

Briefing for Contracting Parties

Wetlands International at Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP 14

In this document, we offer support to Contracting Parties attending COP and provide Wetlands International's position and proposals for improvements to a selection of **draft resolutions**.

Please contact us with any questions or requests for further input. Wetlands International staff from across our global network are attending COP and are available to provide support to Contracting Parties including expert advice and input on draft resolutions and relevant information from our wetland conservation and restoration initiatives around the world. At the end of this briefing you can find **contact details for all of our delegation**.

We warmly invite you to attend our **side events**, in collaboration with a wide range of partners. These are listed online [here](#).

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Wetlands International position on selected draft resolutions

Our position on selected draft resolutions and some proposals for improvements are set out as follows. Suggested changes are ***emboldened and in italics*** for each resolution. We would be pleased to provide further input and advice on these and other draft resolutions.

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

Position:

Wetlands International strongly supports this resolution. The poor condition of wetlands is now a major constraint on meeting many of the Sustainable Development Goals, and it not be possible for countries to deliver their commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement nor the forthcoming Global Biodiversity Framework without transformational investment to restore wetlands at landscape scale, better protect Ramsar sites and other wetlands, and improve connectivity.

This resolution is critical to raising awareness of and operationalising such synergies and thereby helping to unleash the potential contribution of wetlands and the Ramsar convention to addressing the most pressing challenges the world faces at global, national and local level.

We note that paragraphs 35-37 refer to the need to strengthen capacity for wetland restoration and to monitor progress. To measure the significance of progress, reference to some clear global targets, per wetland type, would be required. Inclusion of meaningful targets and indicators for wetlands in the GBF will also depend on there being sufficient knowledge and methodologies for monitoring change.

Online platforms like Global Mangrove Watch help Parties to identify priorities for conservation and restoration and provides access to status and trends. There is a need to establish such a system for all wetlands – and to overlay priorities for e.g. climate mitigation and adaptation, DRR, livelihoods. Wetlands International is looking to establish a strategic partnership to achieve this, starting with preparing a global Wetlands Database and map. We propose to engage closely with other IOPs and Ramsar STRP for this purpose over the next triennium.

We propose that Parties draw attention to the wealth of technical expertise within the Ramsar Convention and commit to bridge any gaps in defining and implementing meaningful wetland indicators for the GBF. For example, Wetlands International can contribute advice on science-based targets for peatlands, mangroves, inter-tidal habitats and flyways.

These proposed changes have been developed jointly with other IOPs. They focus on:

- providing additional clarity on the importance of Ramsar sites being accorded formal protection or conservation status in national policy and legislation and their role in delivering the forthcoming Global Biodiversity Framework, especially Target 3 on area based conservation
- strengthening the text on the synergies between the Convention on Wetlands and the UNFCCC, CBD and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Proposed changes:

Suggested new text is ***emboldened and in italics*** as follows:

Paragraph 11:

11. RECOGNIZING, in the context of the ongoing work on synergies, the importance of the linkages between the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, ***the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and Glasgow Climate Pact***, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and related reporting and indicators;

Section: Concerning visibility and stature, and increasing synergies

Paragraph 28:

28. FURTHER INVITES Contracting Parties to continue to establish or strengthen, at the national level, mechanisms to enhance effective coordination between relevant national and subnational authorities, and to support the mainstreaming of wetland ecosystem functions and the ecosystem services they provide to people and nature in national development plans, other sectors' strategies, plans and regulations, and especially in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the SDGs, ***in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD***, and in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) ***and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)*** under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to

increase the synergies in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation, [nature and especially wetland based solutions,] wetland restoration, conservation, sustainable management and wise use;

Paragraph 35:

35. WELCOMES the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the status of the Convention on Wetlands as a Global Partner and REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue working with FAO, UNEP, **the NDC Partnership, IOPs and strategic global alliances such as the Global Mangrove Alliance and Global Peatland Initiative, as well as** the biodiversity-related conventions in its implementation;

After paragraph 40:

40.bis REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with UNESCO, the CMS family, IUCN and relevant International Organisation Partners to undertake a situation analysis and gap analysis of the coverage by World Heritage and Ramsar Sites, protected areas and OECMs important for ecological connectivity of the world's flyways for migratory birds and potentially of other taxa;

Paragraph 41:

41. ENCOURAGES Parties to the Convention that are also Parties to **the CBD**, UNFCCC or the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to consider, as appropriate, the relevance of their actions to implement the Convention on Wetlands taking into account the importance of safeguarding and restoring wetlands including in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, of their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and their national action programmes, respectively, and to also consider, where appropriate, [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to adaptation, aiming to reduce human vulnerability to climate change;

