



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**IGO Statement on behalf of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Secretary General Martha Rojas-Urrego**

Date: 17 November 2016

15h00

Wetlands crucial in addressing climate change

Mr/Madam Chair, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen :

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands at this historic meeting in Marrakech after the rapid entry into force of the Paris Agreement. It is now time for action and wetlands can play a key role in this regard, as nature-based solutions for adaptation and mitigation.

Adaptation cannot happen without water. Wetlands are the primary source of water for human consumption, energy and agriculture. Billions of people depend also on wetlands for their livelihoods.

Wetlands make communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. They provide buffers against sea level rise and storm surges, and reduce the impacts of floods, droughts and cyclones.

Wetlands also play a major role in mitigation as they are the planet's most effective carbon sinks. Peatlands are particularly important; they store twice as much carbon as the entire world's forest biomass. Drained peatlands alone are responsible for 5% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet, despite all the critical services that wetlands provide, 64% of the world's wetlands have been lost in the last century. We continue to lose wetlands at the rate of 1% per year – which is faster than the current rate of deforestation.

Today we have the knowledge, and we have the tools, to reverse this process.

Wetlands need to be factored into the Nationally Determined Contributions and in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands with its 169 Contracting Parties provides a ready platform for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and to contribute to stepping up action to reach the ambition of the Paris Agreement and to ensure sustainable and equitable development for all.

END