

Draft Resolution

Protection, management and restoration of wetlands as ~~and~~ nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis

Submitted by Spain

1. RECALLING

- a. Resolution XI.14 on Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which urges Contracting Parties to maintain or improve the ecological character of wetlands to promote the ability of wetlands to contribute to nature-based climate change adaptation;
- b. Resolution XIII.14 on Promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems, highlighting the value of wetlands as natural carbon sinks
- c. Resolution XII.13 on Wetlands and disaster risk reduction which welcomes initiatives that support the conservation and restoration of coastal wetlands and encourages engagement in such activities;
- d. the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 highlighting the important ecosystem services that wetlands provide, to contribute to food security, healthy living, water quality and supply, water security, disasters risk reduction, adaptation to climate change and biodiversity;
- e. Resolution 031 adopted at the World Conservation Congress in September 2021, in Marseille, on the Implementation of nature-based solutions in the Mediterranean Basin.

2. RECOGNIZING

- a) ~~the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Paris Agreement adopted thereunder,~~ as well as the outcome of the 25th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties;
- b) the final agreement of COP26 of the UNFCCC, known as the Glasgow Climate Pact, which recognized the importance of “protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystem, (...) acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases.”;
- c) UN Member States have decided that nature-based solutions are “actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits” (UNEP/EA.5/Res.5);

- ~~c)~~ ~~the framework for defining Nature-based Solutions (Nbs) adopted at the World Conservation Congress in 2016 by Resolution 6.069 and the IUCN Global Nature-based Solutions adopted in 2020 (WCC 2020-Res-060);~~
- d) the entry into force of the UN Decade for the restoration of ecosystems 2021-2030;
- e) the Global Assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;
- e)f) the process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework adopted by the conference of the parties to the convention on biological diversity (CBD/COP/DEC/14/34);
- g) the IPCC AC6 (Working Group 1, 2 and 3 reports);
- h) 2022 UN Water Development Report on Nature-based Solutions of 2018;
- i) the UNDRR report on words into action nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction of 2021;
- f)j) that the EU Green Deal and its post 2020 Biodiversity strategy, includes a strong EU restoration plan to reverse the degradation of land and sea ecosystems and thereby increase nature resilience to climate change, and that substantial financial support will be dedicated to restoration actions, both within the EU and for neighbouring countries including the Mediterranean Basin;
- ~~g)k)~~ the progress made at the UNFCCC Blue COP 25, through which the role of the ocean and marine-coastal ecosystems was recognized for the first time as essential elements to mitigate the effects of climate change and promote compliance with the NDCs.

3. AWARE that

- a) climate change is already affecting every ~~inhabited~~ region across the globe, with human influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes and that global temperature will continue to increase until at least mid-century under all emission scenarios considered by IPCC;
- b) that wetlands have globally decreased by 35% since 1970 and that the trend of decline has not been effectively stopped (GWO 2018; IPBES 7, 2019), and that this trend will impact the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, the UNFCCC, Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework for 2050;
- c) progress in adaptation planning and implementation has been observed across all sectors and regions, generating multiple benefits. However, adaptation progress is unevenly distributed with observed adaptation gaps;
- d) according to IPCC, adaptation to water-related risks and impacts make up the majority of all documented adaptation;
- e) enhancing natural water retention such as by restoring wetlands can reduce flood risk by storing water and slowing water flow, in most circumstances;
- f) coastal wetlands protect against coastal erosion and flooding associated with storms and sea level rise;
- g) by protecting and restoring wetlands, which are included in the IPCC's internationally recognized guidelines for national GHG emissions and removals, we are safeguarding crucial carbon sinks which can support countries in reaching mitigation targets and that wetlands are a cross-cutting tool for achieving their National determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement;
- h) the Mediterranean Basin is warming 20% faster than the rest of the world with a drop of 15% in the availability of freshwater by 2040 as well as an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events like floods, heatwaves and droughts;
- i) the societal challenges Wetland-based Solutions aim to address (food security, climate change, water security, human health, disaster risks, economic and social development) are particularly acute in the Mediterranean Basin due to recent strong demographic

- developments, tremendous pressure on scarce water resources, and the concentration of economic activities and urban development in coastal regions;
- j) due to the Mediterranean peculiarity, the Mediterranean Contracting Parties and their Ramsar Regional Initiative (MedWet) with its partners have acquired a valuable knowledge and know-how on wetland protection, management and restoration as presented in the Technical Annex;

