



13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

“Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”
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Draft resolution on sustainable urbanization, climate change and wetlands

Submitted by the United Arab Emirates

Note from the Secretariat

Following discussion and the tabling of amendments by members, the Standing Committee asked the United Arab Emirates to prepare a revised text taking into consideration the comments made. The present text implements those comments.

1. RECOGNIZING the Convention’s role and mandate to address all issues affecting the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands and RECALLING that Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, which recognizes that the ecological functions and ecosystem services performed by wetlands, including peatlands in all geographical regions, which contribute to human well-being, including of indigenous peoples and local communities, can be seriously degraded if the ecosystem is not managed wisely;
2. RECALLING that Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*, which updated Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, recognizes the potential implications of climate change for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and also calls upon Contracting Parties to manage their wetlands in such a way as to increase their resilience to climate change and extreme weather events and to ensure that climate change responses would not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;
3. RECOGNIZING the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement as the primary multilateral forum on addressing climate change, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the leading international body for assessing the science related to climate change;
4. RECALLING that in its Third, Fourth, and Fifth Assessment Reports, the IPCC concluded that wetlands, especially those located in areas with high construction rates, may undergo significant and irreversible damage from climate change, due to the limited adaptive capacities of wetlands and their susceptibility to associated risks;

5. AWARE that the IPCC will be producing three Special Reports, a refinement to the 2006 IPCC guidelines on national greenhouse gas inventories and a Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), and RECOGNIZING the role and mandate of the IPCC in this process;
6. NOTING that paragraph 11 of Resolution XII.11 refers to Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* (Aichi Target 15): “By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification”;
7. AWARE of Resolution 1/8 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme on *Ecosystem-based adaptation*;
8. AWARE that wetlands can filter pollutants from water that flows through them and reduce the pollutant load on other wetlands downstream;
9. RECOGNIZING the efforts and successes of many Contracting Parties in rehabilitating and restoring degraded wetlands, the benefits of sharing practical methods and experiences and of having knowledge-based best-practice guidance;
10. RECALLING that paragraph 14 in the annex of Resolution 71/256 on *New Urban Agenda*, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), identified the principles of and commitments to ensuring environmental sustainability by promoting clean energy and sustainable use of land and resources in urban developments, by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature, by promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, by building urban resilience, by reducing disaster risks and by mitigating and adapting to climate change;
11. AWARE that effective decision-making to limit the effects of climate change and manage urban development on wetlands can best be supported by a wide range of analytical approaches for evaluating expected risks and benefits, while ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of governance, data sharing and cooperation, ethics, equity, shared values, economic, social and environmental impact assessments, diverse perceptions, environmental awareness and education, and risk management approaches;
12. RECALLING Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands*, which identifies key issues and potential solutions for future sustainable urban and wetland management and planning;
13. RECALLING Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization*, which urges Contracting Parties to pay due attention to the importance of their wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments and review the status of wetlands, as well as requesting that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel prepare guidelines for managing urban and peri-urban wetlands;
14. RECOGNIZING that urban development surrounding wetlands increases the volume and types of pollutants entering wetlands;

15. ACKNOWLEDGING the Ramsar Wetland Cities Accreditation initiative, which can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness and attracting support for the wise use and conservation of wetlands and other sustainable development initiatives; and
16. REAFFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention is the primary multilateral forum on addressing wetland issues;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to prevent activities that have an adverse impact on urban and peri-urban wetlands;
18. URGES greater international and national cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address these negative effects;
19. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, in line with its work plan, consider, in cooperation with interested Contracting Parties and International Organization Partners (IOPs), the following:
 - a. Developing technical guidelines for the design of urban and peri-urban Ramsar Sites using climate scenario, climate modelling, and techniques for analysis of climate change, as well as performing functional assessments of wetlands using hydrogeomorphic methods;
 - b. Developing technical guidelines for constructed urban and peri-urban water treatment wetlands, which would include ensuring water quality and the provision of wildlife habitat based on best available standards for the siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and monitoring of constructed treatment wetlands, and bioremediation;
 - c. Providing the highest quality standard operating procedures (SOPs) for urban and peri-urban development or development adjacent to Ramsar wetlands; and
 - d. Developing guidelines for the wise use and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands and their buffer zones, considering factors related to climate change and ecosystem services;
20. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to consider taking the following actions respecting the planning and management of wetlands:
 - a. Developing and implementing wise-use management plans for urban and peri-urban wetlands and periodically monitoring changes in wetlands; sharing these plans with urban planning authorities; and encouraging the embedding of urban wetland protection and creation goals in municipal and national planning programmes;
 - b. Implementing constructed urban and peri-urban wetland habitat enhancement by integrating treatment systems that use natural processes involving wetland vegetation, soils, and their associated microbial assemblages to improve water quality; undertaking *in situ* and/or *ex situ* bioremediation of wetlands;
 - c. Involving local stakeholders, including government, the private sector, NGOs, research centres, educational institutions, the tourism sector, the heritage sector, indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of urban and peri-urban

wetlands, including the establishment of a formal national urban wetlands stakeholder management committee;

- d. Developing an urban and peri-urban wetlands inventory;
 - e. Conducting impact and vulnerability assessments of urban development and climate change on wetlands; prioritizing wetlands in terms of degree of impact and vulnerability and sharing the results of these studies with urban development decision-makers;
 - f. Establishing action programmes between local governments to mitigate urban development impacts and climate change risks on prioritized wetlands; and
 - g. Developing awareness and education programmes on the protection of urban and peri-urban wetlands, and a plan to promote such programmes among stakeholders;
21. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariats of other environmental multilateral agreements (MEAs), on the impact of urban development and climate change on wetlands; and
22. INVITES the Ramsar Convention Administrative Authorities of Contracting Parties to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other MEAs; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.