



**Convention on
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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

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Item 3.1.2 of the provisional agenda*

**RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED BY THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE AT ITS FOURTEENTH MEETING**

***XIV/2. In-depth review of the programme of work on the biological diversity
of inland water ecosystems***

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, in collaboration with other relevant organizations and initiatives, to prepare proposals for strengthening policy-relevant scientific advice regarding the linkages outlined in paragraph 31 of the draft decision in paragraph 3 below, including options for convening expert group meetings and potential terms of reference for such meetings, and to submit proposals to this effect for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting;

2. *Recommends to* [WGRI] that in the relation to paragraph 42 of the draft decision in paragraph 3 below, that in the process of revising and updating the Strategic Plan and its goals and targets, there is stronger reflection of the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for [water security]; and that a goal or target is developed and included to reflect this;

3. *Recommends* that the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Notes with concern* the overall continuing and accelerating rate of loss of the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems and the rapidly increasing pressures from the drivers of change in these ecosystems; that the loss of critical services associated with this biodiversity loss, and in particular water-related services, including water supply for both ecosystems and people and the mitigation of hydrological extremes, are already resulting in significant economic, social and environmental costs, which are projected to rapidly escalate;

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/1.

2. *Expresses its concern* that major anthropogenic changes are ongoing in the Earth's water cycle at the global, regional and local scales through direct water use; that the limits of sustainability of both surface water and groundwater resources have already been reached or surpassed in many regions; that demands for water continue to increase; that these trends may be more pronounced in some areas through climate change; and that water-related stresses on both people and biodiversity are rapidly escalating;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the continuing value of national reports of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in providing key information on the status and trends of inland water biodiversity and drivers of change, and *expresses its appreciation* for the inputs of the Secretariat and Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands into the in-depth review;

4. *Stresses* that human societies rely on numerous services from inland water ecosystems and that biodiversity underpins those ecosystem services;

5. *Notes* that water is one of the most valuable natural resources and that [water security] for ecosystems and people is widely agreed to be the primary natural resource challenge, and stresses that water is the key natural resource link between the various Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and biodiversity;

Implementation of the programme of work

6. *Concludes* that the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems remains a good framework for implementation of relevant activities but that implementation needs to be significantly enhanced through better coherence between land- and water-use policies and activities, better incorporation of water issues into other programmes of work of the Convention and improved recognition of the relevance of inland water ecosystem services to human health, poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate change;

7. *Notes with concern* evidence that proves that inland water ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to invasive alien species and *urges* Parties and other Governments to refer to the programme of work on invasive alien species when implementing the programme of work on inland water ecosystems;

8. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to develop and implement national and regional action plans and to enforce existing legal measures in order to halt unsustainable utilization, and promote the conservation and sustainable use, of inland water biodiversity;

9. *Recalling* decision IX/19, paragraph 3, *alerts* Parties and other Governments of the continuing need to further strengthen efforts towards international cooperation at the regional and bilateral level regarding inland water resources;

10. *Urges* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to reinforce their efforts for the implementation of the programme of work on inland water biodiversity, taking into account the relevant goals and targets of the Strategic Plan for the post-2010 period;

11. *Encourages* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to reinforce capacity for the implementation of the programme of work, including institutional coordination, with particular emphasis on the contribution of the programme of work to the achievement of sustainable development, poverty alleviation and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by, *inter alia*:

(a) Enhancing coordination and collaboration between all sectors using water and other resources associated with inland water ecosystems to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services;

(b) Further incorporating biodiversity considerations into Integrated Water Resources Management and related approaches;

(c) Reinforcing their conservation efforts including, *inter alia*, extending protected areas and ecological networks for inland water biodiversity and through designating full appropriate networks of wetland areas throughout river basins for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance and through international cooperation in the management of inland water resources;

(d) Enhancing efforts to address the drivers of inland water biodiversity degradation and loss by integrating biodiversity considerations, where appropriate, into decision-making by other sectors, e.g., energy production, transport, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and into regional development plans;

(e) Addressing the alteration of water flows that are detrimental to biodiversity and ecosystem services;

(f) Preventing unsustainable use of groundwater;

(g) Rehabilitating degraded inland water ecosystems and their services;

(h) Exploring ways and means to further develop and implement, as appropriate, the “payment for ecosystem services” approach;

