



# Approaches to protect lakes and wetlands: Successes and challenges for lake protection on a global level

Valencia, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019  
World Congress for Wetland and Lake Restoration

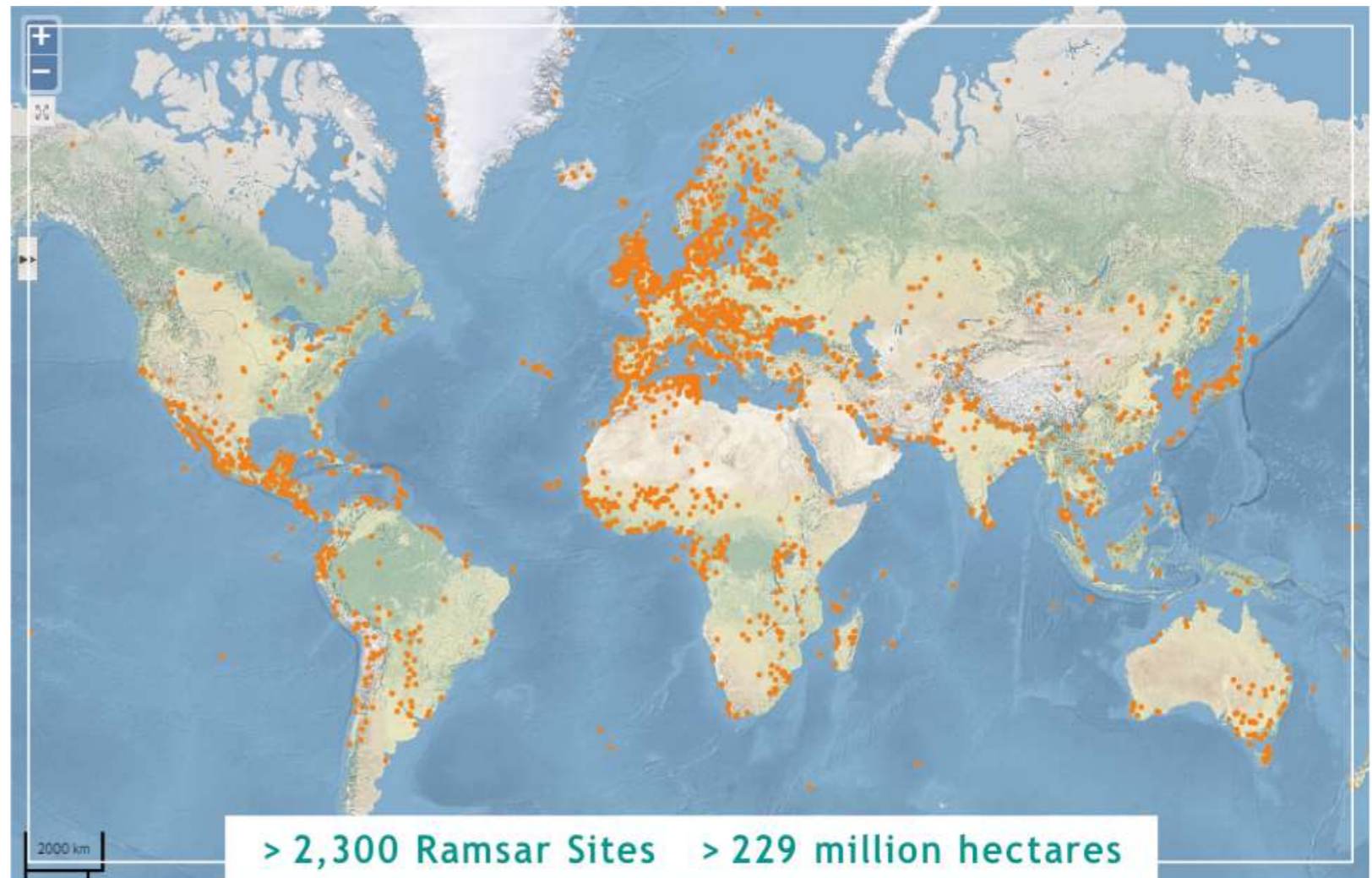
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Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

# Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

## Intergovernmental treaty on wetlands

- First modern global environmental agreement
- 170 Parties (Countries)
- Provides the framework for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands
- Designation of Wetlands of International importance (Ramsar Sites)

