

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**  
**35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**  
**Gland, Switzerland, 14-16 February 2007**

## **Decisions of the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

### **Agenda item 6: Report of the Culture Working Group (DOC SC35-5)**

**Decision SC35-1:** The Standing Committee urged the Culture Working Group to continue its work on a draft Resolution and guidance on the cultural values of wetlands, taking account of the comments made in this meeting, and to propose new drafts of both documents in time for consultation at the regional meetings. The drafts will be circulated to the SC if possible but presented at SC36 at the latest.

### **Agenda item 7: Report of the Subgroup on COP10**

**Decision SC35-2:** The Standing Committee adopted the theme for COP10 of “Healthy wetlands, healthy people”.

**Decision SC35-3:** The Standing Committee confirmed that the nomination and award procedures for the Ramsar Conservation Awards will remain the same as previously and determined that previous laureates of the Awards should be invited to nominate candidates or to form an alumni club and that success stories of earlier winners should form part of the 2008 nominations publicity.

### **Agenda item 8: Financial matters: Report of the Subgroup on Finance**

**Decision SC35-4:** The Standing Committee approved the 2006 budget review.

**Decision SC35-5:** The Standing Committee approved that the Secretariat should agree a repayment plan for contribution arrears with the specific Contracting Party concerned that allows for payment of most recent contributions first.

**Decision SC35-6:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to develop a core budget proposal for the next triennium using the approach outlined in the Subgroup on Finance’s report; to accompany this budget proposal with an explanatory Information Paper showing the overall allocations proposed for the major areas of expenditure; and to prepare this budget presentation for consideration by SC36 as the basis for the preparation of the budget proposal to COP10 for the 2008-2011 triennium.

Concerning financial assistance for regional initiatives:

**Decision SC35-7:** The Standing Committee decided that:

- i) Owing to a delay in initiation of implementation of the “WacoWet” Initiative during 2006, the 2006 allocation to this initiative is carried over from the 2007 core budget to be available for allocation during 2007;

- ii) From the CHF 262,382 thus available from the core budget for 2007, the following allocations of funding to regional initiatives from the core budget are approved for 2007:

WacoWet:	CHF 59,700
High Andean Initiative:	CHF 22,000
MedWet (as approved by Resolution IX.7):	CHF 15,499
CREHO (Panama):	CHF 80,000
Ramsar Centre, Iran:	CHF 44,745
Pacific Islands Initiative:	CHF 40,438*

\* for project proposals A and B as provided in DOC. SC35-11 Addendum Annex 4

- iii) Henceforth six-monthly progress and financial reports must be provided to the Secretariat from each initiative which has received funding from the core budget, the first such report being required by 31 July 2007, and the SC will then review and reallocate funds between initiatives if appropriate, and a full report for 2007 by 15 January 2008 or a minimum of six weeks in advance of the 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee (whichever is earlier); and
- iv) In relation for Decision SC34-21, insufficient information is as yet available from all COP9-approved initiatives to determine core budget allocations for 2008, and such allocations should be considered either inter-sessionally or at SC36, taking into account satisfactory progress and reporting of each initiative, and with a deadline for requests for 2008 allocations of 31 July 2007.

**Decision SC35-8:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a single clearly set-out paper on regional initiatives not less than one month in advance of the meetings of the Standing Committee that will permit its full review and consideration, and in order to ensure that this can be done, the SC decided that the deadlines for submission of progress reports and requests for further funding by involved regional initiatives are immutable, and that no such information submitted to the Secretariat after established deadlines will be transmitted to the Standing Committee.

**Decision SC35-9:** The Standing Committee requested the Subgroup on Finance's contact group on SGF development to refine its proposals for a new Small Grants Portfolio (or similar title) and a new Signature Initiative to be circulated as soon as practicable for SC comment and approval or for discussion at SC36.

#### **Agenda item 10: Report of the Management Working Group**

**Decision SC35-10:** The Standing Committee decided to recommend to the COP that a Transition Committee be formally constituted, with an agreed agenda, to meet following the COP and first SC meeting of each triennium. The members should be the outgoing and newly elected Chairs and Vice Chairs of the SC and Chairs of the Subgroup on Finance, with the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General *ex officio*. It should be chaired by the incoming Chair of the SC.

**Decision SC35-11:** The Standing Committee noted the agreed action plan amongst Secretariat staff and requested that three-monthly updates on the plan's implementation be provided to the SC Chair and Vice Chair and the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance.

**Decision SC35-12:** The Committee agreed that IUCN should be advised that the Chair of the SC should be considered as the ombudsman for the Secretariat staff in cases where an urgent independent intervention is sought to resolve difficult staff issues.

