



**COP14**  **2022**

## 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**“Wetlands Action for People and Nature”  
Wuhan, China, and Geneva, Switzerland 5-13 November 2022**

### Conference Report<sup>1</sup>

**Saturday 5 November 2022**

**10:05 – 11:00 Welcome and Opening Ceremony**

#### **Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

1. A cultural performance in Wuhan, China, was followed by the opening ceremony, held across both venues in Wuhan, China, and Geneva, Switzerland.
2. The Ramsar flag was symbolically handed over from the **United Arab Emirates**, host of COP13, to **China**, host of COP14.

#### **Agenda item 2: General statements and keynote addresses**

3. H.E. President Xi Jinping, People’s Republic of China, underscored the significance of preserving water bodies and wetlands, stressing the need to strengthen cooperation, raise awareness, and scale up action. He emphasized the role of wetlands for protecting biodiversity and providing benefits to people, and drew attention to national efforts to promote wetland conservation, including the suggested establishment of an International Mangrove Center.
4. Opening statements were delivered by:
  - H.E. Wang Guanghua, Minister of Natural Resources of the People’s Republic of China, who moderated the opening session;
  - Ms Shen Yueyue, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China;
  - Ms Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, via video;
  - Mr Wang Menghui, Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Hubei Provincial Committee;
  - Mr Bruno Oberle, Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature;
  - Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands; and

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraphs 70 and 241 and Annex 2 were corrected on 8 December 2022, in line with inputs recorded at paragraph 422.

- Ms Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.
5. Youth representatives offered an artistic performance, launching the Wetland Protection Youth Initiative.
  6. Drawing the event to a close, moderator Mr Wang Guanghua urged delegates to share experiences and build consensus, achieving meaningful results to promote global ecological protection and governance.

## **Sunday 6 November 2022**

### **09:05 – 10:15 High-level ministerial segment**

#### **Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

7. Mr Guan Zhi'ou, Administrator, Secretary of the Leading Communist Party of China (CPC) Members Group of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, and member of the Leading CPC Members Group of the Ministry of Natural Resources, China, chaired the session.
8. A video showcasing efforts and initiatives towards wetland conservation in China was screened.

#### **Agenda item 2: High-level ministerial segment**

9. Statements were delivered by:
  - Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands;
  - Mr Zhao Haishan, Vice Governor of Hubei Province, China;
  - Mrs Sandra Patricia Vilardy Quiroga, Vice Minister of Policies and Environmental Standardization, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia;
  - H.E. Shara Duncan Villalobos, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva;
  - Mr Fernando Israel Espinosa Olivera, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva;
  - H.E. Amadeu Paulo Samuel Da Conceição, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva;
  - Mr Nathan Glassey, Deputy Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva;
  - H.E. Anita Pipan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva;
  - H.E. Giuseppe Yoffreda Yorio, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the People's Republic of China;
  - Mr Jean-Yves Roux, Consul General of France in Wuhan;
  - Mr Abderrahim Houmy, Secretary General of the Department of Water and Forests, Morocco;
  - H.E. Mohamed Al Afkham, Director General of Fujairah Municipality, United Arab Emirates.

### Agenda item 3: Briefing on the Wuhan Declaration

10. Mr Chunfeng Wang, Executive Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Center of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, outlined the review process for the Wuhan Declaration, giving thanks to Contracting Parties for their comments, and introduced the Wuhan Declaration, noting it is neither a negotiated document nor is it legally binding. The Wuhan Declaration was adopted.

**Monday 7 November 2022**

**10:30 – 12:10 Plenary session**

### Agenda item 5: Election of the President and Vice-Presidents and remarks by the President

11. Based on proposals made by the Standing Committee, in accordance with Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure, **H.E. Mr Li Chunliang**, Deputy Administrator of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and Director General of the Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office, China, was elected President of COP14, and **Dr Wu Zhimin**, Deputy Director General, Department for Wetland Management, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, was elected Alternate President, both by acclamation.
12. For Vice-Presidents of the meeting, **Ms Jacey Scott** (Canada) had been nominated by the North American region and **Ms Laura Bermudez Wilches** (Colombia) by the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Both were elected by acclamation.
13. The **President** welcomed delegates and wished them a successful meeting, thanking the outgoing President, H.E. Mr Mohamed Al Afkham, Director General Fujairah Municipality (United Arab Emirates), for all his hard work.
14. The **Alternate President** expressed thanks to Switzerland for its role in facilitating the meeting, and wished the delegates a successful, ambitious and practical meeting.

### Agenda item 3: Adoption of the agenda

#### 3.1: Provisional agenda

15. The provisional agenda in document COP14 Doc.3.1 was introduced by the **Alternate President**, acting as **President**, who noted the withdrawal of the draft resolution proposed by Sweden on how to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages (document COP14 Doc.18.7). **Sweden** suggested creating an informal group, led by the Secretariat, for interested Contracting Parties to carry out further discussion.
16. The provisional agenda in document COP14 Doc.3.1 was adopted, noting the withdrawal of Sweden's draft resolution.

### 3.2: Provisional working programme

17. The **Secretariat** introduced the provisional working programme in document COP14 Doc.3.2.2 Rev.1, noting that the Conference Bureau had recommended the inclusion, in that document, of the Bureau meeting that had taken place that morning (Monday 7 November 2022) before the plenary session. The **Secretariat** further noted that the amended working programme would be published on the Convention website upon its adoption.
18. **Czechia, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU)**, stressed the important role of sovereignty in undertaking conservation and restoration work, noted the EU's condemnation of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, drawing attention to the impact on people and the environment, including Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), and demanded that the Russian Federation immediately withdraw and respect international law.
19. **Indonesia**, supported by **Brazil** and the **Russian Federation**, drew attention to the definition of the term "consensus" used in the Rules of Procedure, noting its disagreement with the legal interpretation, provided during the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee, that the term indicates that participants are generally in agreement. Indonesia believed that the term should be interpreted to mean unanimity, and encouraged the Conference of the Parties to accept this definition to be consistent with the use of the term in other international frameworks.
20. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** noted the need for enhanced international cooperation in the sustainable management and utilization of wetlands, as well as the promotion of capacity building and technology transfer for developing countries.
21. The **Russian Federation** cautioned against politicizing the discussion, rejected the intervention made by the EU, and asked that the meeting focus on the mandate and principles of the Convention.
22. Noting the interventions on procedural matters by Brazil, Indonesia and the Russian Federation, and on the suggestion of the President, the **Secretariat** stated that it would work with the Legal Advisor to resolve the definition of "consensus" and provide clarification to the Conference at a later date.
23. The provisional working programme in document COP14 Doc.3.2.2 Rev.1 was adopted.

### Agenda item 4: Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

24. The **Secretariat** introduced the existing Rules of Procedure in document COP14 Doc.4, noting that these had been adopted at COP13 and remained in effect.
25. The existing Rules of Procedure in document COP14 Doc.4.2 were adopted.

### Agenda item 6: Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees

26. The **Secretariat** reported that the Conference Bureau had received the following regional nominations for membership of the Credentials Committee, in accordance with Rule 19:
  - Africa: Zambia;

- Asia: Indonesia;
- Europe: Armenia;
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Panama;
- North America: United States of America; and
- Oceania: Fiji.

27. The Credentials Committee was established by acclamation with membership as listed above.
28. The **President** invited Contracting Parties to establish the Committee on Finance and Budget with the same composition as the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee and open to all Parties as in previous COPs.
29. The Committee on Finance and Budget was established.

#### Agenda item 7: Admission of observers

30. The **Secretariat** introduced document COP14 Doc.7, drawing attention to paragraph 7, which lists bodies or agencies seeking approval to attend COP14 as observers.
31. The organizations listed in paragraph 7 of document COP14 Doc.7 were approved to participate as observers.

#### Agenda item 8: Report of the Chair of the Standing Committee

32. The **Chair of the Standing Committee**, H.E. Mr Mohamed Al Afkham (United Arab Emirates), summarized his report as contained in document COP14 Doc.8, recalling the particular challenges faced by the Committee arising from the COVID-19 crisis, and extended his best wishes to the meeting.
33. The Conference took note of this report, with the **President** acknowledging the work of the Chair of the Standing Committee in advancing the work of the Convention.

#### Agenda item 9: Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention

##### 9.1: Global implementation

34. The **Secretary General** summarized document COP14 Doc.9.1, outlining the status of key indicators and the assessment of progress and implementation of the Convention against the fourth Strategic Plan over the past four years. She drew particular attention to the high rate of submissions of national reports by Contracting Parties, highlighting the importance of the availability of national data to successful implementation.
35. **China** commended the report.
36. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** recalled the financial issues faced by developing Contracting Parties, and called on the Conference to focus on mechanisms to share knowledge and technology amongst Parties.

37. **Colombia** noted the progress made by the Convention despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, and underlined the need to achieve conservation and restoration objectives that contribute to reducing poverty.
38. The **President** encouraged Parties to submit their national reports to the Secretariat, recalling their importance in facilitating the Convention's implementation.
39. The meeting took note of the report contained in document COP14 Doc.9.1.

## 9.2: Work of the Secretariat

40. The **Secretariat** presented a summary of document COP14 Doc.9.2, and drew attention to the following thematic areas of work addressed over the last triennium: strengthening service to Contracting Parties' decision-making and accountability; increasing relevance of wetlands and the Convention to global sustainable development policy objectives; strengthening support and enabling implementation; enhancing the visibility of wetlands and the Convention; and strengthening the Secretariat's efficiency and effectiveness.
41. The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** commended the Convention on its progress, noting that the agricultural sector is reliant on wetlands and can negatively impact them through water use and pollution. It drew attention to the UN 2023 Water Conference, to be hosted in March 2023 in New York, United States of America, and to the Rome Water Dialogue, to be held on 29 November 2022 at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy, which would enable discussions between the wetlands, water and agricultural sectors, to develop and agree on a suite of commitments for future collaboration. It invited interested Parties to join this Dialogue online or in person.
42. **Sweden, speaking as Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel**, thanked the Secretariat for its support to the Panel.
43. The meeting took note of the report contained in document COP14 Doc.9.2.

## Agenda item 10: Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance

44. The **Secretariat** briefly summarized document COP14 Doc.10 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance. Regarding the request in the report to the Conference on providing guidance to Contracting Parties and the Secretariat on how to manage "Ramsar Sites" which are designated in areas not recognized by the UN as being part of the territory of the designating country, the Secretariat requested that interventions on this issue be made during discussions on the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.15 on *the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance*.
45. **Mauritius** made an intervention, and requested that this be recorded in the report of this meeting.<sup>2</sup> Supported by the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, it suggested that consideration of the request of the Secretariat for guidance be deferred to the next Conference of the Contracting Parties.

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1 below.

46. **South Africa** expressed its concern regarding the increase of cases under Article 3.2 of the Convention, and general comments were made by **Colombia**, which noted the need for further monitoring initiatives, and by **China**, which proposed to establish a Ramsar Site Information Sheet and Ramsar Site effectiveness working group.
47. The **President** closed the session at 12:10.

**14:00 – 17:35 Plenary session**

**Agenda item 11: Report on implementation of the CEPA Programme 2016-2024**

48. The **Secretariat** presented document COP14 Doc.11, noting the review of progress in the implementation of the CEPA Programme, as well as the recommendation on the new approach to CEPA implementation, and further noted that the recommendations pertaining to document COP14 Doc.18.10 on the draft resolution on the new CEPA approach would be addressed during the discussions on that agenda item.
49. The Conference took note of the report and approved the recommendations contained in document COP14 Doc.11.

**Agenda item 12: Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)**

50. The **Chair of the STRP**, Dr Guangchun Lei (China), introduced document COP14 Doc.12 which described the activities and progress of the STRP over the past triennium. He noted the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in convening in-person meetings, and highlighted the special edition of the *Global Wetland Outlook*, which had been released on the occasion of the Convention's 50th anniversary.
51. **China** thanked the STRP for its work.
52. The Conference took note of the report of the STRP and approved the recommendations contained in document COP14 Doc.12.

**Agenda item 13: Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

53. The **Secretariat** noted that all relevant issues were reflected in the documents submitted for the current meeting.
54. With no comments from Contracting Parties, the **President** noted that no further action was required under this agenda item.

**Agenda item 14: Secretariat report on administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions**

55. The **Secretariat** presented document COP14 Doc.14, highlighting two distinct categories of financial implications related to additional staff days and estimated cash expenses, and noting

that the projected implications were the best estimates based on the current text of the draft resolutions.

56. The **President** invited Parties to take into account the administrative and financial implications when considering the draft resolutions, including the one on financial and budgetary matters (document COP14 Doc.18.1), and noted that no further action was required under this agenda item.

**Agenda item 15: Financial report for 2019-2021 by the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee, and proposed budget for the 2023-2025 triennium**

57. The **Chair of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee**, Ms Mariana Olivera West (Mexico), introduced document COP14 Doc.15, highlighting its three sections: a summary of the core budget results for 2019-2021 and the approved budget for 2022; the proposed budget for 2023-2025; and the status of assessed contributions. She drew attention to the following points:

- following Decision SC59/2022-39 of the Standing Committee, a single scenario of a 0% increase in the budget for the 2023-2025 triennium was being presented to the Conference;
- the reallocation to the next triennium of surplus funds in the core budget resulting from underspending during the previous triennium, owing in part to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, had been approved; and
- the level of outstanding contributions was equivalent to approximately one third of the annual income.

She suggested that the Committee on Finance and Budget meet on Tuesday 8 November to consider the draft resolution on budgetary matters included in document COP14 Doc.18.1.

58. **Colombia** expressed support for the decision for a 0% nominal increase.
59. **Mexico** urged all Contracting Parties to identify strategies which would enable them to pay their outstanding and future contributions, and added that adjustments to the budget should be reserved for exceptional circumstances.
60. The **President** noted that the Committee on Finance and Budget would consider this document and report back on its work at a later session.

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee**

61. The **Secretariat** noted that it had submitted to the Conference Bureau a new suggested running order for consideration of the draft resolutions. This order sought to take into account the Contracting Parties' differing views on how best to address the time constraints of the coming days, and had been accepted thanks to their willingness to compromise. The Secretariat further noted that delegates were able to initiate informal discussions on draft resolutions prior to the formal discussions taking place during plenary sessions. The running order was contained in Annex 1 to the working programme in document COP14 Doc.3.2.2 Rev.1.



### 18.1: Draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters

62. The **President** noted that discussion of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.1 would be deferred to a later session, after the Committee on Finance and Budget had concluded its deliberations.

### 18.2: Draft resolution on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention on Wetlands

63. The **Secretariat** introduced document COP14 Doc.18.2, highlighting tasks for Standing Committee members contained within it and a proposal for the cycle of meetings of the Standing Committee and the COP for the coming triennium.
64. **Czechia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU with a reservation from Sweden**, suggested delaying the proposed meetings of the Standing Committee by a month, to take place in August or September 2023 and 2024.
65. **Sweden** suggested amendments to the responsibilities of members of the Standing Committee, and provided a further suggestion, opposed by **Brazil**, to reduce the number of Ramsar Regions from six to four, to overcome difficulties associated with the wide differences in the numbers of Parties in each region.
66. Responding to the proposal by the Member States of the EU, **New Zealand** suggested bringing the first meeting of the Standing Committee forward, to allow timely approval of the STRP workplan and allow sufficient time for its work. The **Secretariat** responded that the scheduling of a meeting in June 2023 should be feasible.
67. **Canada**, supported by **Mexico**, suggested amendments, which included instructing the Secretariat to propose a process that would incorporate criteria for the Standing Committee to decide whether to forward draft resolutions for consideration by the COP.
68. **Brazil** responded by recalling that the Standing Committee is a Contracting Party-led process and any changes in the *modus operandi* should be approved by the Conference of the Parties.
69. The **President** invited Contracting Parties to send their proposed amendments to the Secretariat for production of a revised draft resolution for discussion at a later session.

### Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

70. **Ukraine** delivered a joint statement on behalf of 32 Contracting Parties<sup>3</sup>, underscoring the impacts of the Russian Federation's unjustified aggression on critical ecosystems and Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in Ukraine, and emphasizing that the war in Ukraine undermined the Convention's ability to deliver effective conservation and management of the Ramsar Site network, and noting that it had proposed a draft resolution.

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex 2 to the present report.

71. The **President** noted that the new draft resolution submitted by Ukraine would be reviewed in accordance with the Rules of Procedure at the next meeting of the Conference Bureau, which would decide on its admissibility for discussion in plenary.

### **18.3: Draft resolution on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Ramsar Convention**

72. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Chair of the Effectiveness Working Group (EWG)**, presented the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.3, highlighting the EWG's sustained work over the past triennium to develop the draft resolution, through which it had succeeded in narrowing down options for actions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention. It further highlighted the remaining bracketed text related to the cost of implementation of the draft resolution, and suggested that unspent funds from the EWG budget be allocated for use.
73. **Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa on behalf of the Africa region** supported the draft resolution, and expressed thanks to the EWG for its work.
74. **Canada, Costa Rica, France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, and Mexico** suggested amendments.
75. In response to **South Africa's** suggestion that the Secretariat support Contracting Parties in preparation of draft resolutions, the **President** responded that the Secretariat could provide guidance or training on how to prepare draft resolutions.
76. The **President** noted that the draft resolution had received wide support, and invited interested Parties to submit proposed amendments for consideration at a later session.

### **18.4: Draft resolution on review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands, additions for the period COP14-COP15 and key elements for the fifth Strategic Plan**

77. The draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.4 was introduced by **Australia**, speaking as interim Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG), outlining the results of the SPWG's mid-term review of challenges faced by Contracting Parties in implementing the fourth Strategic Plan, and noting the need to enhance existing guidance and share this with Parties. It highlighted the addition of three thematic annexes: on wetland conservation actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets; on the new CEPA approach and wetland policies and practices; and on gender-responsive wetland policies and practices. It advised that proposed amendments would be submitted to the Secretariat, and suggested that the President form a contact group.
78. **Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia and Sweden** provided comments on the text.
79. **Argentina, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with a reservation from Sweden**, and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, welcomed the interim Chair's report, and noted the upcoming discussions on the targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity at CBD COP15 in December 2022. All intervening Parties suggested that further discussion take place once the outcome of these negotiations had been finalized, to align the relevant text in the current

draft resolution. **Argentina and Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with a reservation from Sweden** proposed amendments.

80. **Namibia on behalf of the Africa Region** expressed support for the draft resolution.
81. **China, Costa Rica, Iran, Malaysia, Switzerland and Tunisia** supported the draft decision, and advised that they would propose amendments.
82. The **President** established a contact group to take forward discussion of the draft resolution, appointing the interim Chair of the SPWG as Chair.

#### **18.14: Draft resolution on strengthening Ramsar connections through youth**

83. **Australia**, as co-proponent with Costa Rica, introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.14, highlighting its general objective of encouraging Parties to explore and support strategies to engage, collaborate with and involve youth in the work of the Convention. Engaging energetic young people who are passionate about wetlands would be a cost-effective way to implement innovative and impactful projects. It drew attention to minor amendments already submitted to the Secretariat by Brazil, France, Japan and Wetlands International.
84. **Colombia, Ecuador, France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, the Republic of Korea, Malawi on behalf of the Africa Region, Mexico, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** expressed general support for the draft resolution, noting its timeliness and importance, and advised that they would propose amendments.
85. **Canada** supported the draft resolution, noting national policy efforts on youth engagement, and advised that it had submitted amendments to Costa Rica directly during the prior regional meetings.
86. **China** supported the draft resolution, and Australia acknowledged its request for a clarification within the text regarding the relevant meeting of the Standing Committee.
87. **Switzerland** supported the draft resolution, while noting that calls for national efforts should reflect that individual Parties determine domestic implementation. It drew attention to the potential role of the Junior Professionals within the Secretariat in engaging and integrating youth, and expressed support for the use of virtual meetings to increase global youth engagement.
88. **Malaysia** supported the draft resolution, stressing the need for additional resources and knowledge-sharing for effective implementation, and urged Parties to provide technical and financial support to this end. **Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Philippines** all proposed amendments.
89. The **Dominican Republic, Peru and Venezuela** supported the draft resolution without further amendment.
90. **Brazil** supported the draft resolution, noting Australia's acknowledgment of the proposals for amendments that it had previously submitted.

91. **Japan** supported the draft resolution, noting its potential to strengthen international cooperation, and requested further clarification on the nomination processes and rules on regional representation of a working group.
92. **Costa Rica**, as co-proponent of the draft resolution, emphasized the need to recognize the valuable contributions of young people, and thanked the Parties for their contributions.
93. The **President** requested that the Secretariat prepare a revised version of the draft resolution for consideration at a later session.

#### 18.13: Draft resolution on wetland education in the formal education sector

94. The **Republic of Korea**, as co-proponent with China, introduced document COP14 Doc.18.13, noting its recommendations to help Contracting Parties enable and facilitate more effective wetland education in schools, and inviting participants to a side event at which these would be presented in greater detail.
95. **Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Gabon, Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka** expressed support for the draft resolution.
96. **Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Colombia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka** proposed amendments.
97. **Canada**, supported by **Colombia**, suggested including non-formal and informal education practices, to acknowledge the various ways of transmitting knowledge, including indigenous knowledge.
98. The **Republic of Korea** noted that the original aim had been the agreement of a resolution dedicated to formal education.
99. The **President** invited Parties to engage in informal consultations so that a revised version might be addressed at a later session.

#### 18.16: Draft resolution on review of the Ramsar Criteria, and delisting of Ramsar Sites located in territories which are not recognized at the UN level as part of the territory of the submitting country

100. As proponent, **Algeria** introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.16, noting that it aimed to initiate reflection on the listing of Ramsar Sites, and stated that it had prepared a revised draft, taking account of comments received, and had amended the title to *Draft Resolution on the Ramsar List*.<sup>4</sup>
101. **Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo** and the **United States of America** opposed the draft resolution, suggesting a focus on conservation rather than political designation of wetlands. Niger, Senegal and Togo proposed that the draft resolution be discussed at COP15.

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<sup>4</sup> Algeria requested that its interventions on this draft resolution be captured in the official record of the meeting. They are listed at Annex 3 of the present report.

102. **Tunisia** reminded Contracting Parties that a significant proportion of the Ramsar Information Sheets and associated Ramsar Site maps presented challenges, indicating the need to use authoritative documents as the basis for necessary technical and scientific information.
103. Noting its understanding of the proposal's background, **China** expressed hope that Contracting Parties might resolve disagreements through friendly consultations.
104. **Czechia** requested clarification regarding the version of the draft resolution being discussed, noting that despite substantial amendments, the document was not yet available to Contracting Parties.
105. The **President** suggested adjourning the discussion until the following plenary session so that the revised version might be prepared and advice sought from the Legal Advisor.
106. The **President** closed the session at 17:35.

#### **17:40 - 18:30 Ramsar Wetlands Conservation Awards ceremony**

107. The session concluded with the presentation of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards for 2022.
108. The Ramsar Convention Award for Young Wetland Champions was presented to Ms Fernanda Samuel of Angola, in recognition of her achievements on mangrove restoration.
109. The Ramsar Convention Award for Wetland Wise Use was presented to Mr Kurechi Masayaki of Japan, for his work in relation to sustainable agriculture and conservation of waterbird habitat in rice paddies.
110. The Ramsar Convention Award for Wetland Innovation was presented to Ms Carla Ximena Giraldo Malca of Peru, for her work on education for wetland conservation and engaging youth.
111. The Ramsar Conservation Merit Award was presented to Mr Jérôme Bignon of France, for his work on the conservation and sustainable management of the Somme Bay and the wetlands of Amiens.
112. Drawing the event to a close, the **Secretary General** observed that the Contracting Parties at COP6 in Brisbane, Australia, had recognized the need for awards for such individuals engaged in action on the ground, which are key in implementing this pragmatic Convention.

#### **Tuesday 8 November 2022**

##### **10:15 – 12:45 Plenary session**

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

**18.16: Draft resolution on the Ramsar List (continued)**

113. The President opened the morning plenary session by resuming discussions on agenda item 18.16, which had been tabled in the previous session, with the Secretariat noting that a revised version of the draft resolution had been made available in the three working languages on the Convention's website as document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1 with the new title of *The Amended Draft Resolution on the Ramsar List*.
114. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** acknowledged the work undertaken by Algeria, as proponent of the draft resolution, and noted that its comments applied to both versions of the draft resolution. Supported by **Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and **New Zealand**, it expressed concern that the recommendations and procedures outlined in the operative text were inappropriate and inconsistent with the remit of the Convention. The United Kingdom recalled Article 2.5 of the Convention, which outlines that only Contracting Parties have the authority to delist Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). The aforementioned Parties, as well as **Cambodia, Gambia** and **Nepal**, opposed the revised draft resolution.
115. **Burundi, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Gabon** and **South Africa** requested additional time to review the revised draft resolution.
116. **Mauritius** agreed with the fundamental principles that Contracting Parties act in line with the Convention and respect international law, encouraging constructive discussions on this issue.
117. **Colombia**, supported by **Mexico**, requested clarification from the Secretariat on its procedure for verifying that Ramsar Sites fulfil the territorial criteria outlined in Recommendation 4.2 on *Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance*, under Article 2 of the Convention. Mexico also noted that decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice should be considered, and that it was not opposed to further discussions.
118. **Sierra Leone** opposed the revised draft resolution, expressing concern regarding the issue of "delisting", and drew attention to potential challenges in using the United Nations Geospatial Network as a mapping reference, noting regional data gaps.
119. In response to comments, **Algeria** highlighted the amendments reflected in the revised draft resolution, stressing that the document does not address the issue of transboundary Ramsar Sites, and noted a minor amendment. It underscored the proposal's aim to support the efficacy of the Convention processes, and emphasized its commitment to work with Contracting Parties to reach a consensual outcome.<sup>5</sup>
120. **Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi**, the **Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea** and **Gabon** opposed the draft resolution, noting past work to review the draft resolution with Algeria by African Contracting Parties. Acknowledging the good will of the proponent, the Parties invited Algeria to reopen discussions, and to defer submission to the following COP.

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<sup>5</sup> See Annex 3 for the full statement by Algeria.

121. **Sweden**, supported by **Benin, Gabon** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** requested clarification, noting its concern that the revised text retained the original document's intention regarding "delisting" of Ramsar Sites.
122. **Morocco** requested that the Conference of the Parties avoid political debate.
123. The **President** established a contact group to take forward discussion of the draft resolution, and reminded the Conference that this outcome was required by 18:00 on Thursday 10 November. He requested that the chair and rapporteur be appointed by the contact group members.
124. Noting the clarification requested by **Colombia** on Ramsar Site designation and verification procedures, and the **Secretariat's** response recalling the text of document COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1 on *the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, the **President** proposed that this be further discussed within the contact group.

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

125. The **President** reported that the Conference Bureau had discussed and agreed to admit the draft resolution on the environmental emergency in Ukraine to the Conference for its review and decision, and noted that the draft resolution had been published as document COP14 Doc.18.24 *Draft resolution on environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar Sites) stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression*.
126. Acknowledging the sensitivity of the issue, the **President** noted a request by the **Russian Federation** for sufficient time to review the draft resolution and that it opposed the formation of a contact group. He also noted the request by **Ukraine** that the document's placement in the running order be decided by the Bureau. He proposed to retain discussions within plenary sessions, and invited the Bureau to consider the running order for ongoing consideration of draft resolutions at its meeting scheduled for the following morning.

**18.8: Draft resolution on enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions**

127. The **Secretariat** introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.8, drawing attention to information document COP14 Inf.1, containing the report on *the Second Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-related Conventions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Bern II)*, submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
128. Interventions were made broadly in support of the draft resolution, raising a number of specific observations, including on the value of synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), by **Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Georgia, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe on behalf of the Africa Region**.

129. Further synergetic initiatives were highlighted by **Cambodia, China, Colombia, Finland, on behalf of the Member States of the EU, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo and Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Africa Region**, including the following:
- the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
  - the World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
  - the World Coastal Forum;
  - the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
  - the Data and Reporting Tool (DART);
  - the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
  - the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
  - the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
  - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
  - treaties on water.
130. **Brazil**, supported by **Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay**, recommended the creation of an open-ended working group to address the legal status of the Convention Secretariat, strengthen its relationship with other MEAs and increase the Convention’s relevance to the SDGs.
131. **Finland, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, indicated that the establishment of an open-ended working group was premature, as further analysis of the legal and financial implications of establishing this group would be required. **Japan** stressed that addressing the legal status of the Convention was not a productive use of the Convention’s resources.
132. **Costa Rica** requested that references to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework should not be finalized until the Framework had been approved at CBD COP15 in December 2022.
133. Proposed amendments were made by **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Indonesia, Japan, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Africa Region**, noting that these would be submitted to the Secretariat.
134. **UNEP** welcomed the draft resolution, and noted its work with Switzerland on the Bern II process, drawing the Conference’s attention to its report in information document COP14 Inf.1. It highlighted a key recommendation of the report, on creating a cross-MEA working group for implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
135. Contracting Parties expressed a range of opinions on the use of the terms “nature-based solutions” and “ecosystem-based approaches”.
136. **The Nature Conservancy**, also speaking on behalf of the International Organization Partners of the Convention (**BirdLife International, IUCN, International Water Management Institute, Wetlands International, WWF and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust**), welcomed the discussions on MEA synergies, noting their potential, and expressed support for the alignment of the Convention’s fifth Strategic Plan with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
137. The **President** thanked UNEP and The Nature Conservancy for their key work. Noting general consensus, he invited the Secretariat to revise the draft resolution, taking into account



comments and views shared by the Parties, and to submit a revised draft at a later session for further discussion.

### **Interpretation of consensus**

138. The **President** invited the Secretariat’s Legal Advisor to provide clarification on the interpretation of “consensus” within the Convention.
139. The **Legal Advisor** noted that the Convention on Wetlands procedure is consistent with that of other United Nations frameworks, whereby the majority of proposals are adopted by consensus. The term is understood to mean “adoption of a decision without formal objections and vote”, and does not preclude Contracting Parties from submitting reservations. He also noted that consensus does not signify “unanimity”. This clarification was acknowledged by **Indonesia**.
140. The **President** closed the session at 12:45.

### **15:10 – 17:50 Plenary session**

<b>Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)</b>
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<b>18.10: Draft resolution on the new CEPA approach</b>
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141. **Sweden**, speaking as Chair of the Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel, introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc18.10, noting that the proposed new CEPA approach had been developed to be integrated into the Convention’s current Strategic Plan, and encouraged cooperation between Contracting Parties on CEPA campaigns.
142. **Brazil, Canada, China, Germany on behalf of the Members States of the EU, India, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia and Zimbabwe** welcomed and supported the draft resolution, with amendments, noting the importance of CEPA approaches in supporting the conservation and wise use of wetlands. **Thailand** further stressed the importance of integrating and mainstreaming new approaches into the public and private sectors, in line with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. **Germany, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, further noted the need for updated terms of reference for the CEPA Oversight Panel, and proposed the addition of a new annex to the draft resolution to incorporate this.
143. Responding to **Brazil’s** request that the EU make its proposal on the proposed additional annex available for review, the **Secretariat** noted it would make this document available to the Conference.
144. The **President** noted general support for the draft resolution and invited Sweden to work with the Secretariat to develop a revised draft resolution to be addressed at a later plenary session.

