



WORLD WETLAND NETWORK

A global network of Civil Society Groups & NGOs working on wetland conservation

WWN Closing Statement, Ramsar COP 12, 9 June 2015, Punta del Este

Presented by Rafaela Nicola, World Wetland Network Committee's Neo-Tropics delegate.

We would like to thank the Secretary General and the Parties for this opportunity to address the meeting, to share our message that NGOs are committed to Ramsar and we want to do more.

We also wish to thank the government of Uruguay for hosting the COP. We appreciated the field trips yesterday, which introduced us to the beautiful wetlands in this country, some of which are Ramsar Sites.

World Wetland Network was launched at Ramsar COP 10; this is our third COP. Our participation in Ramsar is recognised in Resolution 11.6. We were formed to complement the activity of the IOPs. We fully appreciate the value and expertise of the non-governmental IOPs, who work in strong partnership with local communities and indigenous peoples. WWN was formed at the initiative of smaller, grass-roots NGOs and CSOs seeking a voice at the table.

I speak on behalf of our 2000 members worldwide and our friends at the COP: local and sub-regional organisations who have been meeting daily to engage with and monitor this important process.

The core work of the Ramsar COP 12 has been the resolutions. Crafting and revising resolutions. Collaborating, negotiating and finally reaching agreement. We humbly acknowledge the co-operation and hard work of the Secretariat, Contracting Parties and IOPs to create meaningful resolutions that ensure conservation and wise use of our world's wetlands.

When we all return home the real challenge begins, turning these resolutions into action. We urge the Contracting Parties to show steadfast commitment and leadership. We stand ready to help at the local level.

The Fourth Strategic Plan is the most significant outcome of this COP, guiding our combined efforts for the next nine years.

World Wetland Network welcomes the Contracting Parties initiative to strengthen engagement of NGOs, civil society groups, local communities and indigenous peoples in the Strategic Plan. These stakeholders provide a long-term and often continuous connection to wetland sites and are essential partners to achieve the Ramsar vision.

We note that the top priority of the Strategic Plan is to prevent, stop and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands. Your recognition of the key threats including unsustainable agriculture, forestry and extractive industries, especially oil, gas, mining, and urbanisation closely reflects the local knowledge and concerns of our members, in Latin America and globally.

We encourage Contracting Parties to work cohesively across ministries and prioritise long-term sustainability when approving developments. A healthy environment is fundamental to our economic and social security.

Cohesive implementation will be supported by the effective mobilization of National Wetland Committees. We note that establishment of these committees, with both government and non-government representatives, is an indicator for success of Goal 1 in the Plan, and we urge the parties to comply.

The theme of the COP has been “Wetlands for our future.” That future starts today. Every planning and development decision taken today will directly impact on wetlands and the communities that depend on them.

Our message is loud and clear: we are committed to Ramsar and we want to do more.

We trust our activities at Ramsar COP 12 have enhanced the meeting and we pledge our commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Thank you

