

## Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group, 3 June 2024

The Co-Chairs of the Management Working Group, Brazil and Canada, welcomed delegates and introduced the agenda comprising:

- Review of progress to date and introduction of the “Co-Chairs’ draft”
- Discussion on “Co-Chairs’ draft”
- Presentation of Working Group report to SC63

### 1. Review of progress to date and introduction of “Co-Chairs’ draft”

The Co-Chairs of the Strategic Plan Working Group provided an overview of the process guiding the development of the 5th Strategic Plan (SP5), highlighting workshops and online meetings, as well as a collection of views on the draft’s structure, goals and targets, including on improving consistency with SP4 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). They suggested a discussion on the non-paper developed by the Co-Chairs, with the aim of finding common ground on goals and, if time allows, on targets.

The consultant provided an overview of the process and the work to date. He noted that the human-wetland relationship is broken and highlighted the need to reverse the degradation and loss of wetlands, including by enhancing the Convention’s implementation. He stressed that the non-paper is the outcome of an extensive process of review and work by the Working Group. He underscored priority issues; the aspiration to streamline SP5’s content and align it with SP4 and the GBF; and the need to embed CEPA activities throughout.

### 2. Discussion on the “Co-Chairs’ draft”

The Co-Chairs opened the floor for general reflections on the set of goals included in the non-paper.

Members noted, among other things, that the text is shorter than for previous Strategic Plans and the goals have been amended since the last Working Group meeting, and requested clarifications. They noted the potential overlap between the suggested Goals 2 and 3, and proposed to focus on strengthening conservation and on reversing degradation and loss in separate goals. They proposed that headline indicators should be developed for activities to implement the goals; and that focus on wise use might be elevated by making it Goal 1.

The Co-Chairs provided the necessary clarifications on the draft, noting that any changes from the previous draft were based on Parties’ comments, and stressed that the numbering of the goals does not imply any prioritization. They opened the floor for specific reflections on each goal.

On Goal 1, namely to “achieve the wise use of wetlands”, several delegates suggested integrating wise use with wetland conservation. Some highlighted the importance of having a stand-alone goal on wise use. One delegate cautioned against restructuring the goals, noting this might result in an imbalanced distribution of targets specified under each goal. The consultant noted that currently Goal 1 is based on the relationship between humans and wetlands. One delegate emphasized the importance of recognizing the intrinsic value of wetlands. Several delegates highlighted the importance of pointing at synergies in implementing the goals.

The Co-Chair observed overall agreement on the wording of Goal 1 and a stand-alone goal on wise use, while referring to conservation in subsequent goals.

Regarding Goal 2, namely “conserve existing wetlands and reverse degradation and loss”, delegates suggested: separating the references to conservation and the effective management of wetlands of international importance, and addressing drivers of wetland loss separately; focusing on reversing wetland degradation and loss; discussing the timeframe for the goal and SP5; and recognizing a disconnection between humans and wetlands.

A member proposed that “by 2030 the impacts of key global drivers of change of wetlands degradation and loss are reversed and effective restoration of degraded wetlands is done to benefit all life on Earth and ecosystem services”.

Another suggested focusing on impacts, proposing alternative language for the goal’s statement to read that “by 2030 the impacts of key drivers of wetlands loss and degradation are addressed, and effective restoration actions are implemented to reverse loss and degradation of wetlands for the benefit of all life on Earth”.

Following discussions, the Co-Chairs noted general agreement on Goal 2 to “address and reverse wetland loss and degradation” and on the goal’s statement that “by 2030 the impacts of key drivers of wetlands loss and degradation are addressed and effective restoration actions are implemented to conserve wetlands and address their loss and degradation”. A member noted the need for further work on the targets before finalizing the text on goals.

On Goal 3, namely “effectively conserving and managing Wetlands of International Importance”, delegates discussed potential references to conservation. The Co-Chairs highlighted the specific focus of the network of Wetlands of International Importance.

Delegates agreed on rewording the title to “conserve and manage Wetlands of International Importance effectively”.

The Co-Chairs clarified that discussions on the draft Strategic Plan will continue at an additional session of the Working Group based on the deliberations so far.