



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Contracting Parties,

Recognizing the interdependence of man and his environment;

Considering the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water régimes and as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna, especially waterfowl;

Being convinced that wetlands constitute a resource of great economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value, the loss of which would be irreparable;

Desiring to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future;

Recognizing that waterfowl in their seasonal migrations may transcend frontiers and so should be regarded as an international resource;

Being confident that the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna can be ensured by combining far-sighted national policies with co-ordinated international action;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

1. For the purpose of this Convention wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.

2. For the purpose of this Convention waterfowl are birds ecologically dependent on wetlands.

Article 2

1. Each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance, herein- after referred to as 'the List' which is maintained by the bureau established under Article 8. The boundaries of each wetland shall be precisely described and also delimited on a map and they may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands, especially where these have importance as waterfowl habitat.

2. Wetlands should be selected for the List on account of their international significance in terms of ecology, botany, zoology, limnology or hydrology. In the first instance wetlands of international importance to waterfowl at any season should be included.

3. The inclusion of a wetland in the List does not prejudice the exclusive sovereign rights of the Contracting Party in whose territory the wetland is situated.

4. Each Contracting Party shall designate at least one wetland to be included in the List when signing this Convention or when depositing its instrument of ratification or accession, as provided in Article 9.

5. Any Contracting Party shall have the right to add to the List further wetlands situated within its territory, to extend the boundaries of those wetlands already included by it in the List, or, because of its urgent national interests, to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included by it in the List and shall, at the earliest possible time, inform the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8 of any such changes.

6. Each Contracting Party shall consider its international responsibilities for the conservation, management and wise use of migratory stocks of waterfowl, both when designating entries for the List and when exercising its right to change entries in the List relating to wetlands within its territory.

Article 3

1. The Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory.

2. Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8.

Article 4

1. Each Contracting Party shall promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves on wetlands, whether they are included in the list or not, and provide adequately for their wardening.

2. Where a Contracting Party in its urgent national interest, deletes or restricts the boundaries of a wetland included in the List, it should as far as possible compensate for any loss of wetland resources, and in particular it should create additional nature reserves for waterfowl and for the protection, either in the same area or elsewhere, of an adequate portion of the original habitat.

3. The Contracting Parties shall encourage research and the exchange of data and publications regarding wetlands and their flora and fauna.

4. The Contracting Parties shall endeavour through management to increase waterfowl populations on appropriate wetlands.

5. The Contracting Parties shall promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, management and wardening.

Article 5

The Contracting Parties shall consult with each other about implementing obligations arising from the Convention especially in the case of a wetland extending over the territories of more than one Contracting Party or where a water system is shared by Contracting Parties.

They shall at the same time endeavour to co-ordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.

Article 6

1. The Contracting Parties shall, as the necessity arises, convene Conferences on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl.

2. These Conferences shall have an advisory character and shall be competent inter alia:

- (a) to discuss the implementation of this Convention;
- (b) to discuss additions to and changes in the List;
- (c) to consider information regarding changes in the ecological character of wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 3;
- (d) to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands and their flora and fauna;
- (e) to request relevant international bodies to prepare reports and statistics on matters which are essentially international in character affecting wetlands.

3. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that those responsible at all levels for wetlands management shall be informed of, and take into consideration, recommendations of such Conferences concerning the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands and their flora and fauna.

Article 7

1. The representatives of the Contracting Parties at such Conferences should include persons who are experts on wetlands or waterfowl by reason of knowledge and experience gained in scientific, administrative or other appropriate capacities.

2. Each of the Contracting Parties represented at a Conference shall have one vote, recommendations being adopted by a simple majority of the votes cast, provided that not less than half the Contracting Parties cast votes.

Article 8

1. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources shall perform the continuing bureau duties under this Convention until such time as another organization or government is appointed by a majority of two-thirds of all Contracting Parties.

2. The continuing bureau duties shall be, inter alia:

- (a) to assist in the convening and organizing of Conferences specified in Article 6;
- (b) to maintain the List of Wetlands of International Importance and to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any additions, extensions, deletions or restrictions concerning wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article 2;
- (c) to be informed by the Contracting Parties of any changes in the ecological character of wetlands included in the List provided in accordance with, paragraph 2 of Article 3.1
- (d) to forward notification of any alterations to the List, or changes in character of wetlands included therein, to all Contracting Parties and to arrange for these matters to be discussed at the next Conference;
- (e) to make known to the Contracting Party concerned, the recommendations of the Conferences in respect of such alterations to the List or of changes in the character of wetlands included therein.

