



22 MAY 2013
INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
WATER & BIODIVERSITY

The International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May 2013

Statement by Anada Tiéga, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



On this Biodiversity Day, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands joins in worldwide celebrations and calls for more actions to conserve wetlands for the planet's biodiversity and human well-being. It is urgent to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues to prevent the loss of many species of plants and animals that cannot survive without wetlands. Water and biodiversity are vital for human survival but today's increasing pressures (such as the impact of a growing human population, intense demands for economic growth, imperatives for poverty eradication and improving people's livelihoods), continue to take precedence over maintaining a healthy wetland biodiversity.

A recently published booklet by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, [Natural Solutions for Water Security](#), stresses why biodiversity is central to achieving the vision of a water secure world. We live at a time of great environmental challenges. Given the increasing human population and its dependence on water and wetlands, it is urgent to fully recognise the values and benefits of nature. The booklet states that currently 884 million people (12.5% of the global population) are living without safe drinking water and 2.5 billion people (40%) do not have adequate sanitation. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under water stress conditions.

Action needed at all levels

Today, the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands reaffirms its active engagement with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The main activities listed in the 5th Joint Work Plan between the two Conventions ensure the wise use of wetlands as well as the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in all ecosystems, and to promote the contribution of biodiversity and wetlands to human well-being. In addition, the Work Plan takes notice of the adoption by CBD COP10 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The Ramsar Convention works with many partners to secure wetland biodiversity for the future by alerting stakeholders of the economic dangers of continued wetland and biodiversity loss. It is urgent to act upon them by integrating the values of water and wetlands into decision-making processes. The recently launched report [The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity \(TEEB\) for Water and Wetlands](#) lists the benefits derived from wetlands as well as losses faced from destroying them, acknowledging the need for 'measurement' of these values for improved wetland resources management.

This year's theme "Water and Biodiversity" is also a great opportunity for the Ramsar Convention to stress that eight out of the nine criteria used to designate Wetlands of International Importance (to date a network of 2,122 protected wetlands around the globe) are biodiversity criteria, emphasizing the importance the Convention places on sustaining this diversity by designating and restoring wetlands. The Convention also provides tools at the international, national and local level to make the link between wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services such as fish, fruit, wood, medicines, etc., upon which people depend.

It is time to secure biodiversity for the future

Considerable technical knowledge has already been developed by the CBD, Ramsar, and many partners to manage land and water better in order to sustain their benefits for people. The Ramsar Convention believes that appropriate land use planning to minimise wetland loss and degradation, accelerated wetland restoration, and

increased designation and management of Wetlands of International Importance will all help to secure wetland biodiversity for the future. Biodiversity is life; it is time to make sure we value its richness appropriately.

English: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-biodiversity-daymessage2013/main/ramsar/1-26%5E26188_4000_0

Spanish: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-biodiversity-daymessage2013/main/ramsar/1-26%5E26188_4000_2

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