## Wetlands of International Importance 'Ramsar Sites'



# Bodies of the Convention

The Convention provides policy guidance and tools to enable national governments to effectively manage their wetlands

**The Conference  
of the Contracting Parties (COP)**  
the policy-making body of the Convention

**The Standing Committee**  
oversees implementation on behalf of the Contracting Parties  
between meetings of the Conference of Parties

**The Communications, Capacity  
Building, Education, Participation  
and Awareness  
(CEPA)**

**The Scientific and  
Technical Review Panel  
(STRP)**

**The Secretariat**  
provides administrative services to the Contracting Parties of the Convention

# 4<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024

## GOAL 1

### Addressing the Drivers of Wetland Loss And Degradation

1. Recognizing wetland benefits in sectoral strategies
2. Ensuring water for wetland ecosystem needs
3. Applying wise use guidelines in private and public sectors
4. Controlling or eradicating invasive alien species

## GOAL 2

### Effectively Conserving and Managing the Ramsar Site Network

5. Maintaining ecological character through integrated management
6. Increasing wetland area under Ramsar designation
7. Addressing threats to ecological character

## GOAL 3

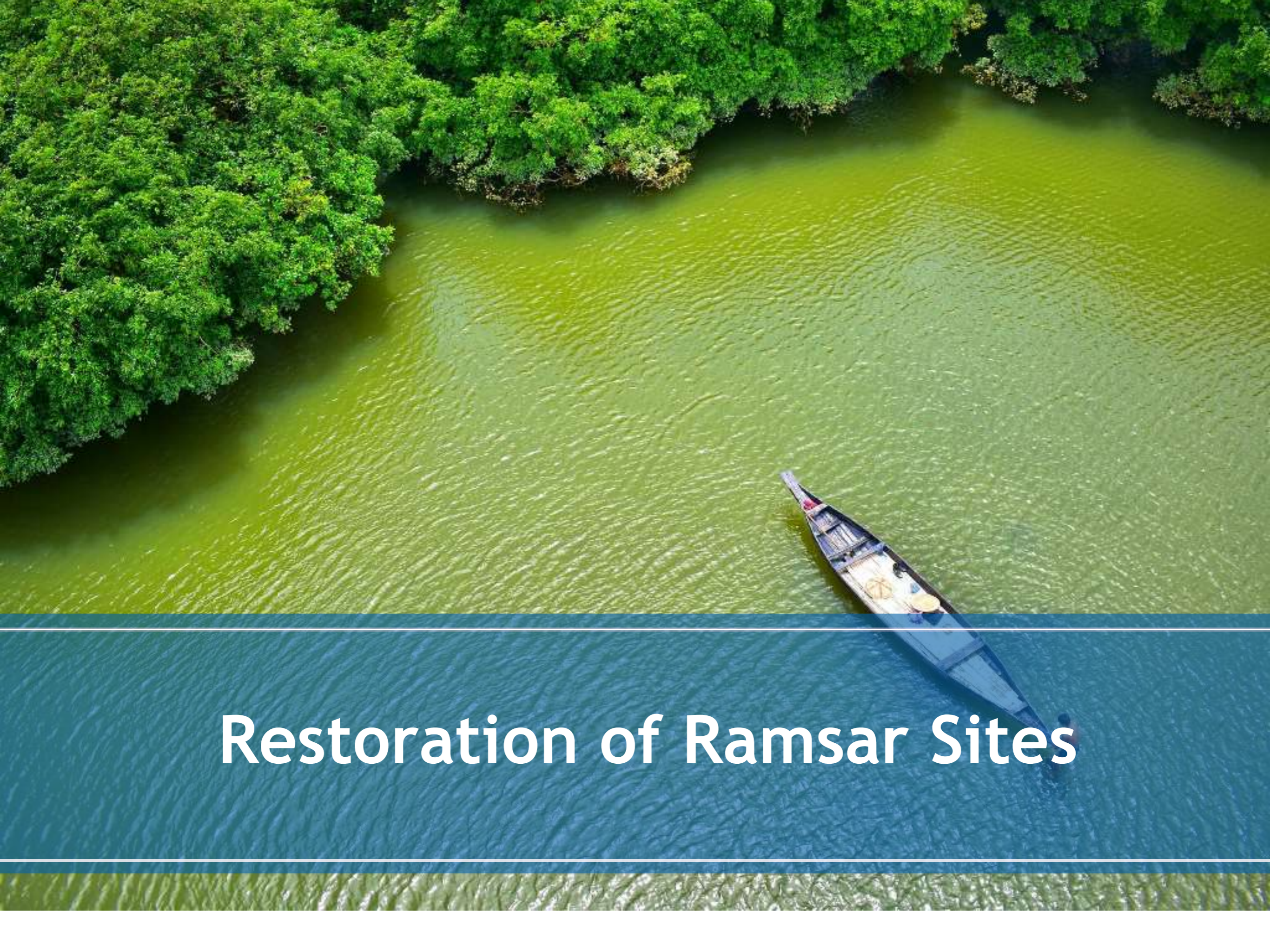
### Wisely Using All Wetlands

8. Completing national wetland inventories
