

Wuhan Declaration¹

We, Ministers, Ministerial-level officials, and Ambassadors of the Contracting Parties, gathered at the high-level segment of the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP14), on 6th November 2022, hereby:

RECOGNIZE that wetlands are one of the key global ecosystems, and their conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use is vital to addressing urgent environmental, social, and economic challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss whilst ensuring health and well-being of humanity and the entire planet;

EXPRESS our deep concern that, despite 2,466 wetlands of international importance currently designated, 43 wetland cities accredited, 19 Ramsar Regional Initiatives launched, and the numerous efforts made at all levels to realize sustained conservation of and continued benefits and services from wetlands since the Convention entered into force 51 years ago, natural wetlands have declined by 35%, resulting in the loss of invaluable ecosystems, and their functions and services, affecting all individuals and communities;

REAFFIRM the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands as the central principles underpinning the Convention, and that urgent implementation of these principles in collaboration with all stakeholders including other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), is critical to halting and reversing biodiversity loss; to mitigating, adapting and building resilience to the negative impacts of climate change; and to delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, for the benefits of current and future generations;

ACKNOWLEDGE that wetland ecosystems are both vulnerable to climate change and at the same time, if sustainably managed, provide nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem-based approaches, as appropriate, to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, to preserve water resources, reduce erosion, prevent flooding and storm surges, thereby sustaining biodiversity, mitigating disaster risks

¹ This Declaration is NOT a negotiated document and is non-legally binding in nature.

and sequestering carbon;

ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties to include wetlands in national sustainable development plans, as well as other national plans, and recognize the benefits that wetlands can provide to national and local economies;

STRESS the importance of Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation with free, prior and informed consent, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and stress the importance of the role of Indigenous Knowledge and their practices in improving the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands;

RECOGNIZE the important role played by civil society and non-governmental stakeholders, including women and youth as well as local communities in the implementation of the Convention;

AFFIRM the importance of transparently and openly mobilizing financial resources from all sources to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and halt and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands in Contracting Parties;

CONSIDER the assessments of the Global Wetland Outlook 2021, the Sixth UNEP Global Environment Outlook, the Fifth CBD Global Biodiversity Outlook, the IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report and the Global and Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services undertaken by IPBES;

THEREFORE DECLARE WITH URGENCY that, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the Convention, strong will and practical actions are needed to promote the conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use of all types of wetlands and to prevent and/or to mitigate the systematic risks arising from the continuing loss and degradation of wetlands worldwide.

To this end, we will endeavor to

1. TAKE appropriate and urgent measures to achieve the goal of halting and reversing the loss of wetlands globally;

2. MOBILIZE more resources from all sources to strengthen the implementation of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan, while setting the ambitious 5th Ramsar Strategic Plan for impactful actions towards 2030, taking into account the diverse needs of the Contracting Parties;

3. CONSIDER INCORPORATING the conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use of wetlands into domestic legislation, plans or actions to

contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and other relevant MEAs and to promote synergy among these instruments and relevant agencies;

4. ENCOURAGE all Contracting Parties, to define strategic goals and priority areas for conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use of wetlands in partnership with civil society stakeholders, academia and the private sector while ensuring their social and environmental safeguard; and to enhance wetland inventory, monitoring and assessment through innovative technologies;

5. SUPPORT legislation and implementation of wetlands conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use in harmony with the Convention, and make efforts to assess and maintain wetland ecosystem services;

6. UNDERTAKE the assessment and accounting of the natural capital of wetlands and their ecosystem services, including the integration of wetlands valuation into financial frameworks and payments for ecosystem services, as appropriate, with a view to exploring and establishing innovative and diversified investment and financing mechanisms for wetlands conservation, restoration, management, and wise and sustainable use according to national circumstances and priorities;

7. CONSERVE, RESTORE AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGE wetlands in urban and suburban areas, through establishing wetland parks or wetland education centers and promoting the Wetland City Accreditation Scheme as appropriate, so as to build climate-resilient, biodiversity-inclusive and sustainable wetland cities;

8. UNDERTAKE wetlands conservation and restoration to address social, economic and environmental challenges, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, land and water degradation, deforestation, desertification, disaster risks, and risks to human health;

9. ENHANCE the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of wetlands, and do so especially for wetlands that serve as habitats for migratory, threatened and endemic species, and those that play a major role in water cycle as well as encourage priority conservation and management of vulnerable ecosystems such as peatlands, coral reefs and seagrass beds, mangroves, highland wetlands and subterranean wetlands, where applicable;

10. REINFORCE water pollution prevention and control in wetlands by developing sanitation and wastewater treatment services and infrastructures, implementing integrated water management at the river basin level, and promoting

sustainable production and consumption patterns to reduce pollution of wetlands;

11. STRENGTHEN technical cooperation and knowledge sharing among global wetland conservation practitioners through Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the Programme on Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA), and other subsidiary scientific bodies related to MEAs;

12. ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties in line with domestic legislation, to ensure full participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, academia, civil society organizations and the private sector in the conservation, restoration, management, wise and sustainable use of all types of wetlands for the benefits of people and nature.