

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Gland, Switzerland: 23- 27 October 2000

## Decisions of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

**Agenda item 7: Resolution VII.12 on “Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance: official descriptions, conservation status, and management plans, including the situation of particular sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties”**

(See document SC25-3 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs03.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs03.htm).)

**Decision SC25-1:** The Standing Committee decided to:

- a) request the Bureau to make further contacts with Contracting Parties about their actions concerning their commitments embodied in Resolution VII.12, in order to obtain the most up-to-date information and encourage their further action;
- b) invite SC members to encourage Parties in the respective regions to follow up on those commitments; and
- c) receive the Bureau’s report on Resolution VII.12 implementation at SC26, and then decide how best to deal with the remaining issues in advance of COP8.

**Decision SC25-2:** Recognizing the need to give increased attention to the fuller implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention, the Standing Committee requested the Bureau, with the assistance of the members of the Standing Committee, BirdLife International and other International Organization Partners, and the STRP’s Expert Working Group on Ecological Character, to prepare a paper for consideration by the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee, for possible consideration by COP8. The paper should:

- (a) propose guidance to Contracting Parties concerning their identification and reporting of change and likely change in ecological character, in full accordance with Article 3.2; and
- (b) propose options for response to reported change, or likely change, in ecological character, to include *inter alia* the *modus operandi* of the Montreux Record, the National Planning Tool, and other mechanisms.

**Agenda item 9: Joint Work Plan with the Convention on Biological Diversity**

(See document SC25-5 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs05.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs05.htm).)

**Decision SC25-3:** The Standing Committee expressed its support for the Bureau's efforts to develop synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity and endorsed further work towards a third Joint Work Plan to succeed the present one.

**Agenda item 10: Synergy and partnerships with other conventions and institutions**

(See document SC25-6 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs06.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs06.htm).)

**Decision SC25-4:** The Standing Committee registered its support for the Bureau's cooperative efforts with other related conventions and institutions, in particular with the global treaties, and looked forward to observing benefits from these efforts flowing to the Contracting Parties. The Standing Committee members expressed their willingness to play a role in such cooperation, for example, by contacts in-country with the national focal points of other conventions.

**Agenda item 11: Priority actions in the Barbados Programme of Action**

(See document SC25-7 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs07.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs07.htm).)

**Decision SC25-5:** The Standing Committee determined that the priorities in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States should be adopted as a focus for the development of specific actions to be considered for incorporation in the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008, and it urged further consultations with the Small Island Developing States on their needs relative to wetlands. The Committee welcomed the intention of Trinidad and Tobago to bring the "Review of the Role of the Ramsar Convention in Relation to the Barbados Programme of Action" to the consideration of the Caribbean meeting to be held in December 2000.

**Agenda item 12: Analysis by the Environmental Law Centre of interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2**

(See document SC25-8 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs08.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs08.htm).)

**Decision SC25-6:** The Standing Committee requested the Bureau to translate the Environmental Law Centre's analytical paper into French and Spanish and circulate it to the Contracting Parties for comment; to convey any comments received to the ELC for consideration in a further draft of the paper; and to present that revised draft to the Standing Committee's next meeting for transmittal to COP8. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the ELC for its work thus far.

**Decision SC25-7:** The Standing Committee requested the Bureau, with assistance from BirdLife International, to prepare an analysis of the issue of "a procedure for the review of Ramsar site boundaries for reasons other than urgent national interest, without prejudice to other international obligations" (Resolution VII.23, para. 9).

**Agenda item 13: Implementation of Resolution VII.8 on participation of local communities and indigenous people in wetland management**

(See document SC25-9 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs09.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs09.htm).)

**Decision SC25-8:** The Standing Committee welcomed and supported the joint initiative by IUCN, WWF, and the Ramsar Bureau to establish a Participatory Management Networking Service (PMNS), to be managed by IUCN's Social Policy Programme.

