

Proposed draft resolution on education and participation as a basis for the management of urban and peri-urban wetlands

Submitted by Colombia

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached draft resolution for consideration by the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Secretariat cover note

The draft resolution introduces a new resolution on education and participation for the management of urban and peri-urban wetlands.

The Secretariat notes that paragraphs 24 to 29 may conflict with earlier resolutions that prioritized traditional wetland conservation approaches, without a strong emphasis on education or urban wetlands. These paragraphs could benefit from specifically including “urban and peri-urban wetlands”, hence aligning them more closely with the draft resolution’s objectives.

Additionally, the draft resolution could benefit from recognizing the Convention’s Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) scheme in its preambular section. This recognition would underscore how the resolution complements the implementation of WCA as it aims to benefit from the role of local and regional governments in managing wetlands within their jurisdictions. Acknowledging the WCA could encourage support for the resolution’s aims in accredited cities and promote constructive collaboration in advancing the Convention’s goals at the local level.

Introduction

Background/contextual information for the Standing Committee

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia has prepared this proposed resolution, taking into account that the management of urban and peri-urban wetlands represents a critical challenge, mainly owing to the accelerated growth of cities and to climate change. Wetlands are key ecosystems for their ecological, social and economic functions, which are facing increasing threats due to uncontrolled urbanisation and pressure on natural resources. Urban and peri-urban wetlands provide people with many important ecosystem services, while it has been shown that urban green spaces, especially wetlands, contribute to people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, as does the important management of urban and peri-urban wetlands under a regulatory framework aligned with international Ramsar guidelines, highlighting education and community participation as central to their management. This approach seeks not only to protect biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of urban activities, but also to foster social ownership of these spaces through inclusive, collaborative processes based on local knowledge.

Financial implications of implementation

No potential impact is foreseen on the workload of the Secretariat and on the core or supplementary budgets of the Convention in the implementation of the proposed Resolution.

Paragraph (number and key part of text)	Action	Core budget cost (CHF)	Non-core budget cost (CHF)

Draft resolution XV

Education and participation as a basis for the management of urban and peri-urban wetlands

1. RECALLING the commitments of the Contracting Parties under Article 3.1 of the Convention on Wetlands to achieve as far as possible the wise use of all wetlands in their territory and to maintain the ecological character of sites included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention;
2. AWARE that since prehistoric times human settlements have been associated with wetlands, and dependent upon them for food production, water supply, commerce and defence, among other things;
3. RECALLING that at its 11th meeting the Conference of the Contracting Parties, through Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* defined “urban wetlands” as wetlands within the boundaries of cities, towns and other conurbations and “peri-urban wetlands” as wetlands adjoining an urban area between its suburbs and rural areas; and AWARE that many other wetlands around urban centres are linked, and/or hydrologically related, to urban settlements;
4. FURTHER RECALLING that at its 10th meeting (COP10) the Conference of the Contracting Parties, through Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization* recognized the important role that urban and peri-urban wetlands can play in communication, education, participation, and awareness of urban communities on wetlands, and the value of establishing educational and visitor centres in these locations;
5. RECOGNIZING that the global extent of wetlands declined by 64-71% in the 20th century and that wetland loss and degradation continue across the world;
6. CONCERNED that the loss of natural wetlands continues into the 21st century, noting that wetlands, including river systems, continue to be fragmented and degraded and that ecosystems of particular importance for the services they provide continue to decline;
7. AWARE that advancing urbanisation processes are affecting wetlands, including urban and peri-urban wetlands that have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance, which are increasingly urbanised and under pressure from high land values in cities, with a consequent increase in the risk of their loss;
8. RECOGNIZING the competence of local governments, including municipalities, to involve wetland management in planning to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands in urban and peri-urban areas under their jurisdiction;
9. NOTING that due to the dynamics of cities, wetlands are immersed in a matrix of urbanization which affects their function, reducing the provision of ecosystem services such as water supply, food supply and habitat for fauna and flora species, among others;
10. AWARE that education should be the basis for the management of urban and peri-urban wetlands as a guiding principle for the management and appropriation of these ecosystems, in order to maintain their ecological and cultural functions, within the framework of wise use;

