision made by the Contracting Party to other interested bodies.

Montreux Record - Questionnaire

Section One

Information for assessing possible inclusion of a listed site in the Montreux Record

Essential items

- ◆ Name of site
- ◆ Ramsar Criteria for listing the site as internationally important
- ◆ Nature of the change in ecological character/potential for adverse change
- ◆ Reason(s) for adverse change, or potential adverse change, in ecological character

Additional items which may be included

- ◆ Date Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands submitted
- ◆ Date and source of Information Sheet updates (e.g. National Reports, national wetland inventory, specific survey)
- ◆ Benefits and values derived from the site
- ◆ Extent to which values and benefits derived from the site have decreased or changed
- ◆ Monitoring programme in place at the site, if any (technique(s), objectives, and nature of data and information gathered)
- ◆ Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used)
- ◆ Ameliorative and restoration measures in place or planned (if any) so far
- ◆ List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable)
- ◆ List of attachments provided by the Ramsar Bureau (if applicable)

Section Two

Information for assessing possible removal of a listed site from the Montreux Record

- ◆ Success of ameliorative, restoration or maintenance measures (describe if different from those covered in Section One of this questionnaire)
- ◆ Proposed monitoring and assessment procedures (describe if different from those in Section One of this questionnaire)
- ◆ Extent to which the ecological character, benefits and values of the site have been restored or maintained (provide details)
- ◆ Rationale for removing the site from the Montreux Record (refer to Guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record, together with Section One of this questionnaire)
- ◆ List of further attachments (if applicable)

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.2: ADOPTION OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA BASED ON FISH FOR IDENTIFYING WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

1. RECALLING that Recommendation 5.9 instructed the Convention Bureau, in cooperation with experts from Contracting Parties, partner organizations, and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), to formulate proposals on criteria to be used when identifying wetlands of international importance as fish habitat or as a nursery for fisheries, and to develop guidelines for application of such criteria;
2. NOTING WITH GRATITUDE the extensive work on this issue carried out by the STRP and other experts, which has led to the formulation of criteria and guidelines on wetlands of international importance as fish habitats;
3. EMPHASIZING the importance for the scope of the Convention of the increased recognition of the importance of wetlands as fish habitats; and
4. RECOGNIZING that in many instances commercial fisheries are regulated by statutes whose objectives are compatible with the sustainable exploitation of fishing resources with due regard for the aquatic environment;

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5. ADOPTS the specific criteria based on fish, and guidelines for their application, appended as an Annex to the present resolution, and includes them as an integral part of the criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance adopted by Recommendation 4.2;
6. EMPHASIZES the need for STRP to continue its work on refining these guidelines on the application of these new criteria in the context of Resolution VI.3; and
7. CALLS ON the Contracting Parties to use these criteria and guidelines to identify sites for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, and to designate sites so identified.

Annex to Resolution VI.2

SPECIFIC CRITERIA BASED ON FISH FOR IDENTIFICATION OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE, AND GUIDELINES FOR THEIR APPLICATION

Specific Criteria 4 Based on Fish

“A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

- (a) *it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity;*
- or (b) *it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.”*

Guidelines for the application of the Criterion 4(a)¹

- 1.1 Fishes are the most abundant vertebrates associated with wetlands. Worldwide, over 18,000 species of fishes are resident for all or part of their life cycles in wetlands as defined by the Ramsar Convention.
- 1.2 The importance of Criterion 4(a) is that a wetland can be designated as internationally important if it has a high diversity of fishes and shellfishes even if it does not fulfil the requirements of the other criteria. Furthermore, this criterion emphasizes the different forms that diversity might take, including the number of subspecies, species and families, different life-history stages, species interactions, and the complexity of interactions between the above taxa and the external environment. Fish diversity therefore includes diversity within species, between species and between ecosystems. It also includes the diversity of genetically similar intraspecific ecological units, for instance, salmon runs or the different geographical races of marine fishes that have been identified in many regional seas around the world. Species counts alone are not sufficient to assess the importance of a particular wetland.
- 1.3 In addition, the concept of the “niche” needs to be considered, i.e. the different ecological roles that species may play at different stages in their life cycles. This point is especially relevant to animals that have a marked metamorphosis in their life cycle, such as corals, barnacles, many aquatic insects, amphibians, fishes with larvae or leptocephali and birds with naked young, e.g. passerines, some birds of prey, and egrets.
- 1.4 Implicit in this understanding of diversity is the importance of high levels of endemism and of biodisparity. “Endemic species” are species that are unique to one region, often within one country or continent, and are found nowhere else. Many wetlands are characterized by the highly endemic nature of their fish fauna.
- 1.5 Some measure of the level of endemism should be used to distinguish sites of international importance. If at least 10% of the ichthyofauna is endemic to a wetland, or to wetlands in a natural grouping, that site should be recognized as internationally important, but the absence of endemic fishes from a site should not disqualify it if it has other qualifying characteristics. In some wetlands, such as the African Great Lakes, Lake Baikal in Russia, Lake Titicaca, sinkholes and cave lakes in arid regions, and lakes on islands, endemism levels as high as 90-100% may be reached, but 10% is a practical figure for worldwide application. In areas with no endemic fish species, the endemism of genetically-distinct infraspecific categories, such as geographical races, should be used.
- 1.6 Over 977 species of fishes are threatened with extinction worldwide and at least 28 fish species have recently become extinct (Groombridge 1993). The occurrence of rare or

¹ Please refer to the “Definitions” section of this document for explanation of technical terms.

threatened fish species in a wetland is an important attribute but is catered for in Criterion 2 of the Ramsar Convention.

- 1.7 The concepts of indicator, flagship and keystone species are also important. The presence of “indicator” species is a useful measure of good wetland quality. “Flagship” species have high symbolic value in the conservation movement (e.g. Siberian crane, flamingo, desert pupfish, sturgeon) whereas “keystone” species play vital ecological roles. The recognition of the important ecological role of keystone species, which are often abundant and widespread, and the need for their conservation, is perhaps foreign to the traditional conservation ethic, but deserve serious consideration. Wetlands with significant populations of indicator, flagship and/or keystone species would merit consideration as sites of international importance.
- 1.8 An important component of biodiversity is biodisparity, i.e. the range of morphologies and reproductive styles in a community. The biodisparity of a wetland community will be determined by the diversity and predictability of its habitats in time and space, i.e. the more heterogeneous and unpredictable the habitats, the greater the biodisparity of the fish fauna.
- 1.9 For example, Lake Malawi, a stable, ancient lake, has over 600 fish species of which 92% are maternal mouthbrooding cichlids, but only a few fish families. In contrast, the Okavango Swamps, a palustrine floodplain that fluctuates between wet and dry phases, has only 60 fish species but a wider variety of morphologies and reproductive styles, and many fish families, and therefore has a greater biodisparity (Bruton & Merron, 1990).
- 1.10 Measures of both biodiversity and biodisparity should be used to assess the international importance of a wetland.
- 1.11 The problem of invasive aquatic animals also needs to be considered. Fishes (finfishes and shellfishes) have been widely distributed, accidentally or purposely, by humankind from one catchment, ocean or continent to another, with sometimes disastrous consequences for the local fauna and ecology. In some cases, as in the Laurentian Great Lakes in North America, the indigenous fauna of the lakes has been dramatically altered even though the total species count has not declined significantly. In Suisun Marsh in the Sacramento-San Joaquin estuary in the USA, the introduction of alien species has doubled the species count in the wetland. In other cases, as in Lake Victoria in Africa, alien species, combined with overfishing and pollution, have caused a major decline in the diversity of indigenous species. Measures of biodiversity and biodisparity should only take into account representative assemblages of indigenous species, if the true intrinsic worth of the system is to be measured.
- 1.12 The situation is not simple, however, as many high altitude lakes that formed since the last glaciation contain only introduced fish species. Throughout the world important commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries are based on introduced species, especially trout, carp, salmon, bass and tilapia. Furthermore, some alien species, for instance those used for biological control, have had beneficial effects on wetlands. In general, the introduction of alien species of fishes and shellfishes which may have adverse impacts on the diversity of indigenous species or for which there are insufficient data available to make a reliable judgement should be discouraged.