**Agenda item 15: Status of implementation of the River Basin Initiative**

(See document SC25-11 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs11.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs11.htm) )

**Decision SC25-9:** The Standing Committee welcomed the news of recent progress in establishing the River Basin Initiative, jointly supported by the Conventions on Biological Diversity and on Wetlands.

**Agenda item 16: Report from the Scientific and Technical Review Panel**

(See document SC25-12 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs12.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs12.htm).)

**Decision SC25-10:** The Standing Committee approved the revised Work Plan proposed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). It noted the report on the STRP's 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and its progress in achieving its programme of work, and it noted the progress in the Parties' designation of STRP National Focal Points.

**Decision SC25-11:** The Standing Committee noted the concerns of the STRP's Chair and members about its *modus operandi*, mandates from the COP, and high turnover. The Committee established a Subgroup on the STRP to study the method of STRP selection and kinds of expertise sought for it, as well as the resource implications for the STRP and the Bureau caused by its work load and by the need for coordinating interactions with the STRP National Focal Points. The Terms of Reference of the Subgroup are to:

- prepare Terms of Reference for the Chair and members of the STRP and guidelines on the role and functioning of the STRP in relation to these TORs, as well as the role of observer organizations and invited experts;
- review the role of the STRP National Focal Points and, as appropriate, recommend changes to the existing Terms of Reference of these focal points so as to ensure that they can contribute fully to the work of the STRP;
- make recommendations for a procedure designed to establish greater continuity of membership in the STRP;
- make recommendations for a process designed to make available to COP8 (and subsequent COPs) a clear understanding of the full list of tasks it has under consideration for the future work of STRP, so as to assist the COP in its determination of Resolutions and Recommendations relating to this work;
- make recommendations on the schedule of meetings of the STRP during the next triennium, and in particular the timing of its first meeting, so as to maximize the time available to STRP to develop and undertake its programme of work; and
- review the financial and other resource implications of the recommendations and proposals relating to the *modus operandi* of the STRP, and make recommendations concerning resourcing of the work relating to the STRP.

The Standing Committee requested the Bureau to prepare a paper addressing the above Terms of Reference for circulation to the Subgroup on the STRP by 15 January 2001 and

to incorporate comments from the Subgroup in a second draft; this second draft will be considered by the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of STRP (in line with Decision STRP 9-17) and then at a meeting of the Subgroup to take place immediately prior to the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, in late 2001, for transmittal to COP8.

The Subgroup will consist of Armenia, France, Japan, Uganda, BirdLife International, the Chair of STRP, and the USA as Observer, and the Deputy Secretary General (*ex officio*) and the past Chair of STRP (to be invited).

#### **Agenda item 17: Significance for Ramsar of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment**

(See document SC25-13 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs13.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs13.htm).)

**Decision SC25-12:** The Standing Committee endorsed the Bureau's participation in the development and implementation of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and expressed the willingness of SC members to assist the MEA Board by nominating suitable experts and suggesting likely pilot sites for local assessment.

#### **Agenda item 18.1: Suggested dates and venue of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

**Decision SC25-13:** The Standing Committee adopted the recommendation of the Subgroup on COP8 that the COP be scheduled for Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002, and it endorsed the proposed slogan "Wetlands: water, life, and culture" (and its French and Spanish equivalents). The Committee welcomed the agreement between the Bureau and the Spanish Ministry of Environment outlining responsibilities and budget and expressed gratitude for Spain's generous offer of Sfr 721,000 for Bureau costs and Sfr 100,000 for sponsored delegates.

The Committee also approved the following calendar of pre-COP8 events: a) Standing Committee's 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, 3-7 December 2001; b) Subgroup on COP8 meeting, 6-8 May 2002; c) SC27 and SC28 meetings, 17 and 26 November at the COP8 venue; d) SC29 meeting, 6-9 January 2003; e) SC30 meeting, 10-15 November 2003. The Committee welcomed Japan's indication of its willingness to contribute to delegate sponsorship.

