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CONSERVATION



Treaty Series No. 13 (1996)

Convention

on Wetlands of International Importance
especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Ramsar, 2 February 1971,
as amended by the Paris Protocol of 3 December 1982,
with
amendments to Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention
adopted at the Extraordinary Conference of
the Contracting Parties at Regina, Canada,
28 May to 3 June 1987

[The Amendments entered into force on 1 May 1994]

*Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
by Command of Her Majesty
January 1996*

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**CONVENTION
ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT, RAMSAR, 2 FEBRUARY 1971,¹
AS AMENDED BY THE PARIS PROTOCOL OF 3 DECEMBER 1982,²
WITH AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES 6 AND 7 OF THE CONVENTION,³
ADOPTED AT THE EXTRAORDINARY CONFERENCE OF
THE CONTRACTING PARTIES AT REGINA, CANADA,
28 MAY TO 3 JUNE 1987**

The Contracting Parties,

Recognizing the interdependence of Man and his environment;

Considering the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes 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, hereinafter 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.

¹ Treaty Series No. 34 (1976) Cmnd. 6465.

² The Protocol entered into force on 1 May 1994, Miscellaneous No. 1 (1994) Cmnd. 9113.

³ Miscellaneous No. 6 (1990) Cm 983.

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. The 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 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;
 - (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 Depositary").

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 10 *bis*

1. This Convention may be amended at a meeting of the Contracting Parties convened for that purpose in accordance with this article.
2. Proposals for amendment may be made by any Contracting Party.
3. The text of any proposed amendment and the reasons for it shall be communicated to the organization or government performing the continuing bureau duties under the Convention (hereinafter referred to as "the Bureau") and shall promptly be communicated by the Bureau to all Contracting Parties. Any comments on the text by the Contracting Parties shall be communicated to the Bureau within three months of the date on which the amendments were communicated to the Contracting Parties by the Bureau. The Bureau shall, immediately after the last day for submission of comments, communicate to the Contracting Parties all comments submitted by that day.
4. A meeting of Contracting Parties to consider an amendment communicated in accordance with paragraph 3 shall be convened by the Bureau upon the written request of one-third of the Contracting Parties. The Bureau shall consult the Parties concerning the time and venue of the meeting.
5. Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Parties present and voting.
6. An amendment adopted shall enter into force for the Contracting Parties which have accepted it on the first day of the fourth month following the date on which two-thirds of the Contracting Parties have deposited an instrument of acceptance with the Depositary. For each Contracting Party which deposits an instrument of acceptance after the date on which two-thirds of the Contracting Parties have deposited an instrument of acceptance, the amendment shall enter into force on the first day of the fourth month following the date of the deposit of its instrument of acceptance.

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 Depositary. Denunciation shall take effect four months after the day on which notice thereof is received by the Depositary.

ARTICLE 12

1. The Depositary 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, all texts being equally authentic which shall be deposited with the Depositary which shall send true copies thereof to all Contracting Parties.

**Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
especially as Waterfowl Habitat as amended by the
Conference of the parties on 28.5.1987**

(amendments are reproduced below in italics)

ARTICLE 6

1. *There shall be established a Conference of the Contracting Parties to review and promote the implementation of this Convention. The Bureau referred to in Article 8, paragraph 1, shall convene ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties at intervals of not more than three years, unless the Conference decides otherwise, and extraordinary meetings at the written requests of at least one-third of the Contracting Parties. Each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties shall determine the time and venue of the next ordinary meeting.*
2. *The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall be competent:*
 - (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;
 - (f) *to adopt other recommendations, or resolutions, to promote the functioning of this Convention.*
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.
4. *The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall adopt rules of procedure for each of its meetings.*
5. *The Conference of the Contracting Parties shall establish and keep under review the financial regulations of this Convention. At each of its ordinary meetings, it shall adopt the budget for the next financial period by a two-third majority of Contracting Parties present and voting.*
6. *Each Contracting Party shall contribute to the budget according to a scale of contributions adopted by unanimity of the Contracting Parties present and voting at a meeting of the ordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties.*

ARTICLE 7

1. The representatives of the Contracting Parties at such Conference 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, resolutions and decisions being adopted by a simple majority of the Contracting Parties present and voting, unless otherwise provided for in this Convention.*

**ACCEPTANCES OF AMENDMENTS TO
ARTICLES 6 AND 7 OF THE CONVENTION**

	<i>Date of Acceptance</i>
Armenia	6 July 1993
Australia	25 July 1990
Austria	18 Dec. 1992
Bangladesh	21 May 1992
Bulgaria	21 June 1990
Canada	8 Nov. 1988
Denmark	3 Jan. 1994
Ecuador	21 Feb. 1995
Finland	27 Mar. 1990
France	1 July 1994
Germany, Federal Republic	20 June 1990
Greece	22 May 1992
Hungary	20 Sep. 1990
Iceland	18 June 1993
Indonesia	8 Apr. 1992
Iran	20 July 1994
Ireland	28 Aug. 1990
Japan	2 June 1988
Jordan	27 Aug. 1993
Liechtenstein	6 Aug. 1991
Lithuania	20 Aug. 1993
Mexico	2 Nov. 1992
Netherlands	19 Nov. 1991
New Zealand	7 July 1993
Norway	20 Jan. 1989
Pakistan	20 Sep. 1988
Paraguay	7 June 1995
Poland	19 Aug. 1993
Russian Federation	11 Feb. 1992
Senegal	1 Apr. 1994
South Africa	14 Feb. 1992
Sweden	6 Apr. 1989
Switzerland	8 June 1989
Togo	4 July 1995
Trinidad and Tobago	21 Dec. 1992
Tunisia	26 Jan. 1993
Turkey	13 July 1994
United Kingdom*	27 June 1990

*The United Kingdom acceptance is in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Bailiwick of Jersey, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeono Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, St Helena Dependencies, St Helena and Turks and Caicos Islands.



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