After paragraph 42:

42.bis WELCOMES the progress in establishing the World Coastal Forum, in line with Resolution XIII.20 on Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats, as well as CMS Resolution 12.25 on Promoting Conservation of Critical Intertidal and Other Coastal Habitats for Migratory Species, CBD Decision 14/30 on Cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives, and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Resolution WCC-2020-Res-030-EN on Enhancing the resilience of coastal areas in the face of climate change, biodiversity crisis and rapid coastal development, as a mechanism synergistically to put into practice provisions of these Resolutions;

Section: Implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework

After paragraph 43:

43.bis ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are also Parties to the CBD to ensure wetlands are adequately recognised in the final version of goals, targets and indicators for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, for example by retaining the references to inland waters and/or freshwater and coastal ecosystems, alongside terrestrial and marine ecosystems/land and sea, in targets 2 and 3 of the framework;

Paragraph 44:

44. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are also Parties to the CBD to actively contribute to the **development and** implementation of an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that ensures wetlands and the ecosystems services they provide are adequately covered, **including in funding mechanisms; and that the establishment of new, and the effective conservation and wise use of all, Ramsar Sites are incorporated into the NBSAPs to be revised or updated as part of the**

delivery of the GBF, and the role of the Convention on Wetlands for its implementation and monitoring strengthened.;

After paragraph 45:

45.bis. URGES Contracting Parties to work on the legal protection of the parts or the totality of areas of Ramsar Sites that are not under such status, considering protection or conservation categories that are most appropriate, as a way to contribute to both Target 6/Goal 2 of the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 2016-2024; and the achievement of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework goals and targets on area-based conservation measures;

45.ter. CALLS upon contracting Parties to identify geographic boundaries of all designated Ramsar Sites [as obliged by Article 2.1 and requested by Resolution VIII.21 of the Convention], and calls upon the Secretariat to support Parties, International Organisation Partners, knowledge holders and other stakeholders to support this as a precursor to the legal protection or conservation of parts or the totality of Ramsar Sites, and that will enable area-based evaluations for CBD and SDG targets;

<p>Doc.18.14 Draft resolution on strengthening Ramsar connections through youth (by Australia and Costa Rica)</p>

Position:

Wetlands International finds this resolution very timely. We understand the importance of intergenerational dialogue very well. We welcome the invitation in the resolution for IOPs to strengthen youth involvement in their programmes and outreach. Wetlands International's work with youth is particularly strong in Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and some of our Africa offices. For example, the Japan office has developed a relationship with the young generation on capacity building and education. We consider it important that the focus on youth is not used by those currently in charge of decision-making to shirk their responsibilities. Instead, the influence of youth and the role of young people in decision making increases.

Proposed changes:

We suggest two small changes to paragraph 2, to recognise that it is not only the 'youth' of the current generation who suffer from the loss of wetlands and the negative factors of climate change, and to emphasise that the costs of wetland loss are already being felt and these will continue.

Paragraph 2

Delete 'of youth' and add 'continue to', as follows:

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 well-being;

We also suggest the addition of a reference to career development support in Paragraph 19, as this is critical, alongside financial support, to allow young people to fully consider a career path in wetlands at the crucial stages of their lives.

Paragraph 19

Add 'and career development support' as follows:

ENCOURAGES the business sector and non-government community organisations to collaborate with Parties, including financial cooperation **and career development support**, to implement this Resolution;

[Doc.18.19](#) Draft resolution on integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategies (submitted by China)

Position:

We strongly support this resolution which we see as strongly complementary to Draft Resolution 18.8 on synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements by setting out in practical terms what this looks like for national level wetlands policies and legislation that deliver the SDGs, climate, biodiversity and other goals. We welcome the invitation to International Organization Partners to provide to government and other stakeholders to develop national wetland policies that integrate wetland conservation and restoration into sustainable development. We look forward to working with Contracting Parties and other stakeholders, including at national and regional level, to deliver on this resolution.

Proposed changes:

We proposed one small but significant addition: a reference to the Global Biodiversity Framework and 2030 timescale.