(i) Exploring opportunities to strengthen resource allocation for capacity-building for implementation, as might be justified by the economic benefits of improved inland water ecosystem management; and

(j) Ensuring that the connectivity of inland water ecosystems with terrestrial and marine ecosystems is maintained, where appropriate, and where necessary restored, in order to adapt to the adverse impact of climate change and also minimize the degradation of biodiversity;

12. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to support programmes and activities at regional and national levels to address the drivers of loss of biodiversity of inland water ecosystems;

13. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to take into full account inland water ecosystems and their values in their sectoral development plans;

14. *Recognizing* the importance of inland water ecosystems on islands, their often unique inland water biodiversity and, in particular, their role in sustaining limited water supplies on islands, *urges* small island developing States, as appropriate, to give increased attention to the implementation of the programme of work;

15. *Recognizes* the rapidly urbanizing global population and the importance of water supplies to cities and *urges* Parties and other Governments to take measures to reduce the pressure of cities on water and in particular on inland water ecosystems and to strengthen attention to the role of urban authorities and other stakeholders and involve them further in support of measures to increase [water security] for ecosystems;

16. *Notes* that there is a need to clarify the scope of, and interlinkages between, the programmes of work on inland water biodiversity and marine and coastal biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity in coastal areas, including with regard to coverage of coastal wetlands under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and *requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to include under the Joint Work Plan between the two conventions an assessment of ways and means to address relevant inland water biodiversity needs in coastal areas and to report on this matter to the next meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

17. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments, where appropriate, to ensure that their water allocation policies are based on the need to achieve [water security] for ecosystems and bearing in mind the demand and need for sustainable supplies for all uses in urban and rural sectors;

18. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in partnership with relevant organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Water Management Institute, to continue to investigate ways and means to reduce the negative impacts of water use by agriculture, especially by irrigation, on inland water ecosystems and to enhance the ability of ecosystems to contribute to improved [water security] and quality for food production for present and future generations;

19. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention, to undertake an analysis of information in the fourth national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to the status and trends of wetlands and drivers of change in wetlands, from all programme areas, and report the findings to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in order to strengthen mutual information flow between the two conventions and in particular to inform, *inter alia*, the planned report on the State of the Worlds Wetlands;

20. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to consider the need for joint implementation of elements of the programmes of work on inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal ecosystems, taking into account the role of biodiversity in the water cycle;

Climate change

21. *Notes* the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Technical Report *Climate Change and Water*, which concludes, *inter alia*, that the relationship between climate change and freshwater resources is a matter of primary concern as water quality and availability will be severely affected by climate change;

22. *Notes* that the carbon cycle and the water cycle are perhaps the two most important large-scale biogeological processes for life on Earth and that these two cycles are broadly linked;

23. *Notes* that inland water ecosystems are significant stores of carbon and that peatlands and other wetlands have very high carbon stocks, particularly below ground, as recognized in decision IX/16 D, and as recognized by the report of the second Ad-Hoc Technical Working Group on biodiversity and climate change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/INF/21) that peatlands and other wetlands store more carbon than the world's tropical forests;

24. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to:

(a) Recognize the prominence of changes occurring in the water cycle when considering the impacts of climate change on terrestrial, inland and coastal ecosystems and also therefore the importance of the role of the water-related services provided by ecosystems, in particular inland water ecosystems, in ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change;

(b) Ensure that their climate-change mitigation and adaptation activities are designed and implemented taking into account the needs and opportunities to sustain and/or enhance the services provided by inland water ecosystems; and

(c) Recognize the inter-dependence of the carbon and water cycles in their climate change mitigation and adaptation activities and, in particular, the need to sustain the water cycle in order to ensure [water security] for ecosystems and thereby sustain the carbon storage services they provide;

25. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to take into consideration the adaptation and mitigation capacities of wetlands when developing their climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies;

26. *Notes* that water provides strong linkages between biodiversity, climate change and desertification and *invites* Parties and other Governments to build upon these linkages to further strengthen coherence between these subjects at the national level, as appropriate, to strengthen coordination between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, taking into account the crucial role of Convention on Biological Diversity in this context, and *requests* the Executive Secretary to use these linkages to strengthen collaboration within and between the Joint Liaison Group and the Biodiversity Liaison Group;

27. *Stresses* that reducing wetlands degradation and loss can provide multiple benefits for biodiversity and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and *invites* relevant bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to consider the issue of reducing emissions from wetlands degradation and loss in their framework;

