



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**

Resolution XIV.12

Strengthening Ramsar connections through youth

1. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that continued wetland loss requires inclusive and participatory approaches and diverse voices to raise awareness and strengthen the implementation of the Convention;
2. **FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING** that the current generation of youth and future generations will continue to bear the costs of the continued global loss of wetlands, their ecosystem services and benefits and the risks from a changing climate on nature, human health, and wellbeing;
3. **RECALLING** the principle of intergenerational equity that underpins the conservation and wise use of wetlands, that contributes towards achieving sustainable development for the wellbeing of current and future generations;
4. **NOTING** that intergenerational responsibility is a central principle guiding Stockholm+50, commemorating the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, which positions youth as key actors to drive action to respond to the global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;
5. **FURTHER NOTING** the virtual “One Nature One Future” Global Youth Summit in the lead up and as part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in 2021;
6. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 72/146 and 74/121 call for member States to include young people and youth organizations in relevant decision-making processes, to include youth delegates in their delegations, and acknowledge the role of youth as agents of change;
7. **FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING** Decision XI/8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), encouraging Parties to include youth fully in relevant processes, Decision 13.9 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) promoting the integration of youth groups in Convention processes, and Resolution Conf. 17.5 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which encourages Parties to explore opportunities to engage youth with the Convention and include youth delegates on official delegations;

8. COMMENDING initiatives to date to engage youth through the Ramsar Culture Network, World Wetlands Day and youth-focused events, and the Ramsar Convention Awards for Young Wetland Champions, that encourage the involvement of young people in wetland conservation;
9. REAFFIRMING the importance of mainstreaming the participation of under-represented groups in the implementation of the Convention, through: Resolution XIII.15 on *Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities*; Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and wetlands*; and Resolution VII.8 on *Guidelines on establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands*;
10. CONCERNED that young people are not recognized as critical and valuable stakeholders and partners under the Convention on Wetlands and in its Strategic Plan 2016-2024; and
11. APPLAUDING the ambition of Youth Engaged in Wetlands, established at COP13, which is connecting young people around the world, and provides a platform and network to enable and empower youth to conserve wetlands and support the mission of the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. URGES Contracting Parties to recognize the importance of engaging young people in the implementation of the Convention to build awareness, intergenerational capacity and partnerships for the conservation, restoration, wise and sustainable use and management of all wetlands;
13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to explore and support strategies to engage, collaborate with and involve youth in the implementation of the Convention, such as:
 - i. appointing national NGO or government Youth Focal Points to the Convention, as outlined in Annex 1, to strengthen the voice and representation of young people;
 - ii. inviting youth participation on the National Ramsar Committees, and in country delegations to COP;
 - iii. building relationships with youth-led and/or youth- inclusive NGOs, associations, and networks as well as educational institutions, in order to foster increased cooperation with these institutions;
 - iv. identifying professional development opportunities and employment pathways through the conservation, restoration, sustainable management and use of wetlands to support wetland-dependent youth communities and address their social and economic vulnerability;
 - v. targeted wetlands communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) programmes and outreach for children and young people in all their diversity, including participation in the celebration of World Wetlands Day; and
 - vi. seeking, welcoming, and reflecting diverse youth voices and perspectives in wetland-related priorities, policies, decision-making, and programmes;
14. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the host country of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to include youth events in the programme of the Conference to mainstream youth participation at the Conference;
15. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to explore hybrid models such as virtual forums, and engagement approaches that are relevant and meaningful to youth, that allow young people to meet ahead of, and take part in, meetings of the Conference of the

Contracting Parties, for the purpose of expanding youth participation and regional outreach of the Conference and also of sharing successful cases of youth engagement;

16. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, in the period between its 61st and 62nd meetings, to establish a Ramsar Youth Working Group (described in Annex 2) to mainstream youth engagement in the Convention; the Working Group will include a youth representative from each region and present agreed terms of reference to the Standing Committee, with the priority task for the next triennium to enable youth participation in the development of the new Strategic Plan (SP5);
17. FURTHER REQUESTS that, subject to available resources, the Secretariat employ the capacity of its junior professional programme to assist with coordination of the Ramsar Youth Working Group and the joint work plan; and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to call for voluntary contributions including professional secondments to support the employment of a youth advisor to facilitate youth engagement and projects and to help coordinate this programme of work;
18. INVITES the International Organization Partners of the Convention to strengthen youth involvement in their programmes and outreach;
19. ENCOURAGES the business and financial sectors, non-government community organizations and higher education and research institutions to collaborate with Parties, including financial cooperation and career development support, to implement this Resolution;
20. ENCOURAGES the private sector and organized civil society to collaborate and support the Contracting Parties for the implementation of this Resolution, with a view to the involvement of young people to value the ecosystem services provided by wetlands;
21. URGES Contracting Parties to use their National Reports to provide information on strategies being used to support youth participation in the implementation of the Strategic Plan;
22. DIRECTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to compile information on the progress of youth participation based on the National Reports and report the result to the Contracting Parties; and
23. REQUESTS the Secretariat to coordinate with the secretariats of other international environmental conventions on allied work to strengthen youth participation, to assist in implementing this Resolution.

