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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 15 March 2019**

4/16. Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling the commitment made by Heads of State and Government in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,¹ which recognized the importance of facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges,

Recognizing that peatlands exist in more than 180 countries in different regions of the world, and that, while peatlands cover only some 3 per cent of global land area,² they contain a far higher proportion of global organic soil carbon, making them one of the world’s largest carbon stores, contributing to global climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration,

Recognizing also that degraded peatlands resulting from multiple activities contribute to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation and are a substantial source of greenhouse gas emissions globally,

Considering the benefit and value of peatlands, which include but are not limited to providing vital ecosystem functions and services that reduce the scale and mitigate the impact of flooding and drought, preserve biodiversity, and supply food and water that maintain ecological systems and improve human livelihoods,

Recognizing the value of improving the management of peatlands in order to improve their carbon storage capacity on degraded sites, strengthen resilience, improve the socioeconomic livelihoods of populations around peatlands, and increase biodiversity, and noting that such actions can contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement³ thereunder, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the 2030 Agenda for

¹ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

² F. Parish and others, eds., *Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change: Main Report* (Global Environment Centre, Kuala Lumpur, and Wetlands International, Wageningen, 2008).

³ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

Sustainable Development,⁴ the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,⁵ the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals and specific peatland-related initiatives, such as the Brazzaville Declaration⁶ adopted at the third meeting of the Global Peatlands Initiative partners, the Global Peatlands Initiative and the International Peatland Society,

Recognizing also that actions to advance sustainable peatland conservation and sustainable management can also contribute to addressing climate change,

Noting its resolution 3/5, entitled “Investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”, which urged Member States to adopt, as appropriate, measures for preventing, reducing and reversing ecosystem degradation and loss in order to sustainably use and manage natural resources towards sustainable development,

Recalling resolution XIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, on restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and disaster risk reduction,

Recognizing the common interests of countries in different regions aimed at enabling better management of peatlands, and ongoing efforts by Governments to conserve and sustainably use peatlands,

Willing to increase capacity through collaboration to promote best practice for conservation and sustainable management of peatlands,

Appreciating the engagement in the above-mentioned endeavours of partners such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Ramsar Convention, the Centre for International Forestry Research and national research institutions,

Recognizing that policymakers, practitioners and local communities need access to sound, credible and science-based information, analysis and relevant tools in order to design and implement the conservation and sustainable use of peatlands and consistent with laws and regulations in respective countries,

1. *Urges* Member States and other stakeholders to give greater emphasis to the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of peatlands worldwide, including through ongoing efforts by institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, within the scope of existing resources and in consultation with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, to coordinate efforts to create a comprehensive and accurate inventory of global peatlands, which will be crucial as a basis for identifying the extent of peatlands globally, determining appropriate interventions, understanding the value and potential of carbon sequestration and planning for sustainable peatlands management;
3. *Welcomes* the development of technical guidance on peatlands, including tropical peatlands, and, in that regard, notes the guidance set out in resolution XIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention as an important means of encouraging improved ecological functioning of degraded peatlands;
4. *Also welcomes* collaboration efforts and, in that regard, notes decision 14/5 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, on biodiversity and climate change;
5. *Encourages* Member States and other stakeholders to enhance regional and international collaboration for the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands, including but not limited to the following:
 - (a) Sharing information, knowledge and best practice regarding the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands;

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

⁶ Available at <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25329/Brazzaville%20D%C3%A9claration%20FR%20and%20EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

- (b) Continuing interdisciplinary research to advance the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands;
- (c) Building capacity for the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands;
- (d) Promoting a multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands involving private landowners, concession holders, businesses and other stakeholders;

6. *Encourages* Member States, international organizations, the private sector and all other actors involved in the conservation, management and restoration of peatlands at the national and regional levels, including, inter alia, the International Tropical Peatlands Centre being established in Indonesia, to cooperate with existing national, regional and international peatland management organizations and all actors, including the Global Peatlands Initiative led by the United Nations Environment Programme, to foster the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands.
