



**12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Ramsar COP12 DR3

Draft 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**

1. RECALLING that Resolution XI.1 in paragraphs 17 and 18 instructed 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 XI.1 called for the establishment of a working group to develop such strategies and report on its progress to each Standing Committee meeting including any implications such as financial ones and recommendations, and also requested that the Standing Committee submit a report including its recommendations to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12);
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the reports of the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee on the above matters and EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the significant work carried out during the triennium;
4. APPRECIATING the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group in ensuring that the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan presents strategies on these issues for Parties' consideration;
5. NOTING the interest of all Parties in enhancing the visibility and stature of the Ramsar Convention and increasing synergies with other MEAs and with UNEP, and in supporting the development and implementation of the Convention, including *inter alia* by potentially introducing other official UN languages into its operations;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING that the accommodation of additional languages into the daily work of the Convention could foster the engagement of more Contracting Parties to the Convention;
7. NOTING the expressed interest in accession to the Ramsar Convention by a growing number of Arabic-speaking countries and the increasing interest in implementation of the Convention by Arabic-speaking Contracting Parties;

8. 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;
9. UNDERSTANDING the range of pressing wetlands issues in Arabic-speaking and other countries, relating to national and transboundary water resources, in light of the increasing demand from the region's growing population and changes in water availability due to changing rainfall and unsustainable use patterns;
10. RECALLING that the Standing Committee in Decision SC47-07 instructed the Secretariat to prepare a draft text for a Resolution in response to Resolution XI.1 for its consideration at the 48th Meeting of the Standing Committee, addressing accommodation of the Arabic language into the Convention, to be supported by an analysis of legal considerations in relation to the Convention text as well as existing COP Resolutions and the Rules of Procedure, and options for a phased introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources;
11. NOTING the need to address the longstanding differences in treatment of the three official Convention languages;
12. WELCOMING the Secretariat's progress in preparing a memorandum of understanding with UNEP to enhance collaboration on areas of common interest;
13. NOTING the project undertaken by UNEP "Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies" and its results inter alia the source book; and
14. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the quality of the cooperation between the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Secretariat as part of the Ramsar-IUCN Task Force, and progress which they have together made in enhancing support to the operations of the Secretariat and thus the implementation of the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Concerning accommodation of UN languages:

15. INVITES the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention to develop a strategy, subject to the availability of resources, outlining the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention, which:
 - i. Classifies the language needs of the Convention according to the short-, medium- and long-term work of the Convention;
 - ii. Identifies barriers to effective translation, publishing and interpreting, and actions needed to overcome them including identification of resources needs and sources to accommodate inclusion of additional languages;
 - iii. Proposes a potential timeline for phased integration of procedural changes, key indicators, and milestones for any UN languages added;

- iv. Outlines the financial implications of further phased integration of existing Convention languages in line with the scale of existing resources;
 - v. Prepare a draft text for a Resolution addressing accommodation of the Arabic Language into the Convention, supported by Financial Mechanism and options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention subject to the availability of resources;
16. RECOGNIZES that a phased approach would be needed to integrate any new language into the Convention as an “official” and “working” language, with a related need for identification of sources for gradual increase in funding, capacity and outputs and address potential resulting impacts on funding for other budgetary items in order to accommodate any new language(s);
 17. INSTRUCES the Standing Committee, through an appropriate working group of representatives of the Parties, to monitor the progress made in consideration of the Secretariat’s proposal for a phased approach to language integration, including efforts to fully integrate Spanish and French, and report its findings for consideration by the Parties at COP13;

Concerning visibility and stature, and increasing synergies:

