

Recommendation 7.1



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands

1. RECALLING Recommendation 6.1, which encouraged further cooperation on wise use, sustainable development, and conservation of global peatlands;
2. CONGRATULATING many organizations for their positive response and initiative, including the publication of *Management Guidelines for Forested Tropical Peatlands, with Special Reference to Southeast Asia* by the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, the International Peat Society *Statement on the Wise Use of Peatlands*, the International Mire Conservation Group in their ongoing development of *Wise Use Guidelines for Peatlands*, and Wetlands International and other organizations for numerous new projects developed since the 6th Meeting of the Ramsar Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1996 in support of national and regional peatland wise use and management guidelines, programs and policies;
3. RECALLING the Agenda 21 commitment for a well-considered balance between the economic and social development needs of nations in their use of natural resources, such as peatlands, and their goals for environmental conservation;
4. EXPRESSING CONCERN for the low level of global recognition of the implications of significant carbon loss due to peat fires and other human-induced factors throughout the world;
5. FULLY AWARE of the need to include all wetland carbon sinks and sequestration initiatives as key issues in the global discussion concerning the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
6. WELCOMING the increase in the number of designated Ramsar sites in many nations that include, or are dominated by, peatland ecosystems, thus responding to the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which has identified peatlands as an under-represented wetland type in the List of Wetlands of International Importance; and
7. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION the significant ongoing international interest in the government, private and environmental non-government sectors for enhanced promotion of the sustainable development, wise use and conservation of peatland ecosystems and their associated natural resources;

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8. CALLS ON Contracting Parties to give further priority to supporting the inventory and evaluation of peatlands of all types and, where appropriate, to designate additional peatland

ecosystems within their territories for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

9. URGES Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners, and other interested bodies to take immediate actions to improve awareness and understanding of the functions and values of the world's peatlands and to protect sites under particular risk, such as tropical and boreal peatlands;
10. ENDORSES the *Draft Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands* as annexed to this Recommendation and RECOMMENDS the cooperation of Contracting Parties and other interested bodies in further refining the Draft and in establishing funding for appropriate projects and activities in support of its Implementation Strategy;
11. INVITES the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel and Ramsar International Organization Partners to assist Contracting Parties in evaluating this *Action Plan*, once completed, with regard to development of:
 - i) additional guidelines for designation of peatlands as Ramsar sites;
 - ii) further national and regional sustainable development, wise use and management guidelines for peatlands;
 - iii) initiatives to transfer peatland development and restoration technology to developing nations and countries with economies in transition; and
 - iv) standardized and globally applicable classification of peatland types and their ecological characteristics;
12. CALLS UPON partners in this *Draft Global Action Plan* to report on progress with its further development, in particular in the Implementation Strategy and in establishing a potential Global Peatland Partnership (GPP), at the Millennium Wetland Event in Quebec, Canada, in August 2000 and to submit a revised Global Action Plan at Ramsar COP8 in 2002 for its consideration and possible adoption.

Annex

Draft Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands

Introduction

1. In March of 1996, in advance of COP6 of the Ramsar Convention, a series of partner agencies cooperated in organizing an *International Workshop on Global Mire and Peatland Conservation* (Rubec 1996). This was one in a series of international working meetings focused on drawing global attention to the need for action on peatland and mire sustainable development, wise use, conservation and management. These meetings include the Sixth Meeting of the International Mire Conservation Group (Moen 1995) and the Peatland Convention (Parkyn, Stoneman and Ingram 1997). Peatlands were subsequently recognized as an under-represented wetland type in the global network reflected in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar List). A variety of ongoing efforts by non-government organizations have identified potential elements of a Global Peatland Wise Use Action Plan, regional or national guidelines for the management of peatland ecosystems (such as Maltby 1995; Safford and Maltby 1998), and cooperation among potential partners.
2. At the 4th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (Buenos Aires, November 1998), it was apparent that carbon sequestration is emerging as an important mechanism to foster the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. This inherently must include the wise use of carbon resources found in peatlands and the potential implementation of a global trading mechanism for carbon credits. Peatlands have been identified as a potential component of the world's carbon sink and a valuable economic resource. International discussions in many sectors are underway to promote recognition of peatland types as a component linking the economic and environmental issues inherent in the Conventions on Climate Change, Wetlands, and Biological Diversity, and international trade issues.
3. Thus, it was proposed that issues such as climate change, carbon sinks, wise use, and sustainable management of peatlands form the elements of the 13th Global Biodiversity Forum Workshop on Peatlands held on 7-9 May 1999 in San José, Costa Rica. This Workshop was organized under the sponsorship of IUCN and numerous partner organizations. The Workshop reviewed the *Draft Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands*.
4. The proposed elements of this *Draft Global Action Plan for the Wise Use and Management of Peatlands* are based upon the recommendations for initiatives developed in previous international fora including:

