



13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

“Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

Resolution XIII.5

Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

1. RECALLING that, through the adoption of Resolution XII.2 on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024* at its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved the Strategic Plan 2016-2024 “as the basis for the implementation of the Convention during this period”;
2. FURTHER RECALLING that, through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Parties decided “to undertake a review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 and to establish the modalities and scope for this review at COP13, taking into account *inter alia* the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services] and the coordination needs with regard to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020”, and instructed the Secretariat to facilitate this;
3. WELCOMING the publication of the *Global Wetland Outlook*; THANKING the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Ramsar Secretariat, the editors, and all involved in its production; and NOTING that it will provide a critical resource in the context not only of the review of Ramsar’s fourth Strategic Plan but also for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and other relevant processes;
4. NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which represents an opportunity to highlight the main achievements in the implementation of the Convention and future challenges;
5. RECOGNIZING that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many of which are relevant to the work of the Convention such as: SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”; SDG 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”; SDG 3 “Promote healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”; SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; SDG 6: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”; SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”; SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”; SDG 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”; and SDG 15 “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”;

6. RECOGNIZING that implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 makes an important contribution towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
7. RECOGNIZING that the National Reports of the Contracting Parties provide the opportunity to report progress and any difficulties in implementation;
8. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to all Contracting Parties that provided their National Reports for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13) and to all Contracting Parties that voluntarily submitted to the Secretariat their quantifiable and time-bound national and regional targets in line with the targets set in the Strategic Plan;
9. TAKING NOTE of the progress towards the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and its contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based on the information provided in the COP13 National Reports;
10. NOTING the contribution of the Convention to the work of IPBES, and in particular to the regional and global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services; and also NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan represents an opportunity to take into account the key messages from the *Global Wetland Outlook* and the approved messages from the Summaries for policymakers of the IPBES assessments, and to include recommendations in this regard;
11. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the support provided to Contracting Parties to implement the Strategic Plan by the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, intergovernmental organizations, International Organization Partners and non-governmental organizations; and
12. NOTING that the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan can complement the process of developing options for a new approach for advising on and supporting communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) in the Convention, as envisaged in Resolution XII.9, paragraph 9, for consideration at COP14;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Regarding the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

13. URGES Contracting Parties to continuously monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to continue to communicate progress as well as any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan in their National Reports and to their regional representatives in the Standing Committee; and REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its regular meetings, and on the basis of the information provided at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to assess progress and any difficulties in implementing the Strategic Plan;
14. RECOGNIZES that several Contracting Parties have established national biodiversity targets, strategies and action plans in line with the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and ENCOURAGES such Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to harmonize national implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan with implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), to mainstream wetland conservation and wise use issues in other national strategies and action plans as well as in national plans and reports in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

15. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to strengthen their mechanisms to enhance effective coordination among national and subnational statistical authorities responsible for reporting on the SDGs and in particular those related to wetlands;
16. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to elevate the importance of wetlands and the Convention to address the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDGs and to strengthen mainstreaming efforts at national and subnational levels;
17. ENCOURAGES the National Focal Points of Contracting Parties to engage their counterparts responsible for updating their NBSAPs, to take into account, as appropriate, the indicators for the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 and to seek to ensure that these indicators are taken into account, as appropriate, in the SDGs process;
18. ENCOURAGES Parties to allocate, from national and subnational budgets, financial resources for the implementation of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2021, and to report on implementation in the National Report to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14);
19. APPROVES the scope and modalities for the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan as contained in Annex 1 of the present Resolution;
20. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 56th meeting (SC56), to establish a Strategic Plan Working Group to conduct the review of the fourth Strategic Plan; the Working Group will include representation from all regions; the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will provide advice as appropriate; and other biodiversity-related Conventions (e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Migratory Species) will be invited to participate. The Working Group will report on the preparation and progress of the review at each meeting of the Standing Committee, and in accordance with the modalities indicated in Annex 1;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties that are also Parties to the CBD to actively contribute to the development of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework that ensures wetlands and the ecosystems services they provide are adequately covered;
22. REQUESTS the Secretariat and Parties, through their focal points, to actively participate in the preparatory process for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to ensure that issues relevant to wetlands are adequately covered;

Regarding the Ramsar Convention Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA)

23. URGES all Contracting Parties, and INVITES other governments, International Organization Partners, and other organizations and implementing partners, to continue to implement the Ramsar Convention Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) 2016-2024 (Resolution XII.9);
24. REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to continue to monitor CEPA issues at the national level within the Convention and the progress of implementation of the CEPA Programme, and to continue to advise the Standing Committee and the Secretariat on the CEPA work priorities at the national, regional and international levels;

25. FURTHER REQUESTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to present to the Standing Committee, at its 57th meeting (SC57), its proposal to assume the responsibilities assigned in Resolution XII.9 and, in accordance with Decision SC50-08 tasked to the Working Group on CEPA Implementation, to develop a new approach for supporting CEPA implementation, taking into account the work already carried out by the Panel and by the Working Group prior to COP13, and indicating which Parties have agreed to join the Panel's work for this undertaking, in order to ensure that, for this specific task, all six Ramsar regions are represented by Parties, noting that additional Parties beyond those six may also join efforts while striving to maintain regional balance and manageability;
26. REQUESTS the Standing Committee at SC57 to consider and approve the CEPA Oversight Panel's plan to develop a new approach for advising and supporting CEPA in the Convention, which *inter alia* provides for incorporation of the advice of the STRP, and complements the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group established in accordance with paragraph 20 of the present Resolution;
27. INSTRUCTS the CEPA Oversight Panel to develop a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention and to report at the 58th and 59th meetings of the Standing Committee (SC58, SC59) to provide an update on its progress, and at the 59th meeting to present its proposed new approach and a draft resolution on this subject to be submitted to COP14; and FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to take this matter further, for decision at COP14;
28. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its support for implementation of the CEPA Programme and, upon request, for the Panel's work to develop a new approach for advising on and supporting CEPA in the Convention; and
29. INVITES Parties, other governments, financial institutions and other implementing partners in a position to do so to make resources available for the implementation of the CEPA Programme at their respective national and regional levels.

