



**12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015

Ramsar COP12 DR4

Draft Resolution XII.4

**The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and
regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention**

1. RECOGNIZING the value of keeping under periodic review the terms of Resolution XI.19 (2012) so as to ensure that the work of the Standing Committee continues to be delivered in as effective and cost-efficient a manner as possible;
2. RECALLING that Resolution IX.24 (2005) established a Management Working Group reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties and that Resolution X.4 (2008) also established a Transition Committee of the Management Working Group;
3. RECOGNIZING that aspects of the work of these groups are also embodied in the roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee itself;
4. AWARE of the intersessional Standing Committee oversight of the Secretariat, which is now conducted on its behalf between meetings of the Standing Committee by its Executive Team (Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of Subgroup on Finance) with the Secretary General; and
5. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the members of the Management Working Group for their work;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. ADOPTS the text in Annexes 1-4, based upon amendments that update Resolution XI.19 (2012) on the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and its appended list of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties belonging to the six Ramsar regional groups; and
7. CONFIRMS that this updated text and its annexes supersede those adopted as Resolution XI.19, which is retired.

Annex 1

The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. Considering that it is useful for the effective functioning of the Ramsar Convention that Contracting Parties should have a clear process for the operation of its Standing Committee, in Resolution VII.1 (1999) the Conference of the Contracting Parties adopted guidelines on the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the Standing Committee and the regional categorization of countries under the Convention. In Resolution XI.19 (2012), the Parties amended that text and the list of countries and Contracting Parties assigned to each of the six Ramsar regions in order to bring them up to date.
2. The Ramsar Convention will have the following regional groups:
 - Africa (50 Contracting Parties)
 - Asia (32 Contracting Parties)
 - Oceania (8 Contracting Parties)
 - Europe (48 Contracting Parties)
 - Latin America and the Caribbean¹ (27 Contracting Parties)
 - North America (3 Contracting Parties)
3. Contracting Parties and those countries that are eligible to join the Convention are assigned to the above regional groups.
4. The composition of the Standing Committee will be determined by means of a proportional system, by which each regional group in paragraph 2 above will be represented by voting members in the Standing Committee according to the following criteria:
 - a) one representative for regional groups with 1 to 12 Contracting Parties;
 - b) two representatives for regional groups with 13 to 24 Contracting Parties;
 - c) three representatives for regional groups with 25 to 36 Contracting Parties;
 - d) four representatives for regional groups with 37 to 48 Contracting Parties; and
 - e) five representatives for regional groups with 49 to 60 Contracting Parties.
5. Each region can decide to appoint an Alternate Member or Members pro rata with their appointed Members with full power to represent the region, if the representative member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Standing Committee;
6. The host countries of the most recent and the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) are also voting members of the Standing Committee.
7. The regional representatives and their alternate Party representatives will be elected by the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the basis of nominations received from the regional groups established in paragraph 2 above. Initial consideration of nominations by regional groups will be undertaken at any intersessional regional COP preparatory meetings which may take place, and finalization of nominations will be made by regional groups in their regional meetings at the COP venue immediately prior to the opening of the COP, so that appointments of the new members of the Standing Committee can be made as early as

¹ Note by the Secretariat: The amending of the text to include renaming of the “Neotropics” Ramsar region as “Latin America and the Caribbean” (see *Report of the 48th meeting of the Standing Committee* para.196) was approved by Standing Committee through Decision SC48-19. This change is also reflected on page 7 in Annex 2 *Allocation of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties to the six Ramsar regional groups*.

possible in the COP proceedings, thus permitting the members of the new Committee to participate in Conference Committee meetings during the COP.

