

**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.9

**Draft session report
Day 6 – Thursday 10 November
(Morning plenary session)**

10.00 – 12.40 Plenary session

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

1. The **President** invited the Chairs of the established contact groups, as well as the representatives of any informal groups, to report progress on deliberations on draft resolutions to the plenary session.
2. **Costa Rica** reported on the contact group discussions regarding the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives – Operational Guidelines*, acknowledging that the contact group had received the document compiling all comments and amendments by Contracting Parties for use in the group’s review, and noted that another meeting was necessary for further discussions.
3. **Australia** reported that a revised version of the draft resolution addressing the Strategic Plan of the Convention had been submitted to the Secretariat by the contact group, to be made available as document COP14 Doc.18.4 Rev.1.
4. **China** reported on the work of the contact group addressing the draft resolution on *establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the framework of the Ramsar Convention* in document COP14 Doc.18.22 Rev.1, noting the group’s constructive engagement by means of a roundtable discussion. It outlined the outcome of this collaborative work on amending the document, notably to propose that the International Mangrove Center be established as a Ramsar Regional Initiative, and to make the draft resolution more concise, adding that the revised version would be made available on the Convention website later that day.
5. **South Africa** reported on the contact group addressing the draft resolution on the Ramsar List in document COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1, noting that informal consultations had been held, following guidance received during the previous plenary session. General agreement was reached on deferring the submission of this draft resolution to COP15, though it noted that further discussion on the modalities of this deferral remained necessary and would take place in the contact group’s meeting following the session. **Algeria** reported on the informal

discussions held on the documents COP14 Doc.18.15 *Draft resolution on the status of Sites in the List of Wetlands of International Importance* and COP14 Doc.18.16 Rev.1 *Amended Draft resolution on the Ramsar List*, noting productive discussions that delivered a range of options. **Morocco** stressed that it was premature for the Conference to react to the options presented before discussions were concluded.

6. **New Zealand** provided a brief update on the draft resolution on *future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025* in document COP14 Doc.18.17, highlighting that consultations had resolved all outstanding issues, and that a revised version would be submitted.
7. The **President** drew attention to the Conference Bureau's proposal that agenda item 17 on the election of Contracting Parties to the Standing Committee for 2023-2025 be deferred to the morning plenary session on 12 November. This was accepted with no objections.
8. **Brazil**, supported by **Argentina**, requested clarification on when a revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.20 on the *protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions] [ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis* would be made available, noting that a contact group might be required for discussions to be concluded. The Secretariat reported that it would make this document available. The President invited interested Contracting Parties to join informal discussions on this draft resolution to clarify whether a contact group would be established.

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

9. **Ukraine**, as one of the 36 co-sponsors, introduced the revised version of the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.24 Rev.1, highlighting the proposal's aims and relevance in supporting the mandate and implementation of the Convention. The full statement, along with the joint statement delivered by Ukraine in plenary on 7 November, are annexed to the report of the Conference upon Ukraine's request.
10. Support for this draft resolution, which was co-sponsored by 36 Contracting Parties was expressed by **Albania, Canada, Czechia on behalf of the Member States of the European Union (EU), France, Georgia, Guatemala, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America**. They expressed general support for the request that the Secretariat undertake assessments of the Ramsar Sites referred to in the draft resolution, and provide a report to the following COP and updates to the Standing Committee. They condemned the aggression by the Russian Federation as a violation of international law and of the Convention, which prevents Ukraine from carrying out its obligations under Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Convention. They noted that waterbird species of international importance are also negatively impacted by this situation. Ukraine urged Contracting Parties to take a clear stand on the destruction of Ramsar Sites.
11. The **Russian Federation** strongly rejected the statements that it had committed violations of international law and of the UN Charter. Its full statement is annexed to the report of the Conference upon the Russian Federation's request.
12. **China and Nicaragua** also opposed the draft resolution, and China additionally noted that, in the Conference Bureau, it had opposed the submission of this document to plenary.