Annex 1

Review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan: Scope and modalities

1. At its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), through Resolution XII.2, the Conference of the Contracting Parties approved the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, including the “Mission of the Ramsar Convention” and “A Vision for the 4th Strategic Plan”. It includes 19 Targets, organized under three Strategic Goals and one Operational Goal which supports them.
2. The Strategic Plan foresees that:
A review of the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan at COP14 will be done and the modalities and scope for this review will be established at COP13, taking into account inter alia the outcomes of the discussions of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the work of IPBES and coordination needs with regards to the review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
3. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is compatible with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Scope of the Review

4. The fourth Strategic Plan covers nine years, being three triennial periods between meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COPs). It finishes in 2024, which is the year when COP15 will take place. However, as the review will be conducted at COP14, in accordance with Resolution XII.2, it is effectively a mid-term review and will focus on assessing the implementation of the Strategic Plan from 2016 up to 2021, and on identifying for COP14 any necessary amendments. Any amendments to the plan will cover the remaining period, from 2022 to 2024.
5. At the time of the approval of the fourth Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties established indicators, which should therefore be used as the basis for determining achievement of the Goals and Targets of the Plan.
6. However, the review should also take into account the suggestions resulting from the expert group meeting of September 2015 and developments in the global environmental agenda, including the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
7. The review process should also provide a basis for the preparation of a fifth Strategic Plan to be considered at COP15.

Modality

8. Contracting Parties and the Secretariat are requested to evaluate their efforts in relation to the implementation of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, and to submit their evaluations explaining their achievements and challenges experienced to the Secretariat for delivery to the Standing Committee’s Strategic Plan Working Group according to a format and template provided by the Working Group.

9. The Strategic Plan Working Group established by the Standing Committee is to:
 - a) review, for consideration at SC59, the progress up to 2021 in implementing the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 against the adopted indicators, taking account of:
 - i) input from Contracting Parties;
 - ii) the conclusions of the *Global Wetland Outlook*, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel's 2018 assessment of the state of the world's wetlands and their ecosystem services;
 - iii) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and Targets;
 - iv) the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, in 2020;
 - v) the refinements to the indicators suggested by the expert group in September 2015 and relevant indicators developed by the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership, the outcomes of the relevant assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (global assessment, regional assessments, land degradation and restoration assessment, etc.); and
 - vi) developments in fora of other multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Convention on Migratory Species, African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement), and other relevant fora;
 - b) identify any potential refinements to the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators, including from the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be considered at COP14;
 - c) based on the review, identify any elements that can contribute to the preparation of a new strategic plan for the period after 2024; and
 - d) regularly report its progress to the Standing Committee.
10. The Standing Committee is to:
 - a) establish a timeframe for the tasks to be conducted by the Strategic Plan Working Group, monitor its progress and provide guidance as necessary; and
 - b) prepare a progress report on implementation of the fourth Strategic Plan, together with any proposed refinements to the Plan, and basic elements for the preparation of a proposed framework for a fifth Strategic Plan for the period after 2024, indicating the key elements, for consideration at COP14.
11. The Secretariat shall contract an appropriate consultant to assist with this process, including work for the Standing Committee and the Strategic Plan Working Group.

Indicative timeline

12. Table 1 below provides an indicative timeline of the key activities to be undertaken for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan.

Table 1. Indicative timeline of key activities for the mid-term review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 (final timeline will depend on final dates of COP14).

Date	Activity
COP13, October 2018 SC56, October 2018	Establishment of a working group of the Standing Committee to conduct the review of the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan
December 2018	Virtual / face-to-face meeting of the working group to discuss planning process and strategy
April 2019	Written submissions of views from Contracting Parties and stakeholders, in response to a notification, and global implementation report of the Convention provided to COP13 by the Secretariat
SC57, June/July 2019	Assessment of progress by the Standing Committee
	Approval of National Report format for COP14
August 2019	Issue of National Report format for COP14
November 2019	Virtual meeting of the working group to assess progress
May 2020	Inputs from Global Biodiversity Outlook-5 published and the IPBES global and regional assessments
SC58, June/July 2020	Discussion paper for SC58 written by the working group
September 2020	Submission of National Reports for COP14
October/November 2020	Assessment by Secretariat of National Reports for COP14
October 2020	Face-to-face meeting of the working group to agree on final document to be submitted to SC59
SC59, January 2021	Report and recommendation for any potential refinements to the fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators and any elements that can contribute to the preparation of a new strategic plan for the period after 2024 for COP14 consideration

Indicative budget

13. The Standing Committee at its 54th meeting¹ authorized the use of CHF 44,000 in 2018 to undertake the following review activities:
- A Strategic Plan Working Group meeting in Gland. Travel costs for six members, one from each Ramsar region eligible for funding (one meeting is estimated, the Working Group will decide if further meetings are necessary);
 - A consultancy to support the Standing Committee and Working Group.

¹ Decision SC54-26; see *Report and Decisions of the 54th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Annex 5 Report of the Subgroup on Finance*