Paragraph 2:

2. ALERT TO THE FACT that global wetlands have declined by 35% since 1970 and that the trend of declining has not been effectively halted (GWO 2018; IPBES 7, 2019). Such tendency will affect the achievement of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the mitigation and adaptation to climate change according to the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC, and achievement of ***the Global Biodiversity Framework's 2030 targets and 2050 Vision on Biodiversity***;

[Doc.18.20](#) Draft resolution on protection, management and restoration of wetlands as nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis (submitted by Spain)

Position:

Wetlands International welcomes this resolution and the opportunity to input into it during drafting. We also welcome the changes made during SC59. The content of this resolution strongly aligns with our key climate priorities. We are committed to securing a transparent, equitable, and just carbon market to sustain, safeguard, and restore our precious wetlands.

We are a leading advocate for wetlands as nature-based solutions, including via our participation in UNFCCC COP27 in Egypt in parallel to Ramsar COP14. Our policy paper [Voluntary Carbon Markets for Wetland Conservation and Restoration](#) (May 2022) provides a point-by-point brief on opportunities, guidelines, and risks around mobilising the VCM for the safeguarding and restoring of our wetland habitats. We offer a small number of suggestions for strengthening this resolution further.

Proposed changes:

Paragraph 4

After (b) add:

() restoring wetlands is an essential strategy for water security and for reversing land degradation, as well as reducing fire risks and human displacement, even conflicts;

() governments and public financing alone cannot foot the bill for wetland conservation and restoration with the urgency needed. Private sector funding must be mobilised at scale and at speed;

Paragraph 6

After (a) add:

() Consider landscape restoration approaches which are inclusive and fit to tackle the interrelated challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change, and food and energy security;

() Develop incentives that lead to wetland conservation and restoration and avoid perverse incentives in other sectors that lead to wetland drainage and degradation;

Paragraph 7

In (c), delete 'in the Mediterranean' as follows:

(c) identifying, upscaling and replicating existing successful wetland restoration projects based on a nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approach] ~~in the Mediterranean~~ to other sites designated as a priority for restoration and organize exchanges of good practices and lessons learnt; and

This will ensure successful wetland NBS projects from elsewhere can be included, alongside those in the Mediterranean.

Paragraph 10

Add reference to a broader range of institutions - specifically IFIs, RDBs, the GEF and GCF - which have the potential to play a major role in funding wetland restoration as a nature-based solution, so that the text reads as follows:

URGES the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to liaise with other international institutions promoting wetland restoration and other nature-based solutions [or ecosystem-based approaches], such as the EU, the Barcelona Convention, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) or IUCN, ***International Financial Institutions, Regional Development Banks, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF)*** in the context of their respective mandates and as part of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, to identify a range of financial schemes (i.e. public private partnerships, payments for ecosystem services, dedicated grants, private sector investments in carbon financing, etc.) to support urgent large-scale wetland restoration efforts especially in regions most affected by climate change.

[Doc.18.22](#) Draft Resolution on establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention

Position:

We applaud the political commitment of the Republic of China to drive forward global mangrove conservation including through establishing this International Mangrove Center. We note and applaud similar initiatives by Indonesia and the UAE. We urge though that these initiatives that are properly aligned to avoid duplication with existing international mangrove initiatives by non-state actors, to ensure complementarity.

Wetlands International is one of the founding members of the Global Mangrove Alliance. Over the last 5 years, this leading science-based alliance has carefully crafted common goals, a strategy, work programme and collaboration structure, involving the best mangrove scientists and leading (non-government) mangrove expert organisations. GMA's targets, evidence base and consolidated mangrove restoration best practices are all science-based. It is recommended for other international mangrove initiatives to connect to and build on this work.

To bring best practice mangrove action to scale and enable coordination and collaboration, the [Global Mangrove Alliance](#) (GMA) in collaboration with the [UN Climate Change High-level Champions](#) are launching the "Global Mangrove Breakthrough" at CoP27. The Breakthrough is a science-based, achievable and measurable goal to restore and protect mangroves at the scale needed to secure the future of these coastal forests. It can provide an "umbrella" under which state and non-state actors combine forces to safeguard and restore mangroves worldwide.

We encourage China, Indonesia, the UAE and other countries to align under the Global Mangrove Breakthrough. After UNFCCC CoP27, the Mangrove Breakthrough programme will be further designed and mobilised including by leveraging mixed public and private funds to implement a large-scale global mangrove programme.

We would also highlight that the most recent data and figures on mangroves can be found in the 2022 version of State of the World Mangroves, which is available [here](#), and in other resources available from the GMA.

