

**Proposed draft resolution
on strengthening action on culture and wetlands**

Submitted by Uganda

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached draft resolution for consideration by the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Financial implications: None.

Secretariat cover note

The Secretariat notes that the Ramsar Culture Network as referenced in the draft resolution has not been formally established within the Convention. Given this, should Parties desire to establish a Ramsar Culture Network as a formal body with the Convention as called for in paragraph 10, guidance on the purpose, structure, governance, outcomes and resourcing of a Ramsar Culture Network would be beneficial.

Paragraph 11 requests the Secretariat to investigate options for developing a targeted programme of culture-related work in support of relevant objectives defined in the Convention's fifth Strategic Plan. The view of the Secretariat is that this paragraph requires greater detail on the scope of the proposed investigation and how the identified options would be evaluated or considered by Parties.

The draft resolution does not require a review by the STRP.

Draft Resolution XV.x on Strengthening action on culture and wetlands

1. RECALLING Resolution VIII.19 on *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites*, Resolution IX.21 on *Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands* and Resolution XIII.15 on *Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and their contribution to climate-change mitigation and adaptation in wetlands*;
2. TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT Resolution VII.8 on *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous peoples' participation in the management of wetlands*;
3. [NOTING the emphasis in the fifth Strategic Plan of the Convention for 2025-2030 (Resolution XV.[xx]) on the importance of wetlands for human culture, and on the fact that embedding cultural values and traditions into wetland management is one of the most effective drivers of achieving good ecological condition in wetlands, as well as the need highlighted in its Target 1.2 for the rich cultural connections and traditional knowledge that have sustained the connection between wetlands and people to be recognised, and the role in this for the Ramsar Culture Network, as noted in the actions for delivering Target 3.1];
4. WELCOMING the renewal in 2022 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of their commitment to the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, which offers a key mechanism for cooperation between relevant bodies including the Convention on Wetlands;
5. AWARE of related opportunities for further cooperation on issues of culture and wetlands with other international bodies and initiatives, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme, the Global Network of Water Museums, the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage; the IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species in the context of that Convention's COP Decision 14.10, among others;
6. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the work of the Ramsar Culture Network and its predecessor Culture Working Group, since the establishment of the latter in 2005 at the request of the Contracting Parties in Resolution IX.21 and thereafter under the supervision of the Standing Committee;
7. CONCERNED however that operating in recent years entirely on a voluntary basis and with no material resources, the capacity of the Network to continue championing the cultural aspects of wetlands and to provide support for Parties on knowledge sharing and other relevant initiatives has become severely reduced; and
8. DESIRING to revitalise the position of the Convention on Wetlands as a key contributor to global approaches for wetland conservation and wise use that effectively integrate multiple systems of knowledge and values, including the contribution of traditional and contemporary human culture;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. REQUESTS the Secretariat to strengthen its cooperative links with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Convention on Biological

Diversity in the context of the Joint Programme of Work on Biological and Cultural Diversity, and to seek similar cooperation with other international bodies and initiatives sharing similar concerns;

10. REAFFIRMS the value to the Convention of the Ramsar Culture Network, and URGES Contracting Parties and INVITES others to consider providing resources and other assistance to the Secretariat so as to facilitate a revival of the Network and the support it can provide towards the implementation of relevant decisions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
11. INVITES the Secretariat, in conjunction with the Ramsar Culture Network and with advice from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel as appropriate, to investigate options for developing a targeted programme of culture-related work in support of relevant objectives defined in the Convention's fifth Strategic Plan;
12. ENCOURAGES Parties to include representation of individuals or groups with cultural expertise, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in the membership of Ramsar National Committees; and
13. ENCOURAGES Parties and others to ensure the greatest possible success of World Wetlands Day in 2026 on its agreed theme of "Wetlands and traditional knowledge: celebrating cultural heritage", by contributing case studies, promoting public awareness, highlighting Wetlands of International Importance with important cultural values, launching wetland cultural heritage conservation initiatives, and other forms of supportive activity.