

Draft resolution on wetlands in West Asia

Submitted by Iraq

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

1. GREATLY APPRECIATING the generosity of the United Arab Emirates to host the 13th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands which is being held for the first time in West Asia and which can be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of the wetlands in the region, their status as well as the issues and opportunities that they face.
2. RECOGNIZING the range of unique wetland types in West Asia, such as *sabkha* (salt-flats), *khor* (tidal inlets), *oasis* (desert spring or water source).
3. BEARING in mind that bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements between parties to the convention are in place and nothings in this resolution undermines the provisions of those agreements.
4. RECALLING the importance for Contracting Parties to integrate wetland conservation and wise use into the management of their national as well as transboundary river basins, and the maintenance of environmental flows (Res VII.18), as well as to ensure and protect the water requirements of wetlands for present and future generations (Res XII.12).
5. BEARING in mind the great importance of ensuring conservation and wise use of wetlands in West Asia, and then encourages cooperation between countries in the region in this respect;
6. CONCERNED over the degradation and drying of many wetlands, especially those that are shared, due to inter alia such as decreasing rainfall from a changing climate, over-extraction and mismanagement of water resources and the constructions of water control structures and extraction projects.
7. RECOGNIZES AND REITERATES that the lack of water in wetlands is a far-reaching global problem with serious consequences for ecosystems and people's livelihoods, in particular in vulnerable communities that depend on wetlands, and NOTES with concern that this problem

will tend to be aggravated in the future due to the growing demand for water and other natural resources, in addition to potential effects of climate change (Res XII.12).

8. Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/225 on “Combating sand and dust storms”, the decision of the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 31/COP.13 on “Policy Advocacy Framework to combat Sand and Dust Storms” and the resolution of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly 2/21 on “Sand and dust storms” expressing concerns on severity of sand and dust storm impacting also wetlands ecosystems and outlining the need for actions to be taken;
9. ALERTED to the increasing pressure on urban wetlands as well as the loss of natural coastal wetlands due to various reasons including over-control and overuse of water resources.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that share the basins of rivers that flow through West Asia, especially the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and their tributaries, to cooperate to maintain the environmental fresh water flow along the natural river so that the riparian countries are not adversely affected by development activities.
11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in the west Asia Region to consider leveraging existing regional initiatives and commitments within the context of sustainable development to provide water for the environment and thus to strengthen wetland management.
12. Within the slogan "Wetlands for our future" CALL for international support from Contracting Parties, IOPs and relevant organizations, to carry out restoration of their ecosystem services as necessary so that wetlands can continue to benefit the affected people during recovery and into the future.
13. ENCOURAGE greater cooperation amongst Contracting Parties, World Heritage convention, IOPs and related organizations to promote awareness of the importance of the region’s wetlands and make practical efforts for their conservation and wise use, including exchange of experience and expertise, training, joint study.
14. CALL upon Ramsar Regional Center – Central and West Asia (RRC-CWA) to follow up the provisions of this resolution, in the framework of its mandate and report to Ramsar Conference of the Parties.