



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Resolution X.26

Wetlands and extractive industries

1. CONSCIOUS of the need, in implementing policies for the wise use of all wetlands, including those in the Ramsar List, and in a context of objectives for sustainable development, to avoid, minimize or mitigate the negative impacts of economic development on the ecological character of wetlands;
2. RECOGNIZING the increasing global demand for resources, including *inter alia* non-renewable resources such as oil and gas, precious and base minerals, coal, sand and gravel, industrial minerals and peat, and some renewable resources such as salt and soda ash, and NOTING the resulting increase in industrial activities related to exploration for, and extraction of, these resources including through artisanal, small-scale and large-scale projects;
3. AWARE of the potential for certain activities related to extractive industries, if not appropriately managed and regulated, to have direct and indirect negative impacts on the ecological character of wetlands, including Ramsar sites, and RECOGNIZING the particular vulnerability of wetlands to the impacts of extractive industries, given not only the role of wetlands as sources of key ecosystem services including water provision and storage, but also the potential for impacts to be transferred both upstream and downstream within a river basin;
4. RECALLING Resolution VIII.3 (2002), which noted that peatlands may undergo significant and irreversible damage due to climate change, and Resolution VIII.17, which further noted that widespread loss and damage of peatlands is continuing in many parts of the world;
5. RECALLING Resolution VII.16 *The Ramsar Convention and Impact Assessment: strategic, environmental and social* (1999), which calls upon Parties “to reinforce and strengthen their efforts to ensure that any project, plans, programmes and policies with the potential to alter the ecological character of wetlands in the Ramsar List, or impact negatively on other wetlands in their territories, are subjected to rigorous impact assessment procedures and to formalize such procedures under policy, legal, institutional and organizational arrangements”;
6. ALSO AWARE that recent global and regional initiatives, including those by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IUCN, to improve corporate social responsibility and governance in the extractive industries sector offer opportunities to

strengthen the conservation and wise use of wetlands, while still realizing economic benefits from the development of extractive industries;

7. RECOGNIZING the value of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) approaches in supporting decision-making that reflects the wise use of wetlands, in line with Resolution X.17 on *Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment: updated scientific and technical guidance*, and NOTING that SEA approaches can be particularly helpful for planning and prioritization of wetland inventory and baseline information collection;
8. ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of adequate wetland inventory and baseline information in supporting decision-making and permitting procedures related to extractive industries, and EMPHASIZING the importance of early notification of proposed exploration and extraction activities in providing sufficient time for collection of wetland inventory and baseline information in areas potentially affected by these proposed activities;
9. CONCERNED that private sector organizations are not always aware of the extent of their own dependence and impact on ecosystems, including wetlands, and that both ecosystem-related risks and opportunities are not always well recognized in private sector planning and execution of projects, and AWARE of the work of the World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and the Meridian Institute, which have prepared a Corporate Ecosystem Services Review (ESR) framework for use by the private sector to help address such matters;
10. RECALLING Resolution VII.8 (1999), entitled *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands* and Resolution VIII.36 (2002) on *Participatory Environmental Management (PEM) as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands*;
11. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the importance in decision-making of valuation of the full range of ecosystem services provided by wetlands, and RECALLING that guidance on valuation of wetland ecosystem services is provided in Ramsar Technical Report Number 3 (2006), and that this guidance should be applied in a manner consistent and in harmony with the Convention, internationally agreed development goals, and other relevant international obligations;
12. NOTING with appreciation the briefing paper on *Economic trends in the mining sector and the implications for protection and wise use of wetlands*, prepared through the STRP and considered by the Africa regional meeting of Ramsar Contracting Parties in Yaounde, Cameroon, in November 2007 (COP10 DOC. 24); and
13. ALSO NOTING with appreciation the offer of the Republic of Gabon to host a regional meeting related to extractive industries in or near wetlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. URGES Contracting Parties to emphasize the importance of Strategic Environmental Assessment, particularly in relation to the extractive industries sector, and to apply the SEA guidance adopted in COP10 Resolution X.17 on *Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment: updated scientific and technical guidance*, adapting that guidance

as appropriate in order to address specific issues associated with direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on wetlands and, in applying the guidance, to take account of traditional collective knowledge;

