

## **Draft resolution on restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity**

*Submitted by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel*

### **Action requested:**

- The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached draft resolution for consideration at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### **Draft Resolution XIII.xx**

#### **Restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity**

1. RECALLING Recommendations 4.1, *Wetland Restoration*, and 6.15, *Restoration of wetlands*, which highlighted the important need for wetland restoration; Resolution VII.17, *Restoration as an element of national planning for wetland conservation and wise use*; and Resolution VIII.16, *Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration*;
2. RECALLING Resolutions VIII.3, *Climate change and wetlands: impacts, adaptation, and mitigation*, and X.24, *Climate change and wetlands*, on the need to minimize degradation, promote restoration, and improve management practices of peatlands and other wetland types which are significant carbon stores or have the ability to sequester carbon, and to encourage the expansion of demonstration sites on peatland restoration and wise use management in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
3. NOTING paragraph 17 of Resolution X.25, *Wetlands and "biofuels"*, encouraging Contracting Parties "to consider the cultivation of biomass on rewetted peatlands (paludiculture)" as an alternative to drained peatland use, and AWARE that since the adoption of this Resolution, the rewetting of peatlands, while maintaining their productive use, has been recognized as a promising option to enhance climate change mitigation;
4. RECALLING paragraph 24 (d) of Resolution XII.11, *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, requesting the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to advise "the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on practical methods for rewetting and restoring peatlands", as well as paragraph 28 of the same requesting the Secretariat, in collaboration with the STRP, International Organization Partners (IOPs) and "other stakeholders, to compile best practices in peatland restoration techniques to support the work of wetland managers and share [this compilation] through the official website of the Ramsar

Convention”, and FURTHER RECALLING paragraph 29 of the same Resolution, encouraging “Ramsar bodies to collaborate with relevant international conventions and organizations, including [bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] (UNFCCC), within their respective mandates, on the relationship between peatlands and climate change”;

5. FURTHER NOTING Decision X/2, *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*, of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in particular its 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”;
6. NOTING that the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC urges Contracting Parties to mitigate climate change and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as soon as possible to keep global warming below 2°C and FURTHER NOTING that peatland restoration could contribute to fulfilling this goal;
7. NOTING also the high number of international studies on the link between GHG emissions and wetland restoration, and the wealth of experience that has been accumulated on the restoration of degraded peatlands, especially for biodiversity conservation and increasingly for reducing GHG emissions;
8. NOTING the significant and recent international recognition of the role of peatlands in carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, as expressed by the high profile given to peatlands in the outcomes of the following international conferences and workshops:
  - a. The *Changshu Declaration on Wetlands* of the 10th INTECOL International Wetlands Conference held in Changshu, China in September 2016, and specifically target 3 of the Declaration: “to ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in line with obligations under international agreements”;
  - b. The international workshop held on Vilm, Germany in September 2016 on *Peatland Conservation and Wise Use in the Context of Climate Change*, as a direct follow-up to Resolution XII.11, that highlighted the close links between research, education and communication, and implementation of and policy on peatland conservation and wise use<sup>1</sup>; and, more specifically, in the context of rewetting activities, stressed the need to consider local stakeholder involvement and agreement, land owner compensation and the adaptation of policy frameworks (for example, to avoid perverse incentives);
  - c. The 2nd international conference on *Renewable resources from wet and rewetted peatlands*<sup>2</sup> held in Greifswald, Germany in September 2017, where progress in the development and use of paludiculture in mitigating and adapting to climate change by rewetting drained organic peatland soils was demonstrated;

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<sup>1</sup> The discussions of the workshop are summarized in a report available at: [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/report\\_peatlands\\_vilm\\_workshop\\_sept\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/report_peatlands_vilm_workshop_sept_2016.pdf) and a Briefing Note produced by Greifswald Mire Center available at: [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/briefing\\_note\\_peatlands\\_vilm\\_workshop\\_sept\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/briefing_note_peatlands_vilm_workshop_sept_2016.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The proceedings of the event can be downloaded at: <http://www.rrr2017.com/doc/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/rrr2017/downloads/RRR2017%20-%20proceedings%20-%20web.pdf>.

- d. The substantial number of side events at the 23d Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) of the UNFCCC in November 2017, which addressed the role of peatlands in climate change mitigation, and the proposal by relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) at that meeting to manifest further cooperation on peatland restoration in a joint declaration to encourage greater synergies and cooperation between MEAs, which is currently being followed up by relevant Conventions, Contracting Parties and international organizations;
9. ALSO NOTING that the Global Peatlands Initiative, which was co-founded by the Ramsar Convention and launched at UNFCCC COP22, is a global effort by leading experts and institutions to save peatlands as the world's largest terrestrial organic carbon stock, and further NOTING the presentation at UNFCCC COP23 of the Initiative's first assessment, entitled *Smoke on Water – Countering global threats from peatland loss and degradation*;
10. NOTING that peatland restoration contributes to the implementation of obligations under different MEAs (Ramsar, CBD, UNFCCC and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)), but also REAFFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention is the primary multilateral forum on addressing wetland issues; and
11. ALSO NOTING that peatland restoration should not occur in isolation, but, as appropriate, as part of wider consideration of water management at landscape scales, as highlighted during the Global Landscapes Forum convened by the UN in December 2017;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognize that peatland restoration can contribute to fulfilling multiple obligations under different MEAs, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, better water regulation, and accordingly, should be promoted as a cost-effective tool with cross-cutting benefits;
13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to conserve existing mires (Resolution VIII.17, *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands*) and other peatland habitats and to restore degraded peatlands in their territory to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to restore biodiversity values;
14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to note and use, as appropriate, the compilation of experiences on peatland restoration and rewetting methods prepared by the STRP and provided as a Ramsar Technical Report [XX]/[INF DOC XIII.xx] to support peatland restoration worldwide;
15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to stimulate the shift from drainage-based peatland agriculture and forestry to paludiculture;
16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure that rewetting and paludiculture can take place where paludiculture is the best land use for climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as biodiversity conservation, taking into account the peatland type, the site's ecological status and the ecological potential after rewetting;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to engage in the Global Peatlands Initiative;

18. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to engage in and to help develop the international joint declaration on climate protection and biodiversity conservation by relevant MEAs (Ramsar, CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD), and to encourage collaboration and synergies among MEAs with respect to peatland conservation and restoration, thereby safeguarding the multiple benefits of peatlands including restored peatlands;
19. URGES Contracting Parties to include peatland restoration as part of Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;
20. REQUESTS the STRP, with respect to its Work Plan, related to the 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024, to further elaborate on the practical experiences from restoration methods for peatland types not yet covered by Ramsar guidance, using for example, the experience with tropical peatlands gained by the Indonesian Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG) and other relevant experiences around the world;
21. FURTHER REQUESTS Contracting Parties to provide information and case studies for inclusion in such guidance, as well as to disseminate outputs and to report progress to COP14; and
22. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider financial and legal incentives to foster peatland restoration and conservation.