



## Press Release

### Wetland Cities to convene in Amiens, France, for the Second Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors

The Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia (RRC-EA) and Amiens City Government will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors that will be held in Amiens, France, on 8-10 June 2023. The event will see the participation of 23 Wetland Cities from 9 countries for a total of over 200 participants, including 9 Mayors, 8 Vice/Deputy Mayors, and over 30 observers.

The annual meeting, originally supposed to take place in 2020 and later delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will feature two days of technical and policy level discussions, and a one-day field trip to Baie de Somme, co-organized by the Conseil Départemental de la Somme. Baie de Somme is a Ramsar Site in France and a major wetland in the Hauts-de-France region.

The meeting will be opened by the remarks of important speakers such as Mrs. Brigitte Fouré, Mayor of Amiens City, France, Mr. Suh Seung Oh, Executive Director of RRC-EA, Mr. Jay Aldous, Deputy Secretary General, Convention on Wetlands, Mr. Roh Kwan-kyu, Mayor of Suncheon City, Republic of Korea (incumbent chair of Wetland City Network), and Mr. Haussoullier, President of Department Somme Council. Mayors and officials of Wetland Cities will also have the opportunity to review the existing Terms of Reference of the Wetland City Network, adopt the first Wetland City Network Strategic Plan, and present their wetland conservation initiatives during the two parallel sessions.

The meeting is organized as a voluntary initiative aimed to support Wetland Cities and facilitate sharing of best practices on wetland policies and management. It is also meant to support the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention, a scheme that recognizes exceptional local governments that promote and maintain their strong and positive relationship with wetlands. The scheme was officially adopted through the endorsement of Resolution XII.10 on the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention during the COP12 in 2015.

The first round of accreditations culminated at COP13 in 2018 and recognized a total of 18 Wetland Cities from seven countries. In this occasion, the RRC-EA prepared a side event that invited mayors of the very first set of Wetland Cities to showcase their efforts and contributions to sustainable urban development and to the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Following the first round of accreditations, mayors and officials of newly accredited cities formally convened for the first time in October 2019 in Suncheon City, Republic of Korea, for the “Inaugural Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors”. The event, organized by the RRC-EA, and hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, and the Suncheon City Government, gathered over 130 representatives from government and non-government organizations, local communities and the academe.

The roundtable facilitated the successful establishment of the Wetland City Network, while membership, composition, and other preliminary operational information were defined through



a Terms of Reference. During the meeting, the RRC-EA was endorsed to serve as the Secretariat of the Wetland City Network, while Amiens City in France and Dongying City in China offered to host the second and third meetings, respectively.

In the meanwhile, COP14 recognized 25 new cities from 12 countries that joined the cohort of pioneer cities accredited in 2018. Also in this occasion, the RRC-EA hosted a side event on the topic “Learning from new Wetland Cities”, which was a sequel to the side event organized during COP13. The event provided an opportunity for new Wetland Cities to share their experiences and knowledge with interested parties, as well as to welcome them into the Wetland City Network and invite them to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mayors’ Roundtable. As such, the upcoming Roundtable will serve as a platform for new wetland cities to mingle with and further learn from the other accredited cities.

In this regard, Mrs. Brigitte Fouré, in her role of mayor of the host city, said that “Amiens is happy to welcome mayors and officials from the forty-three accredited wetland cities, as well as observers including international organization partners of the Convention on Wetlands”, stressing how water and wetlands in Amiens are closely associated with citizens’ living environment, recreation, and tourism. The Executive Director of the RRC-EA, Mr. Suh Seung Oh, also said that “as the Secretariat of the Wetland City Network, the RRC-EA is pleased to serve its role by co-organizing this important event, and looks forward to the fruitful discussion and to sharing experiences on wetland conservation and management of local policies, as well as to adopting the first Wetland City Network Strategic Plan that will guide Wetland Cities in the implementation of the Convention at the local level”.