13. Concerns were expressed by **Bolivia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Venezuela** on the political nature of the draft resolution, recalling the scientific and technical mandate of the Ramsar Convention. These Parties underlined that it was outside the scope, mandate and objectives of the Convention, further requesting that it continue to focus on environmental and technical matters.
14. Abstention regarding the draft resolution was expressed by **Brazil and Gabon**.
15. **Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and Venezuela** stressed that the Ramsar Convention was not the appropriate forum for discussing this issue and noted the existence of other more suitable fora. Gabon and Venezuela further emphasized that attention should be given to the environmental impacts on wetlands in all conflict situations, and noted that other conflicts had damaged wetlands since the inception of the Convention, but that no similar draft resolutions had been adopted under the Convention.
16. The **President** acknowledged the divergence in views expressed by the Parties, and recalled Rule 39.1 of the Rules of Procedure, which provides that every effort shall be made to reach agreement by consensus before proceeding to a vote as a last resort. Statements were made: by the **Russian Federation** opposing both the establishment of a contact group and any further consideration of the draft resolution; by **Ukraine**, supporting further discussions with interested Parties in an informal capacity; by **Indonesia**, noting that the establishment of a contact group might enable the inclusion of all interested Parties in discussions; and by **Colombia**, expressing opposition to the principle of voting on environmental issues, supported by **Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine**. The **President** invited interested Parties to join informal consultations, and to report back to the plenary in order to reach a decision on the way forward. He also noted the **Russian Federation's** request that a quorum be ensured prior to any vote on this draft resolution.

18.1: Draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters

17. The Chair of the Committee on Finance and Budget, **Ms. Mariana Olivera West** (Mexico), noted that the Committee had held two meetings to discuss the draft resolution, and had provisionally approved the budget for the 2023-2025 triennium. She noted that a revised version of the draft resolution had been published on the Convention website as document COP14 Doc.18.1 Rev.1, and presented the minor changes that it contained, including on the 2023-2025 non-core fundraising priorities presented in Annex 4.
18. With no comments from the Contracting Parties, the **President** noted that the revised draft resolution would be addressed at a later session.

18.23 Draft resolution: Thanks to the Host Country, the People's Republic of China

19. The **United Arab Emirates**, as Host Country of COP13, briefly presented the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.23, which extends thanks to China and Switzerland for hosting COP14 and refers to the Wuhan Declaration.
20. **Japan** provided a number of comments, and noted its reservations on parts of the draft resolution. Japan further referred to the High-Level Ministerial Segment and the Wuhan Declaration, of which organization and drafting were coordinated by the Host Country,

stressing that the Wuhan Declaration is not a negotiated document and therefore should not be appended to the draft resolution.

21. The **President**, in response to Japan, noted the procedural and courtesy nature of the Wuhan Declaration, and added that a revision of the draft resolution would follow the model of previous Resolutions that provided thanks to Host countries.
22. **China** thanked the United Arab Emirates for drafting this document, welcomed the progress made during Conference deliberations to date towards concluding a safe, efficient and practical meeting. It noted the mutual trust and collaboration of all Parties which enabled this, and recognized the hard work and cooperation of the Convention Secretariat. China further suggested that equal gratitude be extended to the two host cities in the draft resolution.
23. The **President** requested revision of the draft resolution for subsequent discussion by Contracting Parties.

18.2 Draft resolution on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention on Wetlands (continued)

24. The **Secretariat** presented the revised version of the draft resolution contained in document COP14 Doc.18.2 Rev.1, noting some deletions and amendments following comments received.
25. **Czechia** requested more time to review the revised document.
26. **Canada** and **New Zealand** expressed a wish to postpone the discussion, and Canada proposed amendments to the draft resolution, noting there had not yet been adequate consultation on the relevant text.
27. **Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czechia, Iran, Pakistan** and **Zambia** indicated that more time was required before discussions could take place on changing the number of regions. Australia also noted that this would require further consultation at the national level and suggested that this draft resolution be deferred to the next COP.
28. **Sweden** withdrew its suggestion to change the number of regions, though expressed a wish to discuss this issue prior to the next COP, noting the links to legitimacy of decision-making at the regional level, and the need for time to discuss the issue of representation. **Pakistan** stated that it was not in a position to support changes to the regional groupings at this time, and **Argentina** agreed on deferring this draft resolution to the next COP. **New Zealand** welcomed the withdrawal of the proposal on changing the regional groupings.
29. The **President** deferred further discussions to the plenary session on 12 November.

Agenda item 19: Report of the Credentials Committee

30. **Indonesia**, as Chair of the Credentials Committee, provided an interim report, noting that the Committee had met three times and reviewed 119 credentials submitted in original form and two in digital form. Following the review of credentials, 110 were validated as of 9 November with the process ongoing. The Chair of the Credentials Committee invited Contracting Parties that had not submitted their credentials or had not fulfilled certain requirements to do so as soon as possible.

31. The **President** urged the Committee to take all actions possible to ensure that a quorum be achieved by the time the Conference discusses the revised versions of the draft resolutions on 12 November.

Closing remarks

32. The **President** noted that the first round of consultations on all the draft resolutions was completed and the second round on the revised versions would take place on 12 November, urging Contracting Parties to complete their consultations in a timely manner.
33. The **President** closed the session at 12.40.