



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**Regional consultation in Africa in preparation for the third extraordinary meeting
of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands
22 September from 13:00 to 16:00 CEST**

Summary report

Agenda item 1. Welcome and Introduction

1. Welcoming remarks were provided by: the Acting Director, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Head of Zambia's Administrative Authority; and the Secretary-General of the Convention on Wetlands.
2. The meeting officially opened in the presence of 36 Contracting Parties and 53 participants, excluding Secretariat staff.

Agenda item 2. Election of the Chair of the meeting

3. Zambia introduced this item and invited the Contracting Parties to elect a chair for the meeting. Parties elected Zambia to chair the meeting. Zambia thanked Parties for their confidence and introduced the aim and purpose of the African Consultation Meeting in Preparation for the Third Extraordinary COP.

Agenda item 3. Approval of the agenda¹

4. Parties adopted the agenda with no amendments

Agenda item 4. Procedural matters for the third extraordinary meeting of the COP

General overview of the agenda of the meeting and documents

5. The Secretariat highlighted that the Extraordinary COP would meet in *two online sessions*, opening on Monday 25 October 2021 and resuming on Thursday 28 October. Should all business not be conducted on Thursday 28, Parties will meet again on Friday 29 October. The online sessions are *strictly limited to three hours*: 13:00–16:00 CEST Geneva time (UTC+2) with English, French and Spanish (see the working programme *ExCOP3 Doc.3.2*²). The two-day break is to comply with Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure³, which requires Parties to submit their Credentials within 48 hours of the opening of the meeting.

¹ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/provisional_agenda_africa_e.pdf

² https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/excop3_3.2_provisional_working_programme_e.pdf

³ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/excop3_4.1_provisional_rules_of_procedure_e.pdf

6. The first session on **Monday 25 October** will elect its officers, adopt the agenda work programme and Rules of Procedure (*ExcOP3 Doc.4.1⁴*) for the Extraordinary COP, appoint its Credentials Committee, admit observers, and start to consider Draft Resolutions.
7. The second session on **Thursday 28 October**, will receive and adopt the report of the Credentials Committee, continue the considerations of the Draft Resolutions, and finally adopt the Resolutions and the report of the Extraordinary Meeting.

Officers of the meeting (President and Vice Presidents)

8. The Bureau of the Extraordinary Meeting will be composed of the officers elected at COP13 to serve until COP14: President (United Arab Emirates), Vice-Presidents (Finland) and Second Vice President (Uganda) following Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure adopted by COP13.

Credentialing process

9. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of Parties to participate in the Extraordinary Meeting, pointing out that a two-thirds quorum of all Parties (that is, 114 Parties) is required to make decisions, according to Rules 29 and 39 of the Rules of Procedure. African Standing Committee members were encouraged to actively reach out and contact Parties in their sub-regions to submit their Credential letters and participate fully on all meeting days.
10. The Secretariat explained the process of preparing and submitting the Credential letters, directing Parties to Diplomatic Notes 6⁵ and 7⁶ that the Secretariat shared with them during this year. The Credentials should be signed by the Head of State or Government or the Minister for Foreign Affairs or their equivalent and submitted electronically to the Secretariat. The requirement for Parties to submit Credentials conforms with Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure. The letters must bear the name and position (e.g. President, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs etc.) and the signature and complete address of the appropriate authority.
11. The Credentials should be prepared in one of the Convention's languages (English, French and Spanish), scanned and submitted by email to: excop@ramsar.org as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the opening of the meeting on 25 October, as they need to be reviewed by the Credentials Committee before the beginning of the second session of the Extraordinary Meeting on 28 October.

Selection of representatives to the Credentials Committee

12. The Extraordinary Meeting will establish a **Credentials Committee** to review the credentials of each Party. During this meeting, African Parties selected Zambia to represent Africa in the Credentials Committee of the Third Extraordinary COP, using an electronic voting system.

Questions and answers

13. Malawi sought clarification on how Parties would submit Credentials letters, considering the online nature of the meeting. The Secretariat advised that all Credentials should be scanned and submitted as attachments to excop@ramsar.org.

⁴ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/excop3_4.1_provisional_rules_of_procedure_e.pdf

⁵ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/dn2021_6_extraordinary_cop_2021_e.pdf

⁶ https://contacts.ramsar.org/civicrm/file?reset=1&id=6161&eid=1337&fcs=3bd3813a320dcb63e897d6e138b8e6c2c0f31ac881e8378ac4037945ee451c5e_1633429174_4320

14. Guinea-Bissau sought clarification on the language in which Parties should prepare the Credentials and the submission deadline. The Secretariat advised that letters could be prepared in any of the Convention's official languages and submitted as soon as possible following the template in Diplomatic Notes 6 and 7 but not later than 48 hours after the start of the meeting on 25 October. The early submissions of Credentials will allow the Credentials Committee to identify any issues in due time.

