

Decisions of the 42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee

(The meeting report in English, opening statements, and PowerPoint presentations [signified by “PPT”] are available at http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-standing-sc42-ppts/main/ramsar/1-31-41%5E25127_4000_0__.)

Agenda item 6: Report of the Management Working Group

Decision SC42-1: The Standing Committee noted that the work permit issue has now been resolved and expressed its gratitude to the Swiss authorities for help in achieving that result.

Decision SC42-2: The Standing Committee a) noted the Secretary General’s progress in establishing a strategy for the maximization of the Secretariat’s synergies; b) urged that the process should continue, fully involving all staff; c) requested that further information on current staff award systems, including options for non-monetary awards, should be provided to the Management Working Group at its next meeting; and d) agreed to review the current grievance procedure for staff to ensure that it remains appropriate to the present operations of the Secretariat and Secretary General.

Decision SC42-3: The Standing Committee noted the progress made by the SC Executive Team in establishing a clear process and criteria for the annual evaluation of the Secretary General and requested that those criteria be circulated to all Standing Committee members.

Agenda item 7: Report of the Subgroup on COP11

Decision SC42-4: The Standing Committee welcomed the proposed logos and slogans but suggested that the importance of wetlands for people should also be reflected, as well as the idea of wetlands being both a “home” and a “destination” for both people and nature, bearing in mind that a slogan should be as short and as simple as possible. The SC requested Romania, working with the Secretariat, to finalize the logo and slogan as quickly as possible, taking into account the SC’s advice.

Decision SC42-5: The Standing Committee noted that Romania and the Secretariat have an adequate but tight budget to cover the costs of the venue and in-country logistics, though there might be a need for them to request from the Parties modest funding for certain specific items in the near future. The Committee noted that the Secretariat is responsible for finding resources to cover sponsorship of delegates from eligible Parties and is currently seeking 1 million Swiss francs to support two delegates from each of those. The Committee indicated that contributions and suggestions for fundraising for this purpose would be welcomed.

Decision SC42-6: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue to develop the list of special presentations for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties and identify the appropriate speakers, and to report back to SC43. It was suggested that an

additional agenda item should be added, following the Secretary General's and STRP reports, for a report on CEPA Programme activities.

Decision SC42-7: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to draft an advisory note to Parties to guide streamlining their input to COP informational documents (including the draft Resolution on the status of Ramsar Sites) in order to save time spent on corrections and comments during plenary sessions and, along with the COP Presidency, to structure and facilitate COP plenary sessions to seek to retain a focus on matters of significant policy and substance relevant to the conservation of wetlands during those sessions.

Decision SC42-8: The Standing Committee determined that the election of the new SC should be conducted early in the COP proceedings to allow time for the new members to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The SC determined that the pre-COP regional meetings should begin to identify their new representatives for COP appointment to the Standing Committee and complete their nominations during the regional meetings just before the opening of the COP; following the election of the new SC members, they will be charged with participating as observers in the meetings of the Conference Committee throughout the COP, and will take over as the new Standing Committee at the close of the COP.

Decision SC42-9: The Standing Committee approved the draft agenda for COP11, subject to the amendments noted above, and requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised draft agenda to all Parties.

Decision SC42-10: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat and host country of COP11 to study further the implications of holding a high-level segment, and to report to the Subgroup on COP11 at SC43.

Decision SC42-11: The Standing Committee requested that, given the small number of nominations so far for the Ramsar Award, the members should assist in identifying appropriate nominees and spread information about the Award widely. The Committee determined, if few further nominations are received, to consider whether it would be appropriate to review and re-admit nominations made for the COP10 award.

Agenda item 8: Report of the Subgroup on Finance

Decision SC42-12: The Standing Committee noted the CHF 61,000 core budget deficit and the CHF 50,000 transfer from reserves to STRP priority projects as directed at SC41, such that the Reserve Fund stood on 31 December 2010 at CHF 302,000; noted the continued decline in voluntary contributions and the current over-dependence upon one private sector donor; and noted that the draft 2010 Financial Statements presented in DOC. SC42-04 have been finalized and signed off by the auditors in April 2011. The Standing Committee requested the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance and the Ramsar Finance Officer to develop guidelines for ensuring that transfers are not made until after end-of-the-year financial results are known.

Decision SC42-13: In the matter of payment of Parties' contributions, the Standing Committee thanked all Parties that have made their contributions on time; urged all Parties experiencing difficulty or delay in their payments to advise the Secretariat at the earliest

opportunity; urged Parties in arrears to correct that situation by making all possible efforts to reduce their outstanding arrears to 50% of current levels by the end of 2011 and to 30% of current levels by the end of 2012; and urged Standing Committee members and the Secretariat to continue to work with such Parties, stressing to all relevant ministries in such countries the importance and benefits gained from meeting their commitments to the Convention following their accession.