#### **18.9: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines**

145. **Costa Rica** briefly introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.9, which was based on the work undertaken by the Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) Working Group and other interested Parties at the resumed session of the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee.
146. The **Republic of Korea**, supported by **Togo** and **Uganda**, emphasized the key role of RRIs in implementing the Convention, and urged that the Operational Guidelines be transparent regarding the legal status and management of the Initiatives.
147. **Cambodia, Colombia on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Region, France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Japan, Panama, the Philippines and the Seychelles, on behalf of the Africa Region**, generally supported the draft resolution, with amendments, recognizing the value of the RRIs as a mechanism for implementing the Convention and empowering regional collaboration. **Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire** and **Uruguay** provided further comments in support of RRIs and the work undertaken by the Working Group. **Switzerland** made a note regarding the financial sustainability of the Initiatives and **Togo** proposed an additional amendment.
148. **New Zealand** proposed amendments to be submitted to the Secretariat.
149. The **President**, following agreement from **Costa Rica** and **France, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, established a contact group to take forward the proposed amendments, and submit a revised draft resolution for presentation at a later plenary session.

#### **18.7: Draft resolution on how to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages**

150. Proponent **Sweden** withdrew the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.7, which was noted by the **President** and removed from the running order.

#### **18.11: Draft resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards**

151. As its proponent, **Sweden** introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.11, noting its aim to compile all decisions on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards in a single draft resolution which also includes new elements.
152. **Bolivia, China, Colombia, New Zealand, Slovakia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Tunisia** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** supported the draft resolution. **Slovakia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, and **Tunisia** requested that future award ceremonies take place at COPs as a general rule. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** also provided an amendment.
153. **New Zealand**, supported by **Bolivia** and **Colombia**, suggested establishing a Ramsar Indigenous Peoples Conservation Award, to acknowledge transformative projects led or involving Indigenous Peoples.
154. The **President** noted the wide support for the draft resolution, noting that a revised text would be prepared by the Secretariat based on Contracting Parties' comments, and invited

Sweden and New Zealand to discuss with the Secretariat the establishment of the proposed new Award, and its administrative and budgetary implications.

#### **18.17: Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025**

155. The **Chair of the STRP**, introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc18.17, noting that the workplan had been extensively discussed by the members of the STRP, and drew attention to the categorization of future work in thematic areas relating to the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives.
156. **Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations by Sweden, Liberia, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela** expressed general support for the draft resolution and appreciation for the STRP's work, highlighting priority areas for implementation and encouraging efficient implementation of the Convention to facilitate the Panel's work. **Czechia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU, with reservations from Sweden**, further encouraged the practical and functional design of STRP work packages, and **Brazil** noted it was premature to refer to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets which would be finalized at COP15 of the CBD in December.
157. **Brazil, Canada, Czechia, New Zealand, Sweden** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** reported that they would submit amendments.
158. The **President** noted that the draft resolution had received wide support, and suggested that an informal group be formed to develop a revised version based on the Contracting Parties' comments.

#### **18.18: Draft resolution on enhancing the conservation and management of small wetlands**

159. **China** introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.18, outlining its aims to provide a framework for the conservation of small wetlands, following guidance to be developed by the STRP.
160. **Cambodia, Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya on behalf of the Africa Region, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Thailand, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zimbabwe** generally supported this draft resolution, with amendments, noting the need for specific national, regional and international measures and policies to conserve small wetlands effectively and need for a definition of "small wetlands" by some Parties.
161. The **President** noted the support and comments expressed by Parties, and invited the Secretariat to revise the draft resolution based on the comments received.

#### **18.5: Draft List of Resolutions that are effectively defunct**

and

#### **18.6: Draft resolution on options to continue the review of all previous Resolutions and decisions**

162. The **Secretariat** introduced the two draft resolutions, noting that document COP14 Doc18.6 included the options for a review of previous resolutions and decisions, with the draft list of

resolutions that were defunct included as an annex. The Secretariat noted that none of the past resolutions or decisions would be removed without the decision of the Conference.

163. Amongst the three potential options for consolidation of current resolutions, **Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** expressed a preference for the first option, which stipulates that after each COP, the Standing Committee will select a small number of subject categories from the list of categories of resolutions included in this draft resolution, for which the Secretariat will prepare draft consolidated resolutions for consideration at the following COP.
164. **Mexico, Panama** and **Switzerland** provided amendments to the list of resolutions to be repealed.
165. **Zambia** suggested retaining the resolutions selected for retirement in a database to facilitate their accessibility. **Sweden** suggested the same for all decisions and resolutions, independently of their status.
166. **Japan, Thailand** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** provided additional comments, and **Colombia** requested further information on the consolidation process.
167. **Sweden** offered amendments, noting that it could be counter-productive to take a final decision on the themes prior to the consolidation process.
168. The **President** invited the Secretariat to develop a revised version of the draft resolution based on the comments received, noting that additional comments would be addressed in the morning plenary session on Wednesday 9 November.
169. The **President** closed the session at 17:55.

### **Wednesday 9 November 2022**

#### **10:15 – 13:05 Plenary session**

<b>Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)</b>
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170. The **President** invited the representatives of contact groups, as well as any informal groups, to report progress on deliberations on draft resolutions.
171. **Australia** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution on the review of the fourth Strategic Plan and key elements of the fifth Strategic Plan in document COP14 Doc.18.4, noting that the contact group had met on 7 November to address the draft resolution, and that work was ongoing, with the contact group to meet immediately after this plenary session. It also reported on the discussions of the informal group addressing the draft resolution on strengthening Ramsar connections through youth, in document COP14 Doc.18.14, noting that a revised draft resolution would be submitted for consideration.

172. The Vice-President, speaking on behalf of **Colombia**, reported on the discussions of the contact group addressing the draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives in document COP14 Doc.18.9. Colombia noted that the contact group had made insufficient progress. Referencing the document's substantial length, Colombia requested that the Secretariat consolidate all comments and amendments submitted by Contracting Parties in order to facilitate the work of the contact group. The **Secretariat** responded that it would submit a consolidated document to the contact group, with any subsequent comments received to be forwarded separately to the group.
173. **South Africa** reported on the work of the contact group addressing the draft resolution on the Ramsar List in documents COP14 Doc.18.16 and COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1, noting fruitful engagement on options for the draft resolution's withdrawal, deferral, or further discussion. South Africa noted that additional time would be needed to develop a revised version incorporating comments and proposed amendments. **Algeria**, as proponent of the draft resolution and its revision, highlighted that a misunderstanding regarding the intention and rationale of the draft resolution had been addressed through informal discussions, and expressed hope that consensus could be reached.<sup>6</sup>

**18.5: Draft list of Resolutions that are effectively defunct**  
and  
**18.6: Draft resolution on options to continue the review of all previous Resolutions and decisions (continued)**

174. The **President** drew attention to the discussions on these two agenda items that had taken place during the previous plenary session, including the comments provided to the Secretariat, and briefly outlined the options put forward to the Conference. Noting no further comments, he invited the Secretariat to revise this draft resolution, incorporating comments received, for discussion at a later plenary session.

**18.21: Draft resolution on waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates**

175. **Australia** introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.21, highlighting the need for up-to-date waterbird population estimates to support the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) under Ramsar Criterion 6. Australia drew attention to the request that the STRP develop a technical proposal to enable the resourcing and implementation of future waterbird population estimates, to be presented at the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, in 2023.
176. General support was expressed for this draft resolution by **China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, India, Indonesia, Japan, Madagascar on behalf of the Africa Region, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia and Zimbabwe**, with amendments proposed.
177. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** noted its willingness to fund this work through a voluntary contribution, based on the Secretariat's costing of CHF 5,000.

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<sup>6</sup> See Annex 3 for the full statement by Algeria.

178. Comments were made drawing attention to the need for further funding and capacity building, knowledge sharing and technology transfer in supporting the implementation of this work, as expressed by **Colombia, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia**. Support for the STRP's future work on the technical proposal was expressed by **Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and Zambia**. Various sources of alternative waterbird population estimates were noted by **Ecuador, Mexico, Norway and Sweden**. The need to adapt the current census methods, in order to better include migratory waterbird species in the waterbird population estimates, was highlighted by **Gambia and Senegal**.
179. **Norway** proposed that Wetlands International could coordinate these activities, where appropriate and in full consultation with Contracting Parties, to facilitate updating of the Waterbird Populations Portal in order to make timely information available to the Parties.
180. **Wetlands International, on behalf of the International Organization Partners (IOPs)**, expressed support for the amendments proposed by the Contracting Parties, further emphasizing the importance of the Waterbird Populations Portal as a key repository of the most up-to-date waterbird population estimates. In response to Norway's suggestion, it expressed willingness to take on the proposed coordinating role.
181. Noting strong support for this draft resolution, with minor amendments, as well as **Australia's** comment that it was available to assist the Secretariat and that it welcomed informal discussions, the **President** invited the Secretariat to submit a revised version to a later plenary session.

**18.20: Draft resolution on protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis**

182. **Spain** presented the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.20, noting that the proposal was prepared jointly with the 27 Contracting Parties that are members of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet). Spain underlined the critical need to strengthen climate change adaptation through the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands, to conserve biodiversity and maintain the crucial services that wetland ecosystems provide.
183. **Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana on behalf of the Africa region, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, the Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovenia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe** welcomed the draft resolution and noted the role of wetlands in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Parties expressed preference for the use of various terminologies: nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches, and iterations thereof.
184. **Austria** pointed out the importance of "nature-based solutions", since they play a vital role in flood risk management, flood control and flood prevention activities. They not only improve hydromorphology of rivers and streams, they also allow more dynamic natural development in floodplain forests and meadows, and the improvement of groundwater hydrology and habitats and species dependent on water and therefore contribute essentially to the wise use of wetlands.

185. **Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Paraguay, the Philippines, Slovenia on behalf of the Members States of the EU, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America** proposed amendments to the text.
186. **Argentina, Botswana on behalf of the Africa Region, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Gambia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the United States of America and Venezuela** suggested broadening the geographical scope of the draft resolution to a global scale, rather than limiting it to the Mediterranean region. To this end, Brazil requested deletion of the annexes of the draft resolution, given their prescriptive nature.
187. **Slovenia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** suggested acknowledging within the draft resolution that the term “nature-based solutions” does not replace the need for rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and that these solutions could contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** further noted that nature-based solutions should be tailored to local conditions, in accordance with local, national and regional circumstances consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
188. **Switzerland** suggested publishing a page in the website of the Convention to collect and showcase examples of nature-based solutions, enabling and encouraging Contracting Parties to share best practices.
189. **Wetlands International, on behalf of the IOPs**, expressed support for this draft resolution, providing suggestions to be submitted to the Secretariat, and noted that it looked forward to working with Contracting Parties to support implementation.
190. The **President** noted the broad support for the draft resolution, acknowledging the substantial changes proposed, and invited the Secretariat to coordinate with Contracting Parties in an informal capacity, in order to develop a revised version of the draft resolution to be presented at a later plenary session.

<b>Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)</b>
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191. The **President** noted that the Conference Bureau proposed that the draft resolution on the environmental emergency in Ukraine, in document COP14 Doc.18.24, be considered as the first agenda item in the plenary session on the morning of 10 November.
192. The **President** closed the session at 13:05.

**15:10 – 18:10 Plenary session**

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

193. **Brazil** requested clarification on the procedure the Secretariat would follow in promoting and facilitating informal consultations regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.20 Rev.1 on *protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis*, recalling its suggestion to establish a contact group.
194. Noting its instructions were to incorporate submitted amendments in a revised version of the draft resolution, the **Secretariat** added this would be shared with Spain, as proponent, in order to determine whether a contact group is required.

**18.12: Draft Resolution on updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention**

195. The **Republic of Korea**, as co-proponent, summarized the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.12, outlining elements of the Wetland City Accreditation (WCA), drew attention to the operational guidance on the WCA held in information document COP14 Inf.2, and highlighted the WCA's importance in enhancing the visibility of the Convention.
196. General support was expressed for this draft resolution by **Austria on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Botswana, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia** and the **United States of America**, highlighting the innovative nature and success of the WCA.
197. Amendments were proposed by **Austria on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Canada, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland** and the **United States of America**.
198. **Switzerland** drew attention to potential synergies with another global initiative, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Trees in Cities Challenge. **Indonesia** encouraged the Conference to prepare further guidelines on the management of accredited cities. **India** provided suggestions on creating categories within the WCA, as well as a mentoring programme for experience sharing. **Sweden** requested further informal discussions with the co-proponents.
199. **Austria**, speaking as co-proponent, highlighted the annual Roundtable of Wetland City Mayors meetings, in response to India's comment on mentoring, and in response to the request of Sweden, noted its willingness to hold informal discussions to provide concise amendments to the Secretariat. It further expressed its commitment to support interested Parties in preparing a new draft resolution on creating a group to help and prepare cities for accreditation for the following COP.
200. The **President** invited the Secretariat to revise the draft resolution taking into account comments and proposed amendments to be admitted at a later plenary session, and encouraged interested Parties to join informal discussions.



**18.22: Draft resolution on establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention**

201. **China** introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.1, outlining its call for the establishment of the International Mangrove Center within the framework of the Convention. It highlighted the Center's aims to promote joint actions and inter-regional collaboration, noting it would have no financial implications for the Convention, and highlighted the proposed establishment of an international steering committee to the Center.
202. Support for the draft resolution was expressed by **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Comoros on behalf of the Africa Region, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela.**
203. Acknowledging China's engagement on working collaboratively to revise this document, reservations on the draft decision were expressed by **Costa Rica, France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Gambia, Indonesia, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.**
204. Amendments were proposed by **Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Japan, Panama, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Venezuela.**
205. Comments requesting clarification on the Center's terms of reference, including its legal, financial and administrative status, its independence with regard to the Convention, as well as how it relates to, and is complementary with, existing mangrove initiatives, were made by **France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.**
206. **Costa Rica** emphasized the need to ensure the Center's objectives are aligned with those of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), highlighting a link to UNFCCC Article 6, and noted that the Centre could be a practical tool in the implementation of Resolution XIII.14 of the Convention on Wetlands, on *Promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems.*
207. Acknowledging the existing initiatives established by Indonesia in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates, **South Africa** called for alignment to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts by Parties.
208. Suggestions that the Center would be more appropriately established as a Ramsar Regional Initiative were made by **France on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.**
209. Noting the need for further discussions, suggestions on how to move forward were made by: **Costa Rica**, which supported making the draft resolution more comprehensive; the **United States of America**, which suggested submitting the document as a concept note; and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, supported by **Switzerland**, which recommended establishing a contact group.

210. The **President** noted the Conference's general agreement on the importance of mangroves, acknowledging the need expressed by Parties for collaboration in mangrove conservation initiatives, and the concerns expressed on the modality, mandate and operations of the proposed Center. He established a contact group to enable Parties to continue discussions.

#### **18.15: Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance**

211. The **Secretariat** introduced the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.15, recalling its links to the *Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance* in document COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1, introduced in the plenary session on 8 November. It noted that the draft resolution invited the Conference to provide its reaction and responses to the status report as presented in document COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1. It drew attention to the section on the *Designation of Ramsar Sites and the extension of the Convention in areas not recognized by the United Nations as being part of their territories*. The Secretariat reminded Contracting Parties that this text invited the Conference to provide guidance on how to address this issue under agenda item 10, and further invited Parties to do so under this draft resolution.
212. **Thailand** requested that the Secretariat undertake work to assess the cost of improving and revising the Ramsar Information Sheets (RISs), and to provide guidance and support to those Contracting Parties which had not yet completed the RISs.
213. **Czechia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU, with reservations from Sweden**, expressed concern regarding the increased delay in the Secretariat's response time for providing feedback to Parties after submission of the RISs, and urged Contracting Parties to continue working toward removing Ramsar Sites from the Montreux Record.
214. Proposed amendments to the draft resolution were provided by **Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Ecuador, Sweden** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, to be submitted to the Secretariat. Sweden noted its concern on budgetary matters.
215. **BirdLife International, on behalf of the IOPs**, suggested aligning this draft resolution with Resolution XIII.20 of the Convention. This was supported by the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, which proposed a corresponding amendment.
216. The **President** invited the Secretariat to revise this draft resolution, incorporating the proposed amendments, and to submit the revised version for discussion at a later session.

