

**Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**5th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**  
**Kushiro, Japan**  
**9-16 June 1993**

### **Recommendation 5.3: The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves**

RECALLING the multiple values and functions of wetlands for sustainable development and the maintenance of biodiversity;

AWARE that wetlands are highly liable to negative impacts from actions occurring outside their designated boundaries (whether such impacts come from upstream, downstream or other sources), and that because of this essential character - as recognized by the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (Caracas, Venezuela, 1992) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992) - they require particular measures in the field of land-use planning, including integrated management and creation of reserves;

EMPHASIZING that land-use plans need to adopt a catchment approach and to consider the impact on wetland reserves of factors occurring both upstream and downstream;

WELCOMING the measures taken by Contracting Parties to establish wetland reserves on their territory, both in wetlands designated for the Ramsar "List of wetlands of international importance" and at other wetlands;

NOTING that the Ramsar concept of wise use for the benefit of human populations is of relevance in relation to Ramsar sites and other wetland reserves;

RECOGNIZING that zonation related to Ramsar sites and wetland reserves must take account of the size and sensitivity of the wetland in question, and that, while strict protection may be the most appropriate form of wise use for smaller or highly sensitive Ramsar sites or wetland reserves, it alone is not always possible in larger sites where other forms of wise use will be appropriate;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

RECOMMENDS that the essential character of wetlands be recognized and that measures (notably inclusion of wetland concerns in land-use and water management planning, adoption of a whole catchment approach and/or creation of buffer zones) be taken to ensure that the ecological character of Ramsar sites and wetland reserves is not placed at risk;

EMPHASIZES the need to develop zoning measures related to larger Ramsar sites and wetland reserves, involving strict protection in key zones and various forms of wise use for the benefit of human populations in other zones; and the need to develop ecological corridors linking Ramsar sites; and

CALLS FOR the establishment of strict protection measures for Ramsar sites and wetland reserves of small size or particular sensitivity.