

**UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



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**Statement by the United States of America  
72<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly Sixth Committee  
Agenda Item 173: Observer status for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat in  
the General Assembly  
Emily Pierce, Counsellor  
November 3, 2017**

Thank you, Chair.

We thank the delegation of Uruguay for its engagement with us on our questions regarding the Ramsar Secretariat's eligibility for observer status in the General Assembly. We regret that after our consultations, we remain convinced that, though Ramsar's activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly, a treaty secretariat does not qualify as an intergovernmental organization.

The United States supports the critically important work the Ramsar Secretariat is doing to facilitate implementation of wetlands conservation decisions by Ramsar Parties. Wetlands provide many environmental services, including clean water, flood abatement, wildlife habitat, recreation, tourism, fishing and groundwater discharge and recharge.

The United States also greatly values the contributions that the Ramsar Secretariat can make to the discussions in the United Nations on topics relevant to Ramsar's work. We share the desire of Uruguay and other delegations to find creative, practical ways to create opportunities for the Ramsar Secretariat to make such contributions. We are reviewing participation modalities for relevant meetings, including those of the High Level Political Forum and ECOSOC, to ensure that, when eligible, the Ramsar Secretariat has a seat in the room at critical discussions. We also strongly encourage organizers of relevant side events and meetings at the UN to invite Ramsar Secretariat representatives to participate and to request the UN to facilitate appropriate entry of Ramsar Secretariat representatives for such events and meetings. In addition, we urge the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which hosts the Ramsar Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, to designate Ramsar Secretariat representatives as part of IUCN delegations to UN meetings and conferences relevant to Ramsar's work. We express our readiness to work with Uruguay, the Ramsar Secretariat, the co-sponsors of this application, and other interested delegations towards this important shared goal.