9. Strengthening wise use through integrated river basin management or coastal zone management
10. Respecting and using traditional knowledge and practices
11. Documenting wetland services and benefits
12. Restoring degraded wetlands
13. Enhancing sustainability of projects in key sectors

## GOAL 4

### Enhancing Implementation

14. Developing scientific and policy guidance
15. Reinforcing Ramsar Regional Initiatives for implementation of the Convention
16. Mainstreaming wetland conservation and wise use through CEPA
17. Mobilizing resources for implementation
18. Strengthening international cooperation
19. Building capacity to implement the Convention and Strategic Plan



# Restoration of Ramsar Sites

# Prespa Lake Restoration

Case study

## Transboundary Wetland (Albania, Greece and North Macedonia)

### Ecosystem in distress

Deteriorating water quality, native fish species declining and habitats threatened for rare bird species

A trilateral committee was formed for the preparation of a GEF funded project that lasted until 2012. After that, follow up projects were done by several NGOs (SPP), municipalities and the UNDP

### Challenges

Made in a difficult transboundary context, where overcoming historical, political and environmental obstacles was a regular challenge

### Successes

More than 80% of local farmers have adopted agro-ecological practices

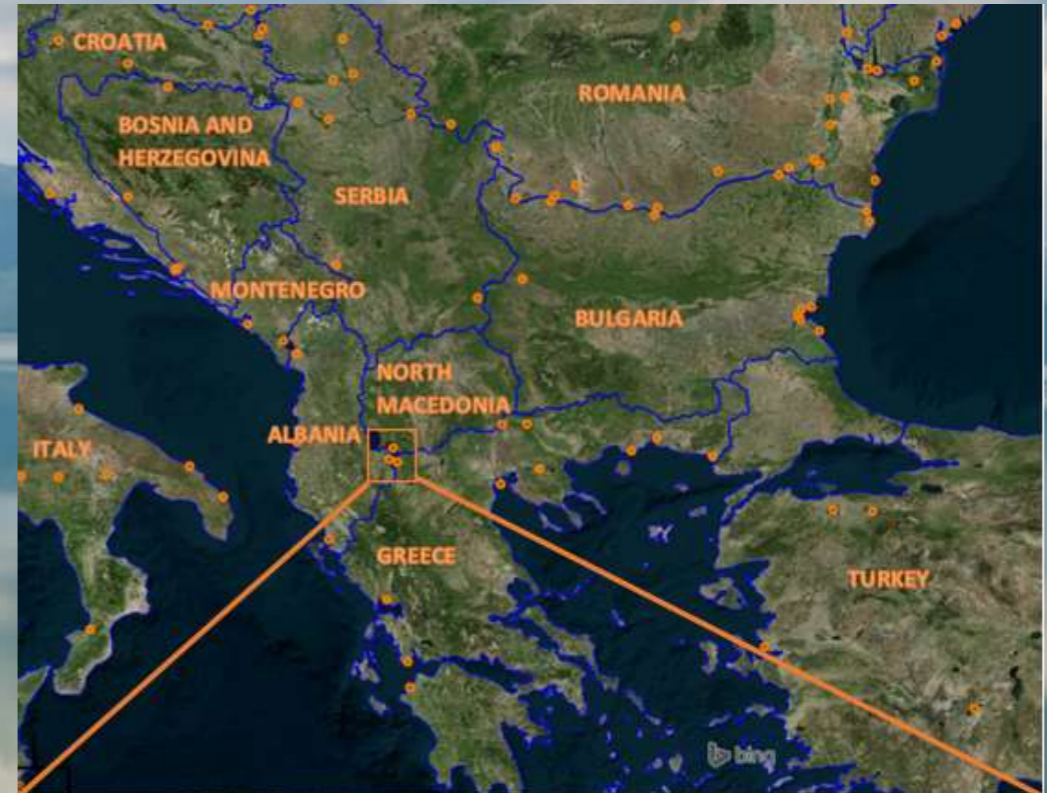
The use of water for irrigation has fallen by nearly 60%

