Final Draft Dated 16 May 2002

Chapter 1.

Introduction

The first chapter sets out the context in which this document was prepared, the background to the terms 'Wise Use' and 'sustainable', and outlines the purpose of the document.

1.1 Preface

All human beings have a stake in the peatlands that enrich the planet. From Northwest Canada to Southeast Asia and southernmost America, from tropical Africa to above the Arctic Circle, everybody wants something from peatlands. Farmers, foresters, oil and mining companies, hydro-electricity plant operators and urban developers want the land beneath peatlands. Horticulturists, farmers and hobby gardeners, energy and building companies, households, chemical and environmental industries want the peat itself. Hunters, fishermen, berry and mushroom pickers want the natural harvest of the plants and animals of the peatlands. Paper industries, building companies, and furniture manufacturers want the timber on peatlands. Nature lovers yearn for primeval peatlands to nurture their spirits; hikers, campers, and backpackers demand that peatlands be preserved for their enchantment; skiers for their openness; conservationists for their biodiversity; scientists as outdoor laboratories and as sources of information.

The distribution of peatland wealth, and its division between the present and the future, was originally relatively simple: some was used to provide land for crops, some to provide peat for fuel; some peatlands were used for hunting, gathering and for recreation; the remainder were inaccessible. In the second half of the 20th century the growing demands for energy, agriculture, horticulture and forestry led to a rapid increase in the commercial use of mires and peatlands. In the same period an increasing awareness of the environmental, ecological, aesthetic and scientific value of mires and peatlands led to demands for the cessation or reduction of this exploitation[1].

Different stakeholders have widely differing views on what peatlands legacy should be left for future generations. All claim they are entitled to the beneficial air and water regulating capacities and to the natural and cultural heritage of peatlands. Increasingly they are becoming aware of the local and global environmental issues associated with peatland exploitation. In the midst of these interest groups are the millions of people who depend directly on peatlands, who earn their living harvesting, converting, cultivating, extracting, cutting, planting, exploiting, conserving, and studying peatlands. Their interests are served by thousands of organisations. Silent, but more

[1] Here and elsewhere in the document, the word "exploitation" is used in the sense of deriving benefit from, without any pejorative intent.

significant, are the great numbers of citizens of Earth, who - largely unconsciously - enjoy the products and services that peatlands provide.

1.2 'Sustainable' and 'Wise' Use in key conventions

A number of international conventions have sought to reconcile the actual and potential conflicts between different uses[2] of natural resources. These help to provide a context for the 'sustainable' or 'wise' use of peatlands.

Ramsar: Under Article 3.1, the Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention agree to "formulate and implement their planning so as to promote ... as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory." The Regina Conference 1987 defined *Wise Use* of wetlands as "their sustainable utilisation for the benefit of mankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem". The Montreux Conference 1990 adopted "Guidelines for implementation of the *Wise Use* concept of the Convention".

The Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan (1997- 2002, Recommendation 6.1) calls on Ramsar Parties to facilitate the conservation and wise use of peatlands at national and regional levels, including the development of regionally based peatland management guidelines.

Biological Diversity: The Convention on Biological Diversity states that '"Sustainable use' means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations."

Climate Change: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change states 'The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities….The Parties have a right to, and should, promote sustainable development. Policies and measures to protect the climate system against human-induced change should be appropriate for the specific conditions of each Party and should be integrated with national development programmes, taking into account that economic development is essential for adopting measures to address climate change… The Parties should co-operate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change.'

This document is informed by these concepts of 'sustainable and 'wise'. It deals specifically with mires and peatlands, and defines the Wise Use of mires and peatlands as those uses of mires and peatlands for which reasonable people now and in the future will not attribute blame. The word 'use' is employed in its widest meaning, including conservation and non-use.

[2] The words 'use' and 'utilisation' are employed in this document to mean any type of use including conservation (or non-use).

1.3 Preparation of a Wise Use document

The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) and the International Peat Society (IPS) agreed in 1997 to prepare jointly a document on the Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands.

> **IPS** (www.peatsociety.fi) is an international organisation containing representatives of different interests: applied and academic scientists, engineers, and businesspeople. The mission of IPS is to promote international co-operation on all matters concerning peatlands. IPS carries out its main work through seven Commissions dealing with the use of peatlands for conservation, industry, agriculture, medicine, forestry; as well as after-use and characteristics.
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> **IMCG** (www.imcg.net) is an international network of specialists having a particular interest in mire and peatland conservation. The network encompasses a wide spectrum of expertise and interests, from research scientists to consultants, government agency specialists to peatland site managers. It operates largely through e-mail and newsletters, and holds regular workshops and symposia.