#### **Agenda item 18.2: Proposed Draft Agenda and Programme for COP8**

**Decision SC25-14:** The Standing Committee adopted the Draft COP8 Agenda and Programme proposed in DOC. SC25-15, with the following amendments (in bold):

Agenda item VI: Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees - Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Conference will appoint a Credentials Committee on the basis of proposals made by the Conference Committee, and may establish any other committees necessary to enable the Conference to carry out its functions. The COP may establish a Committee on the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and the Work Plan 2003-2005; a Committee on Finances and Budget; **and a Committee on content and duration of future Ordinary Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.**

Technical Session 1: Item 1.1 should incorporate the outputs of the STRP Working Group on Water allocation and management; Item 1.2 should incorporate the outputs of the (proposed) STRP Working Group on Climate change and the Ramsar Convention

Technical session 4: The titles of items 4.1 to 4.5 should read “**Case studies and guidelines on ...**”

The Committee requested the Subgroup on COP8 to prepare a study of the content and duration of future Conferences of the Parties, for consideration by SC26 and COP8. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of Spain for its leadership on COP issues.

### **Agenda item 18.3: Ramsar regional meetings prior to COP8**

**Decision SC25-15:** The Standing Committee noted the suggestions that regional meetings in Africa be organized by geographical proximity rather than by language and that planned meetings in the Neotropical region be increased from two to four, and instructed the Bureau to explore these arrangements, subject to their financial feasibility. The Committee adopted the list of regional meetings proposed by the Subgroup on COP8, as amended by the wishes of Africa and the Neotropics, and with a notation that the Central Asia meeting is planned for non-Parties. The Committee also approved the list of objectives for the regional and subregional meetings, as amended by the Subgroup's recommendations. It welcomed Australia's offer to explore with New Zealand and Papua New Guinea the organization of a meeting for Oceania, possibly to include non-Contracting Parties.

**Note:** On the basis of this Decision, the list of planned meetings, subject to availability of funds, comprises:

**Africa:** 1 meeting each for West Africa; North and Central Africa; and Eastern and Southern Africa.

**Asia:** 1 meeting each for the Middle East; Central Asia (for non-Contracting Parties); West Asia; and East Asia.

**Europe:** 1 pan-European meeting in Slovenia in October 2001.

**Neotropics:** 2 meetings for South America and two meetings for Central America. One meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee, in Portugal in 2001.

### **Agenda item 18.4: Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award**

**Decision SC25-16:** The Standing Committee approved the proposed text of the guidelines for the Ramsar Award, amended to indicate that sums of less than \$10,000 will not be awarded as cash prizes, not that they will not be accepted from donors. It endorsed the Subgroup's proposed calendar – call for nominations by 20 June 2001; deadline for nominations on 31 December 2001; Bureau's analysis of candidatures by 31 March 2002; Subgroup on COP8's recommendations on winners at its 6-8 May 2002 meeting and transmittal to Standing Committee for endorsement; presentation of the Awards at the opening of COP8 on 18 November 2002.

### **Agenda item 19: Report of the Subgroup on Ramsar's Strategic Plan 2003-2008**

**Decision SC25-17:** The Standing Committee requested the Bureau to prepare a third draft of the Strategic Plan in line with the recommendations of the Subgroup on the Strategic Plan; to incorporate in this third draft, as far as practicable, any additional comments on the second draft received from Standing Committee members by 30 October 2000; and to circulate the third draft to the Subgroup by 15 December 2000 for comment and approval by 8 January 2001, followed by its translation into French and Spanish and wider distribution for comment by the end of January 2001. The Standing Committee will consider again the draft at its 26<sup>th</sup> meeting and will delegate the Subgroup to meet in May 2002 to adopt the final draft for transmittal to COP8. It is intended that the draft Strategic Plan will be considered late in the COP8 agenda to allow time for incorporation within it of results of the COP, as appropriate. It is also intended that the pre-COP8 Ramsar regional meetings will be given the opportunity to comment upon the draft Strategic Plan.

(**Note:** on the basis of this decision, the Bureau will circulate the draft Strategic Plan 2003-2008 to all Contracting Parties for comments by the end of January 2001.)