**Decision SC35-13:** The Committee requested that issues of Secretariat staff remuneration and conditions of service, including training needs, be included in budgetary considerations presented to COP10

#### **Agenda item 11: Report of the CEPA Oversight Panel**

**Decision SC35-14:** The Standing Committee noted the CEPA Oversight Panel's report and agreed to require that the financially supported Ramsar regional initiatives to report on their CEPA activities to the CEPA Oversight Panel. The SC also agreed to change the theme of the 2008 World Wetlands Day to the COP10 theme of "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People".

#### **Agenda item 13: Report of the Chair of the STRP (DOC. SC35-8 and annex)**

**Decision SC35-15:** The Standing Committee adopted the report of the STRP, including the STRP Work Plan 2006-2008 included as an annex.

#### **Agenda item 14: Report of the Subgroup on the Strategic Plan**

**Decision SC35-16:** The Standing Committee decided that the basic framework of the Strategic Plan should be in line with the proposals for this in paragraph 5 of DOC. SC35-9; that the plan should be specific about its audience and how the plan will be used; that some vision of the world by 2014 should be included, in order to provide the global context of the Plan (e.g., trends in global policy and governance and trends in state of wetland ecosystems); that major issues specific to the Plan period should be recognized, such as global responses to the 2010 biodiversity target and the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, and global responses to climate change; that a short summary of implementation achievements and progress during the 2002-2008 period should be included; and that there should be convergence and linkages clearly established between the Strategic Plan and other Convention planning and reporting documents, e.g., the budget, Secretariat Work Plan, STRP Work Plan, and National Report Format, with an attempt, where possible, to indicate costs of delivery of the Strategic Plan.

**Decision SC35-17:** The Standing Committee also decided that the Strategic Plan's five-goal structure should be retained but that, as currently worded, some of these goals are not goal statements, and need to be reworded; and that the language of the top-level section heading of the Plan concerning "Conservation and wise use of wetlands and water resources" also needs rewording to reflect the Convention's business more clearly.

**Decision SC35-18:** The Standing Committee agreed that the Strategic Plan's mission statement should not be amended.

**Decision SC35-19:** The Committee instructed that the Plan be as strategically-focused and as short and succinct as possible; that the new Strategic Plan should be less complex and detailed than the current (2002-2008) Strategic Plan; that the model of the structure and

level of detail of Convention's Work Plan 2006-2008 should be followed; and that the Strategic Plan should identify and point at where more detailed sources of information exist, such as in Work Plans, action plans, etc., concerning different aspects of implementation.

**Decision SC35-20:** Concerning time-lines for the Strategic Plan, the Standing Committee decided that the Secretariat should prepare a first draft to be circulated for comment to all members of the Subgroup in mid-2007; that following their comments a second draft should be prepared in early autumn 2007 for circulation to all Standing Committee members and observers; and that a third draft should then be provided to the Subgroup prior to, and for consideration at, the 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee in early 2008.

**Decision SC35-21:** Concerning the National Reports format, the Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to develop further the COP10 National Report format based on the approach and reduced number of indicators presented in the Annex to DOC. SC35-10.

**Decision SC35-22:** The Standing Committee directed the Secretariat, when preparing the NR format, to include, in a preamble, a clear explanation of the purposes for national reporting and the uses to which the COP10 National Reports will be put, amplifying DOC. SC35-10 paragraphs 2 and 3; include a 'free-text' summary section for reporting national implementation progress, based on the questions set out in DOC. SC35-10 paragraph 6; include a 'free-text' section under each Strategy, as an optional section for Parties to provide additional information if they so wish, to cover a) additional information concerning each of the indicators for that strategy, and b) any information concerning other aspects of implementation progress of that strategy; for each specific indicator, to include other 'tick-box' options than a simple Yes/No answer, such as inter alia Partially/ In progress/ completed/ not applicable, etc., depending on the precise formulation of that indicator; and review and amend the wording of each indicator so as to ensure that its wording is precise and clear, and will yield information useful for assessing and reporting on Convention implementation progress.

**Decision SC35-23:** Concerning specific indicators, the Committee instructed the Secretariat to, under Strategy 4.4, include additional CEPA indicators, covering the full breadth of the Convention's CEPA programme implementation, based on those recommended by the CEPA Oversight Panel, but consolidating these so as to avoid unbalancing the overall report format; under Strategy 1.2 add a small number of indicators concerning the status of National Wetland Policies (or their equivalents); add, if necessary and following the advice of the Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP), any additional process-oriented indicators that it deems essential for assessing the ecological-outcomes of the implementation of the Convention; and add a short section reporting the availability of national information on the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands (both specifically for Ramsar sites and for the overall wetland resource), through the provision of 'meta-data' on such information rather than reporting the status and change itself, so as to facilitate the STRP's follow-up work on site and national level information sources for certain of its indicators of effectiveness.

