

## Meeting of the 5th Strategic Plan (SP5) Working Group

Monday 19 March 2024, 13.00 – 15:15 CET (by videoconference)

### Participants

- Working Group members: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Switzerland, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia, STRP, WWT.
- Observer: BirdLife International
- Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General
- Consultant: Rob McInnes and team members

### Minutes

1. The Co-Chair, Elena Sanchez McAuley, the National Focal Point for Canada, opened the meeting, welcomed participants and indicated she would be chairing the meeting. She acknowledged Co-Chair Luiz Eduardo Andrade de Souza of Brazil who would be assisting in leading the meeting. Ms. Sanchez McAuley shared with Working Group members that effective 25 March that Canada would have a new National Focal Point, ZuZu Gadallah, and that Ms. Gadallah would serve as the Co-Chair of the Working Group with Mr. Andrade de Souza.
2. The Consultant (Rob McInnes) was invited to provide an overview of the Phase II Report which has been published on the Strategic Plan webpage on the Convention website. The consultant's presentation can be found [here](#).
3. The Chair of the STRP, Hugh Robertson, was invited to provide an overview of the STRP's review of the zero draft of the 5th Strategic Plan. The Chair of the STRP reported that the STRP was of the view that there are several open questions for further review including whether the proposed structure and theory of change were fit for purpose and the appropriateness of the targets and indicators.
4. Specific recommendations from the STRP include; a) a more streamlined approach - clear and aspirational targets to enhance SP5 impact, b) clarifying the role of Convention in implementation of the KM GBF for inland waters and coastal wetlands, c) reconsidering how strategic pathways to achieve the goals of the Convention are presented; d) establishing measurable targets for wetland loss and degradation, on a regional basis where necessary, e) strengthen wise use components, including through measurable targets for wise use; f) emphasizing Wetlands of International Importance as a core 'goal', and g) Including targets relating to the conservation of wetland-dependent species. The STRP Chair noted that the STRP's comments had been made on the online document.
5. The Co-Chair (Canada) reminded Working Group members of the Group's mandate and that the next step in the work of the Group was to prepare a draft of the 5th Strategic Plan for review and consideration by SC63. She reminded members that the zero draft document had been shared with Working Group members on 23 February 2024 and thanked Working Group members who had made online comments. The Chair proposed to go through the draft document beginning with

Section A to provide members the opportunity to provide further comments and express their views on the draft document.

6. The consultant introduced Section A (Background) as setting the scene for the plan noting that the online comments to this section were mostly general and could be addressed throughout the document. A question was raised about process for consultation of the draft with the Co-Chair (Brazil) responding and reminding Working Group members that members had received the draft via email on 23 February 2024 with the invitation to make comments, and that as this meeting was the first time the draft is being discussed collectively as a Group, that it should be treated as a first reading of a zero draft of the document. He reminded members of the timeline and expressed that he hoped progress on reaching consensus could be made during today's meeting, while recalling that countries would have an opportunity to revisit this document once it is formally introduced in SC63 and that as a first reading exercise it would be useful to identify potential areas of convergence and divergence amongst members. Several members expressed concerns with the current draft noting agreement with some of the STRP comments including the lack of emphasis and clarity of the wise use concept, alignment with global goals and targets and the need for more time for both internal consultations and consultation amongst Parties. A member expressed their view that goals and targets in the 5th Strategic Plan should be aligned with those in the 4th Strategic Plan and that the current draft would lack continuity with some elements from the 4th Strategic Plan and that targets should be timebound.
7. Brazil as Co-Chair noted that the consultant and the Co-Chairs are seeking to have the new Strategic Plan be easier to understand and more accessible to different audiences to increase visibility of the Convention and that the review of the 4th Strategic Plan showed that there were a number of targets and indicators that lacked clarity and were considered by many to lack utility for countries at the national level. He expressed, while there is not an intent to build the new Strategic Plan from scratch, there is a desire to take a fresh approach that will increase the utility and value of the new plan for Parties. Members were invited to provide proposed text to Section A in writing on the online document.
8. The Co-Chair (Canada) invited members to comment on Section B (Purpose) noting that a number of Parties had provided online comments. Members made specific suggestions to text on matters including reference to wetland dependent communities and the mandates of other MEAs and indicated that they would provide those comments in writing to the online document.
9. The Co-Chair (Canada) invited members to comment on Section C (Relationship with the Global Agenda) noting that a number of Parties had made online comments. Members made specific suggestions to text on matters including references to MEA mandates, different national capacities and circumstances, a more nuanced approach to synergies, how progress on targets in other global processes are referenced and indicated that they would provide those comments in writing to the online document.
10. The Co-Chair (Canada) informed members that no written comments had been received on Section D (Theory of transformative change) and invited comments. One member provided views on the importance of the Plan in facilitating transformative change within the Convention with members agreeing that further discussion on this would be useful.

11. The Co-Chair (Canada) invited members to Comment on Section E (Mission and Vision) noting several comments on the reference to the wise use of wetlands had been made in writing. There were no further comments made by members on this section.
12. The Co-Chair (Canada) noted that there was ten minutes remaining in the meeting and proposed that the remainder of the time be used to discuss next steps. The Co-Chair proposed that the consultant update the zero draft version of the 5th Strategic Plan to reflect the written comments received to date and the comments on Sections A through E made during the meeting. This updated report would be annexed to the Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group to SC63. There was support for this proposal with the request that Working Group members be allowed to continue to provide written comments on Sections F and G through 12 April. The Co-Chair suggested that a meeting of the Group be scheduled in advance of SC63 to further discussion on the draft Plan and that the Co-Chairs would meet with the Secretariat to refine details for the preparation and submission of the Report to SC63 and the next meeting of the Working Group. A member expressed that it would be beneficial to discuss the framing of goals and targets at a higher level during the next meeting rather than work through the text line by line.

### Action Items

- As this meeting was the first time members had the opportunity to discuss the zero draft document, the zero draft will remain available at this [link](#). Working Group members are invited to consider further comments and provide these in the document no later than **12 April 2024** to contribute to discussions at the next Working Group meeting.
- The Co-Chairs will prepare the draft Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group to SC63 which will be shared with Working Group members the first week of April for comments.
- The consultant with the support of the Co-Chairs will update Sections A through E of the zero draft document to reflect comments where there seems to be areas of convergence during the first reading of the draft, while noting that members of the Working Group may not have had sufficient time to prepare written comments and may wish to do so and revisit those sections once those comments are provided. This updated zero draft document will be annexed to the Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group to SC63, which will provide an overview of the process for developing the Plan to date, along with a revised workplan. The zero draft will be presented as a draft prepared by the consultant based on the suggestions and inputs shared throughout the meetings of the Strategic Plan Working Group held in 2023 and in the first quarter of 2024 and the written comments received prior to the March meeting of the Working Group.
- The next meeting of the Working Group will be on **18 April 2024** to discuss the framing of the goals and targets and, if time allows, proceed with discussing detailed wording.