DRAFT MOTION FOR IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 9-15 October 2025.

Submitted by Fundación Global Nature

Title

Prioritizing Wetlands Restoration to Tackle the Dual Climate and Biodiversity Crises

Preamble (max. 2,000 characters / approximately 350 words)

ACKNOWLEDGING Section H and Targets 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, and 14 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to restore 30% of terrestrial, inland, marine and coastal ecosystems by 2030;

RECALLING the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, Articles 4, 5, and 7 to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases by developing nationally determined contributions (NDC);

STRESSING the recognition given by the Paris Agreement to the role played by ecosystems in climate regulation and in the adaptation to climate change regulations;

ALSO RECALLING RAMSAR Convention aimed at halting the degradation of wetlands, the UNEP/EA.5/RES.4 on Sustainable Lake Management and WCC-2016-Rec-107-EN motion of the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in 2016 to Integrate nature-based solutions into strategies to combat climate change;

CONCERNED that 85% of lakes and wetlands are destroyed or heavily degraded according to IPBES, particularly as a result of the combined effects of both nutrient pollution and climate change (Meerhoff et al.,2022).

KNOWING the key role that lakes and wetlands play in in carbon storage and regulation of greenhouse gasses as well as in balancing the earth's climate system (Irvine et al., 2023);

CONSIDERING the carbon balance and the mitigating role of coastal wetlands (Blue Carbon) and fresh and saline inland wetlands (Teal Carbon) depend on their conservation status, with degraded wetlands becoming carbon emitters (Limpert, 2020).

RECOGNIZING the role of wetlands as biodiversity hotspots, whose restoration benefits biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation;

NOTING the multiple climate, ecological and social services wetlands provide for humans and ecosystems such as supporting biodiversity, protecting from the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, and promoting wellbeing of local communities.

The World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 9-15 October 2025:

Operative text (max. 1,500 characters / approximately 250 words)

1. REQUESTS the Director General and IUCN members to:

a. CALL for urgent action to prioritize wetlands conservation and restoration as a strategic climate solution, emphasizing the dual benefits of GHG emissions reduction and biodiversity conservation.
b. URGE states to allocate adequate public budgets and develop private funding tools.
d. Foster collaboration between the UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD to enhance wetland conservation efforts across climate, biodiversity, and land degradation agendas.

2. INVITES governments and local authorities to:

a. INCORPORATE ambitious lake and wetland restoration targets into their **NDCs,** ensuring that wetland based NbS are recognized as a vital component of national climate plans.

b. RECOGNIZE the central role of lakes and wetlands in ecosystem based adaptation **(EbA)** strategies and integrate restoration into National Adaptation Plans **(NAPs**) to build resilience against climate impacts.

c. Develop and implement national policies that halt the degradation of lakes and wetlands and promote their recovery to reduce emissions and conserve biodiversity.

d. Foster cross-sectoral cooperation to integrate lake and wetland management into broader water, land use, and disaster risk reduction strategies.

e. Ensure adequate **finance support** as part of global efforts to phase out fossil fuels and transition to low-carbon economies. And promote public-private partnerships to mobilize additional financial resources for large-scale wetland restoration projects.

f. ENSURE wetland-based (teal-) carbon credits are included in voluntary carbon markets, with rigorous safeguards in place to protect biodiversity and local communities' rights.