8. The terms of office of the regional representatives will commence at the close of the meeting of the COP at which they have been elected and will expire at the close of the next ordinary meeting of the COP, and each Contracting Party may serve on the Standing Committee for a maximum of two consecutive terms;
9. Contracting Parties that are voting members of the Standing Committee will convey to the Secretariat, through their diplomatic channels, the name of the officer(s) in the designated national Ramsar Administrative Authority who act as their delegates on the Standing Committee, as well as the name of their substitutes, should they be needed;
10. The Contracting Party acting as host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat will continue to have the status of permanent observer in the Standing Committee. If the host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat stands for, and is elected as, a member of the Standing Committee representing its regional group, it will have voting status for that triennium in lieu of its permanent observer status.
11. The Secretariat will continue to notify all Contracting Parties of the date and agenda of meetings of the Standing Committee at least three months in advance of each meeting, so that they may, as appropriate, make arrangements to be represented at the meeting as observers.
12. Countries that are not Contracting Parties but have expressed an interest in joining the Convention may be also admitted as observers at meetings of the Standing Committee.
13. The Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel will be invited as an observer to Standing Committee meetings, as well as other experts and/or institutions that the Standing Committee may deem appropriate for assisting in its consideration of particular agenda items.
14. International organizations which are official International Organization Partners in the work of the Convention will be invited to participate as observers in meetings of the Standing Committee.
15. If an extraordinary meeting of the COP is held between two ordinary meetings, the host country will participate as an observer in the work of the Committee on matters related to the organization of the meeting, provided that the country in question is not already present in the Committee as a member or permanent observer.
16. The Contracting Parties in regional groups with one representative in the Standing Committee will use a rotation system for the nomination of the regional representative, and in regional groups with two or more representatives the selection will be made in such a manner as to achieve a balance in relation to biogeographical, geopolitical, and cultural considerations.
17. At its first meeting immediately after the close of the COP the Standing Committee will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the members and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance established by Resolution VI.17 of 1996.
18. The Standing Committee will meet once each year, normally at the seat of the Convention Secretariat, according to the indicative schedule provided as the Annex 4 to this Resolution. A

further meeting of the Subgroups on COP and Finance may be envisaged during the year before COP, if required and if sufficient funds are available, in order to ensure the timely and efficient preparation of the COP. The costs of participation of Committee members eligible for sponsorship will be borne by the Convention.

19. Within the policies agreed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the functions of the Standing Committee will be to:
 - a) carry out, between one ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the next, such interim activity on behalf of the Conference as may be necessary, giving priority to matters on which the Conference has previously recorded its approval;
 - b) make preparations on issues, including inter alia draft Resolutions and Recommendations, for consideration at the next COP;
 - c) supervise, as a representative of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the implementation of activities by the Secretariat, the execution of the Secretariat's budget, and conduct of the Secretariat's programmes;
 - d) provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention, on the preparation of meetings, and on any other matters relating to the exercise of its functions brought to it by the Secretariat;
 - e) act as Conference Committee at COPs in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
 - f) establish subgroups as necessary to facilitate the carrying out of its functions;
 - g) promote regional and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
 - h) approve the work plan of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP) on the basis of the decisions of the COP, receive the reports of the STRP on the progress made with its implementation, and provide guidance for its future development;
 - i) adopt for each triennium the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use and decide on the allocation of funds;
 - j) review each triennium the criteria for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award established by Resolution VI.18 and select the laureates; and
 - k) report to the COP on the activities it has carried out between ordinary meetings of the Conference.
20. The tasks of the regional representatives elected to serve in the Standing Committee will be those contained in Annex 3 of this document.
21. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, is to take into consideration, within available resources, the need to have interpretation for its Subgroup meetings when it is requested by its members.
22. The Contracting Parties and the Secretariat will endeavour to secure additional voluntary funding to enable simultaneous interpretation at meetings of the Subgroup on Finance and Subgroup on COP.
23. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, will be governed, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Convention (see COP12 DOC3).

Annex 2

Allocation of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties to the six Ramsar regional groups

NOTE: Names of countries in capital and bold letters denote Contracting Parties to the Convention at the time of approval of this Resolution.

AFRICA

ALGERIA

Angola

BENIN

BOTSWANA

BURKINA FASO

BURUNDI

CAMEROON

CABO VERDE

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CHAD

COMOROS

CONGO

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DJIBOUTI

EGYPT

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Eritrea

Ethiopia

GABON

GAMBIA

GHANA

GUINEA

GUINEA-BISSAU

KENYA

LESOTHO

LIBERIA

LIBYA

MADAGASCAR

MALAWI

MALI

MAURITANIA

MAURITIUS

MOROCCO

MOZAMBIQUE

NAMIBIA

NIGER

NIGERIA

RWANDA

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

SENEGAL

SEYCHELLES

SIERRA LEONE

Somalia

SOUTH AFRICA

SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN

SWAZILAND

TOGO

TUNISIA

UGANDA

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

ZAMBIA

ZIMBABWE

ASIA

Afghanistan

BAHRAIN

BANGLADESH

BHUTAN

Brunei Darussalam

CAMBODIA

CHINA

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

INDIA

INDONESIA

IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF

IRAQ

JAPAN

JORDAN

KAZAKHSTAN

Kuwait

KYRGYZSTAN

LAO, PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

LEBANON

MALAYSIA

Maldives

MONGOLIA

MYANMAR

NEPAL

OMAN

PAKISTAN

PHILIPPINES

Qatar

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Saudi Arabia

Singapore

SRI LANKA**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC****TAJKISTAN*****OCEANIA*****AUSTRALIA**