18. NOTES that one way to increase the global, regional, and national profiles of the Ramsar Convention could be the establishment of a high-level ministerial segment at the COP addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the COP;
19. INVITES all Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the COP to consider including a high-level ministerial segment in the latter half of the Conference addressing clearly defined topics in support of the agenda of the COP as a possible means to improve the visibility, political support and impact of the Convention;
20. RECOGNIZING that wetlands related activities also relates to transboundary as well as municipal areas, Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the Conference of the Parties are therefore also invited to consider including transboundary cooperation as well as “Cities and Wetlands” round tables and/or Summits in support of the implementation of the wetland conservation activities;
21. FURTHER INVITES all PARTIES to work to raise the visibility of the Convention at the national, sub-national, and regional level, *inter alia* through invitations at global or regional levels, invitations to ministers as keynote speakers, or convening of round-table discussions;
22. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to explore other means to increase the visibility of the Convention;
23. RECOGNIZING the role of communities in the wise use of wetlands and reliance of such communities particularly in developing countries on wetlands natural resources and the importance of conservation activities undertaken by such communities, URGES Parties to take account of, and where appropriate incorporate traditional knowledge, available in their respective countries in implementing the Strategic Plan and encouraging the active participation of such communities in the conservation of wetlands;

24. INVITES Contracting Parties to take into account the project undertaken by UNEP “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” and its results, through *inter alia* the *Sourcebook*, and CALLS UPON the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to implement as appropriate its important recommendations for promoting synergies within the cluster of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements;
25. ENCOURAGES all Ramsar National Focal Points to increase their efforts to coordinate with their national counterpart Focal Points of other Conventions, and with all wetland practitioners including Ramsar Site managers, to inform them of Ramsar activities and learn from them about processes and issues of common interest;
26. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to activate and develop networking mechanisms, including Ramsar National Wetlands Committees, to ensure collaboration with national ministries, departments and agencies, and global and regional bodies including UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (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 Fund (GEF), to enhance the wise use of wetlands;
27. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to continue to implement the *Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention* (Resolution VII.19), including by establishing cooperative mechanisms for the management of transboundary shared wetlands and hydrological basins;
28. URGES Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and global and regional partners to continue supporting Ramsar regional initiatives and applying the *Operational Guidelines 2016-2018 for regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands* (approved through Resolution XII.xx *Regional initiatives 2016-2018 in the framework of the Ramsar Convention*) to foster increased national- and regional-level political engagement and implementation of the Convention;
29. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to regularly report on progress on implementing Resolution XI.6 on *Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions* to the Standing Committee;
30. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue working to strengthen collaboration with UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNECE and other Regional Economic Commissions of the UN, the World Bank, WHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), FAO, GEF and others, and report on progress to the Standing Committee on a regular basis;
31. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with UNEP on the implementation of their memorandum of understanding and report to the Standing Committee on the progress of the activities concerned;
32. RECOGNIZES that the Ramsar Convention is a biodiversity Convention as well as a water Convention which contributes to the implementation of sustainable development through the wise use of wetlands;
33. REQUESTS that the Secretariat, under the Joint Work Plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention, continue their cooperative partnership to

promote awareness of, and capacity-building for, ecosystem-based solutions for water management as a contribution to sustainable development in line with CBD Decision XI/23.

34. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to implement the *Conceptual Framework for the wise use of wetlands* (Resolution IX.1 Annex A) the *Integrated Framework for the Convention's water-related guidance* (Resolution IX.1 Annex C) and Resolution XI.21 *Wetlands and sustainable development*, and INVITES the Convention's partners and other interested stakeholders to support implementation of these resolutions as well;
35. REQUESTS Contracting Parties to contribute to implementing the CBD's Aichi Targets.
36. ENCOURAGES Parties and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to integrate wetland management plans into integrated water resources management plans and efficiency plans at basin level, as well as into spatial planning/land-use plans;
37. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the Parties and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to communicate on wetland values 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;
38. NOTES the references to wetlands contained in the proposals of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and URGES Contracting Parties to include, under their own national targets, priorities for management, restoration and repair of wetlands in line with sustainable development; and
39. RECOGNIZES the collaboration between the Secretariat and IUCN and the progress made to evaluate the work already achieved, and URGES the Secretariat to update all agreements and guidelines with IUCN in cooperation with the Management Working Group and in line with Resolution IX.24 on *Improving management of the Ramsar Convention*; and ENCOURAGES them to collaborate further to continue to enhance the implementation of the Convention.