Guidelines for the application of the Criterion 4(b)

- 2.1 Many fishes (including shellfishes) have complex life histories, with spawning, nursery and feeding grounds widely separated and long migrations necessary between them. It is important to conserve all those areas that are essential for the completion of a fish's life cycle if the fish species or stock is to be maintained. The productive, shallow habitats offered by coastal wetlands (including coastal lagoons, estuaries, salt marshes, inshore rocky reefs and sandy slopes) are extensively used as feeding and spawning grounds and nurseries by fishes with openwater adult stages. These wetlands therefore support essential ecological processes for fish stocks, even if they do not necessarily harbour large adult fish populations themselves.
- 2.2 Furthermore, many fishes in rivers, swamps or lakes spawn in one part of the ecosystem but spend their adult lives in another inland water or in the sea. It is common for fishes in lakes to migrate up rivers to spawn, or fishes in rivers to migrate downstream to a lake or estuary, or beyond the estuary to the sea, to spawn. Many swamp fishes migrate from deeper, more permanent waters to shallow, temporarily inundated areas for spawning. Wetlands, even apparently insignificant ones in one part of a river system, may therefore be vital for the proper functioning of extensive river reaches up- or downstream of the wetland.
- 2.3 The adoption of this criterion for the identification of wetlands of international importance is for guidance only and does not interfere with the rights of Contracting Parties to regulate fisheries within specific wetlands and/or elsewhere.

Definitions

Catchment: The area drained by a river and all its tributaries; a drainage basin or watershed.

Endemic species: A species that is unique to one region, i.e. it is found nowhere else in the world. A group of fishes may be indigenous to a subcontinent with some species endemic to a part of that subcontinent.

Family: An assemblage of genera and species that have a common phylogenetic origin, e.g. pilchards, sardines and herrings in the family Clupeidae.

Fish: Any finfish, including jawless fishes (hagfishes and lampreys), cartilaginous fishes (sharks, rays, skates and their allies, Chondrichthyes) and bony fishes (Osteichthyes) as well as certain shellfish or other aquatic invertebrates, as listed below.

Fish orders that typically inhabit wetlands (as defined by the Ramsar Convention) and which are indicative of wetland benefits, values, productivity or diversity, include:

Jawless fishes - Agnatha

- hagfishes (Myxiniiformes)
- lampreys (Petromyzontiiformes)

Cartilaginous fishes - Chondrichthyes

- dogfishes, sharks and allies (Squaliformes)
- skates (Rajiformes)
- stingrays and allies (Myliobatiformes)

Bony fishes - Osteichthyes

- Australian lungfish (Ceratodontiformes)
- South American and African lungfishes (Lepidosireniformes)
- bichirs (Polypteriformes)
- sturgeons and allies (Acipenseriformes)
- gars (Lepisosteiformes)
- bowfins (Amiiformes)
- bonytongues, elephant fishes and allies (Osteoglossiformes)
- tarpons, bonefishes and allies (Elopiformes)
- eels (Anguilliformes)
- pilchards, sardines and herrings (Clupeiformes)
- milkfishes (Gonorynchiformes)
- carps, minnows and allies (Cypriniformes)
- characins and allies (Characiformes)
- catfishes and knifefishes (Siluriformes)
- pikes, smelts, salmon and allies (Salmoniformes)
- mullets (Mugiliformes)
- silversides (Atheriniformes)
- halfbeaks (Belontiiformes)
- killifishes and allies (Cyprinodontiformes)
- sticklebacks and allies (Gasterosteiformes)
- pipefishes and allies (Syngnathiformes)
- cichlids, perches and allies (Perciformes)
- flatfishes (Pleuronectiformes)

Several groups of shellfishes:

- shrimps, lobsters, freshwater crayfishes, prawns and crabs (Crustacea)
- mussels, oysters, pencil baits, razor shells, limpets, winkles, whelks, scallops, cockles, clams, abalone, octopus, squid and cuttlefish (Mollusca)

Certain other aquatic invertebrates:

- sponges (Porifera)
- hard corals (Cnidaria)
- lugworms and ragworms (Annelida)
- sea urchins and sea cucumbers (Echinodermata)
- sea squirts (Ascidiacea)

Fish stock: The potentially exploitable component of a fish population.

Fishes: “Fishes” is used as the plural of “fish” when more than one species is involved.

Indigenous species: A species that originates and occurs naturally in a particular place.

Life-history stage: A stage in the development of a finfish or shellfish, e.g. egg, embryo, larva, leptocephalus, zoea, zooplankton stage, juvenile, adult, post-adult.

Migration path: The route along which fishes, such as salmon and eels, swim when moving to or from a spawning or feeding ground or nursery. Migration paths often cross international boundaries or boundaries between intranational management zones.

Nursery: That part of a wetland used by fishes for providing shelter, oxygen and food for the early developmental stages of their young. In some fishes, e.g. nest-guarding tilapias, the parent/s remain at the nursery to protect the young whereas in others the young are not protected by the parent/s except by virtue of the shelter provided by the habitat in which they are deposited, e.g. non-guarding catfishes.

The ability of wetlands to act as nurseries depends on the extent to which their natural cycles of inundation, tidal exchange, water temperature fluctuation and/or nutrient pulses are retained; Welcomme (1979) showed that 92% of the variation in catch from a wetland-recruited fishery could be explained by the recent flood history of the wetland.

Population: A group of fishes comprising members of the same species. A wetland community would comprise all the species of plants and animals that live in that wetland.

Significant proportion: In polar biogeographical regions a “significant proportion” may be 3-8 subspecies, species, families, life-history stages or species interactions; in temperate zones 15-20 subspecies, species, families, etc.; and in tropical areas 40 or more subspecies, species, families, etc, but these figures will vary between regions. A “significant proportion” of species includes all species and is not limited to those of economic interest. Some wetlands with a “significant proportion” of species may be marginal habitats for fish and may only contain a few fish species, even in tropical areas, e.g. the backwaters of mangrove swamps, cave lakes, the highly saline marginal pools of the Dead Sea. The potential of a degraded wetland to support a “significant proportion” of species if it were to be restored also needs to be taken into account. In areas where fish diversity is naturally low, e.g. at high latitudes, in recently glaciated areas or in marginal fish habitats, genetically-distinct infraspecific groups of fishes could also be counted.

Spawning ground: That part of a wetland used by fishes for courting, mating, gamete release, gamete fertilization and/or the release of the fertilized eggs, e.g. herring, shad, flounder, cockles, and many fishes in freshwater wetlands. The spawning ground may be part of a river course, a stream bed, inshore or deep water zone of a lake, floodplain, mangrove, saltmarsh, reed bed, estuary or the shallow edge of the sea. The freshwater outflow from a river may provide suitable spawning conditions on the adjacent marine coast.

Species: Naturally occurring populations of fishes that interbreed, or are capable of interbreeding, in the wild.

Species interaction: Exchanges of information or energy between species that are of particular interest or significance, e.g. symbiosis, commensalism, mutual resource defence, communal brooding, cuckoo behaviour, advanced parental care, social hunting, unusual predator-prey relationships, parasitism and hyperparasitism. Species interactions occur in all ecosystems but are particularly developed in species-rich climax communities, such as coral reefs and ancient lakes, where they are an important component of biodiversity.

