13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.1

World Wetlands Day

1. RECALLING the International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl, hosted by the Game and Fish Department of the Government of Iran from 2 to 3 February 1971, in Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, where the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat" was adopted by representatives of 18 States on 2 February 1971;

2. FURTHER RECALLING that the Convention was signed in Ramsar on 3 February 1971;

3. AWARE of the comprehensive nature of the Convention Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) established by Resolution XII.9 for the period 2016-2024;

4. RECALLING that Resolution XII.9 recognizes the growing celebration of World Wetlands Day in a large number of countries, and urges Contracting Parties to continue or to begin to use this occasion to bring attention to their achievements and continuing challenges in wetland conservation and wise use; and

5. CONGRATULATING all Contracting Parties celebrating World Wetlands Days;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. WELCOMES the celebration of World Wetlands Day in a growing number of countries;

7. INVITES the United Nations General Assembly to recognize 2 February of each year, the date of adoption of the Convention on Wetlands, as World Wetlands Day; and

8. INVITES Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme and international organizations and non-governmental organizations with an interest in wetlands to facilitate cooperation and information exchange in support of 2 February as World Wetlands Day.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

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Resolution XIII.2

Financial and budgetary matters

1. RECALLING the budgetary provisions established by paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 6 of the Convention;

2. RECALLING Resolution XII.7 on *Resource mobilization and partnership framework of the Ramsar Convention*;

3. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the prompt payment by the majority of Contracting Parties of their contributions to the core budget of the Convention; but NOTING WITH CONCERN that a number of Parties have significant outstanding contributions (see document COP13 Doc.14, *Report on financial and budgetary matters*);

4. NOTING WITH GRATITUDE the additional voluntary financial contributions made by many Contracting Parties, including those from Contracting Parties of Africa specifically earmarked for African Regional Initiatives (in accordance with paragraph 23 of Resolution X.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*), and also the contributions made by non-governmental organizations and private companies for activities undertaken by the Secretariat;

5. RECALLING the *Delegation of Authority to the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands* signed by the Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Chairman of the Convention's Standing Committee on 29 January 1993, and the *Supplementary Note to Delegation of Authority* signed on the same date;

6. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the financial and administrative services provided to the Secretariat by IUCN, underpinned by the Services Agreement between Ramsar and IUCN revised in 2009;

7. NOTING that Contracting Parties have been kept informed of the financial situation of the Secretariat through the audited annual financial statements for the years from 2015 to 2017 and the reports of the Standing Committee meetings from 2016 to 2018; and

8. RECOGNIZING the need to continue to strengthen financial partnerships with relevant international organizations and other entities, and to explore additional funding opportunities through their existing financial mechanisms;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. APPRECIATES that, since the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP12), in 2015, the Secretariat has substantially improved its management of the Convention's funds, prudently, efficiently and openly;

10. EXPRESSES ITS GRATITUDE to the Contracting Parties that have served in the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee during the triennium 2016-2018, and in particular to Senegal, which has acted as Chair of the Subgroup;

11. DECIDES that the *Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention* contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters* (1993), shall be applied *in toto* to the 2019-2021 triennium;

12. FURTHER DECIDES that the Subgroup on Finance will be continued and operate under the aegis of the Standing Committee and with the roles and responsibilities specified in Resolution VI.17 on *Financial and budgetary matters* (1996), and will include one Standing Committee representative from each Ramsar region plus the immediately prior Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, as well as any other interested Contracting Parties, bearing in mind the desirability of equitable regional participation and the need to keep the group to a manageable size, and will designate one of its members as its Chair; and NOTES that travel support for eligible Contracting Parties to attend Subgroup meetings will be limited to the regional representatives of the Standing Committee;

13. NOTES that the 2019-2021 budget includes a core element funded by contributions from Contracting Parties, and that the Secretariat will seek additional non-core resources in line with the priorities identified by the Conference of the Parties, which are listed in Annex 3 of the present Resolution; and REQUESTS that the Secretariat continue to develop new approaches and tools to secure voluntary financial support for currently unfunded priority projects as listed in Annex 3;

14. APPROVES the core budget for the triennium 2019-2021 as presented in Annex 1 of the present Resolution, to enable the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;

15. APPROVES the use of surplus from the core budget for the 2016-2018 triennium of CHF 228,000 to supplement the approved 2019-2021 triennium budget in the following areas: CHF 120,000 for Communications, translation, publications and reporting implementation, CHF 60,000 for staff travel (CHF 15,000 for travel of Secretariat Senior Management, CHF 15,000 for travel of Resource Mobilization and Outreach and CHF 30,000 for travel of Regional Advice and Support), CHF 15,000 for STRP implementation, and CHF 33,000 for planning and capacity building; and REQUESTS the Secretariat to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the 2019-2021 triennium;

16. APPROVES the use of surplus from the core budget of the 2016-2018 triennium of up to CHF 70,000 to support the work of the Effectiveness Working Group;

17. URGES Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to make a renewed effort to settle them as expeditiously as possible to enhance the financial sustainability of the Convention through contributions by all Contracting Parties;

18. REQUESTS that the Secretariat contact Contracting Parties that have outstanding contributions in excess of three years and assist them to identify appropriate options to rectify the situation

and to request a plan for making payment of contributions, and report back at each meeting of the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Contracting Parties on activities taken in this regard and results achieved; and AGREES that the Standing Committee should continue to consider appropriate action concerning Parties that have neither paid their outstanding contributions nor submitted a payment plan for this purpose;

19. REQUESTS regional representatives in the Standing Committee to engage Parties from their respective regions with outstanding contributions to encourage them to identify appropriate options to rectify the situation;

20. NOTES WITH CONCERN the situation with voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and others to increase such contributions;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other governments, financial institutions, International Organization Partners and other implementing partners to support the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;

22. REQUESTS the Secretariat to update the resource mobilization strategy for the Convention to reflect the priorities identified in Annex 3 to the present Resolution and make it available to the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting, for its consideration;

23. NOTES WITH APPRECIATION the alignment of the Secretariat with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) policies and procedures for managing non-core funding;

24. REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide to the Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) in Africa, on an annual basis, the available balance of the African voluntary contribution fund; and INVITES those RRIs to submit requests to the Secretariat as part of the reports to access available funds in accordance with the provisions of Resolution XIII.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021*;

25. INVITES the regional representatives in the Standing Committee to decide on the use of those funds based on the requests submitted by the RRIs and inform the Secretariat accordingly;

26. REQUESTS the Secretariat within its existing legal framework and mandate, to assist, as appropriate, Contracting Parties in the administration of non-core funded projects, including, but not limited to successful fund-raising for Regional Initiatives; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS Secretariat staff, identified in Annex 4, supported with core funds, not to be involved in the day-to-day administration of non-core funded projects as this role would be the responsibility of any Secretariat staff supported with non-core funds for that specific purpose.

27. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to transfer core budget allocations between budget lines as may be required in the light of significant positive or negative changes during the triennium to costs, rates of inflation, interest and tax income projected in the budget, without increasing the assessed contributions of Parties or increasing the charges paid to IUCN above a maximum of 13% of the budget;

28. RECOGNIZES the benefits of flexibility in travel budget lines to deliver on the Secretariat Work Plan for the triennium; and AUTHORIZES the Secretary General to transfer resources between travel budget lines, ensuring that the Subgroup on Finance is informed and that such transfers are reported to the Standing Committee at its next meeting;

29. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to the core budget should be in accordance with the most recent scale of assessments for the contribution of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly, except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale of assessments, would make annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention core budget of less than CHF 1,000, in which case the annual contribution is to be that amount;

30. URGES all Contracting Parties to pay their contributions promptly by 1 January of each year, or as soon thereafter as that country's budget cycle will permit;

31. AGREES to phase out the Small Grants Fund Programme upon exhaustion of its currently available resources; and URGES the Secretariat and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to seek funding alternatives for small-scale projects;

32. EXPRESSES GRATITUDE to the governments of Switzerland and the United States of America and to Danone, the MAVA Foundation and the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation for their voluntary contributions to non-core activities of the Convention, namely the Swiss Grant for Africa, the Wetlands for the Future Fund, World Wetlands Day, Conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in wetlands, and the Nagao Wetland Fund, respectively;

33. REAFFIRMS the decision taken at the 11th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (in Resolution XI.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*) that the Reserve Fund:
    a. provides for unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures;
    b. receives realized triennial core budget surpluses (or deficits);
    c. should not be lower than 6% of the annual core budget of the Convention and not greater than 15%; and
    d. should be administered by the Secretary General with the approval of the Subgroup on Finance established by the Standing Committee;

34. REQUESTS the Secretariat to endeavour to maintain the Reserve Fund over the 2019-2021 triennium and to report annually to the Standing Committee on its status and to seek the concurrence of the Subgroup on Finance prior to any use of the Fund;

35. ALSO AUTHORIZES the Secretary General, within the rules of IUCN, to adjust the staffing levels, numbers and structure of the Secretariat presented in Annex 4, provided that the adjustments are within the costs indicated and made in accordance with the 1993 *Delegation of Authority to the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands* and its *Supplementary Note*;

36. NOTES with appreciation the transparency and accountability regarding Secretariat operations that the Secretary General has fostered during the past triennium; and REQUESTS, as a means to further enhance these efforts, that the Secretariat establish a section of the Convention website to publish information to ensure transparency and accountability, including *inter alia*: completed and accepted audit reports; financial rules and regulations; annual reports of the Secretary General to the Standing Committee; procedures for engagement with the private sector; materials related to staff codes of conduct and professional ethics; the 1993 delegation of authority and its supplementary note; anti-fraud policies; anti-harassment policies; whistle-blower rules and protections; policies on conflict of interest; policies on gender equity and equality; and any other relevant information;

37. REQUESTS the Secretariat to consider Contracting Parties that are on the UN Conference on Trade and Development's List of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as eligible for sponsorship

for delegate travel, whether or not they are formally classified as such on economic grounds in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list; and

38. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution and its annexes supersede Resolution XII.1 on *Financial and budgetary matters,* and paragraph 11.a of Resolution VI.17.

Annex 1

Core budget 2019-2021

Ramsar core budget 2019-2021 CHF 000s	Budget 2019	Budget 2020	Budget 2021	Total Budget 2019-2021
INCOME				
Parties' contributions	3,779	3,779	3,779	11,337
Voluntary contributions	1,065	1,065	1,065	3,195
Income tax	225	225	225	675
Income interest	12	12	12	36
TOTAL INCOME	**5,081**	**5,081**	**5,081**	**15,243**
EXPENDITURE				
A. Secretariat Senior Management	1,009	1,027	1,033	3,070
B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach	638	615	603	1,856
C. Regional Advice and Support	1,325	1,347	1,361	4,033
D. Support to Regional Initiatives	100	100	100	300
E. Science and Policy	754	733	722	2,209
G. Administration	436	440	444	1,320
H. Standing Committee services	150	150	150	450
I. IUCN administrative service charges (maximum)	560	560	560	1,680
J. Miscellaneous including Reserve Fund	109	108	109	326
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**5,081**	**5,081**	**5,081**	**15,243**

Annex 2

Estimated core budget contributions by Contracting Parties for 2019-2021

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 June 2018)	2016-2018 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Estimated annual contribution 2019-2021	Annual contribution 2016-2018	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Albania	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Algeria	0.161	0.165%	7,871	7,872	-1
Andorra	0.006	0.006%	1,000	1,000	0
Antigua and Barbuda	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Argentina	0.892	0.915%	43,608	43,616	-8
Armenia	0.006	0.006%	1,000	1,000	0
Australia	2.337	2.397%	114,250	114,272	-22
Austria	0.720	0.738%	35,199	35,206	-7
Azerbaijan	0.060	0.062%	2,933	2,934	-1
Bahamas	0.014	0.014%	1,000	1,000	0
Bahrain	0.044	0.045%	2,151	2,151	0
Bangladesh	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Barbados	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Belarus	0.056	0.057%	2,738	2,738	0
Belgium	0.885	0.908%	43,266	43,274	-8
Belize	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Benin	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Bhutan	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.012	0.012%	1,000	1,000	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.013	0.013%	1,000	1,000	0
Botswana	0.014	0.014%	1,000	1,000	0
Brazil	3.823	3.921%	186,898	186,933	-35
Bulgaria	0.045	0.046%	2,200	2,200	0
Burkina Faso	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Burundi	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Cabo Verde	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Cambodia	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Cameroon	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Canada	2.921	2.996%	142,801	142,828	-27
Central African Republic	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Chad	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Chile	0.399	0.409%	19,506	19,510	-4
China	7.921	8.123%	387,239	387,313	-74
Colombia	0.322	0.330%	15,742	15,745	-3
Comoros	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Congo	0.006	0.006%	1,000	1,000	0
Costa Rica	0.047	0.048%	2,298	2,298	0
Côte d'Ivoire	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Croatia	0.099	0.102%	4,840	4,841	-1
Cuba	0.065	0.067%	3,178	3,178	0
Cyprus	0.043	0.044%	2,102	2,103	-1
Czech Republic	0.344	0.353%	16,817	16,821	-4

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 June 2018)	2016-2018 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Estimated annual contribution 2019-2021	Annual contribution 2016-2018	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.005	0.005%	1,000	0	1,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Denmark	0.584	0.599%	28,550	28,556	-6
Djibouti	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Dominican Republic	0.046	0.047%	2,249	2,249	0
Ecuador	0.067	0.069%	3,275	3,276	-1
Egypt	0.152	0.156%	7,431	7,432	-1
El Salvador	0.014	0.014%	1,000	1,000	0
Equatorial Guinea	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Estonia	0.038	0.039%	1,858	1,858	0
Eswatini	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Fiji	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Finland	0.456	0.468%	22,293	22,297	-4
France	4.859	4.983%	237,545	237,590	-45
Gabon	0.017	0.017%	1,000	1,000	0
Gambia	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Georgia	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Germany	6.389	6.552%	312,343	312,403	-60
Ghana	0.016	0.016%	1,000	1,000	0
Greece	0.471	0.483%	23,026	23,030	-4
Grenada	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Guatemala	0.028	0.029%	1,369	1,369	0
Guinea	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Guinea-Bissau	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Honduras	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Hungary	0.161	0.165%	7,871	7,872	-1
Iceland	0.023	0.024%	1,124	1,125	-1
India	0.737	0.756%	36,030	36,037	-7
Indonesia	0.504	0.517%	24,639	24,644	-5
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.471	0.483%	23,026	23,030	-4
Iraq	0.129	0.132%	6,307	6,308	-1
Ireland	0.335	0.344%	16,377	16,380	-3
Israel	0.430	0.441%	21,022	21,026	-4
Italy	3.748	3.844%	183,231	183,266	-35
Jamaica	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Japan	9.680	9.927%	473,232	473,323	-91
Jordan	0.020	0.021%	1,000	1,000	0
Kazakhstan	0.191	0.196%	9,338	9,339	-1
Kenya	0.018	0.018%	1,000	1,000	0
Kiribati	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Kuwait	0.285	0.292%	13,933	13,936	-3
Kyrgyzstan	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Latvia	0.050	0.051%	2,444	2,445	-1

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 June 2018)	2016-2018 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Estimated annual contribution 2019-2021	Annual contribution 2016-2018	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Lebanon	0.046	0.047%	2,249	2,249	0
Lesotho	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Liberia	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Libya, State of	0.125	0.128%	6,111	6,112	-1
Liechtenstein	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Lithuania	0.072	0.074%	3,520	3,521	-1
Luxembourg	0.064	0.066%	3,129	3,129	0
Madagascar	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Malawi	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Malaysia	0.322	0.330%	15,742	15,745	-3
Mali	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Malta	0.016	0.016%	1,000	1,000	0
Marshall Islands	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Mauritania	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Mauritius	0.012	0.012%	1,000	1,000	0
Mexico	1.435	1.472%	70,154	70,167	-13
Monaco	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Mongolia	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Montenegro	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Morocco	0.054	0.055%	2,640	2,640	0
Mozambique	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Myanmar	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Namibia	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Nepal	0.006	0.006%	1,000	1,000	0
Netherlands	1.482	1.520%	72,452	72,465	-13
New Zealand	0.268	0.275%	13,102	13,104	-2
Nicaragua	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Niger	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Nigeria	0.209	0.214%	10,218	10,219	-1
Norway	0.849	0.871%	41,506	41,514	-8
Oman	0.113	0.116%	5,524	5,525	-1
Pakistan	0.093	0.095%	4,547	4,547	0
Palau	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Panama	0.034	0.035%	1,662	1,662	0
Papua New Guinea	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Paraguay	0.014	0.014%	1,000	1,000	0
Peru	0.136	0.139%	6,649	6,650	-1
Philippines	0.165	0.169%	8,066	8,068	-2
Poland	0.841	0.862%	41,115	41,122	-7
Portugal	0.392	0.402%	19,164	19,168	-4
Republic of Korea	2.039	2.091%	99,682	99,701	-19
Republic of Moldova	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Romania	0.184	0.189%	8,995	8,997	-2
Russian Federation	3.088	3.167%	150,965	150,994	-29
Rwanda	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 June 2018)	2016-2018 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Estimated annual contribution 2019-2021	Annual contribution 2016-2018	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Saint Lucia	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Samoa	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Senegal	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Serbia	0.032	0.033%	1,564	1,565	-1
Seychelles	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Sierra Leone	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Slovakia	0.160	0.164%	7,822	7,824	-2
Slovenia	0.084	0.086%	4,107	4,107	0
South Africa	0.364	0.373%	17,795	17,799	-4
South Sudan	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Spain	2.443	2.505%	119,433	119,455	-22
Sri Lanka	0.031	0.032%	1,516	1,516	0
Sudan	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Suriname	0.006	0.006%	1,000	1,000	0
Sweden	0.956	0.980%	46,737	46,746	-9
Switzerland	1.140	1.169%	55,732	55,743	-11
Syrian Arab Republic	0.024	0.025%	1,173	1,174	-1
Tajikistan	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Thailand	0.291	0.298%	14,226	14,229	-3
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Togo	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Trinidad and Tobago	0.034	0.035%	1,662	1,662	0
Tunisia	0.028	0.029%	1,369	1,369	0
Turkey	1.018	1.044%	49,768	49,777	-9
Turkmenistan	0.026	0.027%	1,271	1,271	0
Uganda	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Ukraine	0.103	0.106%	5,035	5,036	-1
United Arab Emirates	0.604	0.619%	29,528	29,534	-6
United Kingdom	4.463	4.577%	218,186	218,227	-41
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Uruguay	0.079	0.081%	3,862	3,863	-1
Uzbekistan	0.023	0.024%	1,124	1,125	-1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0.571	0.586%	27,915	27,920	-5
Viet Nam	0.058	0.060%	2,835	2,836	-1
Yemen	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Zambia	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Zimbabwe	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Total	**76.059**	**78.000%**	**3,779,000**	**3,778,701**	**299**
Other contributions					
United States of America**		22%	1,065,799	1,065,799	0
Grand Total		**100%**	**4,844,799**	**4,844,500**	**299**

* As per UN Resolution A/RES/70/245; revised UN Scale for triennium will be applied when released

** As previously, 22% of total contributions from Contracting Parties

Annex 3

2019-2021 budgeted non-core items, in order of recommended priority

No.	Non-core funds 2019 - 2021	3-year funding requirement (CHF)
1	Ramsar Advisory Missions	225,000
1	Gender and wetlands	36,000
2	Regional Initiatives networks and centres support	150,000
3	World Wetlands Day	250,000
4	Complete wetland inventories to report on indicator 6.6.1 including digital mapping and online reporting	165,000
5	COP14 sponsorship for eligible delegates	600,000
6	Ramsar CEPA Programme	200,000
7	Supporting STRP work	300,000
8	Pre-COP14 sponsorship for eligible delegates	650,000
9	Language strategies	530,000
	Total	**3,106,000**

Annex 4

Secretariat staff (core) for 2019-2021 as per budget in Annex 1

Team	2018	2019	2020	2021
Secretariat Senior Management	1 S, 1 M2, 1 A3	1 S, 1 M2, 1 P2, 2 A3	1 S, 1 M2, 1 P2, 2 A3	1 S, 1 M2, 1 P2, 2 A3
Resource Mobilization and Outreach	1 M1, 1 P2, 1 P1	1 M1, 1 P1, 1 A3	1 M1, 1 P1, 1 A3	1 M1, 1 P1, 1 A3
Regional Advice and Support	4 M1, 2 P1, 4 interns	4 M1, 2 P1, 4 interns	4 M1, 2 P1, 4 interns	4 M1, 2 P1, 4 interns
Science and Policy	1 M1, 1P1	1 M1, 2 P1, 1 A3	1 M1, 2 P1, 1 A3	1 M1, 2 P1, 1 A3
Administration	1 P2, 1 P1, 1 P1 (50%), 3 A3	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A2	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A2	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A2
Total	**23.5 staff**	**24.5 staff**	**24.5 staff**	**24.5 staff**
Total costs (in '000 CHF)	**3,430**	**3,552**	**3,603**	**3,649**

Note:
2018 staff numbers and positions shown for reference. Costs budgeted and allocated to budget lines on the basis of current core-funded positions. Team refers to the categorization of expenditures as listed in Annex 1.

Levels as per IUCN HR policy and guidelines on position classification.
S = Secretary General; M1-M2 = management positions; P1-P2 = professional positions; A1-A3 = support positions

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.3

Governance of the Convention

1. ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of providing an adequate institutional set-up for Ramsar, a global convention with 170 Parties;

2. RECALLING the Convention's mission of conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world;

3. FURTHER RECALLING Contracting Parties' commitment to work towards achievement of the Convention's mission, both within their own territories and through cooperation globally and with other Contracting Parties;

4. ALSO RECALLING the vision of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 that wetlands are conserved, wisely used and restored and that their benefits are recognized and valued by all, and the Plan's goals of addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation, effectively conserving and managing the network of Ramsar Sites and accredited Wetland Cities, wisely using all wetlands, and enhancing implementation of the Convention;

5. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the extensive and continuing work by Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to support the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan through efforts undertaken by the bodies of the Convention and its working groups;

6. RECOGNIZING that the Convention has a crucial role to play and contribution to make to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of relevant conventions;

7. REITERATING the obligation on all Contracting Parties to contribute to Convention deliberations and processes in a manner that ensures the effective and efficient use of resources of the Ramsar Convention and Contracting Parties in order to support the best outcomes for wetlands and the Convention; and

8. RECOGNIZING that 2021 will be the 50th anniversary of the Convention, the intended mandates, reporting arrangements, and bodies of the Convention should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention, increase its visibility and foster synergies;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. EXPRESSES ITS GRATITUDE to all bodies and workings groups of the Convention for the accomplishments and benefits to the Convention realized as a result of their work;

10. DECIDES to retire the working groups listed in Annex 1 of the present Resolution, and invites the Chairs of these subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to provide to the Standing Committee the final report on the outcome of the work of their subsidiary body, to be posted on the Convention website by the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee;

11. ESTABLISHES the Effectiveness Working Group under Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure;

12. DIRECTS that the Effectiveness Working Group be composed of one Standing Committee representative from each Ramsar region as well as any other interested Contracting Parties, keeping in mind the desirability of equitable participation and keeping the group to a manageable size;

13. DIRECTS that the members of the Effectiveness Working Group are to designate two of its members as Chair and Co-Chair/Vice-Chair, the latter acting as Rapporteur;

14. REQUESTS the Effectiveness Working Group to review the governance structure of the Convention with the assistance of an independent consultant, as that structure exists at the close of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, for the purpose of:

    a. recommending revisions (as necessary) that further enhance the effectiveness, including cost effectiveness, and efficiency of the Convention in order to reduce administrative burden and speed up the processes to achieve the mission of the Ramsar Convention; and

    b. proposing a process to implement its recommendations;

15. REQUESTS the Effectiveness Working Group to define its terms of reference for presentation to the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting and to report at that meeting and each meeting of the Committee thereafter, with final recommendations at its 59th meeting, which should include a draft resolution for consideration by the Standing Committee;

16. DECIDES to allocate funding from the current identified core budget surplus to support the work of the Working Group including, but not limited to, meetings or other support required to accomplish its tasks;

17. FURTHER DECIDES that the Effectiveness Working Group is to complete the above outlined work by the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee, at which time the Group will be retired unless otherwise decided at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and

18. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution supersedes the decisions relating to each working group in the Resolutions listed in Annex 1, and that any ongoing responsibilities of these working groups now revert to the Standing Committee to address or delegate further.

Annex 1

Working groups to be retired

Ramsar Convention Working Groups	Resolutions/decisions relating to these Groups
CEPA Working Group	Resolution XII.9 *The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024*.
Facilitation Working Group	Resolution XII.3 *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*, and Resolution XII.4 *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention*.
Language Strategy Working Group	Resolution XII.3 *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*. 52nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC52, 2016) agreed to establish an open-ended informal working group.
Resource Mobilization Working Group	Resolution XII.7 *Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention*.
Staffing Working Group	Mandate completed at SC52[1]
Transition Committee	Resolution X.4 *Establishing a Transition Committee of the Management Working Group*.

[1] http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc53-05_review_wgs_e.pdf

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.4

Responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. RECOGNIZING the value of keeping under periodic review the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee so as to ensure that its work continues to be delivered in as effective and cost-efficient a manner as possible;

2. NOTING that Resolution XII.4 on *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention* is out of date and that a number of the tasks specified have been implemented; and RECALLING that Resolution XII.4 seeks to strengthen transparency within the work of the Convention to facilitate the evolution of decisions, guidance and implementation of the Convention in cooperation with Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and stakeholders;

3. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.24 (2005), on *Improving management of the Ramsar Convention*, the Conference of the Parties established a Management Working Group reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties;

4. AWARE that the Standing Committee's oversight of the Secretariat is conducted on its behalf between meetings of the Standing Committee by its Executive Team (Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance) with the Secretary General;

5. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the members of the Executive Team and the Management Working Group for their work;

6. ACKNOWLEDGING the potential role of the Secretariat in providing advice to Parties, at their request, in the drafting of potential resolutions, especially in providing help to ensure consistency with past decisions and clarity of language, and to reduce overlap of issues being discussed at a single meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

7. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the steady improvement in performance, management, and optimization of resources by the Secretariat over the past triennium and the interest of Contracting Parties in re-establishing normalized levels of oversight while maintaining accountability between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat;

8. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the cooperation between IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat through the IUCN/Ramsar Liaison Group to support the operations of the Secretariat;

9. APPRECIATING the results achieved by the Facilitation Working Group of the Standing Committee to facilitate discussions between the Secretariat and IUCN, in order to seek ways of improving the current operations of the Secretariat;

10. RECOGNIZING that inconsistencies and contradictions between Resolutions and decisions taken over the years can result in confusion and a lack of clarity that creates inefficiencies in the implementation of the Convention, or inadvertently adversely impact the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, and that implementation of the Convention can be improved by retiring resolutions and decisions and parts thereof that are outdated or contradictory;

11. NOTING Parties' interest in enhancing their efforts to identify and address the challenges to wetlands globally as a means to increase the relevance, timeliness, and impact of the Convention and of Contracting Parties' Resolutions related to the wise use of wetlands; and

12. NOTING the value in reviewing the Rules of Procedure to identify any inconsistencies or other elements that may negatively impact the work of the Convention or that might usefully be amended to optimize resources and/or increase efficiency;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. EXPRESSES its gratitude to the outgoing Chair and members of the Standing Committee for their support and willingness to provide additional oversight of the activities and the implementation of the Convention during the 2015-2018 triennium;

14. FURTHER EXPRESSES its gratitude to the Contracting Parties that will serve as the Chair and members of the Standing Committee following the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13), for their willingness to take on the responsibility of governing the activities and the implementation of the Convention for the coming triennium;

15. ALSO EXPRESSES its satisfaction with improvements made by the Secretariat in performance, management, and optimization of resources and its full support for the efforts of the Secretary General in this regard; and DECIDES to re-establish normalized levels of oversight by the Parties while maintaining accountability between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat;

16. REQUESTS the Executive Team to define its terms of reference for approval by the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting (SC57);

17. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to re-engage with Parties, at their request, in preparing draft resolutions, so as to improve the quality of possible decisions that are tabled for consideration;

18. REQUESTS the Secretariat to use Annex 3 of the present Resolution on *Responsibilities of Contracting Parties elected as regional representatives in the Standing Committee* as a tool to conduct a preparatory briefing for representatives of incoming members of the Standing Committee prior to the first meeting of the Standing Committee that immediately follows the close of the meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

19. INVITES incoming members of the Standing Committee to participate as observers at meetings of the Conference Bureau of the Conference of the Contracting Parties once their designation has been announced to the Conference by a representative of their region;

20. REQUESTS the Secretariat, at the beginning of each triennium and as appropriate thereafter, to bring to the attention of Standing Committee members the updated consolidated list of Resolutions and decisions generated in accordance with Resolution XIII.7 on *Enhancing the Convention's implementation, visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*;

21. ADOPTS the text in Annexes 1-4 of the present Resolution, based upon amendments that update Resolution XII.4 (2015) on *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention*;

Concerning enhancement of the implementation of the Convention

22. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee, at its first full meeting following each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, identify, with the support of the Secretariat, a limited set of urgent challenges to the wise use of wetlands, in the framework of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the broader environmental agenda, to receive enhanced attention during the coming triennium;

23. FURTHER REQUESTS that the Standing Committee consider these urgent challenges during its meetings throughout the triennium, inviting external expert speakers to participate in and contribute to Contracting Parties' discussions as appropriate and subject to available resources, with a view to identifying potential solutions to these challenges and reflecting them in draft resolutions for consideration at the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

24. REQUESTS the Secretariat to:

    a. review all previous Resolutions and decisions, identifying those or parts of those, if any, that may no longer be valid or applicable, that contradict each other, or are otherwise inconsistent with current Ramsar practices, and at SC57 report its findings, including information on how it reached these conclusions (e.g. *inter alia*, that the work has been completed, superseded, is contradictory, or is incorporated elsewhere); and

    b. based on its findings and Parties' feedback on its report to SC57, develop recommendations for Parties to consider at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58) to consider a process for: retiring outdated resolutions and decisions; establishing a practice of retiring outdated or contradictory Resolutions and decisions automatically when they are superseded by new ones; and preparing a consolidated list of resolutions and decisions, to be updated after each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and on an as-needed basis following meetings of the Standing Committee;

25. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee, at SC57, review the Secretariat's report on the validity of Resolutions and decisions and provide feedback, and consider the Secretariat's recommendations on this subject at SC58, with a view to including, in a relevant draft resolution for COP14, the retirement of outdated Resolutions and decisions and the establishment of a practice for the Convention to retire outdated Resolutions and decisions automatically when they are superseded by new ones;

26. REQUESTS the Secretariat to:

    a. conduct a review of the Rules of Procedure, identifying text, if any, that may no longer be valid or applicable, is contradictory, is otherwise inconsistent with current Ramsar

practices, and the Rules' applicability to subsidiary bodies including the Standing Committee, working groups, and Friends of the Chair groups and, at SC57, report its findings, including information on how it reached these conclusions;

b. in conducting the aforementioned review, give due consideration to any proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure that were not considered at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and

c. develop, as appropriate, based on its findings and Contracting Parties' feedback on its report to SC57, recommendations for Parties at SC58, to consider revisions that might be made to the Rules of Procedure, in preparation for COP14;

27. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at SC57, to review the Secretariat's report on the Rules of Procedure and provide feedback, and to consider the Secretariat's recommendations on this subject at SC58 and, as appropriate, consider revisions that might be made to the Rules of Procedure in preparation for COP14;

28. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, to consider using written submissions from their national Administrative Authorities as a means to provide opportunities for fostering increased participation and representation of views of Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the work of the Convention;

29. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its efforts to deploy appropriate cost-effective communication and other technologies as a means to foster the participation and representation of the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat, increase efficiencies, and reduce costs;

30. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to make Contracting Parties aware of the opportunities provided by these technologies to foster Convention-related capacity building and to support the efforts of the Convention bodies to enhance implementation of the Convention; and

31. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution and its Annexes supersede Resolution XII.4.

Annex 1

The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. Considering that it is useful for the effective functioning of the Ramsar Convention that Contracting Parties should have a clear process for the operation of its Standing Committee, in Resolution VII.1 (1999) the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) adopted guidelines on the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the Standing Committee and the regional categorization of countries under the Convention. In Resolution XII.4 (2012), the Parties amended that text and the list of countries and Contracting Parties assigned to each of the six Ramsar regions, in order to bring them up to date.

2. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will have the following regional groups:
   - Africa;
   - Asia;
   - Europe;
   - Latin America and the Caribbean;
   - North America; and
   - Oceania.

3. Contracting Parties and States that are eligible to accede to the Convention are assigned to the above regional groups, but Contracting Parties that are geographically near to the boundaries of the allocated region, as given in Annex 2, may, at their own request, participate in the activities of a neighbouring alternative regional group, while remaining a member of their allocated geographical regional group, upon formal notification of this intent to the COP.[1]

4. The composition of the Standing Committee will be determined by means of a proportional system, by which each regional group listed in paragraph 2 above will be represented by voting members in the Standing Committee according to the following criteria:
   a. one representative for regional groups with 1 to 12 Contracting Parties;
   b. two representatives for regional groups with 13 to 24 Contracting Parties;
   c. three representatives for regional groups with 25 to 36 Contracting Parties;
   d. four representatives for regional groups with 37 to 48 Contracting Parties; and
   e. five representatives for regional groups with 49 to 60 Contracting Parties.

5. Each region may appoint an alternate member for each appointed member with full power to represent the region if the appointed member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Standing Committee.

