



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands: home and destination”

PRESS RELEASE

Nowadays, a crucial challenge and reality for all environmental treaties is working across sectors. Government delegates, in their capacity as wetland policy makers and implementers met this week in Bucharest together with representatives from the civil society, including NGOs and private sector to share common concerns over wetlands and water management and make commitments to address key challenges for sustainable development.

Bucharest, Romania | 13 July 2012. The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands convened from Friday, 6 July until 13 July at the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, Romania, to discuss a broad range of topical environmental issues as well as the highlighted theme of wetlands and tourism, under the catchy slogan *“Wetlands: Home and Destination”*.

For the Ramsar Convention, working with the water sector, which manages water rather than the wetlands that carry the water, requires engaging with a multiple range of stakeholders and partners such as other Multilateral Environment Agreements, other partners within and outside the UN system, NGOs, and International Organization Partners, as well as the private sector including the Evian/Danone Group & Star Alliance Network.

At COP11, delegates could benefit from the cross-sectoral expertise through side events and discussion groups created to debate the Resolutions to be adopted by the end of the week on such vital issues as wetland and tourism, urban wetlands, climate change, poverty eradication, wetlands and human health, avoiding further wetland losses, and understanding the relationships between wetlands and the energy sector. In addition to approving the work programme and budgetary arrangements for the next three years, as well as some eleven administrative decisions on the workings of the Convention, the COP11 delegates adopted guidance for the Parties on a range of ongoing and emerging environmental issues by agreeing nine substantive Resolutions on scientific and policy matters concerning wetlands. Those new Resolutions identify what countries are committing themselves to do at national and local levels to ensure that the crucial issues affecting wetlands are considered in a sustainable manner, consistent with the Convention’s ‘wise use’ principle.

Over the years, the Convention’s work has managed to stay close to the ground, caring for tangible outcomes through the wise use concept and Ramsar Site management. Its member countries need to keep looking for partners and resources to harness the political will within their countries to guarantee the long-term benefits that wetlands provide to people, wildlife, economics, and biodiversity.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (www.ramsar.org)

The Ramsar Convention is a global intergovernmental treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. Signed in the Iranian town of Ramsar in 1971, the Convention established the basis for the management and sustainable use of wetlands. To date, it remains the only environmental agreement in the world devoted to a particular ecosystem. Under this treaty, the member States, also known as “Contracting Parties”, undertake to protect and sustainably use all the wetlands on their territory by implementing the necessary local measures as well as through national and international cooperation. As part of their commitment, the countries actively collaborate to maintain the ecological characteristics of wetlands, including through the inclusion of wetland conservation in their national land-use and management plans.