Wetland benefits: The services that wetlands provide to people, e.g. water purification, supplies of potable water, fishes, plants, building materials and water for livestock, outdoor recreation and education.

Wetland values: The roles that wetlands play in natural ecosystem functioning, e.g. flood attenuation and control, maintenance of underground and surface water supplies, sediment trapping, erosion control, pollution abatement and provision of habitat.

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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)

RESOLUTION VI.3: REVIEW OF THE RAMSAR CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE AND THE ACCOMPANYING GUIDELINES

1. RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention “designate suitable wetlands within their territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” (Article 2.1 of the Convention), and that the 4th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Montreux, Switzerland, 1990), adopted Recommendation 4.2 on “Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance”, in order to provide guidance on the identification of sites for the List;
2. FURTHER RECALLING that Recommendation 4.2 adopted two Criteria of a general nature: i) Criteria for representative or unique wetlands; ii) General criteria based on plants and animals; and Specific criteria based on waterfowl, together with Guidelines for Application of the Criteria;
3. NOTING that Resolution VI.2 on “Adoption of Specific Criteria Based on Fish for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance”, discussed at Technical Session E of the present meeting, includes in its Annex detailed guidelines on application of the criteria based on fish, which are of great value, especially for developing countries;
4. FURTHER NOTING that identification of wetlands of international importance based on the three existing criteria would be facilitated by adoption of more detailed guidelines like those appended to the criteria based on fish;
5. AWARE that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) has suggested the need for a review of the existing criteria, even though Recommendation 4.2 recommended against further amendments to the existing criteria, so as to facilitate establishment of a definite basis for uniform application of the Convention;
6. FURTHER AWARE THAT the Strategic Plan for the Convention (Operational Objective 6.3) calls for the Ramsar criteria to be kept under review by the Conference of the Parties and the STRP;
7. NOTING that papers presented at Technical Session E also call for a review of the criteria and expansion of the guidelines; and
8. FURTHER NOTING the references in the Strategic Plan (Action 6.2.3) to “wetland types currently under-represented on the Ramsar List, and, in particular, when appropriate, coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds, and peatlands” and the content of Resolution VI.5 on subterranean karst wetlands, Recommendations 6.1 on peatlands and 6.7 on coral reefs and associated ecosystems, whose application may require additional criteria and guidelines;

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9. REQUESTS the STRP, in cooperation with relevant experts and partner organizations, and with the assistance of the Bureau, to review the existing criteria and revise the guidelines in the light of Operational Objective 6.3 of the Strategic Plan, of discussions at Technical Session E, and of recommendations on wetland types currently under-represented on the Ramsar List;
10. CALLS ON the STRP in their work to take into account cultural values and/or benefits derived from wetlands;
11. FURTHER REQUESTS that the results of this review be presented to the Standing Committee and submitted for consideration and possible approval to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and
12. DIRECTS the STRP to consider the feasibility of designating Ramsar sites on the basis of important natural hydrological functions, such as groundwater recharge or water quality improvement.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.4: ADOPTION OF POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR OPERATION OF THE SPECIFIC CRITERIA BASED ON WATERFOWL

1. REAFFIRMING the particular ecological values of waterfowl in the identification of internationally important wetlands, as expressed by both the Convention and subsequent resolutions and recommendations of the Conference of the Parties;
2. RECOGNIZING the many Ramsar sites which are of importance to waterfowl, and the continuing need for reliable information to underpin the application of Criterion 3(c);
3. RECALLING Resolution 5.9 which, *inter alia*, called for the regular updating of international population estimates for waterfowl as the basis of the application of Criterion 3(c), and which further requested IWRB (now Wetlands International) to bring revised estimates to each future meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
4. AWARE of Technical Workshops coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the UK, the National Environmental Research Institute in Denmark, and Wetlands International to agree timetables for the revision of waterfowl population estimates in the Western Palearctic and East Atlantic Flyway, the conclusions of which were submitted to Technical Session E of the present meeting, and in particular aware of the need to avoid short-term changes in standard 1% thresholds given their value as “bench-marks”, against which sites of possible international importance can be assessed;
5. CONSCIOUS of the need for close technical coordination between the Ramsar Convention and the Bonn Convention’s Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, and also with other international treaties and agreements, to ensure consistency in the use of international waterfowl population estimates and 1% thresholds; and
6. NOTING Wetlands International’s draft report summarizing revised population estimates and 1% thresholds prepared for the present meeting of the Conference of the Parties in response to Resolution 5.9;

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7. URGES Wetlands International to continue to develop the International Waterfowl Census and to enhance its global coverage as an important basis for the application of Ramsar Criterion 3(c);
8. ENCOURAGES Wetlands International, using its network of Waterbird Specialist Groups, to work with the Ramsar Bureau, Contracting Parties, and other international treaties in order to review and keep up to date waterfowl population estimates and 1% thresholds, in particular giving priority to the assessment of the sizes of those populations for which no reliable population estimate or 1% threshold currently exists, and to report

back the results of such activity to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

9. AGREES that unless waterfowl populations are poorly known or are known to be rapidly changing, 1% threshold levels should be revised not more frequently than every third ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and
10. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to use these estimates and thresholds, upon their publication, as a basis for designation of sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance in the succeeding three triennia.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.5: INCLUSION OF SUBTERRANEAN KARST WETLANDS AS A WETLAND TYPE UNDER THE RAMSAR CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

1. RECALLING that the Preamble to the Convention recognizes the “fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna”;
2. FURTHER RECALLING that for the purpose of the Convention, Article 1.1 recognizes wetlands as areas with “water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt...”;
3. AWARE that Article 2.2 of the Convention determines that wetlands should be selected for the List of Wetlands of International Importance on account of their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology;
4. RECOGNIZING that some subterranean cave and karst systems provide natural underground wetlands and constitute a resource of ecological, cultural, scientific, aesthetic and recreational value, providing an environment for specialist vertebrate and invertebrate species and in many cases being the groundwater source for otherwise arid areas;
5. RECALLING Recommendation 4.7 which calls for the use of the “wetland classification system” to describe “wetland type” when “presenting information for the Ramsar Database and as appropriate in other contexts”;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING the need for the Convention to continue to promote the use of a standardized wetland classification system; and
7. NOTING that the current wetland classification as provided in Annex 2B to Recommendation 4.7 does not include subterranean karst or cave wetlands;

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8. DECIDES that subterranean karst and cave hydrological systems shall be added to the Ramsar wetland classification system; and
9. URGES Contracting Parties to assess the significance of karst and cave wetland systems within their territories and to consider their designation for the List.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.6: THE WETLAND CONSERVATION FUND

1. RECALLING Resolution 4.3 establishing the Wetland Conservation Fund (WCF), and Resolution 5.8 on future funding and operation of the WCF;
2. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION that since its inception the WCF has provided assistance to 55 projects in 41 developing countries for a total amount of SFR 1,668,545;
3. EXPRESSING its appreciation to the Contracting Parties and partner organizations that have made voluntary contributions to complement the core budget allocation to the WCF, and to IUCN and Wetlands International for their assistance to the Bureau in the technical review of projects submitted to the WCF;
4. AWARE that the level of funding at the disposal of the WCF has not been sufficient to fund many of the projects that have been submitted to the Fund and that a renewed effort is required in line with the provisions of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 to attract more contributions to the Fund;
5. CONVINCED of the important role that such a small grants mechanism would continue to play in support of activities in the field of wetland conservation and wise use that normally, because of the amount of funding involved, cannot be considered by most multilateral and bilateral funding agencies;
6. FURTHER AWARE that such a small grants mechanism, in order to be effective, has to be administered in a flexible and rapid manner; and
7. CONSIDERING that funding from the WCF should be available to all Contracting Parties eligible for receiving official development assistance (ODA) or official aid, since they may also require external funding for meeting their obligations under the Convention;

