

IOP Closing Remarks

Speaking on behalf of the five IOPs, Wetlands International congratulates the Republic of South Korea for their excellent arrangements for CoP10. The extraordinary hospitality and immaculate organisation of the conference has been greatly appreciated by all. We thank you sincerely.

We also thank the Ramsar Secretariat and fabulous volunteers for their dedication and stamina during the COP processes and for enabling the participation to COP10 of as many Contracting Party delegates as possible, especially from the developing countries. We also ask you to note the IOP efforts to support the participation of delegates to this Conference.

We further congratulate to the Republic of South Korea on announcing their significant commitments to wetland conservation and implementation of the Convention, and especially their commitments to conserve intertidal wetlands. We remain concerned about the threats, and ongoing reclamation in the Yellow Sea but are pleased by the adoption of a comprehensive resolution on flyways, which provides a strong foundation for international collaboration for the conservation of migratory waterbirds along all of the world's major flyways.

The IOPs are pleased by the commitments made by Parties with regard to Resolution 13 on the status of Ramsar Sites, especially with regard to Lake Natron in Tanzania, the Tana Delta and Lake Naivasha in Kenya. However, we are concerned by the on-going degradation of Ramsar Sites around the world. We feel this is not fully recognized at this COP and deserves closer scrutiny and action over the next triennium.

The IOPs consider that the Ramsar Convention has a responsibility to champion the need to sustain and restore wetlands as an effective means to address the major, global issues including water security, food security and climate change.

In this respect, we think that the theme "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People " has served us well at COPX. We welcome the considerable focus on water in many of the resolutions as well as the increasingly inter-sectoral approach that is being promoted, for example through the resolutions on partnerships and on extractive industries. We believe that continuing the focus on water and wetland management in relation to food security, human health and poverty will be important and necessary in the next triennium. The IOPs are ready to support this work.

We are pleased that Parties recognised the increasing importance of the Ramsar Convention in developing solutions to global environmental problems. This was demonstrated by the almost unanimous decision to retain the 3 year frequency of COP meetings and to modestly increase the budget. We especially welcome the voluntary contribution made by Africa and call on other

countries to follow their good example. We recognize that it is vital to ensure that the Secretariat has the staff and tools needed to fulfill the expectations of Parties. This is in our view, far more important than where they sit. But in this respect, the mechanisms put in place by R5 to resolve a number of immediate administration and hosting issues are welcome.

Turning to some of the other substantive issues dealt with by the COP, we note with concern that, in seeking consensus, the outcome of negotiations have tended to shy away from influencing the current water, climate and development policies and processes. This does not sit well with the Convention's wish to become more visible and effective at the global level. Nor does it serve the goals of the Convention and the need today, for integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to solving environmental problems including most especially climate change. We note that after all the discussions, the active text of the Climate Resolution (24) has only inched forward compared to that developed in COP8. We feel sure that in the following years, Parties will reflect on this missed opportunity in Changwon to ensure that wetlands are at the heart of the UNFCCC considerations.

Finally, the IOPs welcome the great progress on many Regional Initiatives in last triennium, that have encouraged Contracting Parties to work together - such as in Andes, Lake Chad and Niger Basins. We call on Parties to enhance development of other Regional Initiatives, such as Himalayas, and the proposed regional initiatives in the Amur Basin, Congo River Basin, la Plata Basin and Black Sea. We will work with the Secretariat to facilitate knowledge exchange and lessons learnt among/across these regional initiatives, including on effective means on addressing climate mitigation and adaptation.

Despite some disappointments, we are confident this Conference provides a renewed enthusiasm and commitment to Ramsar implementation. The IOPs remain committed and look forward to working closely with Ramsar Administrative Authorities, the Standing Committee and Secretariat over the next triennium – and to the COPXI in Romania.