

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
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Resumed session  
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## **Draft Resolution on Strengthening Ramsar Connections Through Youth**

*Submitted by Australia and Costa Rica*

*Secretariat cover note:*

The DR is related to Resolutions VII.8, Guidelines on establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands; VIII. 19 Guiding Principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites, Resolution IX.18 Establishment of an Oversight Panel for the CEPA activities of the Convention, Resolution IX.21 Taking into account the cultural values of wetland and Resolution XIII.15 Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and their contribution to climate-change mitigation and adaptation in wetlands. This DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached Draft Resolution submitted for consideration by the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Introduction***Information for Standing Committee*

The development of a resolution focused on strengthening youth inclusion in the Ramsar Convention, builds on the strong interest expressed by Contracting Parties during the closing Plenary Session of Ramsar COP13 to support youth engagement and encourage a theme around youth and wetlands for the Ramsar COP14. Importantly, the resolution seeks to leverage the network and momentum created by Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW) to make a positive contribution to wetland conservation.

Since COP13, the YEW has held workshops with interested young wetland professionals and students from a diverse range of countries and undertaken a review of youth resolutions from other MEAs and International Bodies, as well as relevant Ramsar resolutions, to help inform work on this draft resolution. The YEW has consulted widely with the Society for Wetland Scientists, the Convention's International Organisation Partners, other NGOs, national Ramsar Networks (e.g., Japan) and wetland researchers.

As we reflect on 50 years of the Convention, we need to build on our strong foundations and be open to new voices and perspectives. The Wetlands Global Outlook (2021) highlights the continued loss of wetlands and recognises that the scale of the environmental crisis necessitates new partners in wetland conservation. These include young people, women, indigenous people, the business sector and local communities, with this diversity providing the best opportunities for collaborative action.

As co-sponsors of this resolution, we propose the Convention charts a path to build intergenerational capacity and dialogue to continue the Convention's mission to conserve wetlands. Following the principle of 'intergenerational responsibility' set for Stockholm+50, Contracting Parties are encouraged to actively engage, mentor, and support current and future generations of young wetland scientists, policy makers, managers, educators and communicators.

The resolution proposes a series of measures that allow progress towards the incorporation of the participation of young people in the Convention: encouraging Parties to appoint national Youth Focal Points; include young people on National Ramsar committees and delegations; mainstream youth participation in COPs; establish a Ramsar Youth Working Group, and appoint an Advisor. These strategies complement other matters for decision at the COP, relating to mainstreaming wetland education and the new approach to CEPA.

*Financial implications of implementation*

Paragraph	Action	Cost (CHF)
[OP17] FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to appoint an Advisor to coordinate the Ramsar Youth Working group and projects with a youth focus, as well as engage with national youth focal points and other key actors and organizations such as YEW; including the Global Youth Biodiversity Network and the youth programs of international environmental organizations and conventions	1-2 FTE for youth coordination and engagement roles at various levels Explore financing through new partnerships and/or sponsorship or in concert with new Advisor positions	140,000

