



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

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CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES

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CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES

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(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

# **Environmental Conservation : What Role for MEAs ?**

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# *What are MEAs ?*

**The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

<http://www.ramsar.org>

## The Convention's Mission

***“ The conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world “***

- Adopted in the Iranian City of Ramsar in 1971
- 130 State members (Contracting Parties)
- 1100 Ramsar Sites all over the Planet
- 4 NGO Partners
- COP, Standing Committee, STRP, Bureau

# What Are Wetlands ?

“ 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 meters “

Ramsar Convention, Article 1.1

## Also, Wetlands ...

“ may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six meters at low tide lying within the wetlands “

(Ramsar Convention, Article 2.1. )

# Ramsar's Wetland Types

- **Marine** ( coastal lagoons, rocky shores and coral reefs)
- **Estuarine** ( deltas, tidal marshes, mangroves swamps)
- **Lacustrine** (wetlands associated with lakes)
- **Riverine** ( wetlands along rivers and streams)
- **Palustrine** (marshes, swamps and bogs)

# Functions of Wetlands

- **Water storage**
- **Storm protection and flood mitigation**
- **Shoreline stabilisation and erosion control**
- **Groundwater recharge and discharge**
- **Water purification**
- **Biological productivity**
- **Retention of nutrients, sediments and pollutants**
- **Local climate mitigation**

# Values of Wetlands

- **Biodiversity conservation**
- **Water supply**
- **Fish nurseries**
- **Timber production**
- **Fauna and Flora**
- **Transport**
- **Recreation and tourism**
- **Aesthetic and spiritual values**

## CP Obligations

- To implement “wise use” for all wetlands
- To cooperate internationally
- To designate wetlands of international importance and maintain their ecological character

## *What is the Actual Situation of MEAs ?*

- **Proliferation**
- **Competition**
- **Contradiction**
- **UN and non-UN Convention**

# *What Is the Impact of this Situation ?*

- **Structural roadblocks**
- **Cultural roadblocks**
- **Political roadblocks**
- **Financial roadblocks**

## *What Could MEAs Do Better ?*

- **Apply synergies**
- **Economies of scale**
- **Prioritise field work**
- **Link development and environment**
- **Be culturally sensitive**
- **Promote Sustainable Finance Mechanisms**

# What Kind of Financial Mechanisms ?

- Financial (and non-financial) incentives
- Market Based Environmental Management Tools
- Debt-for-Sustainable Development Swaps
- Creation of Site Specific Environmental Trust Funds

# What are Market Based Environmental Management Instruments ?

**Emission charges** : direct payment based on the measurement of estimation of the quality and quantity of a pollutant.

**User charges** : payment for the cost of collective services. For example , charges for the collection and treatment of solid waste, charges on sewage water , charges on hazardous waste , charges on aircraft noise, charges on air pollution etc. When they are used for natural resources management , they are usually called user fees. For example for access to national parks , to hunting or fishing facilities.

**Product charges** : applied to products that create pollution either through their manufacture, consumption or disposal (fertilisers, batteries, pesticides). The aim of this charge is to put a real price on the product to include its collection, disposal and treatment.

**Taxes** for natural resources management are payment for their use. They are also sometimes called Royalties.

## **Marketable (tradable, transferable) permits, rights, quotas**

: also called emission trading. Are based on the principle that any increase in emission or in the use of natural resources must be offset by a decrease of an equivalent , or sometimes greater , quantity. Two broad types of tradable permits system are actually in operation : those based on emission reduction credits (ERCs) , and those based on *ex ante* allocations ("cap-and-trade" ).

**ERCs** takes a "business as usual" approach scenario as the starting point and compares this baseline with the actual performance. If the pollution emitter performs better than the anticipated baseline , a "credit" is earned. This credit can be either used by him or sold to another emitter whose emissions are higher than the accepted baseline.

The "**cap-and-trade**" approach sets an overall emission and use limit (the cap) and requires all pollution emitters to acquire a share of this total before they can emit. Shares may be given free of charge by an environmental agency or auctioned. Their owners can either utilise them , save them for later use or trade them.

**Deposit-refund system** : payment made when purchasing a product . The payment (deposit) is fully or partially reimbursed when the product is returned to the dealer or a specialised treatment facility.

**Non-compliance fee**: imposed under civil law for polluters who do not comply with environmental or natural resources management requirements and regulations. They can be proportional to selected variables such as damage caused by non-compliance , profits linked to reduced non-compliance cost, etc.

**Performance bonds** : used to guarantee compliance with environmental or natural resources requirements , polluters or users may be required to pay a deposit in the form of a bond . The bond is refunded when the compliance is achieved.

**Liability payments** : payment made under civil law to compensate for the damage caused by a polluting activity. Such payments can be made to victims or to the government. They can operate in the context of specific liability rules and compensation schemes , or compensation funds financed by contributions from potential polluters (funds for oil spills , funds for chemical pollution).

**Subsidies** : all form of explicit financial assistance to polluters or users of natural resources, e.g. grants, soft loans, tax breaks, accelerated depreciation, etc. for environmental protection.