Agenda item 5. Discussion of the Draft Resolutions

EXCOP3 Doc.8.1 Draft Resolution on the postponement of COP14

15. This Draft Resolution aims to approve the proposed new dates for COP14 of 21-29 November 2022 in Wuhan, China. The new dates were proposed by the host country and subsequently approved by Standing Committee (Decision SC59-10) for approval by the COP. The Secretariat provided background information on this Draft Resolution, found here EXCOP3 Doc.8.1⁷

EXCOP3 Doc. 8.2 Draft Resolution on financial and budgetary matters

16. EXCOP3 Doc.8.2 Draft Resolution on financial and budgetary matters to approve a one-year 2022 core budget for the Convention. The Subgroup on Finance has reviewed the proposed budget, approved by Standing Committee (Decision SC59-31⁸) for submission to the COP for approval. The Secretariat provided background information on this Draft Resolution, found here EXCOP3 Doc.8.2⁹

A Party raised a question on a possible mistranslation in the French text of Draft Resolution EXCOP3 Doc.8.2. and the Secretariat noted the comment.

Agenda item 6. Logistical matters for the third extraordinary meeting of the COP

17. The Secretariat informed Parties that the COP meeting would use KUDO as the online meeting platform. Participants will need to register to participate in the Extraordinary COP Meeting no later than 13 October 2021, at: <https://contacts.ramsar.org/register-excop>.
18. During the registration process, the letter of Credentials or an official nomination letter signed by the head of the Administrative Authority or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be uploaded indicating the names of the representatives and the head of the delegation of the Party. All registered participants will receive a link for each day of the meeting ahead of the meeting, which Parties can use to connect at the beginning of the session.
19. Parties are encouraged to test their equipment in advance of the meeting. Information on the test session can be found here: <https://contacts.ramsar.org/extracop-meeting>. Before and during the Meeting, dedicated operators from KUDO will be available to help with any technical issues. A specific chat window will allow you to communicate directly with them and solve any problem. If the connection is not possible, participants can write to preregistration@ramsar.org to reach the Secretariat for assistance.

⁷ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/excop3_8.1_dr_postponement_cop14_e.pdf

⁸ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc59_decisions_e.pdf

⁹ https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/excop3_8.2_dr_financial_and_budgetary_matters_e.pdf

Agenda item 7. Outstanding contributions and the requirement for provisions

20. The Secretariat highlighted the implications of irregular payment of annual contributions, stating that in addition to creating a gap in the core budget of the Convention, it necessitates the putting aside of funds to manage risks of non-payment, as required by the Swiss law. Given recent changes in the methodology for calculating these risk management funds, also known as provisions, the burden on the Secretariat's budget increases significantly when Parties fail to pay contributions for more than four years, which means that more money needs to be taken out from the core budget of the Convention to cover for provisions. Thus, without the regular payment of all annual contributions, the budget of the Convention could be in shortfall and affect the support that the Convention can provide to the Parties, as well as operations.
21. Burkina Faso congratulated Parties who paid their financial contributions following the informal meeting of 28 July and highlighted how Parties' irregular payments of contributions affect the Convention's budget.
22. Pointing to the Draft Resolution on budget, Burkina Faso iterated that funds are raised solely from the financial contributions by Parties. The Party encouraged all Parties to continue making the African region proud by regularly paying financial contributions on time. It pointed out that some Parties are on the right path, but many more countries need to pay their contributions so that the Convention can continue working on getting us to Wuhan next year.
23. Kenya highlighted that pending contributions and provisioning are substantive items that ought to be a central agenda item. The Party added that these are significant issues hindering the proper performance of the Secretariat and requested African Parties to improve their payment rates and to take immediate actions upon receiving invoices at the beginning of each year.

The status of each Party's contribution is updated regularly and published here:

https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/status_contributions.pdf

Agenda item 8. Any other business

24. The Chair thanked participants for their time and contribution and closed the session at 15:20 CEST.

General Information for Parties

Diplomatic notes

2021/6

https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/dn2021_6_extraordinary_cop_2021_e.pdf

2021/7

https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/dn2021_7_extraordinary_cop_2021_e.pdf

The provisional agenda and supporting documents are available at

<https://www.ramsar.org/event/extraordinary-meeting-of-the-conference-of-the-contracting-parties-2021>.