

World Wetlands Day themes

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to take a decision on the themes proposed for World Wetlands Day 2017 and 2018.

World Wetlands Day

1. The Secretariat presented to the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee (SC51) a list of themes to celebrate World Wetlands Day (WWD) in 2017 and 2018, as in document SC51-15. The list of themes proposed was based on consultations held in 2015 with the International Organization Partners and aligned with international themes communicated by UN organizations, in particular UN-Water.
2. In 2016 the WWD sub-theme “Sustainable Livelihoods” had resonance with the themes for World Water Day 2016: *Water and Jobs*; and for the international Day for Biological Diversity: *Sustaining People and their Livelihoods*. This facilitated collaboration with UN-Water partners and increased outreach, providing incremental access to additional communications channels and audiences.
3. At SC51 the Secretariat proposed a new approach which included maintaining “Wetlands for Our Future” as the umbrella theme for WWD and proposing new sub-themes each year. Maintaining an umbrella theme has the advantage of delivering a consistent message which over time creates clarity, facilitates recognition and helps to build awareness. The Secretariat recommends that “Wetlands For our Future” continues to be the main umbrella theme in 2017 and 2018, with a proposal for review in 2019.
4. The Secretariat reminds SC52 that even though young people have been identified as the primary target audience, and a photo contest has been organized in 2015 and 2016 for this target group, other audiences such as policy makers, wetland practitioners, children or the general public remain a vital audience for WWD.
5. The decision by the Secretariat to focus on young people as the primary target group is based on the findings and recommendations of Futerra Sustainability Communications. In 2013 Futerra undertook an evaluation of WWD outreach to advise the Secretariat on how to improve messaging and generate interest in the celebration of WWD around the world.
6. Star Alliance Biosphere Connections agreed in 2015 and 2016 to offer the main prize for the Youth Photo Contest, a free flight to visit a wetland anywhere in the world. Star Alliance Biosphere Connections has communicated its interest in continuing to support this activity. Star Alliance’s contribution to support global outreach of WWD is a welcome addition to the financing for WWD provided by the Danone Group since 1997.

7. The Secretariat confirms that WWD 2017 outreach materials will be developed and made available to all Parties, with due consideration for their needs. Additionally, building on the success of WWD 2015 and 2016 a youth photo contest will be planned, based on the theme selected by SC52.
8. Whilst SC51 did not make a decision on the themes for 2017 and 2018 the Secretariat took note of the recommendation that any future themes should be aligned to the focus areas of the Convention.
9. The Standing Committee is now invited to make a decision on a list of themes proposed by the Secretariat to celebrate WWD in 2017 and 2018. The list of themes provided is based on consultations with IOPs, other partners and aligned with international themes as communicated by UN organizations as of February 2016.
10. It is worth noting that the first Ramsar Wetland City could be accredited in 2018, so a “Caring for Urban Wetlands” theme for 2019 would help facilitate a global launch of the initiative.

Theme	Rationale / Justification
Wetlands for Our Future: Wetlands and Waste Water	UN water theme 2017
Wetlands for Our Future: Nature-Based Solutions for Water	UN Water theme 2018
Wetlands for Our Future: Sustainable Tourism	UN theme 2017
Wetlands for Our Future: Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction	Proposed by Wetlands International
Wetlands for Our Future: Caring for Urban Wetlands	Proposed by WWF (2019)