Cook Islands

FIJI**KIRIBATI****MARSHALL ISLANDS**

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Nauru

NEW ZEALAND

Niue

EUROPE**ALBANIA****ANDORRA****ARMENIA****AUSTRIA****AZERBAIJAN****BELARUS****BELGIUM****BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA****BULGARIA****CROATIA****CYPRUS****CZECH REPUBLIC****DENMARK****ESTONIA****FINLAND****FRANCE****GEORGIA****GERMANY****GREECE**

Holy See

HUNGARY**ICELAND****IRELAND****ISRAEL² (formerly within the Asia regional group)****ITALY****LATVIA****THAILAND****TURKMENISTAN****UNITED ARAB EMIRATES****UZBEKISTAN****VIETNAM****YEMEN****PALAU****PAPUA NEW GUINEA****SAMOA**

Solomon Islands

Timor-Leste

Tonga

Tuvalu

Vanuatu

LIECHTENSTEIN**LITHUANIA****LUXEMBOURG****MALTA****MOLDOVA, Republic of****MONACO****MONTENEGRO****NETHERLANDS****NORWAY****POLAND****PORTUGAL****ROMANIA****RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

San Marino

SERBIA**SLOVAK REPUBLIC****SLOVENIA****SPAIN****SWEDEN****SWITZERLAND****THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF****MACEDONIA****TURKEY****UKRAINE****UNITED KINGDOM**

² Note by the Secretariat: Through Decision SC47-05, the Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a Draft Resolution amending the status of Israel within the Ramsar regional groupings.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

ARGENTINA

BAHAMAS

BARBADOS

BELIZE

BOLIVIA

BRAZIL

CHILE

COLOMBIA

COSTA RICA

CUBA

Dominica

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ECUADOR

EL SALVADOR

GRENADA

GUATEMALA

Guyana

Haiti

HONDURAS

JAMAICA

NICARAGUA

PANAMA

PARAGUAY

PERU

Saint Kitts and Nevis

SAINT LUCIA

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

SURINAME

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

URUGUAY

VENEZUELA

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

MEXICO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Annex 3

Tasks of Contracting Parties elected as Regional Representatives in the Standing Committee

The Contracting Parties that have accepted to be elected as Regional Representatives on the Standing Committee will have the following tasks:

1. To designate their delegates to the Standing Committee taking into account their significant responsibilities as Regional Representatives, according to paragraph 9 of this Resolution, and to make every effort that their delegates or their substitutes attend all meetings of the Committee.
2. When there is more than one Regional Representative in a regional group, to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the other regional representative(s).
3. To maintain regular contacts and consultations with the Contracting Parties in their regional group, and to use the opportunities of travel within their regions and of attending regional or international meetings to consult about issues related to the Convention and to promote its objectives. To this effect, when there is more than one regional representative, they will agree among themselves which Contracting Parties will be the responsibility of each regional representative.
4. To solicit the opinions of the Contracting Parties in their regional group before meetings of the Standing Committee.
5. To advise the Secretariat in setting the agenda of regional meetings.
6. To assume additional responsibilities by serving as members of the subgroups established by the Standing Committee.
7. To provide advice as requested by the Chairperson and/or the chairs of subgroups and/or the Secretariat of the Convention.
8. In the regions concerned, to make deliberate efforts to encourage other countries to join the Convention.

Annex 4

Indicative schedule for Standing Committee intersessional meetings post-2015, and for the 2016-2018 triennium

Note. This schedule is predicated on future cycles being three calendar years, with the meetings of the Conference of the Parties in May/June of the final year of each cycle.

	General timelines, post-2015	2016-2018 triennium
First full meeting	8 months after COP	SC51 – February 2016
Second full meeting	20 months after COP	SC52 – February 2017
Subgroup on COP (if required)	1 year before COP	Subgroup on COP13 (if required) – June 2017
Third full meeting	5 months before COP	SC53 – January 2018
Pre-COP meeting	Immediately prior to COP, at COP venue	SC54 – June 2018