

Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group, 5 June 2024

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Brazil and Canada, welcomed participants and invited them to confirm language agreed on Goals 1, 2 and 3. Following discussions, Working Group participants confirmed agreed language on the first three goals and focused on their **ordering**.

The Working Group discussed whether the goal on addressing and reversing wetland loss and degradation should precede the goal on achieving the wise use of wetlands, stressing that both alternatives have merit and arguments could be made in favour of both. Following discussions, they concluded that the goal to “address and reverse wetland loss and degradation” should come first, followed by the goal to “achieve the wise use of wetlands”, with the goal to “conserve and manage wetlands of international importance effectively” coming third.

On **Goal 4**, to “enhance implementation of the Convention,” discussions focused on the goal statement, which originally read that “by 2030, sufficient means of implementation of the Convention, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, are provided and available and equitably accessible to all Contracting Parties and other wetland stakeholders”.

Working Group participants suggested: including references to developing country Parties, least developed countries and small island developing states; switching the order of the elements of means of implementation to “scientific and technical cooperation, capacity building and financial resources”; specifying the entities that will be providing means of implementation and resources; including reference to critical actions that Contracting Parties will implement at the national level; explicit reference to resource mobilization; and clarifying the reference to “other wetland stakeholders”.

Delegates offered alternative formulations of the goal, ending up with multiple options. Following lengthy consultations, delegates focused on a proposal by the Co-Chairs that “by 2030, the Convention is effectively implemented, including through increased scientific and technical cooperation, [increased] capacity building, [increased] awareness of wetland issues, and [increased] resource mobilization, recognizing the specific needs of developing country Parties and the need for equitable access to resources, and cooperation with wetland stakeholders is strengthened and supported.”

Several delegates voiced support for the Co-Chair’s proposal, with one noting the repetitive use of “increased” could be improved by replacing it in same places with “enhanced”. Working Group participants noted elements not adequately captured in the proposal, including focus on actors that are implementing; wording on synergies with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; and achieving organizational robustness of the Secretariat. The Co-Chairs highlighted that wording on synergies will be included in an additional section of the Strategic Plan and reminded delegates that the goal statement is intended to be captured in one sentence.

Following discussions and bilateral consultations, the Co-Chairs proposed, and delegates agreed, “parking” the accompanying statement for Goal 4, withdrawing their compromise suggestion. Discussions will continue on the basis of the following fully bracketed options, some of which include additional brackets:

Option 1: [By 2030, sufficient means of implementation of the Convention, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, are provided and available and

equitably accessible to all Contracting Parties and other wetland stakeholders.]

Option 2: [By 2030, sufficient means of implementation of the Convention through scientific and technical cooperation, capacity-building and financial resources are provided [and available and equitably accessible] [on an equitable basis] to [all] Contracting Parties, particularly developing [countries] [country Parties] and cooperation with wetland stakeholders is strengthened and supported.]

Option 3: [By 2030, the implementation of the Convention is enhanced through scientific and technical cooperation, capacity building and resource mobilization.]

Option 4: [By 2030, Contracting Parties undertake critical actions towards goals of the Convention in partnership with other parties and other entities, in particular with regard to scientific and technical advice and guidance, resource mobilization, public awareness, raising visibility of the Convention and importance of wetlands, and capacity building. The Ramsar Secretariat will also play a crucial role in supporting Contracting Parties' actions, raising awareness and visibility of the Convention, as well as mobilizing resources to support enhanced implementation. Other stakeholders including ...will also play a crucial role in the implementation of the Convention in addition to actions by Contracting Parties and the Secretariat.]

Option 5: [By 2030, the Secretariat has achieved the necessary organization robustness to support the effective implementation of the Convention, responding to its needs regarding administrative arrangements...]

On the **timeframe** to achieve the goals, participants of the Working Group decided to shift the timeframe from 2030 to 2034, noting a review of the Strategic Plan could be possible, after two triennia, coinciding with the end of the period of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Participants noted the importance of aligning the Strategic Plan with national reporting processes; and suggested a tight connection between future iterations of the Global Wetlands Outlook and the Strategic Plan.

Delegates shared their views on **targets** relating to the goal "Achieve the wise use of wetlands", titled "Recognize and transform human's relationship with wetlands through enhancing our understanding of wetland values, functions and services and wise use"; "Ensure inclusive participation in wetland decision-making and address the needs of wetland communities"; and "Enable people to take action for wetlands".

They highlighted important additional elements, including maintaining the ecological character of all wetlands through implementing an ecosystem approach; safeguarding the multiple values surrounding wetlands; enhancing the role of wetlands in disaster risk reduction and climate change; innovation in wetland use; and the role of wetlands for supporting food security and poverty reduction.

The Co-Chairs suggested reflecting new elements in an additional target 1.x, titled "Safeguard the multiple values provided by wetlands, including for sustainable fisheries and agriculture to support food security and poverty reduction." One delegate provided wording for another additional target, titled "Target 1.x Conduct wetland positive actions for sustainable use".

Discussions focused on the first target, which originally read: "Recognize and transform human's relationship with wetlands through enhancing our understanding of wetland values, functions and services and wise use." Some delegates expressed concerns on the notion of "transforming", and

tabled an alternative to “Recognize the values, functions and services of wetlands by incorporating wise use and an ecosystem approach within policy and planning at all levels.”

Following lengthy discussions without reaching consensus, the Co-Chairs discussed the way forward, which, regarding the first target, includes all suggestions in brackets for further discussion. Bracketed proposals for targets under the goal on wise use are:

- **[Recognize the values, functions and services of wetlands by incorporating wise use and an ecosystem approach within policy and planning at all levels.**
Take effective legal, policy and administrative measures at all levels, to promote the values wetland provide to people and nature and the contributions wetlands make to achieving sustainable development to transform the human-wetland relationship from one of exploitation, extraction, and depletion to one where humans and nature live in harmony.];
- **[Safeguard the multiple value provided by wetlands, including for sustainable fisheries and agriculture to support food security and poverty reduction.];**
- **[Conduct wetland positive actions for sustainable use**
Proactively preserve through [national and local] landscape/seascape planning, manage and create wetlands for biodiversity conservation and climatic resilience, and innovative and sustainable utilization of wetlands and associated resources for sustainable development]; or as an alternative [water resources, climate change and land-use policy management, planning and regulation identify measures to protect and restore wetlands]
- **[Maintain the ecological character of wetlands through implementing an Ecosystem Approach**
Take effective legal, policy and administrative measures at all levels, by 2034, to ensure the ecological character of wetlands is maintained and an ecosystem approach is applied to the management of all wetlands.]

The Co-Chairs stressed that the Working Group is running behind schedule, adding that virtual meetings will be required to reach agreement. They “parked” the discussions on the targets, noting that only wise use was discussed due to lack of time. They invited comments on the targets and noted they will prepare a table, including the goals and targets, for delegates to have a clear picture of the added value of different proposals and facilitate merging and compromise. They noted that three virtual meetings will be scheduled, provisionally in early July, August, and September, with a view to finalizing the draft resolution by the deadline of 20 November 2024. They thanked all participants for their active engagement and closed the Working Group meeting.