

FORUM: Environment Sub-Commission 2

QUESTION OF: International Cooperation to Conserve Wetlands to Safeguard Biodiversity

SUBMITTED BY: Uruguay

CO-SUBMITTERS: Costa Rica, Greece, Venezuela, Turkey, Egypt, Uganda, Montenegro, Fiji, Singapore, Malta, UNDP, Romania, Brunei Darussalam, Kenya, Finland, Sudan, Yemen, Bulgaria, Mali, Qatar, Oman

THE ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMISSION 2,

Alarmed by the connection between the ongoing climate crisis and biodiversity, as well as the ignored significance of preserving and maintaining the delicate balance of natural ecosystems,

Defining wetlands as fresh-water marshes, peat-lands, or an environment regularly flooded by fresh water,

Further recognizing the international and humanitarian danger the loss of biological diversity in the wetlands poses,

Bearing in mind the disastrous effects human agriculture has had on the wetlands and their natural denizens in the past,

Expressing appreciation for the Ramsar Convention, which seeks to classify and preserve the wetlands,

Recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1993, and its ambitions to preserve global biodiversity,

Taking into account the ambitions of the upcoming October 2020 Convention on Biological Diversity conference, and upholding such progress which has been made,

1. Requests the formation of a new, primarily legislative body of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), named the Commission for Wetland Preservation (CWP), focused on preserving the wetlands' distinctive biological diversity, which would work towards progress in terms of new legislation concerning the wetlands, designating which areas are classified as wetlands and which are the primary factors affecting biodiversity there, and encourage nations to follow any legislation passed through:
 - a) constructing a comprehensive database which would log nations' progress and signatures on progressive resolutions, as well as designated wetlands, in order to measure follow-through on legislation signed and ratified, and to monitor the use of the wetlands
 - b) designating fertile land where crops near the wetlands whose waste production has harmed biodiversity may be relocated, at no expense of the personal owners if the property is private
 - c) helping to resolve international disputes amongst members with the approval of the UN;
2. Calls upon the aforementioned new body of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the CWP, to actively protect the wetlands by implementing physical barriers or waste deposit systems, such that human activities not related to agriculture cannot harm the wetlands, and so that the wetlands are given time to properly coalesce from human damage naturally, including:
 - a) constructing living shorelines, which are environments made of mostly natural materials dedicated to preventing flooding, and include either replacing ancient environments or placing in this environment other organisms or habitats which absorb water (i.e. a salt marsh, for less turbulent shores; or mangroves), where stability also increases over time as the environment adapts
 - b) introducing waste filter systems in the wetlands at the point of drainage (further determined by the CWP), so that solid or recyclable waste could be filtered out with the water;

3. Encourages sustainable agriculture near designated wetlands where detrimental practices have been used in order to minimize waste runoff, water pollution, and the damaging effects of artificial pesticides, through designating which areas and practices specifically are causing the most harm, and taking initiative to relocate them away from the wetlands, and to implement sustainable agricultural methods by:
 - a) water harvesting, especially in areas with heavy rainfall, in order to recycle and minimize pollution, through direct collection with personal tanks or various irrigation methods, including, but not limited to: levees or flood banks
 - b) recycling biological waste and using it for fertilizer or other biological compounds, to minimize the continuous release of unnatural chemicals into the wetlands, further polluting their freshwater and harming the organisms
 - c) rotating crops so that soil can replenish its nutrients, (if the climate allows it), such that waste runoff could be combated by various organisms and bacteria, instead of being solely focused on one area, by planting different crops throughout the seasons in different designated areas, giving recovery periods for environments affected by human agriculture
 - d) utilizing natural pesticides instead of artificial, such that any waste or chemicals could be naturally combated by organisms in the wetlands, not negatively affecting or even killing them, and if currently unavailable in the nation, providing:
 - i. educatory services with instructions on how to make natural pesticides with resources in rural agricultural areas
 - ii. importing natural pesticides through the CWP
 - e) providing alternative water sources for cattle than just the wetland, as cattle bathing in and drinking from these sources can damage the wildlife that inhabits them by exposing them to bacteria and other unwanted illnesses
 - f) requiring fencing to prevent manure from damaging the water quality as well as limiting stream bank erosion, including:
 - i. filtering manure through mesh nets at drainage points of the wetlands, which would be emptied every week by individual property owners or, with publicly owned land, by the CWP, made of biodegradable materials;
4. Deplores the exploitative tourism the wetlands have been subjected to, which has resulted in incredibly harmful amounts of waste, and encourages nations which view tourism there absolutely essential to:
 - a) ensure any waste is disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner, and that no littering harms the environment
 - b) warn civilians not to harm animals or plants when walking, and to be conscientious of their actions when visiting designated and protected wetlands, according to any specific guidelines either imposed by the CWP or member states
 - c) implementing natural waste disposal systems near the wetlands which would include recycling any recyclable materials and any biological waste which could be converted into natural pesticides or other agricultural products, as mentioned in clause #3
 - d) establish national organizations to do special optional training and education for the guides about wetland tourism and provide certifications for those finished the curriculum which allows them to guide a wetland tour;
5. Draws the attention to the equally exploitative illegal fishing practices which have harmed the wetlands' biological diversity immensely, and implementing severe precautions administered through the CWP, such as:
 - a) monitoring fish populations and growth in the context of the environment and available nutrients, and analyzing whether there is an abnormal decrease that could be due to illegal fishing
 - b) upholding the barriers to be established around the wetlands, with regards to the marine populations

- c) encouraging the spread of information as to legal fishing practices, and assisting those who have committed the crime (after appropriate judiciary action is taken by their nation), to relocate and continue to fish ethically;
6. Proposes UN member states ban the mining of wetland soils for peat, coal, clay, sand, gravel, minerals, gemstones, phosphate and other materials, (which researchers at Mahidol University in Thailand have classified as a major threat to global wetlands), by allowing the CWP to create an inventory of such wetland-derived materials in order to prevent gratuitous and harmful mining of such materials, which would also classify which products they would be used for, as well as finding sustainable alternatives to those materials;
 7. Recommends that precautions be put into place by the CWP in order to ensure the safety and care of anyone affected by potential environmental collapse in the wetlands, including:
 - a) adequate relocation and available housing and resources in case of disaster, including food, clothing, and temporary professions when available
 - b) appropriate compensation given by their respective nations if their property is destroyed.