

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

22nd Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee  
San José, Costa Rica: 9 and 14 May 1999

## **Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of the Standing Committee**

Participants: Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Uganda, Uruguay, United States; BirdLife International, Wetlands International, World Wide Fund for Nature; Ramsar Bureau.

### **First session, 9 May 1999**

#### **Agenda item 1: Welcoming remarks from the Chairperson of the Standing Committee (Hungary) and Costa Rica**

#### **Agenda item 2: Brief report on the arrangements for COP7**

1. The Secretary General reported that all preparations, including the dispatch of conference documents, have been completed on time, and that the Convention has received more than half a million US dollars to enable sponsorship of some 180 delegates from more than 90 countries. He thanked the Government of Costa Rica, and in particular the work of [Dunnia] of IUCN in San José, for streamlining the process of acquiring visas for the delegates. Sr Marco Solano of Costa Rica reported on further details of the arrangements.

#### **Agenda item 3a: Proposed changes in the Conference programme: Additional plenary session for Tuesday evening**

2. The suggestion was made that, in addition to scheduling an extra plenary session to consider DOC. 15.1 on regionalization, the Committee should establish a working group to seek consensus in advance of that. It was preferred, however, that informal consultations could take place at any time, and if a consensus proposal should emerge, a special meeting of the Standing Committee could consider it for recommendation to the COP.

**Decision SC22.1: The Standing Committee agreed to schedule an additional plenary session for Tuesday evening, 11 May.**

#### **Agenda item 3b: Proposed changes in the Conference programme: Establishment of focus groups**

3. The establishment of six focus groups was proposed in order to advance the consideration of and orientation to major issues, but not to “wordsmith” the relevant resolutions. The Bureau has prepared two “non-papers” as drafts of the enabling resolutions on the work plan and budget for 2000-2002. It was felt that the budget issue should be taken up instead by the Subgroup on Finance, with other Contracting Parties welcome to participate as observers. Care will be taken to minimize the impact of multiple meetings on small delegations.

**Decision SC22.2: The Standing Committee agreed to establish six focus groups to permit interested participants to discuss major issues in advance of their**

consideration by COP: 1) work plan, 2) strategic framework, 3) national policies and laws, 4) community participation and outreach, 5) cooperation and synergies, and 6) water-related issues. The budget 2000-2002 will be considered by the Subgroup on Finance.

#### **Agenda item 4: Election of COP president and vice-president**

**Decision SC22.3: The Committee agreed to recommend to the COP that Minister Elizabeth Odio Benito of Costa Rica be chosen as president of the COP, and that Minister Keximbira Miyingo of Uganda and Mr Veit Koester of Denmark be chosen as vice-presidents.**

#### **Agenda item 5: Appointment of the Credentials Committee**

5. Each Contracting Party proposed for membership in the Credentials Committee should designate one individual to participate; Annette Keller Pavlic of the Bureau will act as secretary, and the Committee will elect its own chair. The Committee will report to the COP on Wednesday unless an earlier vote should require the Committee to certify eligibility. The Committee's mandate is to determine whether the credentials presented by each Contracting Party meet the clear standards described in the Rules of Procedure.

**Decision SC22.4: The Standing Committee agreed to nominate Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Mongolia, Switzerland, and Togo for the COP's appointment to the Credentials Committee.**

#### **Agenda item 6: Conference report**

6. Full minutes of all interventions in plenary require too many resources to produce and are not done by other conventions. The Bureau proposes to produce a more "streamlined" type of report which merely summarizes the COP's determinations on each issue without recording the evolution of the discussion and the individual interventions. The draft daily report for each day's plenary will be presented to the next day's Conference Committee for approval and cumulated for the COP's approval at the last plenary session.

**Decision 22.5: The Committee adopted the Bureau's plan to produce a more streamlined report on the plenary sessions, to be reviewed daily and cumulated into the Conference Report.**

#### **Agenda item 7: Opening ceremony and social functions**

7. The Secretary General outlined the plans for the opening ceremony, social functions, and seating arrangements for the plenary hall.

#### **Agenda item 8: Conference Committee**

**Decision 22.6: It was agreed that the Conference Committee includes the seven Standing Committee members, but not the alternate members, plus the hosts of the last and present COPs and the president and vice-presidents of COP7. The**

**Committee will meet from 8:00 to 8:50 daily beginning Tuesday, and transportation will be arranged for members.**

**Agenda item 9: Any other business**

8. The question was raised when the plenary session will consider DOC. 23 and the issue of the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Convention. Some felt that this would have been an issue for the Credentials Committee, had the FRY presented its credentials for participation, but since the FRY has not registered, the issue need not be addressed. Others felt that clarification of the issue is needed anyway, since the Bureau has received no guidance from the COP on dues, notifications, etc. respecting the FRY.

**Decision SC22.7: The Committee determined that the issue of the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Convention is not a matter for the Credentials Committee and will be left to Contracting Parties to bring up in the plenary sessions.**

9. Under other business, the Committee noted the present version of DOC. 3 on Admission of Observers, welcomed Néstor Windevoxhel as Special Adviser for the COP on the Neotropics, and wished a happy birthday to Tim Jones of the Bureau.

**Second Session, 14 May 1999**

**Agenda item 1: Approval of the minutes of the first session of the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

10. In Decision SC22.7, 'Conference Committee' should read 'Credentials Committee'. With that amendment, the minutes were approved by consensus.

**Agenda item 2: Nomination of STRP members for the next triennium**

11. The SC accepted Canada's proposal that a "substitute" member of the STRP be appointed for the North American and Oceania regions, because according to the proportional regional system there would only be one regular member from those regions. There was no consensus for naming substitute members from the other regions.
12. It was determined to amend the wording of DOC. 15.2 (Resolution VII.2) on STRP so as to avoid possible confusion caused by the suggestion that the STRP should 'mirror' the Standing Committee's structure.

**Decision SC22.8: The Standing Committee approved the list of names to be recommended to the COP for election to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for the next triennium.**

**AFRICA**

Dr A Awaiss, Republic of Niger  
Mr G Cowan, South Africa  
Dr H Chabwela, Zambia

**ASIA**

Dr M Shatanawi, Jordan  
Dr A Alcalá, Philippines

**EUROPE**

Dr J Pokorny, Czech Republic  
Professor T Saat, Estonia  
Dr G Zalidis, Greece  
Dr P Maitland, United Kingdom

**NEOTROPICS**

Dr Y Schaeffer, Brazil  
Dr J Jimenez, Costa Rica

**NORTH AMERICA**

Dr A Hawkins, USA  
Substitute – Dr R Milton, Canada

**OCEANIA**

Dr M Finlayson, Australia  
Substitute – Ms B Golder, New Zealand