6. The host countries of the previous and next meetings of the COP are also voting members of the Standing Committee.

[1] See Resolution X1.19. “Participate” is defined in this context as different from membership within the alternative region. Participation confers to the State the right to be present in meetings, to speak, to exchange information, to submit reports, to cooperate on a scientific and practical level, and to contribute to joint projects. It does not include the right to be a representative of this alternative region nor to participate in the nomination of its representatives. It does not confer the right to vote within the alternative region.

7. The regional members and their alternate members will be elected by the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the basis of nominations received from the regional groups established in paragraph 2 above. Initial consideration of nominations by regional groups will be undertaken at any intersessional regional COP preparatory meetings that take place, and nominations will be finalized by regional groups in their regional meetings at the COP venue immediately prior to the opening of the COP, so that appointments of the new members of the Standing Committee can be made as early as possible in the COP proceedings, thus permitting the new members of the Committee to participate as observers in Conference Bureau meetings during the COP.

8. The terms of office of the regional representatives will commence at the close of the meeting of the COP at which they have been elected and will expire at the close of the next ordinary meeting of the COP, and each Contracting Party may serve on the Standing Committee for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

9. Contracting Parties that are voting members of the Standing Committee will convey to the Secretariat, through their diplomatic channels, the name(s) of the officer(s) in the designated national Ramsar Administrative Authority who act as their delegates on the Standing Committee, as well as the names of their substitutes, should they be needed.

10. The Contracting Party acting as host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat will continue to have the status of permanent observer in the Standing Committee. If the host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat stands for, and is elected as, a member of the Standing Committee representing its regional group, it will have voting status for that triennium in lieu of its permanent observer status.

11. The Secretariat will continue to notify all Contracting Parties of the date and agenda of meetings of the Standing Committee at least three months in advance of each meeting, so that they may, as appropriate, make arrangements to be represented at the meeting as observers.

12. Countries that are not Contracting Parties but that have expressed an interest in acceding to the Convention may also be admitted as observers at meetings of the Standing Committee.

13. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will be invited as an observer to Standing Committee meetings, as well as other experts and/or institutions that the Standing Committee may deem appropriate for assisting in its consideration of particular agenda items.

14. International organizations that are official International Organization Partners in the work of the Convention will be invited to participate as observers in meetings of the Standing Committee.

15. If an extraordinary meeting of the COP is held between two ordinary meetings, the host country may participate as an observer in the work of the Committee on matters related to the organization of the meeting, provided that the country in question is not already present in the Committee as a member or permanent observer.

16. The Contracting Parties in regional groups with one representative in the Standing Committee will use a rotation system for the nomination of their regional representative. In regional groups with two or more representatives the selection will be made in such a manner as to achieve a balance in relation to biogeographical, geopolitical, and cultural considerations.

17. At its first meeting immediately after the close of a meeting of the COP, the Standing Committee will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the members and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance established by Resolution VI.17 (1996).

18. The Standing Committee will normally meet once each year, normally at the seat of the Convention Secretariat, according to the indicative schedule provided as Annex 4 to this Resolution. Further meetings of the Subgroup on the COP and the Subgroup on Finance may be envisaged during the year before COP, if required and if sufficient funds are available, in order to ensure the timely and efficient preparation of meetings of the COP. The costs of participation of Committee members eligible for sponsorship will be borne by the Convention.

19. Within the policies agreed by the Conference of the Parties, the functions of the Standing Committee will be to:

    a. carry out, between one ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next, such interim activity on behalf of the Conference as may be necessary, giving priority to matters on which the Conference has previously recorded its approval and noting that the Standing Committee is not mandated either to take decisions that would normally be taken by the Conference of the Contracting Parties or to amend any decision taken by the Conference of the Parties;

    b. make preparations on issues, including *inter alia* draft resolutions and recommendations, for consideration at the next meeting of the COP;

    c. supervise, as a representative of the COP, the implementation of activities by the Secretariat, the execution of the Secretariat's budget, and conduct of the Secretariat's programmes;

    d. provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention, on the preparation of meetings, and on any other matters relating to the exercise of its functions brought to it by the Secretariat;

    e. act as Conference Bureau at meetings of the COP in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;

    f. establish subgroups as necessary to facilitate the implementation of its functions;

    g. promote regional and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;

    h. approve the work plan of the STRP on the basis of the decisions of the COP, receive the reports of the STRP on the progress made with its implementation, and provide guidance for its future development;

    i. adopt for each triennium the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use and decide on the allocation of funds;

    j. review each triennium the criteria for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award established by Resolution VI.18 and select the laureates; and

    k. report to the COP on the activities it has carried out between ordinary meetings of the Conference.

20. The tasks of the regional representatives elected to serve in the Standing Committee are contained in Annex 3 of this document.

21. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, shall take into consideration, within available resources, the need for interpretation at its subgroup meetings when it is requested by its members.

22. The Contracting Parties and the Secretariat will endeavour to secure additional voluntary funding to enable simultaneous interpretation at meetings of the Subgroup on Finance and the Subgroup on the COP.

23. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, will be governed, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference.

Annex 2

Allocation of Contracting Parties and non-party States to the six regional groups

NOTE: Names of countries in capital and bold letters denote Contracting Parties to the Convention at the time of approval of this Resolution.

AFRICA:

ALGERIA
Angola
BENIN
BOTSWANA
BURKINA FASO
BURUNDI
CAMEROON
CABO VERDE
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CHAD
COMOROS
CONGO
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
DJIBOUTI
EGYPT
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
Eritrea
ESWATINI
Ethiopia
GABON
GAMBIA, THE
GHANA
GUINEA
GUINEA-BISSAU
KENYA
LESOTHO
LIBERIA
MADAGASCAR
MALAWI
MALI
MAURITANIA
MAURITIUS
MOROCCO
MOZAMBIQUE
NAMIBIA
NIGER
NIGERIA
RWANDA
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
SENEGAL
SEYCHELLES
SIERRA LEONE
Somalia
SOUTH AFRICA
STATE OF LIBYA
SUDAN
SOUTH SUDAN
TOGO
TUNISIA
UGANDA
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

ASIA:

Afghanistan
BAHRAIN
BANGLADESH
BHUTAN
Brunei Darussalam
CAMBODIA
CHINA
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
INDIA
INDONESIA
IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
IRAQ
JAPAN
JORDAN
KAZAKHSTAN
KUWAIT
KYRGYZSTAN
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
LEBANON
MALAYSIA
Maldives
MONGOLIA
MYANMAR
NEPAL
OMAN
PAKISTAN
PHILIPPINES
Qatar
REPUBLIC OF KOREA
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
SRI LANKA
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
TAJIKISTAN
THAILAND
TURKMENISTAN
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
UZBEKISTAN
VIET NAM
YEMEN

EUROPE:

ALBANIA
ANDORRA
ARMENIA
AUSTRIA
AZERBAIJAN
BELARUS
BELGIUM
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BULGARIA
CROATIA
CYPRUS
CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK
ESTONIA
FINLAND
FRANCE
GEORGIA
GERMANY
GREECE
Holy See
HUNGARY
ICELAND
IRELAND
ISRAEL
ITALY
LATVIA
LIECHTENSTEIN
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBOURG
MALTA
MONACO
MONTENEGRO
NETHERLANDS
NORWAY
POLAND
PORTUGAL
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
San Marino
SERBIA
SLOVAK REPUBLIC
SLOVENIA
SPAIN
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
TURKEY
UKRAINE
UNITED KINGDOM

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
ARGENTINA
BAHAMAS
BARBADOS
BELIZE
BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)
BRAZIL
CHILE
COLOMBIA
COSTA RICA
CUBA
Dominica
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ECUADOR
EL SALVADOR
GRENADA
GUATEMALA
Guyana
Haiti
HONDURAS
JAMAICA
NICARAGUA
PANAMA
PARAGUAY
PERU
Saint Kitts and Nevis
SAINT LUCIA
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
SURINAME
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
URUGUAY
VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

NORTH AMERICA:

CANADA
MEXICO
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OCEANIA:

AUSTRALIA
Cook Islands
FIJI
KIRIBATI
MARSHALL ISLANDS
Micronesia (Federated States of)
Nauru
NEW ZEALAND
Niue
PALAU
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
SAMOA
Solomon Islands
Timor Leste
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

Annex 3

Responsibilities of Contracting Parties elected as regional representatives in the Standing Committee

Ramsar Regions are to designate their delegates to the Standing Committee, taking into account their significant responsibilities as regional representatives, and should make every effort to ensure that their delegates or their substitutes attend all meetings of the Committee. The Contracting Parties that have accepted to be elected as regional representatives on the Standing Committee will have the following responsibilities:

1. when there is more than one regional representative in a regional group, to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the other regional representative(s);

2. to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the Contracting Parties in their regional group, and to use the opportunities of travel within their regions, and of attending regional or international meetings, to consult about issues related to the Convention and to promote its objectives. To this effect, when there is more than one regional representative, they will agree among themselves which Contracting Parties in their region will be the responsibility of each regional representative;

3. to commit to preparing for meetings by reviewing papers and other background information prior to the session during which the matters will be discussed;

4. to solicit the opinions of the Contracting Parties in their regional group before meetings of the Standing Committee and to be empowered by their group to use their best judgment to make decisions during meetings as needed;

5. to advise the Secretariat in setting the agenda of regional meetings;

6. to commit to engaging in a collegial, professional, respectful, ethical, and constructive manner;

7. to commit to familiarizing themselves with the Rules of Procedure, and to adhering to them;

8. to commit to actively engage in the deliberations as a means to ensure the views of the region they represent are well understood and considered;

9. to assume additional responsibilities by serving as members of the subgroups established by the Standing Committee and to respect and honour the outcomes of the work of all subgroups;

10. to provide advice as requested by the Chair of the Standing Committee, the chairs of subgroups, or the Secretariat of the Convention;

11. to commit to reaching agreements that are guided by the goals of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and that foster the implementation of the Convention; and

12. in relevant regions, to make efforts to encourage other countries to accede to the Convention.

Annex 4

Indicative schedule for Standing Committee intersessional meetings post-2018, and for the 2019-2021 triennium

NOTE: This schedule is predicated on future cycles being three calendar years, with the meetings of the Conference of the Parties in May/June of the final year of each cycle.

	General timelines, post-2018	**2019-2021 triennium**
First full meeting	9 months after COP13	**SC57** – June/July 2019
Second full meeting	21 months after COP13	**SC58** – June/July 2020
Subgroup on COP (if required)	1 year before COP14	**Subgroup on COP14** (if required) – June/July 2020
Third full meeting	6 months before COP14	**SC59** – January 2021
Pre-COP meeting	Immediately prior to COP14, at COP venue	**SC60** – June/July 2021

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.5

Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING that, through the adoption of Resolution XII.2 on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024* at its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 "as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during this period";

2. FURTHER RECALLING that, through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Parties decided "to undertake a review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account *inter alia* the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services] and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020", and instructed the Secretariat to facilitate this;

3. WELCOMING the publication of the *Global Wetland Outlook*; THANKING the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Secretariat, the editors, and all involved in its production; and NOTING that it will provide a critical resource in the context not only of the review of Ramsar's fourth Strategic Plan but also for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and other relevant processes;

4. NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which represents an opportunity to highlight the main achievements in the implementation of the Convention and future challenges;

5. RECOGNIZING that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many of which are relevant to the work of the Convention such as: SDG 1 "End poverty in all its forms everywhere"; SDG 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"; SDG 3 "Promote healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages''; SDG 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"; SDG 6: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all"; SDG 11 **"**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"; SDG 13 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts"; SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development"; and SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss";

6. RECOGNIZING that implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 makes an important contribution towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

7. RECOGNIZING that the National Reports of the Contracting Parties provide the opportunity to report progress and any difficulties in implementation;

8. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to all Contracting Parties that provided their National Reports for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13) and to all Contracting Parties that voluntarily submitted to the Secretariat their quantifiable and time-bound national and regional targets in line with the targets set in the Strategic Plan;

9. TAKING NOTE of the progress towards the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and its contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the information provided in the COP13 National Reports;

10. NOTING the contribution of the Convention to the work of IPBES, and in particular to the regional and global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services; and also NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan represents an opportunity to take into account the key messages from the *Global Wetland Outlook* and the approved messages from the Summaries for policymakers of the IPBES assessments, and to include recommendations in this regard;

11. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the support provided to Contracting Parties to implement the Strategic Plan by the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, intergovernmental organizations, International Organization Partners and non-governmental organizations; and

12. NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan can complement the process of developing options for a new approach for advising on and supporting communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) in the Convention, as envisaged in Resolution XII.9, paragraph 9, for consideration at COP14;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

<u>Regarding the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024</u>

13. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to continue to communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan in their National Reports and to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its regular meetings, and on the basis of the information provided at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan;

14. RECOGNIZES that several Contracting Parties have established national biodiversity targets, strategies and action plans in line with the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and ENCOURAGES such Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to harmonize national implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan with implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), to mainstream wetland conservation and wise use issues in other national strategies and action plans as well as in national plans and reports in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to strengthen their mechanisms to enhance effective coordination among national and subnational statistical authorities responsible for reporting on the SDGs and in particular those related to wetlands;

16. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to elevate the importance of wetlands and the Convention to address the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDGs and to strengthen mainstreaming efforts at national and subnational levels;

17. ENCOURAGES the National Focal Points of Contracting Parties to engage their counterparts responsible for updating their NBSAPs, to take into account, as appropriate, the indicators for the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and to seek to ensure that these indicators are taken into account, as appropriate, in the SDGs process;

18. ENCOURAGES Parties to allocate, from national and subnational budgets, financial resources for the implementation of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2021, and to report on implementation in the National Report to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14);

19. APPROVES the scope and modalities for the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan as contained in Annex 1 of the present Resolution;

20. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 56th meeting (SC56), to establish a Strategic Plan Working Group to conduct the review of the fourth Strategic Plan; the Working Group will include representation from all regions; the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will provide advice as appropriate; and other biodiversity-related Conventions (e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Migratory Species) will be invited to participate. The Working Group will report on the preparation and progress of the review at each meeting of the Standing Committee, and in accordance with the modalities indicated in Annex 1;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are also Parties to the CBD to actively contribute to the development of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework that ensures wetlands and the ecosystems services they provide are adequately covered;

22. REQUESTS the Secretariat and Parties, through their focal points, to actively participate in the preparatory process for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to ensure that issues relevant to wetlands are adequately covered;

<u>Regarding the Ramsar Convention Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA)</u>

23. URGES all Contracting Parties, and INVITES other governments, International Organization Partners, and other organizations and implementing partners, to continue to implement the Ramsar Convention Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024 (Resolution XII.9);

24. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to continue to monitor CEPA issues at the national level within the Convention and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme, and to continue to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on the CEPA work priorities at the national, regional and international levels;

25. FURTHER REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to present to the Standing Committee, at its 57th meeting (SC57), its proposal to assume the responsibilities assigned in Resolution XII.9 and, in accordance with Decision SC50-08 tasked to the Working Group on CEPA Implementation, to develop a new approach for supporting CEPA implementation, taking into account the work already carried out by the Panel and by the Working Group prior to COP13, and indicating which Parties have agreed to join the Panel's work for this undertaking, in order to ensure that, for this specific task, all six Ramsar regions are represented by Parties, noting that additional Parties beyond those six may also join efforts while striving to maintain regional balance and manageability;

26. REQUESTS the Standing Committee at SC57 to consider and approve the CEPA Oversight Panel's plan to develop a new approach for advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention, which *inter alia* provides for incorporation of the advice of the STRP, and complements the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group established in accordance with paragraph 20 of the present Resolution;

27. INSTRUCTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to develop a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention and to report at the 58th and 59th meetings of the Standing Committee (SC58, SC59) to provide an update on its progress, and at the 59th meeting to present its proposed new approach and a draft resolution on this subject to be submitted to COP14; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to take this matter further, for decision at COP14;

28. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its support for implementation of the CEPA Programme and, upon request, for the Panel's work to develop a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention; and

29. INVITES Parties, other governments, financial institutions and other implementing partners in a position to do so to make resources available for the implementation of the CEPA Programme at their respective national and regional levels.

Annex 1

Review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan: Scope and modalities

1. At its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, including the "Mission of the Ramsar Convention" and "A Vision for the 4th Strategic Plan". It includes 19 Targets, organized under three Strategic Goals and one Operational Goal which supports them.

2. The Strategic Plan foresees that:
   A review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 will be done and the modalities and scope for this review will be established at COP13, taking into account inter alia *the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and coordination needs with regards to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.*

3. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is compatible with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Scope of the Review

4. The fourth Strategic Plan covers nine years, being three triennial periods between meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COPs). It finishes in 2024, which is the year when COP15 will take place. However, as the review will be conducted at COP14, in accordance with Resolution XII.2, it is effectively a mid-term review and will focus on assessing the implementation of the Strategic Plan from 2016 up to 2021, and on identifying for COP14 any necessary amendments. Any amendments to the plan will cover the remaining period, from 2022 to 2024.

5. At the time of the approval of the fourth Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties established indicators, which should therefore be used as the basis for determining achievement of the Goals and Targets of the Plan.

6. However, the review should also take into account the suggestions resulting from the expert group meeting of September 2015 and developments in the global environmental agenda, including the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

7. The review process should also provide a basis for the preparation of a fifth Strategic Plan to be considered at COP15.

Modality

8. Contracting Parties and the Secretariat are requested to evaluate their efforts in relation to the implementation of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, and to submit their evaluations explaining their achievements and challenges experienced to the Secretariat for delivery to the Standing Committee's Strategic Plan Working Group according to a format and template provided by the Working Group.

9. The Strategic Plan Working Group established by the Standing Committee is to:

    a) review, for consideration at SC59, the progress up to 2021 in implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 against the adopted indicators, taking account of:

        i) input from Contracting Parties;

        ii) the conclusions of the *Global Wetland Outlook*, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel's 2018 assessment of the state of the world's wetlands and their ecosystem services;

        iii) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and Targets;

        iv) the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, in 2020;

        v) the refinements to the indicators suggested by the expert group in September 2015 and relevant indicators developed by the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership, the outcomes of the relevant assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (global assessment, regional assessments, land degradation and restoration assessment, etc.); and

        vi) developments in fora of other multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Convention on Migratory Species, African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement), and other relevant fora;

    b) identify any potential refinements to the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators, including from the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be considered at COP14;

    c) based on the review, identify any elements that can contribute to the preparation of a new strategic plan for the period after 2024; and

    d) regularly report its progress to the Standing Committee.

10. The Standing Committee is to:

    a) establish a timeframe for the tasks to be conducted by the Strategic Plan Working Group, monitor its progress and provide guidance as necessary; and

    b) prepare a progress report on implementation of the fourth Strategic Plan, together with any proposed refinements to the Plan, and basic elements for the preparation of a proposed framework for a fifth Strategic Plan for the period after 2024, indicating the key elements, for consideration at COP14.

11. The Secretariat shall contract an appropriate consultant to assist with this process, including work for the Standing Committee and the Strategic Plan Working Group.

Indicative timeline

12. Table 1 below provides an indicative timeline of the key activities to be undertaken for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Table 1. Indicative timeline of key activities for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 (final timeline will depend on final dates of COP14).

Date	Activity
COP13, October 2018 SC56, October 2018	Establishment of a working group of the Standing Committee to conduct the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan
December 2018	Virtual / face-to-face meeting of the working group to discuss planning process and strategy
April 2019	Written submissions of views from Contracting Parties and stakeholders, in response to a notification, and global implementation report of the Convention provided to COP13 by the Secretariat
SC57, June/July 2019	Assessment of progress by the Standing Committee
	Approval of National Report format for COP14
August 2019	Issue of National Report format for COP14
November 2019	Virtual meeting of the working group to assess progress
May 2020	Inputs from Global Biodiversity Outlook-5 published and the IPBES global and regional assessments
SC58, June/July 2020	Discussion paper for SC58 written by the working group
September 2020	Submission of National Reports for COP14
October/November 2020	Assessment by Secretariat of National Reports for COP14
October 2020	Face-to-face meeting of the working group to agree on final document to be submitted to SC59
SC59, January 2021	Report and recommendation for any potential refinements to the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators and any elements that can contribute to the preparation of a new strategic plan for the period after 2024 for COP14 consideration

Indicative budget

13. The Standing Committee at its 54th meeting[1] authorized the use of CHF 44,000 in 2018 to undertake the following review activities:
    - A Strategic Plan Working Group meeting in Gland. Travel costs for six members, one from each Ramsar region eligible for funding (one meeting is estimated, the Working Group will decide if further meetings are necessary);
    - A consultancy to support the Standing Committee and Working Group.

[1] Decision SC54-26; see *Report and Decisions of the 54th Meeting of the Standing Committee*, Annex 5 *Report of the Subgroup on Finance*

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

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Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.6

Language strategy for the Convention

1. RECALLING that, in Resolution XI.1 on Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat, adopted at its 11th meeting (Bucharest, 2012), the Conference of the Contracting Parties instructed the Standing Committee, with the participation of all interested Parties, to develop strategies that explore the accommodation of UN languages into the Convention, the elevation of the Convention's visibility and stature, including inter alia through enhancing high-level political engagement in its work at national, regional, and global levels, the enhancement of synergies with multilateral environmental agreements and other international entities including through Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and the increased involvement in the initiatives of the United Nations Environment Programme;

2. RECALLING ALSO that, in Resolution XII.3 on *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*, adopted at its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015) the Conference of the Contracting Parties called on the Secretariat to develop a strategy and draft resolution addressing accommodation of the Arabic language into the Convention and further phased integration of existing Convention languages, which called on the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;

3. ACKNOWLEDGING that funding constraints have precluded the provision of a full and equal language service for the official languages of the Convention, which are English, French and Spanish;

4. CONSIDERING that the accommodation of additional languages, in particular Arabic, into the daily work of the Convention could foster the engagement of more Contracting Parties to the Convention and could assist Contracting Parties to raise awareness and improve their implementation of the Convention;

5. NOTING the expressed interest in accession to the Convention by a growing number of Arabic-speaking countries and the increasing interest in implementation of the Convention by Arabic-speaking Contracting Parties;

6. APPRECIATING the range of distinct wetland types such as wadis, sabkhas and oases in Arabic-speaking countries and their under-representation among Ramsar Sites in the network, and the presence of organizations and individuals in the region with expertise in the conservation and

wise use of wetlands, whose contribution would be beneficial to the further implementation of the Convention;

7. UNDERSTANDING the range of pressing wetland issues in Arabic-speaking and other countries, in light of the increasing demand from the region's growing population and changes in water availability due to changing rainfall, unsustainable use patterns, and climate changes; and

8. APPRECIATING the work of the Standing Committee and its working group on language strategy for their work in relation to the development of a language strategy for the Convention;

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9. ADOPTS the Language Strategy for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands presented in Annex 1;

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to provide translation of the most important Ramsar information documents into their own official languages to make them publicly available on their national Ramsar websites, and ENCOURAGES them to send to the Secretariat translated Ramsar documents of wider relevance to other Contracting Parties;

11. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, with the assistance of Contracting Parties and Ramsar Regional Centres and others as appropriate, to implement a cost-effective mechanism to make translated Ramsar documents of wider relevance to other Contracting Parties available on the Convention's website; and

12. REPEALS paragraphs 6 to 11 and 26 to 31 of Resolution XII.3 on *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions* and AMENDS the title of that Resolution to "Enhancing the visibility and stature of the Convention, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions".

Annex 1

Language Strategy for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Basic principle

The Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands acknowledges that the use of multiple languages in the work of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee as well as other bodies, as appropriate, and the Secretariat, could:

- help to improve the implementation of the Convention by Parties;
- make the Convention more accessible to a wider public; and
- foster the interest and engagement of non-party States.

However, as for some other conventions, budgetary constraints have precluded the provision of a language service in all six official languages of the United Nations.

The Conference of the Contracting Parties agrees that the key goals for a language strategy are:

a) to have equal language service for English, French and Spanish, being the official languages of the Convention at the start of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13); and
b) to aim to introduce Arabic as an official language.

When seeking to fill vacancies in the Secretariat, the Secretary General should take into account the language skills of applicants, with a view to augmenting the capacity of the Secretariat to communicate in all official languages.

The cost of translation of non-official documentation that results from projects or from externally funded activities should also be provided from voluntary non-core contributions unless the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee specify otherwise.

Timetable

13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (2018)	The budget adopted for 2019-2021 includes provision for: - a full equal language service in English, French and Spanish for meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee, as appropriate (interpretation of plenary sessions, and translation of working documents); - new official documentation in English, French and Spanish; and - equal treatment of these official languages on the website to the extent that resources allow. The Contracting Parties approve the plan to make Arabic an official language at COP16, seeking its step-by-step inclusion in the budgets adopted for 2022-2024, 2025-2027 and 2028-2030.
2019-2020	The Secretariat arranges translation into Arabic of the text of the Convention and key Resolutions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, subject to the availability of voluntary non-core contributions.
14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (2021)	Subject to agreement at COP14, the budget adopted for 2022-2024 includes provision for a full language service for meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Standing Committee and other bodies, as appropriate, and related official documentation in English, French and Spanish, and for the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Arabic.

2022-2023	The Secretariat arranges translation into Arabic of remaining Resolutions that remain in effect and key high-level pages of the Ramsar website, subject to the availability of voluntary non-core contributions.
15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15, 2024)	Subject to agreement at COP15, the budget adopted for 2025-2027 includes provision for: - a full language service for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee and other bodies, as appropriate, in English, French and Spanish; - a full language service for meetings of Conference of the Parties in Arabic; and - all new official documentation in the four official languages; - additional staff capacity for management of texts and documentation in Arabic.
2025-2026	The Secretariat arranges translation into Arabic of new official notifications (e.g. Ramsar Exchange messages), related news stories and new publications of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, subject to the availability of voluntary non-core contributions.
16th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (2027)	Subject to agreement at COP16, the budget adopted for 2028-2030 includes provision for a full language service for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee and other bodies, as appropriate, in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, and for all new official documentation, and for new website pages.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.7

Enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

1. RECALLING that Resolution XI.1, on *Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat*, in paragraphs 17 and 18, instructs the Standing Committee and Contracting Parties to develop strategies that explore the accommodation of UN languages into the Convention, the elevation of the Convention's visibility and stature, including *inter alia* through enhancing high-level political engagement in its work at national, regional, and global levels, the enhancement of synergies with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other international entities including through regional initiatives, and the increased involvement in the initiatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

2. FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution XII.3 on *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions* instructs the Secretariat to report to the Standing Committee annually on progress in implementing Resolution XI.6 on *Partnerships and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions*;

3. NOTING that Resolution XII.3 requests that the Secretary General report at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the opportunities for the Convention to further strengthen its contribution to the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as they relate to wetlands;

4. FURTHER NOTING that Resolution XII.3 instructs the Secretariat to continue working to strengthen collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Heritage Outlook, UNEP, UNEP-GRID, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), regional economic commissions of the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and others, and report on progress to the Standing Committee and the Contracting Parties on a regular basis;

5. RECALLING that the Secretariat is also requested by Resolution XII.3 to continue its work with the Biodiversity Liaison Group to enhance coherence and cooperation and to continue efforts to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication at all relevant levels among the biodiversity-related Conventions;

6. NOTING that Resolution XII.7 on *Resource Mobilization and Partnership Framework of the Ramsar Convention* requests that the Secretariat strengthen partnerships with other MEAs such as, *inter alia,* the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in order to enhance synergies and sharing of resources, avoid duplication and enhance implementation, respecting the mandate of each Convention;

7. RECALLING that Resolution XII.3 invites all Contracting Parties that are considering hosting a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) to consider including a high-level ministerial segment during the meeting addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the COP;

8. NOTING the interest of all Contracting Parties in enhancing the visibility and stature of the Convention and increasing synergies with other MEAs and with UNEP;

9. NOTING the project undertaken by UNEP on "Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies" and its tools for enhancing synergies at national level, and also the 2020 Biodiversity Strategic Planning Timeline for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework[1];

10. RECOGNIZING, in the context of the ongoing work on synergies, the importance of the linkages between the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and any follow-up, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[2] and the SDGs, and related reporting and indicators;

11. ALSO NOTING Decisions XII/30 and XIII/21 of the CBD on the financial mechanism, and the United Nations General Assembly document *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which stresses the importance of enhancing programmatic synergies among relevant biodiversity-related Conventions and recognizes the significant contributions to sustainable development made by the MEAs including the Ramsar Convention;

12. FURTHER NOTING the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) contained in *The future we want*[3]*;*

13. CONVINCED of the significant potential of increasing cooperation, coordination and synergies among the biodiversity-related Conventions to enhance coherent national-level implementation of each of the Conventions;

14. NOTING that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes SDG 6, "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", and Target 6.6, "By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes";

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[1] https://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources-and-data/biodiversitysynergies; https://post2020.unep-wcmc.org/
[2] General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", annex.
[3] http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E

15. ALSO NOTING SDG 14, “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, and Target 14.2, “By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans”;

16. ADDITIONALLY NOTING SDG 15, “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”, and Target 15.1, “By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements”;

17. FURTHER NOTING that other SDGs that are relevant to the Convention are: SDG 1, “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”; SDG 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”; SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”; and SDG 13, “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”;

18. NOTING the decision of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) at its 7th meeting to reclassify Indicator 6.6.1, “Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time” and to approve two reporting lines to the global SDG database hosted by the UN Statistics Division, such that UNEP will be responsible for the internationally comparable methodology with national data, regional and global aggregations for Indicator 6.6.1, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will contribute data from the National Reports based on Ramsar definitions and requirements; and

19. FURTHER NOTING that the Convention and UNEP, as co-custodians for SDG Indicator 6.6.1, will be responsible for their respective reporting lines and will jointly contribute to the SDG target 6.6 storyline;

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<u>Concerning visibility and stature, and increasing synergies</u>

20. INVITES the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners (IOPs) and others to work to raise the visibility of the Convention at the national, subnational, regional and international levels as appropriate, including some focus on the 50th anniversary of the Convention, which will be celebrated in 2021;

21. FURTHER INVITES Contracting Parties to establish or strengthen, at the national level, mechanisms to enhance effective coordination between relevant national and subnational authorities, and to support the mainstreaming of wetland ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature in national development plans, other sectors’ strategies, plans and regulations, and especially in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to increase the synergies in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation, nature and especially wetland based solutions;

22. URGES the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, IOPs and others to take urgent action to enhance synergies, coherence and effective cooperation among the biodiversity-related multilateral

environmental agreements (MEAs) to strengthen the contribution of these instruments to a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;

23. REQUESTS the Secretariat to present, at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee, a plan to strengthen synergies with other MEAs and contributions to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

24. ENCOURAGES all Ramsar National Focal Points to continue to increase their efforts to coordinate with their national counterparts for other MEAs as well as with institutions and agencies working to address the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDGs;

25. FURTHER ENCOURAGES National Focal Points to strengthen coordination with all wetland practitioners including Ramsar Site managers, to inform them of Ramsar activities and be informed by them about processes and issues of common interest;

26. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to continue to develop and activate networking mechanisms, including Ramsar National Wetlands Committees or similar bodies, to ensure collaboration with national ministries, departments and agencies;

27. INVITES Contracting Parties to identify opportunities to enhance synergies and cooperation at the local and regional levels, including with respect to Wetland City accreditation and sites with multiple international designations (such as Wetlands of International Importance that are also Biosphere Reserves or World Heritage sites);

28. FURTHER INVITES Contracting Parties to work with global and regional bodies, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and other regional economic commissions of the UN, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to enhance the wise use of wetlands;

29. ALSO INVITES Contracting Parties to continue to take into account the results of the project "Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies" through, *inter alia,* the *Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional levels*, undertaken by UNEP; and ENCOURAGES the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to implement its recommendations to promote synergies within the cluster of biodiversity-related MEAs;

30. REQUESTS that Contracting Parties continue to implement the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), including by establishing cooperative mechanisms for the management of shared wetlands and hydrological basins to enhance transboundary cooperation and establishment of transboundary Ramsar Sites[4];

[4] Turkey has registered a reservation concerning the content of paragraph 30, which refers to *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19) and which was accepted at COP7 with Turkey's reservation. The declaration by the Turkish Delegation appears in the Conference Report.

31. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to report regularly to the Standing Committee on progress in implementing the present Resolution and Resolution XI.6 on *Partnerships and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions*;

32. REAFFIRMS the invitation in Resolution XII.3 to Parties considering hosting a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to consider including a high-level ministerial segment during the meeting, addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the meeting;

33. WELCOMES the continued collaboration between the Secretariat and the secretariats of other biodiversity-related Conventions through the Biodiversity Liaison Group and through the implementation of joint work plans and activities of common interest; and REQUESTS the Secretary General to include in future reports information on the results of existing cooperation with other Conventions, international organizations and partnerships and on the exploration of new activities with possible partners;

34. WELCOMES Decision XIII.24, on *Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations,* adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and REQUESTS that the Secretariat provide inputs to the synergy process as appropriate and in particular on matters that are relevant to the Ramsar Convention and report to the Standing Committee;

35. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue working to strengthen collaboration with UN agencies, in particular UNEP, UNDP, FAO, the World Bank, WHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNECE and other regional economic commissions of the UN, GEF, MEAs such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the CBD, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and others, and to report progress to the Standing Committee on a regular basis;

36. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider their national circumstances and ecosystem-based approaches when preparing or updating their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) as applicable and where appropriate, and pursuing domestic climate action under the Paris Agreement, taking into account the importance of safeguarding and restoring wetlands;

37. WELCOMES the Secretariat's progress in the implementation of the memorandum of understanding with UNEP to enhance collaboration on areas of common interest; and REQUESTS that the Secretariat report to the Standing Committee on the progress of the activities concerned;

38. REQUESTS the Secretariat to foster and enhance cross-cutting subject matter expertise within the Secretariat team as a means to maximize use of existing resources and avoid duplication of efforts, foster a whole-of-Secretariat approach to providing equitable and consistent support to Parties' efforts to implement the Convention, and advance synergies and contributions across the MEAs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

<u>Concerning Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals - indicator for wetland extent</u>

39. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue working actively with the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), as well as with other relevant UN agencies, on water-related indicators, and in particular SDG Indicator 6.6.1 on wetland extent;

40. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue working with Contracting Parties on the completion of national wetland inventories and wetland extent to report on SDG Indicator 6.6.1;

41. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to participate as appropriate in relevant international efforts to address the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDGs, including the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the discussion of SDGs 14 and 15 and Targets 14.2 and 15.1 in international fora;

42. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties as appropriate in mainstreaming and raising the relevance of wetlands and the Convention in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and in the work of MEAs and other international instruments, including *inter alia* through collaboration with intergovernmental organizations, IOPs and other partners in the public and private sectors for the development of guidance and tools, capacity building and identification of opportunities to access resources;

43. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to strengthen their mechanisms to enhance effective coordination among national and subnational statistical authorities responsible for reporting on the SDGs and in particular those related to wetlands and wetland extent (indicator 6.6.1);

44. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to elevate the importance of wetlands and the Convention to address the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDGs and to strengthen mainstreaming efforts at national and subnational levels;

45. INVITES the Contracting Parties that are also Parties to other MEAs to consider further measures to promote national level synergies so as to foster policy coherence, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication, and enhance cooperation, coordination and synergies among MEAs and other partners as a means to enhance coherent national implementation of the Convention;

<u>Concerning the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund</u>

46. REQUESTS the Secretariat, in response to the invitation to the Convention found in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of CBD Decision XII/30, to present to the Standing Committee for its consideration at its 58th meeting elements of advice for the GEF concerning the funding to support the objectives and priorities of the Convention, consistent with the mandates of the GEF, and to repeat the exercise described therein for the development of strategic guidance for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund in time for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its 15th meeting, consistent with CBD Decision XIII/21; and

<u>Concerning the relationship with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the work of the Secretariat</u>

47. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue the cooperation efforts with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) through the IUCN/Ramsar Liaison Group to support the operations of the Secretariat under the Service Agreement between the Convention on Wetlands and IUCN.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.8

Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2019-2021

1. RECALLING Resolution XII.5, *New framework for delivery of scientific and technical advice and guidance on the Convention*, which sets out the new *modus operandi* and responsibilities for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP);

2. FURTHER RECALLING paragraph 44 of Annex 1 of Resolution XII.5, which requests that the STRP identify, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee, "scientific and technical priorities for the coming triennium, and funding needs, and indicate potentially relevant partner organizations, for the consideration of the Conference of Parties";

3. ALSO RECALLING paragraph 45 of Annex 1 of the same Resolution, which requires that the list of scientific and technical priorities "reflect the content of the Ramsar Strategic Plan for the coming triennium, resolutions of the last COP, and other priority issues which have been identified by regional or global wetland networks";

4. RECALLING Resolution XII.9, *The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024*;

5. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION and expressing gratitude to:

   - STRP members, International Organization Partner observers, observers from other organizations and STRP National Focal Points for their valuable contributions to the work of the STRP during the triennium;

   - the Secretariat for its support; and

   - donors for their generous financial contributions, including Norway (regarding the Wetland Extent Trends Index) and WWF (regarding the analysis of Ramsar Advisory Mission reports); and

6. RECALLING Decision SC52-04 of the Standing Committee, which approved the work plan of the STRP for the 2016-2018 triennium;

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7. WELCOMES the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) products delivered during the 2016-2018 triennium, listed in Annex 1 of the present Resolution;

8. URGES Contracting Parties, the Ramsar community, and other sectors to use them as appropriate;

9. INVITES Contracting Parties to use available communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) tools with the help of their CEPA National Focal Points and others to disseminate STRP products;

10. INVITES the Convention's International Organization Partners and other members of the Ramsar community to widely promote and disseminate STRP products, including the *Global Wetland Outlook*;

11. APPROVES the priority thematic work areas for the STRP for the 2019-2021 triennium listed in Annex 2 of the present Resolution;

12. APPROVES the revised list of bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the STRP for the 2019-2021 triennium, included in Annex 3 of the present Resolution;

13. APPROVES the guidelines for submitting proposals to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) contained in Annex 4 of the present Resolution; REQUESTS that the STRP review proposals submitted and provide advice to the Standing Committee in this regard in accordance with the procedure described in Annex 4; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to facilitate the process outlined in Annex 4 and subsequently submit any submission to IPBES before 31 December 2018, in order to meet the deadline established by IPBES for multilateral environmental agreements;

14. INSTRUCTS the STRP to develop its work plan for 2019-2021 for approval of the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting; ENCOURAGES it in so doing to give due consideration to including unfinished high-priority and low-priority tasks from the 2016-2018 work plan as well as to including elements of the Strategic Plan which the Secretariat reported[1] that Parties are struggling to implement; and ALSO INSTRUCTS it to ensure that the plan developed is streamlined and achievable within a single triennium;

15. REQUESTS the Secretariat and the STRP, building on lessons learned regarding the timing of the STRP's work during the 2016-2018 triennium, to test a new procedure for sequencing its work throughout the 2019-2021 triennium that maximizes time available within a triennium to develop outputs and products for the Conference of the Parties (COP), noting that STRP outputs need to be finalized about nine months prior to meetings of the COP, and to advise the Standing Committee of progress and report to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on its results;

[1] Ramsar COP13 Doc.11.1 Rev.1

16. REQUESTS the Secretariat to schedule the second STRP meeting in conjunction with the second Standing Committee meeting of the triennium, starting with the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee and continuing in future triennia, with a view to benefiting the development of the STRP's work and more broadly fostering communication and synergies across the work of the Convention;

17. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat, as a means to foster diversity and greater participation from STRP Focal Points from all regions and subject to the availability of resources, to hold the third STRP meeting of the triennium in the region or country of the host of the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and INVITES Contracting Parties and Ramsar Regional Centres to offer to host such meetings in order to support enhanced engagement by and capacity of STRP Focal Points from their respective regions, noting that, if no such offer is forthcoming, STRP meetings would be held in the host country of the Secretariat of the Convention; and

18. ADDITIONALLY REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake activities to build the capacity of Parties' National Focal Points and STRP and CEPA Focal Points, including *inter alia* through regional capacity-building workshops and other training opportunities, including on the margins of STRP meetings held in regions, as a means to further enhance the effectiveness of the Convention; and INVITES Parties, and interested entities in a position to do so, to provide support, including in-kind support, to the Secretariat's capacity-building efforts.

Annex 1

List of Scientific and Technical Review Panel outputs produced during 2016-2018

Note: Outputs are listed in order of the task in the STRP work plan.

1. *Global Wetland Outlook*

2. *Wetland Extent Trends (WET) Index* (as a key component of the *Global Wetland Outlook*)

3. Ramsar Technical Report No. 10: *Best practice guidelines for the use of earth observation for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring* (Task 1.1)

4. Draft Resolution on *Guidance on identifying Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for global climate change regulation as an additional argument to existing Ramsar criteria* (Task 1.2)

5. Briefing Note No. 8: *Best Practice guidelines for tropical peatlands inventories for their designation as Wetlands of International Importance* (Task 1.2)

6. Ramsar Sites management toolkit (https://www.ramsar.org/resources/ramsar-sites-management-toolkit) (Task 2.1)

7. Ramsar Policy Brief No. 2: *Integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making*. https://www.ramsar.org/document/ramsar-policy-brief-2-integrating-multiple-wetland-values-into-decision-making (Task 3.1)

8. Ramsar Policy Brief No. 1: *Wetlands for disaster risk reduction – Effective choices for resilient communities.* https://www.ramsar.org/document/ramsar-policy-brief-1-wetlands-for-disaster-risk-reduction-effective-choices-for-resilient (Task 3.2)

9. Policy Brief No. 3: *Implementing environmental flows with benefits for society and different wetland ecosystems in the river system* (Task 4.1)

10. *Comprehensive review and analysis of Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) reports* (Task 4.2)

11. Policy Brief No. 4: *Ramsar Advisory Missions: A tool to respond to ecological character change in Wetlands of International Importance* (Task 4.2)

12. Briefing Note No. 9: *Ramsar Advisory Missions: Technical Advice on Ramsar Sites* (Task 4.2)

13. Briefing Note No. 8: *Potential and rationale for wetland restoration in a climate change context* (Task 5.1)

14. Draft Resolution on *Guidance on restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity* (Task 5.3)

15. Ramsar Technical Report No. 11: *Restoration of degraded peatland soils to mitigate and adapt to climate change* (Task 5.3)

Annex 2
Scientific and Technical Review Panel Priority Thematic Work Areas for 2019-2021

STRP Priority Thematic Work Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024	Ramsar Strategic Plan Goals and Targets 2016 – 2024
Best practice methodologies / tools to identify and monitor Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, including surveying, mapping, inventorying, and global and regional analysis of the priorities for enhancing the Ramsar site network.	**Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network** **Target 5** The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management **Target 6** There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites **Target 7** Sites that are at risk of loss of ecological character have threats addressed **Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands** **Target 10** The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels. **Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation** **Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
Best practices for developing and implementing tools for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, recognizing traditional practices of indigenous peoples and local communities.	**Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands** **Target 8** National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands. **Target 9** The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, *inter alia*, within a river basin or along a coastal zone. **Target 11** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.

STRP Priority Thematic Work Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024	Ramsar Strategic Plan Goals and Targets 2016 – 2024
	Target 12 Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation. **Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation** **Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
Methodologies for the economic and non-economic valuation of the values of the functions and services of wetlands, and improved methodologies and knowledge exchange on current and future drivers of wetland loss and degradation.	**Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation.** **Target 1** Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level. **Target 3** The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands. **Target 4** Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment **Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands** **Target 8** National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands. **Target 9** The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, *inter alia*, within a river basin or along a coastal zone. **Target 11** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated. **Target 12** Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.

STRP Priority Thematic Work Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024	Ramsar Strategic Plan Goals and Targets 2016 – 2024
	Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation **Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.
Promoting wetland conservation within sustainable development frameworks and other relevant development initiatives	**Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation.** **Target 1** Wetland benefits are featured in national/ local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, and fisheries at the national and local levels. **Target 3** The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands. **Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands** **Target 8** National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands. **Target 9** The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone. **Target 11** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated. **Target 12** Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation. **Target 13** Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods. **Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation** **Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.

STRP Priority Thematic Work Areas, as matched to Ramsar Strategic Plan Targets 2016 – 2024	Ramsar Strategic Plan Goals and Targets 2016 – 2024
Climate change and wetlands: innovative methodologies for carbon accounting/assessments related to wetlands.	**Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands** **Target 8** National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands. **Target 9** The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, *inter alia*, within a river basin or along a coastal zone. **Target 11** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated. **Target 12** Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation. **Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation** **Target 14** Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.

Annex 3

Bodies and organizations invited to participate as observers in the meetings and processes of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for the 2019-2021 triennium

Observer organizations are defined as global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, global intergovernmental organizations and processes, regional intergovernmental organizations and processes, international organizations and other non-governmental organizations and organizations devoted to wetlands.

They include, but are not restricted to:

- Ducks Unlimited (DU)
- European Space Agency – ESRIN (ESA-ESRIN)
- Flora and Fauna International
- Global Environment Facility (GEF: Secretariat and/or the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel)
- Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)
- Group on Earth Observation – Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON)
- Group on Earth Observation – Wetlands Initiative (GEO-Wetlands)
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- International Crane Foundation (ICF)
- International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG)
- International Peat Society (IPS)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- Scientific and Technical Network of the Mediterranean Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative (MedWet)
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the Secretariats and/or representatives of their technical bodies, as follows: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and related instruments, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)
- Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Tour du Valat Research Institute for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

Annex 4

Guidelines for developing requests to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) for its future work programmes

(As proposed as interim guidelines to the Standing Committee in document SC47-19 on *Outcomes of the second plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-2)* and approved through Decision SC47-24.)

1. The Ramsar Secretariat notifies the Ramsar Contracting Parties and broader community of the opportunity to develop requests to be submitted to IPBES and provides guidance on the form and detail of such requests and a deadline for submissions to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (via the Secretariat), as well as, as appropriate, a template for such submissions.

2. Any Contracting Party, Ramsar Regional Initiative, the STRP, and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) that are proposing a joint submission may develop a proposal for consideration.

3. All proposals are submitted to the STRP, which reviews them and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee. The STRP's review and recommendations will take into account the extent to which the requests advance the Ramsar Strategic Plan and are consistent with IPBES priorities.

4. It is important to note that the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel prioritizes requests based on the following information:

    a. Relevance to the objective, functions and work programme of the Platform;

    b. Urgency of action by the Platform in the light of the imminence of the risks caused by the issues to be addressed by such action;

    c. Relevance of the requested action in addressing specific policies or processes;

    d. Geographic scope of the requested action, as well as issues to be covered by such action;

    e. Anticipated level of complexity of the issues to be addressed by the requested action;

    f. Previous work and existing initiatives of a similar nature and evidence of remaining gaps, such as the absence or limited availability of information and tools to address the issues, and reasons why the Platform is best suited to take action;

    g. Availability of scientific literature and expertise for the Platform to undertake the requested action;

    h. Scale of the potential impacts, and potential beneficiaries of the requested action;

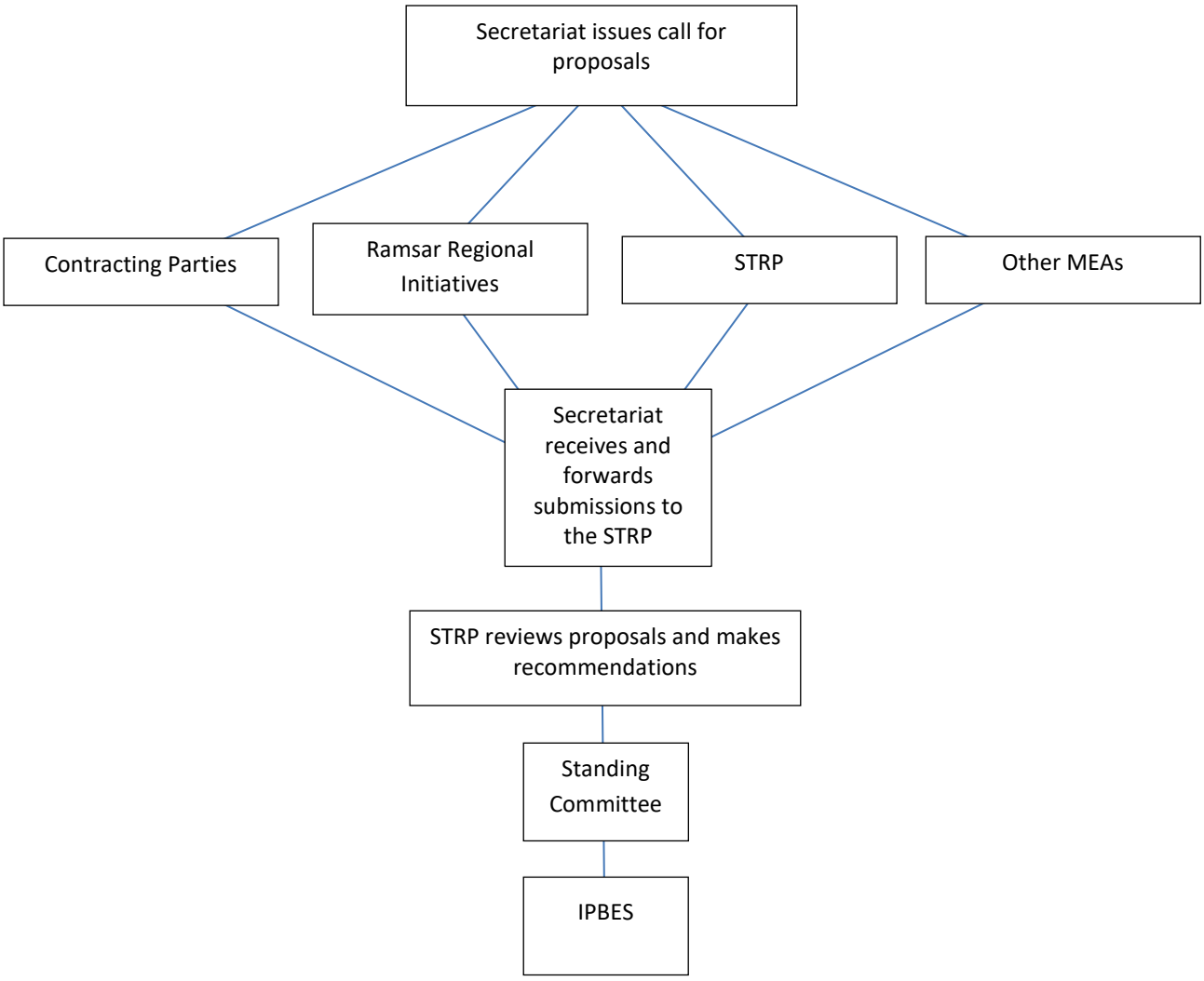
    i. Requirements for financial and human resources, and potential duration of the requested action; and

    j. An identification of priorities within multiple requests submitted.

5. The Standing Committee decides which proposal or proposals to submit to IPBES. Owing to timing constraints, it is likely that the proposals will need to be presented to Standing Committee members virtually and approval or comments provided within a short period.

6. The Secretariat submits the proposal to IPBES on behalf of the Ramsar Convention.

Figure 1. Process for developing IPBES requests



13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.9

Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021

1. RECALLING that Regional Initiatives under the Ramsar Convention, which include regional centres for training and capacity building and regional networks to facilitate cooperation, are intended as an operational means to provide effective support for improved implementation of the Convention in specific geographic regions, through voluntary international cooperation on wetland-related issues of common concern;

2. ALSO RECALLING that the Conference of the Contracting Parties has recognized the importance of Ramsar Regional Initiatives in promoting the objectives of the Convention in several Resolutions; and

3. FURTHER RECALLING that, at its 12th meeting (COP12), the Conference of the Parties[1], instructed the Standing Committee, through Resolution XII.8, to undertake a review of the existing *Operational Guidelines for Regional Initiatives* and to formulate recommendations for their improvement, and that the work undertaken to this end led to the *Operational Framework* included in Standing Committee Decision SC52-16;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

4. DECIDES that Regional Initiatives from now on are called Ramsar Regional Initiatives, with the acronym RRI;

5. REAFFIRMS the effectiveness of regional cooperation through networks and centres, grouped under the term Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs), in supporting improved implementation of the Convention on Wetlands and its Resolutions;

6. DECIDES that any RRI run jointly by several Contracting Parties for improved implementation of the Convention should comply with the principles listed in paragraph 8 of the present Resolution in order to be formally recognized under the Convention as an RRI, and that the *Operational Guidelines* adopted through Decision SC52-16 can be applied as appropriate for each RRI, taking into account that they will be revised at the 14th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP14);

[1] With the exception of Turkey, which entered a reservation.

7. REQUESTS that Contracting Parties participating in any existing or future RRI endeavour to achieve full compliance with the principles listed in paragraph 8 of the present Resolution;

8. DECIDES that RRIs, to maintain their formal recognition as an RRI, have to be in line with the following principles:
   a. RRIs must be endorsed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, or intersessionally by the Standing Committee if they are new;
   b. RRIs must be subject to review by the Contracting Parties at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
   c. RRIs must develop terms of reference, which cover their own rules of procedure, structure, governance and membership, including the status of the Convention Secretariat's participation in the RRI, and which should be consistent with the Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Parties;
   d. RRIs must be financially accountable;
   e. RRIs should undertake tasks related to the implementation of the Convention in their region and can speak in their own name only, using their own logo only;
   f. RRIs must submit to the Secretariat, according to the format approved by the Standing Committee, an annual report of progress on their work and a financial summary at the end of each year, together with a work plan and budget for the following year; and
   g. RRIs that have been established for fewer than six years and that want to apply for start-up financial support from the Ramsar Convention core budget must request it in their budget submitted for the following year;

9. RE-ESTABLISHES the (open-ended) Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group under Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure, to draft new *Operational guidelines for Ramsar Regional Initiatives*, and submit their recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 58th meeting, which should include a draft resolution for consideration by the Standing Committee, taking into account the principles listed in paragraph 8 of the present Resolution as well as the diversity of RRIs and their specific needs;

10. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to consider the recommendations on *Operational guidelines for Ramsar Regional Initiatives* from the re-established Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group, and submit them for consideration at COP14; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Standing Committee at its 56th meeting to facilitate the functioning of the Working Group and allocate core budget surplus funds for this purpose;

11. ENDORSES the existing RRIs listed below as operating in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands until COP14:

    Four regional Ramsar centres for training and capacity building:
    - Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA)
    - Ramsar Regional Centre for Training and Research in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO)
    - Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia (RRC-CWA)
    - Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia (RRC-EA); and

    Fifteen Ramsar networks for regional cooperation:
    - Ramsar Regional Initiative for West African Coastal Zone Wetlands (WaCoWet)
    - Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Niger River Basin (NigerWet)
    - Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Senegal River Basin
    - Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of High Andean Wetlands
    - Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of the Plata River Basin

- Caribbean Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative (CariWet)
- Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs
- Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Amazon River Basin
- East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership
- Ramsar Regional Initiative for Central Asia
- Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative
- Mediterranean Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative (MedWet)
- Carpathian Wetland Ramsar Regional Initiative (CWI)
- Nordic-Baltic Wetlands Ramsar Regional Initiative (NorBalWet)
- Ramsar Regional Initiative on Black and Azov Seas Coastal Wetlands (BlackSeaWet);

12. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee endorse proposals for new initiatives submitted intersessionally before COP14, on the basis of a positive assessment of the compliance of their structure and work plan with the principles in paragraph 8 of the present Resolution;

13. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to open the call for proposals for new RRIs, to be endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at COP14 or by the Standing Committee at its meetings before COP14;

14. NOTING that Resolution XIII.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters* includes within the Convention core budget for 2019-2021 a budget line "Support to Ramsar Regional Initiatives", to provide start-up support for the running costs of RRIs established for fewer than six years;

15. DECIDES that the levels of financial support from the Convention core budget to eligible RRIs for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 will be determined annually by the Standing Committee, based on their most recent annual reports and updated work plans to be submitted in accordance with the required format and timetable, and informed by the specific recommendations made by the Subgroup on Finance to the Standing Committee;

16. URGES RRIs that receive financial support from the core budget for 2019-2021 to consider using part of this support to seek sustainable funding from other sources, particularly during the last years in which they qualify for such support;

17. REQUESTS the Secretariat, within its existing legal framework and mandate, to assist Contracting Parties, as appropriate, in the administration of non-core funded projects, including, but not limited to, successful fundraising for RRIs; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS Secretariat staff in positions identified in Resolution XIII.2 Annex 4 as supported with core funds not to be involved in the day-to-day administration of non-core funded projects, as this role would be the responsibility of any Secretariat staff in positions supported with non-core funds for that specific purpose;

18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other potential donors, bilateral or multilateral, to support RRIs, whether or not they are also receiving funding through the Convention's core budget; and INVITES Contracting Parties that are geographically related to an RRI to consider giving financial support, as appropriate;

19. RECOGNIZES that MedWet is financially independent of the Convention and has its own provisional budget for the next triennium, which is annexed to the present Resolution for information purposes in response to a request by MedWet without establishing a precedent for RRIs;

20. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to publicize RRIs at the global level as a mechanism to promote international cooperation and support for the implementation of the objectives of the

Convention, to complement the efforts of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities and the National Focal Points at the national level;

21. REQUESTS that the RRIs maintain active and regular contact with the Secretariat; and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to advise RRIs on how to reinforce their capacity and effectiveness;

22. REQUESTS that the Secretariat continue publishing on the Convention's website information provided by the RRIs, including reports on their successes and work plans;

23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to invite regional intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organizations, organizations of indigenous peoples and local communities, and transboundary river and groundwater basin organizations, to participate in or collaborate with RRIs;

24. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties concerned to invite National Focal Points designated by the Parties for scientific and technical matters (STRP Focal Points) and for the Convention's programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA Focal Points), to take an active part in the RRIs' organization, work and projects, when appropriate;

25. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties concerned to take the necessary steps to achieve financial sustainability of the RRIs, preferably through financial support from a variety of sources, to establish mechanisms and procedures to ensure their sustainability beyond specific project periods, and to try to avoid RRIs becoming dependent on a single major donor, in order to promote the financial stability of the RRI;

26. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties concerned to identify donors that are willing to provide additional support to the RRI, notably through specific projects and cooperation programmes;

27. INVITES the Convention's International Organization Partners to partner with and support RRIs in their undertakings, including in particular through capacity building and fundraising efforts;

28. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to prepare a summary assessment of the operations and achievements of the RRIs operating during the period 2019-2021 for consideration by the Standing Committee and submission to COP14;

29. DECIDES that previous Resolutions and decisions concerning RRIs are no longer valid to the extent that they are inconsistent with the present Resolution; and

30. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat's legal adviser to review existing relevant Resolutions and decisions, identifying the ones that are inconsistent with the present Resolution and relevant decisions, and propose which ones should be retired or repealed; and FURTHER DECIDES that the results of the review may be shared with the Working Group on the RRIs, to be consolidated and presented for the approval of the Standing Committee at its 58th meeting, for inclusion in a new draft resolution on RRI and subsequent retirement of relevant Resolutions, *inter alia*,
    - Resolution VIII.30 (2003-2005),
    - Resolution IX.7 (2006-2008),
    - Resolution X.6 (2009-2012),
    - Resolution XI.5 (2013-2015), and
    - Resolution XII.8 (2016-2018).

Annex 1

MedWet budget for the 2019-2021 triennium

Table 1. Budget for the operations of the MedWet Initiative for 2019-2021

BUDGET LINE	2019	2020	2021
EXPENDITURE			
COORDINATOR			
Coordinator on a part-time basis	48,000	48,000	48,000
STAFF COSTS			
All salaries including taxes and social charges	90,000	90,000	90,000
EXPERTS & CONSULTANTS			
Regular needs (STN, MeRSiM-Net and Com)	29,000	29,000	29,000
Other experts	3,000	3,000	3,000
OFFICIAL TRAVEL			
MedWet Coordinator	6,000	6,000	6,000
MedWet Secretariat Staff	4,000	4,000	4,000
MedWet/Com and MedWet/SG	3,000	3,000	15,000
OFFICE COSTS			
Office management	18,000	18,000	18,000
COMMUNICATION SERVICES			
Website & dissemination	1,500	1,500	1,500
Communication tools	3,500	3,500	3,500
MISCELLANEOUS			
Miscellaneous expenses	2,000	2,500	2,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**208,000**	**211,500**	**220,000**
INCOME			
MedWet countries contribution	129,378	129,378	129,378
Agence de l'Eau	15,000		
To be secured from other donors	89.122,00	107.622,00	116.122,00
TOTAL INCOME	**208,000**	**211,500**	**220,000**

Table 2. Countries Contribution according to the 2016-2018 UN Scale (in Euro)

Country	UN 2018 All Countries	UN 2018 Med Countries	Euro	Percentage
Albania	0,008	0,056	514	0,4%
Algeria	0,161	1,123	1,466	1,1%
Andorra	0,006	0,042	514	0,4%
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0,013	0,091	514	0,4%
Bulgaria	0,045	0,314	514	0,4%
Croatia	0,099	0,690	901	0,7%
Cyprus	0,043	0,300	514	0,4%
Egypt	0,152	1,060	1,384	1,1%
France	4,859	33,889	44,235	34,2%
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0,007	0,049	514	0,4%
Greece	0,471	3,285	4,288	3,3%
Israel	0,43	2,999	3,915	3,0%
Italy*	3,748	26,140	28,500	22,0%
Jordan	0,02	0,139	514	0,4%
Lebanon	0,046	0,321	514	0,4%
Libya	0,125	0,872	1,138	0,9%
Malta	0,016	0,112	514	0,4%
Monaco	0,01	0,070	514	0,4%
Montenegro	0,004	0,028	514	0,4%
Morocco	0,054	0,377	514	0,4%
Portugal	0,392	2,734	3,569	2,8%
Serbia	0,032	0,223	514	0,4%
Slovenia	0,084	0,586	765	0,6%
Spain	2,443	17,039	22,241	17,2%
Syrian Arab Republic	0,024	0,167	514	0,4%
Tunisia	0,028	0,195	514	0,4%
Turkey	1,018	7,100	9,268	7,2%
	14,338	100	**129,378**	**100%**

*Under the condition of annual approvals in compliance with the Italian legislation, as a voluntary contribution. The UN 22% threshold has been applied to the Italian contribution at the request of Italy.

Note. Annual contributions from the countries participating in the MedWet Initiative are calculated using the UN Scale of Assessment 2018. When the UN Scale of Assessment will be updated through adoption by the UN General Assembly, the countries contributions will be modified accordingly.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.10

Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance

1. RECALLING Article 8.2 of the Convention, on the duties of the Secretariat concerning reporting on the status of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for the consideration and recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on these matters, and Article 6.2.d), concerning the competence of the Conference to make general or specific recommendations to the Contracting Parties regarding the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands;

2. APPRECIATING the designation of 131 new Ramsar Sites by Contracting Parties between 28 August 2014 and 20 June 2018;

3. ALSO APPRECIATING the work done by 32 Contracting Parties that updated the Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs) for 299 Ramsar Sites within their territories during this period, and by 56 Parties that provided updated information on an additional 454 Sites;

4. NOTING that, for 1,592 Ramsar Sites, representing 69% of the 2,314 Sites that had been designated by 20 June 2018, either RISs or adequate maps had not been submitted, or relevant RISs or maps had not been updated for over six years, so that recent information on the status of these Sites was not available;

5. NOTING that changes to Ramsar Site boundaries and areas reported in updated RISs "*…should only occur where the change is so minor that it does not substantially affect the fundamental objectives for which the site was listed, and:*
   a) the site boundary has been drawn incorrectly and there has been a genuine error; and/or
   b) the site boundary does not accurately match the description of the boundary as defined in the RIS; and/or
   c) technology allows for a higher resolution and more accurate definition of the site boundary than was available at the time of Listing" (Resolution VIII.21);

6. NOTING that substantive changes to Ramsar Site boundaries, arising from extensions or restrictions of the area of a Site, should also be reported in updated RISs;

7. CONSIDERING the need for Contracting Parties, as a matter of high priority, to put in place mechanisms "*… to be informed at the earliest possible time, including through reports by national authorities and local and indigenous communities and NGOs, if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory included in the Ramsar List has changed, is changing or is likely to*

change, and to report any such change without delay to the Ramsar Bureau [Secretariat] *so as to implement fully Article 3.2 of the Convention*" (Resolution VIII.8);

8. EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION to those Contracting Parties that have provided "Article 3.2 reports" to the Secretariat about Ramsar Sites where human-induced changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or may occur, as listed in Annex 4a of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP13 Doc.12);

9. NOTING that 59% of the Contracting Parties reported in their National Reports to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13) that they had arrangements in place to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in their territories; but AWARE that fewer than 42% of Parties have submitted reports of all instances of such changes or likely changes;

10. CONCERNED that, as of 20 June 2018, none of the Ramsar Sites included in the Montreux Record had been removed from the Record since COP12;

11. ALSO CONCERNED about the length of time that it has taken to address changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites (Article 3.2), the continuing lack of information on the status of many open Article 3.2 files, and the lack of response by some Contracting Parties to address concerns raised by third parties about potential changes to Sites;

12. RECOGNIZING the ongoing development of earth observation tools and projects such as GEO-Wetlands (Group on Earth Observations), the Satellite-based Wetland Observation Service (SWOS), the United Nations Environment Programme Global Resource Information Database (UNEP-GRID) and GlobWet-Africa, and the capacity building put in place by the Secretariat to support Parties in using such tools;

13. NOTING the importance of Ramsar Advisory Missions as a monitoring procedure adopted by Contracting Parties through Recommendation 4.7 (1990), to provide technical assistance for addressing problems and threats to Ramsar Sites that could lead to a change in ecological character; and

14. RECALLING Resolution VIII.13, which requested the development of "*protocols for the electronic submission of RISs,* [...] *so as to facilitate the supply of data from the information systems of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Sites Database"*; but AWARE that the online Ramsar Sites Information Service, as developed, still depends on manual input of data and information by Parties; NOTING HOWEVER that database-to-database transfer of data and information is routine for other international reporting; and CONSCIOUS that the utility called for at COP8 and highlighted again at COP11 would greatly enhance the efficiency of the RIS update process;

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15. URGES the Contracting Parties that have not submitted a Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) or a map for all Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) that they have designated (listed at Annex 3a of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* [document COP13 Doc.12]), to provide such information in advance of the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57); and INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to contact the relevant Contracting Parties to offer any necessary technical support;

16. REQUESTS the Contracting Parties listed in Annex 3b of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (document COP13 Doc.12) to update, as a matter of urgency, the RISs for their Ramsar Sites at least once every six years (as urged in Resolution VI.13 on *Submission of information on sites designated for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*);

17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to adopt and apply as appropriate, as part of their management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands, a suitable assessment and monitoring regime, such as that outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1 on *Working definitions of ecological character, guidelines for describing and maintaining the ecological character of listed sites, and guidelines for operation of the Montreux Record*, as well as the Convention's *Wetland Risk Assessment Framework* (Resolution VII.10), in order to be able to report change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites in accordance with Article 3.2;

18. REQUESTS Contracting Parties with Ramsar Sites for which the Secretariat has received reports of change or likely change in their ecological character (listed in Annexes 4a and 4b of the *Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance,* in document COP13 Doc. 12) to submit information to the Secretariat in response to such reports, including, as appropriate, information on steps taken or to be taken to address these changes or likely changes in ecological character, in advance of SC57 and each subsequent Standing Committee meeting until the issue is resolved; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide technical support to these Parties to address the threats to their Sites, with priority being given to the longer-standing Sites, and to report back at SC57;

19. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to continue to use the Montreux Record questionnaire at Annex 1 of the present Resolution to determine the inclusion or removal of a listed Site in the Montreux Record;

20. DECIDES to remove Ramsar Site 139, Réserve Spéciale de Faune du Ndjaél, from the Montreux Record;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, when submitting a report in fulfilment of Article 3.2, to consider whether the Site concerned would benefit from listing on the Montreux Record;

22. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to assist Contracting Parties in their actions in response to change or likely change in the ecological character of a Ramsar Site or Sites, for example by providing advice, when requested, on the application of the wise-use principles, or, when relevant, proposing to Parties to add the Site or Sites to the Montreux Record or to invite a Ramsar Advisory Mission;

23. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to investigate the options and associated costs for working with earth observation organizations,including the Group on Earth Observations (GEOS), Group On Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEOBON), the Biodiversity Observation Network in a Box (BONinaBOX) toolkit andthe Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), to put such data and monitoring tools at the disposal of Contracting Parties for national wetland inventories or monitoring of changes to Sites;

24. REPEALS Resolution XII.6 on *The status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*, which is replaced by the present Resolution; and

25. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to develop protocols that would allow direct database-to-database transfer of data and information related to the RIS, as previously identified as a need at both COP8 and COP11.