#### **18.19: Draft resolution on integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategies**

217. **China** introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.19, calling on Contracting Parties to assess the status of existing wetland conservation and restoration policies, and to promote their integration into national sustainable development strategies, together with nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches.
218. **Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, New Zealand, the Philippines, Slovakia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, South Africa, Thailand** and

the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** expressed general support of the draft resolution.

219. **Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, the Philippines, Slovakia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, South Africa, Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** suggested amendments.
220. **South Africa** underlined the need for a comprehensive approach, consistent with MEAs and other multilateral Conventions, and **Brazil** highlighted the link of the draft resolution to wetland-dependent communities and poverty alleviation.
221. **Slovakia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU, and Switzerland** supported the use of terminology on nature-based solutions, noting its international acceptance and application.
222. **Brazil** further stressed that the issue of terminology around nature-based solutions should be addressed under the relevant draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.20 Rev.1, and suggested using the term “integrated approaches” as an alternative. **Indonesia** and the **Islamic Republic of Iran** suggested using both “nature-based solutions” and “ecosystem-based approaches” throughout all the draft resolutions.
223. **Brazil, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, South Africa and Thailand** called for technical and scientific support, in the form of capacity building and resource mobilization, to assist Contracting Parties that are developing countries in integrating wetland policies into national sustainable development strategies.
224. Noting strong support, with minor amendments, the **President** invited the Secretariat to revise this draft resolution for consideration at a later plenary session.
225. The **President** closed the session at 18:10.

#### **Thursday 10 November 2022**

##### **10:00 – 12:40 Plenary session**

<b>Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)</b>
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226. The **President** invited the chairs of the established contact groups, as well as the representatives of any informal groups, to report progress on deliberations on draft resolutions to the plenary session.
227. **Costa Rica** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines*, acknowledging that the contact group had received the document compiling all comments and amendments by Contracting Parties for use in the group’s review, and noted that another meeting was necessary for further discussions.
228. **Australia** reported that a revised version of the draft resolution addressing the Strategic Plan of the Convention had been submitted to the Secretariat by the contact group, to be made available as document COP14 Doc.18.4 Rev.1.

229. **China** reported on the work of the contact group addressing the draft resolution on *establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention* in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.1, noting the group's constructive engagement by means of a roundtable discussion. It outlined the outcome of this collaborative work on amending the document, notably to propose that the International Mangrove Center be established as a Ramsar Regional Initiative, and to make the draft resolution more concise, adding that the revised version would be made available on the Convention website later that day.
230. **South Africa** reported on the contact group addressing the draft resolution on the Ramsar List in document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1, noting that informal consultations had been held, following guidance received during the previous plenary session. General agreement was reached on deferring the submission of this draft resolution to COP15, though it noted that further discussion on the modalities of this deferral remained necessary and would take place in the contact group's meeting following the session. **Algeria** reported on the informal discussions held on the documents COP14 Doc.18.15 *Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance* and COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1 *Amended Draft resolution on the Ramsar List*, noting productive discussions that delivered a range of options. **Morocco** stressed that it was premature for the Conference to react to the options presented before discussions were concluded.
231. **New Zealand** provided a brief update on the draft resolution on *future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025* in document COP14 Doc.18.17, highlighting that consultations had resolved all outstanding issues, and that a revised version would be submitted.
232. The **President** drew attention to the Conference Bureau's proposal that agenda item 17 on the election of Contracting Parties to the Standing Committee for 2023-2025 be deferred to the morning plenary session on 12 November. This was accepted with no objections.
233. **Brazil**, supported by **Argentina**, requested clarification on when a revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.20 on the *protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis* would be made available, noting that a contact group might be required for discussions to be concluded. The Secretariat reported that it would make this document available. The President invited interested Contracting Parties to join informal discussions on this draft resolution to clarify whether a contact group would be established.

**18.24: Draft resolution on Ramsar Convention's response to environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression**

234. **Ukraine**, as one of the 36 co-sponsors, introduced the revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.24 Rev.1, highlighting the proposal's aims and relevance in supporting the mandate and implementation of the Convention. The full statement, along with the joint statement delivered by Ukraine in plenary on 7 November, is included as Annex 4 to the present report upon Ukraine's request.
235. Support for this draft resolution, which was co-sponsored by 36 Contracting Parties was expressed by **Albania, Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, France,**

**Georgia, Guatemala, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.** They expressed general support for the request that the Secretariat undertake assessments of the Ramsar Sites referred to in the draft resolution, and provide a report to the following COP and updates to the Standing Committee. They condemned the aggression by the Russian Federation as a violation of international law and of the Convention, which prevents Ukraine from carrying out its obligations under Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Convention. They noted that waterbird species of international importance are also negatively impacted by this situation. Ukraine urged Contracting Parties to take a clear stand on the destruction of Ramsar Sites.

236. The **Russian Federation** strongly rejected the statements that it had committed violations of international law and of the UN Charter. Its full statement is included as Annex 5 to the present report upon the Russian Federation's request.
237. **China and Nicaragua** also opposed the draft resolution, and China additionally noted that, in the Conference Bureau, it had opposed the submission of this document to plenary.
238. Concerns were expressed by **Bolivia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Venezuela** on the political nature of the draft resolution, recalling the scientific and technical mandate of the Ramsar Convention. These Parties underlined that it was outside the scope, mandate and objectives of the Convention, further requesting that it continue to focus on environmental and technical matters.
239. Abstention regarding the draft resolution was expressed by **Brazil and Gabon**.
240. **Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Gabon, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and Venezuela** stressed that the Convention on Wetlands was not the appropriate forum for discussing this issue and noted the existence of other more suitable fora. Gabon and Venezuela further emphasized that attention should be given to the environmental impacts on wetlands in all conflict situations, and noted that other conflicts had damaged wetlands since the inception of the Convention, but that no similar draft resolutions had been adopted under the Convention.
241. The **President** acknowledged the divergence in views expressed by the Parties, and recalled Rule 39.1 of the Rules of Procedure, which provides that every effort shall be made to reach agreement by consensus before proceeding to a vote as a last resort. Statements were made: by the **Russian Federation** opposing both the establishment of a contact group and any further consideration of the draft resolution; by **Ukraine**, supporting further discussions with interested Parties in an informal capacity; by **Indonesia**, noting that the establishment of a contact group might enable the inclusion of all interested Parties in discussions; and by **Colombia**, expressing opposition to the principle of voting on environmental issues, supported by **Indonesia** and the **Russian Federation**. The **President** invited interested Parties to join informal consultations, and to report back to the plenary in order to reach a decision on the way forward. He also noted the **Russian Federation's** request that a quorum be ensured prior to any vote on this draft resolution.

#### **18.1: Draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters (continued)**

242. The **Chair of the Committee on Finance and Budget** noted that the Committee had held two meetings to discuss the draft resolution, and had provisionally approved the budget for the

2023-2025 triennium. She noted that a revised version of the draft resolution had been published on the Convention website as document COP14 Doc.18.1 Rev.1, and presented the minor changes that it contained, including on the 2023-2025 non-core fundraising priorities presented in Annex 4.

243. With no comments from the Contracting Parties, the **President** noted that the revised draft resolution would be addressed at a later session.

#### **18.23: Draft resolution: Thanks to the Host Country, the People's Republic of China**

244. The **United Arab Emirates**, as Host Country of COP13, briefly presented the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.23, which extends thanks to China and Switzerland for hosting COP14 and refers to the Wuhan Declaration.
245. **Japan** provided a number of comments, and noted its reservations on parts of the draft resolution. Japan further referred to the high-level ministerial segment and the Wuhan Declaration, of which organization and drafting were coordinated by the Host Country, stressing that the Wuhan Declaration is not a negotiated document and therefore should not be appended to the draft resolution.
246. The **President**, in response to Japan, noted the procedural and courtesy nature of the Wuhan Declaration, and added that a revision of the draft resolution would follow the model of previous Resolutions that provided thanks to Host countries.
247. **China** thanked the United Arab Emirates for drafting this document, welcomed the progress made during Conference deliberations to date towards concluding a safe, efficient and practical meeting. It noted the mutual trust and collaboration of all Parties which enabled this, and recognized the hard work and cooperation of the Convention Secretariat. China further suggested that equal gratitude be extended to the two host cities in the draft resolution.
248. The **President** requested revision of the draft resolution for subsequent discussion by Contracting Parties.

#### **18.2: Draft resolution on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention on Wetlands (continued)**

249. The **Secretariat** presented the revised version of the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.2 Rev.1, noting some deletions and amendments following comments received.
250. **Czechia** requested more time to review the revised document.
251. **Canada** and **New Zealand** expressed a wish to postpone the discussion, and Canada proposed amendments to the draft resolution, noting there had not yet been adequate consultation on the relevant text.
252. **Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czechia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan** and **Zambia** indicated that more time was required before discussions could take place on changing the number of regions. Australia also noted that this would require further consultation at the national and regional levels and suggested that any proposals for changing regional groupings be deferred to the next COP.

253. **Sweden** withdrew its suggestion to change the number of regions, while expressing a wish to discuss this issue prior to the next COP, noting the links to legitimacy of decision-making at the regional level, and the need for time to discuss the issue of representation. **Pakistan** stated that it was not in a position to support changes to the regional groupings at this time. **New Zealand** welcomed the withdrawal of the proposal on changing the regional groupings.
254. The **President** deferred further discussions to the plenary session on 12 November.

#### Agenda item 19: Report of the Credentials Committee

255. **Indonesia, as Chair of the Credentials Committee**, provided an interim report, noting that the Committee had met three times and reviewed 119 credentials submitted in original form and two in digital form. Following the review of credentials, 110 had been validated as of 9 November with the process ongoing. The Chair of the Credentials Committee invited Contracting Parties that had not submitted their credentials or had not fulfilled certain requirements to do so as soon as possible.
256. The **President** urged the Committee to take all actions possible to ensure that a quorum be achieved by the time the Conference discussed the revised versions of the draft resolutions on 12 November.

#### Closing remarks

257. The **President** noted that the first round of consultations on all the draft resolutions was completed and the second round on the revised versions would take place on 12 November, urging Contracting Parties to complete their consultations in a timely manner.
258. The **President** closed the session at 12:40.

#### 16:30 – 17:50 Plenary session

#### Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

259. The **President** invited the representatives of the established contact groups, as well as the those of informal groups, to report progress on deliberations on draft resolutions.
260. **Seychelles** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines*, noting that the contact group had reached agreement on critical parts of the draft resolution, and adding that another meeting would be required to finalize deliberations.
261. **China** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.1 on the *establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention*, noting that the group had reached consensus and the revised draft resolution had been forwarded to the Secretariat.

262. **South Africa** reported on the contact group addressing the amended draft resolution on the *Ramsar List* in document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1, noting that the group had concluded its deliberations, proposing to defer the submission of the draft resolution to the following COP, and to move three paragraphs of the revised draft resolution to the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.15 on *the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance*.
263. **Australia** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.21 on *waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates*, noting that proposed amendments had been incorporated in the draft resolution. A revised version had been submitted to the Secretariat. Australia further noted that discussions had been concluded on the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.4 on the *review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands, additions for the period COP14-COP15 and key elements for the fifth Strategic Plan*, and a revised document had been forwarded to the Secretariat.
264. The **Republic of Korea** reported that, following productive informal discussions, a revised draft of the resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.13 on *wetland education in the formal education sector* had been forwarded to the Secretariat.

<b>Agenda item 16: Wetland City Accreditation – presentation of certificates</b>
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265. **Mr Jay Aldous**, Deputy Secretary-General of the Convention on Wetlands, **Dr Ernita Flyn**, Senior Professional Officer from ICLEI and Co-chair of the Independent Advisory Committee which oversees the Wetland City Accreditation scheme and **Mr Seung Oh Suh**, Executive Director of the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia presented 25 municipal authorities that had demonstrated strong and positive relationships with wetlands. Representatives of these cities and municipalities received certificates of accreditation from Secretary General **Dr Musonda Mumba**.
266. The following cities were awarded Wetland City Accreditation:
- Al Chibayish, Iraq;
  - Bandar Khamir, Islamic Republic of Iran;
  - Belval-en-Argonne, France;
  - Cape Town, South Africa;
  - Gochang, Republic of Korea;
  - Hefei, China;
  - Ifrane, Morocco;
  - Izumi, Japan;
  - Jining, China;
  - Kigali, Rwanda;
  - Liangping, China;
  - Nanchang, China;
  - Niigata, Japan;
  - Panjin, China;
  - Sackville, Canada;
  - Seltz, France;
  - Seocheon, Republic of Korea;



- Seogwipo, Republic of Korea;
- Sri Songkhram District, Thailand;
- Surabaya, Indonesia;
- Tanjung Jabung Timur, Indonesia;
- Valencia, Spain;
- Varzaneh, Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Wuhan, China; and
- Yancheng, China.

267. The **Secretary General** congratulated the accredited cities' representatives, noting that most, if not all, human civilizations began around waters, and invited more cities to participate in Wetland City Accreditation.

268. The **President** closed the session at 17:50.

## Saturday 12 November 2022

10:15 – 12:55 Plenary session

### Agenda item 17: Election of Contracting Parties to the Standing Committee for 2022-2025

269. The following nominations for membership were received by the Conference of the Parties:

- For the Africa Region:
  - Central Africa: **Gabon** (Alternate member: **Equatorial Guinea**);
  - North Africa: **Libya** (Alternate member: **Morocco**);
  - East Africa: **Rwanda** (Alternate member: the **United Republic of Tanzania**);
  - West Africa: **Burkina Faso** (Alternate member: **Liberia**);
  - Southern Africa: **Lesotho** (Alternate member: **Madagascar**);
- For the Asia Region:
  - South Asia: the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** (Alternate member: **Indonesia**);
  - East Asia: **Japan** (Alternate member: the **Republic of Korea**);
  - West Asia: **Iraq** (Alternate member: the **Islamic Republic of Iran**);
- For the Europe Region:
  - **Belgium** (Alternate member: **Austria**);
  - **Czechia** (Alternate member: **Slovakia**);
  - **Georgia** (Alternate member: **Montenegro**);
  - **Sweden** (Alternate member: **Slovenia**);
- For the Latin America and the Caribbean Region:
  - South America: **Brazil** (Alternate member: **Colombia**);
  - Central America: **Costa Rica** (Alternate member: **Guatemala**);
  - Caribbean: **Saint Lucia** (Alternate member: the **Dominican Republic**);
- For the Oceania Region:
  - **Samoa** (Alternate member: **Australia**);
- For the North America Region:
  - **Canada** (Alternate member: **Mexico**).

270. The composition of the Standing Committee for the 2022-2025 triennium, as shown above, was approved by acclamation.

### Agenda item 19: Report of the Credentials Committee

271. **Indonesia, as Chair of the Credentials Committee**, provided an update on its progress, recalling Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure and noting that it had held meetings from 7 to 11 November 2022, during which submitted credentials, in original and digital form, were examined and reviewed. It stated that 119 credentials out of 125 submitted had been validated, and that consequently the threshold for quorum for COP14 of 115 Contracting Parties had been met. This was acknowledged by the **Secretariat's Legal Advisor** and noted by the **President**.

### Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

#### 18.24: Draft resolution on Ramsar Convention's response to environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression (continued)

272. Recalling the outcome of discussion of this draft resolution by the Conference Bureau, the **President** drew attention to the new revision available on the Convention website as document COP14 Doc.18.24 Rev.2.
273. **Ukraine** introduced the revised document, acknowledging the engagement of Contracting Parties from all regions during the informal discussions held, and highlighted that all concerns had been addressed and accommodated in the revised draft resolution. It underlined that the second revision of the draft resolution addresses the urgent need for the Convention to respond to the situation in Ukraine and to prevent harm and destruction to Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). It stressed that the draft resolution establishes a clear framework to address these issues. Ukraine called on all Parties to support adoption of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.24 Rev.2 by consensus.
274. Support for adoption of this draft resolution by means of consensus was expressed by **Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay**. Comments were made by these Parties to note the urgency of this matter; to express support for the proposed assessment of the affected Ramsar Sites in order to provide a report on future conservation and restoration measures; and to emphasize that the provisions of the draft resolution are within the scope of the Convention.
275. The **Russian Federation** emphasized that the proposed text remained beyond the mandate of the Convention, expressing concerns that the document contained politicized proposals and provided an unbalanced view of the situation. It further noted the lack of applicable and substantive data and proof of damage to wetlands protected under the Convention. Stressing that the draft resolution could cause harm to cooperation under the Convention, it rejected the draft resolution.
276. **China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua and Venezuela** also expressed opposition to this draft resolution, with China and Nicaragua further noting that no substantial changes to the intention of the draft resolution were reflected in the revised document.

