Transboundary Waters and Wetlands: from mitigation to adaptation

**Blue Zone- Water Pavilion
UNFCCC COP 26
Glasgow, UK**

12 November 2021, 12:00 - 12.45 CET

CONTEXT

Wetlands are one of the most vital ecosystems on Earth. They are a cradle of biodiversity, deliver numerous ecosystem services, ensure drinking water, support people's livelihoods and have a crucial role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The intrinsic value of these ecosystems and the benefits and services they provide are worth trillions of US dollars every year. They are indispensable to meet the Paris Agreement Goals and 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.

Yet, humanity has destroyed 90% of the wetlands in the last 300 years and this process continues, further contributing to carbon emissions. Wetlands are the ecosystems with the highest rate of decline, loss and degradation and are disappearing three times faster than forests. 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.

Wetlands are often considered as nature-based solutions that can provide a multitude of services of great social, economic and environmental value. They are essential for livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and represent precious elements of their cultures.

As climate change effects are intrinsically global and transboundary, the necessity for cross-border cooperation in Transboundary Waters and Wetlands proves crucial.

- How do we raise awareness of Water and Wetlands ecosystems importance for mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction?
- How do we encourage transboundary cooperation in preparation and implementation of the transboundary wetlands management plans in order to avoid negative effects of unilateral or sectoral measures and to achieve their full mitigation and adaptation potential?

The objectives of the session:

- Over this session we will share science, knowledge, experience and information to help taking informed decisions and provide opportunities for governments, business and global society to connect and join their actions on safeguarding and restoring water & wetlands ecosystems and enhancing their conservation and multiple ecosystem services they provide. We will argue that without halting the loss of these vital ecosystems, and rapidly scaling up their restoration, we will not be able to meet Paris Agreement goals, preserving planet's biodiversity and achieving the UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, particularly the SDG 6.

ABOUT THE SIDE EVENT

Slovenian Presidency is organizing a hybrid session within the Water Pavilion, which was set up for the first time at the UNFCCC session. The pavilion is organized by the International Stockholm Water Institute (SIWI). The purpose of the event is to highlight cross-border cooperation in the action, management to foster resilience to climate change and enable the full potential of these ecosystems for climate mitigation and adaptation.

EVENT MODERATOR

Katja Vrtovec

WELCOMING REMARKS

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

PANEL SPEAKERS

Aleksander Koren, Institut of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation

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

Jane Madgwick, Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International

Karin Zaunberger, European Commission, DG Environment, Policy Officer

Lilian Nygaea, project manager, Transboundary work in the Nile Basin

Link to hybrid events
More information about the pavilion