



OUR POSITION BEFORE RAMSAR COP12

RAMSAR CLASSIFYING DESTRUCTION

SHRIMP FARMS AND SALT MINES ARE NOT ARTIFICIAL WETLANDS RAMSAR MUST TAKE THEM OUT OF THEIR CLASIFICATION SYSTEM

The twelfth Conference of the Parties of the RAMSAR Convention, called COP12 will be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from June 1st to June 9th. In the face of this Convention, Redmanglar Internacional requests that RAMSAR retires shrimp and salt industries, among others, from its artificial wetlands classification list.

THE CONVENTION:

The Ramsar Convention is the only international treaty at government levels that's specific to the conservation and rational use of wetlands. "The treaty, negotiated during the 1960s by countries and non government organizations that were concerned over the growing loss and degradation of wetlands that were habitats to migratory aquatic birds, the treaty was adopted at the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971, and came into force in 1975. It's the only global treaty on environmental issues that deals with a specific type of ecosystem, and the countries that are members of the Convention cover all the geographic regions of the country."

MANGROVE FORESTS ON THE RAMSAR CONVENTION:

From its creation to this day, the Ramsar Convention has 2,177 designated Sites on its Wetlands of International Importance List, adding up to a surface of 208,518,408 hectares. According to "The Ramsar Convention and the Mangrove ecosystems" report (2006) up to February of this year 177 Ramsar sites presented mangrove ecosystems.

44 years have passed since the RAMSAR Convention was created but to this day wetlands are still highly pressured systems, due both to economic dynamics and models and to industrial and agroindustrial activities of high environmental impacts, extractive industries and to the little or inexistent political will of governments that often approve and support such activities.

Mangrove forests are among the most threatened wetlands and ecosystems of the planet. Several studies have revealed a great loss of the mangrove ecosystem in tropical and subtropical zones, in some cases more than 30% of these areas has been destroyed to allow room for shrimp production, an activity that's been acknowledged as its main threat at a global level.

SHRIMP FACTORIES, SALT MINES AND EVEN MINING PONDS ARE STILL CONSIDERED WETLANDS BY RAMSAR:

Despite the grave impacts that industrial shrimp factories generate both for ecosystems and human populations, RAMSAR still regards this predatory industry as a type of "Artificial Wetland" sharing this classification with industrial salt mines, hydroelectric dams and mine residue ponds.

The shrimp industry has a long history of human rights violations on the places where it works, going from eviction of coastal towns and communities to damage to the health of local populations, repressive and intimidating actions against those who oppose or question their projects to the murder of local leaders.

THE IMPACTS OF THE SHRIMP INDUSTRY:

It threatens the integrity of coastal ecosystems. It reduces the performance of ecosystemic services. It threatens the food sovereignty of coastal towns. It uses destructive fishing methods. It takes active part on the fishing overpopulation and lack of food security all over the world. It contributes to global warming and climate crisis. It privatizes public use lands. It creates armed conflicts and violates human rights. It deepens social and environmental injustice. It breaks environmental laws. It promotes an inadequate distribution of public resources. It threatens the health of workers and consumers. It is green makeup of destruction through certification.

BEFOR RAMSAR'S COP12:

Redmanglar Internacional questions the fact that shrimp farms, fish culture ponds and salt mines are considered by the RAMSAR Convention as artificial wetlands.

These industries must be classified in the listings of activities that generate negative impacts against wetlands and other associated ecosystems, as well as against the communities and people that inhabit them.

Placing shrimp factories, salt mines and other industrial activities in the “Artificial Wetlands” list is another argument that’s used by such high social and environmental impact industries, and it only contributes to the green make-up of their activities.

Considering them “Artificial Wetlands” is a criteria that’s not fair to these projects’ realities nor to the thousands of communities that face hard battles in many countries that are members of the Ramsar Convention to have their rights respected.

Redmanglar asks the RAMSAR Convention, of its scientific and technical body and to the contracting countries and parties to take the following actions:

Review the wetlands classification with attention and make necessary changes to leave the following out:

- 1) Fish culture ponds (such as industrial fish and shrimp culture ponds).
- 2) Salt production zones; artificial salt mines, etc.
- 3) Water storage areas, reservoirs, dykes, hydroelectric dams,
- 4) Digging ventures, sand and gravel quarries, mining residue ponds.

Implement and promote actions through its contracting parties in order to promote a special categorization for mangroves s ecosystems in a critical state of conservation, vulnerable and endangered.

Redmanglar urges the Convention’s contracting parties to create legal mechanisms that sanction and penalize in harsher ways the destruction, felling, degradation and negative impacts caused to the mangrove ecosystem generated, whether directly or indirectly, by high social and environmental impact industrial activities.

Secretaría Ejecutiva

Redmanglar Internacional

Guatemala, Centroamérica.

redmanglar@redmanglar.org www.redmanglarinternacional.org Tel. (502) 2476 - 8663