4. NOTING that

- a. well-preserved and restored wetlands are a prerequisite for biodiversity to thrive in the coming decades and adapt to and mitigate the new conditions imposed by climate change as it has been demonstrated for ~~Mediterranean~~ water bird populations;
- b. the key role played by wetlands in providing crucial ecosystem services and their potential role as nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches], ~~NBS~~, and aware of the need to protect and restore wetlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

5. AFFIRMS the significant value of wetlands conservation and restoration as nature-based solutions ~~NBS~~ [or ecosystem-based approaches], including ecosystem-based approach, providing the “wetland-based solutions”, for facing societal challenges, especially climate-change mitigation and adaptation, water and food security, risk reduction and health;

6. URGES the Contracting Parties to

- a. address simultaneously biodiversity loss, wetland degradation, water abstraction and scarcity and risks associated to climate change as urgent and to pursue policies and projects to conserve and restore wetlands in the coming years;
- b. consider the conservation, sustainable management of wetlands and the restoration of degraded wetlands as long term and most cost-effective nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches], ~~NBS~~ when contemplating measures to regulate carbon emissions, to mitigate climate impacts and reduce vulnerability to climate change, to secure ~~sound~~ sustainable water resources management as well as sustainable food production;
- c. favour the conservation and the restoration of wetlands by promoting ambitious, ecosystem-based and integrated sustainable water management and hydro-morphological restoration measures of the whole connected watersheds;
- d. put in place financial incentives to support the efforts of local stakeholders and their full involvement to sustainably manage, conserve and restore wetlands;
- e. put in place measures that include the polluter pays principle for land and water use that has negative impact on climate and possibilities for climate adaptations;
- f. take nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches] ~~NBS~~ into account under the Ramsar Convention to include them in their NDCs under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, but also in all relevant sectoral policies as approved by the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 (WCC-2020-Res-031);

7. RECOMMENDS that all Contracting Parties promote and implement the following activities: ~~Mediterranean Contracting Parties to support the MedWet initiative in promoting and implementing the following activities:~~

- a) developing a ~~Mediterranean-wide~~ knowledge base on the wetland extent, based on a watershed and river basin approach, and their conservation status in the region as a regional reference base to assess progress and prioritize restoration actions;

- b) calling for more research to provide a knowledge base on carbon fluxes in wetlands including blue carbon and on targeted restoration efforts that would co-benefit biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation;
 - c) identifying, upscaling and replicating existing successful wetland restoration projects based on a nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approach] ~~a NBS approach~~ in the Mediterranean to other sites designated as priority for restoration and organise exchanges of good practices and lessons learnt;
 - d) promoting wetlands restoration capacity building for wetland managers, practitioners, and civil society;
8. REQUESTS the Ramsar Secretariat, in collaboration with MedWet, to establish a community of practice on wetland conservation, protection, management and restoration as a nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approach] ~~NBS~~ for cooperation among regional initiatives and other stakeholders aiming at providing scientific and technical support as well as easing facilitating the access to financial resources for interested Contracting Parties;
9. INSTRUCTS the Ramsar Secretariat to liaise with relevant international conventions and organizations including UNFCCC bodies, within their respective mandates, to promote wetland protection, management and restoration as nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches] ~~NBS~~ for climate change mitigation and adaptation;
10. URGES the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to ~~explore and mobilize~~ liaise, together with other international institutions promoting ecosystem wetland restoration and other nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches], ~~NBS~~, such as the European Union ~~with the forthcoming restoration law, the UNFCCC, the Barcelona Convention, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in the~~ context of their respective mandates and as part of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, to identify a range of financial schemes (i.e. public-private partnerships, payments for ecosystem services, dedicated grants, private sector investments in carbon financing, etc.) to support the urgent large-scale wetland restoration efforts especially in regions most affected by across landscapes that are required to tackle climate change in priority regions such as the Mediterranean;
11. REQUESTS that the STRP, if resources are available, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2022-2025, consider continuing its work on climate change and wetlands, focusing on wetland restoration as a nature-based solution [or ecosystem-based approach] ~~NBS~~ for climate mitigation and adaptation, as a high priority, inter alia by:
- a. undertaking a desktop study of success stories of wetlands as nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches] to address ~~NBS for climate change of the Ramsar Sites of those Contracting Parties that express their interest in participating~~
 - b. developing a technical handbook ~~of on the use of~~ wetland conservation, protection, management and restoration as nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches], to provide ~~accurate, detailed~~ information on the full range of potentially applicable wetland-based solutions ~~(WBS)~~ for climate change mitigation and adaptation ~~benefits; the handbook being built on the desktop study and on the success stories of Ramsar sites.~~

Technical Annex Remains Unchanged from document SC59/2022 Doc.24.1 Rev.1