

Ponderful

PONDS FOR CLIMATE

Dr Musonda Mumba
Secretary General
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
IUCN Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, CH-Switzerland

26 June 2023

Dear Dr Mumba

Resolution XIV.15: Conservation and management of small wetlands

On behalf of the PONDERFUL project, we are writing to congratulate the Contracting Parties for passing Resolution XIV.15: Conservation and management of small wetlands.

As partners in the PONDERFUL consortium, along with members of the European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN) and freshwater specialists from across the world, we warmly welcome this development, which strengthens the representation of small wetlands, particularly including ponds, within the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. We also look forward to further protection being given to small wetlands by the Contracting Parties in our respective nations.

The passing of this resolution comes at a pivotal moment for small freshwater habitats generally. Globally, most waterbodies and wetlands are small: for example, 90 percent of global standing waters are ponds of less than one hectare, and small streams dominate global running water networks. Despite this, systematic bias against small waterbodies has often led to them being excluded or overlooked in policy. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that small waterbodies are critical for the protection of freshwater biodiversity. For example, research from UK PONDERFUL partner Freshwater Habitats Trust has shown that – at landscape scale – ponds support even more species than either rivers or lakes, findings that have been replicated in Europe (Denmark, Germany, France) and also in China.

The Convention on Wetlands' championing of small waters and wetlands comes at a vital moment – as ponds and other small wetlands have a critical, and very practical, role to play in addressing the freshwater biodiversity crisis.

PONDERFUL (**POND** Ecosystems for **Resilient FUt**ure Landscapes in a changing climate) is a Horizon 2020 "Research and Innovation Programme" project funded by the European Union. Based across Europe and South America, our consortium is conducting innovative research on ecosystem services provided by ponds, including their importance for biodiversity. Additionally, early results from PONDERFUL's work on carbon sequestration in ponds is particularly helping to refine our knowledge of their potentially powerful role as carbon sinks, helping to mitigate climate change impacts. Overall, the results from PONDERFUL will significantly add to our understanding of these rich and diverse habitats, further enhancing policies to protect and benefit from these important and abundant wetlands.

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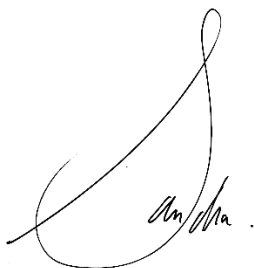
We - as partners in PONDERFUL and fellow freshwater specialists - will share the results of the project to our respective governments. We will also keep the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands updated on our progress in learning more about these undervalued but critical habitats. We would also like to acknowledge the important role played by Tobias Salathé, former Senior Advisor for Europe, both in working with our project and providing important advocacy for small waters and wetlands more widely.

Once again, we congratulate the Secretariat of the Convention and Contracting Parties on this important step forward and will work with our respective governments to ensure this resolution delivers protection for small wetlands, and promotes the use of the services they provide.

With best wishes



Professor Jeremy Biggs (Freshwater Habitats Trust, UK)



Professor Sandra Brucet (University of Vic & ICREA, ES)

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