277. Concerns that the proposals were beyond the mandate and scope of the Convention were expressed by **China, Cuba, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and Venezuela**. Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran urged the Parties to focus on the technical and scientific mandate of the Convention, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea underlined that the draft resolution could set a negative precedent for the work of the Convention. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** further recalled concerns expressed in earlier plenary discussions that the Convention was not the appropriate forum for this issue.
278. The **Dominican Republic** and **El Salvador** noted their abstention with respect to this draft resolution, to be recorded in the report of the meeting.
279. Following advice from the Legal Advisor, and recalling Rule 39.1, the **President** noted that the divergence in the views expressed by Contracting Parties remained apparent, and that a decision by consensus was unlikely. He therefore proposed to proceed to a vote. The Secretariat noted that there would be final checks on credentials and voting cards during the lunchtime break.

#### **18.1: Draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters (continued)**

280. The **President** recalled the report presented by the Chair of the Committee on Finance and Budget at the last plenary session, and noted that the Chair had no further update to provide, and that no additional proposals or comments had been received. He drew the Conference's attention to the revised draft resolution available online in document COP14 Doc.18.1 Rev.1, and proposed adoption of this clean text.
281. The draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.1 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation without further amendment.

#### **18.2: Draft resolution on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention on Wetlands (continued)**

282. The **President** introduced the revised version of this draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.2 Rev.1, noting that the document had several amendments proposed by Parties, possibly requiring additional consultation. He noted the confirmation by the **Secretariat** that all comments received in writing had been incorporated in the revised text.
283. **Czechia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, proposed amendments, to be submitted to the Secretariat, aiming to retain the original text in the revised draft resolution and its annexes.
284. **Australia** expressed support for a number of the amendments proposed by Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, including **Sweden**, which noted it had withdrawn its proposal on adjusting the number of regional groups, as detailed in the annexes to the draft resolution. Australia requested that this be reflected in a second revision of this draft resolution. Its intervention was supported by **Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Mexico** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, with further amendments to the draft resolution proposed by **Brazil, Japan and Mexico**.

285. Following the proposed amendment by Brazil **to delete** the new operative paragraph 6, **Canada** noted its withdrawal of its proposed inclusion of this paragraph.
286. **Sweden** stressed the importance of adjusting the number of groups for regional representation and suggested that it be addressed intersessionally and at the following COP, further noting it could be recorded in the Conference report instead of the draft resolution.
287. **Zambia** noted that Sweden's original proposal on regional groupings would have strong impacts on the present Contracting Parties, emphasizing that the draft resolution text should retain the original six regions. **Colombia** requested that the discussions on this issue be undertaken in a contact group, to ensure open, structured and multilateral consultations.
288. **Brazil**, supported by **Australia** and **Canada**, **requested** that a second revision of the draft resolution, taking account of withdrawn amendments by Canada and Sweden, be made available to Parties.
289. The **President** invited interested Contracting Parties to carry out additional informal consultations on the draft resolution and deferred further consideration to a later session. He urged careful consideration by all Contracting Parties on issues such as the adjustment of regional groups, noting its effects on the governance, implementation and operation of the Convention, and encouraged Parties to ensure adequate consultation was undertaken on the issues being submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

#### **18.3: Draft resolution on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Ramsar Convention (continued)**

290. **The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, as Chair of the Effectiveness Working Group, introduced the revised version of the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.3 Rev.1, noting the agreement reached through the productive consultations undertaken with all interested Parties.
291. With no further comments, the **President** thanked the Chair of the Working Group, and the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.3 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.4: Draft resolution on review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands, additions for the period COP14-COP15 and Framework for the fifth Strategic Plan (continued)**

292. **Australia**, as chair of the contact group, introduced the revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.4 Rev.1, noting that proposed amendments by Contracting Parties had been incorporated and the contact group had resolved the remaining issues. It also noted additional minor amendments suggested to this revised draft by Canada.
293. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.4 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation with the amendment suggested by Canada.

#### **18.14: Draft resolution on strengthening Ramsar connections through youth (continued)**

294. **Australia**, as co-proponent, noted that following consultations with interested Contracting Parties, the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.14 Rev.1 was agreed upon. It outlined two minor amendments, noting that Brazil and Switzerland had proposed changes directly to the Australian delegation: that the envisaged Ramsar Youth

Working Group be established intersessionally rather than at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee; and to remove “in line with national circumstances and priorities” in paragraph 13 of the draft resolution, which encourages Contracting Parties to explore and support strategies to engage, collaborate and involve youth in the implementation of the Convention. **Youth Engaged in Wetlands** expressed its strong support for this initiative, highlighting the engagement and progress achieved thus far within the Ramsar Convention, as well as by Parties on a domestic scale.

295. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.14 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation with the two amendments proposed by Australia.

#### **18.13: Draft resolution on wetland education in the formal education sector (continued)**

296. The **Republic of Korea** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.13 Rev.1, noting that, following constructive informal consultations, especially with Canada, the draft resolution was strengthened by including references to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well by acknowledging the importance of synergies with the informal and non-formal education sectors. The Republic of Korea reported that a suggestion by the EU, to direct proposed work to the CEPA Oversight Panel, rather than “a small working group consisting of CEPA experts”, was not included in the revised draft resolution, following advice by the CEPA Oversight Panel.
297. **Czechia, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, agreed with the exclusion of its earlier amendment, and proposed two minor technical amendments. **Sweden, as Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel** during the last triennium, supported the exclusion of this amendment, and confirmed that the Oversight Panel is overloaded with work.
298. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.13 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.16: Draft resolution on the Ramsar List (continued)**

299. **Algeria** reported that the contact group had reached a compromise regarding document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1 *Amended Draft resolution on the Ramsar List* and document COP14 Doc.18.15 Rev.1 *Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance*. It underscored that the compromise included: transferring from draft resolution 18.16 to draft resolution 18.15 the reference to Article 2.1 of the Convention and the request to the Secretariat to prepare a relevant technical report; thus deferring consideration of draft resolution 18.16 to COP15.<sup>7</sup>
300. Following agreement by the Conference, the **President** deferred a decision on draft resolution 18.16 until after draft resolution 18.15 was discussed.

#### **18.8: Draft resolution on enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions (continued)**

301. The **Secretariat** noted that the revised version of this draft resolution, incorporating all comments submitted by Parties to the Secretariat, was available on the Convention website as

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<sup>7</sup> See Annex 3 for the full statement by Algeria.

document COP14 Doc.18.8 Rev.1. It requested that the Conference focus its discussions on the bracketed text of this document and pointed out that amendments proposed by observers needed to be sponsored by at least one Contracting Party in order to be taken into account.

302. **Mexico** noted that it had proposed amendments, which were agreed during the informal consultations that took place after this draft resolution was first addressed in plenary, but which were not incorporated in the revised version of the draft resolution. It called on the Conference to adopt the draft resolution with its proposed amendments included.
303. **Switzerland**, supported by **Brazil, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Japan and Zimbabwe**, indicated that more time was needed for informal discussions to review Mexico's proposed amendments prior to adoption. Zimbabwe added that the suggestions of the Africa Region were not reflected in the current revised draft.
304. **Brazil and Ecuador** proposed further amendments, and Brazil noted the need to clarify the regional scope of the synergies in the draft resolution. **Japan** requested that a revised document incorporating these amendments be made available to Parties before these discussions takes place.
305. **China** sponsored the amendments proposed by **BirdLife International**. Responding to a request for clarification by **New Zealand** to ensure that there was no duplication in the content of draft resolutions, BirdLife International noted that its suggested amendment would highlight the relevance of the Convention's work in contributing to a larger network of area-based conservation measures. BirdLife International further recalled that this amendment had been suggested by the IOPs when this draft resolution was first addressed in plenary.
306. The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** requested a minor correction to its name as it is referred to within the draft resolution.
307. The **President** invited Parties to carry out informal consultations, and to submit comments and further proposed amendments to the Secretariat, which would make the revised document available to the informal group. He deferred further consideration of the draft resolution to a later session.

#### **18.10: Draft resolution on the new CEPA approach (continued)**

308. **Sweden, as Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel**, introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.10 Rev.1, noting that it would facilitate the CEPA Oversight Panel's work and ensure its timely establishment.
309. **Germany, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, supported the revised draft resolution, and suggested amendments to the list of CEPA priorities to be included in the fifth Strategic Plan. **Brazil** opposed the revisions, encouraging Contracting Parties to abide by agreed language.
310. **Norway** supported the revised draft resolution, suggesting an amendment to appoint an additional communication officer to underpin implementation of the new CEPA approach.
311. **Zambia** supported the revised draft resolution, which added reference to local communities, and **Canada** underlined the importance of further discussions on wording related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

312. **Australia**, speaking as a member of the Oversight Panel, noted that none of the suggested changes had been circulated or agreed upon by the Oversight Panel.
313. Noting that the revised draft resolution will be revisited at a later session, the **President** invited interested Contracting Parties to continue informal consultations to reach consensus.

#### **18.9: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines (continued)**

314. **Costa Rica** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.9 Rev.1, providing an update on the work of the relevant contact group. Addressing the Operational Guidelines, Costa Rica highlighted numerous issues that these should consider, underscoring that the revised Guidelines, annexed to the document, were the best option that the contact group could present to the Conference. It noted that the new revised draft resolution had been forwarded to the Secretariat.
315. **Colombia** and **Mexico** noted the efforts of the contact group to reach consensus on the proposed revisions to the draft resolution, adding that they expected approval of the draft resolution once the revised version was made available on the Convention website for Contracting Parties to consider.
316. The **President** thanked the contact group participants for their constructive engagement and deferred the final decision on the draft resolution to a later session.

#### **18.11: Draft resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards (continued)**

317. **Sweden** introduced the revised version of the draft resolution, contained in document COP14 Doc.18.11 Rev.1, expressing its satisfaction with the result of discussions.
318. **Australia** and **New Zealand** suggested minor amendments to the criteria for the newly established Ramsar Wetland Indigenous Peoples Conservation and Wise Use Award, underscoring connections of Indigenous Peoples to their lands, seas and territories and the need to involve Indigenous Peoples in the nomination process.
319. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.11 Rev.1 with the suggested amendments by New Zealand and Australia was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.17: Draft resolution on future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025 (continued)**

320. **New Zealand** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.17 Rev.1, providing an update of the work conducted in collaboration with the Chair of the STRP.
321. **Sweden** reiterated its suggestion for an additional paragraph on encouraging the STRP to present in a draft resolution to COP15 priority tasks for the triennium after 2025 on the classification of Wetlands of International Importance, noting its late submission.
322. Responding to Sweden, **New Zealand** noted that the suggestion is not included in the revised draft resolution, proposing it be included as an ad hoc task for the STRP at the request of the Standing Committee.

323. The **President** deferred the discussion on draft resolution 18.17 to a later session to allow time for informal consultations with the Chair of the STRP.

**18.18: Draft resolution on enhancing the conservation and management of small wetlands (continued)**

324. **China** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.18 Rev.1, highlighting two proposals by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

325. In response to **Pakistan's** request for a definition of small wetlands, **China** noted that the draft resolution encourages Parties to undertake work relative to their national circumstances, and recalled Resolution XIII.21 on the *conservation and management of small wetlands*, which notes the current lack of 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.

326. In response to the in-session discussion between **Brazil, China, the EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran**, it was agreed to delete the terms "ecosystem-based approaches" and "nature-based solutions" from the draft resolution.

327. Following clarifications on the proposed modifications, the revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.18 Rev.1, with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was adopted by acclamation.

328. The **President** closed the session at 12:55.

**15:15 – 18:15 Plenary session**

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

**18.5: Draft list of Resolutions that are effectively defunct and**

**18.6: Draft resolution on options to continue the review of all previous Resolutions and decisions (continued)**

329. The **President** drew the Conference's attention to the draft resolution for these two agenda items.

330. The **Secretariat** provided an update, noting that the comments it had received from Contracting Parties had been incorporated in the revised version of the draft resolution, available online in document COP14 Doc.18.6 Rev.1 *Draft Resolution on review of Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Contracting Parties*.

331. **Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, proposed amendments which they would submit in writing.



332. **Sweden** proposed an amendment and noted it could withdraw several of its earlier proposals. It emphasized the need for clearer differentiation between the decisions of the Standing Committee and of the Conference of the Parties.
333. The **President** invited Sweden to submit its amendments in writing and asked the Secretariat to coordinate with the EU and Sweden to revise the draft resolution, deferring further consideration to a later session.

**18.21: Draft resolution on waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar Site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates (continued)**

334. **Australia**, as proponent, introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.21 Rev.1, incorporating the written comments received from 11 Parties.
335. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, supported by **Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden**, and by **Norway**, proposed revised compromise text requesting the STRP to develop guidance that provides technical support to Parties in identifying gaps in population data and to identify opportunities for capacity building, technical and scientific exchange to support developing Parties in their assessment of waterbird populations.
336. The **Chair of the STRP**, confirmed that this should be an important task for the STRP for the next triennium.
337. In response to **Colombia**, **New Zealand** noted that text relating to collecting waterbird population data from “most biodiverse” countries had been changed to “in developing countries”.
338. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc18.21 Rev.1, with the amendment proposed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was adopted by acclamation.

**18.20: Draft resolution on protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis (continued)**

339. **Spain**, as proponent, introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.20 Rev.3, noting the constructive work in the contact group, in particular by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Brazil, and offering minor editorial amendments.
340. **Brazil**, as chair of the contact group, explained that the contact group sought to develop a document reaching compromise on the terminology “ecosystem-based approaches” and “nature-based solutions”, with a degree of constructive ambiguity. It noted that the revised draft resolution now addresses challenges beyond climate change and the geographic scope had been expanded to enable it to be adopted at a global level. The title was also amended to *Draft resolution on the protection, conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of wetland ecosystems in addressing climate change*.

341. **Ecuador** congratulated the contact group on the revised text, though noted the need for further discussions regarding nature-based solutions and their consequences for some Contracting Parties. It requested more time to review the revised draft resolution.
342. **Botswana, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Libya, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Slovenia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Turkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Venezuela** supported adoption of the revised draft resolution.
343. **Colombia**, supported by **Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and Switzerland**, congratulated the contact group on the balanced text, and requested that a reference be added clarifying that this resolution does not create a precedent for negotiations under other MEAs.
344. **Brazil**, supported by **Gambia, Germany, New Zealand** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, proposed that those countries wishing to add the requested reference on this resolution creating no precedent be listed in the report of the meeting.
345. **Brazil, supported by Colombia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Spain**, urged other Parties to refrain from re-opening discussion of the text agreed by the contact group, highlighting the delicate balance reached during the group discussions.
346. The **President** noted that Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands do not have the authority to determine what Parties to other MEAs include as provisions, and called for flexibility to allow for adoption by consensus.
347. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.20 Rev.3 was adopted by acclamation.

#### **Agenda item 19: Report of the Credentials Committee**

348. **Indonesia**, as Chair of the Committee on Credentials, confirmed that it had validated the credentials of 121 Contracting Parties.

