

**Communication, capacity building, education, participation
and awareness (CEPA):
Report of the Secretariat on World Wetlands Day 2024**

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to note the present report of the Secretariat on World Wetlands Day 2024.

Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the Secretariat in the preparation and launch of World Wetlands Day 2024, providing both an overview and specific highlights of the 2024 event.
2. Every year on 2 February, World Wetlands Day brings people together from around the globe to celebrate the value and beauty of our planet's wetlands. It calls nations and each of us to act on behalf of these highly productive natural environments, the existence of which is interlaced with our own.
3. Wetlands are essential for human life. From filtering water to providing food, supporting biodiversity, mitigating climate change, offering livelihoods and inspiring unique cultures, these ecosystems provide vital services that sustain our wellbeing. Yet, with 35% loss globally since 1970, wetlands are our most threatened ecosystems, disappearing three times faster than forests. World Wetlands Day increases global understanding of how much wetlands do for humanity and how we must nurture them for a sustainable future.

The 2024 theme: Wetlands and Human Wellbeing

4. The theme for 2024 spotlighted how interconnected wetlands and human life are, with people drawing sustenance, inspiration and resilience from these productive ecosystems. Importantly, the theme for 2024 underscored how all aspects of human wellbeing are tied to the health of the world's wetlands.
5. The Secretariat partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in developing an umbrella outreach campaign in support of national outreach goals to inform, educate and inspire actions to conserve wetlands. Both organizations are members of the One Health Initiative and are active proponents for the protection and sustainable use of wetlands. In addition, the World Health Organization extended its support to the campaign with a video message shared by the Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

¹ The revision includes updated figures in paragraphs 8 and 15.

6. Information materials to support outreach activities for World Wetlands Day were made accessible for download on the website www.worldwetlandsday.org on 30 November 2023, courtesy of funding from Danone.
7. A campaign toolkit was developed to facilitate a coordinated global communications campaign, which included key messages and ideas for how to get involved. Other resources available to download on the website included: a campaign poster; six infographic sheets to help spur action on the benefits that human beings receive from wetlands; a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation which spotlights the degree to which human wellbeing relies on healthy wetlands; social media cards providing simple, visually engaging messages that underscore the value that healthy wetlands bring to human wellbeing; and a colouring poster for children, a T-shirt design, logos and InDesign files to facilitate translation into languages other than English, French and Spanish.
8. A total of 1,874 events were registered on the World Wetlands Day website, with France hosting the highest number at 979, followed by Spain with 130, Italy with 112, Mexico with 64, and India with 59.

Promotion of World Wetlands Day by diverse stakeholders

9. In 2021 World Wetlands Day was proclaimed a United Nations International Day, further increasing the number of countries and organizations invited to observe and raise awareness about wetlands to include all UN Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other global, regional, and sub-regional organizations, including civil society, international and national non-governmental organizations, and individuals.
10. In this regard, World Wetlands Day was celebrated by various international partners, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Development Programme, UNEP, FAO, the UN-REDD Programme, the World Food Programme (WFP) Africa, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the European Commission and the World Bank.
11. FAO hosted a World Wetlands Day celebration at its Headquarters in Rome, Italy, in collaboration with the Convention on Wetlands and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security. The event was attended by the Deputy Secretary General of the Convention.
12. Additionally, environmental organizations contributed to amplifying the celebration, including:
 - African Women’s Development and Communications Network (FEMNET);
 - African Activists for Climate;
 - The African Wildlife Foundation;
 - The Bat Conservation Trust;
 - The Beaver Trust;
 - BirdLife;
 - Butterfly Conservation;
 - The Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF);
 - Digital Earth Africa;
 - Ducks Unlimited Canada;

- The Environmental Justice Foundation;
 - The European Union’s Copernicus programme;
 - Greenpeace International;
 - iDiv Biodiversity Research;
 - The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
 - The International Water Management Institute (IWMI);
 - The National Audubon Society;
 - The Nigerian Conservation Foundation;
 - Oceana;
 - The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust;
 - Wetlands International;
 - WildAid;
 - The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT);
 - The Wildlife Trusts;
 - World Agroforestry;
 - WWF; and
 - YouthNet Global.
13. The Secretary General engaged in interviews with numerous national and international media outlets, providing extensive coverage for the celebration.
 14. On social media, individuals enthusiastically embraced the theme through personal videos, songs, photos and various celebrations.
 15. The World Wetlands Day campaign was strategically executed across various platforms and achieved remarkable success by reaching an impressive total of 2.5 billion potential users that were exposed to the World Wetlands Day message, creating widespread awareness and engagement.

World Wetlands Day celebration in India

16. In celebrating World Wetlands Day, the city of Indore hosted the Secretary General of the Convention.
17. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) organized a national event to celebrate World Wetlands Day 2024 at Sirpur Lake, Indore in collaboration with Indore Municipal Corporation and the Environmental Planning & Coordination Organisation (EPCO) of the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
18. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and the Secretary General inaugurated the event in the presence of cabinet ministers from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, with guests including the Director General (Forest) & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC, the Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC, and other senior officials from the Government of India and Government of Madhya Pradesh.
19. The celebration commenced with the ceremonial inauguration of an exhibition which featured contributions from more than 25 exhibitors representing various States, technical organizations and government departments.
20. Three national publications were released during the event, namely the revised guidelines for the *National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA), Management*

Effectiveness Tracking Tool: A Practitioners' Guide, and the Compendium on Phyto-diversity of Ramsar Sites in India.

21. Additionally, a series of educational videos developed jointly by MoEF&CC and the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) and a series of film festivals entitled "Wetlands for Life Forums & Film Festivals" was also launched during the event.

Building on 2024 successes

22. The Secretariat is dedicated to elevating future campaigns and, recognizing the importance of this commitment, comprehensive research on previous World Wetlands Day events will be conducted. This will involve a thorough analysis of key aspects such as event themes, participant engagement, logistical challenges, and feedback. The insights gained from this research will play a crucial role in the preparation for World Wetlands Day 2025 and in formulating effective approaches to build upon the success of this year's event.