Annex 1

Montreux Record – Questionnaire content

Section 1: Information for assessing possible inclusion of a listed Ramsar Site in the Montreux Record

Nature of the change

1. Name of Site.
2. Ramsar Criteria for listing the Site as internationally important.
3. Summary statement of ecological character description.
4. Ecological components, processes, functions and services of the ecosystems affected by adverse human-induced change / likely change (list relevant code numbers from the ecological character description).
5. Nature and extent of the change / likely change to ecological character (use the threat categories in Appendix F of Resolution XI.8 Annex 2 *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands*).
6. Reason(s) for the change / likely change described above.

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) was submitted.
2. Management strategies and administrative mechanisms in place, if any (national government, decentralized government, community-level, or others).
3. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives, and nature of data and information gathered) – refer to RIS section 5.2.7 (Resolution XI.8 Annex 1, RIS field 34).
4. Assessment procedures in place, if any. (How is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used?)
5. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures in place so far or planned, if any.
6. Any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes activated or planned, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements.
7. List of attachments provided by the Contracting Party (if applicable).
8. List of attachments provided by the Secretariat (if applicable).

Section 2: Information for assessing possible removal of a listed Site from the Montreux Record

Management measures in place

1. Date when the latest RIS was submitted.
2. Site management plan or other planning, monitoring or assessment programmes in place at the Site, if any (description of technique(s), objectives and nature of data and information gathered (refer to RIS section 5.2.7, Resolution XI.8 Annex 1 RIS field 34).
3. Assessment procedures in place, if any (how is the information obtained from the monitoring programme used).
4. Protection, amelioration and/or restoration measures so far in place or planned, if any.

Assessment for removal of the Ramsar Site from the Montreux Record

1. Success of protection, amelioration and/or maintenance measures (if different from those covered in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
2. Proposed management, monitoring and assessment or other procedures (if different from those in Section 1 of this questionnaire).
3. Extent to which the ecological components, processes, functions and services of the Site's ecosystems have been restored or maintained (provide details).
4. Rationale for removing the Site from the Montreux Record. (Refer to *Guidelines for Operation of the Montreux Record*, the specific issues identified in Section 1 of this questionnaire, and any advice given by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) or arising from a Ramsar Advisory Mission, where applicable.)
5. Status of any other analogous or linked Site intervention processes, e.g. under other multilateral environmental agreements, and details of how Montreux Record removal will be harmonized with these.
6. Measures that the Contracting Party will implement to maintain the ecological character of the Site with clear indicators for follow up.
7. List of further attachments (if applicable).

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.11

Ramsar Advisory Missions

1. RECALLING Recommendation 4.7 on *Mechanisms for improved application of the Ramsar Convention* which established that, when the Secretariat becomes aware that a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) is facing change in ecological character, where appropriate it is to propose a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) to assist Contracting Parties to address such changes;

2. NOTING that, up to December 2016, across all Ramsar Regions, there had been 82 applications of this procedure, with positive results; and RECOGNIZING those Parties that have used RAMs in order to seek constructive solutions to challenges they face and as a contribution to their efforts towards effective implementation of the Convention;

3. RECOGNIZING the need to underpin and promote the greater application of the RAM as an important and useful tool for assisting Contracting Parties to implement the Convention;

4. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the important contribution that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the International Organization Partners and other stakeholders have made to implementation of the RAM process over its 30-year history;

5. WELCOMING the STRP's work in the past triennium to comprehensively review and analyse the body of reports from 82 RAM missions, and RECOGNIZING the STRP's derived briefing note and policy brief on RAMs published in 2018[1];

6. NOTING that there has been no allocation from the core budget to support implementation of the RAM process since the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, in 1999, but that non-core funding has been expended since this time to support 50 RAMs;

7. TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that resources may not always be available to support RAMs in a timely manner; and ENCOURAGING Contracting Parties facing such situations to seek to identify other sources of support for RAMs; and

[1] Briefing Note 8: *Ramsar Advisory Missions - Technical advice on Ramsar Sites*: https://www.ramsar.org/document/briefing-note-8-ramsar-advisory-missions-technical-advice-on-ramsar-sites; Policy Brief 3: *Ramsar Advisory Missions - A mechanism to respond to change in ecological character of Ramsar Sites*: https://www.ramsar.org/document/ramsar-policy-brief-3-ramsar-advisory-missions-a-mechanism-to-respond-to-change-in

8. RECOGNIZING the additional value of RAMs in raising the Convention's visibility, highlighting the commitment of Contracting Parties, and contributing to public awareness concerning wetland conservation and wise use;

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9. CONSIDERS that the Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) mechanism is a useful tool available to Parties to assist with implementation of the Convention, constituting a means for providing independent advice relevant to addressing actual and potential change in ecological character at Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites);

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider requesting more frequent application of RAMs in their national territories in appropriate cases;

11. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, when considering RAMs, to prioritize the application of RAMs for Sites that are facing problems similar to those at many other Ramsar Sites, where the RAM report may be of use for many other wetlands or where the RAM can add value to existing knowledge on how to address the described challenges;

12. INSTRUCTS Ramsar National Focal Points from Contracting Parties requesting RAMs to communicate with their national counterparts for other Conventions to identify opportunities to coordinate RAMs with other Conventions' missions when applicable; and REQUESTS the Secretariat in responding to requests for RAMs to avoid duplication with other Conventions' missions that may be undertaken, to the extent practicable;

13. URGES diligent follow-up by Contracting Parties hosting RAMs, to foster implementation of the recommendations made in RAM reports and to evaluate and report on the outcomes;

14. REAFFIRMS that RAM reports are public documents once the Party concerned has had an opportunity to approve them;

15. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, in consultation with the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), to prepare operational guidance for RAMs, addressing *inter alia* the issues listed in Annex 1 to the present Resolution and giving due consideration to the briefing note and policy brief on RAMs published in 2018, to be submitted for adoption by the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting;

16. REQUESTS the Secretariat to ensure that regional expertise is included in RAM teams in order to leverage the knowledge and experience of national and regional experts, including from International Organization Partners, research and educational institutions, and civil society where relevant;

17. INVITES Contracting Parties, the private sector, financial entities and others in a position to do so to consider making additional voluntary contributions in support of RAMs; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to consider the funding needs of the RAM mechanism in its Resource Mobilization Work Plan and in execution of its Work Plan;

18. THANKS the STRP for its useful work during the 2015-2018 triennium to review past RAM experiences;

19. REQUESTS the Secretariat, as appropriate and upon request, to advise Contracting Parties in their efforts to manage Sites on the Montreux Record and Sites for which reports on adverse change in ecological character have been received, engaging Regional Centres in such efforts as appropriate; and FURTHER REQUESTS the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate, and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider working together with the Secretariat to support these efforts;

20. REQUESTS that the Secretariat develop an informational, downloadable brochure in all official languages explaining the opportunities presented by RAMs to assist Parties with implementing the Convention; and

21. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to promptly submit to the STRP all Contracting Parties' requests for removal of Ramsar Sites from the Montreux Record and to expeditiously inform the Contracting Party and the Standing Committee of the STRP's recommendation regarding the outcome of such requests.

Annex 1

Development of practical and technical operational guidance for Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and other stakeholders in the form of a simple "how to" step-by-step manual addressing *inter alia* the following topics

- Circumstances that trigger the proposed use of a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM)
- Links with Article 3.2
- Links with the Montreux Record
- Pre-RAM investigations and advice
- Prerogative of the Contracting Party to invite RAM / approve terms of reference (ToRs)
- Developing ToRs – standard good practice
- Scope of the RAM
- Coordination and team composition of mission team
- Timeframe considerations
- Role of the Secretariat
- Role of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel
- Role of International Organization Partners and other stakeholders
- Resourcing the RAM
- Application to candidate Ramsar Sites and other undesignated wetlands
- Application in transboundary contexts
- Operation on a joint basis with mechanisms of other multilateral environmental agreements
- Structure and contents of RAM reports
- The process for following up a RAM report
- Reporting on the activities of the RAM, including a review of outcomes an appropriate time after completion of the mission (typically about six years)

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.12

Guidance on identifying peatlands as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for global climate change regulation as an additional argument to existing Ramsar criteria

1. RECALLING that Article 2.1 of the Convention requires the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites);

2. RECALLING ALSO the Vision for the Ramsar List and the criteria for designation of Ramsar Sites in Annex 2 to Resolution XI.8 on *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) – 2012 revision*;

3. FURTHER RECALLING Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change, and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, which requests the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to develop guidelines for the further application, as regards peatlands, of Criterion 1 for the selection of Wetlands of International Importance, and in particular paragraph 121 of Annex 2 to Resolution XI.8, which encourages Contracting Parties to designate at least one peatland Ramsar Site as appropriate, that is suitable for communication, education, and raising of awareness of the conservation, restoration and wise use of peatlands and their role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and summarizes the significance of peatland conservation and management in the context of climate change;

4. RECOGNIZING that, through their sequestration of atmospheric carbon, wisely managed peatlands are an international asset with a value for global climate-change mitigation independent of their location;

5. NOTING that peatlands provide space-effective terrestrial stores of carbon, and that peatland conservation, including as a cost-effective measure to maintain terrestrial carbon stores (emission avoidance), and restoration (emission reduction) are among the measures for long-term climate-change mitigation;

6. RECALLING that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary multilateral forum for addressing climate change issues and that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change, providing policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation; and NOTING

that some countries are currently testing the methodology in the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*;

7. AWARE that peatlands store large quantities of carbon and that protection and restoration of peatlands contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, whereas the drainage of peatlands causes net emissions of greenhouse gases;

8. NOTING that designation of even small peatlands as Ramsar Sites can be valuable for education and for raising public awareness of the nature of peatlands and their role in providing ecosystem services, including long-term carbon storage, and that the larger and thicker the peatland, the greater the sequestration capacity and the carbon stock, and the more the peatland contributes to climate change mitigation;

9. ALSO RECOGNIZING that permafrost loss and overgrazing may act as significant factors in peatland degradation;

10. NOTING the Ramsar Briefing Note on *Best practice guidelines for conducting tropical peatland inventories to facilitate their designation as Ramsar Sites*;

11. RECOMMENDING that Parties with appropriate peatland sites consider the identification of potential peatland Ramsar Sites as an essential element of national wetland inventories, with due attention being paid to different types of peatlands and their condition; and

12. RECOGNIZING that most of the peatlands in semi-arid regions are dependent on sustained groundwater and/or hillslope intermediate flows and therefore their designation should consider catchments and related landscapes as part of the strategy to conserve these peatlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. ADOPTS the *Revised guidelines for identifying and designating peatlands* related to the designation of peatlands as wetlands of international importance, found in Annex 1 to the present Resolution, which replaces and supersedes Appendix E2 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) – 2012 revision*;

14. URGES Contracting Parties to use the Revised guidelines in their consideration of potential peatland Ramsar Sites as appropriate;

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to use all available methods, including remote sensing, to help identify sites as appropriate; and

16. NOTES the case study included in Annex 2 to the present Resolution, related to the designation of a Wetland of International Importance that has contributed to better public awareness of the role of its peatland resource in relation to climate-change avoidance and mitigation; and RECOGNIZES that there are many other examples of designated Wetlands of International Importance that make the same or similar contributions.

Annex 1

Revised guidelines for identifying and designating peatlands

(Replacing and superseding Appendix E2 of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) – 2012 revision*, as adopted by Resolution XI.8)

E2. Peatlands

Geographic distribution and extent

1. Peatlands are ecosystems with a peat soil. Peat consists of at least 30% dead, partially decomposed plant remains that have accumulated *in situ* under waterlogged and often acidic conditions. Peatlands cover over 400 million hectares worldwide and occur from the high mountains to the sea, and from high to low latitudes.

2. Commonly, many habitats with peat soil are not recognized as "peatlands" even if their peat layer is thick enough. However, some peatland examples include polygonal tundra, salt marshes and mangroves, paludified forests and cloud forests, high-mountain paramos, and dambos and vleis. Peat may be formed by various kinds of vegetation: a) bryophytes, mainly *Sphagnum* mosses and associated herbaceous and dwarf shrub species; b) herbaceous plants such as sedges and grasses; and c) trees such as in alder *Alnus* spp. forests in the temperate zone and in peat swamp forests in the tropics.

Ecological functions, ecosystem services/benefits, and societal values

3. Two main types of peatland are distinguished: bogs, which are rainwater fed and therefore acid and nutrient poor, and fens, which are additionally groundwater fed and thus generally less acidic and more nutrient-rich than bogs. In this guidance the term "peatland" includes both peatland with active peat accumulation ("mire") and peatland that is no longer forming peat and may have lost peat forming vegetation and is degrading naturally or as a result of human intervention. Whereas the presence of peat is the defining characteristic of a peatland, vegetation and hydrology are key defining aspects of the peatland type.

4. Peatlands are important for the ecosystem functions and services they contribute to human well-being and to nature. The Common International Classification for Ecosystem Services (CICES)[1], accepted by most Parties as being one relevant non-exclusive source for peatland evaluation for reporting in the Ramsar Information Sheet, distinguishes three main categories of ecosystem services:

    a. Provisioning and supporting functions and services: for example, materials and energy, such as biodiversity, wild foods, drinking water and non-fossil and renewable biomass-based energy resources, as well as commercial development for food production;

    b. Regulating functions and services: these relate to the maintenance of ecological conditions, such as climate regulation through carbon storage and sequestration, water regulation,

[1] See: https://cices.eu/cices-structure.

maintenance of water quality through removal of pollutants and nutrients, prevention of saline water intrusion, and protection from disasters; and

c. Cultural values: provision of non-material benefits, such as opportunities for recreation and education, culture and heritage, spiritual and aesthetic experiences, and information and knowledge, e.g. from biogeochemical and palaeo-environmental archives.

Peatland degradation

5. The main factors causing peatland degradation locally and globally include: a) drainage; b) vegetation removal or disturbance; c) infrastructure development; d) peat extraction; e) eutrophication and pollution; f) acid rain; g) water abstraction and/or diversion, and h) fire. These factors, which can occur in the peatlands or in their zones of influence, have various consequences, which need to be taken into consideration when defining the boundaries of peatland Ramsar Sites and determining their management:

   a. The main drivers of peatland drainage are agriculture and forestry both on peatlands and related catchments. Peatland hydrology may be influenced by hydrological changes (e.g. drainage, erosion and groundwater abstraction) in adjacent land. Peatland drainage leads to increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (carbon dioxide from peat oxidation, methane from drainage ditches, nitrous oxide from nitrification), subsidence (reduction in peat thickness by oxidation and compaction) and increased fire risk. Drainage affects water regulation capacity, and therefore water security of downstream human communities and ecosystems. Many peatlands are located close to sea or river level and subsidence may result in increased and prolonged flooding and salt water intrusion, thereby affecting the ecological character of the peatland. If the peatland is located on acidic sulphate soils, drainage may result in very acidic runoff, rich in metals, that contaminates the waters downstream;

   b. Vegetation removal or disturbance (e.g. by land use change) directly reduces biodiversity (flora, fauna, their distribution patterns and population resilience). It exposes the peat to direct solar radiation and wind, water and frost erosion, resulting in changes in micro-climate and desiccation of the surface peat and flooding risk in the surrounding areas;

   c. Construction of infrastructure (e.g. roads, pipelines, buildings) on peat causes compaction by overburden and vehicles and requires drainage (often resulting in erosion and exacerbating draining in drier climates). This results in habitat and species loss, change in drainage patterns and compaction flooding in wet periods and increased fire risk in dry ones. Construction in permafrost areas may result in ice thawing, thermokarst, flooding and increased GHG emissions, especially of methane;

   d. Peat extraction involves drainage and removal of peat (and vegetation), which reduces carbon storage and increases GHG emissions. There may also be local effects on water quality and regulation, and biodiversity, as well as aesthetic impacts potentially affecting the recreational potential;

   e. Eutrophication (input of nutrients) is caused by direct on-site fertilization and atmospheric deposition, or (in fens) by input of nutrients in ground or surface water derived from the fertilizer added to surrounding landscape;

   f. Acid rain deposition from industrial sources can severely affect wildlife;

g. Peatland fires have led to considerable damage of peatlands around the world, especially in drained and, thereby, dry peatlands, affecting vegetation and emitting in some cases large amounts of GHGs. Peatland fires and related haze have major economic impacts (for example, on transport, tourism, agriculture and forestry) and public health impacts;

h. Specific quantitative and qualitative criteria for classifying peatlands as degraded are to be determined by Contracting Parties based on scientific, legislative and national policy considerations.

Peatland restoration

6. Rewetting of peatlands means restoring the water table or hydrological regime towards a condition where the new ground water level is close to the surface of the peatland, with the aim of partial or total reversal of the effects of drainage. (Subsidence may have made original conditions impossible.)

7. Rewetting of drained peatland restores some ecosystem functions but full recovery may be difficult and a long-term objective. Rehabilitation of fauna and flora, for example, can take a long time, if it is achieved at all, and depends on the peatland type and species available. Some degraded peatlands can still provide ecosystem functions, for example fens that are used for traditional hay making, and former peat extraction fields that have been rewetted and are used for paludiculture. These peatlands may be degraded but can be included in a Ramsar Site designation if they form part of a mosaic that includes pristine peatlands.

8. In addition to peatland rewetting, active restoration techniques that reintroduce peatland plant species are important to restore the vegetation layer.

Position within Ramsar's classification system

9. Since peatlands are characterized by the presence of peat, whereas the Ramsar Classification System is based on vegetation, peatlands occur in most Ramsar Wetland Type categories, especially:

   a. Marine/coastal wetland, mainly under categories H (intertidal marshes), I (intertidal forested wetlands), J (coastal brackish/saline lagoons), and K (coastal freshwater lagoons);

   b. Inland wetland, under categories U (non-forested peatlands) and Xp (forested peatlands); and

   c. All other Inland wetland categories except Tp (permanent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils), Ts (seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools – inorganic soils), W (shrub-dominated wetlands – inorganic soils), Xf (wooded swamps on inorganic soils) and Zk (b) (subterranean karst systems).

Applying the Ramsar Criteria

10. Peatlands considered for designation under Criterion 1 include pristine, peat-forming peatlands, some human-modified and naturally degrading peatlands that are no longer forming peat, and restored or rehabilitated peatlands that meet the criteria. They may consist of a mosaic of different peatland types with various levels of human impact.

11. Designation of peatlands as Ramsar Sites should pay special attention to peatland areas with at least some of the following attributes:

    a. Intact hydrology and peat-forming vegetation;

    b. Characteristic biodiversity;

    c. Large carbon store and active carbon sequestration;

    d. Well-developed and conserved historical archives of past environmental and human change;

    e. Unique macro- and/or micro-morphological features, such as complexes of peatland habitats or diverse micro-typography (e.g. hummocks and hollows); and/or

    f. Peatlands with high potential as "nature-based solutions" to reduce the risks of impacts related to climate change including climate change effects.

12. Special attention should be paid to the designation of vulnerable peatlands (for example, where minor impacts could lead to major degradation), to degraded peatlands with high potential for restoration and to peatlands that reduce the vulnerability of nearby human populations in the face of climate change. Criterion 2, which refers to vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities, may be considered in this regard.

Application of Criterion 1 of the Application Guidelines with respect to carbon storage

13. As acknowledged in Resolutions XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention* [and XIII.13 on *Restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and disaster risk reduction*], peatlands are important carbon stores, for carbon sequestration and, in the case of restoration of degraded peatland, in reducing GHG emissions. Peatlands provide opportunities for awareness raising, communication and education. They can be used to demonstrate best practices for wise use and restoration. Peatlands for which the relevance of climate-change adaptation and mitigation is considered in the process of their designation as demonstration sites with respect to Criterion 1 would feature (some of) the following attributes:

    a. Large peat volume that can be preserved, always in proportion to the area of the territory of the Contracting Party, which makes the request/proposal;

    b. Information on the area's history, land use, hydrology, and peat volume, to enable assessment of the effects of restoration, as appropriate, on carbon store capacity and GHG fluxes to be used for communication and awareness raising; and

    c. Accessibility to provide site facilities that enable awareness-raising and education activities to be carried out on site.

Boundaries and size

14. Large peatlands should generally have higher priority for designation than small areas, because their hydrology, carbon stock and historical archives are easier to protect and because they

incorporate macro-landscapes (see also Section 5.6 of the *Strategic Framework* on "Site delineation and boundary definition").

15. Safeguarding the hydrological integrity of peatlands designated as Ramsar Sites is critical to their long-term persistence. Site boundaries must be drawn in such a way as to prevent and eliminate as far as possible the impact of off-site hydrological changes on peatland hydrology.

16. Small peatlands can also be important for biodiversity, raising public awareness and providing education on the role of peatlands (see also paragraph 78 of the *Strategic Framework*).

17. Individual peatlands and complexes incorporating several peatland types (also with various levels of human impact) may qualify for designation (see also paragraph 91 of the *Strategic Framework* concerning site clusters).

The importance of peatland inventories

18. A peatland inventory should elaborate and/or collate key information for a wide range of conservation purposes including the designation of Ramsar Sites. A comprehensive overview of the extent, location and distribution of peatlands is necessary for each peatland inventory.

19. Ramsar guidance on wetland inventory (see Ramsar Handbooks 15 *Wetland Inventory* and 13 *Inventory, assessment and monitoring*) also applies to peatlands. According to this guidance, an inventory for the designation of peatlands as Ramsar Sites should use a hierarchy of four mapping scales in GIS format (multi-scale approach):

    a. The identification of peatland regions (at a scale from 1:500,000 to 1:1,000,000) using national and international information on bioclimatic and biogeographical ecoregions and landscape types (such as, for Europe, Moen *et al*. 2017[2]);

    b. Within the identified peatland regions, the assessment of location and rough extent of confirmed and probable peatlands (1:250,000 to 1:500,000);

    c. The validation of these data and the collection of supplementary field and literature data to characterize hydrology and vegetation (1:100,000 to 1:250,000) to determine representativeness, rareness, or uniqueness of peatlands under Criterion 1; and

    d. The mapping of habitats and management issues (1:10,000 to 1:50,000).

20. At all levels of analysis, the usefulness of the information must be assessed to determine if further data collection is necessary.

21. Parallel to this inventory, draft descriptions of specific peatlands in relation to Ramsar Criterion 2 should be prepared through evaluation of information on vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.

Further sources of information on peatlands

[2] Joosten, H., Tanneberger, F. & Moen, A. (eds.) (2017) *Mires and Peatlands of Europe: Status, Distribution and Conservation*. Schweizerbart Science Publishers, Stuttgart.

22. Much information on peatlands is available on the Internet. For successful information gathering, the use of appropriate search terms is important. Search terms should include any local term related to organic soil or peatland, combined with the country name (be aware of former country names which are no longer in use).

23. Soil data (including in manuscript form) might be available from soil institutions and other authorities. Since organic soils are subject to various kinds of land use, relevant information might be held by various national and regional authorities, including those responsible for geology, land development, environment, agriculture, forestry, resource extraction or energy. The information available from these authorities is sometimes of high resolution, often not available online, and must often be purchased.

24. Maps from digital archives (see below) are generally freely accessible and provide valuable information if geographic information system (GIS) data of appropriate resolution and accuracy are unavailable. Most maps are available as high-resolution images, which can be downloaded, geo-referenced and incorporated in GIS software. A large number of maps of the World Soil Survey Archive, the Sphaera library, and the Laboratory of Soil Science at Ghent University are not digitally available, but can be consulted at the archive sites themselves.

25. Spatially explicit soil information of various spatial resolutions is available in the open access online archives listed below at Table 1.

Table 1: Open access soil information archives

Source	Website
International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC World Soil Information)	http://www.isric.org/
European Union Joint Research Centre	https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en
FAO Corporate Document Repository	http://www.fao.org/documents/search/en/
Institute de Recherche pour le Développent : Base de données Sphaera du service Cartographie	http://www.cartographie.ird.fr/sphaera
World Soil Survey Archive and Catalogue (WOSSAC)	http://www.wossac.com
Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin	http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/topo/
Ghent University Laboratory of Soil Science	http://www.labsoilscience.ugent.be/Congo
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization: Land Research Surveys	http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/289/aid/16088
International Peatland Society: Publications	www.peatlands.org
International Mire Conservation Group: Publications	www.imcg.net/pages/publications/papers.php
Greifswald Mire Centre	http://greifswaldmoor.de/about-us.html
Wetlands International: Peatland Treasures	https://www.wetlands.org/our-approach/peatland-treasures/
Ramsar Recommendation 7.1: A global action plan for the wise use and management of peatlands	https://www.ramsar.org/document/recommendation-71-a-global-action-plan-for-the-wise-use-and-management-of-peatlands
Directory of Soil Institutions and soil experts in Africa	http://www.apipnm.org/swlwpnr/reports/y_sf/sftb221.htm

Source	Website
Canadian Peatland Inventory	http://ftp.geogratis.gc.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/archive/vector/geology/Peatland/

26. More empirical supplementary data can be obtained from a wide range of sources, including publications and grey literature on: research and protection of wetlands, peatlands and organic soil; paleo-ecological, pedological, geological, hydrological and botanical research; expedition reports; technical reports by companies and environmental organizations; and incidental descriptions.

27. To locate data (including proxy data) on the occurrence of peatland and organic soil, relevant research institutes, ministries or agencies may be contacted. Data on organic soil are generally elaborated by and stored at various authorities, reflecting the multiple land uses applied on them. Relevant national authorities may include those for agriculture, forestry, resource extraction, geology, hydrology or environment. Considering the often very local terms for peatlands and organic soils, it is important to become familiar with local terms and concepts before contacting local authorities and researchers.

Annex 2

Case Study Example: Designation of a peatland as a Ramsar Site using climate mitigation relevance as an additional argument (Lille Vildmose, Denmark)

1. Lille Vildmose is a Ramsar Site, a peatland complex with one of the largest areas of active raised bog in lowland Northwest Europe. The bog was until about 2,500 years ago part of a strait connected to the sea of Kattegat. The landscape elevated due to post-glacial uplifting and eventually the strait was blocked with a brackish lagoon that was covered by nutrient-poor reed swamp. The reed swamp and subsequent development of forest bog were followed by treeless bog of *Sphagnum* mosses. The sphagnum eventually lost contact with the ground water creating the raised bog that exists at present in Lille Vildmose.

2. The bog is currently subject to a large-scale ecological restoration project. Even though the approximately 24 square kilometres (km^2) of raised bog is the largest remaining in lowland Northwestern Europe, it is only 40%of its original size. Originally, four lakes covering 400 hectares (ha) were situated in the raised bog: Tofte Sø, Birkesø, Lillesø and Møllesø. These were surrounded by peat habitat having a natural outlet to the sea at Strebæk south of Mulbjerge. Between 1760 and 1769, these lakes were drained and the lake bottoms used for agriculture.

3. At that time, handmade channels were excavated over several years, including a channel of about 7 metres deep and 2 km long leading the drainage water to the sea. Two of the lakes (Lille Sø and Tofte Sø) have been restored (one in 1927 and one in 1973) and a third (Birkesø - 130 ha) is in the process of restoration. In contrast to the acid bog, the freshwater lakes in the area have a neutral pH, as they are fed by groundwater springs connected to calcium-rich soil.

4. From 1937 to1939, the Danish government acquired 2,300 ha in the central part of the peatland with the objective of creating farmland for small-scale famers. Digging 200 km of ditches improved the drainage and cultivation begun along the eastern border, including for marling, a friable earthy deposit consisting of clay and calcium carbonate used especially as a fertilizer for soils deficient in lime. Lack of fuel during Second World War hampered this project and the northwestern part was sold for peat-extraction and fuel for the local cement-industry. After the war, the cultivated land was found to be rather unattractive. Of 80 planned peatland areas for smallholders, only 36 were sold. Much of the area was turned into grassland and used for summer grazing by domestic animals. The government also started to lease land for peat-extraction. Initially this was mainly for fuel, but later it developed into a highly industrialized extraction of *Sphagnum* for private and market gardening. Peat extraction stopped in 2011 and today the central part of the Ramsar Site is a mixture of farmland, extensive grassland and recently abandoned open peat-mines in the process of being restored in the sense that the water level has been raised.

<u>Management</u>

5. In contrast, the southern part of the Ramsar Site is in a near natural condition as it was fenced, from 1906 to 1907, and set aside as traditional hunting ground for a major estate. A 25-km fence encircled 20 km^2 of active raised bog and the adjacent forest of Tofte Skov. Drainage of farmland including dredging of the local stream Haslevgaarde River outside the Ramsar Site has disturbed the fringe of this active bog giving it a drier surface. This in turn has allowed some colonization of birch *Betula sp.* and conifers adding further to increased evaporation and the

creation of shade not otherwise found on the active bog. In addition, this process of scrub development has been stimulated by airborne deposit of nutrients (N) to the oligotrophic bog.

6. In the northern part of the Ramsar Site there are two other important areas of raised bogs – both partly degraded. Together with a neighbouring forest (Høstemark Skov), one of these has been another private hunting ground, which was fenced (13 km) from 1933 to 1934. Both forests in the area are predominately lying on moist low-lying land and have significant sectors of fairly old, broadleaf forest.

7. After a vision-based planning process, a number of restoration activities have been initiated focusing on the re-establishment of a more natural hydrology, where possible, and facilitation of natural connectivity between the various habitats – forests, lakes, bogs and other open habitats. The restoration activities are funded by both public and private funds. An EU LIFE+ Nature project (2011 to 2018) is partly funding on-going activities.

8. Key elements of restoration on the bogs include recreation of the natural water system by ditch blocking and elimination of Birch and other trees over an area of 200 ha. In former peat extraction areas, work to restore the possibility of new bog-formation has involved damming in the drainage-system in order to retain water and/or reduce outflow. Significant areas have been flooded (770 ha). In the forests, the establishment of a natural hydrology has occurred with elimination of conifer plantations (common spruce *Picea abies*, dwarf pine *Pinus mugo*, and Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*).

9. Parallel to the physical restoration activities, is a large scale on-going grazing project. A third fence around the central area allows trials with free ranging red deer *Cervus elaphus* and moose *Alces alces* – the latter a re-introduction to Lille Vildmose and Denmark in 2016. The vision is to combine all three fences allowing free movement of all large herbivores, for example allowing the populations within the southern fence (red deer and wild boar *Sus scrofa*) and the northern fence (red deer) to merge. The purpose is to use these herbivores as a measure to establish a more natural grazing pressure in the area and thereby keep the area open by limiting the overgrowth of bog vegetation with trees and scrub.

10. The Ramsar Site is covered by the largest nature conservation order in Denmark to date to protect its natural, cultural and landscape characteristics and includes 7,513 ha. Furthermore, the area is protected as an EU Natura 2000 site and a management plan has been developed for the entire area with the main aim to restore the raised bog habitat including habitats for endangered and vulnerable species and threatened ecological species communities.

<u>Climate mitigation</u>

11. As well as 2,022 ha of active raised bog, the area contains 252 ha of degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration, 1,246 ha of degraded peatland under restoration, 400 ha of bog woodland and 1,000 ha of old natural forest of high biodiversity value on mineral soil. Peat extraction up to 2011 has reduced the area of active raised bog from an original extent of 5,500 ha to its current extent of 2,022 ha.

12. Calculations, using the IPCC (2014) default values, arrived at net GHG emissions of 17,780 CO_2-eq. yr^{-1} before the major restoration activities started in 2011 and expect 7,294 CO_2-eq. yr^{-1} after finalizing restoration activities including rewetting of the central and drained parts of Lille Vildmose in 2018.

13. The calculated emissions from Lille Vildmose represent c. 1% of the total emissions from peatlands in Denmark and c. 0.02% of the total net human emissions of Denmark (in 2012). It has been estimated that the estimated carbon content in the total peat area of Lille Vildmose is "estimated to be approximately 10% of the total peat carbon volume of 73.6 Mton" in the country (Joosten 2009). Based on these estimates, Lille Vildmose is and will continue to be a net GHG emitting ecosystem, although with smaller fluxes due to rewetting, despite the carbon sequestration taking place (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1. Indicative GHG in Lille Vildmose before and after project implementation (emission factors according to IPCC 2014 including the sum of CO_2, CH_4 and N_2O). After Barthelmes et al. 2015.

