

**Proposed draft resolution on achieving the equitable and effective conservation of wetlands as protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)**

*Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Zimbabwe*

**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.

*Secretariat cover note*

The draft resolution proposes mechanisms to integrate Wetlands of International Importance into national and international conservation frameworks, emphasizing equitable governance, improved financial accessibility, and robust monitoring systems.

The Secretariat notes that at the time of publication of this draft resolution, the Convention has not published the new Global Wetland Outlook (GWO). For this reason, the reference in paragraph 3 may be clarified as "GWO, in press".

The draft resolution references earlier resolutions on Wetlands of International Importance; however, it may need to elaborate further in the operative paragraphs to make distinctions in management practices or criteria. The Convention has adopted various Resolutions supporting the integration of wetlands into protected areas, including Resolutions VII.19, XII.7, VII.12, XIII.1, VIII.14, IX.22, and XIV.6. Since this is the first time Contracting Parties would be considering the role of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), the draft resolution may benefit from further clarification to avoid duplication or operational confusion.

Specifically:

- Paragraph 8: may require further guidance or distinguishing criteria between wetlands recognized as OECMs, whether Wetlands of International Importance or other protected areas;
- Paragraph 22: may need more details to illustrate how updates to the Ramsar Information Sheet will enhance governance and improve accessibility to global databases;
- Paragraph 21(v): may need to be more specific on governance mechanisms to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are respected and upheld.

The draft resolution requires a review by the STRP.

## Introduction

*The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would like to invite the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands to review and approve the following draft resolution for consideration at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15).*

*The resolution seeks to align the approach to protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands. In particular, it seeks to support achievement of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (“Conserve 30% of land, waters and seas by 2030”), within which wetlands, including Wetlands of International Importance, can play a critical role. In addition, the resolution seeks to outline steps which Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel can take to support countries in accessing international nature finance mechanisms to achieve this goal.*

## Financial implications of implementation

*The draft resolution requests Secretariat activity only in areas in line with existing responsibilities, namely coordinating with other organisations and maintaining the Ramsar Information Sheet template, for which there should be no significant new cost associated.*

Paragraph (number and key part of text)	Action	Core budget cost (CHF)	Non-core budget cost (CHF)
22. Requests the Secretariat support Parties, in contributing to achievement of KMGBF Target 3, including by improving access to nature finance mechanisms	Secretariat to coordinate with other organisations (UNEP WCMC, CBD Secretariat, Global Environment Facility) to support and advise Contracting Parties. Secretariat to adjust Ramsar information sheet template.	N/A	N/A

**Draft Resolution XV.x on Achieving the equitable and effective conservation of wetlands as protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)**

1. NOTING WITH ALARM the ongoing loss and degradation of wetlands globally (Global Wetland Outlook, 2021) and underlining that a substantial increase and enhancement of the area of wetlands under equitable and effective conservation management is necessary;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING that wetlands offer important solutions to address biodiversity loss, mitigate climate change and support livelihoods, offering a cost-effective opportunity for ecological, societal and economic returns on investment from a range of public and private funding mechanisms as innovative approaches to addressing these challenges;
3. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the economic cost of wetland loss and degradation far outweighs the cost of conserving and restoring these critical ecosystems (GWO, 2025), and that there is an imperative need for increased funding, from all sources, for wetland conservation and restoration;
4. RECALLING Contracting Parties' obligations under the Convention to list sites and formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
5. RECALLING [Resolution IX.22](#) on Ramsar Sites and systems of protected areas; [Resolution XII.15](#) on management and conservation effectiveness of Ramsar Sites; [Resolution VIII.14](#) on management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands; [Resolution IX.6](#) on guidance for Ramsar Sites that no longer meet the criteria; and [Resolution VII.12](#) on Sites in the Ramsar List;
6. WELCOMING the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and recalling [Resolution XIV.6](#) on synergies and "the importance of Ramsar Sites for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Biodiversity Framework" (paragraph 43);
7. RECALLING Decision 16/25 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which requests Parties to the CBD that have not yet done so to revise or update their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as requested in Decision 15/6 of the same Convention, as soon as possible;
8. NOTING that a Wetland of International Importance may be a protected area, or alternatively may qualify and be recognised as an other effective area-based conservation measure (OECM), where legal, management or institutional frameworks are being fully applied to that geographic area;
9. FURTHER NOTING the potential for Wetlands of International Importance to further contribute to Target 3 of the KMGBF as protected areas or OECMs [, and Goal 3 of the Fifth Strategic Plan to designate and effectively manage XXX Wetlands of International Importance by 2030];
10. FURTHER NOTING the important opportunity to also identify and recognise as OECMs other wetlands that meet the criteria, which are not Wetlands of International Importance, which further facilitates the goals of the conservation and wise use of wetlands and contribution to KMGBF Target 3;

