

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**29th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 26- 28 February 2003**

DOC. SC29-8

Agenda item 9

**Preparations for Ramsar COP9, including implementation of
Resolution VIII.45**

Action requested: The Standing Committee should take decisions to put in motion the preparatory process for COP9, including:

- a) a preliminary decision on the dates of the meeting;
- b) substantive preparations, including implementation of Resolution VIII.45;
- c) securing the required funding; and
- d) providing guidance on the Memorandum of Understanding that should be signed between the host country and the Ramsar Bureau.

The Standing Committee may wish to establish a Subgroup on COP9 to advance the issues listed above in advance of the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee, when a number of decisions concerning COP9 should be settled.

Dates of COP9

1. In order to allow Parties sufficient time to make progress with the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the STRP and Standing Committee to prepare the guidance and other documents that have been requested by COP8, it would seem that COP9 should be held, as was COP8, towards the end of the triennium, e.g. in late November 2005.
2. This would entail following a similar pattern of STRP schedule and Standing Committee meetings as we have done for COP8. That may again require a meeting of the Standing Committee Subgroup for COP9 in May 2005, and a meeting of the Standing Committee in February 2006.
3. It would not seem sensible, or even possible, to go back to the old pattern of having the COP in the first half of the COP year, since this would leave only two short years to undertake all the necessary preparatory work.

Substantive preparations, including implementation of Resolution VIII.45

4. Substantial preparations for COP9 entail, at this stage and primarily, deciding which products will be required from the STRP for Standing Committee consideration and transmission to the COP. This matter will be considered by the Standing Committee under Agenda item 6: Matters related to the STRP.
5. In addition, the Standing Committee should review Resolution VIII.45 on "Operation of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the effectiveness of Ramsar Convention

Resolutions and Recommendations” and take decisions on how to approach its implementation.

6. At this stage, the Standing Committee should focus on the following operative paragraphs of the Resolution:
 10. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to undertake, as one of its highest priorities, a general review of the effectiveness of the process of drafting, considering, adopting and implementing Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
 11. DIRECTS that this review focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention, from a broad perspective rather than on a country by country basis;
 18. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to analyse, report and provide recommendations on possibilities to improve the efficiency of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties; and
7. Concerning paragraphs 10 and 11, the Standing Committee should take a decision on how to proceed with the review requested, which entails two aspects:
 - a) a review of the process of drafting, considering and adopting the Resolutions and Recommendations at the last three COPs, which could be a straight forward exercise to be undertaken by the Bureau with the assistance of Party representatives who were directly involved in those processes; and
 - b) a review of the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations “from a broad perspective rather than on a country by country basis”. For such a review to yield a meaningful assessment, this work will be a much more substantive, complicated and costly exercise. Although the review would aim to provide ‘broad perspective’, it is highly likely that compilation and analysis of information may need to be done from information provided by each Contracting Party, IOPs, and from the many other organisations identified as contributing to Convention implementation in past Resolutions and Recommendations.
8. The Standing Committee may wish to advise further on the scope of, and approach to, undertaking this review, and to request the Bureau to prepare a costed proposal for undertaking the review, for its consideration at its 30th meeting.

Securing the required funding

9. COP-related costs include: a) the costs incurred by the Bureau; b) the costs incurred by the host country; c) the costs of holding subregional and regional preparatory meetings for the COP; and d) the costs of financing the participation of delegates from Parties which cannot afford to cover these expenses.

10. The costs incurred by the Bureau, excluding those related to STRP and Standing Committee that might be COP-related, include:
 - a) translation, reproduction, and distribution of documents before the COP;
 - b) translation of documents during the COP;
 - c) interpretation in the three official languages during the COP;
 - d) air tickets for the Ramsar Bureau staff, interpreters, translators and consultants and perdiems for their stay at the COP venue;
 - c) consultants and temporary staff to assist with COP preparations; and
 - d) production of the proceedings of the COP (e.g., publishing in the "Ramsar tools" series the Resolutions and the substantive guidelines normally annexed to a number of them).

11. The above-listed costs would amount for COP9 to some SFR 850,000. Of this, SFR 274,058 have now been included in the core budget 2003-2005. The rest, some SFR 580,000, should either be provided by the host country, as has been the case for all Ramsar COPs with the exception of COP7 in Costa Rica, or raised from other sources, perhaps including charging a conference fee as was done for COP7.

12. The costs incurred by the host country are always difficult to quantify because they depend upon a number of variables. The host country has to provide free of charge all the conference facilities and cover the expenses of running the meetings, such as reproduction of documents, coffee breaks, transport for participants, etc., with the exception of the translation and interpretation services, which are always provided by the Bureau in order to ensure the required quality of these two essential services. In general terms, it is calculated that the host country would have to invest between 1.5 and 3 million US dollars.

13. A Memorandum of Understanding should be signed in 2003 between the Ugandan Government and the Ramsar Bureau specifying in detail the responsibilities of both parties vis-à-vis COP9.

14. The Bureau spent SFR 820,884 in relation to the 11 subregional and regional meetings organized before COP8, an amount that was donated by Contracting Parties, NGOs, and foundations, in addition to the substantial contributions made by the host countries of the 11 meetings. At its next meeting (SC30), the Standing Committee should take a decision about the preparatory meetings that could be held in preparation for COP9 in 2004 and 2005.

15. The participation of delegates from developing countries and countries with economies in transition would amount to one million Swiss francs, and as usual, when the time comes, the Bureau should approach donors for this purpose.

Standing Committee Subgroup on COP9

16. The Standing Committee may wish to establish such a Subgroup in order to progress by correspondence and other means the COP9-related issues listed in this document. The Subgroup could meet on the day before the meeting of next Standing Committee meeting in order to finalize recommendations to the Committee.

17. As was the case with the Standing Committee Subgroup on COP8, it could be chaired by the COP9 host country and have in its membership a representative on the six Ramsar regions, plus representatives of the International Organization Partners and the Secretary General as a member *ex officio*.