



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

## **Statement by Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands for World Wetlands Day 2 February 2023**

Wherever land meets water, life abounds. Wetlands exist in every corner of this beautiful planet and are the arteries and veins of the landscape. Majestic and mighty, wetlands are a sight to behold.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on 2nd of February. The commemoration raises awareness and increases people's understanding of the critical importance of wetlands. Wetlands support critical ecosystems and biodiversity. 40 percent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.

Wetlands are rich in nature and vital to human life. They are crucial to agriculture and fisheries. They act as water sources, purifiers and protect our shores. Wetlands are the planet's greatest natural carbon stores.

To date, nearly 90 percent of the world's wetlands have been degraded or lost. We are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. There is an urgency to raise global awareness on wetlands to arrest and reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to restore and conserve these vital ecosystems.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands invites you to join the World Wetlands Day celebrations on 2nd February 2023; it is now recognized by the UN as an "International Day". The theme for the day is 'It's 'Time for Wetland Restoration'. With only seven years left until 2030 for us to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, time is of the essence for sure.

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a great opportunity for all of us to rethink and change how humans impact the environment - and a chance to restore vital ecosystems like wetlands. Through activating all the relevant players from the public to key stakeholders, we're mobilizing an entire generation for wetland restoration.

For World Wetlands Day 2023, we're calling on you to take action in three specific ways:

- Conscious choices to minimize our own impact on wetlands
- Persuasive voices to educate and activate others to get involved in wetland restoration
- Bold actions and taking part in wetland restoration efforts locally

Governments and other stakeholders are critical actors towards ensuring wetland restoration actions are being implemented on the ground. Three actions that can spearhead these restoration efforts include:

- Creating a national inventory of wetlands
- Setting specific targets for wetland restoration
- Promoting wise use and good management practices

Be a part of the solution by influencing change and sharing your stories of conservation and restoration efforts with us from your countries and communities.

Engage with us this World Wetlands Day and follow the celebrations across our social media platforms.