1994	The <i>Trondheim Declaration</i> from the Sixth IMCG Symposium, Trondheim, Norway (Moen 1995).
1995	The <i>Edinburgh Declaration</i> developed at the International Peatlands Convention, Edinburgh, Scotland (Parkyn et al. 1997).
1996	A <i>Global Action Plan on Mire and Peatland Conservation</i> (Lindsay 1996) proposed during the International Workshop on Peatlands and Mire Conservation, Brisbane, Australia (Rubec 1996).

- 1996 Ramsar COP6 Recommendation 6.9 and Strategic Plan 1997-2002, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- 1997 Recommendations of the Joint IPS/IMCG Working Meeting, Surwold, Germany (Rubec 1997).
- 1998 The IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management report entitled *Management Guidelines for Forested Tropical Peatlands, with Special Reference to Southeast Asia* (Safford and Maltby 1998).

1999 Workshop Objectives

- 5. The objectives of the 7-9 May 1999 GBF13 Peatland Workshop were:
 - i) to review the status of initiatives promoting cooperation and development of a global peatland sustainable development, wise use and conservation strategy;
 - ii) to foster a global partnership of government, private sector and non-government agencies to implement such a strategy; and
 - iii) to explore mechanisms to support international cooperation on issues such as carbon sinks and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol under the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Action Plan Partners

- 6. The partners in a Global Peatland Action Plan may include (this is not a comprehensive list) many networks and organizations such as:
 - i) IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN/CEM);
 - ii) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and its Contracting Parties;
 - iii) International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG);
 - iv) Wetlands International;
 - v) International Peat Society (IPS);
 - vi) Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS);
 - vii) Global Environment Network; and
 - viii) Institute for Wetland Science and Policy Research (USA).

Key Questions and Opportunities

- 7. There have been various efforts to define peatland or mire action plans. Paraphrasing questions originally suggested by Lindsay (1995), the following six questions seem to serve the current situation globally:
 - i) What is the status of the global peatland and mire resource?
 - ii) How is this resource properly characterized ecologically and economically?
 - iii) How and why are peatlands currently used?
 - iv) Why should we use peatlands and mires sustainably?
 - v) How should peatlands and mires be conserved and managed wisely?
 - vi) What monitoring tools would we need to learn whether we are succeeding?
- 8. The *Global Peatland Action Plan* envisaged would focus on a series of “opportunities”, under each of which are now organized several recommendations for discussion purposes below. These recommendations are in general derived from those posed in the previous international

fora and publications listed in a previous section. This listing synthesizes some of the existing recommendations from many sources, presented in a series of eight opportunity themes below.

9. The Draft Action Plan thus has eight opportunities that could be addressed:
 1. Understanding peatland terminology;
 2. Global peatland and mire data base;
 3. Global peatland monitoring and awareness program;
 4. Understanding and standardizing wise use concepts;
 5. Using policy and legislative instruments;
 6. National and regional peatland management guidelines;
 7. Research and cooperative networks and centres of excellence; and
 8. Establishing program and research priorities.

Opportunity No. 1: Understanding peatland terminology

10. Develop a global understanding and standardization of peatland and mire terminology and classification consistent through several languages such as English, French, Spanish, Russian, Finnish and German.