#### **Agenda item 20: The Bureau's Work Plan for 2001**

(See document SC25-19 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs19.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs19.htm).)

**Decision SC25-18:** The Standing Committee approved the Bureau's Work Plan for 2001, with amendments to the Americas section following the recent regional meeting. It urged that in future the Bureau's proposed plan should be simpler in structure and that it be accompanied by a 'balance sheet' indicating where the actions of the preceding year's Work Plan have been achieved or not achieved.

**Decision SC25-19:** The Standing Committee requested the Bureau to prepare a report and proposals, for consideration at its next meeting and possible transmittal to COP8, on a) the nature and extent of data holdings in the Ramsar Sites Database and the relationship between "official" and "unofficial" data on Ramsar sites; b) the possible need for a revised format for the Ramsar Information Sheet to bring it into closer conformity with evolving data needs; and c) specifications for the future preparation of Ramsar site maps, in both paper and digital formats.

**Decision SC25-20:** The Standing Committee endorsed the proposal by Wetlands International for establishment of a Ramsar Wetlands Training and Advisory Service, as described in the supplementary agenda paper to DOC. SC25-19 and presented by the representative of Wetlands International.

(See document SC25-19 Addendum at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs19add.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs19add.htm).)

#### **Agenda item 21: World Wetlands Day 2001**

**Decision SC25-21:** The Standing Committee members noted the Bureau's planning for World Wetlands Day 2001 and indicated their willingness to forward descriptive text about

planned activities in their own countries to the Ramsar Bureau, as soon as practicable, for inclusion in the growing list of planned activities on the Ramsar Web site.

(See the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/wwd2001\\_index.htm](http://ramsar.org/wwd2001_index.htm) )

**Agenda item 22.1: Audited accounts for FY 1999**

**Decision SC25-22:** The Standing Committee accepted the Audited Accounts as truly reflecting the financial position of the Ramsar Bureau as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999, for transmittal to all Contracting Parties.

(**Note:** The Audited Accounts for FY 1999 are being distributed to all Contracting Parties under a separate diplomatic note.)

**Agenda item 22.2: Income and expenditure for FY 2000**

(See document SC25-22 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs22.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs22.htm).)

**Decision SC25-23:** The Standing Committee approved the report on FY 2000 core and projects income and expenditure.

**Agenda item 22.3: Use of funds under budget line 3**

**Decision SC25-24:** The Standing Committee noted the Bureau's report on the use of funds under budget line 3 (travel on official business), submitted in accordance with Decision SC24-23.

**Agenda item 22.4: Small Grants Fund: *modus operandi* and approval of projects**

**Decision SC25-25:** The Standing Committee decided:

- a) to establish a deadline of 31 December 2000 for return to the Bureau of signed contracts on outstanding SGF1999 projects. If a contract has not been returned fully signed by that date, the project should be cancelled and the funds reallocated to the next ranked A2 category SGF2000 project;
- b) to establish a general rule for SGF2000 and future years that fully signed contracts must be returned to the Bureau within three months of the date that the Bureau has confirmed the project proponent's reception of the document. If a contract is not so returned, the project should be cancelled and the funds reallocated to the next ranked A2 project awaiting funding.
- c) to approve for funding the list of projects in Category A1 contained in Annex 2 of DOC. SC25-24 and the projects listed in paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Addenda to DOC. SC25-24, noting the withdrawal of the project proposal from Brazil.
- d) to amend the assessment procedure used in the review and ranking of small grant proposals by the following steps:

- Adding four new categories to the five categories already existing in Stage II of the evaluation form.
- These four new categories would address the 4 technical themes of Stage I:
  1. Objectives
  2. Activities and Methods
  3. Budget
  4. Capacity to Implement the Project
- A maximum of five points and a minimum of zero would be awarded under each category.
- A rating of zero should represent a **minimally adequate** level of compliance, **not non-compliance**.
- The Ramsar Bureau staff will develop specific proposal rating language for each of these four new Stage II categories. This language will be reviewed subsequently by the Subgroup on Finance.
- These proposed changes will be implemented in the 2001 small grants cycle.