## **Draft Resolution XIV.xx**

### **Strengthening Ramsar Connections Through Youth**

1. ACKNOWLEDGING that continued wetland loss requires new, ambitious approaches and diverse voices to raise awareness and strengthen the implementation of the Convention;
2. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the current generation of youth and future generations will bear the costs of the continued global loss of wetlands, their ecosystem services and benefits and the risks from a changing climate on nature, human health, and well-being;
3. RECALLING the principle of intergenerational equity that underpins the conservation and wise-use of wetlands, that contributes towards achieving sustainable development for the well-being of current and future generations;
4. NOTING that intergenerational responsibility is a central principle guiding Stockholm+50, commemorating the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, which positions youth as key actors to drive action to respond to the global crises of climate change, nature, and biodiversity loss;
5. FURTHER NOTING the virtual 'One Nature One Future' Global Youth Summit in the lead up and as part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in 2021;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING that United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 72/146 and 74/121, call for member states to include young people and youth organisations in relevant decision-making processes, to include youth delegates in their delegations, and acknowledge the role of youth as agents of change;
7. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING, Decision XI/8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) encouraging parties to include youth fully in relevant processes, Decision 13.9 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) promoting the integration of youth groups in Convention processes, and, Resolution Conf. 17.5 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) encourages parties to explore opportunities to engage youth with the Convention and include youth delegates on official delegations;
8. COMMENDING initiatives to date to engage youth through the Ramsar Culture Network, World Wetlands Day and youth focused events and the Ramsar Conservation Awards for Young Wetland Champion, that encourage the involvement of young people in wetland conservation;
9. REAFFIRMING the importance of mainstreaming the participation of under-represented groups in the implementation of the Convention; through Resolution XIII.15, Cultural values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, Resolution XIII.18, Gender and wetlands, and Resolution VII.8, Guidelines on establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands;

10. CONCERNED that young people are not recognised as critical and valuable stakeholders and partners under the Ramsar Convention and in Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2016-2024; and
11. APPLAUDING the ambition of Youth Engaged in Wetlands, established at COP13, which is connecting young people around the world, and provides a platform and network to enable and empower youth to conserve wetlands and support the mission of the Ramsar Convention;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

12. URGES Contracting Parties to recognise the importance of engaging young people in the implementation of the Convention to build awareness, intergenerational capacity and partnerships for the conservation and wise use of all wetlands;
13. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to explore and support strategies to engage, collaborate and involve youth in the work of the Convention, such as:
  - i. appointing a national NGO or government Youth Focal Points to the Ramsar Convention, outlined in Annex 1, to strengthen the voice and representation of young people;
  - ii. inviting youth participation on the National Ramsar Committees, in Country delegations to COP;
  - iii. building relationships with youth led NGO's, associations, and networks as well as universities, to foster increased cooperation with these institutions;
  - iv. targeted wetlands CEPA programs and outreach for children and young people, [girls, boys and adolescents,] including participation in the celebration of World Wetlands Day.
14. FURTHER ENCOURAGES the host country of the Conference of the Parties to include youth events in the programme of the Conference to mainstream youth participation at the Conference;
15. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat subject to available resources, to explore hybrid models like virtual Forums that allow young people to meet ahead of and take part in the Conference of the Parties, for the purpose of expanding youth participation and regional outreach of the Conference;
16. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at its 60<sup>th</sup> Meeting (SC60), establish a Ramsar Youth Working Group (described in Annex 2) to mainstream youth engagement in the Convention; the Working Group will include a youth representative from each region and present an agreed terms of reference to Standing Committee, with the priority task for the next triennium, to enable youth participation in the development of the new Strategic Plan (SP5);
17. ~~FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to appoint an Advisor to coordinate the Ramsar Youth Working Group and projects with a youth focus, as well as engage with national youth focal points and other key actors and organizations, including the YEW, Global Youth Biodiversity Network and the youth programs of international environmental organizations and conventions;~~ FURTHER REQUESTS that the Secretariat employ the capacity of its junior professional programme to assist with coordination of the Ramsar Youth Working Group and the joint work plan; and INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to call for voluntary contributions (including professional secondments] to support youth engagement and projects and to help coordinate this programme of work;

18. INVITES International Organisation Partners of the Ramsar Convention to strengthen youth involvement in their programmes and outreach;
19. ENCOURAGES the business sector and non-government community organizations to collaborate with Parties including financial cooperation to implement this resolution;
- ~~19~~20. URGES Contracting Parties to use their National Reports to provide information on strategies being used to support youth participation in the implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- ~~20~~21. DIRECTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to analyse the progress of youth participation based on the National Reports and report the result to the Contracting Parties; and
- ~~21~~22. REQUESTS the Secretariat to coordinate with the secretariats of international environment conventions, on allied work to strengthen youth participation, to assist in implementing this Resolution.