[Doc.18.21](#) Draft resolution on waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates (submitted by Australia)

Position

Wetlands International welcomes the changes to this draft resolution made at SC59. We share the concern set out in paragraph 9, which states that the Waterbird Population Estimates have not been updated since 2012 due to lack of funding, and we look forward to contributing fully to the STRP-led proposals, as set out in paragraph 16, to enable the resourcing and implementation of future timely and comprehensive Waterbird Population Estimate updates.

Regarding the use of alternative estimates in the meantime, we recognise the need for these to be robust and high quality, and note the major risks of Ramsar sites being designated on the basis of poor data. Therefore, in the interim period, we suggest it would be most beneficial for all concerned for Wetlands International to offer to play a coordination role by reviewing proposed alternative estimates, in consultation with Contracting Parties and other partners and users whenever

appropriate, and to upload them to the Waterbird Population Portal in a timely manner. We set out these proposals and some related changes below.

For further information or a full briefing on Waterbird Population Estimates, please do not hesitate to get in touch. The Wetlands International subject matter expert on this resolution is Ward Hagemeyer who will be at COP from 6 – 10 November and can be contacted on Ward.Hagemeyer@wetlands.org.

Proposed changes:

Paragraph 1

We propose adding a fifth highly-relevant resolution to this list: [Resolution XIII.20](#), paragraph 41 of which invites Contracting Parties that are range States of the East Asian/Australasian flyway and the West Asian/East African flyway to enhance efforts and collaboration to improve population size estimates for waterbirds in these flyways and to enable the identification and designation of intertidal wetlands of international importance along these flyways.

After point (iv), insert:

(v) Resolution XIII.20: Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats to the list.

Paragraph 11

We propose the use of the term ‘extraordinary update’ in two places, to maintain a focus on the normal process being updates through the CSR or overall update of a whole flyway or species group.

We propose reference to the ‘methodology on the Waterbird Populations Portal’ rather than the rounding conventions used by Wetlands International because the WPP methodology entails more than just rounding conventions and is essential to the quality of data.

11. AGREES that until the Waterbird Population Estimates are updated with accurate population estimates, alternative data sources may be used by Contracting Parties for ~~the purpose of determining the~~ ***an extraordinary update of 1% thresholds*** in the context of applying Ramsar Criterion 6, provided:
 - i. that the biogeographical population of the species concerned is clearly stated for the species as listed in Waterbird Population Estimates available through the Waterbird Populations Portal;
 - ii. that such thresholds should be derived from estimates that are published in the Waterbird Populations Portal, for migratory species, based on Conservation Status Reviews produced under the auspices of flyway instruments, or other peer-reviewed assessments for other migratory populations for which CSR-type assessments do not exist as well as non-migratory and endemic populations;
 - iii. that the reasons why a new estimate is considered more appropriate are documented with a clear audit trail to original sources, thus allowing third parties to check any derivation of the estimate;
 - iv. that the standard ~~rounding conventions used by Wetlands International methodology on~~ ***the Waterbird Populations Portal*** to convert from a biogeographic population estimate size to a 1% population threshold should be used; and finally

- v. that any **extraordinary updates to thresholds proposed** by Parties for Criterion 6 purposes, and their justification, be communicated both to the Secretariat (to maintain a log of such instances), and Wetlands International **to review and include** in the Waterbird Population Estimates presented on the Waterbird Populations Portal);

Annex 1

We propose the following changes to capture the changes to the main text of the resolution above

Paragraph 197

Current estimates of the sizes of all waterbird species' populations and 1% thresholds for those populations for which there is a reliable population size estimate are also available in Wetland International's periodic publication Waterbird Population Estimates, available in the Waterbird Populations Portal. If this Criterion is being applied to a waterbird species or population which is not covered in Waterbird Population Estimates, or for which that publication does not provide a 1% threshold *or the threshold provided is considered to be out of date, an alternative source of the population size estimate may be used and details of the source must be provided*, both to the Secretariat (to maintain a log of such instances) **and** to Wetlands International (to review and include in future updates of the Waterbird Population Estimates **as outlined operative paragraph 11 of Resolution XIV.#**)

After paragraph 207 insert a subparagraph as follows:

207(a). An alternative source may also be used where population estimates published in the current Waterbird Population Estimates are considered to be out of date **in accordance with operative paragraph 11 of Resolution XIV.#**.

Paragraph 210

Remove the existing hyperlinks and amend as follows:

International Waterbird Census: Wetlands International, <https://www.wetlands.org/IWC> and the publication *Waterbird Population Estimates* available through the Waterbird Populations Portal <https://wpp.wetlands.org/>.

Contact details for Wetlands International COP14 delegation

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