

**14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

**“Wetlands Actions for People and Nature”
Wuhan, China and Geneva, Switzerland, 5-13 November 2022**

Ramsar COP14 Rep.5

**Draft session report
Day 4 – Tuesday 8 November
(Morning plenary session)**

10.15 – 12:45 Plenary session

Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee **(continued)**

18.16 Draft resolution on the Ramsar List

1. The President opened the morning plenary session by resuming discussions on agenda item 18.16, which had been tabled in the previous session, with the Secretariat noting that a revised version of the draft resolution had been made available on the Convention website as document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1 with the new title of *The Amended Draft Resolution on the Ramsar List*.
2. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** acknowledged the work undertaken by Algeria, as proponent of the draft resolution, and noted that its comments applied to both versions of the draft resolution. Supported by **Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Iran and New Zealand**, it expressed concern that the recommendations and procedures outlined in the operative text were inappropriate and inconsistent with the remit of the Convention. The United Kingdom recalled Article 2.5 of the Convention, which outlines that only Contracting Parties have the authority to delist Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). The aforementioned Parties, as well as **Cambodia, Gambia and Nepal**, opposed the revised draft resolution.
3. **Burundi, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the European Union (EU), Gabon and South Africa** requested additional time to review the revised draft resolution.
4. **Mauritius** agreed with the fundamental principles that Contracting Parties act in line with the Convention and respect international law, encouraging constructive discussions on this issue.
5. **Colombia, supported by Mexico**, requested clarification from the Secretariat on its procedure for verifying that Ramsar Sites fulfil the territorial criteria outlined in Recommendation 4.2 on *Criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance*, under Article 2 of the Convention. **Mexico** also noted that decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and the

International Court of Justice should be considered, and that it was not opposed to further discussions.

6. **Sierra Leone** opposed the revised draft resolution, expressing concern regarding the issue of “delisting”, and drew attention to potential challenges in using the United Nations Geospatial Network as a mapping reference, noting regional data gaps.
7. In response to comments, **Algeria** highlighted the amendments reflected in the revised draft resolution, stressing that the document does not address the issue of transboundary Ramsar Sites, and noted a minor amendment. It underscored the proposal’s aim to support the efficacy of the Convention processes, and emphasized its commitment to work with Contracting Parties to reach a consensual outcome.
8. **Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon** opposed the draft resolution, noting past work to review the draft resolution with Algeria by African Contracting Parties. Acknowledging the good will of the proponent, the Parties invited Algeria to reopen discussions, and to defer submission to the following COP.
9. **Sweden**, supported by **Benin, Gabon** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** requested clarification, noting its concern that the revised text retained the original document’s intention regarding “delisting” of Ramsar Sites.
10. **Morocco** requested that the Conference of the Parties avoid political debate.
11. The **President** established a contact group to take forward discussion of the draft resolution, and reminded the Conference that this outcome was required by 18:00 on Thursday 10 November. He requested that the Chair and rapporteur be appointed by the contact group members.
12. Noting the clarification requested by **Colombia** on Ramsar Site designation and verification procedures, and the **Secretariat’s** response recalling the text of document COP14 Doc.10 Rev.1 on *the Report of the Secretariat pursuant to Article 8.2 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance*, the **President** proposed that this be further discussed within the contact group.

<p>Agenda item 18: Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)</p>

13. The **President** reported that the Conference Bureau had discussed and agreed to admit the draft resolution on the environmental emergency in Ukraine to the Conference for its review and decision, and noted that the draft resolution had been published as document COP14 Doc.18.24 *Draft resolution on environmental emergency in Ukraine relating to the damage of its wetlands of international importance (Ramsar Sites) stemming from the Russian Federation’s aggression*.
14. Acknowledging the sensitivity of the issue, the **President** noted a request by the **Russian Federation** for sufficient time to review the draft resolution and that they opposed the formation of a contact group. He also noted the request by **Ukraine** that the document’s placement in the running order be decided by the Bureau. He proposed to retain discussions within plenary sessions, and invited the Bureau to consider the running order for ongoing consideration of draft resolutions at its meeting scheduled for the following morning.

18.8 Draft resolution on enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

15. The **Secretariat** introduced the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.8, drawing attention to information document COP14 Inf.1, containing the report on *the Second Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-related Conventions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Bern II)*, submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
16. Interventions were made broadly in support of the draft resolution, raising a number of specific observations, including on the value of synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), by **Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Georgia, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe on behalf of the Africa Region.**
17. Further synergetic initiatives were highlighted by **Cambodia, China, Colombia, Finland, on behalf of the Member States of the EU, South Africa, Switzerland, Togo, Thailand and Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Africa Region**, including the following:
 - the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
 - the World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
 - the World Coastal Forum;
 - the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
 - the Data and Reporting Tool (DART);
 - the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
 - the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);
 - the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
 - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
 - treaties on water.
18. **Brazil** recommended the creation of an open-ended working group, supported by **Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay**, to address the legal status of the Convention Secretariat, strengthen its relationship with other MEAs and increase the Convention's relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **Costa Rica** requested that deliberations begin after the negotiations on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework had been concluded at CBD COP15 in December 2022.
19. **Finland, on behalf of the Member States of the EU**, indicated that the establishment of an open-ended working group was premature, as further analysis of the legal and financial implications of establishing this group would be required.
20. Proposed amendments were made by **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland on behalf of the Member States of the EU, Indonesia, Japan, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Africa Region**, noting that these would be submitted to the Secretariat.
21. **UNEP** welcomed the draft resolution, and noted its work with Switzerland on the Bern II process, drawing the Conference's attention to its report in information document COP14

Inf.1. It highlighted a key recommendation of the report, on creating a cross-MEA working group for implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

22. Contracting Parties expressed a range of opinions on the use of the terms “nature-based solutions” and “ecosystem-based approaches”.
23. **The Nature Conservancy**, also speaking on behalf of the International Organization Partners of the Convention (**BirdLife International, IUCN, International Water Management Institute, Wetlands International, WWF and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust**), welcomed the discussions on MEA synergies, noting their potential, and expressed support for the alignment of the Convention’s fifth Strategic Plan with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
24. The **President** thanked UNEP and the Nature Conservancy for their key work. Noting general consensus, he invited the Secretariat to revise the draft resolution, taking into account comments and views shared by the Parties, and to submit a revised draft at a later session for further discussion.

Interpretation of consensus

25. The **President** invited the Secretariat’s Legal Advisor to provide clarification on the interpretation of “consensus” within the Convention.
26. The **Legal Advisor** noted that the Convention on Wetlands procedure is consistent with that of other United Nations frameworks, whereby the majority of proposals are adopted by consensus. The term is understood to mean “adoption of a decision without formal objections and vote”, and does not preclude Contracting Parties from submitting reservations. He also noted that consensus does not signify “unanimity”. This clarification was acknowledged by **Indonesia**.
27. The **President** closed the session at 12:45.