



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

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

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 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;
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. APPRECIATING the results achieved by the Standing Committee in addressing 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 through *inter alia* the source book;
14. ACKNOWLEDGING existing efforts to establish synergies with other MEAs, *inter alia*, Resolution 5.19 *Encouragement of further joint implementation of AEWA and the Ramsar Convention of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)*;
15. WELCOMING Decision XII/6 by the 12th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to hold workshops to explore ways for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies and improve efficiency among them, without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources of these conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels;
16. 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;
17. NOTING that one possible 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 and with a more general approach towards synergies with other biodiversity related MEAs;
18. RECOGNIZING that wetlands related activities could occur in transboundary as well as municipal areas, Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the Conference of the Parties are also invited to consider including transboundary cooperation as well as "Cities and Wetlands" round tables and/or summits in support of the implementation of wetland conservation activities;

19. RECOGNIZING the role of communities in the wise use of wetlands and the reliance of such communities, particularly in developing countries, on wetlands' natural resources, and the importance of conservation activities and sustainable management undertaken by such communities, URGES Parties to take account of, and where appropriate incorporate traditional and ancestral knowledge, available in their respective countries in implementing the Strategic Plan and encouraging the active participation of such communities in the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands;
20. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention is a biodiversity-related and water-related convention which contributes to the implementation of sustainable development through the wise use of wetlands;
21. RECOGNIZING the ongoing process under the United Nations General Assembly regarding the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals;
22. ANTICIPATING that some of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and their targets, if and when adopted, may be directly relevant to wetlands;
23. RECALLING that a number of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) played a significant role in the inception of the Convention, and AWARE that these and an increasing number of other INGOs and intergovernmental organizations are contributing to, or have the potential to contribute to, the development and implementation of the Convention's mission at local, national and global scales;
24. ALSO RECALLING that in Resolution VII.3 *Partnerships with International Organizations*, the Contracting Parties established rules for conferring the status of International Organization Partner of the Convention, and conferred this status on BirdLife International, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Wetlands International, and WWF, and that in Resolution IX.16, the Parties recognized the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) as the fifth International Organization Partner; and
25. NOTING that the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) has applied for International Organization Partner status and meets the criteria established by the rules in Resolution VII.3;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Concerning accommodation of UN languages:

26. REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop a strategy to be presented at SC51 and REQUESTS the Standing Committee to monitor progress and advise as necessary, subject to the availability of resources, outlining the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention, which:
 - a. Classifies the language needs of the Convention according to the short-, medium- and long-term work of the Convention;
 - b. Identifies barriers to effective translation, publishing and interpreting of the three official languages of the Convention, and actions needed to overcome them including identification of additional resource needs and sources to accommodate inclusion of additional languages;

- c. Proposes ways forward to engage relevant Contracting Parties in finding a step by step integration and financing of translations at meetings, of meeting documents and as appropriate of important Ramsar information documents into additional languages;
 - d. Proposes a potential timeline for phased integration of procedural changes, key indicators, and milestones for any UN languages added;
 - e. Prepare a draft text for a Resolution addressing accommodation of the Arabic Language into the Convention, outlining in detail the financial implications, including any implications for the core budget, of further phased integration of existing Convention languages in line with the scale of existing resources, and options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention subject to the availability of resources;
27. 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 extra-budgetary funding, capacity and outputs and address potential resulting impacts on funding for other budgetary items in order to accommodate any new language(s);
 28. INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee, through the Management Working Group, to monitor the progress made in the drafting of the strategy pertaining to a phased approach to language integration, including efforts to fully integrate Spanish and French into the work of the Convention, in accordance with COP decisions;
 29. ALSO REQUESTS the Standing Committee to submit a report and its recommendations to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, containing the strategy with a view to address accommodation of the Arabic language into the Convention supported by a financial mechanism and options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention subject to the availability of resources;
 30. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to provide translation of the most important Ramsar information documents into their own official languages and to make the translation publicly accessible on the Ramsar website;
 31. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, with the assistance of Contracting Parties and Regional Centres and guided by the Management Working Group, to build up an online library of official and non-official government translated Ramsar documents to be publicly accessible, and report the status of progress to COP13, and REQUESTS Parties to provide such documents to the Secretariat;