#### **Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

##### **18.24: Draft resolution on Ramsar Convention's response to environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression (continued)**

349. At the request of the President and in response to requests for clarification from the Conference, the **Secretariat** set out the voting procedures for Parties whose credentials had been confirmed. It noted that a simple majority vote, comparing of the numbers of "yes" and "no" votes would determine whether the draft resolution is adopted.
350. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** recalled Rule 29 and sought clarification on how the Secretariat would verify that at least two-thirds of Contracting Parties were present and voting. **Albania** also requested to know how many Parties with validated credentials were present. The

**President** indicated that this was a factual matter determined by the report of the Committee on Credentials.

351. **Armenia** requested that a full record of the vote be shown and, following interventions from **Algeria, Ukraine** and the **United States of America**, it was determined that the vote would be open and conducted by roll call in alphabetical order, according to Rule of Procedure 44.1, with the first Party to vote drawn by lot.
352. With a vote of 50 in favour, 7 against and 49 abstentions, the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.24 Rev.2 was adopted. The full record of the vote is included as Annex 6 to the present report.
353. **Switzerland** noted that international humanitarian law prohibits the use of devices that cause lasting and serious damage to the environment, particularly in protected areas.

**18.12: Draft resolution on updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention (continued)**

354. The **Republic of Korea** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.12 Rev.1, noting it was the result of informal consultations and incorporation of written comments received. It stressed that the revised document was agreed by the concerned Contracting Parties, with the exception of a single paragraph on the first of the six criteria that a candidate for the Wetland City Accreditation should satisfy. Noting this outstanding amendment, the Republic of Korea suggested further informal consultations in order to reach consensus.
355. **Austria** noted that only one sentence remained to be agreed upon within the draft resolution, and it invited Contracting Parties to review it to allow for timely adoption.
356. The **President** noted that the revised draft resolution would be revisited at a later session.

**18.22: Draft resolution on establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention (continued)**

357. **China** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.2, noting that deliberations during the three contact group meetings had resulted in a concise and simple text that achieved consensus. China further emphasized that, following discussions, the title of the draft resolution had been amended to *Draft resolution on the proposal to establish an International Mangrove Center (a Ramsar Regional Initiative)*, reflected in this revised version.
358. The draft resolution as contained in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.15: Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (continued)**

359. The **Secretariat** noted that this draft resolution was considered together with draft resolution 18.16 on the Ramsar List.

360. **South Africa** reported on the work of the contact group that addressed draft resolution 18.16, reiterating the agreement to defer its consideration to COP15 and transfer three of its paragraphs to the revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc. 18.15 Rev.1.
361. **Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU with reservations from Sweden, Ecuador and Sweden** noted that their suggestions had not been captured in the revised draft resolution.
362. **Algeria** stressed that additional amendments could be incorporated in the revised draft resolution as long as they do not affect the delicate balance achieved on draft resolution 18.16.
363. The **President** invited the Secretariat, in collaboration with South Africa, to develop a revised version of draft resolution 18.15 incorporating these comments, and deferred the final decision to the following session.
364. The **President** closed the session at 18:15.

## Sunday 13 November 2022

### 10:15 – 11:55 Plenary session

#### Agenda item 19: Report of the Credentials Committee

365. **Panama**, as a member of the Credentials Committee, introduced its report, recalling the Committee's membership as established at the first plenary session of COP14 on 7 November 2022, as follows: Armenia, Fiji, Indonesia, Panama, the United States of America and Zambia, with Indonesia unanimously elected as Chair. It noted the Committee's work during its six meetings from 7 to 12 November, to examine and review all submitted credentials, and reported that the credentials of the delegations of 121 Contracting Parties had been validated. Panama submitted the report to the Conference for adoption.
366. The report of the Credentials Committee was adopted by acclamation.

#### Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

#### 18.19: Draft resolution on integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategies (continued)

367. **China**, as proponent, provided an update on the proposed amendments included in the revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.19 Rev.1, providing its suggestion for final text of these amendments. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** suggested the inclusion of the more appropriate language regarding "nature-based solutions" that had been used for draft resolution 18.20, which had been approved in the previous plenary session.
368. **Brazil, Colombia, New Zealand and South Africa** also proposed amendments.

369. **Brazil**, supported by **Argentina, Canada** and **India**, expressed concern on the inclusion of references to specific Conventions within the draft resolution, and specifically the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the Water Convention). **Switzerland**, supported by **Pakistan**, suggested retaining this reference, recalling the agreed language on this Convention at Ramsar COP11 in Bucharest, Romania. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** noted that this issue may prevent consensus being reached and urged Parties to consider its deletion.
370. **Canada**, supported by **New Zealand**, requested further discussions to review the proposed amendments prior to adoption.
371. The **President** invited China to organize further informal consultations over the lunch break with all interested Contracting Parties, and urged Parties to be inclusive and flexible. Further consideration of draft resolution 18.19 was deferred to the following plenary session.

**18.23: Draft resolution: Thanks to the Host Country, the People's Republic of China (continued)**

372. The **United Arab Emirates**, as the Host Country of COP13, provided an update on the status of the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.23 Rev.2, noting that two paragraphs remained in brackets and reminding Contracting Parties that this is a ceremonial resolution consistent with a long-standing tradition for the Convention.
373. The discussion focused on how to address the Wuhan Declaration based on two options. **Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU** and **New Zealand** expressed preference on one of the options, noting flexibility to reach consensus.
374. **Japan**, supported by the **United States of America**, suggested language achieving a compromise, that would take note of the Wuhan Declaration and its intended aims on enhancing the visibility of the Convention and strengthening high-level commitment and implementation.
375. The **President** invited the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the draft resolution for further consideration, stressing that Contracting Parties should take into account the Secretariat's capacity limitations for documentation and translation at this late stage of the COP. He deferred consideration of the revised draft resolution to the afternoon session.

**18.2: Draft resolution on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention on Wetlands (continued)**

376. The **Secretariat** provided an update on the status of draft resolution 18.2, noting that the revised version was available online in document COP14 Doc.18.2 Rev.2.
377. The **President** reminded the Conference that this final revision no longer included Sweden's withdrawn proposal regarding adjustment of the number of regional groups.
378. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.2 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.8: Draft resolution on enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions (continued)**

379. The **Secretariat** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.8 Rev.2, noting that, following consultations by interested Parties, a clean document had been submitted to the Secretariat.
380. **Finland**, as representative of the informal group, thanked all Parties and the Secretariat for the hard work and noted that all comments had been incorporated in the revised draft.
381. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.8 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.10: Draft resolution on the new CEPA approach (continued)**

382. **Sweden**, as proponent, recalled the number of amendments proposed by Parties, noting it was ready to accept the adoption of this revised version of the draft resolution, contained in document COP14 Doc.18.10 Rev.2, although it emphasized its remaining concerns on the postponement of a decision on the CEPA Oversight Panel's terms of reference.
383. **Germany, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, noted that the informal consultations with interested Parties on the proposed amendments had reached consensus, and the outcome was reflected in the revised version introduced by Sweden.
384. **Australia** and the **Islamic Republic of Iran** proposed further amendments, and Australia suggested undertaking further informal discussions over lunch, noting the need for consistency with draft resolution 18.4 on the Strategic Plan, which had been adopted by the Conference on Saturday.
385. The **President** invited an informal consultation group to convene over lunch to resolve outstanding issues, deferring further consideration of draft resolution 18.10 to the following plenary session.

**18.9: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines (continued)**

386. **Costa Rica**, as chair of the contact group, provided an update on draft resolution 18.9, informing the Conference that it had received additional minor amendments from France, and requested that further informal discussions take place over lunch to resolve these.
387. **France, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, outlined its proposed amendments and supported Costa Rica's request to have further discussion.
388. The **President** invited the informal consultation group to meet during lunch and deferred further consideration of draft resolution 18.9 until the following plenary session.

**18.17: Draft resolution on future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025 (continued)**

389. The Chair of the STRP presented an update on the informal discussions with interested Parties, led by New Zealand, noting that all issues had been resolved and were reflected in the

revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.17 Rev.1, available on the Convention website. He further highlighted the opportunity to set up an ad-hoc working group.

390. **New Zealand** noted the positive outcome of these consultations, drawing particular attention to agreement with Sweden that its earlier proposed amendment was no longer required, and to identification of ways forward, including through the consideration of ad-hoc tasks for the STRP.

391. The draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.17 Rev.1 was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.6: Draft resolution on options to continue the review of all previous Resolutions and decisions**

392. The **Secretariat** provided an update, noting that it had received the revised version of the draft resolution yesterday from the interested Contracting Parties and that it was available online in document COP14 Doc.18.6 Rev.2.

393. The draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.6 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.12: Draft resolution on updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention (continued)**

394. The **Republic of Korea**, as proponent, provided an update on the draft resolution, noting that the revised version incorporating all amendments was available as document COP14 Doc.18.12 Rev.2. It highlighted that only one amendment had been made from the first revised version, noting that informal discussions had led to a compromise, reflected in the revised document, which provided a balanced resolution to the concerns of Parties on the Wetland City Accreditation. The Republic of Korea proposed further minor amendments and submitted the revised draft resolution for adoption.

395. **Austria** invited all regions and IOPs to prepare their nominations for the Independent Advisory Committee for Wetland City Accreditation to be addressed at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee on the following afternoon.

396. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.12, as amended by the Republic of Korea, was adopted by acclamation.

#### **18.15: Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (continued)**

397. The **Secretariat** introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.15 Rev.2, noting that all outstanding comments had been incorporated.

398. **Algeria**, supported by **Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Mexico, New Zealand** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** opposed a proposal for the Contracting Parties to provide Ramsar Information Sheets every nine years instead of six.

399. **Mexico** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** further opposed a suggestion to prioritize the most important data, to reduce the workload of Contracting

Parties in the provision of revised data for wetlands of international importance. **Brazil** proposed a minor amendment regarding management measures in place for the Montreux Record.

400. The **President** invited interested Parties to undertake another round of informal consultations and deferred decision on the draft resolution to the afternoon session.

**Agenda item 22: Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

401. The **Secretary General** noted that no formal offer to host COP15 had yet been received by the Secretariat.
402. The **President** recalled Rule 3.2 of the Rules of Procedure, noting that, if no offer had been received, then the meeting should be held in the country where the Secretariat has its seat.
403. **Switzerland** recalled that the cycle that meetings of the Conference of the Parties usually follow had been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and noted its strong support for the following COP to be hosted in the Africa Region.
404. **Zimbabwe** announced its intention to submit its candidature to host COP15, subject to official written confirmation through diplomatic channels. This announcement was welcomed by acclamation.

**Agenda item 23: Any other business**

405. **France** indicated that it had a statement to make on an issue regarding the high-level segment, which it would present during the afternoon session.
406. Inviting Contracting Parties to show flexibility and a spirit of compromise to conclude outstanding draft resolutions, the **President** closed the session at 11:55.

**14:10 – 16:00 Plenary session**

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

**18.9: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines (continued)**

407. **Costa Rica**, as co-chair of the contact group, provided an update of the informal discussions held during lunchtime on Sunday, noting that all suggestions and comments had been incorporated in the revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.9 Rev.2.
408. **Seychelles**, as the other co-chair of the contact group, noted that the revised draft resolution addressed the fundamentals of Ramsar Regional Initiatives, including their independence, good governance, accountability and transparency.



409. The revised draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.9 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.15: Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance and**

**18.16: Draft resolution on the Ramsar List (continued)**

410. **Mexico** reported on the informal consultations held during lunchtime on Sunday, noting that consensus had been reached on all outstanding comments, resulting in a revised draft resolution as contained in document COP14 Doc.18.15 Rev.3.

411. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.15 Rev.3 was adopted by acclamation.

412. Following the draft resolution's adoption and according Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, **Algeria** provided further clarifications on its position.<sup>8</sup> Noting the increased understanding of the rationale behind Algeria's proposal, it emphasized that Contracting Parties will have to decide in the future whether to allow the status quo to persist, thus creating a loophole under the guise of environmental protection, and establishing *fait accompli* policies. Stressing that the best possible consensual outcome at this stage had been achieved, Algeria expressed its satisfaction and thanked all Parties involved for their constructive engagement.

**18.19: Draft resolution on integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategies (continued)**

413. **China** provided a status update following the informal consultations that had taken place after that morning's plenary session, thanking Parties for their constructive and flexible discussions, which achieved consensus on the proposed amendments and updated the title of the draft resolution. It noted that the revised document would be submitted to the Secretariat.

414. The revised draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.18 Rev.2 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.23: Draft resolution: Thanks to the Host Country, the People's Republic of China (continued)**

415. The President noted that the revised version of the draft resolution, as requested in the previous plenary session, had been made published in document COP14 Doc.18.23 Rev.3.

416. The revised draft resolution as contained in document COP14 Doc.18.23 Rev.3 was adopted by acclamation.

**18.10: Draft resolution on the new CEPA approach (continued)**

417. **Australia** noted that the Secretariat had made the revised version of this draft resolution available on the Convention website in document COP14 Doc.18.10 Rev.3. It drew attention to the significant amendments set out in this revised version and provided its rationale on the critical need to ensure that this draft resolution be aligned with the adopted draft resolution

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<sup>8</sup> See Annex 3 for the full statement by Algeria.

18.4 on the Strategic Plan and to respect the right of Contracting Parties to comment on any major changes in governance to one of the Convention's subsidiary bodies. It noted that the revised draft resolution retained the intention of the original version, while giving the CEPA Oversight Panel the opportunity to consult with Parties and partners, and to work with the Secretariat to prepare proposals for the future operation of the Panel to support the new approach to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, giving Contracting Parties time to consider how they might integrate the new approach and identify requirements for support. **Germany** noted its appreciation of Australia's initiative.

418. The revised draft resolution on the new CEPA approach in document COP14 Doc.18.10 Rev.3 was adopted by acclamation.

**Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)**

419. The **President** noted that the Conference had addressed all the draft resolutions, resulting in 21 adopted draft resolutions in total.

**Agenda item 24: Adoption of the report of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

420. The **President** introduced the draft session reports available on the Convention website, contained in documents COP14 Rep.1 – Rep.11, inviting Contracting Parties to review them.
421. Amendments to document COP14 Rep.2 on the high-level ministerial segment were requested by **France** and **Slovenia**, and opposed by **China**. The in-session discussions were then addressed under Agenda item 23: *Any other business*, where they are noted in this report.
422. Minor amendments to the draft session reports were made as follows: **Sweden** on document COP14 Rep.3; **New Zealand, Sweden, Ukraine** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** on document COP14 Rep.4; **Argentina** on document COP14 Rep.5; **India** and **Sweden** on document COP14 Rep.6; **Ecuador** on document COP14 Rep.7; **Argentina** and **Ukraine** on document COP14 Rep.9; and **Sweden** on document COP14 Rep.11. The **President** reminded Contracting Parties that all amendments should be sent to the Secretariat in writing.
423. The Conference of the Parties endorsed by acclamation the proposal of the President that, in line with established practice, the Conference Bureau would approve the draft session reports for the final day of COP14 (13 November) as well as the draft report for the afternoon session of the previous (document COP14 Rep.12), noting that any amendments on these reports should be sent to the Secretariat. The daily draft reports in documents COP14 Rep.1 – Rep.11 were approved with the aforementioned amendments.

**Agenda item 23: Any other business**

424. **France** and **Slovenia** noted that during the high-level segment of COP14, held on Sunday, 6 November, 11 statements had been made by high representatives of the Contracting Parties, including Slovenia and France. During the respective interventions of Slovenia and France, the simultaneous interpretations were inaccurate, leading to omissions on the sections related to the conflict in Ukraine. Accordingly, the full statements of the representatives of Slovenia and

France are already published on the Host Country website and are attached to this report (respectively Annex 7 and Annex 8).

425. **China** responded that the situation referring to the issue raised by the French and Slovenian delegates had been duly noted and properly reviewed. It was found that the simultaneous interpreters made their own judgments when translating statements of representatives from France and Slovenia in the high-level segment, thus resulting in inaccurate translation of some sentences.
426. The **Legal Advisor** noted that the factual statement proposed by France and Slovenia, as well as the explanation provided by China, may be reflected in the Conference report.
427. **Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the EU** and the **United States of America** supported France and Slovenia's request to have this recorded. **Algeria** noted that interpretation issues are not unprecedented for Convention meetings, suggesting informal consultations take place between China, France and Slovenia.
428. The **President** invited China, France and Slovenia to hold informal consultations, noting that if no consensual solution was found, the statements would be included in the Conference report.