11. RECOGNIZING that the involvement of different stakeholders in the formulation of management plans should be based on participatory processes, especially involving the communities that inhabit these ecosystems, identifying them as key stakeholders in wetland conservation;
12. CONSIDERING that international cooperation, especially in border cities, should promote transboundary collaboration for the protection of shared wetlands;
13. CONVINCED that urban communities have made great efforts in community organisation, participation and monitoring, generating important opportunities for building local knowledge that plays an important role in decisions on the management and protection of wetlands in cities;
14. CONSIDERING that communities living in urban environments have developed joint management processes in urban wetlands that have allowed the development of participatory and ownership actions that have become true examples of the effectiveness of management measures established by the Convention on Wetlands, contributing to the sustainability of these processes;
15. RECOGNIZING the contribution of the private sector in promoting and financing actions aimed at the conservation and restoration of wetlands and strengthening of wetland communities, contributing to and complementing public actions for the integrated management of wetlands in urban and peri-urban areas; and CONCERNED that inadequate and unsustainable management of wetlands can undermine the resilience of cities to natural disasters, such as floods, tsunamis and earthquakes, and limit their subsequent recovery;
16. EMPHASISING that in order to ensure the prosperity of future generations and the maintenance of wetlands, their biodiversity and the services they provide to people, it is essential that society adopts a more sustainable approach to urbanisation, based on the recognition of the need to protect the natural resource base on which urban areas are built;
17. RECOGNISING that urban and peri-urban wetlands provide a range of ecosystem services, including providing food, improving water quality and sustaining drinking water supplies, assisting in water security, and mitigating natural hazards through the regulation of flooding and reduction of storm surges; and ALSO RECOGNISING that access to urban green space can make a positive contribution to people's physical and mental wellbeing;
18. NOTING Decision IX/28 adopted in 2008 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at its ninth meeting (COP9) on *Promoting the participation of cities and local authorities*, which recognizes that the world's population is rapidly urbanizing and that water supply is important for cities, and urges Parties and other governments to protect the biological diversity and ecosystem services provided by urban and peri-urban wetlands under their jurisdiction; and
19. WELCOMING the outcome of COP16 of the CBD, which seeks to expand its collaborative and coordinated efforts to achieve the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of urban and peri-urban wetlands;

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20. URGES Contracting Parties and other governments to involve education and participation processes in the appropriate management of urban and peri-urban wetlands and to further

disseminate them to other stakeholders (including through translation into local languages), and to seek to ensure their appropriate adoption by the sectors and levels of government responsible for the planning and management of these ecosystems;

21. URGES Contracting Parties to continue to promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands which are affected by urban development activities and initiatives, and to integrate this approach in the basic principles for the achievement of sustainable urban development objectives;
22. RECOGNIZES that urban development should be planned and managed in a sustainable manner and INVITES Contracting Parties and other relevant organizations to enhance education, participation and ownership for the appropriate management of wetlands, based on their importance as providers of benefits to urban populations;
23. URGES Contracting Parties to actively promote the dissemination of information on the importance of urban wetlands as habitats for biodiversity, water regulation, carbon storage and recreation, and RECOMMENDS that this be widely disseminated, in order to raise awareness of the potential of wetlands and wetland management as important elements in the management of the urban environment;
24. INVITES Contracting Parties to promote the integration of wetland management education plans to include wetland content in school, university and non-formal education programmes, as well as to develop educational guides and resources aligned with the Convention on Wetlands;
25. URGES the Contracting Parties to encourage the establishment of interpretation centres, classrooms for environmental teaching, and ecotourism, aimed at creating learning spaces in wetlands, showing their ecological and cultural value and offering interactive activities such as guided tours, workshops and talks, along with an administrative and financial system that guarantees their sustainability;
26. RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties promote capacity-building processes for communities and decision-makers as a basis for providing training for local leaders, authorities and community groups on sustainable wetland management;
27. INVITES Contracting Parties to actively promote participatory research processes as a basis for fostering collaboration between scientists, students and communities, to monitor wetlands and collect data on their status, as well as their links with citizen science programmes, scientific vocations, and basic and applied research programmes;
28. URGES Contracting Parties to include inclusive governance processes to create citizen participation platforms that involve all stakeholders (communities, local governments, NGOs and the private sector), and to guarantee free, prior and informed consultation in decisions that impact on wetlands;
29. INVITES Contracting Parties to foster community action processes to promote activities such as wetland clean-up, ecological restoration and community-based monitoring;
30. INVITES Contracting Parties to promote spaces for public-private collaboration, enabling the inclusion of the productive sector in the financing of projects and the generation and analysis of information for decision-making, and URGES the promotion of cleaner production processes

that allow the productive sector to reduce environmental impacts on urban and peri-urban wetlands;

31. URGES Contracting Parties to formulate collaborative management plans as a basis for developing and implementing participatory management plans, with an emphasis on sustainable practices and the protection of ecosystem services, and RECOMMENDS that public policies and laws be formulated as a basis for promoting local and national regulations that support the conservation and sustainable use of urban wetlands, and for promoting incentives for the responsible management of these ecosystems;
32. INVITES Contracting Parties to undertake processes for the celebration of key events and days such as World Wetlands Day (2 February), promoting educational and recreational activities to raise awareness of urban and peri-urban wetlands;
33. FURTHER INVITES Contracting Parties to generate mass communication campaigns (radio, television, social media) and educational materials on relevant issues related to education, participation, maintenance, enhancement and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands;
34. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to strengthen collaborative initiatives with the CBD and other urban development stakeholders to promote projects aimed at developing demonstration sites that benefit local communities while encouraging the wise use of wetlands;
35. ALSO REQUESTS that the Convention consider the creation of funds for the establishment of interpretation centres and classrooms for environmental teaching, in order to consolidate them as learning spaces in wetlands and to promote the mission of the Convention; and
36. RECOMMENDS that Contracting Parties recognise the important role of local and regional governments in the management of wetlands within their jurisdictions, considering education and participation as essential for the sustainable management of urban wetlands, in line with the principles of the Convention, and value urban wetlands not only as natural spaces, but also as social, cultural and economic assets which are essential for the sustainable development of humankind.