



**World  
Wetlands Day**

2 February 2023



● Live Global webinar

# WEBINAR REPORT

**“IT’S TIME FOR WETLANDS  
RESTORATION”**

Date: 2 Feb 2023

Time: 14:00 – 15:30 CET

[g20land.org](https://g20land.org)



**G20 GLOBAL  
LAND INITIATIVE**

*“I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the It’s time for wetlands restoration webinar”*

— Webinar Attendee

## Overview

The international community celebrated [World Wetlands Day \(WWD\)](#) on 2 February 2023 to raise awareness about wetlands in order to reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to conserve and restore them. This year’s theme was “It’s time for wetlands restoration, “ highlighting the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration.

Restoration requires a collaborative effort, strengthening exchanges and cooperation between relevant players worldwide. Harnessing on collaboration and exchange, the G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office in partnership with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, UN Environment Programme, and other partners hosted a global webinar “It’s time for wetlands restoration” to celebrate WWD 2023.

### The webinar aimed to:

- **Showcase** success stories with examples from around the world to promote wetlands restoration and amplify the messages for WWD.
- **Share** case studies/brief stories of wetlands restoration that capture the hearts and inspire the minds of new audiences, especially youth and young professionals, motivating them to restore wetlands
- **Build** on Indonesia’s G20 Presidency’s focus on Wetlands and Peatlands Restoration
- **Empower** civil society organizations, especially young people, to share their stories on wetland restoration.

The webinar was live-streamed on the G20 Global Initiative YouTube account. The link to the webinar recording can be found, [here](#).

This report highlights the key remarks from the speakers during the webinar, general statistics of the attendees, the webinar agenda (Annex I) and the speakers’ biographies (Annex II).



*“Thanks a lot to the organizers, moderator, and all the presenters for this highly informative webinar. Great Job! Certainly, advocacy and knowledge-sharing initiatives as such are essential for restoration efforts”*

— Webinar Attendee

## Key highlights from the speakers

### Highlights from the welcome remarks:

#### **Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary General, Convention on Wetlands**

*“In our lifetime certain rivers have stopped flowing to the sea, certain species have disappeared, many wetlands have disappeared and have degraded. We cannot talk about wetlands without talking about species, climate change, infrastructure, youth, food and other issues, as intersectionality of this topic is key. We need to take action and time is of the essence.”*

#### **Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive General, UN Convention to Combat Desertification**

*“Wetlands are sometimes referred to as nature’s kidneys because of how critical they are for the overall health of our planet.”*

### Speakers and their key message:

**Jane Madgwick, Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International**, spoke about: Accelerating Wetlands Restoration: Building with Nature Asia

*“To reach global targets, we need to build capacity to translate global targets into national plans, we need to enable landscape recovery by bringing in technical support and finance and we need to put in place inclusive governance”.*

**Dr. Khaled Al-Abulkader, Chief Executive Officer, National Center for Vegetation Development and Combating Desertification, Saudi Arabia** enlightened the audience about NCVC Efforts for Wetland Restoration Under Saudi Green Initiative

*“Two years ago, Saudi Arabia initiated the Saudi Green Initiative targeting 3 billion trees to be planted, an equivalent of 40 million hectares of rehabilitation of degraded land.”*

[Learn More](#)

**Mirey Atallah, Head of UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, UN Environment Programme**, enlightened the audience about the role of the UN Decade for ecosystem restoration in wetland management.

*“Wetlands are significant from a climate change adaptation point of view. We see them as one of the no-regrets restoration options.”*

**Dr. Dicky Simorangkir, Senior Expert Biodiversity Conservation, G20 Global Land Initiative,** talked about the restoration of peatlands in Indonesia

*“Efforts to protect and restore wetlands will need the support from local communities as better protected and better-managed peatlands are very fundamental for their survival.”*

[Learn More](#)

**Prof. Ibby Kakulu, Professor of Land Management and Valuation at Rivers State University, Nigeria,** presented about Urban Wetlands Degradation and Restoration

*“I am hoping that the World Wetlands Day of 2023 can mark the beginning of meaningful partnerships for incorporating wetland restoration concepts and systems into urban planning.”*

[Learn More](#)

**Lis Mullin Bernhardt, Deputy head of Freshwater Ecosystems, UN Environment Programme,** presented about restoring wetlands as Nature based Systems (NBS) – linking and scaling to global processes

*“We are seeing more multipurpose examples of wetland restoration being seen as NBS around the world. I believe countries realize that wetlands are crucial for safeguarding biodiversity, countering the climate crisis and even cleansing polluting water.”*

[Learn More](#)

**Dianna Kopansky Coordinator, Global Peatlands Initiative, UN Environment Programme,** highlighted the importance of wetlands and restoration

*“If implemented with urgency, the protection, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands offers a huge win for people, climate and nature.”*

**Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy, Director of the G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office,** spoke about the G20 Global Land Initiatives’ role in wetlands restoration.