**Decision SC35-24:** Concerning time-lines, the Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of DOC. SC35-10 Annex (early March 2007) and provide this to the STRP for consideration at its mid-term workshops. At its mid-term

workshops (last week of March 2007) the STRP should review and comment on the format and identify any additional process-oriented indicators it needs for its indicator work. A revised draft should be made available to the Standing Committee member and observers in April 2007, for their comment and approval; the finalized COP10 NRF will be issued to all Contracting Parties in June 2007; and the deadline for the submission of COP10 National Reports will be set as 28 February 2008.

#### **Agenda item 15: COP9 outputs**

##### **Review of COP decisions**

**Decision SC35-25:** The Standing Committee expressed its profound gratitude to RSPB and BirdLife International for having released time for Dave Pritchard to undertake his review of the Ramsar Convention's decisions from 1980 to 2005 with a view to rationalization and consolidation.

**Decision SC35-26:** The Standing Committee urged that further work should be encouraged on the review of past decisions, but that legal advice should be sought only if and when major problems should arise, and that it would be worth while to present the Convention's decisions in thematic groupings, with a list of decisions currently in effect. The Committee felt that consolidations and retirements of past decisions should be undertaken only when necessary, but that all new Resolutions should include retirements of superseded earlier decisions when appropriate. The SC encouraged Dave Pritchard to look at what retiring specific blocks of decision might look like, and asked the Secretariat to assess ways and means of analyzing the implementation of past decisions in order to identify any redundancies. And the SC requested a report for SC36 that could be communicated to COP10.

##### **Wetlands and poverty reduction (DOC. SC35-13)**

**Decision SC35-27:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to develop a draft Resolution for COP10, in consultation with interested Parties, that provides more specific guidance on wetlands and poverty reduction.

##### **Resolution IX.15 on the status of Ramsar sites (DOC. SC35-14)**

**Decision SC35-28:** The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to note the information supplied in the interventions and to follow up on them as requested to, and to report back to SC36 on the results. The Committee agreed that the reporting on the status of Ramsar sites should be an agenda item for every Standing Committee meeting. The SC also asked the Secretariat to prepare an information paper on oil and gas exploitation in African Ramsar sites for consideration by SC36. The Committee instructed the Secretariat to keep the supporting materials supplied today on hand in the Secretariat for consultation and to update the information in DOC. SC35-14 for presentation to SC36.

#### **Agenda item 16: The Secretariat Work Plan 2007 and Ramsar-CBD Joint Work Plan 2007-2010**

**Decision SC35-29:** The Standing Committee adopted the Secretariat Work Plan 2007 as annexed to DOC. SC35-17 rev. 1.

**Decision SC35-30:** The Standing Committee endorsed the draft Fourth Work Programme between Ramsar and the Convention on Biological Diversity as found in Annex 2 of DOC. SC35-17 rev. 1.

**The Management Working Group's report concerning changes in the Secretariat's organization (Agenda item 10 above)**

**Decision SC35-31:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretary General to work with the Management Working Group to propose an organizational structure and terms of reference for senior staff to better reflect the strategic priorities and needs of the Convention for the next five years, for consideration by SC36. The Committee also endorsed the recruitment of a P1 post in the Secretariat to support the work of the Senior Regional Advisors.

**Agenda item 16: The legal status of the Convention**

**Decision SC35-32:** The Standing Committee agreed to seek the views of the IUCN Commission on Environment Law, UNESCO, and UNEP on the legal status of the Secretariat and invited interested Parties to collaborate, and it called on the Secretariat to provide a more informative and comprehensive paper on the problem and options for solutions for its next meeting. The Committee agreed that the Director General of IUCN should be formally approached about interim solutions to ensure that the Secretariat is properly represented at all relevant UN meetings.

**Agenda item 18: The 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

**Decision SC35-33:** The Standing Committee chose the week of 25-29 February 2008 for its 36<sup>th</sup> meeting and agreed to hold the 37<sup>th</sup> SC meeting in June 2008. The exact starting date in February and optimum suggested dates for June will be communicated later.

**Agenda item 19: Adoption of the report of the meeting**

**Decision SC35-34:** The Standing Committee adopted the reports of the first two days of the meeting, subject to editorial proofreading by the Secretariat, and empowered the Chair to adopt the report of the third day.