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8. DECIDES:
 - (a) to rename the Fund the “Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (Ramsar SGF)”, so as to convey the true nature and purpose of this funding mechanism;
 - (b) that all countries on the List of Aid Recipients established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shall be eligible for receiving assistance from the Ramsar SGF;

9. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee to review the functioning of the Fund, including the mechanisms for deciding on grant allocations, and to implement any changes in functioning which it considers necessary;
10. REITERATES its conviction expressed in Resolution 5.8 that the level of resources available to the Ramsar SGF should be increased to at least US\$ 1 million annually;
11. REQUESTS the Secretary General to produce appropriate promotional materials and to embark upon an active fundraising campaign to obtain that minimum level of funding; and
12. INVITES Contracting Parties, partner organizations and non-governmental organizations to support the fundraising efforts of the Secretary General for this purpose, and those in a position to do so to contribute generously to the Fund.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.7: THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL

1. RECALLING the establishment by Resolution 5.5 of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), made up of members with appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, appointed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), but acting on an individual basis and not as representatives of their country of origin;
2. NOTING that, at its 14th Meeting in Gland, Switzerland, in October 1993, the Ramsar Standing Committee, on the basis of proposals from Contracting Parties and with due regard for equitable representation of each region, appointed the seven members of the STRP to advise the COP, the Standing Committee, and the Bureau for the period up to the end of the 6th Meeting of the COP;
3. FURTHER NOTING that the Standing Committee, after review of the tasks enumerated in Resolution 5.5, requested the STRP to concentrate on three specific items, namely:
 - a) review of the Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance and especially the establishment of criteria and guidelines on the importance of wetlands for fishes, both as regards biodiversity and fishery yields, as called for in Recommendation 5.9;
 - b) definition of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character” in relation to wetlands designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, as called for in Recommendation 5.2; and
 - c) review of the application of the Montreux Record, as called for in Resolution 5.4;
4. THANKING the members of the STRP for their contributions since the 5th Meeting of the COP on the above three subjects and on other scientific and technical issues important for implementation of the Ramsar Convention; and
5. TAKING NOTE of the views of outgoing members of the STRP, expressed in the STRP report, on the tasks which the Panel might perform for the Convention, notably in relation to technical review of projects submitted to the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (Ramsar SGF), continuing review of the Criteria for the Identification of Wetlands of International Importance, and operation of the Montreux Record and Management Guidance Procedure;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. REAFFIRMS the terms of Resolution 5.5 with the following modifications:
 - a) alternate members shall be appointed from each region by the same process as for STRP members, in order to ensure that the views of each region are expressed at each meeting of the STRP should the member from that region be unavailable.

Alternate members shall only attend meetings if the appointed member is unable to attend in person, but shall be consulted on all STRP matters and receive copies of all relevant correspondence and STRP mailings;

- b) the STRP will be supported by a network that shall provide inputs, as requested. This network shall include experts proposed by the Contracting Parties and will work through correspondence (including fax and E-mail);
- 7. EMPHASIZES the value of participation by STRP members in meetings of the COP and Standing Committee, and requests Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Bureau to do their utmost to secure any additional funding which might be necessary;
- 8. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its annual meeting, to define the principal tasks for the STRP in the coming year, taking into account the views expressed and priorities established by the Contracting Parties at the previous meeting of the COP;
- 9. INVITES the STRP to establish close working relations with the Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other similar bodies which advise other environment-related conventions; and
- 10. DECIDES that the members and alternate members of the STRP from the close of the 6th Meeting of the COP until the end of the 7th Meeting of the COP shall be those recommended by the Standing Committee on the basis of proposals submitted by Contracting Parties to its 16th Meeting in Brisbane in September 1995, as follows:

Members

Africa:	Yaa NTIAMOA-BAIDU (Ghana)
Asia:	Makoto KOMODA (Japan)
Eastern Europe:	Mihály VEGH (Hungary)
Neotropics:	Roberto SCHLATTER (Chile)
North America:	Allan SMITH (Canada)
Oceania:	Keith THOMPSON (New Zealand)
Western Europe:	François LETOURNEUX (France)

Alternate Members

Africa:	Aboubacar AWAISS (Niger)
Asia:	Chaman Lai TRISAL (India)
Eastern Europe:	Mikulas LISICKY (Slovakia)
Neotropics:	Peter BACON (Trinidad and Tobago)
North America:	Mauricio CERVANTES ABREGO (Mexico)
Oceania:	Max FINLAYSON (Australia)
Western Europe:	Palle Uhd JEPSEN (Denmark)

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.8: SECRETARY GENERAL MATTERS

1. RECALLING the Resolution on Secretariat Matters of the 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Regina, Canada, 1987), creating the position of the Head of the Bureau, the Secretary General;
2. FURTHER RECALLING the decision of the 4th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Montreux, Switzerland, 1990), which defined the responsibilities of the Secretary General;
3. AWARE of the fact that the legal personality of the Ramsar Convention is vested in IUCN - The World Conservation Union, and that IUCN provides a number of administrative services to the Convention in addition to its technical expertise;
4. NOTING the delegation of authority to the Secretary General from the Director General of IUCN with respect to financial and budgetary matters, personnel management, and facility management; and
5. EMPHASIZING the leading and supervisory role of the Secretary General over the Ramsar Bureau in serving and servicing the Contracting Parties;

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6. PAYS TRIBUTE to the commitment and the remarkable contribution to the development of the Convention of the first Secretary General, Mr Daniel Navid, over the past 15 years;
7. EXPRESSES its support for the action taken by the Chair and members of the Standing Committee, following the resignation of Mr Navid, to appoint an Interim Secretary General and to develop procedures for the appointment of a new Secretary General;
8. EXPRESSES its appreciation of the important and effective personal role played by the Chair of the Standing Committee, Ms Louise Lakos (Hungary), in ensuring a smooth transition;
9. EXPRESSES special thanks to the Interim Secretary General, Mr James McCuaig, for his invaluable help and services over the period January-July 1995;
10. GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES the offer of the Canadian Wildlife Service to release Mr McCuaig to perform the duties of Interim Secretary General;
11. RECORDS its thanks to IUCN for providing extra services in a very efficient manner in connection with the selection of the new Secretary General; and

12. WELCOMES the new Secretary General, Mr Delmar Blasco, and assures him of its endorsement, wishing him at the same time success in his performance in the best interests of the 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)

RESOLUTION VI.9: COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. RECALLING the terms of the Kushiro Statement approved under Resolution 5.1, which notes that “it will be natural for the Ramsar Convention to work closely with the Convention on Biological Diversity and to continue to play the leading role in the conservation of wetland biodiversity”, and calls for active cooperation between the Secretariats of the two Conventions;
2. EMPHASIZING that wetland diversity is an important element of global biological diversity;
3. REAFFIRMING the need to make best use of scarce resources by promoting synergy between the work of environment-related conventions, and to avoid duplication of work;
4. WELCOMING the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention Bureau and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed on 19 January 1996;
5. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the growing tendency for states which are Contracting Parties to both the Wetland and Biological Diversity Conventions to coordinate their implementation of both conventions and their positions at meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the two Conventions;
6. TAKING NOTE of Decision II/13 of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on “Cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions” which invites “the governing bodies of such conventions and other international legal instruments related to biological diversity to consider at their next meetings their possible contribution to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Convention”;
7. REFERRING to Action 7.2.3 of the Ramsar Convention’s Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which calls on Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Bureau and partner organizations to “strengthen cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular as regards inclusion of wetland concerns in national biodiversity strategies, and planning and execution of projects affecting wetlands”; and
8. TAKING ACCOUNT of the discussions on cooperation between the Wetland and Biological Diversity Conventions at Technical Session C of the present meeting;

