



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND SPATIAL PLANNING



COSTA RICA  
GOBIERNO DEL BICENTENARIO  
2018 - 2022



GOBIERNO DE  
MÉXICO



United Kingdom  
Mission to the  
United Nations



Ramsar  
Convention on Wetlands  
Convention sur les zones humides  
Convención sobre los Humedales



## WETLANDS

**KEY ENABLERS FOR A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY**

**7 JULY 2021, 7.45- 9.00 EDT**

### ABOUT THE SIDE EVENT

This event, organized by Slovenia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the United Kingdom in partnership with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands serves as an opportunity to exchange policies and multi-stakeholder experiences on wetland conservation and its benefits for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as to ensure a resilient and sustainable recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of context of the Decade of Action to deliver the Global Goals, the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and towards the 2023 Conference on the “Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ 2018-2028”.

The event will also provide a space to present the draft resolution to establish the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February as World Wetlands Day, in alignment with the decision of the parties of the Ramsar Convention during COP13 in 2018, which recognized the need to increase the visibility of the Convention on Wetlands and to protect wetlands in order to halt their steep decline and the resulting loss in biodiversity and showcase wetlands’ ability to foster resilience to climate change, among other sustainable development co-benefits.



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## CONTEXT

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Wetlands are defined by the Convention on Wetlands as land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs. Fishponds, rice paddies and saltpans are also human-made wetlands. The conservation and wise use in wetlands management are the core principles of the Ramsar Convention, and for 50 years they have promoted a sustainable development in these diverse ecosystems.

Wetlands are critical to people and nature, given the intrinsic value of these ecosystems and the benefits and services they provide, which are worth trillions of US dollars every year. They are also essential to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to: poverty eradication, food and nutrition, good health and well-being, gender equality, water quality and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, oceans, seas and marine resources, and biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystems.

### Enablers of sustainable development

- Wetlands provide directly or indirectly most of the world's freshwater for consumption and irrigation.
- Wetlands provide food. Three billion people are fed on rice grown in wetland paddies. Fish, which are the main source of protein for one billion people, depend on coastal wetlands for part of their life cycle.
- Wetlands are critical to commercial and recreational fishing industries. One billion people depend on wetlands for their livelihoods.
- Wetlands as adaptation measures are essential to efforts to regulate the global climate. Peatlands, mangroves and seagrasses naturally store carbon. Peatlands cover an estimated 3% of the world's land surface area but store 30% of all carbon stored on land.
- Mangroves, coral reefs and floodplains prevent flood disasters during extreme weather events.
- Forty percent of the entire world's species live or breed in wetlands. More than 25 % of all wetlands plants and animals are at risk of extinction.

### Threats to Wetlands

In spite of all the benefits of wetlands, they are severely threatened. Wetlands are the ecosystems with the highest rate of decline, loss and degradation and are disappearing three times faster than forests. According to the Global Wetlands Outlook (2018), 35% of wetlands have been lost since 1970. There is an overwhelming lack of awareness of the benefits and services provided by wetlands and a widespread misconception that they are wastelands, which can be refilled and converted for other purposes, including their use as garbage dumps. Rapid urbanization, reconverting land for agriculture, excessive water extraction as well as pollution are some of the key drivers of wetland loss and degradation.

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## PROGRAM OF THE EVENT

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## EVENT MODERATOR

**Ms. Martha Rojas Urrego**, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

## WELCOMING REMARKS

**Mr. Andrej Vizjak**, Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia

## PANEL SPEAKERS

Dr. Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary,  
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services  
IPBES

High Level Participant Mexico (TBD)

High Level Participant UK (TBD)

Ms. Susan Gardner, Director of Ecosystems Division of the United Nations Environment  
Program (UNEP)

Mr. Eric Soubeiran, Vice President Nature and Water Cycle, Danone

Dr. Ritesh Kumar  
Director of Wetlands International in South Asia.

Mr. Jorge Escobar  
Director Humedales Bogotá. Ramsar Award for Young Wetland Champions

## INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

Contributions from the floor

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Ms. Haydée Rodríguez Romero**, Viceminister of Water and Oceans of Costa Rica

## REGISTRATION

The event will be held via zoom platform. In order to actively participate at the event, please register at the following link: <https://contacts.ramsar.org/form/webinars> by 6 July in order to receive the special link to log-in.

For those who wish to only follow the event, without active participation, the live broadcast will be streamed on the Ramsar YouTube channel via the following link:  
<https://youtu.be/pwaLhLwRNKg>