



## 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.21

#### Conservation and management of small wetlands

1. RECALLING the commitments made by Contracting Parties in Article 3.1 of the Convention to promote, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in their territory and, in Article 3.2, to maintain the ecological character of wetlands included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;
2. RECALLING Resolution VII.11 on *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, and the amendments adopted through Resolution XI.8 on *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates*;
3. RECALLING Resolution VII.20 on *Priorities for wetland inventory*, which urges “all Contracting Parties yet to complete comprehensive national inventories of their wetland resources, including, where possible, wetland losses and wetlands with potential for restoration, to give highest priority in the next triennium to the compilation of comprehensive national inventories”, and the Framework for Wetland Inventory as annexed to Resolution VIII.6 on *A Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory*;
4. ALSO RECALLING Resolution XII.14 on *Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands* and Resolution VIII.33 on *Guidance for identifying, sustainably managing and designating temporary pools as Wetlands of International Importance*;
5. FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 5.3 on *The essential character of wetlands and the need for zonation related to wetland reserves*;
6. NOTING that conservation and management of the ecological character of small wetlands can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”, SDG 6, “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, SDG 13, “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy”, SDG 14, “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, and SDG 15, “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”;

7. ALSO NOTING the efforts made by many countries to conserve and manage small wetlands that provide examples of small wetland conservation and management;
8. FURTHER NOTING that small wetlands can contribute significantly to the well-being of people, especially in Small Island Developing States and on other islands;
9. AWARE that “small wetlands” currently do not have a clear definition, and that small wetlands, such as springs, ponds and headwater streams, can occur in the landscape either independently or as part of larger wetland complexes;
10. AWARE that some wetland inventories have not prioritized small wetlands, and that there are major gaps in the understanding of small wetlands and their spatial distribution, their connectivity and their networks around the world;
11. ALSO AWARE that small wetlands, as a consequence of their limited size, can be extremely vulnerable to environmental changes, including climate changes, as well as to human development needs;
12. RECOGNIZING that human settlements, including indigenous communities, villages and towns, are often associated with small wetlands and that they together contribute to important landscape heritage that would benefit from integrated management;
13. RECOGNIZING that small wetlands can play important roles in hydrological cycles at catchment and larger scales, provide critical refuge and breeding sites for many specialized wetland species; and FURTHER RECOGNIZING that small wetlands can often provide the same types of ecosystem and cultural services as larger wetlands; and
14. CONCERNED that small wetlands are increasingly facing development pressures leading to degradation and loss; and ALSO CONCERNED that many of these small wetlands are being lost to the expansion of agriculture including livestock grazing, urban development, and other anthropogenic activities;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to address urgently the significant human-induced pressures that threaten small wetlands, through, as appropriate, promulgation of national and regional policy, and other effective measures, such as water-management planning or spatial planning to prevent further loss of small wetlands;
16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to include small wetlands in their science-based inventories, based on appropriate methodologies, to include them in national wetland strategies, and to integrate their information into national and regional land-use plans, as appropriate;
17. INVITES Contracting Parties to foster the wise use of small wetlands, as a means to advance sustainable development, and to explore ways to find additional funding targeted at the effective management, restoration, and implementation of conservation for small wetlands, as appropriate;
18. INVITES Contracting Parties to assess the hydrological connectivity and quality of small wetlands, as appropriate, to consider them as indicators to provide early warning of the over-exploitation and inadequate management of national or regional water basins and aquifers;

19. INVITES Contracting Parties to designate small wetlands and small wetland complexes that meet the criteria for identifying wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, in an effort to ensure the conservation of their biodiversity, and the maintenance of their ecological, cultural and social values;
20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to ensure, as appropriate, that small wetlands are adequately reflected within communication, education, and public awareness activities, so as to enhance awareness of both decision-makers and the general public;
21. INVITES the Contracting Parties and, as appropriate, the Secretariat to further promote the importance of small wetlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
22. INVITES all Contracting Parties to report on the efforts to conserve small wetlands in their territory and their results, in their Ramsar national reports, as appropriate and according to their capacities; and
23. REQUESTS 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, to consider preparing guidance on the identification of small wetlands, and their multiple values for biodiversity conservation especially in the contexts of landscape management and climate change, and to draw representative examples from each of the Ramsar regions highlighting a range of different legislation, policy and other best-practice approaches to the conservation, management and wise use of these wetlands.