



TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HÀNG HẢI VIỆT NAM
VIỆN MÔI TRƯỜNG

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY

1

Lecture 4. WETLANDS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

2

Wetlands include all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peat lands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

3

- Wetlands are vital for human survival. They are among the world's most productive environments; cradles of biological diversity that provide the water and productivity upon which countless species of plants and animals depend for survival.
- Wetlands are indispensable for the countless benefits or “ecosystem services” that they provide humanity, ranging from freshwater supply, food and building materials, and biodiversity, to flood control, groundwater recharge, and climate change mitigation.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

4



- Wetlands provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants.
- Wetlands are nurseries for many saltwater and freshwater fishes and shellfish of commercial and recreational importance.
- Wetlands are also important landscape features because they hold and slowly release flood water and snow melt, recharge groundwater, act as filters to cleanse water of impurities, recycle nutrients, and provide recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of people.

RAMSAR CONVENTION

5

- **The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance**, known as the **Ramsar Convention**, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use (defined as the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of humankind) of wetlands and their resources.
- The Ramsar Convention is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in **1971** and the Convention's **168 member countries** cover all geographic regions of the planet.
- The Ramsar Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

6

- At the time of joining the Convention, each Contracting Party undertakes to designate at least one wetland site for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance.
- Parties should continue to designate suitable wetlands within their territory for the List. They select wetlands for designation by referring to the Criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance.
- The inclusion of a site in the List embodies the government's commitment to take the steps necessary to ensure that its ecological character is maintained. Wetlands included in the List acquire a new national and international status: they are recognized as being of significant value not only for the country or the countries in which they are located, but for humanity as a whole.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

7

- The Ramsar Convention provides the single most global framework for intergovernmental cooperation on wetland issues.
- Article 5 of the Convention establishes that “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 endeavor to coordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna.”
- By setting international standards for wetland conservation and providing a forum for discussing global wetland issues, the Convention enables Contracting Parties to share information on wetlands and address issues together.

THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

8

- At the center of the Ramsar philosophy is the “wise use” of wetlands. When they accede to the Convention, Contracting Parties commit to work towards the wise use of all the wetlands and water resources in their territory, through national plans, policies and legislation, management actions and public education.
- The Convention defines wise use of wetlands as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. Wise use can thus be seen as the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and all the services they provide, for the benefit of people and nature.
- Contracting Parties commit to work towards the wise use of all the wetlands and water resources in their territory, through national plans, policies and legislation, management actions and public education.

THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

9

- In 1990 the Contracting Parties adopted Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept. The Guidelines emphasized the importance of:
 - adopting national wetland policies, either separately or as a component of wider initiatives such as national environmental action plans;
 - developing programs covering wetland inventory, monitoring, research, training, education and public awareness;
 - developing integrated management plans at wetland sites.
- Since 1990, the Contracting Parties have adopted a wide range of related guidance. Annex A of Resolution IX.1 of 2005 provided a framework to bring this together; more detail is provided in Ramsar Handbook 1.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2

10



Exercise

11

- Divide into groups of 7 – 8 members.
- Introduce a typical wetland of international importance that you've ever heard about or just discovered. You have 20 minutes for preparation and 10 minutes for presentation.
- Say how important it is to the global ecosystem.

Thanks for your listening

12

ANY QUESTION?