CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

48th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

***Supplementary Provisional Agenda Item***

**SC48-32**

**Draft Resolution on Undertaking an inventory of polar and subpolar wetlands**

*Submitted by Finland*

**Action requested:**

* Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Draft Resolution XII.\_\_**

**Undertaking an inventory of polar and subpolar wetlands**

1. CONSIDERING the global importance of the polar and subpolar regions in terms of their seasonally or mostly frozen wetlands, and the biodiversity and their freshwater resources which they support, amongst others;
2. RECALLING that Wetlands, as defined by the Ramsar Convention, are “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres”, and NOTING that according to this definition, various types of wetlands occur in the polar and subpolar regions, including some already designated as Wetlands of International Importance by Contracting Parties;
3. AWARE of the great number, diversity and value of wetland ecosystems in polar and subpolar regions, but CONSCIOUS that much scientific data is still needed about these wetlands, and that their geographic distribution and area coverage, and their biodiversity and other important values, remain relatively poorly assessed and recognized;
4. RECOGNIZING that the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment notes rapid northward shifts of northern tree lines as a result of recent rises in summer temperatures, that the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment of the Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora working group of the Arctic Council (the CAFF) notes declines of some wetland types in the Arctic, and that the Global Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change adopted by Decision IX/16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity on *Biodiversity and climate change* states that Arctic peatlands are vulnerable;
5. RECOGNISING the potential threats generated by current and future developments in the polar and subpolar regions, and the urgent need for increased knowledge of these wetlands, as a means to contribute to their conservation and their wise use; and
6. RECALLING the Memorandum of Cooperation signed at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP11, Bucharest, 2012) between the Ramsar Secretariat and the CAFF;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. REQUESTS that the Ramsar Secretariat, with the support of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the concerned Contracting Parties, undertake an inventory and assessment of polar and subpolar wetlands in cooperation with relevant partners including other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), regional organizations, Ramsar Regional Initiatives and International Organization Partners (IOPs);
2. ALSO REQUESTS that Contracting Parties work with the support of the Secretariat to raise awareness of polar and subpolar wetlands and to consolidate existing knowledge on them for decision making in their conservation and wise use;
3. INVITES the Ramsar Secretariat, building on the existing cooperation agreement with the CAFF, to consider the development and signing of a similar type of agreement with the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat;
4. CALLS on the Ramsar Secretariat to consider synergies with UNFCCC to identify mechanisms and incentives for the conservation and wise use of polar and subpolar wetlands, and further CALLS on the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions to mobilize relevant frameworks such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to improve the conservation and wise use of polar and subpolar wetlands;
5. REQUESTS that the Ramsar Secretariat, relevant Contracting Parties, regional organizations and other partners report to COP13 on the process and the outcomes of the polar and subpolar wetlands inventory promoted by this Resolution.