**Wuhan Declaration**

(The Zero Draft)

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Contracting Parties, gathered at the high-level segment of the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP14), on 6th November 2022, hereby:

RECOGNIZE that the well-being of humanity depends on nature. As one of the key global ecosystems, the conservation and wise use of wetlands is vital to address urgent social, economic and environmental challenges, such as climate change response, biodiversity loss and increasing human well-being;

EXPRESS our deep concerns that, despite 2,455 wetlands of international importance currently designated, 43 wetland cities currently accredited, 19 Ramsar Regional Initiatives, and collective efforts made at all levels to realize sustained conservation and continued benefits and services from wetlands since the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands entered into force 51 years ago, natural wetlands have declined by 35% since 1970, resulting in the loss of ecosystem services. That loss of benefits and services affects all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable;

REAFFIRM the conservation and wise use of wetlands as the central principles underpinning the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and that the urgent implementation of these principles is critical to ensuring the conservation of wetlands and their ecosystem services for current and future generations;

NOTE that the Wuhan Declaration has taken into consideration the assessments of the Global Wetland Outlook 2021, the sixth UNEP Global Environment Outlook, the Fifth CBD Global Biodiversity Outlook, the IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report and the Global and Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services undertaken by the IPBES;

STRESS the importance of the conservation, restoration and management of wetlands through wise use in addressing the urgent global challenges we face – to halt and reverse biodiversity loss; to mitigate, adapt, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change; and to help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations;

ALSO STRESS the urgency of realizing the mission of the Convention. By effectively implementing the Convention - alongside other international environmental commitments - and consequently halting and reversing the loss and degradation of wetlands, we can contribute to achieving the SDGs, the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and achieving carbon neutrality;

WELCOME the inclusion of wetlands in national sustainable development plans, as well as other plans including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategies (LTS) in many countries, and recognize the benefits that wetlands can provide to national and local economies as blue-green infrastructure for sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, reduction in disasters and pollution, and improvements in human well-being;

ACKNOWLEDGE that many wetland ecosystems including mangroves, saltmarshes, seagrass beds, coral reefs and peatlands are both vulnerable to climate change yet also crucial in providing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to mitigate and adapt to climate change, reduce coastal erosion, prevent flooding and storm surges, thereby sustaining biodiversity, reducing disaster risk and sequestering carbon;

RECOGNIZE the important role played by the youth and women in the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands, and that they can, to a large extent, decide the future of wetlands. We recognize the importance of full, equal and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and the role of their traditional knowledge, in helping the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands;

AFFIRM the importance of mobilizing financial resources from all sources to enable the effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of wetlands in contracting parties;

WE THEREFORE **DECLARE** that, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, strong political will and practical actions are needed to promote the conservation, wise use and restoration of all wetlands to prevent the systematic risks arising from the continuing loss and degradation of wetlands worldwide.

*To this end, we will strengthen efforts to,*

1. TAKE appropriate measures to achieve the goal of halting and reversing the loss of global wetlands;

2. BUILD a broad coalition including Contracting Parties, other governments, civil society, academia, private sector and other relevant stakeholders through genuine engagement and collaboration, to set an ambitious and strategic framework to deliver the conservation and wise use of wetlands to 2030 and beyond;

3. INCORPORATE the conservation, restoration and wise use of wetlands into national plans and actions on the implementation of the SDGs and the Rio Conventions, including the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and national commitments to address climate change under the Paris Agreement (2015), and promote synergy among these instruments and relevant agencies;

4. ENCOURAGE all Contracting Parties, as appropriate and in line with their national circumstances, to establish a wetland conservation and management system, to make full use of innovative technologies in wetland inventory, monitoring and evaluation, to identify the ecological character, changing trends in wetlands, issues arising from wetland conservation and management, and to define priority areas for conservation and restoration;

5. PROMOTE legislation and enforcement on wetland conservation and wise use in contracting parties consistent with the Convention on Wetlands, prioritizing conservation and pursuing wise use, strongly supporting efforts to maintain ecosystem services of wetlands;

6. ALSO PROMOTE the conservation, restoration, and wise use of wetlands through integrated ecosystem-based approaches and coordinated actions, as appropriate;

7. FURTHER PROMOTE the assessment and accounting of the natural capital of wetlands and their ecosystem services, including valuing wetlands in financial frameworks, and establishing innovative and diversified investment and financing mechanisms from all sources for global wetland conservation and restoration;

8. CONSERVE AND MANAGE WETLANDS IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS, including establishing wetland parks allowing wise use, conservation, promoting the Wetland City Accreditation Scheme, and scaling up relevant Nature-based Solutions, so as to build climate-resilient, biodiversity-friendly and sustainable wetland cities;

9. USE wetlands as nature-based solutions to effectively and efficiently address major social, economic and environmental challenges, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, desertification, disaster risks, and risks to human health;

10. STRENGTHEN the protection and restoration especially of wetlands that serve as habitats for migratory, endangered, and endemic species, as well as ensuring priority conservation and management of threatened ecosystems such as peatlands, highland wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass meadows;

11. REINFORCE water pollution prevention and control in wetlands by promoting a circular economy and transforming sustainable production and consumption patterns to tackle, *inter alia,* plastic pollution, and excessive nutrient inflow;

12. STRENGTHEN links between global wetland conservation practitioners through the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and collaboration with other subsidiary science bodies of related Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs);

13. ENCOURAGE Contracting Parties, in line with national legislation, to ensure effective engagement of youth, women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous People and Local Communities, academia, civil society organizations and the private sector in the conservation, restoration and wise use of all types of wetlands for the benefit of people and the rest of nature.

Finally, we EXPRESS our gratitude to the People’s Republic of China, the Host Country of COP14 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, for proactively drafting this Wuhan Declaration, helping to build consensus among parties for future *Wetlands Action for People and the rest of Nature.*