Ramsar Secretary General, Martha Rojas Urrego, represented the Ramsar Convention at the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development held in New York, United States, from 9 July to 18 July 2018.

The High-level Political Forum is the United Nations’ central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It provides for the full and effective participation of all Member States of the United Nations and specialized agencies. The theme of the meeting was: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

The HLPF reviewed progress towards the SDGS and focused in particular on: Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 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; Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, that will be considered each year.

Wetlands and SDG 6


In her intervention she stressed the role of wetlands and
“and quality” said the Secretary General during her intervention on SDG 6 on water and other water-related ecosystems in the achievement of SDG 6, stating “global progress on water and sanitation cannot be achieved without healthy ecosystems such as wetlands. They are key for water supply, quantity and quality. The world is not on track to achieve the global SDG 6 targets by 2030, as states the report from UN Water. Wetland degradation is one of key reasons. Implementation of MEAs such as the Ramsar Convention is a ready platform for countries from which to achieve SDG 6 on water.”

Wetlands and SDG 15

The Secretary General made an intervention at the “Thematic review of SDG 15 -to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

SDG 15 refers to terrestrial ecosystems, forests, desertification and biodiversity, but it encompasses all types of land-based ecosystems and biodiversity.

In her intervention, she said, “target 15.1.1 refers explicitly to terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, and specifies ‘forests’, ‘mountains’, ‘drylands’ and ‘wetlands’. However, inland water ecosystems and more broadly ‘wetlands’ are not featured prominently in discussions on SDG 15. This key connection needs to be made with SDG 15 as wetlands are key to achieve the biodiversity ambition. 40% of wetlands have been lost over the last 40 years, while 81% of populations of freshwater species have declined globally. Promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands is part of our common agenda to halt biodiversity loss”.

Contribution of the biodiversity-related conventions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals

At a reception co-organized by the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions “Living planet - the foundation of sustainable development” the Secretary General highlighted the relevance of wetlands for SDGs in particular 6, 14 and 15 and the importance to make interlinkages across SDGs and the relevance of the Biodiversity Conventions such the Ramsar Convention to achieve SDGs.

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