**Zimbabwe interested in boosting environmental ties with Iran**

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Victoria Falls – Evelyn Ndlovu, Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife of Zimbabwe, in a meeting with Ahmad-Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy for Marine and Wetlands at the Department of Environment, has called for the promotion of joint efforts between the two countries.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15), which is taking place from July 23 to 31 July in Victoria Falls City, Zimbabwe, the doe.ir reported.

Highlighting Zimbabwe's extensive experiences in wildlife conservation, Ndlovu, who is also COP15 President, proposed to develop collaborative efforts on water management and the preservation of the Asiatic cheetah through sharing scientific and practical expertise.

For his part, Lahijanzadeh welcomed the proposal on behalf of the DOE, while elaborating on the country’s environmental measures.

The two officials agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and put it on the top agenda of the two organizations, subsequently.

**COP15**

The meeting of COP15 is being held under the theme “Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future.” The new Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands has elected Iran as the Vice-Chair for the 15th meeting.

This COP aims to adopt a new strategic plan for 2025-2034, the Convention’s fifth action plan.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. This intergovernmental treaty provides the framework for international cooperation on wetland conservation. The convention officially came into force in 1975.

Since then, many countries have become Contracting Parties to the convention. Saudi Arabia is the 173rd one, ISNA reported.

Moreover, the three Iranian cities, including Babol in northern Mazandaran province, Kiashahr in northern Gilan province, and Gandoman in southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, received wetland city accreditation certificates on the first day of COP15 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

**Environmental diplomacy**

Being transboundary, many complicated environmental challenges can be addressed through environmental diplomacy, which means negotiations among two or more countries.

Environmental diplomacy is used globally to settle problems such as conflicts over sources of energy, water, and climate change, IRNA reported.

The fact that all the countries share the same environment necessitates fostering environmental diplomacy to settle disputes over water resources, environmental pollution, and climate change impacts.

Environmental diplomacy is an effective and required tool to mitigate and eliminate the severe consequences by fair distribution of responsibilities among involved countries as they present their national interests and solutions.

Sand and dust storms (DSDs) are a typical example of meteorological hazards in West Asia, where many countries are involved, as some generate them and some others are affected by them.

SDSs hit countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and sometimes parts of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and even Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Removing pollution from the Aras River and securing the Hirmand River water rights, as well as some wetlands, are other examples where environmental policies have been used to resolve the conflicts.

Therefore, to mitigate climate change impacts and achieve sustainable development goals, environmental policy is required to be strengthened to help Iran, as well as its neighboring countries, benefit from available resources and secure our rights at the international level.

These dust particles have devastating impacts on respiratory health and ecosystems; they result in the closure of airports, schools, and offices, affect electricity transmission infrastructures, and bring about economic losses.