An IMCG/IPS steering group was appointed consisting of Jack Rieley (University of Nottingham), Donal Clarke (Bord na Móna p.l.c.), Hans Joosten (University of Greifswald), and Richard Lindsay (University of East London). The compilation and drafting of the document was carried out on behalf of the two organisations by Hans Joosten and Donal Clarke. It was agreed that the document should consist of a brief, clear executive summary in layman's language, supported by a more extended and referenced background paper.

Progress in drafting the document was reviewed on a periodic basis at internal meetings of both organisations. In addition, meetings attended by various participating parties took place as follows:

Date	**Place**	**Circumstances**
November 1997	Surwold, Germany	Joint IMCG & IPS meeting
September 1998	Jyväskylä, Finland	IPS 'Spirit of Peatlands Symposium' with IMCG members present
May 1999	San José, Costa Rica	13th Global Biodiversity Forum[3]
November 1999	Freising, Germany	Joint IMCG & IPS meeting
March 2000	Lagow, Poland	IMCG meeting with IPS members present
May 2000	Stockholm, Sweden	IPS meeting with IMCG members present
August 2000	Québec, Canada	Millennium Wetland Event
December 2000	Heathrow, England	Joint IMCG & IPS meeting
March 2001	Wageningen	Joint IMCG & IPS meeting with Wetlands International (WI) members present.

1.3.4 The idea for co-operation on the development of Wise Use principles arose also from a series of other events:

[3] IUCN 1999.

Date	Event
1994	*The Trondheim Declaration* from the Sixth IMCG Symposium, Trondheim, Norway[4].
1995	*The Edinburgh Declaration* developed at the International Peatlands Convention, Edinburgh, Scotland[5].
1995	*The Palangka Raya Declaration* adopted by the International Conference on Biodiversity and Sustainability of Tropical Peatlands, Palangka Raya, Indonesia[6].
1996	*A Global Action Plan on Mire and Peatland Conservation* proposed during the International Workshop on Peatlands and Mire Conservation, Brisbane, Australia[7].
1996	*Recommendation VI.9 of COP6 and Strategic Plan 1997-2002*, Ramsar Convention[8].
1998	The IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management report entitled *Guidelines for Integrated Planning and Management of Tropical Lowland Peatlands with Special Reference to Southeast Asia*[9].
1998	*Peatlands Under Pressure – Arctic to Tropical Peatlands*, International Workshop, IUCN-CEM and Society of Wetland Scientists, Anchorage, Alaska, USA[10].
1999	*Recommendations VII.1* of COP7, Ramsar Convention[11].
1999	*Statement on Tropical Peatlands*, "Safeguarding a Global Natural Resource", Statement of the International Conference on Tropical Peat Swamps, Penang, Malaysia[12].

In preparing this document the precedents[13] set in relation to hydropower and forestry were useful.

1.4 Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands [14]

The preparation of this Wise Use document is part of a wider initiative between the participating organisations, the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (GAP), which has now become a document within the context of the Ramsar Convention. This Wise Use project is referred to in one of the action points within theme 4 of the GAP. The overall aim of the GAP is "to achieve recognition of the importance of peatlands to the maintenance of global biodiversity, storage of water and carbon vital to the world's climate system, and promote their wise use, conservation and management for the benefit of people and the environment." The GAP has seven **themes** as follows:

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[4] Moen 1995a.
[5] IPS 1995 p 49.
[6] Rieley & Page 1997.
[7] Rubec 1996a, Lindsay 1996.
[8] Ramsar 1996.
[9] Safford & Maltby 1998
[10] Maltby & MacClean 1999.
[11] Ramsar 1999.
[12] IMCG Newsletter 6 (Nov. 1999): 8-9 (www.imcg.net).
[13] Forestry Stewardship Council 2000, International Energy Agency 2000.
[14] Ramsar 2001.

1: Knowledge of Global Resources
Development and application of standardised terminology and classification systems
Establishing a global database of peatlands and mires
Detecting Changes and trends in the quantity and quality of the peatland resource

2: Education, Training and Public Awareness

3: Policy and Legislative Instruments

4: Wise Use and Management Guidelines

5: Research Networks, Regional Centres of Expertise and Institutional Capacity

6: International Co-operation

7. Implementation and Support

Each Theme is supplemented by more detailed 'Guidelines for Action'.