Actions:

- 1.1 A series of informative publications should be produced for international distribution on the status of regional uses, inventory, and management of peatlands and mires throughout the world.
- 1.2 With the help of partner organizations such as IPS, IUCN, Wetlands International, IMCG, and other organizations and Ramsar Contracting Parties:
 - i) establish an effective communication network;
 - ii) establish targeted publications on peatland classification and terminology;
 - iii) establish an electronic bibliography of literature relevant to peatland wise use, sustainable development, management and conservation; and
 - iv) publish an up-to-date Peatland Glossary of Terms, ideally in several languages, providing the latest agreed upon definitions of terms which are relevant to peatland conservation.
- 1.3 IMCG, IPS and interested Partners should establish a Joint Working Group to bring together peatland, mire and peat terminology and work towards a joint publication on terminology.
- 1.4 The Joint Working Group should organize small international workshops or symposia on this theme at appropriate dates.
- 1.5 Partners should organize printing of publications such as a Glossary on Peat and Peatlands as special issues of existing sources including the *International Peat Journal*.
- 1.6 Partner should prepare a report on global mire types and mire regions.

- 1.7 Partners in a Global Peatland Action Plan should cooperate in organizing a workshop on peatland/mire evaluation models and systems with case studies for presentation at the Quebec Millennium Wetland Event in August 2000.

Opportunity No. 2: Global peatland and mire database

11. Establishment of a global data base on the ecological characteristics and distribution of peatlands and mires, including carbon storage, is essential.
12. Extensive information on global peatland distribution is outlined in several regional and global surveys. These include Lappalainen (1996) in *Global Peat Resources* produced by the International Peat Society and Lofröth and Moen (in prep.) in *European Mires: Distribution and Conservation Situation* by the International Mire Conservation Group and University of Trondheim, Norway. Wetlands International and the Ramsar Convention are also currently developing a global survey of wetland resources in cooperation with groups such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Global databases on carbon storage have evolved in several climate change projects but remain rudimentary and often incomplete.
13. The Ramsar Sites Database maintained by Wetlands International has descriptive information on almost 1000 Ramsar Sites globally. This is projected to increase to 2000 sites in the next decade. Many of these sites are peatlands. A gap analysis of the nature of peatlands identified in this database and possible future directions is needed.

Actions:

- 2.1 Those nations that have not yet identified biogeographic regions should consider initiating a program designed to generate such information, involving consultation with adjoining nations where appropriate. This is essential to allow data integration and synthesis in a standardized framework.
- 2.2 Ramsar Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the Ramsar Bureau, IPS and IMCG and other interested Partners should review the extent and quality of peatland survey around the world and identify those areas in need of further inventory.

Opportunity No. 3: Global peatland monitoring and awareness programme

14. Integration of global statistics and establishment of a Global Status and Trends Survey on peatland resource use, changes in ecological character, restoration and rehabilitation are needed. Such information is fundamental to reporting on and promoting awareness of peatland functions and values.

Actions:

- 3.1 A review of existing peatland ecosystem understanding should be carried out, with the specific objective of identifying priority areas for further research designed to assist in the maintenance of the ecological character of peatlands, including Ramsar sites.
- 3.2 A series of specific, peatland-related education and interpretation initiatives should be established, both internationally and nationally. Feasibility studies for peatland

ecosystems should be carried out by each Ramsar Contracting Party, with the support of expert non-government organizations on possible options and information available for:

- i) links to existing education programs and curricula;
- ii) educational and exhibition proposals which can bring greater understanding and appreciation of the benefits and value of local or regional peatland systems to local communities; and
- iii) the importance of peatland resources to national and global economic systems.

Opportunity No. 4: Understanding and standardizing wise use concepts

15. Synthesis of current understanding and consensus on wise use concepts for peatlands is needed, consistent with definitions and principles established under the Ramsar Convention. It is noteworthy that the IPS and IMCG are working on this issue. IPS has recently published a Statement on Wise Use in an article in its magazine *Peatlands International* (January 1999).

Actions:

- 4.1 Ramsar Contracting Parties should ensure that international mire and peatland sustainable development, wise use, management and conservation issues are included in discussions at, and the resolutions prepared for meetings of the Ramsar Convention and other international environmental treaties such as the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Desertification.
- 4.2 International conventions, agreements and regulations should be used effectively to support wise use and management of global peatland resources consistent with the United Nations Agenda 21 principles for sustainable development at the national level.