(**Note:** The following is the list of projects referred to in section c) of the above decision:

**Funded projects:**

- 1) Armenia, “Regional training course on wetland management”, SFR 40,000
- 2) Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia, “Transboundary management plan for the Lower Naretna Valley”, SFR 25,000
- 3) Cambodia, “Development and implementation of a management plan for the Boeung Chhmar Ramsar site”, SFR 40,000
- 4) Colombia, “Inventory and characterisation of wetlands in Caqueta department”, SFR 40,000
- 5) Lebanon, “Developing a viable economic framework for the management of Amning and Tyre Wetlands”, SFR 38,720
- 6) Madagascar, “Workshop on the development of a National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable use of Wetlands in Madagascar”, SFR 38,700
- 7) Niger and Togo, “Training activities for wetland managers”, SFR 40,000
- 8) Republic of Moldova, “Restoration, rehabilitation and implementation of protective measures in the core wetland areas in the Dniester River”, SFR 40,000

A project from Congo, “Inventory and evaluation of wetlands in Congo”, SFR 39,507, will be funded by the SGF if no confirmation of funding by the WWF Living Waters Campaign has been received by 31 December 2000.

The following projects will receive funding, in this order of priority, if resources became available because of cancellation of some 1999 SGF projects:

Algeria, “Training course for wetland managers at sub-regional level (Magreb countries), SFR 40,000

Chile, “Integrated planning for the conservation of the wetland system of the northern highlands”, SFR 39,108

Panama, “Elaboration of an action plan for the conservation and wise use of Panama wetlands”, SFR 39,325

Croatia, “Development of the Croatian wetland inventory”, SFR 40,000

**Agenda item 22.4 (ii): Feasibility of transferring operation of the SGF to one of the International Organization Partners (IOPs) (Decision SC24-21)**

(See document SC25-25 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs25.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs25.htm).)

**Decision SC25-26:** The Standing Committee

- a) decided that the administration of the SGF should be kept within the Ramsar Bureau and invited the IOPs to strengthen their support in relation to Ramsar SGF project design, evaluation, implementation and monitoring;
- b) welcomed the statement by the Senior Advisor on Environment and Development Cooperation that he is confident that there are several mechanisms that could be explored with considerable prospects of success to raise funds for the SGF;
- c) requested the Secretary General to ensure that the Senior Advisor devotes attention to exploring these mechanisms as soon as possible; and
- d) urged the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to provide full support to the Senior Advisor in this endeavor.

**Agenda item 22.5: Unpaid contributions from the Contracting Parties**

**Decision SC25-27:** The Standing Committee determined to submit to COP8 a draft resolution establishing that, in order to encourage timely and regular payment of annual contributions, as from 1 January 2003:

- a) Contracting Parties whose arrears equal the amount of their assessed contribution for the preceding two years on the date of the opening of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall not be eligible to be elected as Regional Representative in the Standing Committee of the Convention;
- b) Contracting Parties whose arrears equal the amount of their assessed contribution for the preceding three years on the date of the opening of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall have their right to vote suspended at that meeting;
- c) Contracting Parties whose arrears equal the amount of their assessed contribution for the preceding two years at the time of considering any request for funding under the Ramsar Small Grants Funds or other funding mechanism under the Convention shall not be eligible for such funding.
- d) Since these sanctions would commence only at COP9 in 2005, COP8 should authorize the Standing Committee to negotiate a fair arrangement, on a case by case basis, with those Parties that have accumulated considerable arrears, in order to allow them to attend COP9 with a clean slate.
- e) In case of severe economic conditions or natural disaster, at the request of the Contracting Party concerned, the Standing Committee would be authorized to make special arrangements with that Party regarding its unpaid contributions.

**Agenda item 22.6: Use of the OECD/DAC list to determine eligibility for Ramsar financial assistance**

(See document SC25-27 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs27.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs27.htm).)

