<div align="center">**Joint IOP Statement at the 42nd Ramsar Standing Committee**</div>

Opening Remarks

We would like to extend warm congratulations to the Ramsar Convention on its 40th Anniversary from all the International Organisational Partners and our associated networks. From 1971, Parties to the Convention have made significant advances in managing and conserving wetlands around the world. As

wetlands are a vital lifeline for the poorest in society, providing a critical safety net during periods of turmoil.

Wetlands seem to be more and more   -
and security challenges that the world faces. The growing world population (4 billion in 1974 when the Convention came into force; 7 billion today) has increasing demands for food, water and energy, while accessible water supplies, fertile lands, timber, fisheries and accessible energy sources are becoming scarcer. Wetlands are increasingly being targeted for development. In Africa in
                                                             -national companies and foreign governments, which could in fact be more accurately described as
that directly or indirectly impact wetlands

joint efforts to engage and influence the private sector and commodity trade chains in key countries and regions.

Without recognition of the values of wetland ecosystem services by the development sector, these costs will continue to disproportionately impact biodiversity and the most vulnerable peoples. In this respect the Ramsar Convention must play an even stronger role in catalyzing effective action, through its own mechanisms but also by increasing its influence on other conventions and international policy processes. Recognition of the link between water security and wetlands in CBD is a promising outcome in this respect, and one in which joint action by IOPs alongside the Secretariat and Parties was instrumental. The planned future focus of STRP on valuing ecosystem services, on the relation between wetlands and disasters, energy and poverty is therefore strongly welcomed. The IOPs can add value in all this work by bringing our experience from programmes and supporting effective policy development. One example is the innovative Partners for Resilience programme in which Wetlands International is joining forces with the humanitarian and aid sector to put an ecosystem approach to disaster risk reduction into practice, linked with some vulnerable wetlands in Africa, Asia and LAC.

International cooperation for wetlands conservation and wise use is needed now more than ever - to secure wetlands, their biodiversity and ecosystem services, as a basis for sustainable development. We take this opportunity to urge the Standing Committee and the next COP to solve the alarming arrears in payments of Parties and to seriously consider the possibility of increasing both the core-budget and the staffing level of the Secretariat, as a special and most needed

The future- at least another 40 years of partnership(s)
The signature of the new Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) 2011-2017 between IOPs and the Convention Secretariat on Thursday will seal our renewed

commitment to keep working with Parties to achieve the Ramsar mission. The Memorandum signals an even stronger intent to plan and implement joint actions that advance international and national Ramsar commitments. The aim is to focus the partnerships and maximise the synergies between IOPs and with the Secretariat, so that by combining our capacities we can be even more effective. The current 5 Ramsar IOPs are also keen to see a broadening of the IOPs over the coming years to include some other key players in wetlands conservation. We hope and expect that the Partnerships Coordinator will play a crucial role in engaging the IOPs and ensuring effective information flows and communications.

Indeed, time is of the essence and we cannot afford to waste years on discussions and activities that do not move the Convention or its Secretariat forward. CBD target 10 demands urgent action that Ramsar can help deliver. In this respect the

involved in changing administrations or inform2(to)-5( )-38(w)12(a)-3()-5( )a38(to)12 th