Opportunity No. 5: Using policy and legislative instruments

16. Development of national peatland policies consistent with sustainable development, wise use and conservation objectives are needed, defining clear goals and objectives and strategies for wise use. In addition, reviews at a national and international level of laws and institutions that could enhance sustainable peatland management and conservation measures should be considered.

Actions:

- 5.1 Review the present framework of national policies and regulations designed to ensure that peatland sustainable use and management are operating effectively and enhance these measures where there is national consensus that an insufficient network of protected peatland sites is present.
- 5.2 Partner agencies and organizations should proceed with development of global and national Peatland Sustainable Development, Wise Use and Management Action Plans and Guidelines. The overall objectives of such Action Plans should include:
 - i) promoting the sustainability of peatland and mire functions and values through the implementation of national objectives; and

- ii) facilitating peatland and mire commitments made by these nations through their implementation of international conventions, treaties, sustainable development assistance agreements and regulations.

Opportunity No. 6: National and regional peatland management guidelines

17. Development of peatland management systems, guidelines and models for implementation of a national or regional Action Plans is needed. The Commission on Ecosystem Management of IUCN has recently published a booklet on *Guidelines for Management of Tropical Forested Peatlands* (Safford and Maltby 1998). These Guidelines could serve as an example for application to other peatland types, nationally or regionally.

Actions:

- 6.1 Partners should prepare proposals for development assistance agencies to create and implement national and regional Peatland Action Plans, including Guidelines for Peatland Management. This should apply to all nations in which peatlands form a significant component of the landscape, including boreal bogs, coastal mangrove systems and tropical peat swamp forests. The *IUCN Guidelines for Management of Tropical Forested Peatlands* could be an example in this regard.

Opportunity No. 7: Research and cooperative networks and centres of excellence

18. Creation of peatland networks for research and program cooperation and Centres of Excellence are needed to foster joint project ventures and integration of effort among agencies, thus fostering a common sense of purpose.

Actions:

- 7.1 An international coordination office and function should be established to facilitate peatland sustainability, wise use of resources, management and conservation measures, to be housed with a major international agency. This should be funded and undertaken in cooperation with partner agencies and organizations and Contracting Parties to the Wetlands and Biodiversity Conventions that have significant peatland landscapes.
- 7.2 Further strengthening of international cooperation and information exchange between those organizations involved in peatland sustainable development, conservation and resource use issues should be actively supported.
- 7.3 Improved understanding and study of the biodiversity and ecological character of the world's peatlands and mires is needed through enhancement of the research capacity of university, industry and inter-governmental networks. This should include establishment of Centres of Excellence on Peatlands and significant expansion of training in peatland ecology, science and technology.

- 7.4 The Ramsar Convention should take a far more active leadership role in global peatland issues, in cooperation with stakeholder and expert organizations and networks such as the IPS, IMCG, IUCN and Wetlands International.
- 7.5 With the help of partner organizations such as IPS, IMCG, and other organizations and Ramsar Contracting Parties, a more effective global peatland communication network should be established, by:
- i) establishment of e-mail and Internet networks on peatlands; and
 - ii) identification of enhanced networks of peatland specialists who can provide guidance and advice about best practices to client agencies and governments on a project basis.
- 7.6 All agencies with interests in peatlands should actively participate in the Millennium Wetland Event, 6-12 August 2000, in cooperation with INTECOL, the Society of Wetland Scientists, IPS and IMCG to promote the wise use of global peatland resources.
- 7.7 An International Working Group should prepare a Discussion Paper and Guidelines for Sustainable Wise Use of Global Peatlands and Mires. Specialists such as the IPS and IMCG organizations should draft a proposed Table of Contents for this paper. Each organization should then take the lead on this mutually-agreed set of topics and write sections of the paper. These contributions should be edited into a joint paper to be published and distributed globally in cooperation with the Ramsar Convention and other partners.
- 7.8 Peatland organizations should have at least one joint meeting of invited participants and board members each year to focus on key issues of mutual interest. This would build upon the positive example and experience of the November 1997 IPS/IMCG Joint Workshop.
- 7.9 The IPS and IMCG should develop stronger information linkages with the Ramsar Convention, Wetlands International, IUCN Wetlands Program, Society of Wetland Scientists, INTECOL and other appropriate agencies or groups. This should be done through such means as exchange of newsletters on a regular basis.