11. RECOGNIZING that the commitment of Contracting Parties to achieve wise use of wetlands and maintain their ecological character is well-aligned with the goals and targets of the KMGBF;
12. RECOGNIZING that many Contracting Parties need to develop national systems and policy, and institutional and financial frameworks for identification, recognition, monitoring and management of OECMs, and that the need to explicitly embed wetlands in these processes could further facilitate the integration of additional wetlands in area-based conservation;
13. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that, despite the existence of a range of existing private and public nature finance mechanisms, there is a need to improve their accessibility and application to the conservation and restoration of wetlands, while ensuring these mechanisms are equitably accessible;
14. [NOTING the Briefing Note on Wetlands and OECMs produced by the Convention’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel, which highlighted the limitations of current reporting on Wetlands of International Importance;] and
15. RECOGNIZING that as of [the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15)] Wetlands of International Importance cover [257,317,367] hectares and have the potential to significantly contribute towards delivery of KMGBF Target 3 based on the World Database on Protected Areas and World Database on OECMs, but that not all such wetlands are managed and/or recognised as protected areas or OECMs;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

16. REAFFIRMS the role of the Convention on Wetlands as the lead partner for the objectives related to wetlands in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the contribution of Contracting Parties through the Convention on Wetlands in delivering Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and other associated targets including Targets 2 and 4;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and National Biodiversity Finance Plans, where appropriate, to systematically prioritise the role of Wetlands of International Importance as either protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and of other wetlands (as OECMs) in meeting KMGBF Target 3;
18. ADOPTS the following CBD definitions of protected areas and OECMs:
  - i. Protected areas: “Protected area means a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives” (CBD Convention text);
  - ii. OECMs: “a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values” (CBD Decision 14/8);

19. INVITES Contracting Parties to embed Wetlands of International Importance, and other effectively managed wetlands into national systems of protected areas and/or OECMs, in support of KMGBF Target 3;
20. REQUESTS further work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Secretariat of the World Commission on Protected Areas and other relevant organisations, to update guidance to Contracting Parties on integrating Wetlands of International Importance into national systems of protected and conserved areas, including recognising, equitably governing and effectively managing wetland OECMs;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, with the support of the Secretariat of the Convention, the STRP, the International Organization Partners, Ramsar Regional Centres, the CEPA (Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness) Programme and other partners, to contribute towards the achievement of KMGBF Target 3 by:
  - i. Conserving wetlands identified as important via systems of protected areas and OECMs;
  - ii. Developing and updating site management plans or other management measures to achieve the long-term conservation of the site;
  - iii. Assessing existing Wetlands of International Importance not currently managed as protected areas or OECMs, to identify where formalisation of their protection, where possible and appropriate, would strengthen their achievement of positive biodiversity outcomes and solidify their contribution towards KMGBF Target 3;
  - iv. Undertaking consistent and regular monitoring of the biodiversity within protected areas and areas recognised as OECMs for their contribution to the conservation of important biological diversity and adapting the in-situ management based on the monitoring results and other evidence;
  - v. Ensuring a clear governance mechanism or structure is in place for the management of the Wetland of International Importance or other wetlands within protected areas or OECMs, which recognises and respects the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
  - vi. Ensuring all Wetlands of International Importance have up-to-date site boundaries recorded as spatial data that is usable within a geographic information system (GIS);
  - vii. Submitting site boundaries for qualifying Wetlands of International Importance to the World Database on Protected Areas and the World Database on OECMs to facilitate site safeguarding, business disclosure processes and targeting of investments in line with the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD);
  - viii. Developing financing solutions to fund wetland protected areas and OECMs, suitable to national circumstances, including through options outlined in the BIOFIN catalogue;
  - ix. Committing sufficient funding for the management of the Wetlands of International Importance or other wetlands within protected areas or OECMs for at least 25 years, and with the intent of management in perpetuity, in alignment with CBD guidance;

- x. Applying the OECM site-level tool, by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, for identifying OECMs; and
  - xi. Assessing the governance equity and management effectiveness of sites against universal standards, such as the IUCN Green List Standard, and to prioritize actions based on the findings;
22. REQUESTS that the Secretariat support Parties, in contributing to achievement of KMGBF Target 3, including by improving access to nature finance mechanisms, by:
- i. Working with Contracting Parties to share national experiences and case studies on the effective implementation of equitable and effective protected areas and OECMs;
  - ii. Updating the Ramsar Information Sheets to include a mandatory field on governance type for all Wetlands of International Importance, to ensure they can be reported in the World Database on Protected Areas or the World Database on OECMs;
  - iii. Working with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to support Contracting Parties in ensuring boundaries of Wetlands of International Importance are included in the Protected Planet platform on an ongoing basis, improving the accuracy and transparency of global data on wetlands, facilitating opportunities provided through the TNFD to identify nature-positive investment opportunities;
  - iv. Working with the CBD Secretariat to provide strategic advice, as appropriate, concerning national actions Parties may take to support collaboration, cooperation and synergies between the Conventions, to achieve the goals and targets of the KMGBF, including those actions which may be financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and
  - v. Providing input to the inter-secretariat consultation developing the draft programming directions and policy recommendations for the negotiations of the ninth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund; and
23. REQUESTS that the STRP, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, [by SCXX]:
- i. Continues to develop tools for, and standards on, managing wetlands and assessing governance equity and management effectiveness; and
  - ii. Provides technical support to Contracting Parties on delineating site boundaries and developing effective management and governance plans for sites.