



Wetlands: Our Greatest Ally

with Dr. Mumba

Episode 5



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Dr Musonda Mumba, originally from Zambia, is the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

With over 25 years of experience in environmental policy, climate resilience, and ecosystem management, she has worked with institutions such as UNEP and UNDP, and is a founding member of the Network of African Women Environmentalists.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Adopted in **1971** in Ramsar, Iran, the convention is one of the world's oldest global environmental treaties.

The convention currently has **173 Contracting Parties (countries)**, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia being the latest to join in August 2025.

There are **over 2,500+ Ramsar Sites** (wetlands of international importance) globally.

Societal Neglect of Wetlands

- Wetlands store twice as much carbon as forests.
- Despite their importance, wetlands are being lost at a much faster rate than forests.
- Historically, wetlands have been treated as "wastelands" or dumping sites.
- Consequences of wetland loss include:
 - Loss of protective barriers
 - Catastrophic ecosystem collapse

Wetlands as Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

- Wetlands are critical for food systems.
- They act as a buffer, providing ecosystem services and protecting infrastructure.
- Degradation of peatlands (a carbon-rich type of wetlands): when dried up, massive amounts of carbon and greenhouse gases are released during fires, burning down into the earth as well as upwards.
- There is a recognised need to prioritise the rewetting of peatland systems.
- Effective NBS must incorporate both science and indigenous knowledge.