Opportunity No. 8: Establishing programme and research priorities

19. Establishment of priorities for sustainable development, conservation, management, and wise use plans of peatlands at risk through cooperative scientific and management studies is needed. This will assist in future and advance planning to identify such sites on a global basis. In addition, partner agencies must promote and support research and technologies for topics such as peatland restoration, avoiding duplication of effort and maximization of available resources.
20. In November 1997, 59 peatland topics were identified in a Joint IPS/IMCG Meeting (see Rubec 1997) as key issues in global peatland management or for wise use or scientific research needs. Participants in that meeting ranked these topics in terms of relative priority for discussion. Of these 59 topics, twelve were chosen for discussion and recommendations development:

1. Peatland terminology;
2. Actions to protect peatlands and mires;
3. Climate impacts of greenhouse gases from utilized peatlands;
4. Wise use concept;
5. Why use mires?;
6. Tropical peatlands;
7. Recognizing variation in use/conservation and protection with respect to differences in biogeographical regions;
8. Information exchange, data acquisition and networking;
9. Peatland inventory and statistics;
10. Defining choices and values for peatland use;
11. Ecological processes and scientific information; and
12. Socio-economic effects and benefits of peat harvesting in rural areas.

Actions:

- 8.1 Take the necessary action to secure the long-term conservation of globally important peatlands and representative networks of peatland types that are recognized as threatened.
- 8.2 Take effective steps to accelerate the research, development and marketing of all natural growing media, including peat, through the provision of significant levels of funding for research.
- 8.3 Develop global mechanisms for the transfer of peatland sustainable development and restoration technology and expertise to developing nations and countries with economies in transition.
- 8.4 Develop effective national management guidelines for peatlands based on the research and expertise in countries with peatland forestry, energy, and horticultural industries have been in place for extended periods, as experience and examples for other nations considering peatland resource use programs at a national level.
- 8.5 Develop international and national consensus for peatland and mire research programmes applicable to agreed-upon priorities through the cooperation of government, academia, industry and non-government organizations.

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Recommendation 7.2



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999

Small Island Developing States, island wetland ecosystems, and the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING Recommendation 6.18 relating to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Pacific Islands region, and in particular its reference to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
2. NOTING General Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which states that *"a special effort will be made to encourage Small Island Developing States to join [the Convention] in recognition of their special needs and significant wetlands, including coral reefs, sea-grass beds and mangroves?"*;
3. CONSCIOUS of the close dependence of people in small island states on wetlands due to the small size of the concerned areas, the vulnerable character of island ecosystems, and, because of their geographic isolation, the high level of endemism in these countries;
4. CONGRATULATING the Ramsar Bureau, which with assistance from Wetlands International - Oceania, prepared and distributed a leaflet for the Small Island Developing States on the relevance and benefits of the Ramsar Convention to the special circumstances which prevail in these countries;
5. AWARE that despite the efforts to encourage accession, and the continuing threats to their coastal and freshwater wetlands, relatively few of the world's Small Island Developing States have joined the Ramsar Convention;
6. AWARE ALSO of the resource constraints, both human and financial, within which the Small Island Developing States must operate in implementing environmental conventions and the desirability of harmonising and streamlining this implementation where appropriate;
7. RECOGNIZING the recommendations contained in the report prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, *"Feasibility study for a harmonised information management infrastructure for the biodiversity-related conventions"*, and in particular the recommendations relating to streamlining of national reporting procedures (Resolution VII.4);
8. ACKNOWLEDGING the support and assistance provided to the Small Island Developing States by bilateral and multilateral donors for integrated environmental management, and the important role which regional organizations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme in the Oceania region and the Indian Ocean Commission play in facilitating these activities;