<b>Agenda item 25: Close of the meeting</b>
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429. After a short video was presented to the Conference, **Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW)** welcomed the start of a new chapter for the Ramsar Convention, one which is set to fundamentally involve youth, expressing its thanks to Australia and Costa Rica, which co-sponsored the adopted draft resolution on strengthening Ramsar connections through youth, before urging all Parties to continue involving youth throughout all Ramsar initiatives and bodies, emphasizing its wish to be a part of the present, to shape the future.
430. The **World Wetland Network** thanked the full Ramsar family, highlighting its work to coordinate and engage a large network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of civil society, commending the hosting countries and the Secretariat, including on the livestreaming of COP14, which it noted had expanded the reach and impact of the Conference. It urged that Parties recognize the essential work undertaken by smaller NGOs on Ramsar activities, inviting them to engage with this network of organizations in their countries.
431. The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)**, also on behalf of BirdLife International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Wetlands International, WWF, and the International Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), the Convention's six IOPs, emphasized the success of COP14, highlighting the strengthening of youth involvement and the positioning of wetlands as solutions to the environmental and climate crises, and expressed its readiness to support implementation for healthy and sustainable wetlands.
432. The **President** thanked all those who had contributed for their hard work and spirit of cooperation which had led to a successful meeting, and declared COP14 closed at 16:00.

**Annex 1**  
**Statement by Mauritius under Agenda item 10**

Draft statement to the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Agenda Item 10: Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance

Chairperson,

With reference to paragraph 30 of the report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, my delegation requests that consideration of the request of the Secretariat for guidance in respect of the objection of Mauritius to the United Kingdom's extension of the Ramsar Convention to the so-called "British Indian Ocean Territory" be deferred to the next Conference of the Contracting Parties.

My delegation requests that this statement be recorded in the report of this meeting.

Thank you.

## **Annex 2**

### **Statement by Ukraine under Agenda item 18**

#### **Joint Statement**

#### **COP 14 of the Ramsar Convention**

**Mr. President,**

This statement is delivered on behalf of 32 countries, including Andorra, Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America

**Distinguished Delegates,**

These are not normal times.

We wish to share our grave concern over the growing environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the ongoing and potential damage of its wetlands of international importance, stemming from the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified aggression.

Wetlands connect us. Although the war may seem far away from our meeting here in Geneva, the impacts on critical ecosystems and Ramsar sites in Ukraine may be felt along migratory flyways that many of us work hard to maintain. Around 600 000 hectares are suspected of being damaged, and 16 sites are threatened from direct military action or environmental pollution. Russia's war on Ukraine is an attack on Ramsar sites. Ukraine's loss is our collective loss.

For five decades the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has served as a vital international legal instrument promoting sustainable development and wise use of wetlands. Now, more than ever, the Convention's work for wetlands plays a critical role to address the drivers of wetland loss and degradation, including maintaining the effective conservation and management of the Ramsar Site Network.

The impacts of Russia's war on wetlands in Ukraine is undermining the Convention's ability to deliver effective conservation and management of the Ramsar site network.

Though we regret that these fundamental challenges to the Ramsar Convention have not been reflected in the Wuhan Declaration, we have put forth a Draft Resolution with over 20 co-sponsors to condemn all environmental damage to wetlands caused by the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, as well as seek to urgently protect sites at risk in Ukraine and to immediately start an impartial damage assessment with an eye towards mitigation and restoration measures.

**Dear colleagues,**

the situation where one Contracting Party makes it impossible for the other Contracting Party to fulfill its obligations under the Ramsar Convention, namely those related to conservation, management, and wise use measures, as set out in Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Ramsar Convention, undermines this important environmental protection instrument.

We underline the commitments of all Contracting Parties under Article 2 and 3 of the Ramsar Convention with respect to exclusive sovereign rights of the Contracting Party in whose territory the wetland is designated.

We recognise the need to assess the environmental consequences of Russia's aggression both in Ukraine and in a wider region. We affirm our support to reconstruction in Ukraine, including for providing assistance for restoration activities of its wetlands of international importance.

We call, collectively, upon the Russian Federation to respect in full its obligations arising from the Ramsar Convention and to cease aggression that prevents Ukraine from exercising its obligations under the Ramsar Convention to protect, restore, and wisely use its Ramsar sites.

## Annex 3

### Statements by Algeria under Agenda items 18.15 and 18.16

#### 1. 7 November 2022

##### Intervention by Algeria DR.16.Rev1<sup>9</sup>

Thank you Mr. President,

As this is the first time that the Algerian delegation is taking the floor under your presidency of this 14th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, allow me to congratulate you and to express Algeria's full support in the accomplishment of your mission. We are certain that the leadership and wisdom that we know of China will make the COP a success. I would also like to thank China and Switzerland for their hospitality in hosting this historic hybrid COP.

And congratulations to Ms Musonda Mumba, the new Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention.

The draft resolution proposed by Algeria entitled "*Review of the Ramsar criteria, and delisting of Ramsar Sites located in territories which are not recognized at the UN level as part of the territory of the submitting country*" aims to initiate reflection on the procedure for the designation of wetlands on the Ramsar list of international importance.

The designation of sites on the list of international importance follows a pathway that is obviously known by all the Contracting Parties and the information that can be used for this purpose must meet the Ramsar Criteria, which are ecological, since this international treaty aims for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and countering their degradation and disappearance.

Nevertheless, regarding the Ramsar Information Sheet, despite a section including a map and the geographical coordinates of the sites to be classified, it appears today that this information remains insufficient for the protection of these sites.

Furthermore, following the remarks and suggestions made about this draft resolution during its presentation at the African pre-CoP meeting held last March, at the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee, and during the intersessional period, this draft resolution was amended. We thank all delegations for their comments and observations. The draft resolution is now entitled "*Draft Resolution on the Ramsar List*".

To avoid the sites proposed for designation in the list of international importance not being part of the territory of the submitting country, it is therefore requested that the Secretariat apply Article 2.1 of the Convention, which stipulates that "*each Contracting Party shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance*", and the use of the maps drawn up by the United Nations, in order to avoid any ambiguity or error. This will undoubtedly allow a better evaluation of the sites proposed for designation and thus an effective implementation of the Convention.

The amended draft resolution consists of five articles and has been drafted in a clearer way. The first paragraph has not been changed, and recalls Article 2.1 of the Convention, which is a general guidance to Contracting Parties and the Secretariat for the designation of sites for the Ramsar List. The second paragraph was also unchanged. This is a technical matter, concerning the "Ramsar

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<sup>9</sup> Unofficial translation from the original French by the Convention Secretariat.

Information Sheet". The third paragraph also remains unchanged. This is a brief reference to the "Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance". Paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the original text have been deleted.

Paragraph 4 of the amended text is a new paragraph which adds to the general guidance in Article 2.1 of the Convention a specific and fundamental instruction for the Secretariat in the use of official UN maps. This is to avoid the current practice of the Secretariat of downloading maps from Google for the location of sites proposed for inclusion in the Ramsar List. The United Nations Geospatial Network has a website where official UN global maps are published.

In the last paragraph which is paragraph 13 amended from the previous text, the Secretariat is simply requested to rectify errors in the Ramsar List of International Importance.

Also, concerning the delisting proposed in the first version of the draft resolution, this idea has been removed, on the one hand, because there is no procedure related to this and, on the other hand, Algeria's objective is not to be in contradiction with the vision of the Convention.

To conclude, I would like to inform the audience that the amended draft resolution was transmitted yesterday to the secretariat in English. Its translation into French and Spanish has been sent to the secretariat today. We ask the Secretariat to kindly make the revised draft resolution available to all contracting parties for their consideration.

## **2. 8 November 2022**

### **Algeria's intervention on DR 18.16 Rev.1**

Thank you, **Mr. President**, for giving me the floor.

Good morning to all.

This is an intervention to react to the comments we have heard on Algeria's DR 16 yesterday afternoon and earlier this morning.

First of all, I would like to thank to all delegations, especially those delegations who expressed support to Algeria's proposal.

We just have heard this morning comments by a couple of delegations I think that seem to pertain our original draft resolution. I would like kindly to underline that delisting is not anymore in our revised draft resolution. I would like also like to clarify that our proposal has nothing to do with transboundary sites. In addition, the UN geospatial data network as a source of geographical coordinates is addressed to the Ramsar Secretariat, not to Contracting Parties when proposing Sites for inclusion in the Ramsar List.

Our initial draft resolution is not the only that was sent up all bracketed by the Standing Committee to the COP. This simply means that it is submitted to the consideration of the whole membership. In the meantime, we have revised our text in order to accomodate the concerns heard during the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee and in the intersession.

I won't repeat what was presented yesterday by my colleague. I think she was pretty clear and eloquent about the substance of the amended draft resolution.



With the amendments introduced, the initial draft resolution has been streamlined, and let's say the problematic portions of the text removed.

We thank the Secretariat for having uploaded the revised version on the Ramsar website.

I shall indicate that we omitted to say yesterday in the presentation of our revised text that the first paragraph was slightly twicked. We have added, after « RECALLING Article 2.1 », « of the Convention ». I shall indicate that this twick is missing from Algeria's french and spanish courtesy translations published on line. The first paragraph of the English version is correct.

To sum up about the aim of the technical amended draft resolution before us, it aims not only to correct the Ramsar Secretariat malfunctions, but also to avoid any new errors in the future.

**Mr. President,**

We have heard some colleagues saying that Ramsar convention is not under the UN umbrella. Yes, of course. But it's not a Convention of another planet, in a far galaxy, with different countries. It is a convention of planet earth. Even if it's not part of the UN family, the contracting parties present in this room are also members of the UN, with the same borders. Ramsar convention is a treaty, and as such, is subject to international law.

In addition, UNESCO is the depository of the Ramsar Convention. There is a pending request, in the UN Sixth Committee, regarding an observer status for the Ramsar Convention in the UN General Assembly. This request is pending since 2017.

With these elements in mind, we can say that it is simply a natural path that the Ramsar Convention aligns its practice and standards with the UN system. The argument that Ramsar is an environmental convention is of course valid, but there are so many other environmental conventions relating to the UN. This is to say that the environment and the UN are not mutually exclusive.

**Mr. President,**

Maybe by caricaturing a situation on the issue of the Ramsar list, it will help to understand the problem.

So, Algeria cannot propose to inscribe a site located in China on the Ramsar List. It is obvious. But maybe not for the secretariat.

But, let's suppose the secretariat has accepted to inscribe a Site proposed by Algeria in China, would the protection of environment be an argument to keep it on the Ramsar list? Obviously no. And then, let's say there is a possibility to correct the list, it would be up to China to decide whether it wants to keep the Site inscribed by Algeria on the Ramsar list or not. The convention itself allows for the deletion of Sites by Contracting parties. According to Article 2.5, any Contracting Party shall have the right « to delete or restrict the boundaries of wetlands already included by it in the List ».

**Mr. President, dear colleagues,**

We shouldn't accept the current faits accomplis and status quo.

We cannot continue to bury our heads in the sand, or simply ignoring the existing malfunctions. There is a problem, and we believe, it needs to be fixed. Whatever the approach is.

Algeria does not pretend to propose the best approach, but it has the merit to propose a way to solve the issue. We are open to consider all alternative proposals, whether, for instance, to create an open-ended working group to look at the matter, or request the Secretariat to produce a report on the procedure of inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and how it could be adapted in order to be applied in the context of the Ramsar List. We could also simply request the Secretariat to produce a report on its procedure of inscription of Sites and to propose for our consideration options to improve it.

The draft resolution submitted by Algeria is oriented against no one, on the contrary, it aims to improve the work of Ramsar, to protect the territorial integrity of all the contracting parties, and also the territorial integrity of those people who are voiceless, I mean people of the non self-governing territories, in order to leave none behind.

**Mr. President,**

The rule of law at the international level and the territorial integrity are basic principles of international law. Engaging in good faith is also a basic principle of negotiations between States. Algeria submitted the technical text before us, guided by the need to protect the environment, but also, by the imperative to respect international law and its regional binding commitments, among others, Article 3-B of the African Union Constitutive Act.

**Mr. President,**

We have a short time ahead of us in this COP, so let's use it efficiently and engage constructively in order to come up with a consensual text. Let's try to make at least some progress on the issue at hand.

My delegation will do everything possible during the informal consultations to come back with a text to be adopted by consensus.

The Secretariat informed us that our amended draft resolution has been published on line, in three languages.

The Algerian delegation is available to provide any further information or clarification regarding our proposal. Please don't hesitate to approach me or my colleagues. We look forward to the establishment of a contact group in order to engage further.

I thank you.

**3. 9 November 2022**  
**Algeria's intervention on DR 18.16 Rev.1**

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor.

Good morning to all.

I would like first to thank South Africa for chairing DR.16 contact group.

Thanks to all who attended the contact group meeting. I believe we had a good discussion yesterday among contracting parties.

We have made some progress in exploring various approaches, and I believe we are moving in the right direction.

We have been approached by several delegations in the corridors, and I have to say that my delegation noticed that there are many Contracting Parties supporting the revised proposal of Algeria, or at least they have realized that there is indeed something that needs to be fixed in the working methods and procedures of Ramsar Secretariat. I won't say whether the support or sympathy we noticed represent a majority or a minority in this room, but usually there is a silent majority. We have also noticed misunderstanding because maybe we didn't explain well the rationale and aim of our proposal, once we have explained bilaterally, then it helps understand better.

Mr. President, I'm an optimistic person in nature, and I feel that we can bridge gaps during this COP and come with a consensual outcome.

Again, thanks again to South Africa for leading us on DR 18.16 Rev.1. We look forward to further discussing it in the contact group.

Thank you.

#### **4. 12 November 2022 Algeria's intervention on DR.16.Rev1**

Thank you Mr. President for giving me the floor.

Thanks to all delegations who made comments and proposals on Algeria's initial and revised texts.

As announced during Thursday's afternoon plenary by South Africa, in its capacity as Chair of the working group on DR.16 Rev.1 on the Ramsar List, we have reached a compromise on the basis of DR.15 on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

This compromise consists basically in a package comprising the following three elements :

First, Inserting PP.1 of DR.16, which recalls Article 2.1 of the Convention, in DR.15.

Second, requesting the Secretariat to prepare a technical report on the procedure undertaken by the Secretariat to include a site on the Ramsar List that covers all the steps of this process, for consideration at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee

Third, deferring consideration of DR.16 Rev.1 to COP15, to be informed by the results of the technical report and relevant discussions at the upcoming Standing Committee meetings. This third element of the package is that we won't take action on DR.16.Rev.1, submitted by Algeria, during this COP. We will consider it again in COP15, on the basis of the information that will be provided by the Secretariat on its procedure to include sites on the Ramsar List as well as the relevant discussions in the intersessional period within the Standing Committee meetings.

To conclude, I would like to request that all the interventions made by Algeria relating to this agenda item be captured in the official records of this COP. Interventions delivered will be sent to the Secretariat in this regard.

With that, I thank you very much.

**5. 13 November 2022**  
**Algeria's explanation of vote after the vote on DR.15.Rev2**

In accordance with Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, I'm taking the floor in an explanation of position after adoption of DR.15.Rev.2.

Algeria is grateful to all the delegations who engaged constructively on its proposals in DR.16 and DR.15. Thanks to them for helping us to bridge the gap as well as to identify a landing zone. Thanks to their spirit of flexibility, without which we wouldn't have reach such outcome.

We came from far.

My delegation would like to thank the South African delegation for having chaired the contact group on DR.16 and having led us to a consensus. Thanks also to Mexico for having chaired the informal consultations held today.

And we shall also extend our thanks to you, Mr. President, for your wise and impartial leadership.

Algeria believes that it has pointed out to a real dysfunction of Ramsar Secretariat regarding the List of Sites. Now we will have to decide in the future whether we should or not let the status quo persists, and being used as a loophole in order to establish fait accompli policies, and in that sense after a closer look it is perhaps a form of politization of the Ramsar Convention under the guise of the environment protection.