Land type	Extent (ha)	Emission Factor (ton CO_2-eq ha-1 yr^{-1}) before project start	Total emissions (ton CO_2-eq yr^{-1}) before project start	Emission Factor (ton CO_2-eq ha-1 yr^{-1}) after project	Total emissions (ton CO_2-eq yr^{-1}) after project
Active raised bog	2,022	0	0	0	0
Degraded raised bog capable of regeneration	252	10	2,520	3	756
Degraded peatland under restoration	1,246	10	12,460	3	3,738
Bog woodland	400	7	2,800	7	2,800
			Total 17,780		**Total 7,294**

14. Climate change mitigation potential is greatest in heavily degraded sites, such as peatlands that have been profoundly drained and used as cropland. In those cases, rewetting can achieve the largest GHG emissions reductions. These areas may not be as appealing from a biodiversity perspective, as a result, which could hamper their designation as Ramsar Sites. However, it is suggested that when using climate change mitigation as an additional argument to Ramsar Criterion 1, the following considerations are taken into account, which were followed in the case of Lille Vildmose, to designate complexes where:
    - major parts qualify for designation for non-climate related reasons;
    - there are significant areas where restoration will support and strengthen the conservation of adjacent good parts or lead to a substantial emission reductions; and/or
    - where national significant peat carbon stocks are present.

Communication and awareness

15. "Lille Vildmose is one of the most advanced Danish nature areas in terms of nature communication and visitor facilities." A large tourist and visitor centre is centrally situated in the area where wildlife exhibition, films and information activities are showcased. There are guided tours to the peatlands and special education programs for schools during the summer.

16. Several boardwalks have been placed at Portlandmosen and Tofte Mose, as well as a number of information boards and watch towers for bird and animal watching. Information boards were placed in eight areas of special interest to the restoration project between 2012 and 2015.

17. In 2013, the site was designated as a Ramsar Site using the additional argument for climate regulation for the first time in Ramsar history. The designation was based on two Ramsar Criteria: 1) that the peatland sequesters and stores carbon, and 2) that the bog contains large areas of threatened plant communities that have severely declined in distribution and extent in the relevant biogeographic region, because of large-scale extraction of peat and agricultural land use. Moreover, habitats for vulnerable animal species are present including the golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, white-tailed sea-eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, common crane *Grus grus* and Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra*. Communication and awareness materials have been developed to raise awareness about these assets.

18. The area is greatly visited, including by foreign tourists, especially in the summer. A total of 50,000 local visitors, as well as national and international tourists visited the centre in 2014. Since then, and up to 2016, the number increased to 75,000 visitors. It is estimated that twice as many tourists visit the Lille Vildmose Ramsar and Natura 2000 Site annually.

19. Although the contribution of Lille Vildmose to global climate regulation may appear small, it plays simultaneously a valuable and active role as an information centre to thousands of people, in Europe and beyond.

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Figure 1. Map of Lille Vildmose with the Ramsar site boundary in yellow (designated in 2013). Restoration areas are demarcated in red primarily by reestablishing a natural high water table. Most areas in brown are raised bog vegetation including some restored areas.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.13

Restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and disaster risk reduction

1. RECALLING Recommendations 4.1 on *Wetland Restoration* and 6.15 on *Restoration of wetlands*, which highlighted the important need for wetland restoration, Resolution VII.17 on *Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use,* and Resolution VIII.16 on *Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration*;

2. RECALLING Resolution VIII.3 on *Climate change and wetlands: impacts, adaptation, and mitigation* and Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, regarding the need to: minimize degradation, promote restoration, and improve practices for managing peatlands and other wetland types that are important for reducing ecosystem vulnerability as well as being significant carbon stores or that have the ability to sequester carbon; and encourage the expansion of demonstration sites on peatland restoration and wise use management in relation to climate-change mitigation and adaptation;

3. RECALLING Resolution VIII.17 on *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands*, stating that "Measures should be undertaken to restore peatland functions in those systems that have been degraded through human activity, drawing on experience and best management practices from different regions";

4. NOTING Resolution X.25, on *Wetlands and "biofuels"*, encouraging Contracting Parties to consider the cultivation of biomass on rewetted peatlands as an alternative to drained peatland use"; and AWARE that, since the adoption of this Resolution, the rewetting of peatlands while maintaining their productive use (paludiculture) has been recognized as a promising option to enhance climate-change mitigation and adaptation;

5. RECALLING Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, requesting the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to advise the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on practical methods for rewetting and restoring peatlands, and requesting the Secretariat, in collaboration with the STRP, International Organization Partners and other stakeholders, to compile best practices in peatland restoration techniques and share them through the official website of the Ramsar Convention; and FURTHER RECALLING the encouragement for collaboration with other Conventions on the relationship between peatlands and climate change;

6. NOTING that rewetting of peatlands means restoring the water table or hydrologic regime towards its original condition where the water table is close to the present land surface, with the aim of partial or total reversal of the effects of drainage;

7. RECOGNIZING that peatland restoration can contribute to the fulfilment of multiple obligations or commitments under different multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including, as appropriate, on climate-change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity conservation, better water regulation, mitigation of water runoff, and support to the Sustainable Development Goals and that, accordingly, it could be promoted as a cost-effective tool with cross-cutting benefits; and that, as part of responsible management, the requirement for restoration, and rehabilitation of peatlands should be recognized as a requirement for wise use; and that no peatland should be developed without a management plan;

8. ALSO RECALLING the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, its goals and targets to address the drivers of wetland loss and degradation and the need for restoration, in Target 12: "Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation", through "restoration initiatives taken, projects, and programmes implemented";

9. FURTHER NOTING Decision X/2 on *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in particular its Aichi Target 15: "By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification", and ALSO NOTING Decision XIII/5 of the CBD on *Ecosystem restoration: short-term action plan*;

10. NOTING Decision 4/CP.23 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), through which the Contracting Parties have an important opportunity to interact and collaborate on peatland restoration, especially under paragraphs 2 (b) "Methods and approaches for assessing adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and resilience"; and 2 (c) "Improved soil carbon, soil health and soil fertility under grassland and cropland as well as integrated systems, including water management";

11. NOTING that the UNFCCC is the primary multilateral forum on addressing climate change and that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the scientific assessment of climate change;

12. NOTING that the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including, for this effect: a) by holding the increase in global average temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels; and b) by augmenting the capacity for the adaptation to adverse climate-change effects and to promote resilience; and ALSO OBSERVING that emissions reductions and removals resulting from peatland restoration could contribute to the achievement of this temperature goal;

13. ACKNOWLEDGING the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*;

14. NOTING also the large number of international studies on the link between mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by wetland restoration, and the wealth of experience that has

been accumulated on the restoration of degraded peatlands, especially for biodiversity conservation and increasingly for reducing GHG emissions;

15. NOTING the significant and recent international recognition of the role of peatlands in climate-change mitigation and adaptation, carbon storage and sequestration and biodiversity conservation, as expressed by the increased profile given to peatlands in the outcomes of the following international conferences and workshops:

    a. The *Changshu Declaration on Wetlands* of the 10th International Association for Ecology (INTECOL) International Wetlands Conference held in Changshu, China, in September 2016, and specifically target 3 of the Declaration: "to ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in line with obligations under international agreements";

    b. The international workshop held on Vilm, Germany, in September 2016 on "Peatland Conservation and Wise Use in the Context of Climate Change" as a direct follow-up to Ramsar Resolution XII.11, which highlights the close links between research, education and communication, and implementation of and policy on peatland conservation and wise use[1], and which, more specifically in the context of rewetting activities, stresses the need to consider local stakeholder involvement and agreement, landowner compensation and the adaptation of policy frameworks (for example, to avoid perverse incentives);

    c. The second international conference on "Renewable resources from wet and rewetted peatlands"[2] held in Greifswald, Germany, in September 2017, where progress in the development and use of paludiculture in mitigating and adapting to climate change by rewetting drained organic peatland soils was demonstrated; and

    d. The substantial number of side events at the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UNFCCC in November 2017, which addressed the role of peatlands in climate-change mitigation and adaptation;

16. ALSO NOTING that the Global Peatlands Initiative, which was supported by a number of international organizations and national governments, co-founded by the Ramsar Convention, and launched at UNFCCC COP22, is a global effort by leading experts and institutions to save peatlands as the world's largest terrestrial organic carbon stock; and FURTHER NOTING the presentation at UNFCCC COP23 of the Initiative's first assessment, entitled *Smoke on Water – Countering global threats from peatland loss and degradation*;

17. NOTING that peatland restoration contributes to the implementation of obligations or commitments under different MEAs (the Ramsar Convention, CBD, UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification); but also REAFFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention is the primary multilateral forum on addressing wetland issues;

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[1] The discussions of the workshop are summarized in a report available at: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/report_peatlands_vilm_workshop_sept_2016.pdf and a Briefing Note produced by Greifswald Mire Center available at: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/briefing_note_peatlands_vilm_workshop_sept_2016.pdf.

[2] The proceedings of the event can be downloaded at: http://www.rrr2017.com/doc/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/rrr2017/downloads/RRR2017%20-%20proceedings%20-%20web.pdf .

18. ALSO NOTING that peatland restoration should not occur in isolation but, as appropriate, as part of wider consideration of water and land use management at landscape scales, as highlighted during the Global Landscapes Forum convened by the United Nations in December 2017, among other fora;

19. WELCOMING the efforts of Contracting Parties reporting on peatland restoration projects and of the international and national organizations funding and implementing such projects;

20. ACKNOWLEDGING the 2018 thematic assessment report on *Land Degradation and Restoration* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which states that land degradation is worsening worldwide and is now at a critical level, undermining the well-being of 3.2 billion people; and

21. NOTING that over 90% of natural disasters are caused by water-related hazards, as outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

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22. URGES Contracting Parties to report in their National Reports on progress in implementation of Resolution VIII.17 on *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands* and Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*;

23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to develop or improve legislation on restoration and rewetting of degraded peatlands, as well as on the protection and sustainable use of peatlands in general;

24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to conserve existing peatlands (Resolution VIII.17) and to restore degraded peatlands in their territory, as one means to contribute to climate-change mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and disaster risk reduction;

25. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to contribute, as appropriate, to a global compilation of experiences on peatland restoration and rewetting methods, to inform a Ramsar Technical Report mainly on acid bog restoration, that can be adapted to local or national contexts, to be finalized by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP);

26. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider stimulating the shift from drainage-based peatland agriculture and forestry to rewetting followed by paludiculture when identified as the best management option, and away from non-sustainable uses of peatlands, such as overgrazing and construction;

27. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to seek to ensure that rewetting and paludiculture can take place where paludiculture is considered to be the best land use for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and restoration where biodiversity values are not compromised, taking into account the peatland type, the site's present ecological status and the ecological potential after rewetting;

28. RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties make use of remote sensing while assessing suitable sites for restoration and planning the restoration; that Parties calculate peat volume at sites that can benefit from rewetting and for which it may become an important factor when choosing sites for restoration; and that, if possible, Parties also consider the aspects of peat quality and the expected future vegetation and how it may influence the carbon balance after restoration;

29. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to restore peatlands while taking into account the water balance in the landscape, in particular:

    - valuing peatlands as water regulators and filters, and preventing the release of water pollutants;
    - where suitable, including fish, fishing and other sustainable livelihood- and nutrition-generating activities on restored peatlands as increasing the long-term and overall sustainability of restoration efforts;
    - preventing land loss and salinization of the soil due to subsidence caused by drainage; and
    - when it may contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 15.3 and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

30. INVITES Contracting Parties with peatlands to engage in the Global Peatlands Initiative, *inter alia* by contributing case studies of peatland restoration projects to the global knowledge base of best practices[3], and by creating partnerships that support the multiplying and scaling up of such best practices in their own territories and elsewhere;

31. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to foster collaboration and synergies among multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and to support an initiative to develop a joint declaration of MEAs with respect to peatland conservation, restoration and wise use, thereby safeguarding the multiple benefits of peatlands including restored peatlands, and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals;

32. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate within their national circumstances, to pursue peatland conservation and/or restoration measures that reduce anthropogenic emissions and increase removals, as a way *inter alia* to contribute to their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement;

33. REQUESTS the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021 in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider, related to the fourth Strategic Plan 2016-2024, the further elaboration of practical experiences of restoration methods for peatland types not yet covered by Ramsar Convention guidance;

34. ALSO REQUESTS the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider:

    - making an assessment of the status of implementation of Resolution VIII.17;
    - elaborating on the practical experiences of restoration methods based on the integrated approach to ecosystem restoration;
    - developing guidance for the cost-benefit analysis, a cost-effectiveness analysis and multiple-criteria analysis of peatland restoration projects; and
    - developing templates for reporting on peatland restoration;

[3] For example: www.fao.org/in-action/micca/knowledge/peatlands-and-organic-soils/cases-of-peatland-management-practices

35. FURTHER INVITES Contracting Parties to provide peat-related information and case studies for inclusion in such guidance, and to disseminate outputs, and to report progress at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties together with the case studies and to consider what action is required by the Conference of the Parties; and

36. INVITES Contracting Parties to consider options for developing and applying positive incentives to foster peatland restoration and conservation and to phase out incentives harmful to peatlands.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.14

Promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon[1] ecosystems

1. RECALLING:

   a. Resolution VIII.4 on *Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)*, which urges Contracting Parties to ensure that coastal wetlands and their values and functions and their importance for the conservation of biological diversity, including their vital role in mitigating the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise, are fully recognized in their policies, planning and decision-making in the coastal zone;

   b. Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, which urges Contracting Parties to manage wetlands wisely to increase their resilience to climate change and take urgent action to reduce the degradation, promote restoration and improve management practice of wetland types that constitute significant greenhouse gas sinks;

   c. Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*, which urges Contracting Parties to maintain or improve the ecological character of wetlands to promote the ability of wetlands to contribute to nature-based climate change adaptation;

   d. Resolution XII.11 *Peatlands, Climate Change and Wise Use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, which recognizes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the primary multilateral forum on addressing climate change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the leading international body for the scientific assessment of climate change; and

   e. Resolution XII.13 on *Wetlands and disaster risk reduction*, which welcomes initiatives that support the conservation and restoration of coastal wetlands and encourages engagement in such activities;

[1] In this Resolution, blue carbon is defined as "The carbon captured by living organisms in coastal (e.g. mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrasses) and marine ecosystems and stored in biomass and sediments". However, not all Contracting Parties endorse this definition or recognize the Ramsar Convention as the competent forum to address mitigation reporting and accounting arrangements.

2. RECOGNIZING:

   a. the UNFCCC as the international environmental treaty that seeks to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;

   b. the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC, which aims at, among other goals, strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, including by holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;

   c. the IPCC as the primary international body for assessing the science related to climate change, providing policy-makers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation; and NOTING that some countries are currently testing the methodology in the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*; and

   d. the IPCC as the entity that has developed internationally recognized guidelines for national inventories of greenhouse gas emissions and removals, used by Parties to the UNFCCC for national inventory reporting; and ALSO RECOGNIZING that the IPCC requires complete and coherent analysis for every sector considered in carbon capture;

3. RECOGNIZING that Contracting Parties will take action to manage the impact of climate change and its mitigation, and to support the adaptation and resilience of critically important and fragile coastal wetland ecosystems, in the context of their own national legislative and policy frameworks;

4. NOTING that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in Resolution A/RES/71/257 on *Oceans and the law of the sea*, notes the vital role that coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, including mangroves, tidal marshes[2] and seagrasses[3], play in climate adaptation and mitigation through carbon sequestration, and in increasing the resilience of coastal ecosystems to ocean acidification, and the range of other benefits that these ecosystems provide including sustainable livelihoods, food security and biodiversity conservation, and coastal protection, and encourages States and relevant international institutions and organizations to work collaboratively to protect and restore coastal blue-carbon ecosystems;

5. NOTING that the Ramsar Convention represents a relevant policy framework for conserving and managing coastal wetlands, including coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, and that the restoration of degraded wetlands, with priority to those relevant for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, is included within Target 12 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;

[2] UNGA Resolution A/RES/71/257 uses the term “tidal marshes”, but the UNEP Assessment Report (2009) and other scientific papers (e.g. Macleod *et al*., 2011; see footnote 5) use “salt marshes”. The term "salt marshes" is used in the the subsequent text of the present Resolution.

[3] Unvegetated mudflats and intertidal marshes are also important blue-carbon ecosystems. Freshwater marshes and freshwater forested wetlands are important stores of carbon but fall outside the definition of blue-carbon ecosystems.

6. NOTING that the territories of 151 countries contain at least one coastal blue-carbon ecosystem (seagrass, salt marshes or mangroves) and that 71 countries contain all three, and that many of these countries have included anthropogenic emissions and removals resulting from human impacts on coastal wetlands in the communication of their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement[4]; and

7. DEEPLY CONCERNED that about one-third of the area covered by mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass has already been lost over the past several decades[5], and that current dredging practices, decreased input of freshwater in estuaries and deltas, as well as poor water quality and land reclamation practices, may negatively impact coastal blue-carbon ecosystems;

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8. REAFFIRMS the importance of the Ramsar Convention in the conservation and wise use of all wetlands and their resources, including coastal blue-carbon and associated ecosystems, and maintenance of their ecological character;

9. FURTHER AFFIRMS the significant value of coastal wetlands for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to pursue policies and projects to conserve and restore these ecosystems;

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems in their territories to identify and raise awareness of the benefits of these ecosystems and promote actions at appropriate scales and levels within their countries, especially for sustainable development and climate-change mitigation and adaption;

11. ALSO encourages Contracting Parties with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems in their territories to collect and analyse data (including from citizen science and indigenous knowledge), map these ecosystems, and make this information publicly accessible with a view to:

    a. updating their coastal wetland inventories and their threats;

    b. determining the range of ecosystem services that they support;

    c. informing international awareness of the global extent of these ecosystems, potentially through the *Global Wetland Outlook*;

    d. estimating the carbon storage and fluxes of their coastal wetlands; and

    e. updating their national greenhouse gas inventories to better reflect data for wetlands;

[4] Herr, D. and Landis, E. (2016). *Coastal blue carbon ecosystems. Opportunities for Nationally Determined Contributions. Policy Brief*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN and Washington, DC, United States of America: TNC

[5] Mcleod E. *et al*. (2011). *A blueprint for blue carbon: toward and improved understanding of the role of vegetated coastal habitats in sequestering CO_2.* Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment 2011; 9(10): 552-560, doi:10.1890/110004

12. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems in their territories to:

    a. apply ecosystem-based and integrated approaches in managing their ecosystems, consistent with the *Principles and guidelines for incorporating wetland issues into Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)* annexed to Resolution VIII.4, in order to ensure recognition of their values, functions and services, including their role in climate-change mitigation and adaptation;

    b. promote participation, dialogue, information sharing, and collaboration in the management of these ecosystems from a range of stakeholders, including indigenous people and local communities, private sectors, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations and research institutes;

    c. facilitate information sharing, among Ramsar Sites and other wetland sites with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, on the values and benefits of these ecosystems, including ecological resilience, carbon sequestration and other services, and experiences in conservation, restoration and sustainable management of these ecosystems;

    d. apply the developed or updated guidance by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) as per paragraphs 15.c and 15.d below to prioritize coastal blue-carbon ecosystems and develop and implement plans for conservation, restoration and sustainable management of these ecosystems, as appropriate; and

    e. maintain and restore coastal blue-carbon ecosystems alongside coastal infrastructure to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts that detrimentally affect these ecosystems and lead to significant greenhouse gas emissions and reductions in ecosystem services;

13. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources:

    a. to survey interested Contracting Parties to determine their requirements in relation to managing coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, which could include assessing ecosystem components, benefits and services (including for climate mitigation and adaptation), conservation, restoration, sustainable management, capacity-building needs, and learning from others;

    b. based on the outcomes of the survey referred to in paragraph 13.a, to facilitate capacity building for interested Contracting Parties to:

        i. apply the guidance under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement (including the 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC *Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories [Wetlands Supplement]*);

        ii. implement policies on conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems; and

        iii. promote the establishment of regional training courses aimed at enhancing knowledge and capacities of Parties and promoting regional cooperation;

    c. to facilitate, where identified as a priority for a Contracting Party, the use of existing Ramsar regional communication networks, and other relevant initiatives such as the

International Partnership for Blue Carbon, the International Ocean Carbon Coordination Project and Integrated Carbon Observation System, for sharing:

i. data, toolkits and information on values and benefits of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, including carbon sequestration, climate-change adaptation and mitigation and other services; and

ii. information and experiences on the development of inventories of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration associated with coastal blue-carbon ecosystems;

14. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to liaise with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as appropriate, to provide relevant information produced by the STRP in relation to coastal blue-carbon ecosystems;

15. REQUESTS that the STRP, if resources are available, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, consider continuing its work on climate change and wetlands, including coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, as a high priority, consistent with the relevant IPCC guidelines, *inter alia* by:

a. undertaking a desktop study of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems across the Ramsar Sites of those Contracting Parties that express their interest in participating (noting that some countries have data that are more highly publicized or accessible than others), including:

i. assessing the spatial extent, the ecological characteristics and condition of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems across the network of Ramsar Sites; and

ii. where practical, identifying coastal blue-carbon ecosystems of greatest abundance and at most risk (including from vulnerability to climate change, conversion, infrastructure development, drainage, invasive species, fire or natural disasters) in each Ramsar region;

b. reviewing and analysing regional modelling of carbon stocks, greenhouse gas emissions and carbon dynamics in coastal blue-carbon ecosystems and providing information, as appropriate, to the IPCC to inform future updates to the *Wetlands Supplement;*

c. developing guidance for prioritizing coastal blue-carbon ecosystems for conservation and restoration that includes *inter alia*: climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits; the range of other potential ecosystem benefits and services; and assessment of costs relative to benefits; and

d. reviewing and, as appropriate, updating existing guidance on the preparation of plans for conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems at Ramsar Sites where such a review could include development of case studies with regional experts to illustrate how guidance has been applied;

16. INVITES interested Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and others as appropriate to support the work of the STRP identified in paragraph 15, including through the provision of financial resources and/or in-kind technical support, capability development and information; and

17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are in a position to do so, to substantially increase support, including financial support, to projects and research aimed at the conservation and protection of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.15

Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and their contribution to climate-change mitigation and adaptation in wetlands

1. RECALLING Resolution VIII.19 on *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites* and Resolution IX.21 on *Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands*, which recognize and highlight the cultural connections between communities and wetlands and encourage the Convention's Contracting Parties to take cultural values into consideration in managing their wetlands and in designating them as internationally important sites;

2. RECALLING Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, Resolution XII.2 on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024,* and Resolution X.28 on *Wetlands and poverty eradication*;

3. RECOGNIZING the vital importance of wetlands and fresh water for human well-being, livelihoods, and food security; and NOTING that paragraph 1 of Resolution 64/292 of the United Nations General Assembly on *The human right to water and sanitation* "Recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights";

4. CONCERNED that wetlands are among the ecosystems most vulnerable to climate change[1]; and ALSO CONCERNED that wetlands, which provide climate-change mitigation and adaptation opportunities to communities, are currently degrading rapidly;

5. NOTING that Article 7 of the Paris Agreement acknowledges that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socio-economic and environmental policies and actions;

6. NOTING that Decision 1/CP.21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on *Adoption of the Paris Agreement* recognizes the need for non-Party stakeholders "to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and

[1] Third Assessment Report, Intergovermental Panel on Climate Change.

indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner";

7. ACKNOWLEDGING the important contribution that the Ramsar Convention has made through its application of resolutions on culture for the integration of cultural values in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, through *inter alia* initiatives such as the Ramsar Culture Network[2];

8. NOTING the report of the Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas entitled *Sacred natural sites: guidelines for protected area managers* and the relevance of these guidelines in supporting wetland conservation and wise use under the Convention;

9. RECOGNIZING that efforts under the Ramsar Convention can contribute to addressing climate-change goals or actions set out in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

10. ACKNOWLEDGING the significant contributions made by indigenous peoples and local communities to wetland conservation and wise use through their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, including contributions to mitigating and adapting to climate change;

11. RECOGNIZING that the communities which are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (such as those in small island States), and which suffer the consequences of the increase of extreme weather events, are often communities that also suffer from socio-economic vulnerabilities, including poverty, indigence and exclusion;

12. ALSO RECOGNIZING projects and activities supporting conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in wetlands in all Ramsar regions and in further enhancing the work of the Ramsar Culture Network;

13. NOTING WITH CONCERN that owing to, *inter alia*, climate change and land and wetland degradation from a variety of anthropogenic pressures, a range of ecosystem functions, services and goods are increasingly at risk and indigenous peoples and local communities are particularly affected; and

14. CONSIDERING that, while climate change is a global issue, the innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are important to achieve the preservation, conservation and adaptation to climate change in wetlands;

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15. EMPHASIZES that environmental, social and cultural solutions including those of indigenous peoples and local communities will all be needed to achieve climate change targets, including through mitigation and adaptation actions, ecosystem conservation and protection as well as their restoration to enhance resilience and adaptive capacity, as well as innovative

[2] Note: the Ramsar Culture Network is an informal network of Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and others working together on issues and initiatives to further the connection of culture to conservation and wise use of wetlands.

infrastructure and land-use planning approaches, as appropriate; and RECOGNIZES that the Ramsar Convention can play a key role in making the links between societies, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and the integrity and significance of wetland environments;

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and INVITES interested organizations and networks, to protect, support and promote the use of cultural values, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in adapting to the increasing negative impacts of climate change, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems;

17. INVITES Contracting Parties to include in their National Reports to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14), as appropriate, case studies, including those developed by indigenous peoples and local communities, that demonstrate how cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices contribute to significantly increasing the resilience of wetlands to climate change;

18. INVITES the Ramsar Culture Network, subject to the availability of resources, to continue its work as a mechanism to address wetland cultural issues in order to share lessons learned and to guide Contracting Parties in the implementation of relevant Resolutions of the Conference of Parties; and ALSO REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57), to consider working with interested Contracting Parties in developing terms of reference for the Ramsar Culture Network, to be considered at SC57;

19. INVITES the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider reviewing and revising the *Guidance: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands* with a view to ensuring that these guidelines are effective in evaluating the cultural ecosystem benefits of wetlands, including in relation to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, in advance of COP14; and ALSO REQUESTS that the STRP includes indigenous representation in conducting the proposed work, as appropriate;

20. INVITES Contracting Parties to take into account the Platform of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as appropriate;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other interested stakeholders to promote policy guidelines and governance tools to incorporate the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities on climate-change adaptation into management plans for wetlands, as appropriate;

22. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, and INVITES Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, interested organizations and networks, to continue to undertake enabling activities for the effective consideration of the cultural values of wetlands within wetland protection and management;

23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to seek mechanisms that allow the conservation and transmission of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities including in the sustainable use of natural resources, with scientific advice;

24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to continue to promote cultural diversity and traditional knowledge systems and practices within wetlands as part of holistic approaches to the planning and implementation of relevant national and regional policies, as appropriate, including poverty-reduction strategies, and to support Nationally Determined Contributions and the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the need to base such approaches on an understanding of current and projected functionality of specific wetlands, particularly where wetland services and functions may change over time and may be affected by climate change;

25. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to collaborate with indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant institutions (including planning- and wetland-management agencies) in the development of activities for the prevention of forest degradation and deforestation, sustainable tourism and recreation activities, as well as other livelihood activities in wetlands and peatlands in general, and especially in Ramsar Sites, in order to create opportunities to reduce poverty, support the integrity and significance of wetlands and contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation; and

26. INVITES Contracting Parties, when submitting mitigation and adaptation projects to development banks, the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and other funding instruments, to take into account the implementation of the present Resolution, including through supporting capacity building.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.16

Sustainable urbanization, climate change and wetlands

1. RECOGNIZING the Convention's role in addressing all issues affecting the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands; and RECALLING Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, which recognizes that the ecological functions and ecosystem services of wetlands can be seriously degraded if these ecosystems are not managed wisely;

2. RECALLING that Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*, which updated Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, recognizes the potential implications of climate change for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and also calls upon Contracting Parties to manage their wetlands in such a way as to increase their resilience to climate change and extreme weather events and to ensure that climate.change responses would not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;

3. RECOGNIZING the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC as the primary multilateral agreements on addressing climate change, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the leading international body for assessing the science related to climate change;

4. ALSO RECOGNIZING that, in its Third, Fourth, and Fifth Assessment Reports, the IPCC concluded that wetlands, especially those located in areas with high construction rates, may undergo significant and irreversible damage from climate change, due to the limited adaptive capacities of wetlands and their vulnerability to associated risks; and MINDFUL of the IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C;

5. NOTING that paragraph 11 of Resolution XII.11 refers to Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity on the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* (Aichi Target 15): "By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification";

6. AWARE of Resolution 1/8 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme on *Ecosystem-based adaptation*;

7. AWARE that wetlands can filter pollutants from water that flows through them and reduce the pollutant load on other wetlands downstream;

8. RECOGNIZING the efforts and successes of many Contracting Parties in rehabilitating and restoring degraded wetlands, and the benefits of sharing practical methods and experiences and of having knowledge-based best-practice guidance;

9. NOTING that paragraph 14(c) of the Annex of Resolution 71/256 on *New Urban Agenda* (2016), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, identifies the principles of and commitments to ensuring "environmental sustainability by promoting clean energy and sustainable use of land and resources in urban development, by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature, by promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, by building urban resilience, by reducing disaster risks and by mitigating and adapting to climate change";

10. AWARE that effective decision-making to limit the effects of climate change and manage urban development on wetlands can best be supported by a wide range of analytical approaches for evaluating expected risks and benefits; while ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of governance, data sharing and cooperation, ethics, equity, shared values, economic, social and environmental impact assessments, diverse perceptions, environmental awareness and education, and risk management approaches;

11. RECALLING that Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* identifies key issues and potential solutions for future sustainable urban and wetland management and planning;

12. RECALLING Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization*, which urges Contracting Parties to pay due attention to the importance of their wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments and review the state of wetlands, as well as requesting the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to prepare guidelines for managing urban and peri-urban wetlands;

13. RECOGNIZING that urban development surrounding wetlands increases the volume and types of pollutants entering wetlands and may contribute to other changes in ecological character as well as providing wise-use opportunities;

14. RECALLING that Resolution XI.9 on *An Integrated Framework and guidelines for avoiding, mitigating and compensating for wetland losses*, Resolution X.26 on *Wetlands and extractive industries*, Resolution XI.10 on *Wetlands and energy issues*, and Resolution XI.7 on *Tourism, recreation and wetlands* urge Contracting Parties to implement strategic environmental assessments with all related sectors and to conduct long-term monitoring of mitigation and compensation projects, as appropriate, and to modify and re-orient such projects if necessary, to ensure such actions mitigate and compensate for adverse wetland impacts as planned; and

15. ACKNOWLEDGING the Ramsar Wetland Cities Accreditation initiative, which can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness and attracting support for the wise use and conservation of wetlands and other sustainable development initiatives;

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16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to prevent activities that may have an adverse impact on urban and peri-urban wetlands;

17. URGES greater international and national cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address any negative effects resulting from activities that negatively affect urban and peri-urban wetlands, notably, surrounding urban development, climate change, effluents, pollution and fragmentation of ecosystems;

18. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, and working in cooperation with 1) interested Contracting Parties and their accredited wetland cities, and 2) International Organization Partners, consider the following:

    a. Developing technical guidelines for the design of urban and peri-urban Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) using climate scenario, climate modelling, and climate-change analysis techniques, as well as performing functional assessments of wetlands using hydrogeomorphic methods;

    b. Developing technical guidelines for constructed urban and peri-urban water-treatment wetlands, which would include ensuring water quality and the provision of wildlife habitat based on best available standards for the siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and monitoring of constructed treatment wetlands, and bioremediation;

    c. Developing technical guidelines to set limits for the pollutant loads that are discharged into urban wetlands, depending on their pollutant load capacity;

    d. Providing the highest-quality standard operating procedures for urban and peri-urban development or development adjacent to Ramsar Sites; and

    e. Developing guidelines for the wise use and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands and their buffer zones, considering factors related to climate change and ecosystem services and functions;

19. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to consider taking the following actions regarding the planning and management of wetlands:

    a. Developing and implementing management plans for urban and peri-urban wetlands and periodically monitoring changes in wetlands; sharing these plans with urban planning authorities; and encouraging the embedding of urban wetland protection plans and the setting of goals in municipal and national planning programmes;

    b. Implementing constructed urban and peri-urban wetland habitat enhancement activities, by integrating treatment systems that use biomimetic processes involving native wetland vegetation, soils, and their associated microbial assemblages to improve water quality and enhance carbon sequestration potential and resilience to climate change impacts, and undertaking *in situ* and/or *ex situ* bioremediation of wetlands;

    c. Involving local stakeholders, including but not limited to national and local governments, private sector companies, non-governmental organizations, research centres, educational institutions, bodies in the tourism and heritage sectors, indigenous peoples and local communities in the planning, protection and management of urban and peri-urban

wetlands, including through the establishment of a formal national urban wetlands stakeholder management committee;

d. Developing an urban and peri-urban wetlands inventory, and possibly classifying the wetlands included therein;

e. Conducting assessments of the vulnerability of urban and peri-urban wetlands to urban development and climate change, and of their potential impact; prioritizing such wetlands in terms of degree of impact and vulnerability and sharing the results of these studies with urban development decision-makers to prompt their utilization;

f. Establishing action programmes by local governments to mitigate urban development impacts and climate-change risks and to carry out adaptation activities on prioritized wetlands; and

g. Developing awareness and education programmes on the conservation of urban and peri-urban wetlands, and a plan to promote such programmes among stakeholders;

20. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), on the impact of urban development and climate change on wetlands; and

21. INVITES the Ramsar Convention National Focal Points of Contracting Parties to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other MEAs; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.17

Rapidly assessing wetland ecosystem services

1. RECOGNIZING that, to achieve the Mission of the Ramsar Convention as described in the Strategic Plan 2016-2024, it is essential that vital ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services that wetlands provide to people and nature are fully recognized, maintained, restored and wisely used and that the need to develop approaches for assessing both ecosystem functions and ecosystem services is recognized;

2. RECALLING that Annex A to Resolution IX.1 on *Additional scientific and technical guidance for implementing the Ramsar wise use concept* defines the ecological character of wetlands as "the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterize the wetland at a given point in time"; ALSO RECALLING that the *Guidance for valuing the benefits derived from wetland ecosystem services* (Ramsar Technical Report No.3 / Technical Series No.27 of the Convention on Biological Diversity) provides guidance for valuing wetlands and advice on when and why wetland valuation should be undertaken and sets out a framework for the integrated assessment and valuation of wetland services;

3. NOTING that a priority area of focus for the Convention under the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 (Resolution XII.2) is to enhance the information about ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services that wetlands provide to people and nature; ALSO RECALLING Target 11 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, "Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated", and that the assessment of ecosystem services of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) is a key indicator of progress against this target;

4. FURTHER recognizing that, under Resolution XII. 3[1], on *Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*, Contracting Parties and other stakeholders are encouraged "to increase their efforts to communicate on the values of ecosystem services of wetlands in other sectors' strategies, plans and regulations, and integrate them into a basin approach to land-use plans and other relevant local, national and global decisions";

[1] NB: Resolution XII.3 was amended at Ramsar COP13 and the title was amended to "Enhancing the visibility and stature of the Convention, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions".