**Decision SC25-28:** The Standing Committee decided that:

- a) the OECD/DAC List of Aid Recipients should continue to be used, *mutatis mutandis* as applying to Ramsar Contracting Parties and other countries eligible for accession, for eligibility for SGF as established by Resolution VI.6;
- b) the Bureau, when allocating assistance for participating at Ramsar meetings, should use the OECD/DAC list in the following order of priorities:
  - i) Contracting Parties in Part I of the List
  - ii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: Central and Eastern European Countries and New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; and
  - iii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: More advanced Developing Countries and Territories;
- c) the Bureau should prepare a report on the regulations and practice applied on this matter by other environment-related conventions for consideration at the next Standing Committee meeting and possible transmission with recommendations to COP8.

**Agenda item 22.7: Ramsar Bureau budget 2001**

(See document SC25-28 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs28.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs28.htm).)

**Decision SC25-29:** The Standing Committee approved the Bureau's proposed budget as shown in Document SC25-28.

**Agenda item 22.8: Work Plan of the SAEDC**

(See document SC25-29 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs29.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs29.htm) and the addenda at: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs29add.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs29add.htm).)

**Decision SC25-30:** The Standing Committee noted the proposed Work Plan of the Senior Advisor on Environment and Development Cooperation (SAEDC) and looked forward to its effective and successful implementation.

**Agenda item 22.9: Location and financing of the MedWet Coordination function**

(See document SC25-30 at the Ramsar Web site: [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs30.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs30.htm) and the addendum at [http://ramsar.org/key\\_sc25\\_docs30add1.htm](http://ramsar.org/key_sc25_docs30add1.htm).)

**Decision SC25-31:** The Standing Committee, having received the generous proposals submitted by Spain and most recently by Greece for hosting the Coordination of the

Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative, including a pledge for financial contributions towards the salary of the MedWet Coordinator and other expenses:

- a) accepted with pleasure the recommendation of the interested countries that the MedWet Coordination function should continue to be based in Athens, Greece, for the interim period until 31 December 2002, when the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties will have taken a more permanent decision;
- b) accepted the generous offer by the Government of Greece contained in the letter addressed to the Secretary General by the Deputy Minister of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works dated 16 October 2000 and further elaborated in the letter also addressed to the Secretary General by the Director General of that Ministry, dated 24 October 2000;
- c) expressed its most sincere appreciation to the Government of Spain for having submitted a generous and early offer to provide a solution to the location and financing of the MedWet Coordination, and welcomed the indication by the Ministry of the Environment that it may consider using part of the resources involved in its offer for the secondment of a Spanish expert to work in the MedWet Coordination in Athens;
- d) authorized the Secretary General to enter into an appropriate agreement with the Government of Greece concerning the MedWet Coordination office and its financing; and
- e) urged the Bureau to communicate news of this decision to the participating MedWet countries without delay.

#### **Agenda item 23: Next meeting of the Standing Committee**

**Decision SC25-32:** The Standing Committee fixed the dates of its 26<sup>th</sup> meeting for 3-7 December 2001, at the Ramsar Bureau offices, and determined that time will be set aside in the agenda for regional meetings.

#### **Agenda item 25 (i): Procedure for selection of a new Secretary General**

**Decision SC25-33:** The Standing Committee decided a) that the Chair will circulate proposals concerning search procedures, including search criteria and the composition of the search and interview committee(s), well in advance of the next Standing Committee meeting; b) that at that meeting the Committee will adopt the procedure and calendar for selecting the new Secretary General and instruct the Bureau to put it in motion; and c) that the Committee will communicate to COP8 the procedure adopted by the Standing Committee for selecting a new Secretary General and invite the COP to consider and adopt it as the formal procedure for future occasions.

#### **Agenda item 24: Adoption of the report and decisions of the meeting**

**Decision SC25-34:** The Standing Committee adopted all of the Decisions of the meeting, as well as the Minutes of the first day of plenary sessions, subject to final editorial preparation by the Bureau. It was agreed that the Minutes of the second and final day of

plenary sessions will be circulated by electronic mail to voting members of the Standing Committee with one week allowed for comment.