1.5 Purpose of the document

This document aims to assist all those who influence mire and peatland management in identifying, analysing, and resolving possible conflicts, in order to plan, design, and implement the best management option for any mire or peatland. The document is intended to be applicable to all forms of management or development, from single-sector developments to multiple use projects. The Wise Use of mires and peatlands requires an integrative approach, one which looks at all their different values and functions in an integrated way.

The achievement of an integrative approach requires
(i) a knowledge of the characteristics and functions of mires and peatlands;
(ii) an understanding of the factual issues[15] involved,
(iii) an understanding of the motives and reasons for one's own point of view,
(iv) a willingness to understand the others' point of view, and
(v) fair compromise where there are conflicting preferences.

The purpose of the document is to establish a framework within which
- judgements can be made on choices between different options for mires;
- any permitted exploitation of mires or peatlands can be carried out in a way which causes the least damage;
- judgements can be made on whether particular peatland-based services or products have been produced or derived in accordance with accepted principles.

Not all countries will already have in place the full legal and administrative infrastructure assumed in the document. In countries where the full infrastructure does not already exist it cannot be put in place at once. It would be possible, however, to aspire to it over a period of time.

[15] Including factual uncertainties.

1.6 Concept and content of the document

There are no rules or doctrines which are accepted by all human beings. Living conditions, preferences, feelings, and convictions differ strongly between different interest groups, different cultures and countries, and in different time periods. Universally, human beings share only a few attributes. These include

- absolute needs (see § 4.2.),
- a hereditary tendency to develop specific preferences (see § 3.1.4.), and
- an ability to approach choices rationally.

This Wise Use document is based on rational argument and is built on widely accepted premises. These premises include international Conventions and agreed United Nations statements and resolutions. It is necessary to set out first the philosophical, ethical and factual bases from which a framework for Wise Use may be derived. Chapters 2 and 3 provide factual information on the nature, origin, extent, and functional benefits of mires and peatlands. Chapter 3, in addition, describes the values which inform human preferences. Chapter 4 looks at conflicts, their causes, and approaches to solutions. Chapter 5 sets out a framework, based on widely accepted premises, within which the practice of Wise Use of mires and peatlands can be established.

This document provides

- background information on the extent, types, functions and uses of mires and peatlands,
- an underlying rationale for Wise Use, and
- a proposed framework for the Wise Use of mires and peatlands.

The Appendices contain examples of model codes of conduct which can be derived from the framework

1.7 Target organisations

This document is addressed to anyone who has to take decisions regarding appropriate uses of peatlands. It is intended to be of assistance to decision-makers in

- International Trade and Environment Organisations, Conventions, and Commissions;
- Governments and their regulatory bodies, for example, Ministries of Forestry and Agriculture, Environment agencies;
- State and voluntary bodies charged with the conservation of peatlands and mires;
- Development Assistance Agencies;
- Economic entities which derive commercial income from peatlands and mires, including those using peatlands for agriculture, forestry, and extraction.
- Environmental Management Divisions of private companies whose activities may influence, and be influenced by, the state of peatlands;
- Scientists who work for companies or in the development of forestry or agriculture on peatlands;
- Environment Groups, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Scientific and Educational Institutions.

The following networks and organisations would have a specific interest in the document:

- IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN/CEM);
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and its Contracting Parties;
- International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG);
- Wetlands International (WI);
- International Peat Society (IPS);
- International Association of Ecology (INTECOL);
- Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS);
- Global Environment Network;
- Institute for Wetland Policy and Research (USA).

1.8 How to use the document

The document is intended to be read as a whole, providing a logical sequence – what are peatlands, why are they valued, what conflicts arise between values and how these conflicts can be resolved. In this context Chapter 5 sets out a framework of decision procedures, which should make it possible to reach a conclusion where conflicting claims arise. These decision procedures are essentially a rational sequence of questions the answers to which should provide decision-makers with a sound basis for decisions and should provide those on different sides of a dispute with a clear rationale for why a particular decision was taken.

1.9 Drafting and language

In preparing the document the drafters have attempted to use as simple language as possible, conscious that many of those for whom it would be useful do not have a scientific or technical background. However, much of the material is scientific in nature and there are limits beyond which it can not be simplified and still remain accurate. Our aim has been to make the document accessible to anyone prepared to make a certain effort.