In any case, we think that this dysfunction needs to be fixed.

As stated earlier this week, Algeria didn't pretend to propose the best approach, but it has the merit to propose a way to solve the issue.

From our point view, the Secretariat of Ramsar shall receive a clear guidance from contracting parties, including on the source of geographical coordinates regarding international borders.

The internationally recognized borders and names of territories need to be indicated and well reflected in all Ramsar documents and maps. Some current Ramsar documents could be misleading and be interpreted, by laypersons, as a statement of position from Ramsar on the status of some territories. Such an interpretation is contradiction with international law and the rule of law.

There is a growing understanding on what Algeria has brought to the table. We hope that the intersessional work will allow shedding more light on this issue.

My delegation looks forward to working with everybody to improve the work of the Ramsar Secretariat.

We believe that the text we have just adopted is probably the best consensual outcome possible at this stage, given the initial gaps, divergences and misunderstandings as well as the limited time during this COP.

Thank you.

## **Annex 4**

### **Statement by Ukraine under Agenda item 18.24**

COP 14 of the Ramsar Convention  
10 November 2022

Introduction of draft resolution

“Environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) stemming from the Russian Federation’s aggression”

Mr. President, Distinguished delegates

The delegation of Ukraine has an honor to present for consideration of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention resolution 18.24 “Environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) stemming from the Russian Federation’s aggression”.

The aim of this resolution is to support the Convention’s mission focusing at conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as well as to address the grave environmental crisis in Ukraine, in particular that related to the damage of its wetlands, caused by unjustified and unprovoked military invasion of the Russian Federation.

Russia’s ongoing attack on Ukraine is a blatant breach of the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law with acute environmental ramifications.

Some 30 percent of the country’s protected areas have been bombed, polluted, burned, or hit by military maneuvers.

As a result 33% of our wetlands have been occupied or adversely affected. Around 600 000 hectares are suspected of being damaged, and 16 sites are under threat of direct military action, including absolutely unique habitats for birds, such as the Dzharylgatsky Bay, the Shagany-Alibey-Burnas lake system, or the Perebrody peatland.

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine coincided with the beginning of the nesting period of different species of birds, which have protective status at the regional, national and international levels. The military actions caused a powerful disturbance, which reduced the nesting success of the certain species. Massive fires in nesting places have been causing the death of both nestlings and young populations.

While environmental damage is evident, its extent is difficult to measure. Pollution caused by military activities goes unreported, as monitoring systems have been disrupted or destroyed, and such damages continue to accumulate.

The situation in Ukraine is a matter of deep concern for international environmental protection institutions.

Let me recall adopted Declaration of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, expressing (and I quote) “high concern about the harmful impact that this military aggression against Ukraine and its people has already had, and will have, on the environment. The ecological

consequences of this aggression will most likely also threaten human lives and health, with immediate and long-term effects” (end of quote).

Without any politization the proposed draft focuses specifically on these environmental impacts, which we continue to bear witness to.

Building upon these considerations, the present draft resolution recognizes the devastating impact of the Russian Federation’s aggression on the environmental situation in Ukraine, including disruption of ecological status of 16 Ramsar sites and potential damage to another 15 Ramsar sites within Ukraine.

The draft also requests the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to coordinate actions with the Contracting Parties and relevant national and international organizations to conduct assessments of the Ramsar sites in Ukraine affected by aggression, and advise on appropriate mitigation and restoration measures.

Most importantly, the resolution invites Contracting Parties to provide support, including financial contributions on a voluntary basis, and assistance to Ukraine for restoration activities of its wetlands of international importance.

In the process of elaborating this initiative we engaged with numerous delegations from every region of the world. And that is confirmed by the high number of those Contracting Parties that support this resolution as co-sponsors.

As we speak the decision to co-sponsor this resolution have been confirmed by 36 countries. Let me name them: Albania, Australia, Austria, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

Mr. President, Dear colleagues

The irrefutable evidences of gross damages to the wetlands of international importance in Ukraine are building up with every minute of this war.

Thus, the Ramsar Convention and its Contracting Parties have to take clear stance on the destruction of the Ramsar sites in Ukraine, to make a necessary assessment of the damage caused and to support respective restoration activities.

With this in mind we call on all responsible environmental experts sitting in this august body, those who profoundly understand the critical significance of wetlands as complex ecosystems for our nature and for the human being as a part of it, to support concrete measures aimed at preventing destruction of our Ramsar sites, and to take meaningful action for people and nature in line with the objectives of this Conference.

Ukraine looks forward to adoption of this important initiative and counts on your strong support. I would like to request to include the present statement as well as a joint statement on this matter, delivered on behalf of 32 countries on 7 November, to the report and annex of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

I thank you.

## Annex 5

### Statement by the Russian Federation under Agenda item 18.24

Statement by the representative of the Russian Federation  
at the 14th Conference of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on agenda item 18.24  
(Thursday, 10 November 2022)

Dear Mr President,

We reject the accusations made by a number of representatives of the Parties in violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

The special military operation is conducted by the Russian Federation in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and is in line with provisions and principles of the international law. Of which the Russian Federation informed the UN Security Council accordingly.

The draft proposed has a pronounced political character. It touches upon issues that are beyond the mandate and scope of the Ramsar Convention. Matters related to international peace and security are not subject for discussion at the COP.

The draft envisages a call to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the Parties to take into account the current state of affairs in the sphere of European security when making decisions on appointments, as well as to refuse to implement any projects within the territory of the Russian Federation. That seems clearly discriminatory. Such calls are in total contradiction with the objectives and goals of the Ramsar Convention and lay the foundation for their further distortion in future. Looking at the text, we could even speak about incitement of hatred towards the representatives of the authorities of the Russian Federation. We consider this illegitimate and would like to seek the explanation of the Secretariat on acceptability of such clauses in the text of Ramsar resolutions.

Concerning the direct accusations of the Russian Federation in destruction of wetlands contained in the text we would like to inquire – does the Secretariat have any factual information on such destruction of wetlands? Were the underlying surveys conducted? Without such info the statements made in the draft are not more than politicized one sided accusations.

On the other hand, we have the following facts on the situation in the areas affected by the conflict. After Ukrainian central authorities initiated the economic and environmental blockade of the Crimean peninsula and closed the North Crimean Chanel the lack of fresh water resources led to environmental degradation of Crimean wetlands. There happened a significant spike in wetlands' salinity followed by degradation of their biodiversity. Including those of the Ramsar List. The detailed information on this was published by a group of authors in Volume 14 of "Water" scientific journal on January 28, 2022 and is available online (mdpi.com).

As a final remark, I would like to pose an additional question to the authors of the draft document – Do you really want to change things for the better? Is the restoration of affected wetlands your real goal?

If the answer is yes, then the current draft proposal should be withdrawn. As the only goal of the draft under consideration is to politicize the work of the Ramsar Convention and significantly undermine constructive cooperation within it.



We call on Parties to the Ramsar Convention to dismiss the proposed draft.

Thank you,

## Annex 6

### Agenda item 18.24: Voting results

1	Saint Lucia	YES
2	Samoa	ABST
3	Senegal	ABST
4	Serbia	NO RESPONSE
5	Seychelles	YES
6	Sierra Leone	NO RESPONSE
7	Slovakia	YES
8	Slovenia	YES
9	South Africa	ABST
10	Spain	YES
11	Sri Lanka	ABST
12	Sudan	ABST
13	Suriname	ABST
14	Sweden	YES
15	Switzerland	YES
16	Thailand	NO RESPONSE
17	Togo	NO RESPONSE
18	Trinidad and Tobago	NO RESPONSE
19	Tunisia	ABST
20	Turkiye	YES
21	Uganda	ABST
22	Ukraine	YES
23	United Arab Emirates	ABST
24	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	YES
25	United Republic of Tanzania	ABST
26	United States of America	YES
27	Uruguay	YES
28	Vanuatu	ABST
29	Venezuela	NO
30	Viet Nam	NO RESPONSE
31	Zambia	ABST
32	Zimbabwe	ABST
33	Albania	YES
34	Algeria	ABST
35	Andorra	YES
36	Argentina	ABST
37	Armenia	ABST
38	Australia	YES
39	Austria	YES

40	Bahrain	NO RESPONSE
41	Bangladesh	ABST
42	Barbados	YES
43	Belgium	YES
44	Benin	ABST
45	Bhutan	ABST
46	Bolivia	NO
47	Bosnia and Herzegovina	NO RESPONSE
48	Botswana	ABST
49	Brazil	ABST
50	Bulgaria	YES
51	Burkina Faso	NO RESPONSE
52	Burundi	NO RESPONSE
53	Cabo Verde	YES
54	Cambodia	NO RESPONSE
55	Canada	YES
56	Central African Republic	ABST
57	Chile	YES
58	China	NO
59	Colombia	YES
60	Congo	ABST
61	Costa Rica	YES
62	Côte d'Ivoire	ABST
63	Cuba	NO
64	Czechia	YES
65	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	NO
66	Denmark	YES
67	Dominican Republic	ABST
68	Ecuador	YES
69	Egypt	ABST
70	El Salvador	ABST
71	Equatorial Guinea	ABST
72	Eswatini	ABST
73	Fiji	YES
74	Finland	YES
75	France	YES
76	Gabon	ABST
77	Gambia	ABST
78	Georgia	YES
79	Germany	YES
80	Greece	YES
81	Guatemala	YES
82	Hungary	NO RESPONSE

<b>83</b>	India	ABST
<b>84</b>	Indonesia	ABST
<b>85</b>	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	ABST
<b>86</b>	Italy	YES
<b>87</b>	Jamaica	YES
<b>88</b>	Japan	YES
<b>89</b>	Jordan	ABST
<b>90</b>	Kuwait	ABST
<b>91</b>	Lao People's Democratic Republic	ABST
<b>92</b>	Latvia	YES
<b>93</b>	Lesotho	ABST
<b>94</b>	Madagascar	ABST
<b>95</b>	Malawi	ABST
<b>96</b>	Malaysia	ABST
<b>97</b>	Malta	YES
<b>98</b>	Mauritius	ABST
<b>99</b>	Mexico	YES
<b>100</b>	Montenegro	YES
<b>101</b>	Morocco	NO RESPONSE
<b>102</b>	Mozambique	ABST
<b>103</b>	Nepal	ABST
<b>104</b>	Netherlands	YES
<b>105</b>	New Zealand	YES
<b>106</b>	Nicaragua	NO
<b>107</b>	Niger	NO RESPONSE
<b>108</b>	Nigeria	ABST
<b>109</b>	North Macedonia	YES
<b>110</b>	Norway	YES
<b>111</b>	Pakistan	ABST
<b>112</b>	Panama	ABST
<b>113</b>	Paraguay	ABST
<b>114</b>	Peru	YES
<b>115</b>	Philippines	ABST
<b>116</b>	Poland	YES
<b>117</b>	Portugal	YES
<b>118</b>	Republic of Korea	YES
<b>119</b>	Romania	YES
<b>120</b>	Russian Federation	NO
<b>121</b>	Rwanda	NO RESPONSE

## **Annex 7**

### **Statement by Slovenia at the high-level segment of COP14, referenced under Agenda item 23**

*Check against delivery.*

Your Excellency,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me express our greatest appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting this HL event for the very first time at the Ramsar COP. Slovenia warmly welcomes this initiative as we are convinced that wetlands, as one of the most vital ecosystems on Earth, and the importance of wetlands, their values and functions need to be recognised at the highest political level, nationally and internationally. We also thank the Government of Switzerland for all the support and hospitality.

At the same time we would also like to recall the obligation of all Contracting Parties under the Ramsar Convention on their exclusive sovereign rights to protect, restore and wise use of the Ramsar sites within their territories.

Slovenia condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified aggression perpetrated by Russia against Ukraine, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and is causing massive loss of life and injury including to civilians as well as long-term environmental degradation, pollution and risk to biodiversity and ecosystems, including wetlands.

Wetlands are a cradle of biodiversity, deliver numerous irreplaceable ecosystem services and are one of the most crucial ecosystems to address urgent societal and environmental global challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the unsustainability of our relationship with nature. As if, this profound crisis was a needed wake-up call for us all to jointly define a more regenerative relationship with the planet, its natural resources and the species we share this planet with.

We all know that nature does not work in silos, it works as one: ecosystems are closely interlinked and interdependent, loss and degradation of wetlands affects other ecosystems, the hydrological cycle, carbon storage and all the vital services of wetlands we all depend on. With aggravating crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss and pollution, it is essential that the crucial role of wetlands is recognised, and in this the Ramsar Convention has a central role to play.

Healthy wetlands are valuable nature-based solutions, in line with multilaterally agreed definition of United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution, and are critical to mitigate and adapt to climate change, preserve water resources and provide drinking water, reduce coastal erosion, prevent flooding and loss of biodiversity, are sources of food and support people's livelihoods and well-being.

The synergies between wetland's conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and climate change mitigation and adaptation should be encouraged and strengthened, including through increased funding of nature-based solutions considering their multiple benefits for nature, climate and people.

In Slovenia, we are committed to nature conservation. Our protected areas cover about 40% of country's territory. As country rich in biodiversity, freshwater and wetlands that extend across the political borders, Slovenia is actively promoting and contributing to water and wetland conservation and sustainable use, at the national, regional and global level.

Let me draw your attention to a European achievement towards a new era for cohabiting people and nature - the first UNESCO's 5-country Biosphere Reserve of the Mura-Drava-Danube Rivers shared among Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia. It has already been recognized as an international model for regional cooperation in integrated water and wetland conservation and management, water security, climate resilience and sustainable development.

Slovenia remains fully committed to increasing actions for wetlands conservation and restoration and is making every effort to put wetlands on the path to recovery. We also call on other Parties to do so!

Wishing all the delegations most fruitful deliberations in the following week!

Thank you!

## Annex 8

### Statement by France at the high-level segment of COP14, referenced under Agenda item 23<sup>10</sup>

#### COP Ramsar intervention - 6 November 2022

*Check against delivery.*

Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues,

France would like to express its sincere thanks to China for the remarkable work that has been carried out in preparation for the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, and for the organization of this high-level segment, in Wuhan and Geneva.

We would also like to thank the Convention Secretariat, whose expertise and professionalism are invaluable in supporting the Parties to the Convention, both at the time of the COPs and between COPs, when it comes to taking action.

We welcome the international cooperation efforts carried out under the Convention, in particular the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, at the interface of international and national efforts for the preservation, sustainable management and restoration of wetlands. France supports the Mediterranean Regional Initiative, MedWet, hosted in the Camargue since 2014, whose innovations inspire nature-based solutions.

At the national level, France implements the Convention. It includes 52 “Wetlands of International Importance”, the “Ramsar Sites”, which cover more than 3.6 million hectares. This network is essential and we are grateful to the local actors, elected representatives and field workers, who keep them alive. In this respect, we are very proud to see the Convention’s merit award being given tomorrow to Mr. Jérôme Bignon, former Deputy and Senator for the Somme and President of Ramsar France.

We are also proud to already have six “Ramsar Cities” among the 43 accredited to date. France will continue to be involved in the international life of this network, which promotes an important model for raising awareness of wetland issues among urban populations. Finally, France supports the organization of the annual World Wetlands Day, under the aegis of the United Nations. More than 700 events were organized on its territory in 2022.

Wetlands are among the richest ecosystems on the planet. They are also among the most threatened. Crises do not spare them; conflicts do not spare them.

In this respect, France condemns in the strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified aggression perpetrated against Ukraine. It is a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter and undermines international security and stability. Allow me to express France’s full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Russia must at all times respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians, women and children.

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<sup>10</sup> Unofficial translation from the original French by the Convention Secretariat.

We deplore the human and also the ecological disasters caused by this aggression, including on wetland ecosystems.

We ask that an assessment of the ecological damage caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine on Ramsar Sites be launched, as soon as the situation allows, and that it be followed by restoration actions.

Thank you for your attention. I wish all delegations fruitful discussions in the coming days.