

THE RAMSAR CONVENTION – A MODERN SUCCESS STORY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

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On 2 February 1971, eighteen countries signed the first modern global environmental treaty in the town of Ramsar. 40 years later it is still the only MEA dealing with particular ecosystems, subsumed under the newly created term of “wetlands.” Today, it is becoming widely recognized how centrally important these water-related ecosystems are for biodiversity conservation, preservation of cultural heritage, and to mitigate climate change impacts. The network of close to 2000 globally designated sites under the Convention constitutes the world’s largest network of protected areas. The guidance and tools elaborated by the Ramsar Convention provide a unique link to bridge the remaining gap between water resources management and a sustainable ecosystems approach for human wellbeing.