

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**Between**

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

**represented by its  
WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE**

**And**

**THE BUREAU OF THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL  
IMPORTANCE  
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT**

**(Ramsar, Iran 1971)**

## **PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as the United Nations Specialized Agency that has the global mandate for designing instruments and modalities for furthering cooperation in education, science and culture that can promote peaceful international relations among its Member States as well as other non-member States;

WHEREAS, the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its seventeenth session in Paris on 16 November 1972 (hereinafter referred to as the World Heritage Convention) provides for the identification, protection, presentation and listing of natural and cultural properties of outstanding universal value; establishes a system whereby States Parties cooperate in the protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of these properties; and creates the World Heritage Fund with contributions from the States Parties and other sources;

WHEREAS, the World Heritage Convention establishes an elected intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to direct the implementation of the Convention and expenditures from the Fund on behalf of the States Parties and stipulates that the Director General of UNESCO will appoint the Secretariat to the Convention;

WHEREAS, the Director General of UNESCO has established the World Heritage Centre to serve, amongst other functions, as the Secretariat of the Convention to facilitate the direction and coordination of the implementation of the Convention, provide information, advice and guidance to the World Heritage Committee, and administer and obligate the Fund as authorized by the Committee, in accordance with the financial regulations and policy of UNESCO;

WHEREAS, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar on 2 February 1971 (hereinafter referred to as the Ramsar Convention), whose Instrument is safeguarded by UNESCO, entered into force in 1975, and was established to foster the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands, in particular those that under the Ramsar Convention criteria should be considered as wetlands of international importance;

WHEREAS, the Ramsar Convention works through a global network of scientists and practitioners in its Contracting Parties and those scientists and experts from international and national partner organizations, and has established an inter-sessional Standing Committee, a Scientific and Technical Review Panel and a variety of programmes and projects, under the guidance of its Conference of the Contracting Parties;

WHEREAS, the Ramsar Convention established a secretariat known as the Ramsar Bureau co-located with the World Conservation Union -IUCN at their Headquarters in Switzerland to administer and coordinate the day-to-day implementation of the decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee;

WHEREAS, the Ramsar Convention maintains a List of Wetlands of International Importance that includes a number of sites which are also on the World Heritage List; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar and the World Heritage Committee recognize the strategic importance for mutual cooperation between international environment-related conventions in the protection and effective management of internationally important wetlands;

PRESENTLY, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mandate of the Parties to both the World Heritage and the Ramsar Conventions, the Director General of UNESCO, represented by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, and the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, in the interest of the mutual advantages in the cost effective attainment of the objectives of the Conventions and performing work required by the Committee, the Centre, the Conferences of the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Bureau, wishing to avoid duplication of effort in areas of common interest and to formalize and strengthen their cooperation in the spirit of an efficient and effective partnership, mutually agree as follows:

#### **Article I. OBJECTIVE**

The World Heritage Centre and the Ramsar Bureau agree to cooperate with a view to enabling the Contracting Parties to the Conventions to identify and strengthen conservation of those sites of international importance which are recognized by both Conventions.

#### **Article II. STATEMENT OF WORK**

The activities to be undertaken as part of this MOU will be based on a work programme that will be discussed and developed by the Centre and the Ramsar Bureau and may, amongst others, include:

- (a) Exchange of information on a regular basis on specific aspects of the work of the World Heritage and the Ramsar Conventions which are of mutual interest and benefit;
- (b) Sharing of information with the view to identification of potential wetland sites that may meet the criteria for nomination as World Heritage and/or as Wetlands of International Importance, including transboundary sites and habitats that may be critical for the protection of watersheds and catchments and/or home ranges of migratory species that may have outstanding global significance and which are shared by two or more Contracting Parties to both Conventions;
- (c) Sharing of information and cooperation to encourage Contracting Parties to, where appropriate, designate as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention those World Heritage Sites, or parts thereof, which meet the criteria for listing, and vice versa;

- (d) Sharing information, databases, staff mission reports and other materials to enable early detection of threats to Ramsar Sites which are designated as World Heritage Sites and undertake necessary studies and analyses to identify measures for the mitigation of such threats;
- (e) In cooperation with the Contracting Parties to the Conventions, develop programmes and projects for strengthening conservation of specific sites which are recognized by the two Conventions and identify and mobilize human and financial resources and the knowledge to implement such programmes and projects, including emergency actions to mitigate potential and ascertained threats to World Heritage Sites, including in particular those sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger which may also be included in the so called Montreux Record of Ramsar Sites where the ecological character has changed, is changing or may change; and
- (f) Inform in the spirit of partnership and invite each other's participation, and concurrence as appropriate, in meetings, including statutory meetings, studies and review, field visits to sites, design, organization and conduct of training, education and information dissemination activities and other activities to promote awareness of the Parties on the relationships between the application of the two Conventions.

### **Article III. IMPLEMENTATION**

This MOU shall enter into force upon signature by the two Parties. It may be reviewed at a time to be agreed upon by the Parties in the development of the work programme and may be amended at any time by mutual agreement.

Either party may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding by giving notice in writing to the other not less than six months in advance.

**Mounir Bouchenaki**

Director, World Heritage Centre

UNESCO

Signed in Paris, France

**Delmar Blasco**

Secretary General

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Signed in San José, Costa Rica

**Date: 14 MAY 1999**