

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WETLANDS & DEVELOPMENT 14 NOVEMBER 1998, DAKAR, SENEGAL

Hosted by the Government of Senegal in cooperation with IUCN The World Conservation Union, WWF The World Wide Fund for Nature. Incorporating 1st Meeting of the Board of Wetlands International

Background:

African wetlands offer exciting opportunities for sustainable development: they are frequently characterised by direct sustainable use of wetland products by local communities; they often incorporate highly sophisticated traditional management systems; and they are increasingly the focus of flourishing eco-tourism initiatives. There are many lessons here for other regions of the world. Yet African wetlands have received inadequate attention: large-scale development projects have often had catastrophic impacts on wetland functioning; national agencies responsible for wetland conservation are severely constrained by resource limitations and a lack of trained personnel; and this limited capacity hinders the attraction and management of large-scale bilateral and multilateral funds for wetland conservation. Local realities make it hard to implement the international conventions and national legislation.

The 1st International Conference on Wetlands & Development (Malaysia 1995) was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Seri Mahathir bin Mohamad, and was highly successful in raising awareness of the important role of wetlands in sustainable development in Asia. The torch from this Conference will be passed to Africa in November 1998, when Senegal will host the 2nd Conference, to coincide with the Board meeting of Wetlands International.

Objectives:

Wetlands International seeks to focus world attention on Africa's wetlands in order to attract support for their wise use and conservation. The conference brings together individuals responsible for wetland management on-the-

ground (project managers, wetland specialists, community leaders), as well as those responsible for working at the international level (Convention secretariats, donor agencies, international organisations). The conference will address three broad issues:

- Turning legislation and policies for wetlands and wetland biodiversity into meaningful on-the-ground action
- Equipping local communities with tools to promote the wise use of wetlands
- Identifying new approaches for financing the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Tentative workshop themes:

- Wetland Policies, legislation and traditional management systems
- Community participation in wetland management
- Strategies for migratory waterbird conservation
- Financing mechanisms for wetland management and wise use

Key partners and sponsors to be listed later.
Languages: English and French.

For more information about the conference, contact:

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A 2nd announcement including registration forms and a call for papers & posters will be circulated in November 1997.