Scientific needs

28. *Recognizes* the need for enhanced science-policy coordination and integration between natural and socio-economic sciences and notably between the inter-related subjects of biodiversity, terrestrial and inland water ecosystem functioning and service provision, land- and water-use practices, [water security], poverty reduction, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

29. *Notes* the importance of robust data on inland water species in determining the status and trends of these ecosystems, including as key underlying data for other assessments and initiatives, including, *inter alia*, the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, and *expresses its appreciation* to those organizations, initiatives and individuals responsible for generating and maintaining these datasets;

30. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to support strengthened capacity for monitoring of the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems, including at the species level;

31. *Recognizes* the need for improved guidance on the relationships between biodiversity and water and *calls for* further policy-relevant scientific assessments of the relationships between biodiversity, hydrology, ecosystem services and sustainable development, in particular regarding, *inter alia*:

(a) The relationships between the carbon and water cycles, and policies and management interventions in each, and the ability of biodiversity to underpin both cycles; and

(b) The impact of the direct anthropogenic use of water on terrestrial biodiversity, and *vice versa*, including, *inter alia*, fluxes between soil moisture, groundwater and evapotranspiration of plants, and shifts in local and regional precipitation, taking into account any additional water-induced stresses on ecosystems through climate change;

and *invites* Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support for this work;

32. *Recognizes* the need for improved incorporation of biodiversity and ecosystem-service considerations in water-resources scenario planning and *requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to strengthen and contribute to ongoing processes in this regard, including, *inter alia*, the scenario analysis being undertaken for the Fourth World Water Development Report; and *invites* Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support to this end;

Implementation

33. *Welcomes with appreciation* the development and expanded use of tools to assist implementation of the programme of work by Parties, other Governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other partners, and *encourages* their further development and wider application while *noting* that priority needs lie in the social, economic, institutional and policy arenas in order to better coordinate the management of the multiple drivers of change to inland water ecosystems so as to achieve balanced, fair, equitable and sustained delivery of their multiple services as a contribution to sustainable development;

34. *Invites* Parties and other Governments to pay attention to the increasing relevance of existing guidance available under, and resolutions of, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and to continue, and strengthen where necessary, consideration of this guidance and resolutions;

35. *Urges* Parties to both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to take more comprehensive measures for joint implementation of the two conventions at the national level, amongst other means by using the TEMATEA tool;

36. *Notes* that 2011 represents the fortieth anniversary of the negotiation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and *encourages* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to contribute to celebrations of this event and to utilize this as an additional opportunity to further strengthen efforts between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;

37. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to consider the implications of changes in the water cycle, and freshwater resources, where relevant and feasible, in the implementation of all thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, and with special attention to the links between hydrology, biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and sustainable development; and *requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technical Advice to consider these aspects in their relevant deliberations;

Biodiversity and natural disasters

38. *Noting* the role of biodiversity and ecosystems in providing services that reduce vulnerability to and the impact of some natural disasters, in particular water-related impacts such as flooding and drought, and that current global changes are anticipated to increase disaster vulnerability and risk;

39. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to recognize the role of healthy ecosystems, and in particular wetlands, in protecting human communities from some natural disasters and to integrate these considerations into relevant policies;

40. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to resources, in collaboration with partners, including the Ramsar Convention and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to:

(a) Undertake a gap analysis in relation to inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their potential role in disaster-risk reduction;

(b) Address these gaps, as necessary, and within the mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity, through strengthened tools and information, including policy and management guidance; and

(c) Strengthen capacity-support to these ends, as a means to assist Parties to improve the contribution of inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services to natural disaster risk reduction;

and *invites* Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support to this end;

Biodiversity, water and the Strategic Plan

41. *Notes* that water provisioning, regulation and purification:

(a) Are critically important services provided by ecosystems, underpinned by biodiversity, and essential to sustainable development;

(b) Are essential for the continued functioning of terrestrial, inland and coastal ecosystems and the existence of biodiversity within these; and

(c) That there is a clear scientific and technical basis to strengthen attention to water across all relevant interests and programmes of work of the Convention;

42. Making full use of the opportunities presented by the recognition of the role of biodiversity in the achievement of [water security], *urges* Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to mainstream biodiversity into all sectors of government and society as a contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.