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9. REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau to give priority in its programme of work to the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

10. ENCOURAGES the Administrative Authorities of the Ramsar Convention in each Contracting Party to contribute actively to achieving the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity by ensuring that wetland biodiversity components are included into the plans, programmes or strategies, and specific projects elaborated at the national level in response to the requirements of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
11. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to exchange information, cooperate and coordinate activities with the Convention on Biological Diversity's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), and to report, through the Standing Committee, to the Conference of the Parties on the results of such actions;
12. WELCOMES the invitation to consider the Ramsar Convention's contribution to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
13. INVITES Contracting Parties to strengthen coordination of their approach to the two Conventions, so that Ramsar can contribute in the field of wetlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity's broader work on conservation of global biological diversity; and
14. INVITES the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Argentina from 4 to 15 November 1996, to include in its agenda a report (by the Standing Committee or Bureau) on progress achieved and problems encountered in implementation of the Ramsar Convention for conservation of wetland biodiversity, thus noting the complementarity of interests of the two Conventions.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.10: COOPERATION WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) AND ITS IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES: THE WORLD BANK, UNDP AND UNEP

1. NOTING that the four focal areas of the Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) adopted in 1995 are: biological diversity, climate change, international waters and ozone layer depletion, the first three of which have a direct bearing on wetlands;
2. WELCOMING the reference in the chapter of the GEF's Operational Strategy on International Waters to the possibility of cooperation with the Ramsar Convention, and noting that, in contrast to the other three focal areas, there is no global convention dealing specifically with international waters issues as defined by the GEF Strategy;
3. CONSCIOUS of the need to obtain funds for developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition, so that they can fulfil their obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and therefore welcoming the principle of appointing a Ramsar Bureau Development Assistance Officer, whose main role will be to liaise with the GEF and other funding agencies, in order to assist such countries in the search for funds;
4. WELCOMING the links already established by the Ramsar Bureau with the GEF Secretariat and the GEF implementing agencies, the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP;
5. REFERRING to Action 7.4.3 of the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which calls on the Ramsar Bureau to "maintain close working relations with multilateral development assistance agencies relating to project screening, development, and evaluation, notably the World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP, in particular as partners in the Global Environment Facility (GEF)";
6. TAKING ACCOUNT of the discussions on cooperation between Ramsar and the GEF implementing agencies at Technical Session C of the present Meeting; and
7. NOTING WITH APPROVAL the willingness of the GEF, expressed in Technical Session C, to consider funding projects related to conservation and wise use of wetlands, submitted by eligible Contracting Parties in the relevant GEF focal areas;

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8. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau to extend and deepen its ongoing cooperation with the GEF Secretariat and the GEF implementing agencies: the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP;
9. DIRECTS the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), under the guidance of the Standing Committee, to exchange information and cooperate with the GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and to report on the results of such actions, through the Standing Committee, to the Conference of the Parties;

10. INVITES Contracting Parties at national level to coordinate their approach to Ramsar and GEF; and
11. CALLS upon the GEF to provide direct support to eligible Ramsar Contracting Parties, in order to assist them in the implementation, in their own territories, of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.11: CONSOLIDATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. NOTING that no less than 72 recommendations and 18 resolutions have been adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties prior to its 6th Meeting in Brisbane and that more have been adopted by this meeting;
2. AWARE of the significant effort that has been contributed to the periodic compilation of such recommendations and resolutions as reference material for use by the Contracting Parties;
3. RECOGNIZING the need for a consolidated version of recommendations and resolutions dealing with the same matter, which were adopted at successive meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
4. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that such a thematic consolidation could significantly enhance awareness and understanding of the contents, commitments, historical context and potential gaps or overlaps in these documents, and, therefore, could significantly contribute to implementation of the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002; and
5. NOTING that *The Ramsar Convention Manual* and the publication entitled *The Legal Development of the Ramsar Convention*, released in 1994 and 1995 respectively by the Ramsar Bureau, serve as valuable references for such consolidation;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. DECIDES that a thematic consolidation of Ramsar recommendations and resolutions, dealing with the subjects listed in the Annex to the present resolution and other themes as may be appropriate, up to and including those adopted by the present meeting of the Conference, should be prepared;
7. INSTRUCTS the Bureau to produce, in consultation with the STRP and other legal experts as appropriate, a consolidated version of Ramsar recommendations and resolutions for consideration by the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties for adoption as official documentation of the Convention; and
8. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to follow up and review the consolidation process.

Annex to Resolution VI.11

SUBJECTS FOR CONSOLIDATION OF RAMSAR RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following subjects are to be considered when preparing thematic consolidation of the recommendations and resolutions of the six Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties held between 1980 (Cagliari, Italy) and 1996 (Brisbane, Australia):

- (a) Criteria and Guidelines for identifying Wetlands of International Importance;
- (b) Definitions, Guidelines and Additional Guidance for the Wise Use concept;
- (c) Definitions and Guidelines for identifying, reporting and monitoring change in ecological character at listed Ramsar sites and other wetlands;
- (d) Guidelines for Management Planning (including wetland zonation) at listed Ramsar sites and other wetlands;
- (e) Relationship between the Convention and the Development Assistance community, including multi-lateral development banks, the Global Environment Facility and bilateral development aid programmes;
- (f) Operational instructions and mandates for bodies of the Convention such as the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and the Ramsar Bureau; and
- (g) Operating procedures and guidance for the implementing mechanisms of the Convention such as the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use and the Montreux Record.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

**RESOLUTION VI.12: NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORIES AND
CANDIDATE SITES FOR LISTING**

1. RECALLING Recommendation 4.6 and Resolution 5.3, which encourage the establishment of national wetland inventories showing, in particular, those wetlands which are of international importance according to the criteria adopted by the Conference of the Parties;
2. NOTING the value of comprehensive inventories of wetland resources as an aid to implementing the wise use obligation under the Convention; and
3. NOTING ALSO the value of recognition of those sites which may be regarded as candidates for listing under the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

4. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, in establishing and maintaining national scientific inventories of wetlands, to include all wetlands; and
5. URGES each Contracting Party to recognize officially its identified sites meeting the criteria approved by 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)

RESOLUTION VI.13: SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION ON SITES DESIGNATED FOR THE RAMSAR LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

1. RECALLING Article 3.2 of the Convention, which requires information on changes or likely changes to listed wetlands to be passed without delay to the Bureau;
2. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 5.3 which requests Contracting Parties to submit completed information sheets for listed sites, including *inter alia* information on disturbances and threats which may affect the site or its surroundings;
3. NOTING with appreciation the analysis presented to the present meeting by Wetlands International on data held in the Ramsar Database;
4. CONCERNED at reports submitted to the present meeting that maps and descriptions submitted by Contracting Parties are often of inadequate quality;
5. CONVINCED that the effective operation of the Convention requires the submission of maps of listed wetlands and of descriptions, using the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands and the Classification System for Wetland Type approved under Recommendation 4.7 and amended by Resolution VI.5; and
6. FURTHER NOTING that data held in the Ramsar Database do not as yet allow conclusions to be drawn on the composition of different types of threats facing listed sites, or comparisons between the position of listed and unlisted sites;

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7. URGES Contracting Parties to give priority to providing the Bureau by 31 December 1997 with maps and completed Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands for all sites designated for the Ramsar List, and to revise the data provided at least every six years (i.e. every second Meeting of the Conference) for monitoring purposes;
8. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to fulfil Article 3.2 of the Convention and Resolution 5.3; and
9. REQUESTS that Wetlands International develop further its analysis of threats to sites included in the Ramsar List, in particular with a view to presenting a summary of the frequency and distribution of different categories of threat affecting the sites, and drawing conclusions on the success or otherwise of Ramsar listing in reducing such threats.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.14: THE RAMSAR 25th ANNIVERSARY STATEMENT, THE STRATEGIC PLAN 1997-2002, AND THE BUREAU WORK PROGRAMME 1997-1999

