

## **SC43 – Secretary General’s Opening Statement**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Honorable members of the Ramsar Standing Committee and Ramsar Partners, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all in Gland for the 43th Session of our Standing Committee.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Yeon-Chul Yoo, our Chairman of the Ramsar Standing Committee, to all Standing Committee members, all Contracting Parties, our IOPs, the STRP, all participants and the Secretariat.

Let me also welcome three staff members who are attending their first Standing Committee meeting: Saber and Charlotte, Assistants for Asia and Oceania, and Africa, respectively; and Ms Lynn Sorrentino, our Temporary Communications Officer replacing Oana Penea who is on maternity leave.

This is a great opportunity for me to renew the appreciation and the gratitude of the whole Ramsar Secretariat for your continued support, your guidance and the actions you are taking to enhance the conservation and wise use of wetlands all over the world.

I particularly wish to express our gratitude to Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, and the USA for the precious financial contributions to regional meetings to prepare COP11. We thank all other supporting Parties and organizations.

Our thanks go also Burkina Faso, Jamaica, Indonesia, Slovakia, and Palau for hosting our Regional meetings and providing financial and in-kind contributions.

We thank the Republic of Korea for the financial support to facilitate the implementation of the Changwon Declaration.

Over the last months, I have in my work as Secretary General, and the whole Secretariat has paid particular attention to the opportunity to seize the Convention’s 40th Anniversary, to take stock and update future directions for the Secretariat and the STRP that are consistent with the desires of Contracting Parties, Resolutions and the Strategic Plan as well as current and emerging global challenges to address with regard to the environment and sustainable development.

While great efforts and accomplishments have been made over the past 40 years in implementing the Convention, it is timely with the 40th Anniversary to take stock of achievements, and also challenges, and to consider how the current and emerging circumstances and issues affect the implementation of the Convention, the role of the Secretariat and the quality of Contracting Party wetlands, and to set a foundation and vision for the future.

The Ramsar Secretariat strongly believes that over the next 40 years our collective efforts should enhance the recognition of wetlands by decision makers as water providers for vital needs of human societies, especially human health, food security, energy, biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as overall socio-economic development.

We are hopeful that the Ramsar Contracting Parties and partners will adopt a Vision that ensures, through the work of all stakeholders, that vital services provided to human societies by wetlands through water are recognized, maintained, restored and sustainably used by governments (global-national-local), communities, industry, business, agriculture, etc.

We hope that the Draft Resolutions and related documents that are considered by this Standing Committee meeting will be a foundation for the future strategic and operational direction of the Convention.

Thank you.

Anada Tiega