

Draft Resolution on urbanization, climate change and sustainable wetlands

Submitted by United Arab Emirates

Action requested

- The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached Draft Resolution for consideration by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Draft Resolution XIII.xx

Urbanization, climate change and sustainable wetlands

1. RECOGNIZING the Ramsar 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 which recognized 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 (2012), which updated Resolution X.24 on Climate Change and Wetlands (2008), recognized the potential implications of climate change for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and also called 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) 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 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (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 lock-in 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 UNFCCC and the IPCC in this process;

6. NOTING that paragraph 11 of Resolution XII.11 Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – 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 (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on ecosystem based adaptation;
8. AWARE that wetlands filter pollutants from water that flows through on its way to receiving lakes, streams and oceans, groundwater and other water bodies;
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 (2016), adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), identified the principles and commitments to ensure 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 that Resolution XI.11 on principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands (2012), which identified key issues and potential solutions for future sustainable urban and wetland management and planning.
13. RECALLING the Resolution X.27 on wetlands and urbanization (2008), which urged 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 the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to prepare guidelines for managing urban and peri-urban wetlands.
14. RECOGNIZING that urban development surrounding wetlands, increase the volume and types of pollutants entering wetlands, whose adverse impacts on these valued resources may be exacerbated by climate change;
15. REAFFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention is the primary multilateral forum on addressing wetland issues;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to regulate the activities that affect wetlands negatively, including the surrounding urban development climate change, effluents, pollution, loss of biodiversity, fragmentation of ecosystems;
17. URGES greater international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address these negative effects;
18. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review panel (STRP), in line with their work plan, to consider, in cooperation with interested Ramsar Contracting Parties and International Organization Partners (IOPs), the following:
 - a. Develop technical guidelines for the design of Ramsar wetlands using climate scenario, climate model, and analysis techniques of climate change as well as performing functional assessments of wetland using hydrogeomorphic methods.
 - b. Develop technical guidelines for constructed treatment wetlands, which would include the provision of water quality and wildlife habitat based on best available standards for the siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and monitoring of constructed treatment wetlands, and bioremediation;
 - c. Provide the highest quality standard operating procedures (SOPs) for urban and peri-urban development in/ or adjacent to Ramsar wetlands;
 - d. Develop 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
19. ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to consider taking the following actions respecting the planning and management of wetlands:
 - a. Develop and implement wise-use management plans for wetlands and periodically monitor changes in wetlands; share these plans with urban planning authorities; and encourage embedding urban wetland protection and creation goals in municipal and national planning programmes.
 - b. Implement constructed wetland habitat enhancement by integrating treatment systems that use natural processes involving wetland vegetation, soils, and their associated microbial assemblages to improve water quality; undertake in situ and/ or ex situ bioremediation of wetlands.
 - c. Involve local stakeholders, including government, private+ sectors, NGOs, research centres, educational institutions, tourism sector, and local communities in the planning and management of urban and peri urban wetlands, including the establishment of a formal urban wetlands stakeholder management committee;
 - d. Develop a wetlands inventory; and

- e. Conduct impact and vulnerability assessments of urban development and climate change on wetlands; prioritise wetlands in terms of degree of impact and vulnerability and share the results of these studies with urban development decision-makers;
 - f. Develop awareness and education programmes on the protection of urban and peri-urban wetlands, and a plan to promote such programmes amongst stakeholders;
20. ALSO ENCOURAGES Ramsar bodies to collaborate with relevant international conventions and organizations including UNFCCC bodies, within their respective mandates, on the impact of urban development and climate change on wetlands;
21. INVITES the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.