5. FURTHER NOTING the requirement under Resolution XI.8, on *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates,* to ensure that a comprehensive description of ecosystem services is provided in the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) of a Ramsar Site, and that if there are other ecosystem services occurring on the Site which do not fit this classification, that they should also be described in the RIS;

6. ACKNOWLEDGING that the important ecosystem functions and ecosystem services that wetlands provide, as highlighted in the Strategic Plan 2016-2024, have direct relevance to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty eradication, food and nutrition, healthy living, gender equality, water quality and supply, water security, energy supply, reduction of natural disasters, innovation and the development of appropriate infrastructure, sustainable human settlements, adaptation to climate change, oceans, seas and marine resources, biodiversity and the sustainable use of ecosystems;

7. RECOGNIZING the importance of indicating the presence or absence of all relevant ecosystem services/benefits currently provided by each Ramsar Site when completing or updating the RIS and the need also to recognize important ecosystem functions;

8. FURTHER RECOGNIZING the priority thematic work area of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for 2016-2018, which requested the development of methodologies for the economic and non-economic valuation of the goods and services of wetlands; and ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making, as described in Ramsar Policy Brief 2 on *Integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making*;

9. CONSIDERING that only 19% of Contracting Parties reported to COP12 in their National Reports that they had assessed the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites;

10. ALSO CONSIDERING that, without the application of appropriate methodologies, the multiple functions and values of wetlands may continue to be poorly recognized and integrated into decision-making; and

11. THANKING the Government of the Republic of Korea, Suncheon City (Republic of Korea), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia for their generous sponsorship and organization of workshops that laid the foundation for the present Resolution;

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12. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognize the need to assess both wetland ecosystem functions and ecosystem services;

13. TAKES NOTE of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution; and RECOGNIZES that it could be applied by Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to assist in their delivery against the targets of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;

14. INVITES Contracting Parties to volunteer to further develop this methodology in light of scientific and technical advances based on assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the results of the work on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services or other approaches as appropriate;

15. ACKNOWLEDGES the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution as an example of a voluntary assessment approach that may be useful to Contracting Parties for evaluating the ecosystem services of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) and other wetlands; ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are yet to adopt effective approaches for the recognition and evaluation of ecosystem services provided by their Ramsar Sites and other wetlands to consider using the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* approach; and CONFIRMS that the present Resolution does not create additional reporting obligations for Contracting Parties;

16. ENCOURAGES Ramsar Site management authorities to apply, as appropriate, approaches such as the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem service*s as tools to assess the ecosystem services that their Site provides, to contribute to the description of the ecological character of their Site and to ensure the maintenance of these services in their management processes; and ENCOURAGES Parties to use the data and information gathered to update the relevant sections of the Ramsar Information Sheet for the Site;

17. RECOGNIZES the long-term value of taking a participatory approach, involving indigenous peoples and local communities, subject to the respective national laws of the Contracting Parties, when recognizing and understanding the ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provided by wetlands;

18. INVITES Contracting Parties to support the translation and further development of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* annexed to the present Resolution into languages that are not official languages of the Convention within the broad context of the Ramsar Strategic Plan;

19. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote the use by Ramsar Site management authorities of Ramsar communication tools including websites and social media, to highlight more widely the ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provided by wetlands;

20. ENCOURAGES those who modify and use approaches such as the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* in the broad context of the Strategic Plan to also refer to other relevant Ramsar guidelines, when making these assessments;

21. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to utilize this approach and other relevant approaches for the rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services when preparing their National Reports and describing the status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

22. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), consistent with its scope, mandate, and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, and requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to work with Contracting Parties to review and compile outputs from this voluntary assessment approach and share information with other relevant bodies on behalf of the Ramsar Convention; and

23. ALSO REQUESTS the STRP, subject to the availability of resources, and consistent with its scope, mandate, and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan, working with International Organization Partners and other observer organizations to review outputs from the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services*, to ensure that they effectively evaluate the ecosystem services of wetlands.

Annex 1

Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services

Introduction

1. To achieve wise use, and for wetlands to contribute fully to sustainable development, policy-makers and practitioners (such as site managers) need to recognize the important functions and the multiple values[2] of wetlands, and reflect them in their decisions, policies and actions[3.] Without wetlands, the water cycle, carbon cycle and nutrient cycle would be significantly altered, mostly detrimentally. Yet, often due to a failure to recognize these multiple, interconnected values, policies and decisions do not sufficiently take into account these interconnections and interdependencies[4].

2. The Ramsar Convention has recognized the need to integrate the important functions and multiple values of wetlands into decision-making and has produced policy briefs[1], technical reports[5] and wider guidance to address the importance of this issue. However, a review published in 2016 concluded that there is an urgent need to ensure that the requirement to assess a broad range of ecosystem services is achieved in accordance with the reporting obligations under the Ramsar Convention[6]. This improved awareness of and reporting on a comprehensive range of ecosystem functions and ecosystem services is required both for Ramsar Sites and for other wetlands.

3. However, there are inherent limitations, including resourcing, access, cooperation and capacity, which have acted as barriers to more extensive attempts to recognize the functions and multiple benefits that wetlands provide. Therefore, the development of procedures for assessing wetland ecosystem functions and ecosystem services should be targeted and pragmatic in their approach and involve participation of local communities and indigenous knowledge, as appropriate.

4. Many wetland managers have limited time and resources. Therefore, the development of approaches to assessing wetland ecosystem services needs to satisfy the definition of "rapid" insofar that no more than two people should spend more than half a day in the field and another half day on preparation and analysis[7].

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[2] The integral values and benefits, both material or non-material for people and nature, in a non-consumptive approach include spiritual, existential and future-oriented values. Ramsar 4th Strategic Plan 2016-2024.

[3] Kumar, R., McInnes, R.J., Everard, M., Gardner, R.C., Kulindwa, K.A.A., Wittmer, H. and Infante Mata, D. (2017). *Integrating multiple wetland values into decision-making.* Ramsar Policy Brief No. 2. Gland, Switzerland: Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

[4] Russi D., ten Brink P., Farmer A., Badura T., Coates D., Förster J., Kumar R. and Davidson N. (2013). *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands*. IEEP, London and Brussels; Ramsar Secretariat, Gland.

[5] De Groot, R.S., Stuip, M.A.M., Finlayson, C.M. and Davidson, N. (2006). *Valuing wetlands: guidance for valuing the benefits derived from wetland ecosystem services*, Ramsar Technical Report No. 3/CBD Technical Series No. 27. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada. ISBN 2-940073-31-7.

[6] McInnes, R.J., Simpson, M., Lopez, B., Hawkins, R. and Shore, R. (2016). Wetland ecosystem services and the Ramsar Convention: An assessment of needs. *Wetlands*. 37(1), 1-12.

[7] Fennessy, M.S., Jacobs, A.D. and Kentula, M.E. (2007). An evaluation of rapid methods for assessing the ecological condition of wetlands. *Wetlands* 27 (3), 543–560.

Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services

5. The development of the *Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services* (RAWES) approach, as an example of approaches that can be developed, has considered the requirements of the Ramsar Convention, and particularly the need for qualitative assessments that are not resource intensive and that can be applied within the context of Ramsar Convention-related reporting. However, consideration has also been given to developing an approach that would have wider utility as part of a broader suite of assessment approaches. Consequently, the objective of the RAWES approach is to facilitate an assessment of the plurality of benefits provided by a wetland, which can be considered genuinely rapid, involving limited resources.

6. Based on an understanding of what is required by a specific, but global, wetland audience, the approach has, at its core, the realization that in many situations the availability of time, money and detailed information will be limited and such barriers need to be overcome if the full range of functions and values is to be recognized. Furthermore, the development of the RAWES approach recognizes that less time-intensive methods can be applied at a range of scales, from the site to the landscape or catchment. Too often, assessments of ecosystem services are limited in their scope and fail to identify the multiplicity of benefits provided by wetlands, focusing on a few easy-to-recognize benefits, and consequently inherently assigning a default value of zero to other services, thereby excluding them from decision-making fora[8].

7. The RAWES approach builds on similar techniques applied elsewhere[9]. A checklist of services grouped into functional categories, which were originally defined in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, namely provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services, acts as an initial structured framework. Although in more recent analytical frameworks the category of supporting services is no longer included, it is retained in RAWES as it recognizes the functioning and resilience of productive ecosystems rather than valuation. Supporting services therefore constitute important considerations in terms of the resilience and capacity of ecosystems to provide wider benefits, and are therefore important considerations in management decision-making.

8. The list of ecosystem services in RAWES can be modified and adapted, as appropriate, by each Contracting Party and to the local context through dialogue and consultation with local stakeholders who are familiar with the wetland. Furthermore, when an assessment is being made to inform or update the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) it is important to ensure that the description of the ecosystem services provides information on the services described under Resolution XI.8 as well as on any other services that the site is providing. Delimitation of the exact area to be assessed is defined objectively by the assessor depending on the purpose or scope of the assessment. The RAWES approach is flexible, allowing assessments to be made on different habitat units within a larger wetland complex or on an entire wetland site. The onus is on the assessor to define the “wetland” and record the rationale behind the boundaries set and limits used. Since wetland ecosystems can be dynamic or can be subject to change or degradation, an important issue to be addressed is the definition of the condition at the time of the assessment. In some cases, the “natural” condition will vary over time, and it will be

8 McInnes, R.J. and Everard, M. (2017). Rapid Assessment of Wetland Ecosystem Services (RAWES): An example from Colombo, Sri Lanka. *Ecosystem Services*. 25, 89-105. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2017.03.024.

9 Defra. (2007). *An introductory guide to valuing ecosystem services* [online]. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), pp. 68. Available from: www.defra.gov.uk.

necessary to ensure this temporal pattern is considered in the assessment of ecosystem services. For instance, the assessment could return different outcomes if it is conducted during a drought or when the area is subjected to flooding, both of which may represent natural phenomena within the broader tolerances of the system. In other circumstances, a wetland may be subject to ongoing degradation, such as through pollution of surface water or infilling. Therefore, it cannot be safely assumed that the current situation reflects a "natural" condition, and that service delivery is not already influenced by the prevailing conditions. The key issues are to ensure that a comprehensive range of ecosystem services is assessed, that the evidence used to achieve the assessment outcome is transparent and clear, and that the prevailing temporal context is recorded.

Applying the RAWES approach

9. RAWES is designed as a simple and rapid site assessment system that may obtain input from existing studies but does not rely on detailed, quantitative assessments. As such, it is a genuinely rapid approach that may typically take less than two hours per site with trained assessors working in pairs for cross-referencing. Significantly, the RAWES approach is also systemic, addressing all ecosystem services as a connected set rather than selecting only the most readily evaluated or exploited services, and thereby overlooking other services. The RAWES field assessment sheet is included as Appendix 1, with an accompanying explanatory table to guide assessor thinking included as Appendix 2. The field assessment sheet presents a list of ecosystem services which may be interpreted according to the application. For instance, to inform or update the RIS it is important to ensure that the description of the ecosystem services provides information on the services described under Resolution XI.8 as well as on any other services that the site is providing. The method has been used widely in Asia, Australia, Europe and Africa, with a database of sites and informing a number of scientific publications and site reports about the range and likely importance of ecosystem services provided by wetland sites.

10. RAWES can be used across a range of scales from whole wetlands to localized zones of large and complex wetlands; it is in principle also relevant to other habitat types. The RAWES field assessment sheet is a simple table with cells into which assessors record the importance of each ecosystem service produced at the wetland site, with space for free text descriptions of key features supporting that assessment. Assessors are encouraged to interact with stakeholders so that assessments are informed by local perspectives and indigenous knowledge, ensuring that all services are recognized. Early interaction is recommended in order to refine the list of services to be assessed and subsequently to assess the significance of each service.

11. The RAWES field assessment sheet (Appendix 1) comprises the following sections:
    - Wetland name with GPS coordinates
    - Assessment date
    - Assessor name(s)
    - Table cells to record: (1) the importance of the service assessed using the following relative scale (adapted from Defra 2007, see Table 1 below) where, in order to improve objectivity, the level of significance is decided prior to conducting the assessment but is based on a predetermined number or range of beneficiaries (or of those negatively affected); (2) the benefit; and (3) the scale at which the benefit is realized (local, regional or global), the definition of which needs to be decided prior to conducting an assessment.

Table 1. Defra (2007) scale of likely significance of ecosystem services

Score	*Assessment of ecosystem service*
++	Significant positive contribution
+	Positive contribution
0	Negligible contribution
-	Negative contribution
--	Significant negative contribution
?	Gaps in evidence

12. The assessment sheet provides an initial list of ecosystem services under the four main categories of provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services. This initial list should act as a starting point for considering the multiple benefits provided by a wetland. Assessors are encouraged to consider whether this list needs to be expanded or made more site- or context-specific in order to address specific services. For instance, "food" is provided as a catch-all term but could be subdivided into more detail such as "harvested crops", "fish and shellfish" or "collection of fruit and berries" if significant differences are experienced in the wetland being assessed.

Table 2. Linking services to beneficiaries at different scales

- Local benefits: Those experienced by individuals, households or communities living and working in the immediate vicinity of the wetland.
- Regional benefits: Those delivered to individuals, households or communities living and working in the wider catchment of the wetland.
- Global benefits: Those that extend beyond national boundaries.

13. Scores are thus allocated semi-quantitatively, using assessor knowledge and other local and technical input. A more quantitative approach would be more resource-intensive, far from rapid, and would risk overlooking services not initially considered but potentially locally important, as well as skewing assessment towards the more readily exploited, marketable and therefore quantified services to the detriment of other important maintaining processes and wider benefits. The RAWES rapid method thus serves an operational need to incorporate ecosystem service assessment routinely into Ramsar Site assessments and plans.

14. Training in rapid assessment methods has been highlighted as being essential if subjectivity is to be reduced and repeatability of results is to be enhanced[10]. Typically, a one-day training course mixing classroom and field sessions on the RAWES method suffices, with trained assessors undertaking independent surveys following the course for verification by the trainers and also to start building a local site database.

[10] Herlihy, A.T., Sifneos, J., Bason, C., Jacobs, A., Kentula, M.E., Fennessy, M.S. (2009). An approach for evaluating the repeatability of rapid wetland assessment methods: the effects of training and experience. *Environ. Manage*. 44 (2), 369–377.

15. The outputs from applying the RAWES approach can be used to inform subsequent quantitative assessments of targeted ecosystem services, by effectively providing an initial screening, or in more general local or national policy frameworks and decision-making process such as environmental impact assessments. It is recognized that rapid assessment does not replace a comprehensive field assessment.

16. The process for applying the RAWES approach comprises three principle activities: preparation, field assessment and information management (Table 3).

Table 3. Process for applying the RAWES approach

Stage	**Information**
Preparation – key considerations	
Who will undertake the assessment?	• The assessment should be conducted by a minimum of two individuals working together. • The pair should be knowledgeable about the site and the type of wetland being assessed.
Where will the assessment be undertaken?	• The assessment should cover a defined area. • The level of significance of services with regard to number and range of beneficiaries and negatively affected groups must be determined prior to conducting the assessment. • The scales at which benefits are described (from local to global) must be determined prior to conducting an assessment. • Ideally the area should be of a relatively homogeneous habitat type but if it covers several different habitats this needs to be noted. • Health and safety considerations must be taken into account.
What is needed to undertake the assessment?	• Ensure that plenty of assessment sheets are available. • Use a clipboard and take several pens/pencils. • Take a camera and global positioning (GPS) equipment to record images and their location. • Take appropriate personal protective equipment.
Field assessment – key considerations	
Observations	• Use field indicators to help recognize ecosystem services (see Appendix 2). • Understand the wider context of the site and the surrounding social and natural environment. • Think about the scale at which the service may be providing benefits. • Record actual, not potential, services. If there is no evidence do not record the service but make a note for future reference.
Indigenous and local knowledge	• Use local knowledge of how the site functions and how local communities interact with it.
Discussions	• Ensure that the assessors discuss issues between themselves and make reasoned conclusions.

Stage	Information
Stakeholder engagement	• Wherever possible engage with local stakeholders to understand better the relationship between people and the wetland. • Think about a hierarchy of stakeholders, from local (living/working immediately around the wetland), regional (those downstream and upstream of the wetland or in the wider region) and global (stakeholders and beneficiaries beyond national boundaries).
Recording information	• Ensure that as much information as possible is recorded so that others can understand the rationale for any assessments made.
Information management – key considerations	
Data checking	• Before leaving the field, check that all the required information has been recorded.
Data entry	• Ensure all data are entered onto Excel spreadsheets. • Use one spreadsheet for each assessment location. • Work in pairs to enter data. • If necessary check latitude/longitude on Google Earth.
Summarizing for future use	• Make a summary of any key issues recorded such as constraints, uncertainties, impacts and threats.

Appendix 1. Rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services: Field assessment sheet

Note: The list of ecosystem services provided under the rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services (RAWES) approach differs partly from that used in the RIS and therefore should be considered as an example which should be adapted as appropriate to satisfy the relevant situation. For instance, where the RAWES approach is being used to inform the RIS then it is appropriate to make the modification required to ensure that all relevant ecosystem services are assessed.

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF WETLAND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET

Key	**How important?**
++	Significant positive benefit
+	Positive benefit
0	Negligible benefit
-	N benefit
- -	Significant negative benefit
?	Gaps in evidence

Wetland name:

GPS coordinates:

Date :

Assessors :

				Scale of benefit		
		How important?	**Describe benefit**	**Local**	**Regional**	**Global**
Provisioning services	Fresh water					
	Food					
	Fuel					
	Fibre					
	Genetic resources					
	Natural medicines or pharmaceuticals					
	Ornamental resources					
	Clay, mineral, aggregate harvesting					
	Energy harvesting from natural air and water flows					
Regulatory services	Air quality regulation					
	Local climate regulation					
	Global climate regulation					
	Water regulation					
	Flood hazard regulation					
	Storm hazard regulation					
	Pest regulation					
	Disease regulation – human					
	Disease regulation – livestock					
	Erosion regulation					
	Water purification					
	Pollination					

	Salinity regulation					
	Fire regulation					
	Noise and visual buffering					
Cultural services	Cultural heritage					
	Recreation and tourism					
	Aesthetic value					
	Spiritual and religious value					
	Inspiration value					
	Social relation					
	Educational and research					
Supporting services	Soil formation					
	Primary production					
	Nutrient cycling					
	Water recycling					
	Provision of habitat					
Notes :						

Appendix 2. The example list of wetland ecosystem services considered by the RAWES approach and examples of the indicator questions considered

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
Provisioning services	Provision of fresh water	Water used for domestic drinking supply, for irrigation, for livestock etc.	• Does the wetland provide a source of fresh water? • Does the wetland store fresh water for human use? • Is the wetland a net source of pollution, degrading fresh water provision?
	Provision of food	Crops, fruit, fish etc.	• What is grown in the wetland, either formally or from informal harvesting? • Are animals harvested from the wetland? • Are livestock using the wetland?
	Provision of fibre	Timber for building, wool for clothing etc.	• Are any natural materials such as wood, fibre, straw, animal fibre (wool/hide/sinew/antler/other) taken from the wetland?
	Provision of fuel	Fuelwood, peat etc.	• Is any material taken from the wetland and used as fuel for domestic or other uses?
	Provision of genetic resources	Rare breeds used for crop/stock breeding etc.	• Are there any native or rare strains of plants and animals, wild and domesticated, which could contribute genetic diversity for human uses (for instance for drug manufacture, improving resilience of domestic animals and plants, horticultural trade etc.)?
	Provision of natural medicines and pharmaceuticals	Plants used as traditional medicines etc.	• Are there any plants, animals or their parts derived from the wetland which are harvested and used for their medicinal properties?
	Provision of ornamental resources	Collection of shells, flowers etc.	• Are there any plants, animals or their parts derived from the wetland that are collected and used/sold for their ornamental properties?
	Clay, mineral, aggregate harvesting	Sand and gravel extracted for building use, clay extracted for brick-making etc.	• What substances are extracted or dug up from the wetland for construction or other human uses?
	Energy harvesting from natural air and water flows	Water wheels driven by flowing water, windmills driven by the wind etc.	• Are any technologies (water wheels, wind turbines etc.) used to capture natural flows of energy through or across the wetland?
Regulating services	Air quality regulation	Removal of airborne particles from car exhausts, industrial chimneys, dust from agricultural land etc.	• Is there a source of airborne pollutants? • Does the wetland habitat structure help to settle out airborne pollutants? • Does the state of the wetland make it a source of air pollutants (microbial, particulate or chemical)?
	Local climate regulation	Regulation of the local microclimate, through shading, reducing air temperature etc.	• Does the wetland habitat structure provide shade for humans? • Does the wetland have areas of standing water with or without vegetation that will be generating evapotranspiration and consequently reducing air temperatures?
	Global climate regulation	Regulation of the global climate through control of greenhouse gas emissions, the sequestration of carbon, etc.	• Does the wetland store and/or sequester carbon? • Does this balance with generation of methane and other greenhouse gases?
	Water regulation	Regulation of flows of surface water during high and low flows, regulation of recharge of groundwater, etc.	• Do the topography, permeability and roughness of the wetland enable it to store water during high rainfall/discharge and to slowly release it back to surface waters or to groundwater? • Does the wetland regulate discharges during dry periods to buffer low flows during dry weather?
	Flood hazard regulation	Regulation and storage of flood water, regulation of intense rainfall events etc.	• Does the wetland regulate, store and retain floodwaters? • Does the wetland store rainfall and surface water that might contribute to flooding and damage to property or ecosystems downstream?

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
	Storm hazard regulation	Regulation of tidal or storm surges, regulation of extreme winds, etc.	• Does the complexity of habitat, particularly trees, tall reeds and other vegetation and surface topography, absorb energy from extreme events such as storms and waves that might otherwise damage property or adjacent ecosystems?
	Pest regulation	Control of pest species such as mosquitoes, rats, flies, etc.	• Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate and control pest organisms? • Is the wetland a source of pests (for example rats thriving in dirty water systems)?
	Regulation of human diseases	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit human diseases such as malaria, West Nile fever, dengue fever, Zika virus, leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, etc.	• Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate organisms that may cause human diseases? • Are faecal deposits, bacteria or other potentially pathogenic microbes immobilized by processes in the wetland? • Is the condition of the wetland contributing to the negative spread of populations of disease vectors (such as mosquitoes)?
	Regulation of diseases affecting livestock	Presence of species that control the species (vectors) that transmit diseases to livestock such as leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, duck virus enteritis, highly pathogenic avian influenza, tick-borne diseases, etc.	• Do natural predation and other ecological processes in the wetland regulate organisms that may cause diseases in livestock? • Are faecal deposits, bacteria or other potentially pathogenic microbes immobilized by processes in the wetland? • Is the condition of the wetland countering the spread of populations of disease vectors (such as mosquitoes or snails)?
	Erosion regulation	Regulation of energy environment to reduce risk of erosion, presence of dense vegetation protecting soils, etc.	• Does the wetland vegetation provide protection from erosion for the soils? • Are there any signs of erosion, such as bare earth, in the wetland?
	Water purification	Cleaning of water, improvement of water quality, deposition of silts, trapping of contaminants and pollutants, etc.	• Do physico-chemical (sunlight exposure in shallow waters, detention of water in aerobic and anaerobic microhabitats) and biological processes in the wetland result in the breakdown of organic, microbial and other pollutants in the water passing though? • Are suspended solids deposited? • Is there a noticeable change in the quality, such as the turbidity, of water entering and leaving the wetland?
	Pollination	Pollination of plants and crops by pollinators such as bees, butterflies, wasps, etc.	• Do populations of pollinating organisms (butterflies, wasps, bees, bats etc.) in the wetland contribute to pollination within the wetland? • Do pollinators using the wetland also help to pollinate nearby crops, gardens, allotments, etc.?
	Salinity regulation	Freshwater in the wetland provides a barrier to saline waters.	• Does the hydrology of the wetland help prevent saline water contaminating freshwaters? • Does the presence of freshwater in the wetland prevent the salinization of soils? • In tidal wetlands are there man-made or man-altered barriers (levies, roads, railroads) that interrupt connectivity with tidal water?
	Fire regulation	Providing physical barriers to the spread of fire, maintaining wet conditions to prevent fires spreading, etc.	• Does the configuration of waterbodies (ditches, streams, etc.) help to prevent the spread of fires? • Is there water at or near the soil surface that restricts the spread of fire? • Are organic rich or peat soils drained and susceptible to fire and burning?

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
	Noise and visual buffering	Wetland trees or tall reeds absorbing and buffering the impact of noise.	• Is there a source (busy road, industry, construction etc.) and receptor (houses, wildlife, etc.) for noise pollution? • Does the wetland ecosystem structure, particularly tall trees and reeds, provide visual screening as well as suppress noise transmission?
Cultural services	Cultural heritage	Importance of the wetland for historical or archaeological value, as an example of traditional uses or management practices, as a cultural landscape, etc.	• Does the wetland system have cultural importance, either due to its natural character or traditional uses?
	Recreation and tourism	Importance of the wetland in providing a location for recreation such as fishing, watersports or swimming, or as a tourism destination, etc.	• Is the wetland used for organized or informal recreational purposes? • Is there infrastructure provided for access and recreation? • Are their wider tourism/ecotourism benefits flowing from these uses?
	Aesthetic value	The wetland is overlooked by properties, is part of a known area of natural beauty, is used as a subject by painters and artists, etc.	• Does the wetland provide aesthetic benefits through the desirability of siting houses or commercial development adjacent to it? • Does the presence of a wetland have a significant impact on property prices? • Is the wetland depicted in many works of art?
	Spiritual and religious value	The wetland plays a role in local religious festivals, the wetland is considered as a sacred site, the wetland forms part of a traditional belief system, etc.	• What spiritual or religious values do people derive from the wetland? • Does the wetland hold any important spiritual or cultural value to people? • Does the wetland play any part in traditional religious ceremonies? • Are there any traditional wetland management practices (such as the timing of planting and cropping of rice according to Buddhist or other traditions and teachings) associated with the wetland?
	Inspirational value	Presence of local myths or stories relating to the wetland, traditional oral or written histories about the wetland or wetland animals, creation of different art forms associated with the wetland, development of distinct architecture based on the wetland, etc.	• Are there any particular myths or other folklore associated with the wetland? • Do any wetland animals appear or are any featured in local stories and myths? • Does the wetland inspire people to create music or other forms of art? • Have particular ways of designing and building developed which reflect the wetland?
	Social relations	Presence of fishing, grazing or cropping communities, which have developed within and around the wetland.	• Have communities formed around the wetland and its uses, including for example fishing (subsistence, commercial and recreational), cropping or stock management, walking and jogging, birdwatching and photography, etc?
	Educational and research	Use of the wetland by local schoolchildren for education, site of long-term research and monitoring, site visited by organized educational study tours, etc.	• Is the wetland used for any educational purposes, organized or informal, ranging from school visits to university research and teaching? • Are there any public awareness or educational materials present?

	Ecosystem service	Example	Examples of questions assessors can ask about this service
Supporting services	Soil formation	Deposition of sediment, accumulation of organic matter, etc.	• Do accretion processes (both sedimentation of mineral material and the build up of organic material) on the wetland result in the formation of soils?
	Primary production	Presence of primary producers such as plants, algae, etc.	• Do photosynthetic processes on the wetland produce organic matter and store energy in biochemical form?
	Nutrient cycling	Source of nutrients present from inputs from agricultural land, internal cycling of plant material, inputs of nutrients from floodwaters, presence of fauna to recycling nutrients, etc.	• Do wetland processes biochemically transform nutrients (for example nitrification/denitrification)? • Are nutrients settled out in particulate forms, changing the characteristics of water passing through the system? • Are there abundant invertebrates and detritivores that are decomposing and cycling organic material?
	Water recycling	Presence of wetland vegetation and open water result in evapotranspiration and local recycling of water, relatively closed canopies and low exposure to winds retains water in local cycles, sandy or coarse substrates allow exchange with groundwaters, etc.	• Does the structure of the wetland retain water in tight cycles (for example recapture of vapour produced by evapotranspiration)? • Does the wetland enable exchanges with groundwater (either discharge or recharge)?
	Provision of habitat	Presence of locally important habitats and species, presence of species and habitats of conservation concern, etc.	• Does the wetland support a diversity of locally representative biodiversity (plants and animals)? • Does the wetland support species which humans consider of conservation concern or charismatic interest? • Are there invasive plants and animals that pose a threat to ecosystem services and/or functions?

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"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.18

Gender and wetlands

1. RECALLING United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 on *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which recognizes that women play a vital role as agents of development and acknowledges that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to making progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

2. EMPHASIZING the importance of coherence between gender-responsive climate and biodiversity policies and the balanced participation of women and men in the implementation of the Convention;

3. HIGHLIGHTING that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) have recognized the importance of addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in their implementation;

4. NOTING the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and their related outcomes, among others;

5. HAVING IN MIND the agreed conclusions from the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, entitled *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*;

6. RECOGNIZING that women play a crucial role in the provision, management and safeguarding of wetland resources, especially water, as well as in conserving the culture, folklore, music, mythology, oral traditions, customs, and traditional knowledge around wetlands, among other things, and that special attention should be paid to the specific needs of women because they are disproportionately affected by inadequate water facilities;

7. FURTHER RECALLING that the 4th Strategic Plan 2016-2024[1] of the Convention anticipates the relevance that the Sustainable Development Goals[2] will have on wetlands and makes clear that

[1] The 4th Strategic Plan 2016-2024. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (2015). At: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/4th_strategic_plan_2016_2024_e.pdf
[2] *Ibid*, para. 15.

the plan should be implemented as a contribution to the other internationally agreed environmental goals and targets[3]; and

8. ACKNOWLEDGING that the 4th Strategic Plan 2016-2024, in paragraph 38, encourages Contracting Parties to synergize their efforts aimed at implementing the Convention with measures taken to implement the CBD, the UNFCCC and the UNCCD, among other global multilateral environmental agreements, as they deem appropriate;

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9. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to mainstream a gender perspective in their implementation of the Convention, considering the crucial role of women, including indigenous and local women, in the provision, management and safeguarding of wetlands, and paying special attention to their specific needs;

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider what conditions facilitate balanced participation by different genders in work related to the Ramsar Convention, for example equality in salaries, career development possibilities, retirement funds and visibility at meetings;

11. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider how different genders are reflected in wetland communication material in order to promote equal representation and fairness;

12. RECOGNIZES the need to strengthen efforts to empower all women, including indigenous and local women, as important actors in achieving the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands;

13. REQUESTS that the Conference of the Contracting Parties include, as part of the process for the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan, ways in which Parties might mainstream a gender perspective in their implementation of the Convention;

14. ALSO ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties mainstreaming a gender perspective in the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and in the CEPA Programme 2016-2024, including through financial and non-financial resources;

15. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, consider analysing the benefits to wetland management and wise use that derive from taking a gender perspective, developing guidance on how to integrate gender issues in the implementation of the Convention, and submitting proposals to the Conference of the Contracting Parties for its consideration;

16. INVITES Contracting Parties, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to:

    a. train and raise awareness of all delegates on issues related to gender and wetlands; and

    b. strengthen the skills and capacity of all delegates to achieve equal participation of women and men in Ramsar Convention meetings through training on, *inter alia*, negotiation skills, the drafting of legal documents and strategic communication;

[3] *Ibid*, para. 37.

17. REQUESTS that the Secretariat conduct mandatory training for all staff regarding gender equality and mainstreaming and designate a staff member as the Secretariat's lead expert on gender issues, who will be responsible for assisting all Contracting Parties on this topic, providing additional training as needed to enhance his/her expertise;

18. REQUESTS that the Secretariat explore means by which it can generate aspirational goals consistent with the UN Secretary General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity and report back to the Contracting Parties at the 14th meeting of the Contracting Parties on this effort;

19. INVITES Contracting Parties to ensure a balanced representation of women and men in their national delegations and as chairs or facilitators of formal and informal negotiating groups;

20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to give due consideration to a balanced gender representation among representatives within each region as well as in the bodies of the Convention;

21. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to include in their National Reports at least a short description about the balance between men and women participating in wetland-related discussions, and to highlight areas where change is necessary for achieving gender equality, and lessons learned when trying to improve equality between the genders; and

22. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on the gender-relevant and sex-disaggregated information provided by Contracting Parties in National Reports, and on the actions of the Secretariat in this regard.

