



## 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”

Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

### Resolution IX.14

#### Wetlands and poverty reduction

1. EMPHASIZING the relevance to poverty reduction of a number of decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, including Resolutions 5.6 on the *Wise use of wetlands*, VII.8 on *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands*, VIII.23 on *Incentive measures as tools for achieving the wise use of wetlands*, and VIII.36 on *Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands*, and ALSO EMPHASIZING the relevance of Decision IV/4 of the Convention on Biological Diversity concerning the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use;
2. NOTING the relevance of the Ramsar Convention as an important element in the delivery of the internationally agreed development strategies, including the Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7 (“Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger” and “Ensure environmental sustainability”) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development's Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI, 2002), which promoted, *inter alia*, the adoption of integrated water resource management plans by 2005;
3. ALSO NOTING the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness;
4. FURTHER NOTING the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, in particular the key messages in its report to the Ramsar Convention (“Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Wetlands and Water. Synthesis”), to the effect that:
  - wetland ecosystems deliver a wide range of critical benefits/services for human well-being;
  - the projected continued loss and degradation of wetlands will result in further reduction in human health and well-being, especially for vulnerable people in less developed countries;
  - maintaining the natural functioning of wetlands, however, will enable them to continue to deliver their benefits/services to human populations; and
  - a cross-sectoral approach to the management of water resources is needed urgently from policy- and decision-makers that emphasizes securing wetland ecosystem benefits/services in the context of achieving sustainable development;
5. CONSIDERING that the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in its final communiqué on water sanitation and human settlements proposed further

measures to assist the reduction of poverty while enhancing environmental sustainability;  
and

6. AWARE that much of the body of Ramsar guidance available in the Handbooks for the Wise Use of Wetlands is of value in helping to promote the wise use of wetlands and thus contribute to poverty reduction;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. URGES all Contracting Parties and other governments to take action to contribute to poverty reduction, especially in the following areas:
  - *human life and safety*: measures to protect against impacts such as cyclones, storm surges, saline intrusions, droughts and floods through the sustainable use and restoration of wetlands;
  - *access to resources*: measures to improve access to and develop capacity to use, on a sustainable basis, land, water and wetland resources such as fish, in full respect of international and national legislation, respecting the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples consistent with national law and applicable international obligations;
  - *ecological sustainability*: measures to enhance the priority given to sustainability in all relevant mainstream policy sectors, including ecosystem restoration measures;
  - *governance*: measures to improve the empowerment of the poor in decision-making processes and management institutions;
  - *economies*: measures to maintain or improve, on an ecologically sustainable basis, the ecosystem benefits/services that wetlands provide;
8. FURTHER URGES all Contracting Parties, bearing in mind the examples outlined in Ramsar COP9 DOC. 33, to take or support action to:
  - raise awareness of the self-perpetuating cycles that result from the relationship between wetland degradation and poverty;
  - give priority or support to conservation and wise use of water and wetlands in national poverty reduction strategy papers, integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans and similar policies;
  - create new partnerships between local communities, developers and conservationists to ensure that local perspectives are included and existing sustainable livelihood strategies are respected;
  - review and improve existing financing mechanisms and encourage new thinking in finance institutions, such as the Global Environment Facility, for wetland management to help address poverty reduction, and new ideas such as local agreements with wetland communities to enable the maintenance of ecosystem benefits/services;
  - ensure that gender equality and sensitivity to local communities are taken into account in sustainable wetland management strategies;
9. ESPECIALLY URGES Contracting Parties in Africa to implement the wetland component (Programme Area 2) of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), building upon the decisions contained in Resolution VIII.44 (*New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and implementation of the Ramsar*

*Convention in Africa*) and drawing links between implementation of NEPAD and poverty reduction;

10. ENCOURAGES Parties to work with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, the Ramsar International Organization Partners, national and international NGOs and others to:
  - undertake assessments of the economic, social, cultural and livelihood values of individual wetlands and wetlands in general and the benefits/services they deliver, with a view to enhancing sustainable livelihoods utilizing a wise use approach;
  - build capacity within communities and relevant advisory services to sustainably use wetlands and their resources in order to improve livelihoods through activities designed to increase food security, diversify economies, and add value to wetland products, using the wise use principle; and
  - encourage these institutions to undertake a wider consultation of the Parties to define programmes and possibilities for support for poverty reduction in order to address the real necessities of the Parties;
11. INSTRUCTS the STRP to develop guidelines for the implementation of this Resolution; and
12. REAFFIRMS the value of linking wetland restoration to poverty reduction, by incorporating the provision of work, skills and opportunities into restoration projects and by focusing on the restoration of ecosystem benefits/services upon which communities depend.