

Meeting of the 5th Strategic Plan (SP5) Working Group

Tuesday 10 September 2024, 21.00 – 24:00 CEST (by videoconference)

Participants

- Working Group members: Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe, Chair of the STRP, BirdLife International
- Observers: Hungary
- Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General
- Consultant: Rob McInnes

Minutes

1. The Co-Chair, ZuZu Gadallah (Canada) opened the meeting, welcomed participants and indicated she would be chairing the meeting. The Co-Chair informed the Group that the aim of the meeting was to finalize targets for Goal 3 and begin discussions on the Goal 4 statement and targets.
2. The Co-Chair informed participants that the Co-Chairs had prepared a draft, draft resolution which will introduce the draft 5th Strategic Plan and that this draft would be circulated to Working Group members following the meeting for their review and comments. The Co-Chair further informed participants that the Consultant had revised the zero draft of the Strategic Plan to better align with the newly agreed language of the goals and targets as well as to incorporate and reflect the comments received from Working Group members during previous meetings. An annotated version of this revised document would be shared following the meeting for review and comments by Working Group members.
3. The Co-Chair expressed that in the view of the Co-Chairs there is an important question to be answered. In the revised, annotated zero draft of the Strategic Plan, the Consultant has included proposed activities as a placeholder. Should such activities be included as part of the 5th Strategic Plan or, alternatively, is it preferable to consider them with implementation guidance to be developed at a later time? The Co-Chair noted that, given the upcoming deadline for submission of the draft Strategic Plan to SC64 and the number of global events such as the COPs of the Rio Conventions, there may not be sufficient time to negotiate the activities within the Plan itself. The Co-Chair welcomed views from participants on this question. A participant expressed that having activities in the Plan would be useful and that perhaps the activities could be kept at a high level. Other participants expressed that the timeframe may limit the development of activities to be included in the Plan. Another participant expressed that activities are important in providing understanding and context to the Plan and should be included if possible. The STRP Chair noted that having a certain level of detail was useful to support the development of indicators. The Co-Chair welcomed feedback and indicated this question would be discussed further. The Co-Chair also proposed next steps for the Working Group and a timeline for comments.
4. The Co-Chair introduced Goal 3 informing participants that text still needed to be finalized for two targets where text was still in brackets. The proposed target on completion of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) was discussed. Participants expressed views including that: an RIS target was not needed, an RIS target might fit better under Goal 4, RIS completion could be addressed as an

activity or included in the draft resolution, and the target could remain where it is. The Chair of the STRP stressed the importance of having up to date information and suggested that the Plan in some way stress the importance of enhancing reporting. It was agreed to defer further discussion on an RIS target for discussion during Goal 4 targets. The Co-Chair invited the STRP to bring forward recommended indicators.

5. The proposed Goal 3 target on protection of Wetlands of International Importance and protected areas networks was discussed. Views included the importance of including protected areas beyond the Ramsar Sites and having a linkage to the KM-GBF 30% target. It was noted that target 1 under Goal 3 included language on increasing areas under protection and perhaps the proposed target was not needed. After further discussion it was agreed that the proposed target was duplicative and not needed.
6. The Co-Chair provided an overview of progress on developing a Goal 4 statement and targets, noting that agreement had been reached on naming the Goal *Enhance Implementation of the Convention* and on a target on wetland inventory. The Co-Chair noted that the elements of targets proposed under Goal 4 tended to focus around 1) cooperation among partners and stakeholders, 2) elements of information sharing, scientific and technical cooperation and capacity building, 3) CEPA, 4) reporting, and 5) financing. The Co-Chair explained that these elements had been organized by subject matter for possible targets and shared on-screen on a document which could be used to facilitate discussion on Goal 4. The Working group agreed to proceed on the basis of the document as shared on screen.
7. The on-screen document presented three alternatives for a Goal 4 statement. A participant raised the desire to add a target on legal and policy measures, which would need to be reflected in the goal statement. After discussion there was agreement on a Goal 4 Statement, *By 2034, the implementation of the Convention is enhanced through scientific, technical and other cooperation, capacity building, [effective legal and policy instruments] and resource mobilization* with a placeholder for further discussion on the inclusion of legal and policy instruments.
8. A target on cooperation among partners and stakeholders was discussed. Following discussion, the following text for a target was agreed to, *By 2034, Parties collaborate effectively with partners and stakeholders at all scales (global, regional, transboundary, national, local and site levels) and across all sectors to achieve the goals of the Convention, increasing complementarity with other multilateral processes.*
9. Discussion followed on a target on improving information, data and technology sharing with differing views with some expressing concerns about the country burden of reporting, lack of country capacity, sensitivities in sharing information and data, and the need to align with existing reporting processes. Other views included the importance of having data and evidence to inform decision making and action. A number of participants supported the inclusion of the knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). Given there was not agreement on text, it was proposed by the Co-Chair that the two alternative texts would be retained for further discussion. Alternative texts are: alt 1 *[By 2034,] Improve information, data [and technology] sharing [to support evidence-based policy and management decision-making, promote scientific and technical cooperation and capacity-building related to wetland conservation, wise use, monitoring, and reporting, taking into account the knowledges of Indigenous peoples and local communities [with FPIC]* and alt 2 *Evidence-based policy and*