Concerning visibility and stature, and increasing synergies:

32. INVITES all Parties which are considering hosting meetings of the COP to consider including a high-level ministerial segment during 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, and taking into account other possible events in the concurrent international biodiversity agenda in order to enhance cooperation and collaboration with other biodiversity related MEAs;

33. REQUESTS the Secretariat to consult MEAs about their experiences in hosting high-level ministerial segments, so as to identify possible ways to utilize such opportunities to improve the visibility, political support and impact of the Convention;
34. INVITES Parties to work to raise the visibility of the Convention at the national, local, sub-national, and regional levels, *inter alia* through inviting ministers for roundtables or at conferences as keynote speakers;
35. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to explore other means to increase the visibility of the Convention;

Concerning improvement of synergies:

36. TAKES NOTE OF the recommendations in the UNEP report “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” and its results, through *inter alia* the Sourcebook, to promote synergies within the cluster of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements;
37. ENCOURAGES all Ramsar National Focal Points to increase their efforts to coordinate with their national counterpart Focal Points of other Conventions and relevant international agreements, 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;
38. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to activate and develop networking mechanisms, such as 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) and World Bank, to enhance the wise use of wetlands;
39. REQUESTS Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to continue to implement the Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (Resolution VII.19);
40. 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.8 *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;
41. REQUESTS the Secretary General to report to 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, as they relate to wetlands;
42. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to report annually on progress on implementing Resolution XI.6 on *Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions* to the Standing Committee;

43. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to continue working to strengthen collaboration with IUCN World Heritage Outlook, UNEP, UNEP-GRID, UNDP, UNESCO, Regional Economic Commissions of the UN, the World Bank, WHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), FAO, GEF, Intergovernmental 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;
44. ALSO REQUESTS the Secretariat 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, including:
 - a. To increase cooperation, coordination and attention to synergies in the exploration of reporting systems, including future online reporting systems and indicators, as a means to increase synergies in national reporting under the biodiversity-related conventions;
 - b. To consider ways and means to increase cooperation on outreach and communication strategies;
 - c. Options for enhanced cooperation with regard to work on cross-cutting issues;
45. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with UNEP on the implementation of their memorandum of cooperation and report to the Standing Committee on the progress of the activities concerned;
46. REQUESTS the Secretary General and the Standing Committee to facilitate the selection of the representatives to participate in the workshops led by the biodiversity convention exploring synergies among the conventions;
47. 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, and consider the possibility of supporting the organization of a side event about the Ramsar Convention at the next COP of the CBD;
48. REQUESTS the Secretariat and STRP to continue the cooperation with IPBES both on requests from Ramsar to IPBES and the use of the outcomes from IPBES in the work of the Convention.
49. REQUESTS the STRP assisted by the Secretariat to establish guidelines for formulation, approval and transmission of requests from Ramsar to IPBES and submit this to the next Conference of the Contracting Parties for adoption, as requested by COP11 in XI.6;
50. ENCOURAGES 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;
51. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to contribute to implementing the CBD's Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to indicate as appropriate, through their national reports, how the actions they undertake for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention contribute to achievement of the Aichi Targets;

52. REQUESTS the STRP, in collaboration with relevant partners, to explore how it might contribute on wetland issues to any eventual monitoring and indicator framework for relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets;
53. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to estimate the costs of options for working with relevant partners (e.g., UNEP-GRID) and for strengthening Parties' access to such data and monitoring tools;
54. 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;
55. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the Parties and other stakeholders 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;
56. 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 and restoration of wetlands in line with sustainable development;
57. 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;
58. REQUESTS, in order to facilitate further collaboration between the Secretariat and IUCN, the Standing Committee to establish at its 50th meeting a mechanism of the Contracting Parties with balanced regional participation that will, taking into account the needs of the Contracting Parties and the Ramsar Secretariat, facilitate discussions between the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN, in order to seek ways of improving the current operations of the Secretariat and enhancing the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, and to provide the Standing Committee with a report on these discussions at its 51st meeting and at each Standing Committee meeting thereafter; and
59. APPROVES the status of International Organization Partner for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).