1. RECALLING that the text of the Convention on Wetlands was adopted 25 years ago in the Iranian city of Ramsar;
2. RECOGNIZING that wetlands are an essential component of the Earth's natural systems and that their hydrological and ecological functions support local human populations and development, and maintenance of biodiversity;
3. CONCERNED that there has been a significant loss and degradation of wetlands with the consequent reduction in global biodiversity, and that there are serious ongoing and impending threats to many remaining wetlands;
4. APPRECIATING the critical importance of cultural heritage, local practices and indigenous knowledge and that local communities therefore have an important role to play in the wise use and conservation of wetlands;
5. CONSIDERING that it is appropriate for the present meeting to mark the 25th anniversary by the approval of a Statement reviewing the achievements of the Convention in its first quarter of a century and indicating its orientations for the 21st century;
6. NOTING the instructions of the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, Japan, 1993) to the Standing Committee, through its Resolution 5.1, to "prepare strategic plans for the following two triennia for presentation at the 6th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties";
7. AWARE that the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 has been prepared by the Standing Committee in consultation with the Contracting Parties and non-governmental partners;
8. REITERATING that the implementation of the Convention is a partnership between the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the Bureau on the one hand, and numerous partners in the international community, including the other environment-related Conventions, and national and international non-governmental organizations on the other hand;
9. FURTHER NOTING the desire of many parties to rename the Ramsar "Monitoring Procedure" to reflect more accurately its true function;
10. FURTHER RECALLING the function of the Standing Committee to supervise the conduct of the Bureau's programmes; and
11. STRESSING the importance of linking the Bureau's triennial work programme to the triennial budget;

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12. ADOPTS the “Ramsar 25th Anniversary Statement”;
13. APPROVES the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 as the basis for the implementation of the Convention;
14. DECIDES to rename the Ramsar “Monitoring Procedure” the “Ramsar Management Guidance Procedure”;
15. ADOPTS the Bureau Work Programme 1997-1999.

[Note: the “25th Anniversary Statement,” the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, and the Bureau Work Programme 1997-1999 are published as separate documents within the Conference Proceedings.]

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.15: AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE AS OF THE 7th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. NOTING the need to bring the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention in line with the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Parties under other more recent Conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

2. DECIDES to replace the present Rule 2 (2) by the following text: “Any body or agency, national or international, whether governmental or non-governmental, qualified in fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, which has informed the Bureau of its wish to be represented at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, may be represented at the meeting by Observers, unless at least one-third of the Parties present at the meeting object”;
3. DECIDES to replace the present Rule 2 (6) by the following text: “Bodies or agencies desiring to be represented at the meeting by Observers shall submit the name of these Observers to the Convention Bureau at least one month prior to the opening of the meeting”; and
4. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to conduct a thorough review of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in the forthcoming triennium, with a view to proposing to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties a revised set of Rules of Procedure in harmony with those of other international environmental conventions.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.16: ACCESSION PROCEDURES

1. AWARE that Contracting Parties to the Convention “designate suitable wetlands within their territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” and that “the boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely described and delimited on a map” (Article 2.1);
2. RECALLING that “to facilitate accession to the Convention by an increasing number of States and, therefore, to simplify accession formalities”, Resolution 4.5 recommended that, provided a wetland is designated for the List at the time of signing the Convention without reservation as to ratification, or depositing an instrument of ratification or accession, the map and description of the listed site may be submitted to the Bureau later;
3. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION the increasing number of Contracting Parties to the Convention and the increasing number of additional wetlands designated for the List; and
4. RECALLING that Resolution 5.3 on “A Procedure for Initial Designation of Sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance” urged Contracting Parties to ensure that any new sites to be added to the List fulfill one or more of the criteria established by Recommendation 4.2 and urged Contracting Parties, in case of doubt, to enter into informal consultations with the Convention Bureau and its technical advisors prior to listing new sites; and further requested that, in addition to a map showing definitive site boundaries, a completed Information Sheet for Ramsar Wetlands be submitted to the Convention Bureau upon designation of a wetland for the List, giving particular attention to the sections on conservation measures, functions and values, and criteria for inclusion;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

5. DECIDES that, notwithstanding the provisions of Resolution 4.5, the boundaries of each listed wetland shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map by States at the time of signing the Convention without reservation as to ratification, ratifying, or acceding to the Convention;
6. FURTHER DECIDES that the boundaries of each additional site, designated subsequently by States for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map;
7. INVITES Contracting Parties to provide, at the time of designation of a wetland for the List, a completed Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, giving particular attention to the subjects mentioned in Resolution 5.3; and
8. REITERATES the invitation to States and Contracting Parties contained in Resolution 5.3 to enter, in case of doubt, into informal consultations with the Bureau and its technical advisors.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.17: FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

1. RECALLING the budgetary provisions established by Article 6, paragraphs 5 and 6, of the Convention;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING with appreciation the prompt payment by the majority of Contracting Parties of their contributions to the core budget of the Convention;
3. INVITING Contracting Parties that have not done so also to pay promptly their contributions in order to facilitate the work of the Convention and in particular the smooth financial running of the Convention Bureau;
4. NOTING with gratitude the additional financial contributions made by many Contracting Parties for activities undertaken under the Convention and the financial contributions also made for this purpose by intergovernmental institutions and non-governmental organizations; and
5. ACKNOWLEDGING with appreciation the effective financial and administrative services provided by IUCN - The World Conservation Union to the Ramsar Bureau;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. DECIDES that the Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 shall be applied in toto to the 1997-1999 triennium;
7. APPROVES the budget for the 1997-1999 triennium attached as Annex I;
8. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to this budget will be in line with the scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the United Nations budget already approved by the UN General Assembly for 1997 (Annex II) and yet to be approved for 1998 and 1999;
9. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to report to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on its further investigation into alternatives to the use of the United Nations scale of assessments as the basis for the calculation of annual contributions to the Convention budget, taking into consideration the need for an equitable burden sharing among the Parties and the situation in developing countries;
10. FURTHER DECIDES that:
 - a) the Ramsar Bureau shall establish a Reserve Fund to meet unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures, which shall not have implications for the core budget;

- b) the Fund's source of income shall be:
 - i) savings which result from limiting expenditures or efficiencies realized within the budget of the previous fiscal year;
 - ii) payment of Contracting Party subscriptions that had been written off as bad debts;
 - iii) interest earned on funds received, with the approval of the donor;
- c) the resources kept in the Fund should not be higher at any time than one-twelfth of the core budget of the current fiscal year;
- d) the Fund should be administered by the Secretary General under the guidance of the Subgroup on Finance as established by the Standing Committee; and

11. FURTHER DECIDES that:

- a) the Standing Committee shall establish a Subgroup on Finance, with a minimum of five and a maximum of seven members from different regions, and shall designate one of the members to act as Chair of the Subgroup;
- b) the Subgroup shall deal with all financial matters of the Convention and report and make recommendations on these matters to the Standing Committee;
- c) the Subgroup Chair, in consultation as appropriate with the Chair of the Standing Committee and, when so required, the Subgroup as a whole, shall provide guidance and advice to the Secretary General in the discharge of his/her duties in connection with the administration of the finances of the Convention (this shall include all issues related to the sourcing and use of funds in the Reserve Fund); and
- d) the Subgroup on Finance shall meet in anticipation of each Standing Committee meeting and prepare recommendations on all financial aspects that are submitted to the Standing Committee; otherwise, the Subgroup shall work by correspondence.