Decision SC42-14: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to begin the process of considering new ways of dealing with the Parties which would avoid the longstanding bottleneck that is sometimes caused by the inability of Administrative Authorities to engage effectively; to seek feedback on ideas from Parties and regional meetings; and to report progress to SC43.

Decision SC42-15: The Standing Committee approved the 2011 budget with minor reallocations between core budget lines, as set out in DOC. SC42-07, and agreed to use any unallocated or unused 2011 Regional Initiatives allocations for pre-COP regional meetings or necessary 2011 legal costs; thanked all Parties that have made additional voluntary contributions but expressed concern at the continuing decline in such voluntary contributions; and urged all SC members, Parties, and the Secretariat to redouble their efforts to find voluntary funding for important upcoming activities such as pre-COP11 regional meetings, COP11 sponsored delegates, Small Grants Fund, STRP, and Ramsar Advisory Missions.

Decision SC42-16: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to explore options for reducing voluntary contribution requirements for sponsored delegate participation, including a review of the rationale for sponsorship based on the OECD DAC list, in consultation with other convention's secretariats, and to provide options for SC43 consideration.

Decision SC42-17: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare for SC43 three budget scenarios for 2013-2015, including both core and non-core funded elements for implementing the Strategic Plan 2009-2015, based on the format provided in DOC. SC42-07, with priorities for different budget elements. The Committee requested the Secretariat to provide to SC43 some suggestions for 2013-2015 budget scenarios based upon "zero growth" (allowing for inflation), "flat" (with no adjustment for inflation), and "modest growth".

Decision SC42-18: The Standing Committee, recognizing that the Small Grants Fund in its present form has become increasingly unviable in cost/benefit terms,

- a) requested the Secretariat to continue to seek alternative sources of financing for the Small Grants Fund and to report to the SC regularly;
- b) encouraged the Parties and other potential donors to demonstrate their desire to keep the SGF operational by making significant voluntary contributions to the Fund;
- c) instructed the Secretariat not to solicit or assess any SGF proposals for the 2012 cycle and to focus instead on seeking further funds for approved 2010 and 2011 portfolio projects; and
- d) requested the Secretariat to explore additional alternative methods for providing on-the-ground support for Parties, such as providing advice and

information to Parties and others on opportunities for funding for wetlands from other organizations.

Decision SC42-19: The Standing Committee noted that the additional costs of subgroup simultaneous interpretation are not included in the current core budget and requested the Secretariat and the Subgroup on Finance to explore options for such funding for 2012 and for the 2013-2015 budget, including providing to SC43 a full cost estimate with all its implications as well as other low or no-cost options to facilitate the participation of non-native English speakers.

Agenda item 9: Regional Initiatives

Decision SC42-20: The Standing Committee noted the progress of the Regional Initiatives that it endorsed at its 40th and 41st meetings as operating within the framework of the Convention in 2009-2012; determined to withdraw consideration from three inactive Initiatives (Pacific Islands, Himalayan, and Lake Chad Basin); approved the 2011 allocations to Regional Initiatives as summarized below; agreed to require 2011 reports and requests for 2012 to be submitted by 29 February and make the allocations for 2012 by electronic circulation no later than April 2012; and noted that the Secretariat will prepare a review for SC43 of the success of the Regional Initiative programme to serve as an Information Paper for COP11.

Allocations for Regional Initiative, 2011

(all amounts in CHF (0.9 CHF/USD, 1.3 CHF/EUR))

Regional Initiatives	Allocation for 2011
Regional centres	
Eastern Africa (Kampala)	35,000
Western Hemisphere (Panama)	nil
Central and West Asia (Ramsar)	65,000
<i>total for centres</i>	<i>100,000</i>
Regional networks	
West African Coast	20,000
Niger River Basin	20,000
High Andean	25,000
La Plata River Basin	nil
Caribbean	28,800
American Mangroves	32,000
Carpathian	29,000
Black Sea Coast	38,390
<i>total for networks</i>	<i>193,190</i>
Total	293,190

Agenda item 10.2: Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

Decision SC42-21: The Standing Committee noted the STRP Chair's report and the progress made by the Panel on its priority tasks for COP11, and it approved the addition to the STRP work plan 2009-2012 of the task invited by the CBD to establish an expert working group to review available information and provide policy-relevant messages on maintaining the ability of biodiversity to continue to support the water cycle, which would be funded through the CBD.

Decision SC42-22: The Committee encouraged voluntary contributions both to enable STRP members to participate in pre-COP11 regional preparatory meetings and COP11 itself in order to assist Parties in understanding draft scientific and technical Resolutions and to enable meetings of the STRP National Focal Points to be held in other regions, following the successful meetings for European and African NFPs.

Decision SC42-23: The Standing Committee recognized the importance of the work of the STRP as a key mechanism for supporting and guiding the delivery of wetland conservation and wise use on the ground, and it recognized that the mechanisms and strategies for achieving these objectives should evolve over time. To ensure that the STRP's objectives and strategies for their delivery are as targeted and as effective as possible in a rapidly changing world, the SC decided to establish an informal working group to draft a COP11 Resolution for SC43 consideration designed to review and take these matters forward. The Committee requested the Secretariat to establish this group and invited those interested in contributing to the work of this group to contact the Secretariat.