*“There is a tremendous need to accelerate efforts. This is the decade on ecosystem restoration. All partners present here and more, will find a way to work together and make the restoration happen and wetlands protected again.”*



# Webinar Participation

## Geographical Distribution of Registrants

A total of 2216 people from 140 countries registered, with the highest number coming from India, the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia respectively.

### Registration and Participants



## Geographic Distribution of Attendees

The webinar held via the Zoom platform was attended by 929 participants from 100 countries. The highest number of attendees were from India, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and the United States respectively.

Additionally, the attendees on zoom tuned in to the webinar from 338 cities of which the highest number of attendees came from Kochi (India), Hyderabad (India), Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), and Bonn (Germany).

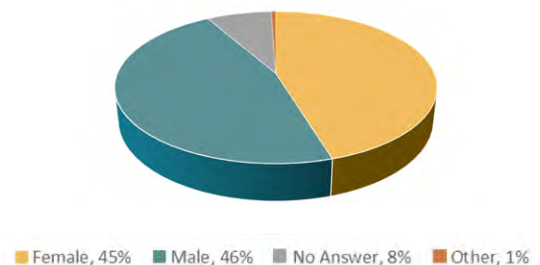
### Top 5 countries and Top 5 cities of attendees

Countries	Cities
India	Kochi (IN),
Germany	Hyderabad (IN),
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh (SA)
United States	Bonn (DE)
Nigeria	Bogotá

## Gender of Attendees

The gender distribution of attendees was 45% female, 43% male, 5% others and 7% who did not respond.

### Gender distribution of the attendee



# Annex I. Webinar Agenda

## It's Time For Wetlands Restoration: Facilitators' Agenda

Webinar name: It's time for wetlands restoration

Session time: Seminar

Date: 2 February 2023, 14:00 to 15:30 CET

Duration: 90 Minutes

Starting Time	Duration	Activity
13:30 CET	30 min	Meeting preparation - Starting the Zoom webinar. - Run a practice round with the panelists. - Run through the webinar schedule - Technical check (audio and video) - Checking the presentations
14:00 CET	5 min	Session 1: Welcome and introduction - Welcoming the participants - Introduction of the panelists - Walkthrough of the meeting agenda - announcements/information for participants
14:05 CET	10 mins	Opening remarks · Introducing secretary general of the convention of wetlands · Opening remarks, Dr Musonda Mumba · Opening remarks, Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD
14:15 CET	5 mins per speaker + 5 mins buffer	Session 2: Speakers present · Jane Madgwick, Chief Executive Officer, Wetlands International · Dr. Khaled Abdulkader, CEO, NCVV · Dianna Kopansky, Global Peatlands Coordinator, UNEP · Prof Olof Linden, World Maritime University · Mirey Atallah, Head of UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, UNEP · Dr Dicky Simorangkir, UNCCD · Prof Iyenemi Kakulu, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria · Elizabeth Mullin Bernhardt, Freshwater Unit, UNEP · Dr Muralee Thummarukudy, G20 global land initiative
15:15 CET	10 mins	Session 3: Question and Answer session
15: 25	5 mins	Thank you note · Dr. Muralee Thummarukudy vote of thanks

## Annex II: Speaker Biography

### Dr. Musonda Mumba

*Secretary General of the Convention of Wetlands*

Dr Mumba is a Zambian-born environmentalist with over 25 years of global experience in environmental management and sustainable development. On International Women's Day 2022, she was honored by the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) as one of 16 worldwide restoring the planet. Dr Mumba has published extensively in scientific journals and as a contributor to book chapters and in news media. She is an Honorary Senior Research Associate at UCL and a visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Perry World House (PWH) of University of Pennsylvania.