Annex I

CORE BUDGET 1997-1999

(costs in Swiss francs [000])

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<u>1. Staff Costs</u> (salaries and social charges)	1718	1796	1878
<u>2. Scientific and Technical Services</u>			
a) Ramsar Database	110	110	110
b) Management Guidance Procedure	0	0	0
<u>3. Travel on Official Business</u>	100	105	110
<u>4. Purchase/Maintenance of Equipment/ Office Supplies</u> (including depreciation)	30	30	30
<u>5. Administrative Services & Operating Costs</u>			
a) IUCN services: computer/finance/ occupancy/personnel administration	305	314	322
b) Operating Costs: fax/telephone/photocopy/ clerical help/hospitality/bank charges etc.	95	110	120
<u>6. Communications and Reporting</u>			
a) Publications/translation/mailing	130	150	155
b) Newsletter	30	30	30
<u>7. Standing Committee and Other Committees</u>			
a) Standing Committee delegate support	30	30	35
b) STRP members' support	20	20	20
c) Regional representatives' support	20	20	20
d) Standing Committee chair fund	0	0	0
<u>8. Conference of the Parties</u>			
a) Cost of the Conference	0	0	0
b) Conference delegate support	0	0	0
<u>9. Ramsar Small Grants Fund</u>	70	70	70
<u>10. Reserve Fund</u>	0	0	0
<u>Total Core Budget</u>	2658	2785	2900

Total for the 1997-1999 triennium: **SFR 8,343,000**

Annex II

CALCULATION OF MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS 1997

Note: Annual contributions relating to the budget for 1998 (SFR 2,785,000) and 1999 (SFR 2,900,000) will be calculated according to the scale for these two years to be adopted by the UN General Assembly.

MEMBER STATE	UN %	RAMSAR %	1997
ALBANIA	0.01	0.010694	284
ALGERIA	0.16	0.171111	4,548
ARGENTINA	0.48	0.513332	13,644
ARMENIA	0.05	0.053472	1,421
AUSTRALIA	1.48	1.582775	42,070
AUSTRIA	0.87	0.930415	24,730
BANGLADESH	0.01	0.010694	284
BELGIUM	1.01	1.080137	28,710
BOLIVIA	0.01	0.010694	284
BRAZIL	1.62	1.732497	46,050
BULGARIA	0.08	0.085555	2,274
BURKINA FASO	0.01	0.010694	284
CANADA	3.11	3.325966	88,404
CHAD	0.01	0.010694	284
CHILE	0.08	0.085555	2,274
CHINA	0.74	0.791387	21,035
COMOROS	0.01	0.010694	284
COSTA RICA	0.01	0.010694	284
COTE D'IVOIRE	0.01	0.010694	284
CROATIA	0.09	0.096250	2,558
CZECH REPUBLIC	0.25	0.267361	7,106
DENMARK	0.72	0.769999	20,467
ECUADOR	0.02	0.021389	569
EGYPT	0.08	0.085555	2,274
ESTONIA	0.04	0.042778	1,137
FINLAND	0.62	0.663054	17,624
FRANCE	6.42	6.865821	182,494
GABON	0.01	0.010694	284
GERMANY	9.06	9.689149	257,538
GHANA	0.01	0.010694	284
GREECE	0.38	0.406388	10,802
GUATEMALA	0.02	0.021389	569
GUINEA	0.01	0.010694	284
GUINEA-BISSAU	0.01	0.010694	284
HONDURAS	0.01	0.010694	284
HUNGARY	0.14	0.149722	3,980
ICELAND	0.03	0.032083	853
INDIA	0.31	0.331527	8,812
INDONESIA	0.14	0.149722	3,980
IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF	0.45	0.481249	12,792
IRELAND	0.21	0.224583	5,969
ITALY	5.25	5.614573	149,235

JAPAN	15.65	16.736775	444,863
JORDAN	0.01	0.010694	284
KENYA	0.01	0.010694	284
LATVIA	0.08	0.085555	2,274
LIECHTENSTEIN	0.01	0.010694	284
LITHUANIA	0.08	0.085555	2,274
MALAYSIA	0.14	0.149722	3,980
MALI	0.01	0.010694	284

MEMBER STATE	UN %	RAMSAR %	1997
MALTA	0.01	0.010694	284
MAURITANIA	0.01	0.010694	284
MEXICO	0.79	0.844860	22,456
MOROCCO	0.03	0.032083	853
NAMIBIA	0.01	0.010694	284
NEPAL	0.01	0.010694	284
NETHERLANDS	1.59	1.700414	45,197
NEW ZEALAND	0.24	0.256666	6,822
NIGER	0.01	0.010694	284
NORWAY	0.56	0.598888	15,918
PAKISTAN	0.06	0.064167	1,706
PANAMA	0.01	0.010694	284
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	0.01	0.010694	284
PARAGUAY	0.01	0.010694	284
PERU	0.06	0.064167	1,706
PHILIPPINES	0.06	0.064167	1,706
POLAND	0.33	0.352916	9,381
PORTUGAL	0.28	0.299444	7,959
ROMANIA	0.15	0.160416	4,264
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	4.27	4.566519	121,378
SENEGAL	0.01	0.010694	284
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	0.08	0.085555	2,274
SLOVENIA	0.07	0.074861	1,990
SOUTH AFRICA	0.32	0.342222	9,096
SPAIN	2.38	2.545273	67,653
SRI LANKA	0.01	0.010694	284
SURINAME	0.01	0.010694	284
SWEDEN	1.23	1.315414	34,964
SWITZERLAND	1.21	1.294025	34,395
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	0.01	0.010694	284
TOGO	0.01	0.010694	284
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	0.03	0.032083	853
TUNISIA	0.03	0.032083	853
TURKEY	0.38	0.406388	10,802
UGANDA	0.01	0.010694	284
UNITED KINGDOM	5.32	5.689434	151,225
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ¹	-----	-----	-----

¹ The contribution of the United States of America is not included in this list because of the US declaration at the Extraordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties (Regina, 1987) on Article 6, paragraph 6, of the Financial

URUGUAY	0.04	0.042778	1,137
VENEZUELA	0.33	0.352916	9,381
VIET NAM	0.01	0.010694	284
YUGOSLAVIA	0.10	0.106944	2,843
ZAIRE	0.01	0.010694	284
ZAMBIA	0.01	0.010694	284
OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ²	25.00	25.000000	664,507
TOTAL	95.13	100	2,658,000

Amendment to the Convention.

² Other contributions include the voluntary contribution of the United States of America.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.18: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RAMSAR WETLAND CONSERVATION AWARD

1. NOTING the achievements of the Convention over the past 25 years in promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and the many individuals, organizations and governments who have contributed significantly to this achievement; and
2. FURTHER NOTING the need to recognize and honour such contributions as a means of motivating greater and continued support for the Convention's cause in the future;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

3. DECIDES to establish the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award;
4. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to consider the financial implications of this decision and to investigate the operation of the Award, taking into account the following principles:
 - a) the Award shall be presented every three years on the occasion of each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - b) nominations for the Award shall be submitted to the Secretary General and the selection shall be made by the Standing Committee;
 - c) nominees may be individuals, organizations or government agencies; and
5. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, if possible, to arrange for the presentation of the Award for the first time at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1999 or, if this is not possible, to report to the 7th Meeting of the Conference.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.19: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