management decision-making and monitoring and reporting is supported through improved information and data sharing, scientific and technical cooperation and capacity building and technology transfer, taking into account the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local communities with FPIC. There also was a general discussion on how to reference the time bounds for each target. The Co-Chair proposed adding this question to the request for review of the draft strategy, which was agreed.

10. Discussion followed on a target for CEPA (communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness). There was general agreement on the importance of a CEPA target and after discussion it was agreed to use the same or similar language as the 4th Strategic Plan, *Wetland conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity [development] [building], education, participation and awareness.*
11. The Co-Chair moved to the next subject, reporting, and noted an emailed suggestion on enhancing national reporting. It was suggested that it may now be covered under data sharing. One participant raised the matter of RIS updates and proposed retaining it as a target under goal 3 or moving it under goal 4 (RIS and national reporting). A proposal on improved reporting was put in brackets for later discussion.
12. Discussion followed on legal and policy measures. A participant asked for information on the rationale for the proposed target. The proponent responded that the lack of legal and policy measures is one of the most significant challenges of countries in implementing the Convention and that strengthening legislative and policy frameworks is an essential element of implementation and should be reflected as a target noting that other Conventions have similar targets. Several participants expressed reservations regarding a target of a legal nature in a non-binding Strategic Plan. The proponent indicated that it is not uncommon to have targets of a legal nature in a non-legally binding Strategic Plans and provided examples. It was agreed to advance the proposed target in brackets for further consideration.
13. The Co-Chair moved to the next subject, reporting, and noted an emailed suggestion from a Contracting Party on enhancing national reporting. It was suggested that it may now be covered under data sharing. One Party raised the matter of RIS updates (discussed earlier) and proposed retaining it as a target under goal 3 or moving it under goal 4 (RIS and national reporting). A proposal on improved reporting was put in brackets for later discussion.
14. Discussions followed on a target on financial resources. A participant expressed the view that enhanced financial support for developing countries is critical for these countries to implement the Convention and address the challenges they face. Several participants expressed that they needed to consult internally on the matter and that the proposed target could be discussed at a future time. It was agreed to advance the proposed target in brackets.
15. The Co-Chair reminded participants of the agreed-upon next steps and timeline noting that the draft, draft resolution and the annotated draft Strategic Plan updated to reflect text agreed during this meeting would be shared with the Working Group members by the end of the week, 11 September. Working Group members would have until 24 September to provide their comments in writing to the Secretariat for both documents. The Consultant would then update the documents for circulation to Working Group members by 4 October such that the documents could be reviewed by members and discussed at the next virtual meeting which would be scheduled for 10

October. The Co-Chair reminded the STRP of the invitation to provide draft indicators that could be discussed at the next meeting.

16. The Co-Chair invited participants to reflect further on two questions; 1) whether activities should be included as part of the 5th Strategic Plan or, alternatively, whether it is preferable to consider them as guidance or as part of an implementation plan to be developed at a later time, and 2) how the time-bound nature of certain targets should be expressed in the Strategic Plan. Views on these two questions should be submitted in writing to the Secretariat with the questions to be discussed at the next meeting.
17. The Co-Chair thanked members for their cooperative spirit and flexibility during the meeting expressing that while there was considerable work still to be done, much was accomplished during the meeting. The Co-Chair then adjourned the meeting.