### Ibrahim Thiaw

*Executive General, UN Convention to Combat Desertification*

Ibrahim Thiaw was appointed as Under Secretary General of the United Nations and UNCCD Executive Secretary on 31 January 2019. The Mauritanian brings 40 years of experience in sustainable development, environmental governance, and natural resource management.

In 2018, he was Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the Sahel and supported ongoing efforts to advance the recalibration of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and the development of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel.



### Jane Madgwick

*CEO, Wetlands International*

Jane is an ecologist and author with 30 years of experience working internationally on the science, policy and practice of wetlands and water management. Since 2004, she has been CEO of Wetlands International, leading a network of 20 offices operating in over 100 countries.

This global team works to mobilise the conservation and restoration of all kinds of wetlands, connecting science, policies and practices for biodiversity, resilient communities and reduced climate risks. Jane is prominent in building partnerships and global dialogues to this end.



### Dr. Khaled Abdulkader

*CEO, National Center for Vegetation Development and Combating Desertification, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Dr. Al-Abdulkader worked as a university professor in the Department of Geosciences at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) and a researcher in the Water and Environmental Resources Division at the Research Institute of KFUPM from 1985 to 1998.

He chaired the Board of Directors of the Environmental Technology & Management Association. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Wildlife Authority.



## **Dianna Kopansky**

*Global Peatlands Coordinator, UN Environment Programme*

Dianna Kopansky is the Coordinator of the Global Peatlands Initiative in the Biodiversity and Land Branch at the United Nations Environment Programme, based in Nairobi, Kenya.

An expert working in landscapes and biodiversity, she delivers a suite of ecosystem management and climate change programmes to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.



## **Prof Olof Linden**

*Professor Emeritus World Maritime University*

His research fields are: Impacts of pollution and climate change on ecosystems; Management and recovery of ecosystems following disasters and conflicts; Rehabilitation of ecosystems such as mangroves and forests; Restoration of pastures and meadows and Oil pollution, and oil spill contingency planning. He has initiated and coordinated research programs funded by Sweden, Finland, UK, World Bank and Japan.



## **Mirey Atallah**

*Head of UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, UNEP*

Mirey has been working in the UN system for over 15 years and join us from UNEP where she heads the Nature for Climate Branch and oversees the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. A land use planner and agronomist by training, Mirey is a bird enthusiast, a legacy of her work with BirdLife International, the Ministry of Environment and various NGOs she supported prior to joining the UN.



## **Dr Dicky Simorangkir**

*Senior Expert Biodiversity Conservation, UNCCD*

Dicky is a forester with 28 years of experience in leading positions for various development, environment, and conservation programs and organizations, including for GIZ, TNC, WWF, IUCN, PanEco, ZSL, RARE, and Tropenbos.

Dicky's field of expertise ranges from natural resource governance and management, biodiversity conservation and protected area management, land use, landscape management, and REDD+, forest and land fire, technical cooperation and development assistance, project planning and design, research, and capacity building.



## **Prof Iyenemi Kakulu**

*Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria*

Consultant and Senior Project Advisor with UNEP's Crisis Management Branch, on its HYPREP support project to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in the cleanup and remediation of Hydrocarbon polluted lands in Ogoniland, Nigeria.

She is a Professor of Land Management and Valuation of the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria and has over 35 years of teaching and research experience in land appraisal, development and management related issues.





## Elizabeth Mullin Bernhardt

*Freshwater Unit, UNEP*

Lis is an international development and environment professional who proudly joined the UN Environment Programme in August 2016, first in the Freshwater Ecosystems Unit and then from November 2019 as part of the Climate Change Adaptation Unit. Lis is now the Coordinator for the Global Adaptation Network, an initiative that shares key adaptation knowledge and information around the world. In 2019 Lis also served on secondment to the Policy and Programme Division for SDGs coordination across the house.



## Dr Muralee Thummarukudy

*Director, G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office*

Dr. Thummarukudy brings to this position over three decades of progressive senior management experience and technical expertise in land restoration issues. He has most recently served as the acting Head of the Disasters and Conflicts Programme at the United Nations Environment Programme, where he implemented a portfolio of over 100 million USD, focusing on ecosystem-based disaster reduction and partnership development.

An internationally renowned expert in disaster response, he played a key role in addressing the environmental aftermath of many major conflicts and disasters, implementing projects in over 35 countries.



***Thank you for this inspiring webinar! Looking forward to the next one!***

— Webinar Attendee