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties also to apply the guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment adopted by the same Resolution, adapting the EIA guidance where appropriate in order to ensure that it adequately addresses direct and indirect impacts on wetlands of the exploration, development, operation, closure and post-closure phases of extractive industrial activities, and FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that in applying the EIA guidance and other necessary measures, they adequately address the impacts on wetlands of the full spectrum of activities associated with extractive industries;
16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider valuation at an early stage in environmental impact assessments, using appropriate techniques, including those that Contracting Parties may have developed, and in a manner consistent and in harmony with the Convention, internationally agreed development goals, and other relevant international obligations, in order to ensure that the full range of ecosystem services is considered in cost-benefit analyses related to all relevant phases of extractive industrial activities, with particular attention to the potential costs associated with the post-closure phase of extractive industrial activities;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that, in SEA and EIA studies related to extractive industries, potential upstream and downstream impacts in river basins are fully considered through ecosystem approaches (including *inter alia* that of the Convention on Biological Diversity), and in doing so to apply the guidance on River Basin Management as [adopted in Resolution X.19 on *Wetlands and river basin management: consolidated scientific and technical guidance*;
18. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to undertake appropriate CEPA activities in order to ensure that all relevant public and private sector bodies associated with extractive industries are aware of obligations under the Ramsar Convention regarding the wise use of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character;
19. URGES Contracting Parties to, where necessary, review and revise regulatory and permitting procedures related to extractive industrial activities, in order to ensure that impacts on wetland ecosystems and their ecosystem services are avoided, remedied or mitigated as far as possible, and that any unavoidable impacts are sufficiently compensated for in accordance with any applicable national legislation. These procedures should allow sufficient time for collection of wetland inventory and baseline information to support effective Environmental Impact Assessment, permitting and oversight of extractive industries, especially with respect to enforcement of compliance with the conditions of authorizations and licences, and particularly to ensure that local and indigenous communities have appropriate opportunities to participate in decision-making, applying as needed the guidance adopted in Resolution VII.7 *Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands* and Resolution VII.8 *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous peoples' participation in the management of wetlands* (1999);

20. URGES Contracting Parties to apply, as appropriate, the guidance adopted through Resolution X.16 and included in COP10 DOC. 27 when extractive industrial activities may directly or indirectly impact Ramsar sites; to consider a precautionary approach when the SEA or EIA predicts any substantial or irreversible loss of wetland ecosystem services, and where appropriate, to consider compensation in accordance with national legislation and Resolution VII.24 *Compensation for lost wetland habitats and other functions* (1999) and Resolution VIII.20 *General guidance for interpreting “urgent national interest” under Article 2.5 of the Convention and considering compensation under Article 4”* (2002);
21. URGES Contracting Parties, in considering the environmental impacts of extractive industries on peatlands, to take appropriate measures/actions, including *inter alia* directing extractive activities to already drained peatlands, in order to reduce the environmental impacts of extractive activities on pristine peatlands, in recognition of the role of peatland conservation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and maintaining ecosystem services, including water provision;
22. URGES Contracting Parties to ensure that existing or new extractive industrial development projects address the need, as far as possible, to avoid, remedy or mitigate the impacts of these projects, and to compensate, in accordance with any applicable national legislation, for the loss of livelihoods that may result directly or indirectly from the impacts of these projects on wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services, in a manner consistent and in harmony with the Convention, internationally agreed development goals, and other relevant international obligations;
23. ALSO URGES Contracting Parties to complete national wetland inventories and to collect baseline information in order to strengthen and support SEA and EIA processes, especially in those areas that are potentially the focus of exploration and development of new extractive industrial projects, to seek sufficient funding and other resources as needed for this purpose, and to seek ways to ensure early notification of potential new extractive industrial projects, especially those which could affect Ramsar sites;
24. FURTHER URGES Contracting Parties to ensure that the boundaries of all designated Ramsar sites within their territories are accurately delineated and mapped, and if necessary protected under national laws, and that this information is made freely available and easily accessible to all relevant regulatory agencies and ministries, private sector bodies with interests in existing or new extractive industrial development projects, civil society and stakeholders, including through provision of these boundaries in digital format to the Ramsar Secretariat and the Ramsar Sites Information Service;
25. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to engage with relevant private sector interests at international, national and local levels to establish and/or strengthen corporate social responsibility programmes related to extractive industries, paying particular attention to actions that avoid, remedy or mitigate the direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on biodiversity and the indigenous peoples and other local communities associated with wetlands, and to ensure, sufficiently in advance, the participation of indigenous and other local communities, in accordance with applicable national legislation, in consultation related to extractive industrial activities in wetland ecosystems on which these communities depend for their livelihoods;

26. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider the creation of new wetlands or the improvement of existing wetlands in the post-closure phases of extractive industrial activities, through well-planned mining and quarrying activities and well-developed site restoration programmes;
27. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to identify capacity and expertise needed for addressing the specific issues and potential impacts of extractive industries on wetlands, particularly in relevant public sector institutions, and to implement, where necessary through partnerships with appropriate public, private and NGO sector groups or organizations, appropriate training and capacity building programmes to strengthen SEA, EIA, and regulatory oversight of extractive industrial activities;
28. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Ramsar Administrative Authorities and Focal Points to establish or strengthen regular cooperation with Focal Points of the Global Environment Facility, considering that many GEF projects are addressing issues associated with extractive industrial activities, and to develop efficient and lasting synergies at national and regional levels, addressing also the potential linkages with those programmes, projects or directives derived from the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; and
29. REQUESTS the STRP, working with UNEP, IUCN, and other relevant organizations, to review available technical guidance on assessing, avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the direct and indirect impacts of extractive industries on wetlands in the exploration, development, operation, closure and post-closure phases, taking into account the potential for adoption of new or emerging extraction technologies and paying particular attention to restoration options, and on the basis of this review, to make recommendations regarding the suitability of available technical guidance and the need, if any, for development of new technical guidance.