Annex 1

Ramsar Youth Focal Points

Background

There is growing recognition of the need to strengthen the voice and representation of young people in the Convention's work to ensure the conservation, restoration and wise and sustainable use and management of wetlands.

By creating an official national role, the Ramsar Youth Focal Point (YFP), Contracting Parties have a focus for increasing youth participation and representation in wetland governance. By harnessing the skills and energy of young people and their networks, the YFP can bring fresh perspectives and facilitate intergenerational dialogue, complementing the roles and experience of other national Focal Points.

Young people are highly creative, digitally aware, capable of responding intuitively to the fast-paced change and flow of information, as well as engaged with cultural conversations intimately, and in a way that can help accelerate cross-sectoral actions needed to mainstream wetland conservation, restoration and wise and sustainable use and management.

It is ultimately for each Contracting Party to define the roles for the national YFP in collaboration with their nominated FP, to best reflect their interests and capacity to operate across different levels and sectors, and available institutional support including mentoring, as appropriate.

YFPs may be in government, non-government or research organizations and involved in research, policy, restoration, community building and other engagement initiatives.

Roles for Ramsar national Youth Focal Points

Roles for national YFPs could include to:

- provide leadership for the inclusion of youth perspectives in the implementation of the Convention, nationally, and across the Ramsar region with other YFPs;
- be the main point of contact on youth inclusion in Ramsar programmes, between the Secretariat and the Contracting Party, other YFPs and the global Youth Engaged in Wetlands network;
- be a key member of the National Ramsar/Wetland Committees or similar national structures;
- assist in the practical development and implementation of Ramsar policies and programmes at all levels of government and in national reporting to the meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
- increase the public profile for the Convention and its conservation, restoration and wise and sustainable use and management goals;
- promote development of projects focused on the conservation of wetlands with the active participation of youth;
- be active spokespeople for young people on wetland conservation; and on professional development opportunities and employment pathways for the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of wetlands; and
- establish and maintain youth contacts and networks for the communication of information between young people at all levels and across wetland sectors.

Annex 2

Ramsar Youth Working Group: Operation and mandate

Composition and regional representation:

- The Working Group is to be composed of members between the ages of 18 and 35, with at least one member to be nominated by each Ramsar region;
 - Each Ramsar regional group will provide one regional representative, and Contracting Parties may nominate additional representatives;
- The Working Group will strive for inclusion and diversity in its membership by giving priority to minorities and Indigenous Peoples and ensuring gender parity, and adhere to these principles via its organizational structure and mandate;
- National Youth Focal Points and a youth representative of the International Organization Partners will have observer status on the Working Group, unless otherwise nominated as the member for a Ramsar region;
- Youth observers may nominate themselves, and the working group will approve their admission unless one third of members vote against this.

Structure and secretariat support:

- The Working Group will appoint among itself a Chair, and a Vice-Chair and any other roles that it deems necessary, with the Vice-Chair acting as Rapporteur;
- The Working Group will nominate one or more of its members, based on their skills and interests, to be observer/s on the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and the communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel; and to observe on any other Working Group established by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, as Working Group capacity allows;
- The Secretariat will provide secretariat services for the Working Group.

Mandate:

The purpose of the Working Group is to advise on mainstreaming youth engagement in the governance, programmes of work and other activities of the Convention.

The priority tasks of the Working Group in the next triennium (to COP15) are to:

- I. advise and participate, where appropriate, in the Working Group to develop the new Strategic Plan (SP5);
- II. identify capacity-building activities to assist Contracting Parties to implement strategies to engage youth (see paragraph 13 of the present Resolution);
- III. report to the Standing Committee, including making any recommendations about capacity building and policy guidance for Contracting Parties; and
- IV. develop a joint work plan with the Secretariat, to:
 - communicate with and support Ramsar national Youth Focal Points;
 - align the youth activities of the Convention on Wetlands with the youth networks, programmes and consultative bodies under other United Nations environmental bodies and multilateral agreements, including youth-focused events at international meetings;
 - coordinate a youth-focused side event and enable youth participation at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, in cooperation with the host country of the COP; and
 - develop youth-focused messaging and programme materials for World Wetlands Day and other international days relevant to the Convention.