9. NOTING WITH APPROVAL the partnership between the Ramsar Administrative Authority of Australia and Wetlands International under which technical and training support is provided to the Small Island Developing States of Oceania for implementing the wise use of wetlands principles of the Convention;
10. CONSCIOUS OF and APPLAUDING the Wetlands for the Future programme supported by the United States of America and administered by the Ramsar Bureau, which provides support for training initiatives for the Contracting Parties of the Neotropics, including the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean;
11. FURTHER RECALLING that under the Joint Work Plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention (Resolution VII.4), priority is to be given to assisting the Small Island Developing States with integrated approaches to implementation of the two Conventions;
12. CONGRATULATING the Government of New Zealand for hosting the first regional meeting for the Oceania Region in December 1998 and WELCOMING the recommendations from that meeting; and
13. RECALLING Recommendation 6.6 which urged Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners, and the Ramsar Bureau to seek support for the establishment and maintenance of regionally-based Ramsar liaison officers;

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14. CALLS UPON the Governments of the following Small Island Developing States to consider, as a matter of priority, accession to the Ramsar Convention in order to allow the special circumstances and needs of these States to be better addressed by the Convention in the future: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cape Verde, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Grenada, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; together with the Cook Islands and Niue (Ramsar site nomination needed);
15. URGES all Contracting Parties with small island wetland ecosystems within their territory to give special attention to ensuring the application of the Convention for these areas in recognition of their fragility and special management needs, and, where appropriate, to consider the inclusion of those wetlands in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
16. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States with a view to identifying a range of priority actions which the Ramsar Bureau should pursue, both independently and in partnership with other convention secretariats, regional organizations and programmes, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and donors;
17. FURTHER REQUESTS, in response to the above review of the Barbados Programme of Action by the Standing Committee, that the Ramsar Bureau, with the Convention's International Organization Partners, investigate, and develop as appropriate, Memoranda of Cooperation and joint plans of actions with the established programmes and

organizations that are facilitating integrated environment management in the Small Island Developing States;

18. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Bureau, as availability of funds and human resources allow, to continue its energetic efforts to promote harmonised implementation of the international environment conventions (Resolution VII.4) through its various Memoranda of Cooperation and Understanding and associated joint work plans, and to continue supporting the implementation of the recommendations from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre report, "*Feasibility study for a harmonised information management infrastructure for the biodiversity-related conventions*", since both of these activities will assist in addressing the resources constraints faced by the Small Island Developing States;
19. STRONGLY ENDORSES the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Resolution VII.4), noting the direct and urgent interests which the Small Island Developing States have in the impacts of climate change and the important roles of wetlands in addressing these threats;
20. ALSO CALLS UPON the bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies to continue their support and, as appropriate, to increase this support, for wetland-related projects in the Small Island Developing States and to give priority to pilot testing in these countries the various guidelines adopted by this Conference;
21. INVITES other Contracting Parties and donor organizations to follow the examples of Australia (paragraph 9 above) and the United States of America (paragraph 10) to develop mechanisms for providing direct technical and training support for the Small Island Developing States, including support for a small island state internship programme and a specialist position on small island issues within the Ramsar Bureau, as a permanent post; and
22. STRONGLY URGES Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and the Ramsar Bureau to strengthen their efforts towards the establishment and maintenance of regionally-based Ramsar liaison officers, as expressed at the first Oceania regional meeting.

Recommendation 7.3



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
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Multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region

1. RECALLING Article 5 of the Ramsar Convention, which calls for international consultation and coordination in the conservation and management of shared wetland resources;
2. NOTING Recommendation 4.4, which calls for networks of wetland reserves to be established, and Recommendation 4.12, which recognises the flyway concept for the conservation of wetland bird species;
3. NOTING Action 7.2.5 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 to “enhance Ramsar’s contribution to international cooperation on shared wetland species, notably through cooperative arrangements with the Convention on Migratory Species, flyway agreements, networks and other mechanisms dealing with migratory species”;
4. RECALLING the *Kushiro Initiative* of December 1994, which called for enhanced mechanisms for collaborative action to conserve waterbird species in the Asia-Pacific region, establishment of a network of sites critical for waterbird conservation, and sustainable management of waterbirds, which also recommended the development of a regional multilateral waterbird agreement;
5. NOTING that pursuant to Recommendation 6.4 (the *Brisbane Initiative*) of the 6th Conference of the Contracting Parties, an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network has been established and continues to expand;
6. FURTHER NOTING the development of the North East Asian Crane Site Network and the Anatidae Site Network in the East Asian Flyway;
7. RECALLING that the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000* calls for development of an Asia-Pacific multilateral migratory waterbird conservation agreement;
8. NOTING the *Guidelines on international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention*, adopted at this Conference of Contracting Parties (Resolution VII.19);
9. ACKNOWLEDGING that Resolution 5.4 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) lists development of Regional Agreements as a key priority and calls for continued support for the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000*;

