



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

## Diplomatic Note 2020/6

### Intersessional activities of the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions and Administrative Authorities of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, and has the honour of updating them regarding the intersessional activities of the Standing Committee of the Convention.

On 23 April, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands informed Contracting Parties of the Standing Committee's decision to postpone the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention (SC58) to 26-30 October 2020. The Standing Committee also identified a number of time-sensitive issues to be addressed intersessionally, and made recommendations on the process to address them. The Secretariat in consultation with the Executive Team has accordingly developed a virtual process for the Standing Committee to discuss the identified issues and take decisions. This process was endorsed by the Executive Team on 13 May. As per Rule 25.1 of the Rules of the Procedure and Resolution XIII.4, Contracting Parties that are not members of the Standing Committee may participate in this process as observers.

The process outlined below has been developed following the Rules of Procedure of the Convention on Wetlands and guidance on conducting virtual meetings prepared by the UNEP Law Division that is aligned with the Rules of Procedure, and in consultation with the Executive Team. Importantly, it provides an open and transparent means for all Contracting Parties to participate in the decision-making process.

### Intersessional process

The Secretariat has reviewed the process for consideration of such issues by the Standing Committee, including the inputs received from Contracting Parties, and ensuring compliance with the Rules of Procedure. The identified issues and accompanying decisions have been divided into two categories:

1. Issues that require consideration by a Group established by the Conference of the Contracting Parties or Standing Committee before decision by the Standing Committee:

For these issues, virtual video/audio meetings of the relevant groups have been scheduled. Documentation for SC58 has been prepared by the Secretariat, including proposed decision text, and is available on the Convention's website. The Working Group or Subgroup will make recommendations with proposed decision text for Standing Committee members to endorse. If no comments or objections are received by the deadline proposed, the issue will be considered as decided. Should there be objections or comments, the Group will consider these. If the amendments are minor, the Group will review its recommendation and send it a second time to the Standing Committee by email. If there is lack of agreement, the Chair of the Standing Committee may propose

that the issue be taken up during a virtual meeting of the Standing Committee scheduled during the week of 22 June. The Executive Team has stressed that, given the circumstances, it is crucial to give sufficient time to Contracting Parties to review the documentation and proposals, and to sequence the different steps with a view to completing the process in the week initially scheduled for the SC58 in June, given that these decisions are time sensitive.

SC58 agenda items, requested decisions and timeline in this category include (associated group and proposed meeting date also listed):

- 8.2. Report on financial matters for 2020 (Subgroup on Finance – scheduled to meet 8 June from 13:00-16:00 CET);
  - 8.3. Status of annual contributions (Subgroup on Finance – scheduled to meet on 8 June from 13:00-16:00 CET);
  - 19. Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (Management Working Group – scheduled to meet on 10 June from 14:00-16:00 CET);
  - 20.1. Report of the Subgroup on COP14 (Subgroup on COP14 – currently meeting via email, possible virtual meeting to be confirmed); and
  - 20.4 Process for the preparation and review of draft resolutions: purpose and timing of regional pre-COP meetings (Executive Team – date to be confirmed).
2. Issues to be considered directly by the Standing Committee

These will be considered via email based on the documents prepared for SC58, which indicate decisions required of the Standing Committee, as available on the Convention's website. These issues and accompanying proposed decisions will be sent as a package on 26 May to Standing Committee members. Parties will have three weeks to comment, with the comment period closing on 15 June. Proposed decisions on which no comments are received by the deadline will be considered approved. Comments received will be compiled, and revised decision text will be proposed by the Chair and circulated to the Standing Committee by 19 June for endorsement by June 22. If no comments or objections are received on an item, it will be considered that the decision is agreed. If further discussion is required, the Chair may propose that the item be discussed during a virtual Standing Committee session scheduled during the week of 22 June. SC58 agenda items and requested decisions in this category include the following:

- 13. Review of all previous Resolutions and decisions;
- 16. Work plan of the Secretariat;
- 20.3. The Ramsar Wetlands Conservation Awards;
- 22.2. Report of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives - clarification on the call for proposals for new RRIs;
- 23. Report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation; and
- Elements of advice for the GEF concerning the funding to support the objectives and priorities of the Convention, for the eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

Contracting Parties will also be able to join two three-hour virtual Standing Committee meetings scheduled for the week of 22 June, the original dates of SC58. These virtual meetings are scheduled for 23 and 25 June from 13:00 to 16:00 CET. We recognize that the scheduled times will be either early in the morning or late in the evening for some. The scheduled times are optimal for a majority of Parties. If Parties are able to conclude all outstanding business during the first meeting, the second meeting will be cancelled. For these meetings of the full Standing Committee, simultaneous interpretation will be provided. Interpretation will not be provided for the group meetings.

## Registration to participate

Contracting Parties that are not members of the Standing Committee will need to register to participate in the intersessional process of the Standing Committee. Registration will be open from 19 May to 26 May 2020. Contracting Parties which register will be asked to indicate whether they will participate in the two categories of the intersessional process as referenced above. Once a Contracting Party has registered, it will receive invitations for the group meetings it has identified and by email the packet of decisions to be undertaken.

The online registration system is accessible at: <https://contacts.ramsar.org/preregistration/ml/scis20>

The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands remains available to provide any further information if required and avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions and Administrative Authorities of the Contracting Parties to the Convention the assurance of its highest consideration.

Gland, 19 May 2020