Agenda item 10.3: Updating the format of the Ramsar Information Sheet and *Strategic Framework*

Decision SC42-24: The Standing Committee approved for finalization and consideration by COP11: a) the proposed Draft Resolution on these matters, b) the revised *Strategic Framework* to be annexed to the DR, and c) the revised Ramsar Information Sheet, also to be annexed to the DR. The Committee endorsed the proposal to prepare an implementation plan for the introduction of streamlined procedures for Ramsar Site data and information handling, covering the preparatory period to COP11, the transitional period following that COP, and the introduction of the new procedures in 2014.

Decision SC42-25: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to make the final drafts of these documents available on the Ramsar website as soon as possible. The Committee thanked the STRP and particularly David Stroud for their work, and urged the STRP, the Secretariat, Wetlands International, and UNEP-WCMC to make a further evaluation of the most appropriate on-line tool for consideration by COP11.

Agenda item 12.1: Promotion and utilization of the Changwon Declaration

Decision SC42-26: The Standing Committee noted the report on the dissemination and uptake of the Changwon Declaration; thanked the Republic of Korea and the Ramsar Regional Centre for East Asia for championing the Changwon Declaration and supporting its implementation; encouraged the Secretariat to develop a framework for Changwon

Declaration implementation case studies and a report to COP11; and urged Contracting Parties and others to consider providing voluntary funding for that purpose.

Agenda item 12.2: The Secretariat's work plan 2011

Decision SC42-27: The Standing Committee thanked the Secretary General for his report and took note of the actions taken since January in implementing the Secretariat's work plan for 2011.

Agenda item 18: Update on business partnerships

Decision SC42-28: The Standing Committee noted and welcomed the report of the Partnership Coordinator and encouraged the Secretariat to continue working along the lines she has described.

Agenda item 14: Review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015

Decision SC42-29: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to advise SC43, based on its review of the COP11 National Reports, as to whether any mid-term adjustments would be desirable to the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 and, if necessary, to draft a possible Resolution for COP11 for SC approval by electronic circulation.

Agenda item 4: Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group

Decision SC42-30: The Standing Committee:

- noted with deep concern the absence of a draft Resolution by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform as mandated by Decision SC41-4;
- expressed appreciation for the commitment of the departing Co-Chairs to facilitate a smooth transition of leadership of the WG, and requested that informal consultations with representatives of the Contracting Parties be conducted in order to appoint a chairperson or co-chairs and that they convene a meeting of the WG to appoint the new leadership by 6 June 2011;
- urged the Working Group to reconvene its work as mandated in Resolution X.5 and Decision SC41-4 as soon as possible after the appointment of new officer(s) and not later than 30 June 2011;
- invited IUCN, the Ramsar Secretariat, and UNEP to provide to the WG and Secretariat any additional information they believe would be useful to inform the decision making of the Parties and, due to the urgency of this matter, requested the Secretariat to make available immediately on the Ramsar website any such materials received;
- due to the importance of this matter to the Convention, encouraged all Contracting Parties to actively participate in the deliberations of the WG;
- further urged the WG to report on a consensus position on the matter, or, if that were not possible, to report on the main positions within the WG with clear, precise, complete and comparable information;
- requested the WG to submit its results by 31 August 2011, so that the 43rd meeting of the SC may consider those results in reporting to Ramsar COP11; and

- requested the Secretariat to provide all necessary support for the WG to complete its task and to participate in the meetings as appropriate.

Agenda item 16: Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee

Decision SC42-31: The Standing Committee determined that, with the Netherlands' agreement, it would be inconsistent with the present administrative arrangements of the Secretariat for the Netherlands to continue being considered as a permanent observer to the Standing Committee.

Decision SC42-32: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue discussions with Switzerland on options for the future in regard to its permanent observer status and to continue to seek legal advice for interpretation of the Rules of Procedure with regard to the Standing Committee's practices.

Decision SC42-33: The Standing Committee determined to examine the desirability of going back to holding only one full SC meeting in the year prior to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and potentially to include a timeline of its meetings for the next triennium in the COP11 Draft Resolution on SC matters.

Agenda item 19: CEPA matters

Decision SC42-34: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare its World Wetlands Day 2013 materials using the theme "Wetlands and Water Management", with a specific focus on working with the water sector.

Agenda item 20: Date and venue of the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee

Decision SC42-35: The Standing Committee decided that its 43rd meeting would be held 31 October to 4 November 2011 in Gland, Switzerland.

Agenda item 21: Adoption of the report of the meeting

Decision SC42-36: The Standing Committee adopted the meeting report for the first three days, subject to the amendments made and editorial polishing, and empowered the Chair to review the fourth day's report on its behalf.