Article 9

1. This Convention shall remain open for signature indefinitely.

2. Any member of the United Nations or of one of the Specialized Agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency or Party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice may become a party to this Convention by:

- (a) signature without reservation as to ratification;
- (b) signature subject to ratification followed by ratification;
- (c) accession.

3. Ratification or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of ratification or accession with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as 'the Depository').

Article 10

1. This Convention shall enter into force four months after seven States have become Parties to this Convention in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 9.

2. Thereafter this Convention shall enter into force for each Contracting Party four months after the day of its signature without reservation as to ratification, or its deposit of an instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 11

1. This Convention shall continue in force for an indefinite period.

2. Any Contracting Party may denounce this Convention after a period of five years from the date on which it entered into force for that Party by giving written notice thereof to the Depository. Denunciation shall take effect four months after the day on which notice thereof is received by the Depository.

Article 12

1. The Depository shall inform all States that have signed and acceded to this Convention as soon as possible of:

- (a) signatures to the Convention;
- (b) deposits of instruments of ratification of this Convention;
- (c) deposits of instruments of accession to this Convention;
- (d) the date of entry into force of this Convention;
- (e) notifications of denunciation of this Convention.

2. When this Convention has entered into force, the Depositary shall have it registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter.

In WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized to that effect, have signed this Convention.

Done at Ramsar this 2nd day of February 1971, in a single original in the English, French, German and Russian languages, in any case of divergency the English text prevailing, which shall be deposited with the Depositary which shall send true copies thereof to an Contracting Parties.

Date of adoption 1971

Declarations and Reservations

[Bulgaria \(Translation\) 'The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria considers it necessary to state that Article 9 of the Convention restricts the possibility of some States to become parties to it and contradicts the universally recognized principle of the sovereign equality of States.' \(See letter LA/Depositary/1975/5 of 21 November 1975\) Denmark \(Translation\) '...in spite of the great importance attached by the Danish Government to the Vadehavet \(a marshy maritime plain situation in the southern part of the west coast of Jutland\) as a wetland, it has decided not to include the Vadehavet for the time being in the above-mentioned List. 'This decision has been taken on account of the negotiations under way between the Governments of the Kingdom of Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the construction of an advanced dyke in that area, and also on account of the trilateral negotiations between the Governments of Denmark, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning a special agreement for the protection of the Vadehavet. The Danish Government is convinced, however, that the Vadehavet, or certain parts thereof, should be included in the aforesaid List once the above-mentioned negotiations have been concluded.' \(See letter LA/Depositary /1977/27 of 30 December 1977.\) Germany \(Federal Republic of\) 'The Federal Republic of Germany in becoming a party to the Convention interprets and understands the provisions of this Convention as being of a nature not to prevent measures to be taken to protect the population of the regions concerned against floods nor to interfere with well-established rights the inhabitants of these regions may have.' \(See letter LA/Depositary/1976/13 of 21 June 1976\) Hungary 'Article 9 of the Convention, which restricts the freedom of certain countries to become Parties to the Convention, contradicts the generally accepted principle of the sovereignty of States.' \(See letter LA/Depositary/1979/12 of 13 July 1979\) Syrian Arab Republic 'Accession to this Convention shall not under any circumstances be taken to mean that Syria recognizes Israel or establishes with it any relations that may derive from the provisions of this Convention'. \(See letter LA/Depositary/1998/05\) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics \[at the time of signature\] \(Translation\) 'The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics deems it necessary to declare that the provisions of Article 9 of the Convention, restricting the possibility of some countries becoming Parties to it, contradict the universally recognized principle of the sovereign equality of States.' \(See letter CL/2365 of 28 May 1974.\) In its instrument of ratification, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics indicated that it ratified the Convention while maintaining that declaration. \(See letter LA/Depositary/1976/18 of 31 December 1976.\)](#)

© UNESCO 1995-2010 - ID: 15398