

Consideration of a proposed Draft Resolution from Greece

Action requested. The Standing Committee is requested to determine whether the attached draft Resolution, submitted by Greece after the deadline for such submissions, should be prepared for transmission to COP11.

1. Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, the Standing Committee, and the Conference Committee during the course of each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) are entitled to submit Draft Resolutions for the consideration of and possible adoption by the COP.
2. When proposals for Draft Resolutions are received from Contracting Parties, the staff of the Secretariat consults with the respective Parties in order to ensure that the proposed drafts conform to the formal requirements of such DRs and that the proposed content is neither inconsistent with the Convention, existing decisions of the COP, and other proposed DRs, nor overlapping or redundant.
3. In order to allow time for such consultations with the Parties concerned, the COP Rules of Procedure stipulate that “the deadline for submission of proposals by the Parties . . . normally shall be 60 calendar days prior to the opening of the Standing Committee meeting at which approvals are made for documents for consideration by Contracting Parties at the COP (rule no. 5)”. In the case of the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee, that deadline occurred on 30 August, and the 60-day limit was notified to the Parties by diplomatic notification and other means on several occasions.
4. On 9 September, the Secretariat received from the government of Greece a proposal for a Draft Resolution on the “Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands”, and that proposed draft is appended here as it was received, unedited and without consultations with the proponents.
5. Because the proposal arrived after the formal deadline, the Secretariat requests the Standing Committee to consider the proposal and the circumstances and determine whether or not to approve the proposed DR for finalization through consultations and forwarding to COP11 for the consideration of the Contracting Parties.

Proposal for a Draft Resolution submitted by the government of Greece

Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

REMINDING that 2011 is the 40th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention,

NOTING that the MEDWET initiative has successfully contributed to the protection of Mediterranean wetlands over the past twenty years

AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is the leading tourist destination in the world and its coastal and island ecosystems are facing tremendous pressures, resulting primarily from tourism development;

AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is one of the global biodiversity hotspots and hosts one of the largest groups of islands in the world.

RECALLING the commitments made by the Contracting Parties to achieving the wise use, as far as possible, of all wetlands in their territory;

ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 5.3, which called for the establishment of strict protection measures for Ramsar sites and wetland reserves of small size or particular sensitivity,

ALSO RECALLING Action 5.2.5 of the Convention's Strategic Plan 1997-2002, which stated that Contracting Parties should promote the establishment and implementation of protection measures for such wetlands;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Resolution VII.11) indicates that smaller wetlands should not be overlooked for designation as Wetlands of International Importance and that such wetlands may be especially important in maintaining habitat or ecological community-level biological diversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING the role of island wetlands in protecting small islands against the impacts of climate change and desertification and their critical significance for a variety of threatened and endemic species of flora and fauna and millions of migrating birds;

CONCERNED that island wetlands currently face serious pressures that threaten to undermine their conservation status;

ALSO CONCERNED that the spread of urbanization is leading to the increased urbanisation of wetland areas and, subsequently, to ecosystem fragmentation;

AWARE that the demand for water for human use in islands is increasing,

and

CONCERNED that many island coastal wetlands are already water-stressed because of unsustainable freshwater withdrawals;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to address the significant human-induced pressures threatening island wetlands with irreversible degradation;

ALSO CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to grant clear and efficient legal protection status to a sufficient number of the island wetlands in their territory;

INVITES Contracting Parties to provide the Ramsar Bureau with information on the island wetland ecosystems in their territory;

DIRECTS the Ramsar Bureau to:

- a) advocate the high priority given by the Ramsar Convention in addressing the conservation needs of island wetland ecosystems to the CBD, global trade and transport organizations and other relevant organizations and initiatives, to ensure that the rates of degradation of these fragile water ecosystems are reversed;
- b) bring this Resolution to the attention of other Convention secretariats and international organizations, to ensure cooperation with existing programmes and to initiate new partnerships;
- c) prepare case studies where:
 - island wetlands have been negatively affected by human intervention and invasive species have adversely affected their ecological values and
 - island wetlands have been effectively protected, through particular measures and through their designation as Ramsar sites;

INVITES Contracting Parties to give special attention to ensuring the application of the Convention for island wetland ecosystems, in recognition of their fragility and special management needs.