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"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
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Resolution XIII.19

Sustainable agriculture[1] in wetlands

1. CONCERNED that 80% of wetlands have been lost in many areas of the world since 1700[2], and that 35% of wetlands, where data are available, have been lost since 1970, a rate of loss three times greater than that of forests (Global Wetlands Outlook, 2018); and NOTING that there is a recognition that one of the main drivers of the loss and degradation of wetlands, as indicated by the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* (2005), has been the clearing and drainage of land, including for agricultural production;

2. FURTHER CONCERNED that many wetland areas that were for centuries used for sustainable agricultural production have been lost in the past 150 years, either intentionally by drainage, which has increased sharply since the 1960s, or indirectly by groundwater depletion;

3. AWARE that, in Resolution VIII.34 on *Agriculture, wetlands and water resource management*, the Conference of the Contracting Parties recognizes that wetlands can play important roles in relation to agriculture; and NOTING the high dependence of local communities on wetland resources, particularly in developing countries and notably in terms of small-scale subsistence agriculture, domestic water supply, and other uses that may contribute directly to poverty alleviation;

4. FURTHER AWARE that Resolution X.31 on *Enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies as wetland systems* and Resolution XI.15 on *Agriculture-wetland interactions: rice paddy and pest control* stress the importance of sustainable rice-paddy cultivation for local and global livelihoods;

5. NOTING the recognition by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio+20", Brazil, 2012), in paragraph 111 of the outcome document *The Future We Want*, of the need to promote more-sustainable agriculture and to maintain natural ecological processes that support food production systems, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1 and SDG 2;

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[1] Article I paragraph 1, second sentence of the Constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reads: 'In this Constitution, the term "agriculture" and its derivatives include fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.' See *Basic Texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* at http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/K8024E.pdf.

[2] Davidson, N.C. (2014). How much wetland has the world lost? Long-term and recent trends in global wetland area. Marine and Freshwater Research, 65(10), pp.934-941.

6. NOTING the outcomes of the second International Symposium on Agroecology (Rome, 2018) which call on stakeholders to view agroecology as an opportunity to transform the food system and address challenges including environmental, economic and social components;

7. NOTING the 2015 Paris Pact on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Basins of Rivers, Lakes and Aquifers, which calls for the services of water-related ecosystems in adaptation to climate change to be enhanced, through, *inter alia*, protection and restoration of wetlands and coastlines, reforestation and other natural water-retention measures;

8. NOTING Resolution 3/2 on *Pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors* and Resolution 3/10 on *Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems,* adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session (2017);

9. RECALLING Resolution XII.9 on *The Ramsar Convention's Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024*, which identifies key actors, including the agriculture sector, and specifies the main messages for this target audience;

10. ACKNOWLEDGING the 2016 assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on pollinators, pollination and food production, which shows that a number of features of current intensive agricultural practices threaten pollinators and pollination, and that moving towards more sustainable agriculture and promoting diversity in agricultural landscapes offers key strategic responses to risks associated with pollinator decline;

11. ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING the 2018 BirdLife International report *State of the world's birds: Taking the pulse of the planet*, which reports that agriculture is a key driver in the decline of a number of bird species, impacting 1,091 globally threatened bird species (74%), including waterfowl and other aquatic birds;

12. REALIZING that wetlands are often intricately connected to groundwater – either by the wetland replenishing groundwater or groundwater feeding the wetland, or by a combination of the two depending on time and space – and that human and climatic impact on one system will affect the other;

13. ALSO REALIZING that the increasing lack of water in landscapes and scarcity of natural vegetation cover have contributed to increases in both the frequency and amplitude of temperature fluctuations, and that, in many parts of the world, maximum summer temperatures are becoming too high and water shortages too severe for either humans or livestock to live comfortably, or for optimum crop yields;

14. FURTHER REALIZING that severe shortages, and also surpluses, of water occur more frequently today in many parts of the world than in the past and that the increasing frequency of persistent droughts (highlighted in Resolution VIII.35 on *The impact of natural disasters, particularly drought, on wetland ecosystems*) and other extreme weather events, such as thunderstorms, hailstorms, sandstorms and also late frosts, leads to major losses of agricultural production and thus threatens food security and efforts to eradicate poverty;

15. CONCERNED that non-sustainable agricultural practices can have an adverse impact on landscape and species diversity (including wetland biodiversity), cause soil erosion, leaching of nutrients, and loss of soil fertility for agriculture, and also have an adverse impact on wetland functions and services;

16. RECALLING Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, which states that climate change and accelerated desertification will have major impacts on water availability and distribution, affecting wetland functions and values as well as agricultural production; and ALSO RECALLING the high primary and secondary production of some wetlands and their important role in retaining nutrients and water, as well as their contribution to the mitigation of climate change;

17. FURTHER CONCERNED that the continuing drainage of wetlands, and especially of peatlands, for agricultural production, forestry and natural resource exploitation further accelerates climate change (Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*);

18. AWARE that wetlands may provide resources that can be used for human and animal nutrition, as building materials and for energy production; and

19. ACKNOWLEDGING that many examples from across the world show that agriculture and forestry have been conducted successfully while conserving wetlands, and that many wetlands worldwide remain important sources for fisheries, crop production and animal husbandry;

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20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to develop sustainable agricultural practices that promote the conservation of wetlands by discouraging further wetland drainage and properly managing aquifers, enhancing water-retention time in the landscape, recreating local atmospheric water cycles and contributing to climate change mitigation and the alleviation of adverse impacts of droughts, as well as reducing peak water discharges coupled with high nutrient and organic matter runoff;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to identify and support sustainable traditional as well as innovative uses of wetlands and their biodiversity, while maintaining the ecological character of wetlands, ensuring sustainable and wise use of wetlands for fisheries, crop cultivation, reed harvesting, wetland grazing or mowing, berry and flower picking and floodplain forestry, and to search for and promote novel uses of wetlands such as the use of integrated buffer zones and constructed wetlands for the treatment of agricultural runoff or the use of degraded peatlands for sphagnum moss cultivation and other kinds of sustainable crop and animal farming;

22. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to support and develop guidance tools for the co-management of wetlands, other surface water resources and groundwater resources, as wetland protection and management cannot be done in isolation and require active land use, surface and groundwater protection and groundwater management, and as each integrated system needs to be monitored and well understood in order for the best management and adaptation strategies to be devised;

23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to strengthen the role of communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) to enhance the understanding of communities that wetlands and agriculture can co-exist and even benefit from each other, and notably:

    a. that agriculture in certain wetlands can benefit from their high primary and secondary productivity without compromising the ecological integrity of such wetlands;

b. that wisely used wetlands can continuously provide many beneficial products, such as biomass, building materials, food and fodder;

c. that wise use of wetlands provides options for receiving multiple benefits, such as diverse production, water retention in the landscape, prevention of floods, stable groundwater storage, reduced runoff of nutrients, preservation of biodiversity, and carbon storage as long as the water table is sufficiently high for a large part of the season;

d. that natural wetlands also function as refuges of wild relatives of crops; and

e. that, thanks to their multiple benefits, wetlands can support human livelihoods and well-being;

24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties: to work with research institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to promote sustainability within farming practices such as agroforestry, permaculture, grazing, aquaculture, fisheries, integrated production, organic production and sorjan farming in and around wetlands; to seek to support basic and applied research and demonstration projects; and to examine the potential for sustainable traditional and novel wetland products and production systems in wetlands;

25. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to review and, if appropriate, improve their respective programmes and policies in support of agricultural production, and to assess their effects on wetlands and their sustainability, including on the integrity of wetlands and the long-term impact upon the sustainability of local livelihoods;

26. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to adapt, if appropriate, incentive schemes to consider criteria for the sustainable use of natural resources, conservation of biological diversity and prevention of the degradation of ecosystems related to wetlands;

27. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, in their National Reports, to assess the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of relevant domestic legislative, regulatory and wetland protection policy frameworks, to ensure that wetlands located in highly intensive agricultural landscapes have the necessary and adequate protection in place;

28. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), funding permitting and consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, together with the International Organization Partners, and in collaboration with Contracting Parties and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, compile and review information on the positive and negative impacts of agricultural practices on wetlands in terms of their biodiversity and ecosystem services, and document best-practice examples of wetland use for agricultural production that preserves wetland integrity and is sustainable in the long term and in the context of climate change;

29. REQUESTS that the STRP, funding permitting and consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, support the implementation of the present Resolution by providing data on, and an overview of, the extent of intact agricultural wetlands and those damaged and destroyed through conversion to agricultural land uses since the 1970s; and

30. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to support agroecological practices favouring sustainable food and agricultural systems.

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Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.20

Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal[1] wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats

Mandate

1. RECALLING that the Conference of the Contracting Parties has repeatedly addressed, *inter alia* through Resolutions listed in Annex 1 of the present Resolution, the pressing need to better promote the conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands, in particular intertidal wetlands, which are areas of special importance to both biodiversity and a large global human population living in or reliant on these coastal ecosystems, yet are highly vulnerable;

2. NOTING that Target 6 of Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2016-2024 seeks a significant increase in the area of the Ramsar Site network, and in particular the inclusion of under-represented types of wetlands; and FURTHER NOTING that both shellfish reefs and seagrass beds are under-represented wetlands;

3. AWARE that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, of which Targets 5, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15 are particularly relevant;

4. NOTING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of which SDGs 2, 6, 13, 14 and 15 are especially relevant;

5. DEEPLY CONCERNED that, if urgent action is not taken to address the increased loss and degradation of intertidal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats, the ability to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs may be seriously impaired and species extinctions will be likely;

6. NOTING Resolution 12.25 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) on *Promoting conservation of critical intertidal and other coastal habitats for migratory species;*

[1] Intertidal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats include intertidal flats, seagrass beds, mangroves, bivalve (shellfish) reefs, and associated coastal (littoral) habitats ecologically linked to these areas, for example saltpans/salinas, fishponds, areas used for aquaculture and mariculture, sewage works, and other habitats used by coastal waterbirds for feeding and roosting, whether or not these coastal areas are subject to tides.

7. NOTING the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and publicly available Nationally Determined Contributions towards achieving the long-term temperature goal of the Agreement, many of which cover anthropogenic emissions and removals caused by human impacts on coastal wetlands;

8. AWARE ALSO that nature-based solutions such as protection of coastal wetlands are important measures for climate-change adaptation and/or mitigation;

9. FURTHER NOTING Resolution 26 of the 2016 World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on *Conservation of Intertidal Habitats and Migratory Waterbirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, especially the Yellow Sea*, *in a global context*[2];

10. WELCOMING the recommended actions for coasts in the Declaration of the Global Flyway Summit held in Abu Dhabi in April 2018, including "a multi-stakeholder Global 'Caring for Coasts' Forum";

Importance

11. RECOGNIZING that intertidal and other coastal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats are very significant socio-economically and culturally, providing multiple and important ecosystem services, benefitting not only local dependent communities but a wider society, in mitigating effects of climate change through sequestration of carbon, reducing excessive erosion by protecting the shoreline, and contributing also to reduce the risk of storm surges and sea level rise;

12. YET NOTING that, despite such international conservation attention and recognition and national conservation programmes, intertidal wetlands and other ecologically-associated habitats in most parts of the world remain subject to extreme and often complex interaction of pressures, including from navigation, development, pollution, and unsustainable uses (such as habitat-altering shrimp farms), as well as from shifting biotic communities/drivers, which removes or degrades the capacity of these habitats not only to support migratory and other species but also to maintain and sustain human communities dependent on the multiple ecosystem services, such as their capacity for carbon storage and sequestration ("blue carbon", see Resolution XIII.14, and disaster risk reduction, Resolution XII.13); also NOTING that there has been "an alarming increase in the past decade in the frequency, duration and extent of degradation and loss of coastal habitats globally, resulting in reductions in quantity and quality of habitat for birds and other biodiversity, as well as impaired ecosystem service provision", as outlined by the 27th International Ornithological Congress in August 2018;

13. CONSCIOUS that the conservation, wise use, restoration and rehabilitation of intertidal and other ecologically-associated coastal wetlands poses particular practical problems, including: that they can fall within the jurisdiction of multiple national and local government agencies; that many straddle either international or internal national borders; their location at the terminus of catchments, which can result in significant pollution inputs, as well as significant reduction and disruption to the water and sediment flows essential for ecosystem functioning, due to water regulation structures such as upstream dams and flood defences, with riverine inputs of sediment to deltas and other soft coastlines being of especially critical importance; dredging to deepen channels for navigation; the encroachment of invasive alien species; and significant human disturbance, resulting in intense development pressures derived from both

[2] IUCN WCC-2016-Res-026.

land and sea; BUT ALSO NOTING good examples, such as in the international Wadden Sea, where such impediments have been addressed successfully;

14. NOTING the inherent ecological connectivity of coastal areas at various scales, notably through their support of migratory species and their role as spawning areas for coastal fisheries; and ACKNOWLEDGING CMS Resolution 12.07 on *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species*; and NOTING ALSO the role of coastal wetlands in maintaining the balance of sediment dynamics;

15. RECOGNIZING the specific vulnerabilities of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as highlighted in the outcome document from the International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Apia, 2014), entitled *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway*;

Losses, degradation and pressures

16. RECALLING Resolution VII.21 on *Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands*; RECALLING ALSO the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fifth assessment report on Coastal Systems and Low-Lying Areas;

17. AWARE that projected sea-level rises and other aspects of climate change, such as rising temperatures and acidifying waters are expected to result in significant further losses of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats; and NOTING that the IPCC special report on *Global Warming of 1.5˚C*, released in 2018, reports that warming of 1.5˚C or higher increases the risk associated with long-lasting or irreversible changes such as the loss of ecosystems;

18. AWARE ALSO that the ecological character of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats can be influenced by loss of ecological linkages to surrounding areas;

Solutions

19. CONSIDERING that the need remains for guidance and models of good practice and management that would assist Contracting Parties to pursue development strategies that protect wetlands;

20. RECALLING Recommendation 6.8 on *Strategic planning in coastal zones*;

21. WELCOMING the steps taken by China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, since the adoption of Resolution 28[3] and Resolution 51[4] of the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress, to conserve the coastal wetlands of the Yellow Sea, including through follow-up of outcomes of national workshops held in China in 2014, the Republic of Korea in 2016 and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2017, with transboundary workshops in 2016, 2017 and 2018; and WELCOMING the steps taken by the Yellow Sea nations towards UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination of their coastal wetlands, including working via a transboundary Yellow/West Sea Working Group;

[3] IUCN WCC-2012-Res-028-EN. *Conservation of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and its threatened waterbirds, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea*
[4] IUCN WCC-2012-Res-051-EN. *Improving conservation and sustainability of the Yellow Sea*

22. NOTING the vital need to conserve and to manage sustainably "working coastal wetlands" [5] – those intertidal and ecologically associated coastal wetlands the sustainable use of which provides crucial socio-economic support to local communities – and that these managed areas can be of integral importance to the maintenance of the ecological character of intertidal wetland ecosystems, especially for waterbirds and other wetland biodiversity; and STRESSING the importance of an ecosystem-based approach;

23. CONSCIOUS that actions and investments, such as in transport and energy, have the potential for very damaging impacts on intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats; MINDFUL that efforts should be made to mitigate such impacts and wherever possible ensure that development activities where investments are targeted appropriately to contribute positively to conservation and wise use of the ecosystem; and AWARE that proactive positive engagement is critical at all scales;

Site designation

24. FURTHER NOTING that, while many Ramsar Sites contain intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats, global coverage of such sites is both highly incomplete and discontinuous, with relatively few such Ramsar Sites;

25. ENCOURAGING Contracting Parties to consider disaggregating wetland types in their future National Reports, so as to create a clearer picture of the numbers of the various types of wetlands designated as Ramsar Sites, and to include such wetland-specific analyses in future updates of the *Global Wetland Outlook* (GWO) to provide the Conference of the Contracting Parties with a high-level overview of relevant progress in the designation of Wetlands of International Importance;

26. NOTING the recent positive experiences of both transboundary and linked World Heritage Site (WHS) designation for intertidal wetlands, notably the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative linking the Wadden Sea WHS (Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands), and Banc d'Arguin WHS (Mauritania); and AWARE of the potential for similar initiatives for conserving and sustainable management of other major coastal wetlands in flyways;

Restoration

27. RECALLING Resolution XII.13 on *Wetlands and disaster risk reduction*, and NOTING CBD Decision XII/19 on *Ecosystem conservation and restoration*;

28. ENCOURAGING Contracting Parties to ensure that conservation efforts, for example mangrove restoration, do not ultimately convert mudflats and intertidal wetlands, which themselves play an important role as breeding and staging grounds for waterbirds;

29. CONSIDERING that there remains a need for guidance on effective methods of restoration, such as a living-shorelines approach that fully re-establishes ecological functions of degraded or lost intertidal wetlands and other coastal wetlands, and for support for Parties to prioritize areas of their coast for ecosystem restoration, including in the light of sea level rise;

[5] *Inter alia* including shellfisheries, polychaete harvesting, mariculture (for example for seaweed), aquaculture, fishponds, saltpans/salinas, and sewage works.

Acknowledgement of and engagement with other initiatives and conservation frameworks

30. NOTING the objectives of many other multilateral environmental agreements and international conservation initiatives, in the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands; and AWARE of the benefits of closer collaboration on this cross-cutting issue of mutual interest within multiple mandates;

31. NOTING the Arctic Council's Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative, established in 2015, which has the potential to support the efforts of Ramsar Contracting Parties towards the conservation of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats, which are vital to Arctic breeding waterbirds along the world's flyways;

32. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the conservation work of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and the partners of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network to conserve critical intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats for shorebirds throughout Africa and Eurasia, and the Americas, respectively;

33. NOTING the development of the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative Business Plan and the Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy, which prioritize strategies and actions for the conservation of key intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats on the West Atlantic and East Pacific flyways;

34. WELCOMING the strategy for monitoring coastal waterbird populations and their habitats on the Arabian Peninsula, which was developed as an outcome of a regional workshop in the United Arab Emirates, hosted by Sharjah's Environment and Protected Areas Authority in association with Wetlands International and BirdLife International in September 2018, which aims to assist the conservation of migratory and resident waterbird populations and their habitats in the region, including through the development of a network of experts in waterbird monitoring; and

Profile and changing attitudes to coastal wetlands (public engagement)

35. NOTING that there can be very low levels of public appreciation of the values and services provided by intertidal and ecologically-associated wetlands; yet AWARE of many successful initiatives that have engaged civil society, and have built effective and strong support from civil society for the conservation, restoration and wise use of these habitats;

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Coordination with other initiatives and conservation frameworks

36. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to explore actively with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements[6], governments, the private sector, relevant international and national non-governmental organizations, experts and other stakeholders, the possibility to set up a multi-stakeholder global coastal forum, to facilitate the protection, management and restoration of coastal ecosystems by raising the profile of the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats within relevant programmes of work, sharing experience and knowledge on solutions related to the

[6] Potentially including but not restricted to the CBD, the CMS family, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, and the Arctic Council's Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative.

conservation, management and restoration of these ecosystems, and encouraging stakeholders to support such initiatives;

37. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, subject to the availability of resources, and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider actively participating in the coastal forum proposed in paragraph 36 of the present Resolution to promote the restoration of coastal wetlands and other relevant habitats;

38. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider the inclusion of their coastal ecosystems, including relevant Ramsar Sites, in their national policies and strategies for climate-change mitigation as well as promoting their role within ecosystem-based adaptation;

39. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote the role of their coastal ecosystems within ecosystem-based adaptation;

Site designation

40. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, in support of Target 6 of Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2016-2024, to urgently designate intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats of international importance, especially but not exclusively in coastal regions that are suffering high ongoing rates of loss, paying particular attention to those sites that are part of critical site networks of migratory species;

41. INVITES Contracting Parties that are range States of the East Asian/Australasian flyway and the West Asian/East African flyway to enhance efforts and collaboration to improve population size estimates for waterbirds in these flyways and to enable the identification and designation of intertidal wetlands of international importance along these flyways;

42. REQUESTS the Secretariat and the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021 in developing its proposed work plan, to summarize the extent of new intertidal wetland Ramsar Site designations for succeeding meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, as far as possible placing this in historical contexts, and to report this information in future updates of the Global Wetland Outlook;

43. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties with qualifying intertidal sites to consider them for nomination as Ramsar Sites, including transboundary sites, as a means to potentially form ecologically connected site networks with other key sites; coastal sites in each flyway with the highest ecosystem service value, including importance for supporting migratory waterbirds, protected via the Ramsar Convention (including exchange of experience between sites);

44. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that intertidal Ramsar Site boundaries include the entire ecosystem of importance to migratory waterbirds and other dependent species, including inland roost and feeding sites; and INVITES Parties to review and extend boundaries of relevant Sites as appropriate;

Management

45. REQUESTS the STRP, subject to the availability of resources and consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan,

to consider coordinating with the scientific subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements, under the proposed coastal forum, to develop guidance on the conservation, wise use and management of sustainable "working coastal habitats", such as by elaborating strategies and models for economic development that maintain the ecological character and functionality of such habitats to the benefit of local communities and migratory species for the consideration of Contracting Parties;

Other solutions

46. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to fully recognize the international importance of their intertidal and associated coastal wetlands for biodiversity and ecosystem services and reconsider mudflat conversion at priority sites for biodiversity as a precautionary approach until full assessments are undertaken that assure the maintenance of ecological services in these sites;

47. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and other range states of the Arabian Peninsula, and surrounding areas, possibly extended later to include other areas of relevance on the West Asian/East African flyway, which is known to be the part of the range of the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement where bird population declines are most severe, to support and participate in an assessment of the state of the region's coastal wetlands, taking into consideration the experience gained by IUCN's 2012 situation analysis of the Yellow Sea and East Asian/Australasian flyway which stimulated policy initiatives at various scales;

48. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that they follow, to the greatest extent practicable, the Convention's *Integrated Framework and guidelines for avoiding, mitigating and compensating for wetland losses* (Resolution XI.9) when considering development impacting on intertidal and other coastal wetlands;

49. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, in support of Target 6 of Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2016-2024, to address and reverse perverse incentives to convert intertidal wetlands and ecologically associated habitats, and to implement sustainable coastal wetland-friendly measures, such as "living shorelines" for climate adaptation, coastal defense and risk reduction;

50. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES non-Contracting Party States to ensure that coastal sediment and water needs from riverine inputs are maintained through the appropriate regulation of outflows from dams or other water regulation structures through the implementation of the Convention's guidance on environmental flows; RECALLING Resolutions VIII.1 *Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands* and X.19 *Wetlands and river basin management consolidated scientific and technical guidance*;

51. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to make publicly available information about their practical experiences with coastal conservation interventions;

52. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to employ coastal and marine spatial planning tools, as appropriate, to better manage conflicts in multi-use coastal areas and to promote conservation objectives in the intertidal and coastal zones and other sectoral development programmes;

Restoration

53. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in areas where coastal erosion and/or sea level rises are resulting in losses of their intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats, to implement programmes of managed retreat of coastal defences, thereby both restoring intertidal habitats and creating more sustainable coastal defences and hence contributing to disaster risk reduction;

Changing attitudes to coastal wetlands

54. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider, as appropriate, the development of programmes and initiatives including, for example, festivals associated with the arrival of migratory species, ecotourism initiatives including those linked to gastronomic appreciation of sustainably-sourced seafood, and encouragement of responsible public access to tidal flats that communicate the importance of intertidal wetlands and associated habitats to the public, policy-makers and other stakeholders (including relevant sectors of the business community);

55. ENCOURAGES interested Contracting Parties and other stakeholders to create a network of experts in waterbird and wetland monitoring in the Arabian Peninsula that could be called on by all countries in the region to help with surveys, training and capacity building, experience sharing and responding to on-site/species conservation issues of urgent importance, and ENCOURAGES the sharing of lessons learned in order that the network could be expanded to other areas along the West Asian/East African flyway; and

56. REQUESTS that Contracting Parties give due consideration to the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats in drafting the post-2024 Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Annex 1

Previous Resolutions especially relevant to the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands

Recommendation VI.8	Strategic planning in coastal zones
Resolution VII.21	Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands
Resolution VIII.4	Principles and guidelines for incorporating wetland issues into Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)
Resolution VIII.32	Conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources
Resolution X.22	Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways
Resolution XII.13	Wetlands and disaster risk reduction

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.21

Conservation and management of small wetlands

1. RECALLING the commitments made by Contracting Parties in Article 3.1 of the Convention to promote, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in their territory and, in Article 3.2, to maintain the ecological character of wetlands included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;

2. RECALLING Resolution VII.11 on *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, and the amendments adopted through Resolution XI.8 on *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates*;

3. RECALLING Resolution VII.20 on *Priorities for wetland inventory,* which urges "all Contracting Parties yet to complete comprehensive national inventories of their wetland resources, including, where possible, wetland losses and wetlands with potential for restoration, to give highest priority in the next triennium to the compilation of comprehensive national inventories", and the Framework for Wetland Inventory as annexed to Resolution VIII.6 on *A Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory*;

4. ALSO RECALLING Resolution XII.14 on *Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands* and Resolution VIII.33 on *Guidance for identifying, sustainably managing and designating temporary pools as Wetlands of International Importance*;

5. FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 5.3 on *The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves*;

6. NOTING that conservation and management of the ecological character of small wetlands can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 2, "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture", SDG 6, "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", SDG 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", SDG 13, "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy", SDG 14, "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development", and SDG 15, "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss";

7. ALSO NOTING the efforts made by many countries to conserve and manage small wetlands that provide examples of small wetland conservation and management;

8. FURTHER NOTING that small wetlands can contribute significantly to the well-being of people, especially in Small Island Developing States and on other islands;

9. AWARE that "small wetlands" currently do not have a clear definition, and that small wetlands, such as springs, ponds and headwater streams, can occur in the landscape either independently or as part of larger wetland complexes;

10. AWARE that some wetland inventories have not prioritized small wetlands, and that there are major gaps in the understanding of small wetlands and their spatial distribution, their connectivity and their networks around the world;

11. ALSO AWARE that small wetlands, as a consequence of their limited size, can be extremely vulnerable to environmental changes, including climate changes, as well as to human development needs;

12. RECOGNIZING that human settlements, including indigenous communities, villages and towns, are often associated with small wetlands and that they together contribute to important landscape heritage that would benefit from integrated management;

13. RECOGNIZING that small wetlands can play important roles in hydrological cycles at catchment and larger scales, provide critical refuge and breeding sites for many specialized wetland species; and FURTHER RECOGNIZING that small wetlands can often provide the same types of ecosystem and cultural services as larger wetlands; and

14. CONCERNED that small wetlands are increasingly facing development pressures leading to degradation and loss; and ALSO CONCERNED that many of these small wetlands are being lost to the expansion of agriculture including livestock grazing, urban development, and other anthropogenic activities;

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15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to address urgently the significant human-induced pressures that threaten small wetlands, through, as appropriate, promulgation of national and regional policy, and other effective measures, such as water-management planning or spatial planning to prevent further loss of small wetlands;

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to include small wetlands in their science-based inventories, based on appropriate methodologies, to include them in national wetland strategies, and to integrate their information into national and regional land-use plans, as appropriate;

17. INVITES Contracting Parties to foster the wise use of small wetlands, as a means to advance sustainable development, and to explore ways to find additional funding targeted at the effective management, restoration, and implementation of conservation for small wetlands, as appropriate;

18. INVITES Contracting Parties to assess the hydrological connectivity and quality of small wetlands, as appropriate, to consider them as indicators to provide early warning of the over-exploitation and inadequate management of national or regional water basins and aquifers;

19. INVITES Contracting Parties to designate small wetlands and small wetland complexes that meet the criteria for identifying wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, in an effort to ensure the conservation of their biodiversity, and the maintenance of their ecological, cultural and social values;

20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure, as appropriate, that small wetlands are adequately reflected within communication, education, and public awareness activities, so as to enhance awareness of both decision-makers and the general public;

21. INVITES the Contracting Parties and, as appropriate, the Secretariat to further promote the importance of small wetlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

22. INVITES all Contracting Parties to report on the efforts to conserve small wetlands in their territory and their results, in their Ramsar national reports, as appropriate and according to their capacities; and

23. REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider preparing guidance on the identification of small wetlands, and their multiple values for biodiversity conservation especially in the contexts of landscape management and climate change, and to draw representative examples from each of the Ramsar regions highlighting a range of different legislation, policy and other best-practice approaches to the conservation, management and wise use of these wetlands.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.22

Wetlands in West Asia

1. RECALLING Resolution VII.18 on *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* and Resolution XII.12 on *Call to action to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for the present and the future*;

2. NOTING United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/225 on *Combating sand and dust storms*, Decision 31/COP.13 of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification on *Policy Advocacy Framework to combat Sand and Dust Storms* (2017), and Resolution 2/21 of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on *Sand and dust storms* (2016);

3. GREATLY APPRECIATING the generosity of the United Arab Emirates in hosting the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which is being held for the first time in West Asia and which can be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of the wetlands in the region, their status as well as the issues and opportunities that they face;

4. RECOGNIZING the range of unique wetland types in West Asia, such as *sabkha* (salt-flats), *khor* (tidal inlets), and *oasis* (desert springs or water sources);

5. BEARING IN MIND that bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements between Contracting Parties to the Convention are in place and that nothing in the present Resolution undermines the provisions of those agreements;

6. CONSCIOUS of the great importance of ensuring the conservation and wise use of wetlands in West Asia, and of encouraging cooperation among Contracting Parties in the region in this respect;

7. CONCERNED over the degradation and drying of many wetlands as a result of, *inter alia*, decreasing rainfall from a changing climate and/or over-extraction and/or unwise use of water resources; and NOTING that some Contracting Parties in the West Asia region have expressed their concerns about sand and dust storms in their wetland ecosystems and outlined the need for actions to be taken by concerned Contracting Parties to address the situation;

8. RECOGNIZING that the reduction of water in wetlands is a far-reaching global problem with serious consequences for ecosystems and people's livelihoods, in particular in vulnerable communities that depend on wetlands; and NOTING WITH CONCERN that this problem will tend

to be aggravated in the future by the growing demand for water and other natural resources, as well as by the potential effects of climate change (Resolution XII.12); and

9. ALERTED to the increasing pressure on urban wetlands as well as the loss of natural coastal wetlands caused by reclamation projects, among various other factors;

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10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in West Asia to cooperate in the wise use of wetlands;

11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in the West Asia region to consider leveraging existing collaboration and regional initiatives within the context of sustainable development;

12. REQUESTS Contracting Parties in the West Asia region to carry out restoration of their ecosystem services as necessary so that wetlands can continue to provide benefits to populations impacted by their degradation;

13. ENCOURAGES greater cooperation among Contracting Parties in the West Asia region, International Organization Partners and related organizations to promote awareness of the importance of the region's wetlands and to make practical efforts, based on concerned Contracting Parties' consent, for their conservation and wise use, including through exchanges of experience and expertise, training and joint study; and

14. REQUESTS the Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia to follow up the provisions of the present Resolution, within the framework of its mandate, and report to the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
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Resolution XIII.23

Wetlands in the Arctic and sub-Arctic

Scope

1. RECALLING and ADDRESSING the area of the Arctic and sub-Arctic as delineated by the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group;

2. CONSIDERING that some ecosystem services provided by Arctic wetlands (for example, carbon sequestration and storage) are of global importance, and furthermore, that measures to mitigate climate change can be taken by all Contracting Parties (as noted in Resolution X.25 on *Wetlands and "biofuels"* and Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* in relation to restoring peatlands) also outside the Arctic and sub-Arctic;

Arctic and sub-Arctic wetland biodiversity, ecosystem services and vulnerability

3. NOTING that various wetlands types, characterized by either being seasonally or permanently frozen, occur in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, including permafrost peatlands, wet tundra, coastal and shallow marine areas, as well as glacial forelands, and that these areas contain unique biodiversity, and are thus of global importance;

4. AWARE of the diversity and value of wetland ecosystems in the Arctic and sub-Arctic and their importance for migratory species, such as marine mammals, ungulates and birds, with several different migration patterns and flyways;

5. CONSCIOUS that Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands are of global significance not only for their biodiversity and their ecosystem services, especially for indigenous peoples and local communities, but also for other services, such as their roles as sinks or stores of carbon;

6. NOTING that Arctic and sub-Arctic wetland ecosystems are sensitive and vulnerable, for example: to changes in hydrology and water levels, to oil spills that are particulary long-lived and difficult to address in dark midwinters and extremely low temperatures; and to disturbance of fragile surface vegetation leading to progressive soil erosion and water pollution;

7. ALSO RECOGNIZING that climate change is resulting in negative effects on wetlands, such as declining summer sea-ice extent, permafrost thaw, sea-level rise, exacerbation of the spread of invasive species, and changes in species distribution, and that the Arctic Council's Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) and the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment note several changes

in arctic ecosystems, including rapid northward shifts of tree lines owing to recent rises in summer temperatures, and breakdowns in marine food webs, following dietary changes after declines of prey species;

8. NOTING that the ABA notes declines in extent of some Arctic wetland types, including thermokarst lakes and peatlands, and that the Global Assessment on Peatlands Biodiversity and Climate Change adopted by Decision IX/16 on *Biodiversity and Climate Change* of the Convention on Biological Diversity states that arctic peatlands are vulnerable;

Knowledge and awareness

9. CONSCIOUS that, as for most wetlands, more scientific data (for example, on the historical evolution, drainage and exploitation, geographical distribution and area coverage of different wetland types, and their biodiversity, ecological functions, ecosystem services and other important values as well as their vulnerability) are needed to inform decisions concerning the conservation and management of Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands, and that knowledge remains relatively limited;

Ramsar Sites and other wetlands of high conservation value

10. AWARE that, as stated in the Arctic Protected Areas Indicator Report[1] of the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group, the total extent of protected areas within the CAFF boundary has almost doubled between 1980 and 2016, resulting in 20.2% of the terrestrial area and 4.7% of the marine area within the CAFF boundary having some form of national protection in 2016, and resulting in a substantial increase in the total extent of protected wetlands in the area;

11. ALSO NOTING the designation of 80 Ramsar Sites in the Arctic and sub-Arctic as of the end of 2017, covering 0.9% (289,931 km^2) of the CAFF delineated area[2]; and ALSO NOTING that Arctic and sub-Arctic wetland types are under-represented among sites on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;

12. NOTING that it is unknown how well the network of wetlands in the Arctic and sub-Arctic fulfil the vision of the Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas to be an "ecologically connected, representative, and effectively managed network of protected and specially managed areas that protects and promotes the resilience of wetland biological diversity, ecological processes and cultural heritage" [2];

13. NOTING that the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment IIC report by CAFF, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), and the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) has recognized 97 marine areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance in the Arctic and sub-Arctic[3], where shipping should be avoided, or its impact mitigated, and that several of these areas include coastal wetlands;

[1] CAFF and PAME. 2017. Arctic Protected Areas: Indicator Report, 2017: Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, Akureyri, Iceland.
[2] Ibid, 2017.
[3] AMAP/CAFF/SDGW. Identification of Arctic marine areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance. Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) IIc.

