

FORUM: Environment Sub-Commission 2

QUESTION OF: International Cooperation to conserve wetlands to safeguard biodiversity

SUBMITTED BY: The Russian Federation

CO-SUBMITTERS: Hungary, Lao PDR, Algeria, Mongolia, Vietnam, Croatia, Cape Verde, Libya, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Palau, Marshall Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, Mongolia, Czech Republic, Azerbaijan, Gambia, European Union, Monaco, Tanzania

ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMISSION 2,

Referring to wetlands as a natural land with distinctive hydrology, soils, and vegetation such as marshes, estuaries, mangroves, mudflats, mires, ponds, fens, swamps, deltas, coral reefs, billabongs, lagoons, shallow seas, bogs, lakes, and floodplains,

Acknowledging the fact that wetlands act as buffers against growing natural disasters, pollution and dramatic increase of carbon emissions.

Recognizing that wetlands offer natural and efficient water filtration, food and shelter for hundreds of wildlife species, as well as educational, recreational, and agricultural opportunities,

Noting that wetlands lack international recognition and value, thus they are threatened and destroyed mainly through drainage, construction, and pollution,

Viewing with appreciation the vision presented in the Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, "Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all", at Conference Of Parties 12, (COP12) in November 2006, Nairobi, Kenya,

Considering the necessity for floodplains to remain undisturbed by human activity in order to enable the natural creation of wetlands, home to diverse ecosystems,

1. **Supports** the reinforcement of the Fourth Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024, approved by contracting parties at COP12, through international assessment of wetland resources and ecosystem benefits by the means of:
 - a) funded research and innovation from the scientific and engineering community in order to enable better understanding, trustworthy and factual awareness, through support from:
 - i. the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund
 - ii. international recognition of research done by the active scientific and engineering communities
 - b) the implementation of a United Nations Wetland Ranking System (UNWRS) to complete the Ramsar Sites Criteria and evaluate wetlands based on:
 - i. biodiversity
 - ii. natural disaster protection potential
 - iii. recreational value
 - iv. clean and drinkable water supply protection
 - v. agricultural prospects
 - c) drafting and publishing of reports with the results on an international scale, through media platforms and accessible to all communities committed to sustainable conservation and restoration of wetlands;
2. **Suggests** the creation of the Ramsar Citizen Collaboration Organisation (RCCO), to promote cooperation between active citizens, corporations, NGOs, sponsors, and nonprofit associations and committed to:
 - a) the creation of new campaigns and educational programs introduced in schools and companies, including:

- i. school trips to wetlands targeting youth to raise awareness of its benefits for human life, biodiversity and the survival of the ecosystems
 - ii. semestrial interventions in companies from parties of the RCCO, issuing voluntary recruitment for restoration and conservation missions
 - iii. media coverage of RCCO missions through diverse social platforms
 - b) annual conferences between the parties to discuss new targets, plans, missions, and achievements
 - c) a minimum of two restoration and conservation missions per year, such as:
 - i. international fundraising for the preservation of a wetland from the United Nations Wetland Ranking System
 - ii. organized parades and demonstrations
 - iii. construction of wetlands;
3. Recommends beneficial restoration of damaged wetlands, by the means of:
- a) careful evaluation by the UNWRS and designation of priority funding
 - b) international recognition and encouragement of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) through:
 - i. evaluation by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations of the FMNR techniques that are most suited to the wetland in question when considering the regional biosphere and climate conditions
 - ii. support from international funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development
 - iii. evidence and quantification of the benefits of FMNR from science communities, to spread awareness efficiently and allow this project to succeed
 - iv. providing access to continuous training and guidance about agroecological techniques and the basic understanding of agro-business
 - v. access to first necessity resources in order to carry out the project of revitalization
 - c) increase in cooperative initiatives for restoration projects from NGOs like Wetland International to support the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration;
4. Encourages the development of Constructed Wetlands with cooperation from national governments, their respective water companies and NGOs, in areas with the most need, identified by an evaluation framework taking into account the areas':
- a) number of drained, polluted and/or damaged wetlands and its ability/initiative to restore them
 - b) accessibility to clean water and the number of registered diseases or incidents related to water contamination
 - c) identified present and historical role in the migration and hibernation of wildlife
 - d) position in the international market as well as the government's ability to provide for its own citizens
 - e) vulnerability to natural disasters and the frequency at which they occur
 - f) potential in sustainable tourism;
5. Discourages the construction of hard infrastructure in areas around natural flood plains, in a radius by the means of:
- a) inviting UN organisations committed to determine the adequate required distance as well as biodiversity safeguard and infrastructure protection regulations, including:
 - i. systematic construction of levees to protect new infrastructure and reduce detrimental consequences probable to occur in such areas
 - ii. proportionate contribution of vegetation to the area on which the infrastructure was built, in order to adequately replace and stabilize the ecosystem
 - b) the renewal of construction contracts that include:
 - i. a clause warning the contracting parties of the possible consequences and dangers to enable conscious will for vulnerability and possible insecurity

- ii. an informative clause about the responsibilities towards the safeguard of biodiversity and conservation of ecosystems that come with the construction within these areas
 - iii. a clause encouraging the use of 'green' infrastructure in order to minimize the degrading impacts of human activity on wetlands
 - c) the reconsideration of national urban planning decisions through cooperation between UN bodies, NGOs, governments and previously stated funded scientific and engineering communities, to develop:
 - i. the generalisation of green infrastructure
 - ii. the spread of natural recreational areas and sustainable tourism;
- 6. Urges all member states to ratify the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RCWII), dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (LWII) through means such as:
 - a) achieving conservation of LWII wetlands by:
 - i. the prohibition of degrading and disdainful activity around wetlands
 - ii. establishing regulations in regards to the pollution sources that may pose threats to nearby wetlands
 - b) developing systematic wetland management plans to ensure symbiotic benefits for locals and the environment, through:
 - i. the combination of wetland restoration with tourism
 - ii. the achievement of resource sustainability in wetland areas;
- 7. Encourages the creation and enforcement of legislation promoting ecotourism, including such as but not limited to:
 - a) fines to disposal of waste in the wetland areas
 - b) limiting the number of tourists allowed in a certain period of time
 - c) establishing the National Wetland Sustainable Tourism Board which will train ecotourism actor group.