## **Annex 1: Ramsar Youth Focal Points**

### Background

There is growing recognition of the need to strengthen the voice and representation of young people in the Convention's work to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

By creating an official national role, the Ramsar Youth Focal Point (YFP), Contracting Parties have a foci for increasing youth participation and representation in wetland governance. By harnessing the skills and energy of young people and their networks, the YFP can bring fresh perspectives and facilitate intergenerational dialogue, complementing the roles and experience of other national Focal Points.

Young people are highly creative, digitally native, capable of responding intuitively to the fast-paced change and flow of information, as well as engaged with cultural conversations intimately, and in a way that can help accelerate cross-sector actions needed to mainstream wetland conservation and wise-use.

It is ultimately for each Contracting Party to define the roles for the national YFP in collaboration with their nominated FP, to best reflect their interests and capacity to operate across different levels and sectors, and available institutional support including mentoring, as appropriate.

YFPs may be in government, non-government or research organisations and involved in research, policy, restoration, community building and other engagement initiatives.

### Roles for Ramsar national Youth Focal Points

Roles for national YFPs could include to:

- provide leadership for the inclusion of youth perspectives in the implementation of Ramsar Convention, nationally, and across the Ramsar region with other YFP's;
- be the main point of contact on youth inclusion in Ramsar programmes, between the Secretariat and the Contracting Party, other YFP's and the global YEW network;
- be a key member of the National Ramsar/Wetland Committees or similar national structures;
- assist in the practical implementation of national Ramsar policies and programs and in national reporting to the Ramsar Conferences of the Parties;
- increase the public profile for the Ramsar Convention and its conservation and wise use goals;
- be active spokespeople for young people on wetland conservation;
- establish and maintain youth contacts and networks for the communication of information between young people at all levels and across wetland sectors.

## Annex 2 – Ramsar Youth Working Group: Operation and Mandate

### Composition and regional representation:

- The Working Group is to be composed of up to 10 members between the ages of 18 and 35, with a member to be nominated from each Ramsar region (n=6);
- The Working Group will strive for inclusion and diversity in its membership by giving priority to minorities and Indigenous Peoples and ensuring gender parity, and adhere to these principles via its organisational structure and mandate;
- National Youth Focal Points and a youth representative from IOPs will have observer status on the Working Group, unless otherwise nominated as the member for a Ramsar region;

### Structure and secretariat support:

- The Working Group will appoint among itself a Chair, and a Vice Chair and any other roles that it deems necessary, with the Vice Chair acting as Rapporteur;
- The Working Group will nominate one or more of its members, based on their skills and interests, to be observer/s on the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and the Communication, Education and Awareness Oversight Panel; and to observe on any other Working Group established by the COP, as Working Group capacity allows;
- The ~~Advisor in the Secretariat~~ will provide secretariat services for the Working Group ~~and act as a point of contact within the Secretariat.~~

### Mandate:

The purpose of the Working Group is to advise on mainstreaming youth engagement in the governance, programs of work and other activities of the Convention.

The priority tasks of the Working Group in the next triennium [to COP15] is to:

- I. advise and participate in the Working Group to develop the new Strategic Plan (SP5);
- II. identify capacity building activities to assist Contracting Parties implement strategies to engage youth, (ref: Para 13).
- III. report to Standing Committee, including making any recommendations about capacity building and policy guidance for Contracting Parties;
- IV. develop a joint work plan with the Secretariat, to:
  - communicate with and support Ramsar national youth focal points.
  - align the youth activities of the Ramsar Convention with the youth networks, programs and consultative bodies under other United Nations Environmental Bodies and multilateral agreements; including youth focused events at international meetings.
  - coordinate a youth focused side event and enable youth participation at the Conference of the Contracting Parties, in cooperation with host country of the COP.
  - develop youth-focused messaging and program materials for World Wetlands Day and other international days, relevant to the Convention.