Threats to wetlands

14. AWARE of potential threats to wetlands generated by current and possible future development in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, for example through possible increases in shipping, tourism, increased demand for natural-resources extraction, and other industrial developments;

15. NOTING that wildfires that could have negative effects on wetlands have increased in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, especially in dried, upper layers of peat;

16. ALSO RECOGNIZING that some wetland species may be affected by competition from more southern species that are becoming established at higher latitudes, and that invasive alien species also may be establishing and spreading in these regions;

International cooperation

17. RECALLING the memorandum of cooperation signed at the 11th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (COP11, 2012) between the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the CAFF Secretariat, and the memorandum of cooperation signed in 1997 between the Ramsar Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);

18. ALSO RECALLING Ramsar Resolution X.22 on *Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways*, which encourages the Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention, CMS and its Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and CAFF to continue to work together with their governance and scientific subsidiary bodies and other interested organizations to establish a mechanism for sharing knowledge and experience; and

19. RECOGNIZING that the Arctic Council States are undertaking an initiative on enhancing engagement in relation to the role and functions of Arctic wetlands in supporting sustainable development and biodiversity resilience in the Arctic;

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Knowledge and awareness

20. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties to obtain sufficient data about Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands in order to take the necessary measures for their conservation and sustainable use, while recognizing the constraints of working in the Arctic and undertaking the necessary inventories of, and research on, Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands, as appropriate;

21. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties to undertake assessments, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, of the state of Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands, to include hotspot analyses for wetland biodiversity, and of gaps in the network of Ramsar Sites and other protected areas containing wetlands, as well as assessing representation of wetland habitats within these areas and their connectivity in the context of the implications of future climate change impacts, and how these may affect the wetlands, while recognizing the constraints of working in the Arctic and sub-Arctic;

22. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, to raise awareness of the biodiversity, ecosystem services and socio-economic importance of Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands;

Ramsar Sites and other wetlands of high conservation value

23. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, within the biogeographical regions of the Arctic and sub-Arctic, when identifying wetland sites of high conservation value that may merit additional conservation measures, to designate new Ramsar Sites within their territories, which comprise under-represented wetland types and/or which are important links in flyways and other migratory routes;

Wise use and mitigation of impact on wetlands and restoration

24. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to seek to ensure that restoration measures in wetlands in the Arctic and sub-Arctic are prioritized and undertaken in order to improve the connectivity between habitats, especially for sites of importance for migrating wetland species, and sites with available fresh water in subregions where fresh water supply is, or may become, locally scarce with continuing climate change[4];

25. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to seek to ensure that an analysis of the impacts of development projects, transportation and tourism activities is undertaken as a means to support Contracting Parties' efforts to maintain the ecological character of wetlands, taking into account Ramsar Resolution XI.9 on *An Integrated Framework for avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for wetland losses*;

26. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, where there are herds of domestic or semi-domestic grazing animals in Arctic or sub-Arctic areas, to work with stakeholders to ensure that the population size of these herds is kept at a level that does not affect wetland populations of wild grazing animals, and that the combined grazing pressure of domestic and wild animals does not risk overgrazing of wetlands;

27. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties to address, through restoration and adaptation measures, as feasible and appropriate, issues of large-scale erosion resulting from unsustainable land uses in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, such as roads, off-road driving and extraction of natural resources;

28. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to seek to put in place measures to eradicate existing invasive alien species and prevent the future spread in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of existing and new invasive alien species that are a threat to wetland biodiversity;

29. ENCOURAGES the concerned Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to restore peatlands, especially those with a large carbon-storage capacity, regardless of their climate zone, in order to mitigate climate change in the Arctic and sub-Arctic; and

[4] Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, CAFF 2013.

International cooperation

30. REQUESTS the Secretariat to share with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change information on relevant activities under the Ramsar Convention.

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.24

The enhanced conservation of coastal marine turtle habitats and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites

1. NOTING that six out of seven species of marine turtle (Dermochelyidae: *Dermochelys coriacea*; Cheloniidae: *Chelonia mydas*, *Caretta caretta*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Lepidochelys kempii*, *Natator depressus*) have a conservation status ranging from vulnerable to critically endangered according to criteria of the IUCN Red List of threatened species; and ALSO NOTING that in order to live and survive these species depend on a variety of coastal habitats throughout their life cycle;

2. RECALLING that the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention has adopted several Resolutions that are relevant and can benefit the conservation of habitats important for marine turtles: Resolution VII.21 on *Enhancing the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetland*s; Resolution VIII.4 on *Wetland issues in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)*; and Resolution VIII.32 on *Conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources*;

3. CONSIDERING that habitats that are home to endangered marine turtle species meet Criterion 2 of the Convention's Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance and that, consequently, the Convention can play a role by encouraging Contracting Parties to strengthen their management and conservation actions related to the wetland habitats that are essential to these species;

4. ALSO CONSIDERING that marine turtles are included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and are addressed by regional instruments and international organizations such as the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, the Abidjan Convention on Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region, the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region, the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution, the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtles MoU), and the CMS MoU concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa (African Atlantic Turtles MOU), the Secretariat of the

Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, under which their members have committed to enhance protection for marine turtles;

5. NOTING the existence of additional action plans such as, for example, the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme's Marine Turtle Action Plan and the Single Species Action Plan for the loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta* in the South Pacific Ocean, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CMS in Quito in November 2014, and the development of the Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the hawksbill turtle (in accordance with CMS COP12 Decision 12.17);

6. NOTING that some marine turtle subpopulations, such as northwest Atlantic loggerhead turtles, have increased as a result of significant conservation efforts, which include prohibiting or modifying fishing practices, designating protected areas and addressing light pollution;

7. CONCERNED that several regional populations of marine turtle are facing a high risk of extinction; NOTING the degradation of their coastal habitats, the significant impact of fisheries bycatch; and ALSO NOTING the excessively high mortality rates owing to egg collection, killing or poaching of adult females on the nesting beaches and the impact of native or introduced predators, as well as natural mortality of eggs and hatchlings;

8. CONSIDERING that marine and coastal feeding and nursery areas that are used by marine turtles during their life cycle such as, *inter alia*, estuaries, seagrass beds, coral reefs and mangroves, are often threatened physically and chemically by human activities such as urban, industrial, port and tourism development and infrastructure as well as discharges of wastewater and industrial effluents, and agricultural runoff;

9. RECOGNIZING the potential and demonstrated role of indigenous peoples[1] and local communities including women and other vulnerable groups in marine turtle conservation and management;

10. CONSIDERING that the protection of nesting beaches, marine and coastal feeding areas, nurseries and growth areas will improve the survival rate of adult females, hatchlings and immature turtles and that their designation as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) is a first step towards an enhanced protection;

11. NOTING that Resolution 12.25 on *Promoting Conservation of Critical Intertidal and Other Coastal Habitats for Migratory Species* adopted by the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (Manila, October 2017) urges those Parties to conserve intertidal and coastal habitats for migratory species;

12. FURTHER NOTING that CMS Resolution 12.23 on *Sustainable Tourism and Migratory Species* outlines general principles for ensuring that tourism activities benefit from and do not harm migratory species, including involvement of and benefits to local communities;

13. NOTING that 248 Ramsar Sites and 76 Contracting Parties (listed at Annex 1 of the present Resolution) already provide habitat for at least one species of marine turtle;

[1] In compliance with national laws and rules.

14. RECOGNIZING that the African Atlantic Turtles MoU and the IOSEA Marine Turtles MoU of CMS have adopted resolutions the application of which can help improve the conservation of marine turtles; and

15. RECALLING that an MoU has been signed between the IAC Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and that its goal is to join the efforts made in the frameworks of the two Conventions, with the aim of building capacities of the Parties of both Conventions to identify and strengthen the conservation and wise use of Ramsar Sites;

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16. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties whose coastlines contain marine turtle breeding areas, nesting beaches, coastal migration corridors and feeding and nursery areas to identify index nesting and foraging sites and ensure the populations are monitored as precisely as possible, in order to improve our knowledge of the distribution, numbers and state of health of each of the species involved;

17. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to strengthen the conservation and management of the identified index nesting and foraging sites, and notably, if possible, to designate them as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), based on Criterion 2 of the Convention's Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance, and to strengthen this designation through the promulgation of the appropriate protective measures in accordance with their legislation and the availability of resources, in particular through the creation of marine protected areas, as appropriate;

18. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to develop and implement management plans for these sites, by integrating specific means for the conservation, protection or restoration of coastal habitats for the different marine turtle species, and to integrate these site management plans with coastal zone management plans;

19. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to consult each other, and work through existing regional agreements, MoUs and action plans, such as those mentioned in paragraph 4 of the present Resolution, to protect habitats in networks that allow for greater safety for marine turtles during their life cycle and in their movements;

20. STRESSES the urgent need to take the measures required, whenever possible, to reduce threats to nesting areas, such as noise and light pollution and beach erosion, and to control native predators and eradicate introduced predators at these sites, to develop best practices to guide the interaction of humans and marine turtles by raising the awareness of inhabitants of and visitors to coastal zones, leveraging the prestigious Ramsar brand and the Convention's communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) programme;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties with marine turtle habitats to promote the wise use of these wetlands by working with local communities, relevant stakeholders and institutions to raise awareness of the importance of conserving marine turtles, their nests and their habitats, and to halt poaching and the exploitation of marine turtle products, including through, *inter alia*, fostering alternative sustainable livelihoods, including sustainable eco-tourism;

22. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to review their Ramsar Site management plans to seek to ensure they include marine turtle conservation actions, as appropriate; and RECOMMENDS

enhancement of synergies and better coordination with Ramsar Regional Initiatives and existing networks rather than establishment of new arrangements;

23. URGES Contracting Parties to undertake collaborative research on impacts of climate change on marine turtles and their wetland habitats; and REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider developing methods to rapidly assess climate vulnerability of wetlands, particularly those important as habitats for marine turtles; and

24. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with the Secretariats of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals as well as their respective memoranda of understanding, (including the the CMS MoUs on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and on Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa) to enhance marine turtle conservation in Ramsar Sites; and ALSO REQUESTS that, where possible and subject to the availability of resources, these Secretariats work with Ramsar Contracting Parties to include marine turtle conservation actions in their Ramsar Site management plans.

Annex 1

Existing Ramsar Sites with coastal and marine turtle habitats[2]

Sources :
Ramsar Sites information service : https://rsis.ramsar.org/
Information on Ramsar Sites in the western hemisphere with sea turtles present and so included in this list can also be found in the report prepared by the Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles with the support of the Ramsar Secretariat entitled *Wetlands of international importance and sea turtle conservation*. The link for the report is: http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/publicaciones/humedales-tortugas-marinas-ing-peq.pdf

Species involved (nesting beaches, nursery areas, feeding areas)*:
Lepidochelys olivacea = Lo (IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable)
Lepidochelys kempii = Lk (IUCN Red List status: Critically Endangered)
Chelonia mydas = Cm (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)
Chelonia agassizii or *C. mydas agassizii* = Ca (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)
Caretta caretta = Cc (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)
Eretmochelys imbricata = Ei (IUCN Red List status: Critically Endangered)
Dermochelys coriacea = Dc (IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable)
Natator depressus = Nd (IUCN Red List status: Data Deficient)

*Note: Depending on the description of the Site, there may be errors in the identification of species or lack of knowledge about existing habitats

Africa

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1898	Algeria	Vallée de l'oued Soummam	Cc
1961	Algeria	Ile de Rachgoun (Wilaya de Aïn Temouchent)	Cc (Dc)
1017	Benin	Basse Vallée du Couffo, Lagune Côtiere, Chenal Aho, Lac Ahémé	Lo, Dc, Cm, Ei
1018	Benin	Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé, Lagune de Porto-Novo, Lac Nokoué	Lo, Dc, Cm, Ei
1575	Cabo Verde	Curral Velho	Cc
1576	Cabo Verde	Lagoa de Rabil	Cc
1577	Cabo Verde	Lagoa de Pedra Badejo	Cc
2182	Cabo Verde	Salinas of the English Port	Cc
1741	Congo	Conkouati-Douli	Dc, Cm, Lo
2325	Congo	Bas-Kouilou-Yombo	Dc, Lo
1581	Côte d'Ivoire	Complexe Sassandra-Dagbego	Dc, Lo
1239	Djibouti	Haramous-Loyada	Cc, Cm
788	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Parc marin des Mangroves	Lo

[2] Ramsar Sites in dependent territories are listed according to their geographical location rather than the Ramsar region of the concerned Contracting Party.

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
407	Egypt	Lake Bardawil	Cc, Cm
408	Egypt	Lake Burullus	Cc, Cm
1310	Equatorial Guinea	Río Ntem o Campo	Cm, Lo
1311	Equatorial Guinea	Reserva Natural del Estuario del Muni	Cm, Lo
351	Gabon	Wonga-Wongué	Dc
352	Gabon	Petit Loango	Dc, Cm, Ei
353	Gabon	Setté Cama	Dc, Cm, Ei
1652	Gabon	Parc National Akanda	Ei, Dc, Lo, Cm
1653	Gabon	Parc National Pongara	Dc, Cm, Ei, Lo
1656	Gabon	Parc national de Pongara	Dc, Lo, Ei, Cm
1657	Gambia	Tanbi Wetlands Complex	Cm
1840	Gambia	Niumi National Park	Cm
563	Ghana	Muni-Pomadze Ramsar Site	Cm
564	Ghana	Densu Delta Ramsar Site	Lo, Dc, Cm
565	Ghana	Sakumo Ramsar Site	Dc, Lo, Cm
566	Ghana	Songor Ramsar Site	Lo, Cm, Dc
567	Ghana	Keta Lagoon Complex Ramsar Site	Dc, Lo, Cm
572	Guinea	Iles Tristao	Cm, Lo, Ei
618	Guinea	Ile Blanche	Ei
2198	Guinea-Bissau	Archipel Bolama-Bijagós	Cm, Dc, Lo, Cc, Ei
2082	Kenya	Tana River Delta	Ei, Cm, Lo, Cc, Dc
1026	Libya	Ain El Shakika	??
1027	Libya	Ain El Zarga	??
2285	Madagascar	Barrière de Corail Nosy Ve Androka	Ei, Cm
2288	Madagascar	Zones Humides de Sahamalaza	Ei, Cm
2302	Madagascar	Mangroves de Tsiribihina	Ei, Cm
2303	Madagascar	Iles Barren	Dc, Cc, Ei, Cm, Lo
250	Mauritania	Parc national du Banc d'Arguin	Cm[3], Cc
666	Mauritania	Parc national du Diawling	Cm, Cc
1044	Mauritania	Chat Tboul	Cm, Cc
1473	Morocco	Cap des Trois Fourches	Cc
288	Senegal	Parc national du Delta du Saloum	Cm
2326	Senegal	Kalissaye	Cm
2327	Senegal	Réserve Naturelle d'Intérêt Communautaire de la Somone	Cm
2328	Senegal	Réserve Naturelle Communautaire de Palmarin	Dc
344	South Africa	Turtle Beaches – Coral Reefs of Tongaland	Cc, Dc
1859	Sudan	Dongonab Bay-Marsa Waiai	Cm, Ei
1860	Sudan	Suakin-Gulf of Agig	Ei, Cm
1722	Togo	Zones Humides du Littoral du Togo	Dc Lo, Cm
1704	Tunisia	Iles Kneiss avec leurs zones intertidales	Cc
2012	Tunisia	Iles Kerkennah	Cc, Cm, Dc
1443	United Republic of Tanzania	Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Marine Ramsar Site	Ei, Cm, Dc, Cc, Lo

[3] Feeding area of international importance.

Asia

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
920	Bahrain	Hawar Islands	Cc, Cm, Ei, Dc
560	Bangladesh	Sundarbans Reserved Forest	Lo
1150	China	Huidong Harbor Sea Turtle National Nature Reserve	Cm
1726	China	Fujian Zhangjiangkou National Mangrove Nature Reserve	Dc, Lo, Cc, Cm
2249	China	Guangdong Nanpeng Archipelago Wetlands	Cc, Cm, Lo, Ei, Dc
1205	India	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Lo
1210	India	Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Ei, Lo, Cm
2192	Indonesia	Tanjung Puting National Park	Ei
1015	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Sheedvar Island	Ei, Cm
1546	Japan	Keramashoto Coral Reef	Ei, Cm, Cc
1559	Japan	Yakushima Nagata-hama	Cc, Cm
2062	Japan	Yonahawan	Ei, Cc, Cm
980	Lebanon	Tyre Coast Nature Reserve	Cc, Cm
1079	Lebanon	Réserve Naturelle des Iles des Palmiers	Cc, Cm, Dc
2280	Myanmar	Meinmahlakyun Wildlife Santuary	Ei, Cm, Lo
1063	Pakistan	Astola Island	Ei, Cm
1066	Pakistan	Jiwani Coastal Wetland	Lo, Cm
1070	Pakistan	Ormara Turtle Beaches	Ei, Cm, Lo
1284	Pakistan	Indus Delta	Lo, Cm
1010	Philippines	Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park	Ei, Cm
2084	Philippines	Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park	Ei, Cm
2271	Philippines	Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area	Ei, Cm, Lo
1910	Sri Lanka	Vankalai Sanctuary	Cm, Lo, Cc
1931	Sri Lanka	Kumana Wetland Cluster	Cm, Lo, Cc
1182	Thailand	Had Chao Mai Marine National Park - Ta Libong Island Non-Hunting Area - Trang River Estuaries	Ei, Cm
2152	Thailand	Ko Kra Archipelago	Ei, Cm
2153	Thailand	Ko Ra-Ko Phra Thong Archipelago	Lo, Cm, Ei, Dc
657	Turkey	Göksu Delta	Cc
1619	Turkey	Yumurtalik Lagoons	Cc, Cm
2125	United Arab Emirates	Mangrove and Al Hafeya Protected Area	Ei, Cm, Cc
2191	United Arab Emirates	Sir Bu Nair Island Protected Area	Ei, CM, Cc
2293	United Arab Emirates	Bul Syayeef	Ei, Cm
2203	Viet Nam	Con Dao National Park	Dc, Ei, Cm, Lo

Europe

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1290	Albania	Butrint	Cc, Dc
62	Greece	Messolongi Lagoons	Cc, Cm
63	Greece	Kotychi lagoons	Cc
2311	Italy	Massaciuccoli lake and marsh	Cc
2135	Montenegro	Tivat Saline (Tivatska solila)	Cc
1804	Portugal	Ilhéus das Formigas e Recife Dollabarat	Cc

Latin America and the Caribbean

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1488	Antigua and Barbuda	Codrington Lagoon	Dc, Ei, Cm
885	Argentina	Bahía de Samborombón	Cm, Cc, Dc
640	Brazil	Reentrancias Maranhenses Protected Area	Cm, Cc, Ei
1021	Brazil	Parcel Manoel Luis State Park	Ei, Cm
1902	Brazil	Abrolhos Marine National Park	Cc, Dc, Ei, Cm
2259	Brazil	Atol das Rocas Biological Reserve	Cm, Cc, Ei
2298	Brazil	Taim Ecological Station	Cc, Dc, Cm, Ei, Lo
2305	Brazil	Guaraqueçaba Ecological Station	Cm, Ei, Dc, Lo, Cc
2310	Brazil	Environmental Protection Area of Cananéia-Iguape-Peruíbe	??
2317	Brazil	Guaratuba	??
2333	Brazil	Fernando de Noronha Archipelago	Ei, Cm, Lo, Cc, Dc
2337	Brazil	Amazon Estuary and its Mangroves	Dc, Cc, Ei, Cm, Lo
2390	Brazil	Cabo Orange National Park	Ei
951	Colombia	Sistema Delta Estuarino Del Rio Magdalena, Cienaga Grande de Santa Marta	Dc, Ei, Cm, Cc
1387	Colombia	Delta del Río Baudó	Lo, Dc, Ei, Cm
610	Costa Rica	Tamarindo	Dc, Lo, Ca
783	Costa Rica	Gandoca-Manzanillo	Cm, Dc, Ei
811	Costa Rica	Humedal Caribe Noreste	Cc, Cm, Ei, Dc
1234	Cuba	Ciénaga de Lanier y Sur de la Isla de la Juventud	Cm, Cc
2210	Dominican Republic	Humedales de Jaragua	Ei, Cc, Cm, Dc
502	Ecuador	Manglares Churute	Ca, Lo, Cm, Dc
503	Ecuador	Zona Marina Parque Nacional Machalilla	Ca, Lo, Cm, Dc
1202	Ecuador	Humedales del Sur de Isabela	Ca, Lo, Cm, Dc
1292	Ecuador	Reserva Ecológica de Manglares Cayapas-Mataje	Ca, Lo, Cm, Dc
2098	Ecuador	Manglares del Estuario Interior del Golfo de Guayaquil « Don Goyo »	Ca, Lo, Cm, Dc
1586	El Salvador	Complejo Bahía de Jiquilisco	Cm, Dc, Ei, Lo
1935	El Salvador	Complejo Jaltepeque	Cm, Dc, Lo, Ei
2207	El Salvador	Complejo Barra de Santiago	Cm, Dc, Ei, Lo

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
642	France	Grand-Cul-de-Sac-Marin de la Guadeloupe	Ei, Cm
643	France	Basse-Mana (réserve de l'Amana)[4]	Dc, Cm, Lo
1828	France	Estuaire du fleuve Sinnamary	Cm
1830	France	Etang des Salines en Martinique	Ei
2029	France	Zones humides et marines de Saint-Martin	Ei, Cm, Dc
2034	Grenada	Levera Wetland	Dc, Ei, Cc, Cm
722	Honduras	Parque Nacional Jeanette Kawas	Cc, Dc,Ei, Cc
812	Honduras	Punta Izopo	CC, Cm, Dc, Ei
1000	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales de la Zona Sur	Lo
1254	Honduras	Laguna de bacalar	Cm, Cc, Dc
2133	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales Cuyamel-Omoa	Ei, Dc
2134	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales de la Isla de Utila	Cm, Cc, Ei
2189	Honduras	Sistema de Humelades Laguna de Zambucco	Dc, Ei
2334	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales de Santa Elena	Cm, Ei, Cc
1454	Jamaica	Palisadoes-Port Royal	Cm, Ei
1597	Jamaica	Portland Bight Wetlands and Cays	CM, EI
2119	Netherlands	Northwest Curaçao	Ei, Cc, Cm, Lo, Dc
2120	Netherlands	Rif-Sint Marie	Dc, Ei, Cc, Cm, Lo
2270	Netherlands	Mullet Pond, St Maarten	Dc, Cm, Ei
2355	Netherlands	Klein Curacao	Cm, Ei
1135	Nicaragua	Cayos Miskitos y Franja Costera Immediata	Cm, Ei
611	Panama	San San – Pond Sak	Dc, Cc, Cm, Ei
630	Panama	Punta Patiño	Dc, Ei
1319	Panama	Bahía de Panamá	Cc
1907	Panama	Humedal de Importancia Internacional Damani-Guariviara	Cc, Cm, Ei, Dc
545	Peru	Reserva Nacional de Paracas	Cc, Cm, Lo, Dc
883	Peru	Santuario Natural Manglares de Tumbes	Ei, Cc, Dc, Lo
1496	Trinidad and Tobago	Buccoo Reef – Bon Accord Lagoon Complex	Ei, Cm
493	United Kingdom	North, Middle and East Caicos Islands	Ei
290	Uruguay	Bañados del Este y Franja Costera, Cerro Verde	Lo, Cm; Cc; Dc
414	Venezuela	Refugio de Fauna Silvestre de Cuare	Cm, Ei, Dc
856	Venezuela	Parce Nacional Archipiélago Los Roques	Ei, Cm, Dc, Cc
857	Venezuela	Laguna de la Restinga	Cc, Ei, Cm, Dc
858	Venezuela	Laguna de Tacarigua	Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc

North America

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
332	Mexico	Humedal de Importancia Especialmente para la Conservación de Aves Acuáticas Reserva Ría Lagartos	Dc, Cc, Cm, Ei
732	Mexico	Marismas Nacionales	Ei, Dc, Lo, Ca
815	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera La Encrucijada	Ca, Lo, Dc

[4] First site to be designated as a Ramsar Site due to the importance of the terrestrial habitat for marine turtles.

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1045	Mexico	Dzilam	Ei
1320	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecifes de Xcalak	Cc, Ei, Dc, Cm
1321	Mexico	Cuencas y corales de la zona costera de Huatulco	Dc, Ei, Lo, Ca
1323	Mexico	Parque Nacional Isla Contoy	Cm, Cc, Ei, Dc
1324	Mexico	Parque Nacional Isla Isabel	Ca, Lo, Ei
1326	Mexico	Playa Tortuguero Rancho Nuevo	Lk, Ei, Cc, Cm, Dc
1327	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera Tierra Colorada	Dc, Lo, Ca
1328	Mexico	Reserva Estatal El Palmar	Ei
1329	Mexico	Sian Ka'an	Cm, Cc, Ei, Dc
1333	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Ría Celestún	Ei, Cc
1334	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Chamela – Cuixmala	Dc, Lo, Ei, Ca
1339	Mexico	Laguna Ojo de Liebre	Ca
1341	Mexico	Laguna San Ignacio	Ca
1342	Mexico	Manglares y humedales de la Laguna de Sontecomapan	Cc, Dc, Ei, Lk
1343	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecife de Puerto Morelos	Ei, Cm, Cc
1345	Mexico	Islas Marietas	Lo, Ei
1347	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera Cahuitán	Ca, Lo, Dc
1348	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera Chenkán	Cm, Ei
1349	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera El Verde Camacho	Cm, Ei, Dc, Lo
1350	Mexico	Playón Mexiquillo	Lo, Ca, Dc
1351	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera X'cacel-X'cacelito	Cc, Cm
1353	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Banco Chinchorro	Cm, Ei, Cc
1354	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Los Petenes	Ei
1356	Mexico	Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Laguna de Términos	Lk, Ei, Cm
1357	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Archipiélago de Revillagigedo	Ca, Dc, Lo
1360	Mexico	Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna Yum Balam	Ei, Cm
1362	Mexico	Laguna Madre	Cm, Lk
1448	Mexico	Laguna Costera El Caimán	Cm
1449	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecifes de Cozumel	Cc, Ei, Cm, Dc
1595	Mexico	Corredor Costoro La Asamblea – San Francisquito	Cm, Cc, Ei, Dc, Lo
1596	Mexico	Laguna de Tamiahua	Lk, Cm
1689	Mexico	Laguna Huizache-Caimanero	Lo
1760	Mexico	Ensenada de Pabellones	Lo
1764	Mexico	Santuario Playa Boca de Apiza – El Chupadero – El Tecuanillo	Lo, Ca, Dc
1768	Mexico	Laguna Xola-ParamáDc	Dc, Lo, Cm
1770	Mexico	Sistema Estuarino Boca del Cielo	Ca, Lo, Dc, Ei
1771	Mexico	Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica Cabildo – Amatal	Lo
1772	Mexico	Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica El Gancho – Murillo	Lo
1777	Mexico	Manglares de Nichutpté	Cm
1778	Mexico	Parque Nacional Cabo Pulmo	Cm, Cc, Ei, Dc, Lo
1788	Mexico	Playa de Colola	Dc, Lo, Ca
1791	Mexico	Estero El Chorro	Dc, Ca, Lo
1792	Mexico	Estero Majahuas	Lo, Dc, Ca
1795	Mexico	Playa de Maruata	Lo, Dc, Cm
1817	Mexico	Laguna Barra de Navidad	Ca, Dc, Lo

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1818	Mexico	Laguna Chalacatepec	Lo, Dc, Ca
1819	Mexico	Lagunas de Chacahua	Ca, Lo, Dc
1820	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecife Alacranes	Ei, Cc, Cm
1821	Mexico	Playa Barra de la Cruz	Dc, Ca, Ei, Lo
1823	Mexico	Sistema Estuarino Puerto Arista	Ei, Cm, Lo, Dc
1824	Mexico	Sistema Lagunar Ceuta	Lo, Dc, Ca
1825	Mexico	Sistema Lagunar Estuarino Agua Dulce – El Ermitaño	Lo, Dc, Ca
1826	Mexico	Sistema Lagunar San Ignacio – Navachiste – Macapule	Ei, Ca, Lo
1866	Mexico	Humedales de Bahía Adair	Ca, Dc, Cc, Lo
1891	Mexico	Canal del Infiernillo y esteros del territorio Comcaac	Cc, Ca, Lo, Dc, Ei
1921	Mexico	Manglares y Humedales del Norte de Isla Cozumel	Cc, Cm, Ei
1983	Mexico	Humedales de Bahía San Jorge	Lo, Ca, Dc, Cc
1985	Mexico	Laguna de Cuyutlán vasos III y IV	Dc, Lo, Ca
2025	Mexico	Lagunas de Santa María-Topolobampo-Ohuira	Ca, Ei, Dc, Lo
2154	Mexico	Humedales de la Laguna La Cruz	Ca
374	United States of America	Everglades National Park	Dc, Cm, Ei, Lk
375	United States of America	Chesapeake Bay Estuarine Complex	Cc, Lk
559	United States of America	Delaware Bay Estuary	Cc
590	United States of America	Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge	Lk, Cm, Cc, Ei

Oceania

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
1	Australia	Cobourg Peninsula	Cm, Nd, Lo, Dc, Ei, Cc
204	Australia	Kakadu National Park	Cm, Nd
266	Australia	Port Phillip Bay & Bellarine Peninsula	Dc
479	Australia	Roebuck Bay	Nd
480	Australia	Eighty Mile Beach	Nd
631	Australia	Moreton Bay	Ei, Cm, Cc
797	Australia	Pulu Keeling National Park	Cm, EI
992	Australia	Great Sandy Strait	Cm, Cc, Ei, Nd, Dc, Lo
1220	Australia	Ashmore Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve	Cm, Ei, CC
1222	Australia	Coral Sea Reserves	Cm, Ei
1223	Australia	Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs Marine National Nature Reserve	Cm, Dc
2331	Fiji	Qoliqoli Cokovata	Ei, Cm, Dc, Cc
1834	France	Lagon de Moorea – Polynésie française	Ei, Cm
2002	France	Vasière des Badamiers - Mayotte	Ei, Cm
2073	France	Ile Europa	Cm, Ei
2143	Kiribati	Nooto-North Tarawa	Cm

Site no.	Country	Name of Site	Species present
2072	Marshall Islands	Namdrik Atoll	Cm, Ei
1744	Mauritius	Blue Bay Marine Park	Cm
1077	United Kingdom	Diego Garcia	Ei, Cm
1971	United States of America	Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge	Ei, Cm

13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

"Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future"
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.25

Thanks to the Host Country, the United Arab Emirates

1. HAVING MET for the first time in Western Asia, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates;

2. FULLY AWARE of the significant effort required for the organization of a meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), with, on this occasion, more than 1,000 participants, including delegations from 143 Contracting Parties, two observer States, 62 observer organizations, and visitors;

3. RECOGNIZING the United Arab Emirates' long-term commitment to the conservation and wise use of wetlands through its actions for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, including recent efforts such as:

   a. the inclusion of sensitive wetland habitats into the 2030 Urban and Maritime Policy;

   b. the implementation of natural habitat mapping and wetland satellite monitoring projects; and

   c. the designation of the urban coastal wetland Jabal Ali Wetland Sanctuary in the Emirate of Dubai, on 25 October 2018, as the eighth Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) of the United Arab Emirates;

4. NOTING the information provided by the United Arab Emirates about ongoing work to designate further Ramsar Sites; and

5. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION that 25 Resolutions considered at the present meeting of the Conference of the Parties were approved by consensus;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. CONGRATULATES the United Arab Emirates for a successful 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13); and RECORDS its thanks to the President, the Alternate President and the Vice-Presidents of COP13 for their commitment to ensuring efficient and effective conduct of the plenary sessions;

7. EXPRESSES its thanks and appreciation to the United Arab Emirates, and in particular to the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment and the Municipality of Dubai, for their efficient,

comprehensive and thorough preparations which ensured that the meeting and all its associated events ran smoothly;

8. FURTHER EXPRESSES its heartfelt thanks to the people of the United Arab Emirates for their warm and gracious welcome and hospitality;

9. EXPRESSES its appreciation for the crucial role played by the COP13 volunteers who have contributed to the many aspects of the meeting's success;

10. GREATLY APPRECIATES the numerous side events and cultural events that provided a wonderful opportunity for technical and cultural exchanges between delegates and citizens of the United Arab Emirates; and

11. LOOKS FORWARD to working ever more closely with the government and people of the United Arab Emirates to harness the interest and energy generated in the framework of COP13 for the benefit of wetland conservation locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.