Pesticide use is down by 30%

New sewage treatment plants prevent harmful run-off

Thousands of tons of waste that used to be dumped in the lake are now being transformed into high-quality compost

Water quality has measurably improved and indigenous fish species have recovered



# Prespa Lake Restoration

Reasons of success

Involving and assuring the commitment of the local stakeholders, such as those fishermen, farmers, and educators through the project was considered essential to achieve lasting progress towards sustainability.

- **Boosting of Local economy and improving livelihoods: The value of a healthy ecosystem**

- **Documentary: Lake of Apples**

A documentary film was made for the World Water Day 2017. The film summarizes more than 15 years of concentrated work to reverse pollution in one of the oldest freshwater ecosystems on earth, the Prespa Lakes.

# Ludaško Lake Restoration

## Serbia

The Ramsar Convention through its **Small Grant Fund Programme** was able to fund a two-phase project in Serbia intended to rehabilitate and restore wet meadows at Ludaško Lake, and to contribute to the realization of a Visitor Educational Centre

## • Successes

Through several activities of **field monitoring**, evaluation, and measurements with the **collaboration of local communities**, the conditions to pursue the rehabilitation of these were created

Several **educational activities** such bank cleaning campaigns and celebrations of environmental days with school children have been organized, increasing **the awareness of the site's values**.

The creation of **new facilities** for ecotourism, such as bird watching towers, has enhanced the economic values of this Ramsar site in line with the concept of wise use of wetlands.

## Challenges

Land purchasing was not realized. The reasons are numerous problems due to complicate bureaucratic procedures that impeded purchasing the land.



# The Ramsar Convention on Wetland Restoration

**Resolution XIII.14** on Promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal blue-carbon ecosystems

**Resolution X.24 on Climate Change and Wetlands**, that urged Contracting Parties to manage wetlands wisely to increase their resilience to climate change and take urgent action to reduce the degradation, promote restoration and improve management practice of wetland types that are significant greenhouse gas sinks;

**Resolution XI.14 on Climate Change and Wetlands:** Implications for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, that urged Contracting Parties to maintain or improve the ecological character of wetlands to promote the ability of wetlands to contribute to nature-based climate change adaptation;

**Resolution XII.13 on Wetlands and disaster risk reduction** which, welcomed initiatives that support the conservation and restoration of coastal wetlands and encouraged engagement in such activities;

## Materials

**Ramsar Briefing Note 10:  
Wetland Restoration for Climate  
Change Resilience (2018)**

**Global Wetland Outlook (2018)**



# The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

*Wetlands are among the ecosystems most vulnerable to climate change.*

- Some wetlands - including lakes, coral reefs, mangroves, and those found in tropical forests, sub-arctic forests, prairies and arctic/alpine zones - are especially at risk.
- Inland freshwater wetlands will be affected mainly through changes to precipitation and more frequent or intense droughts, storms and floods.
- Higher water temperatures, floods and droughts, will reduce water quality and worsen many forms of pollution.
- Many semi-arid areas are particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change and are expected to suffer serious pressure on water resources and wetlands



# The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

*Wetlands are among the ecosystems most vulnerable to climate change.*

Maintaining wetland networks and ‘corridors’ will help wetland-dependent plants and animals move to new areas in response to changing climatic conditions.

wetlands can provide us with a climate-change ‘safety net’ but only if all countries work together to:

- ✓ avoid or minimise other (non-climate related) threats to wetlands so that these ecosystems are as extensive and healthy as possible;
- ✓ restore wetlands that have been damaged or destroyed; and
- ✓ identify opportunities for wetland creation where this would have clear benefits for adapting to climate change.



## UNGA Proclaims UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

Ecosystem restoration is fundamental to achieving the [SDGs](#) mainly those on climate change, poverty eradication, food security, water and biodiversity conservation.

It is also a pillar of international environmental conventions, such as the Ramsar Convention and the Rio Conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change.



offers unparalleled opportunity for job creation, food security and addressing climate change



[www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)

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