10. AWARE of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramsar Bureau and the CMS Secretariat, through which they have agreed to intensify their cooperation in implementation of both conventions, as well as Agreements concluded under CMS;
11. CONVINCED of the need for a concerted multilateral approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds within each of the major flyways of the globe;
12. RECOGNISING the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement as a useful model for international cooperation in the conservation of migratory waterbird species; and
13. CONVINCED that the Ramsar Convention, through the cooperative actions of its Contracting Parties along the major flyways, can facilitate the development of a multilateral approach to waterbird conservation in the Asia-Pacific region;

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14. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to extend their support to the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy 1996-2000*, and to work toward having in place a secure and extended framework for international cooperation aimed at the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the Asia-Pacific region beyond 2000;
15. URGES Contracting Parties in the Asia-Pacific region to nominate additional sites to the Networks established under the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy* and to participate fully in the Action Plans developed under the *Strategy*
16. COMMENDS the *Strategy* to other parties within the Asia-Pacific region that are not yet Contracting Parties, and urges their full participation in its implementation; and
17. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to consider actively the development of a multilateral agreement or other arrangement, to provide a long-term conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats which is inclusive of all Asia-Pacific countries.

Recommendation 7.4



"People and Wetlands: The Vital Link"
**7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971),
San José, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999**

The Wetlands for the Future Initiative

1. RECALLING Article 4.5 of the Convention and Operational Objective 4.2 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 which urges Contracting Parties to promote and undertake a range of actions designed to provide training for institutions and individuals involved in the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
2. NOTING Recommendation 6.5 of COP6, which also called upon Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Bureau to pursue actions directed at fostering and supporting wetland manager training;
3. AWARE that the National Reports submitted for this Conference indicated very clearly the need for greater priority to be given to training in the next triennium;
4. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION that the Convention has been successfully implementing the Wetlands for the Future Initiative for capacity-building in the Western Hemisphere with funding provided during the past four years by the United States of America in the amount of US\$ 250,000 per year;
5. NOTING that the Wetlands for the Future Initiative has as its goals:
 - i) the development of human resources needed for the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands;
 - ii) the training of wetland managers in the professional and technical skills needed to pursue the goals of the Ramsar Convention;
 - iii) the establishment of regional technical information networks to support conservation and the sustainable management of wetlands;
 - iv) the development of local, national, or regional awareness of, and support for, the conservation of wetlands;
 - v) the advancement of ecologically sound community management; and
 - vi) the linkage of the Wetlands for the Future Initiative to other programmes that share the overall goals of wetland management and conservation;
6. FURTHER NOTING that the Wetlands for the Future Initiative has since 1995 funded 60 projects in 14 countries of the Western Hemisphere, which has significantly improved the prospects for better wetland management and coordination on wetland issues in the Hemisphere;
7. RECOGNIZING the dire need for similar initiatives or programmes in other parts of the world;

8. ACKNOWLEDGING the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and efforts made by Contracting Parties Australia and Japan and the Convention's International Organization Partners, notably Wetlands International; and
9. ACKNOWLEDGING FURTHER the efforts of countries, including Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and others and International Organization Partners which are actively engaged in similar initiatives and programmes in Africa, Asia, Oceania and other regions;

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10. URGES Contracting Parties and other organizations concerned about wetland conservation and sustainable use to initiate and support programmes similar to the Wetlands for the Future Initiative in other parts of the world, including in the African region and particularly in the francophone countries.