1. NOTING that, while wetlands provide a range of benefits to humankind, their values, both for conservation generally and economically, have not been communicated effectively to decision-makers, stakeholders, community leaders and the public at large, and that only a few programmes of education and public awareness (EPA) specifically in support of wetland conservation have been organized at either national or international level;
2. CONCERNED that initiatives which attempt to conserve wetlands, their biodiversity and their benefits for humankind without the participation of a wide range of people are unlikely to succeed;
3. AWARE that education and public awareness programmes are essential instruments for successful and sustainable wetland management, and are important tools in countering negative attitudes towards wetlands;
4. CONSCIOUS that those involved in the development and implementation of education and public awareness programmes for wetlands are often isolated and, hence, have limited opportunities to share and learn from one another;
5. RECALLING that a Specialist Group on Education and Public Awareness has already been established by Wetlands International, coordinated by the U.K.'s Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and incorporating the Wetland Link International programme of WWT, in response to these concerns, and that this Group has established linkages with like-minded individuals and institutions across the world; and
6. RECOGNIZING the importance of developing further linkages and programmes and a need to coordinate further between those groups involved in education and public awareness in order to facilitate implementation of elements of the Convention's Strategic Plan;

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7. AFFIRMS that, to implement effectively the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002, a concerted programme of education and public awareness should be organized and implemented at local, national, regional and global levels so as to increase the knowledge and understanding of wetland values and benefits and so develop action towards the conservation and sustainable management of wetland resources;
8. CALLS ON the Wetlands International Specialist Group on Education and Public Awareness, and other EPA networks operated by the partners, to provide leadership to this programme and act as expert advisory groups to the Ramsar Convention;
9. URGES that the Wetlands International Specialist Group and other specialist networks be asked to work with the Ramsar Bureau so as to:
 - a) develop and maintain an international network of experts on education and public awareness for wetlands;

- b) seek resources, undertake regionally appropriate projects and develop training opportunities which aim to improve the design, implementation and evaluation of education and public awareness campaigns;
 - c) assist the Ramsar Bureau in advising Contracting Parties on the application of education and public awareness programmes in support of national wetland and environmental policies through annual progress reports to the Standing Committee; and
10. URGES all Contracting Parties, partner organizations and interested groups and agencies to support this initiative.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.20: THANKS TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA

1. EXPRESSING its deepest appreciation for the generous support provided by the Australian authorities at all levels for the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
2. PAYING PARTICULAR TRIBUTE to the City of Brisbane, which has welcomed participants to the city and contributed so effectively to the meeting;
3. GRATEFUL to the Australian Government for its “Pledging Initiative” on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Convention, inviting special contributions for the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and
4. NOTING with appreciation the announcement made at the meeting by the Federal Government of Australia of the proposed designation of seven new sites for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance and the commitment to finalize the development of a Commonwealth Wetlands Policy;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

5. RECORDS its thanks and appreciation to its Australian hosts, in particular the Federal Government of Australia, the State of Queensland, the City of Brisbane, and the Australian non-governmental organizations;
6. ACKNOWLEDGES the significance of the financial contributions made by the Federal Government, the State Government of Queensland, Brisbane City Council and the Australian private sector towards the organization of the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
7. EXPRESSES its appreciation of Australia’s 25th Anniversary pledge towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan, which together with the pledges made by Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Ducks Unlimited, and the 19 national NGOs will increase the effectiveness of the Convention;
8. PAYS TRIBUTE to the success achieved in the promotion of education and public awareness of wetland values in Australia, which will guide the Convention’s work in this field during and after its twenty-fifth anniversary year;
9. WISHES the people, the State Governments, and the Federal Government of Australia every success in their continued quest to promote wider application of the Convention in Australia and on the world scene; and

10. EXPRESSES its appreciation for continuing Australian support for the Convention's world-wide activities.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.21: ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING ON THE STATUS OF WETLANDS

1. NOTING the various presentations during the present Conference concerning the difficulties associated with measuring and reporting on the state of wetland resources by Contracting Parties, and consistent with Action 6.1.3 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002;

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2. REQUESTS that, over the next triennium, the Bureau, in consultation with Contracting Parties:
 - a) establish a review process that would revise, if necessary and appropriate, the guidelines on preparing National Reports in time for the next Conference of Parties, with a view to examining the structure of the information presented in these regular reports to maximize their contribution to the ongoing assessment of wetlands; and
 - b) establish an agreed scientific process for assessing the state of wetland resources nationally, regionally and globally; and
3. RECOGNIZES the role that community groups and local NGOs can play in the process of the implementation of the Convention, and invites Parties to develop mechanisms by which NGOs may assist governments in achieving the Convention's mission.

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

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

RESOLUTION VI.22: CONSIDERATION OF OVERALL COST REDUCTION AND IN PARTICULAR OF POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF THE RAMSAR BUREAU AND ITS OPERATIONS

1. RECOGNIZING and appreciating the contribution and support given by Switzerland, the host country for the Ramsar Bureau, since the 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Regina, Canada, 1987);
2. APPRECIATING the extremely close relationship and positive support provided by IUCN - The World Conservation Union in delivering services to the Bureau;
3. CONCERNED at the increase in operational and staff costs of Bureau activities which are needed to ensure the adequate implementation of the Convention and the difficulties for the Contracting Parties to respond financially to meet these budgetary needs;
4. MINDFUL of the instruction given to the Bureau over the last three triennia by the Ramsar Standing Committee and the Contracting Parties to institute budgetary efficiencies to maximize the effectiveness of the Convention; and
5. NOTING the considerable and successful efforts by the Secretary General and the Bureau in recent months to identify and exploit opportunities for operational cost efficiencies and, wherever possible, cost reductions in the core budget operations of the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

6. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to undertake a general analysis of the ways and means by which overall Ramsar Bureau costs could be reduced, or extra-budgetary permanent contributions received; and
7. FURTHER DIRECTS the Standing Committee, with the assistance of the Bureau, and in close conjunction with IUCN, to undertake a specific analysis of any potential cost savings associated with possible relocation of the Ramsar Bureau, and to report on the results of both analyses at the next 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)

RESOLUTION VI.23: RAMSAR AND WATER

1. RECOGNIZING the important hydrological functions of wetlands, including groundwater recharge, water quality improvement and flood alleviation, and the inextricable link between water resources and wetlands;
2. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the paucity of hydrological data which exists for the determination and quantification of the hydrological functions of wetlands;
3. REALIZING the need for planning at the river basin scale which involves integration of water resource management and wetland conservation;
4. RECALLING the Themes for the Future paper from IUCN entitled “Reconciling water management and wetland conservation: a key challenge for Ramsar in the 21st century” presented in Plenary Session at the present meeting on 20 March 1996; and
5. FURTHER RECALLING the following Operational Objectives in the Strategic Plan 1997-2002:
 - 2.2 to integrate conservation and wise use of wetlands into decision-making on land use, groundwater management, catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning;
 - 2.4 to provide economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands for environmental planning purposes;
 - 2.7 to encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
 - 4.2 to identify training needs, particularly in developing countries, and to implement follow-up actions;
 - 6.3 to keep under review the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance;
 - 7.2 to strengthen and formalize linkages between Ramsar and other international and/or regional environmental conventions and agencies;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. EMPHASIZES the need to ensure that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel includes or has access to hydrological expertise and develops links with organizations with technical skills in hydrological science and management; and
7. CALLS on the Contracting Parties:
 - (a) to link with organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization, to support the development of hydrological monitoring networks on wetlands throughout the world, to ensure the availability of reliable data;

- (b) to encourage the study of traditional systems of water management to investigate their relevance to the concept of wise use of wetlands;
- (c) to encourage more studies of the economic value of water within wetlands, through dissemination of the forthcoming Convention publication on *Economic valuation of wetlands: guidelines for policy makers and planners*;
- (d) to ensure that National Ramsar Committees are involved in national water planning and the development of river basin management strategies;
- (e) to ensure that wetland users, as well as management authorities and technical experts, participate directly in the decision-making process;
- (f) to continue and strengthen support under Article 4.5 of the Convention for multi-disciplinary training, with a major focus on hydrological science and management;
- (g) to ensure, through partnerships with water related organisations such as the World Water Council, that the Ramsar Convention becomes an audible voice in water debates.