

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

Wetlands in West Asia

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), *khors* (tidal inlets), *oasis* (desert spring or water source), ~~*wadi* (dry riverbed that contains water only during times of heavy rain);~~
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. ~~APPRECIATING~~ BEARING in mind the increasinggreat importance of ensuring conservation and wise use of wetlands in West Asia, and then encourages cooperation between countries in the I.R. Iran and Iraq to conserve and ensure the wise use of the Hawizeh Marsh and the Haur Al-Azim that forms part of the Mesopotamian Marshes; 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 ~~(including aquifers)~~ resources and ~~to the construction~~ 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, ~~thein addition to potential~~ effects of climate change (Res XII.12) ~~and upstream water control and extraction projects;~~.
- ~~7. ALSO CONCERNED over the increasing frequency and severity of sand and dust storms across the region that is impacting social and economic life;~~
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 ~~due to raid development~~ as well as the loss of natural coastal wetlands ~~from reclamation projects;due to various reasons including over-control and overuse of water resources.~~

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. ~~STRONGLY ENCOURAGE~~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 ~~downstream users~~the riparian countries are not adversely affected by ~~upstream development~~ activities ~~such as the construction and operation of dams and other water control structures;~~.
11. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties in the west Asia Region to consider ~~using~~leveraging existing regional initiatives and commitments within the context of sustainable development to provide water for the environment and thus to ~~strengthen wetland~~strengthen wetland management;
12. ~~AWARE of~~Within the ~~high cost of conflicts on people and the environment,~~slogan "Wetlands for our future" CALL for international support from Contracting Parties, IOPs and relevant organizations, ~~to review the status of the wetlands in countries after conflict and~~ 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 ~~but not limited to the~~ exchange of experience and expertise, training, ~~survey and monitoring~~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.