



13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**“Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018**

Resolution XIII.16

Sustainable urbanization, climate change and wetlands

1. RECOGNIZING the Convention’s role in addressing all issues affecting the maintenance of the ecological character of wetlands; and RECALLING Resolution XII.11 on *Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention*, which recognizes that the ecological functions and ecosystem services of wetlands can be seriously degraded if these ecosystems are not managed wisely;
2. RECALLING that Resolution XI.14 on *Climate change and wetlands: implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*, which updated Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, recognizes the potential implications of climate change for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and also calls upon Contracting Parties to manage their wetlands in such a way as to increase their resilience to climate change and extreme weather events and to ensure that climate.change responses would not lead to serious damage to the ecological character of wetlands;
3. RECOGNIZING the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC as the primary multilateral agreements on addressing climate change, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the leading international body for assessing the science related to climate change;
4. ALSO RECOGNIZING that, in its Third, Fourth, and Fifth Assessment Reports, the IPCC concluded that wetlands, especially those located in areas with high construction rates, may undergo significant and irreversible damage from climate change, due to the limited adaptive capacities of wetlands and their vulnerability to associated risks; and MINDFUL of the IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C;
5. NOTING that paragraph 11 of Resolution XII.11 refers to Decision X/2 adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity on the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* (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. AWARE of Resolution 1/8 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme on *Ecosystem-based adaptation*;

7. AWARE that wetlands can filter pollutants from water that flows through them and reduce the pollutant load on other wetlands downstream;
8. RECOGNIZING the efforts and successes of many Contracting Parties in rehabilitating and restoring degraded wetlands, and the benefits of sharing practical methods and experiences and of having knowledge-based best-practice guidance;
9. NOTING that paragraph 14(c) of the Annex of Resolution 71/256 on *New Urban Agenda* (2016), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, identifies the principles of and commitments to ensuring “environmental sustainability by promoting clean energy and sustainable use of land and resources in urban development, by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature, by promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, by building urban resilience, by reducing disaster risks and by mitigating and adapting to climate change”;
10. AWARE that effective decision-making to limit the effects of climate change and manage urban development on wetlands can best be supported by a wide range of analytical approaches for evaluating expected risks and benefits; while ALSO RECOGNIZING the importance of governance, data sharing and cooperation, ethics, equity, shared values, economic, social and environmental impact assessments, diverse perceptions, environmental awareness and education, and risk management approaches;
11. RECALLING that Resolution XI.11 on *Principles for the planning and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands* identifies key issues and potential solutions for future sustainable urban and wetland management and planning;
12. RECALLING Resolution X.27 on *Wetlands and urbanization*, which urges Contracting Parties to pay due attention to the importance of their wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments and review the state of wetlands, as well as requesting the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to prepare guidelines for managing urban and peri-urban wetlands;
13. RECOGNIZING that urban development surrounding wetlands increases the volume and types of pollutants entering wetlands and may contribute to other changes in ecological character as well as providing wise-use opportunities;
14. RECALLING that Resolution XI.9 on *An Integrated Framework and guidelines for avoiding, mitigating and compensating for wetland losses*, Resolution X.26 on *Wetlands and extractive industries*, Resolution XI.10 on *Wetlands and energy issues*, and Resolution XI.7 on *Tourism, recreation and wetlands* urge Contracting Parties to implement strategic environmental assessments with all related sectors and to conduct long-term monitoring of mitigation and compensation projects, as appropriate, and to modify and re-orient such projects if necessary, to ensure such actions mitigate and compensate for adverse wetland impacts as planned; and
15. ACKNOWLEDGING the Ramsar Wetland Cities Accreditation initiative, which can assist cities, Contracting Parties and stakeholders in promoting awareness and attracting support for the wise use and conservation of wetlands and other sustainable development initiatives;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to prevent activities that may have an adverse impact on urban and peri-urban wetlands;

17. URGES greater international and national cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building to address any negative effects resulting from activities that negatively affect urban and peri-urban wetlands, notably, surrounding urban development, climate change, effluents, pollution and fragmentation of ecosystems;
18. REQUESTS that the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, and working in cooperation with 1) interested Contracting Parties and their accredited wetland cities, and 2) International Organization Partners, consider the following:
 - a. Developing technical guidelines for the design of urban and peri-urban Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) using climate scenario, climate modelling, and climate-change analysis techniques, as well as performing functional assessments of wetlands using hydrogeomorphic methods;
 - b. Developing technical guidelines for constructed urban and peri-urban water-treatment wetlands, which would include ensuring water quality and the provision of wildlife habitat based on best available standards for the siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and monitoring of constructed treatment wetlands, and bioremediation;
 - c. Developing technical guidelines to set limits for the pollutant loads that are discharged into urban wetlands, depending on their pollutant load capacity;
 - d. Providing the highest-quality standard operating procedures for urban and peri-urban development or development adjacent to Ramsar Sites; and
 - e. Developing guidelines for the wise use and management of urban and peri-urban wetlands and their buffer zones, considering factors related to climate change and ecosystem services and functions;
19. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to consider taking the following actions regarding the planning and management of wetlands:
 - a. Developing and implementing management plans for urban and peri-urban wetlands and periodically monitoring changes in wetlands; sharing these plans with urban planning authorities; and encouraging the embedding of urban wetland protection plans and the setting of goals in municipal and national planning programmes;
 - b. Implementing constructed urban and peri-urban wetland habitat enhancement activities, by integrating treatment systems that use biomimetic processes involving native wetland vegetation, soils, and their associated microbial assemblages to improve water quality and enhance carbon sequestration potential and resilience to climate change impacts, and undertaking *in situ* and/or *ex situ* bioremediation of wetlands;
 - c. Involving local stakeholders, including but not limited to national and local governments, private sector companies, non-governmental organizations, research centres, educational institutions, bodies in the tourism and heritage sectors, indigenous peoples and local communities in the planning, protection and management of urban and peri-urban

wetlands, including through the establishment of a formal national urban wetlands stakeholder management committee;

- d. Developing an urban and peri-urban wetlands inventory, and possibly classifying the wetlands included therein;
 - e. Conducting assessments of the vulnerability of urban and peri-urban wetlands to urban development and climate change, and of their potential impact; prioritizing such wetlands in terms of degree of impact and vulnerability and sharing the results of these studies with urban development decision-makers to prompt their utilization;
 - f. Establishing action programmes by local governments to mitigate urban development impacts and climate-change risks and to carry out adaptation activities on prioritized wetlands; and
 - g. Developing awareness and education programmes on the conservation of urban and peri-urban wetlands, and a plan to promote such programmes among stakeholders;
20. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), on the impact of urban development and climate change on wetlands; and
21. INVITES the Ramsar Convention National Focal Points of Contracting Parties to bring this Resolution to the attention of the national focal points of other MEAs; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to promote collaborative work among the national focal points of these MEAs in support of its implementation.