



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.15

Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and their contribution to climate-change mitigation and adaptation in wetlands

1. RECALLING Resolution VIII.19 on *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites* and Resolution IX.21 on *Taking into account the cultural values of wetlands*, which recognize and highlight the cultural connections between communities and wetlands and encourage the Convention’s Contracting Parties to take cultural values into consideration in managing their wetlands and in designating them as internationally important sites;
2. RECALLING Resolution X.24 on *Climate change and wetlands*, Resolution XII.2 on *The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024*, and Resolution X.28 on *Wetlands and poverty eradication*;
3. RECOGNIZING the vital importance of wetlands and fresh water for human well-being, livelihoods, and food security; and NOTING that paragraph 1 of Resolution 64/292 of the United Nations General Assembly on *The human right to water and sanitation* “Recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”;
4. CONCERNED that wetlands are among the ecosystems most vulnerable to climate change¹; and ALSO CONCERNED that wetlands, which provide climate-change mitigation and adaptation opportunities to communities, are currently degrading rapidly;
5. NOTING that Article 7 of the Paris Agreement acknowledges that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socio-economic and environmental policies and actions;
6. NOTING that Decision 1/CP.21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on *Adoption of the Paris Agreement* recognizes the need for non-Party stakeholders “to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and

¹ Third Assessment Report, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner”;

7. ACKNOWLEDGING the important contribution that the Ramsar Convention has made through its application of resolutions on culture for the integration of cultural values in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, through *inter alia* initiatives such as the Ramsar Culture Network²;
8. NOTING the report of the Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas of IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas entitled *Sacred natural sites: guidelines for protected area managers* and the relevance of these guidelines in supporting wetland conservation and wise use under the Convention;
9. RECOGNIZING that efforts under the Ramsar Convention can contribute to addressing climate-change goals or actions set out in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
10. ACKNOWLEDGING the significant contributions made by indigenous peoples and local communities to wetland conservation and wise use through their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, including contributions to mitigating and adapting to climate change;
11. RECOGNIZING that the communities which are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (such as those in small island States), and which suffer the consequences of the increase of extreme weather events, are often communities that also suffer from socio-economic vulnerabilities, including poverty, indigence and exclusion;
12. ALSO RECOGNIZING projects and activities supporting conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in wetlands in all Ramsar regions and in further enhancing the work of the Ramsar Culture Network;
13. NOTING WITH CONCERN that owing to, *inter alia*, climate change and land and wetland degradation from a variety of anthropogenic pressures, a range of ecosystem functions, services and goods are increasingly at risk and indigenous peoples and local communities are particularly affected; and
14. CONSIDERING that, while climate change is a global issue, the innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are important to achieve the preservation, conservation and adaptation to climate change in wetlands;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

15. EMPHASIZES that environmental, social and cultural solutions including those of indigenous peoples and local communities will all be needed to achieve climate change targets, including through mitigation and adaptation actions, ecosystem conservation and protection as well as their restoration to enhance resilience and adaptive capacity, as well as innovative

² Note: the Ramsar Culture Network is an informal network of Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and others working together on issues and initiatives to further the connection of culture to conservation and wise use of wetlands.

infrastructure and land-use planning approaches, as appropriate; and RECOGNIZES that the Ramsar Convention can play a key role in making the links between societies, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and the integrity and significance of wetland environments;

16. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and INVITES interested organizations and networks, to protect, support and promote the use of cultural values, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in adapting to the increasing negative impacts of climate change, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems;
17. INVITES Contracting Parties to include in their National Reports to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14), as appropriate, case studies, including those developed by indigenous peoples and local communities, that demonstrate how cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices contribute to significantly increasing the resilience of wetlands to climate change;
18. INVITES the Ramsar Culture Network, subject to the availability of resources, to continue its work as a mechanism to address wetland cultural issues in order to share lessons learned and to guide Contracting Parties in the implementation of relevant Resolutions of the Conference of Parties; and ALSO REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57), to consider working with interested Contracting Parties in developing terms of reference for the Ramsar Culture Network, to be considered at SC57;
19. INVITES the STRP, consistent with its scope, mandate and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider reviewing and revising the *Guidance: Rapid Cultural Inventories for Wetlands* with a view to ensuring that these guidelines are effective in evaluating the cultural ecosystem benefits of wetlands, including in relation to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, in advance of COP14; and ALSO REQUESTS that the STRP includes indigenous representation in conducting the proposed work, as appropriate;
20. INVITES Contracting Parties to take into account the Platform of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as appropriate;
21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other interested stakeholders to promote policy guidelines and governance tools to incorporate the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities on climate-change adaptation into management plans for wetlands, as appropriate;
22. REQUESTS the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, and INVITES Contracting Parties, Ramsar Regional Initiatives, interested organizations and networks, to continue to undertake enabling activities for the effective consideration of the cultural values of wetlands within wetland protection and management;
23. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate, to seek mechanisms that allow the conservation and transmission of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities including in the sustainable use of natural resources, with scientific advice;

24. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to continue to promote cultural diversity and traditional knowledge systems and practices within wetlands as part of holistic approaches to the planning and implementation of relevant national and regional policies, as appropriate, including poverty-reduction strategies, and to support Nationally Determined Contributions and the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the need to base such approaches on an understanding of current and projected functionality of specific wetlands, particularly where wetland services and functions may change over time and may be affected by climate change;
25. FURTHER ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to collaborate with indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant institutions (including planning- and wetland-management agencies) in the development of activities for the prevention of forest degradation and deforestation, sustainable tourism and recreation activities, as well as other livelihood activities in wetlands and peatlands in general, and especially in Ramsar Sites, in order to create opportunities to reduce poverty, support the integrity and significance of wetlands and contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation; and
26. INVITES Contracting Parties, when submitting mitigation and adaptation projects to development banks, the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and other funding instruments, to take into account the implementation of the present Resolution, including through supporting capacity building.