

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 21-25 June 2021

SC59 Doc.24.6

Draft resolution on Wetland education in the formal education sector

Submitted by China and Republic of Korea

Secretariat cover note:

The DR refers to earlier Resolutions adopted by Ramsar COPs on CEPA, notably Resolutions VII.9, VIII.31, X.8 and XII.9. The DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

Draft resolution on Wetland education in the formal education sector

Action requested:

- The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached draft resolution for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

Information for Standing Committee

This draft resolution aims to provide further guidance to strengthen a specific component of the CEPA Programme, that is wetland education in the formal education sector. The development of a resolution focused on wetland education in the formal education sector stems from concerns by proponents that, while wetland education for schools has been a component of successive CEPA Programmes since Resolution VII.9 in 1999, guidance for this sector has been minor. It is hoped that this resolution may redirect attention to this important sector in recognition of the opportunity to reach young people in the formative years. Therefore, the proponents deem that:

- a focused resolution to promote mainstreaming of wetland education in the formal education sector as a component of the CEPA Programme can reinforce the importance of education as a foundation for life-long learning and as an opportunity to influence the mindset of the youth towards better understanding and appreciation of wetlands, and
- a focused resolution may provide more detailed recommendations on mainstreaming wetland education in school settings.

Financial implications of implementation

| Paragraph (number and key part of text) | Action | Cost (CHF) |
|---|--------|---------------------------|
| not applicable | - | no financial implications |

Draft Resolution XIV.xx

Promoting values and importance of wetlands through formal education

1. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Convention on Wetlands has long recognised and promoted a role for education in its work; and ACKNOWLEDGING also the role of the CEPA Oversight Panel in supporting the planning, implementation and review of CEPA-related work, including formal education, as part of the Convention's ongoing work;
2. RECALLING that the role of education and communication to increase public awareness was featured at COP3 in Regina, Canada; with progressive steps taken at COP4 (Montreux), COP5 (Kushiro), and COP6 (Brisbane) to more formally recognise the role of education and to work towards a dedicated Ramsar education programme;

3. ACKNOWLEDGING that the first COP-approved CEPA resolution was VII.9, *The Outreach Programme*, in 1999, which identified the general public, schools, indigenous communities and the private sector as different groups with different communication needs;
4. CONCERNED that specific guidance regarding the formal education sector in successive CEPA Programmes has been minimal and that, while schools and formal education are clearly featured in Resolution VII.9 with related recommendations, subsequent CEPA Programmes (Resolutions VIII.31 and X.08) only mention the “The Education Sector” as a stakeholder; ALSO NOTING that in the current CEPA Programme (Resolution XII.9), Goal 8 encourages the development and distribution of wetland education materials “for use in the formal education sector”, but no additional guidance on suggested approaches is provided;
5. NOTING that environmental education has been evolving as an interdisciplinary field since the late 1960s with focus on environmental literacy as well as an understanding of the relationship people have with their environment, and which has also expanded to include specific focus areas using terms as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Biodiversity Education;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING that UNESCO published “Education for Sustainable Development Goals” in 2017 to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that the United Nations General Assembly endorsed Resolution A/C.2/74/L48 “Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”;
7. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that UNESCO is currently inviting inputs from its Member States and stakeholders towards the new ESD for 2030 Roadmap, which aims to provide guidance for Member States and other stakeholders for the implementation of the new global framework “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs”;
8. COMMENDING Contracting Parties that have responded to recommendations in past CEPA Programmes and invested in wetland education materials, programmes, or curricula for the formal education sector in support of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;
9. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE to Contracting Parties and the Wetland Link International (WLI) for supporting the global expansion of wetland centres and wetland parks, which act as hubs for wetland education and contribute valuable services to the formal education sector, both at wetland sites and in the school setting;
10. RECOGNISING that while many Contracting Parties have CEPA action plans and programmes that include wetland education, further consideration can be made on how to effectively promote wetlands in formal education;
11. RECOGNISING that responsibility for formal education is not uniform across national jurisdictions, and that there are differences in how school education is delivered or how curricula are introduced or mandated in Contracting Parties;
12. ACKNOWLEDGING that environment-focused education in the formal school setting provides a foundation for appreciation of nature, development of conservation values, and a means to influence the mindset of students towards better understanding and appreciation of ecosystems in general;
13. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that learning about the environment both in the school setting and in nature can support life-long learning outcomes, particularly through experiencing wetlands;

14. AWARE that further guidance on supporting wetland education in the formal education sector may redirect attention to this important component of the CEPA Programme in recognition of the opportunity to reach the younger generation in the formative years;
15. AFFIRMING that education is equally important as other components of the CEPA Programme and that synergy among components can facilitate a more effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

16. URGES Contracting Parties to recognise the benefits of promoting wetland education topics in formal education to encourage a greater understanding of wetlands and their values;
17. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to explore and support strategies to further mainstream wetland education in formal education settings and to increase wetland education opportunities in their schools and learning institutions, such as:
 - i. inviting government authorities responsible for education to join the National Ramsar Committee, National Wetland Committee or other similar mechanisms as member to explore opportunities to introduce wetland topics and programmes into existing curricula;
 - ii. adopting a national or sub-national level approach to introducing wetland education topics in school curricula for schooling that are widely available and accessible for schools and teachers;
 - iii. establishing partnerships with wetland centres and wetland parks to enhance the development and implementation of school-based learning;
 - iv. adopting demonstration-school models, and school-to-school and network-of-schools models;
 - v. partnering where appropriate with the private sector to support dedicated grant schemes and various practical activities;
 - vi. identifying partnerships from existing programmes and initiatives such as the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention and mobilising resources through such partnerships;
 - vii. enhancing communication among the stakeholders on wetland education through CEPA National Focal Points;
 - viii. encouraging participation of schools in the celebration of World Wetlands Day;
18. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to recognise the critical role of teachers in improving the effective inclusion of wetlands in school curricula and to support capacity building of educators in wetland science, including school teachers, instructors and eco-interpreters in wetland centres;
19. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to take into account other sectors in education, such as curriculum development authorities, universities and in-service trainers, and national and

international teachers' associations where appropriate, that may assist in the introduction of wetland topics in formal curricula;

20. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to seek opportunities to support citizen science initiatives that are focused on wetlands and delivered by wetland-focused organisations;
21. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to utilise existing online education platforms offered by international and regional organisations such as UNDP Learning for Nature and UNEP Earth School and models of existing educational programmes with quality educational materials repackaged for schools and online access;
22. INVITES International Organisation Partners (IOPs) of the Ramsar Convention to review their programmes and identify aspects that can be repackaged and used in school education;
23. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties to share examples of good wetland education materials, programmes or curricula for the school education sector through the Ramsar website or through other media in cooperation with the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, especially the Ramsar Regional Centres, and with other relevant programmes and networks such as WLI, the global network of wetland centres;
24. URGES Contracting Parties to utilise the National Reports to provide specific information on wetland education in schools that are being supported in their countries;
25. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to include wetland education as an indicator in National Reports, analyse the progress of development and implementation of wetland education programmes based on National Reports in cooperation with the CEPA Oversight Panel, and report the progress to the Contracting Parties through the COPs towards the goal of mainstreaming wetland education in formal education; and
26. REQUESTS the Secretary General to coordinate with UNESCO and work to synergise Ramsar Convention's goal of mainstreaming wetland education in formal education with UNESCO's ESD for 2030 Roadmap.