



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



## PRESS RELEASE

### United Arab Emirates to host next Ramsar COP13 in 2018

**Punta del Este, Uruguay | 9 June 2015-** The United Arab Emirates was officially accepted as the host for the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP13) to take place in Dubai in 2018.

The announcement was made on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 during a plenary session attended by *over 800 delegates from 160 countries* meeting in Uruguay, who are attending the 12th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP12). The Contracting Parties are meeting in Punta Del Este from 1 to 9 June 2015 to approve a new Strategic Plan to guide national and international actions to conserve and wisely use wetlands in the next triennium, 2016 to 2024.

“The UAE’s decision to host COP13 confirms our support to the Convention at the regional and international level,” said **H.E. Eng. Marian Mouhammed Saeed Hared, Acting Assistant under Secretary, Water Resource and Nature Conservation Affairs**. “Wetlands have received the attention of the government and the UAE vision 2024 confirms the importance of conserving our rich natural environment and protecting these fragile ecosystems from urbanization and human activities.”

The United Arab Emirates has been a party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands since 2007 and has designated 5 wetland sites onto the List of Wetlands of International Importance (“Ramsar Sites”), considered to be of high value to the country and the world because of the ecosystem services they provide.

Although the United Arab Emirates is better known for being situated in one of the most arid regions of the world, the wetland ecosystem in the country is one of the most unique and diverse in the Arabian Peninsula. It includes marshes, vast tidal flats, fresh water aquifers, mangroves and coral reefs. Ramsar Sites in the country include the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary in Dubai which is a stop for thousands of migratory waterbirds and the Al Wathba Ramsar Site in Abu Dhabi, which is important for its ecological and touristic value.

On behalf of all the Contracting Parties, **COP12 President, Jorge Rucks**, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment, Uruguay, expressed thanks to UAE for the invitation extended to host COP13.

#### **Note to editors**

#### **About COP12.**

The 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP12) is being held in Punta del Este at the Conrad Resort, Uruguay, from 1 to 9 June 2015. It is the decision-making body of the Convention and meets every three years to assess the progress of the Convention, consider emerging issues and approve the Secretariat’s work plan.

## **About the Ramsar Convention**

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the global framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It is the only global treaty to focus on a single ecosystem. The Convention was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and entered into force in 1975. Since then, 168 countries, almost 90% of UN member states from the entire world's geographic regions have acceded and become Contracting Parties. The State of Kuwait will become the 169th Contracting Party to the Convention on Wetlands in 2015.

Under this treaty, member states undertake to protect and sustainably use all the wetlands on their territory by undertaking local measures and collaborate through international cooperation to maintain the ecological characteristics of wetlands. Each Member State upon adopting the Convention designates at least one site considered to be of high value to the country and the world because of the ecosystem services they provide. These sites are added to the network of Wetland of International Importance. Currently there are over 2,200 designated Ramsar sites around the world, covering an area of 208 million hectares, an area larger than Mexico.

## **About wetlands**

The definition of the word 'wetland', under the Convention, is any land area that is saturated or flooded with water, either seasonally or permanently. Inland wetlands include aquifers, lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, peatlands, ponds, flood plains and swamps. Coastal wetlands include all coastlines, mangroves, saltmarshes, estuaries, lagoons, seagrass meadows and coral reefs.

**Contact Information:** Camilla Chalmers, Head of Communication. Tel. +41 79 949 6013.  
Email. [chalmers@ramsar.org](mailto:chalmers@ramsar.org)