

Subgroup on Finance and
Agenda item 8

**Contracting Parties that are consistently in arrears in their
payments to the Convention**

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to note the present status of arrears in Parties' contributions.

1. In Resolution X.12 (2008), the Conference of the Contracting Parties "URGES Contracting Parties in arrears in their payments of assessed contributions to make a renewed effort to settle them as expeditiously as possible to enhance the financial sustainability of the Convention through contributions by all Contracting Parties, and AGREES that the Standing Committee at its 40th meeting should further consider options for dealing with Parties that are consistently in arrears with payments to the Convention."
2. At the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC34, 2006), the Secretariat presented a number of opportunities to improve the support given by the Secretariat to members, including: producing timely and easily readable statements of contributions, including all unpaid portions, for Contracting Parties in arrears; requesting Parties that are in arrears with their contributions to settle them by the established deadlines; and requesting Parties experiencing difficulties in meeting their financial contributions to propose a plan to provide for the payment of contributions in arrears within a limited period. In assisting Contracting Parties to develop such a plan, the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Standing Committee regional representatives, and the Secretary General should make contacts, through diplomatic channels, with those Parties having arrears to plan settlement of their outstanding contributions.
3. These steps have all been taken, with mixed results. During 2010 we have received previously overdue contributions from the following countries: Belize, Burundi, Costa Rica, Mali, Peru, Senegal, United Arab Emirates
4. A number of Contracting Parties remain in arrears, however, with a consistent core of Parties that have never paid their contributions. A schedule of annual contributions from 2010 and prior, currently outstanding, is attached in Annex 1. (Please note, voluntary contributions from Africa are recognized only as received and do not form part of the core budget. They are shown in the annex for general information.)
5. The continued aging of debts of some Parties, particularly in the Africa and Oceania regions, together with some notable newer large payment delays, has required an increase in the provision for potential bad debts of CHF 50,000 in 2010.
6. The economic crisis in many parts of the world does appear to be a significant contributor to this situation. We have been in close contact and had open dialogue with Contracting

Parties, and fortunately, to date, have only experienced short payment delays and no fundamental issues with respect to the ultimate collection of debts from the larger Contracting Parties on which the Convention is financially most dependent. Collections of 2011 contributions are currently on schedule, in part due to invoicing well before the end of 2010. Invoices for 2012 will be released in October 2011.

7. In recent year, options have been suggested to reduce the flow and priority of services provided by the Secretariat to Parties with arrears. The Standing Committee has previously considered asking the Secretariat to manage requests from Contracting Parties with arrears in the following ways:
 - by not processing further Small Grants Fund (SGF) proposals;
 - by providing Secretariat advice and missions (including Ramsar Advisory Missions) only in emergency situations;
 - by providing delegate support to attend regional and COP meetings only if all other Parties have been assisted according to existing rules, and in any event only if the Contracting Party is not more than three years in arrears.
8. There also exists the option that Contracting Parties more than three years in arrears could be made ineligible to vote in the Convention's meetings, ineligible for election to the Standing Committee, and ineligible to make nominations for membership of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). However, all of these possibilities seek to provide essentially punitive measures and would inevitably restrict the Secretariat in assisting all Parties to fully implement their Convention commitments. To date, the Standing Committee has not supported such measures, and the Secretary General does not recommend consider such measures helpful or necessary.
9. As agreed at SC41, the Secretariat will continue to apply a mixture of awareness-raising and counseling as its principal mechanisms to deal with arrears, and will continue efforts to have timely and open communication with all Parties experiencing payment difficulty/delay.
10. The Secretariat would also like to request that all Standing Committee members, especially those on the Subgroup on Finance, note the Contracting Parties in their regions that have long overdue contributions, particularly those that have never paid since acceding to the Convention, and strongly encourage those Contracting Parties to begin to address their arrears.

Annex 1

Membership receivables, 2010 and prior, outstanding as at 18 March 2011, together with last payment year								
Region	Annual contributions	No of years outstanding	Voluntary contributions	Region	Annual contributions	No of years outstanding		
	CHF		CHF		CHF			
Africa	LIBYAN ARAB JAMAH	24,509	>7 *	-	Asia	UZBEKISTAN	6,930	7
Africa	NIGERIA	20,143	>7 *	-	Asia	BAHRAIN	4,501	3
Africa	MAURITANIA	12,577	>7 *	2,000	Asia	LEBANON	4,335	3
Africa	CHAD	12,367	>7 *	2,000	Asia	PAKISTAN	3,802	2
Africa	GUINEA BISSAU	12,367	>7 *	2,000	Asia	IRAN, ISLAMIC REP	14,104	1.5
Africa	GUINEA	12,215	>7 *	2,000	Asia	IRAQ REPUBLIC OF	3,000	3
Africa	CONGO, DEM. REP.	11,846	>7 *	2,000	Asia	YEMEN	3,000	3 *
Africa	COMOROS	11,694	>7 *	2,000	Asia	BANGLADESH	1,489	1
Africa	SIERRA LEONE	10,000	>7 *	2,000	Asia	TURKMENISTAN	1,166	1 *
Africa	BURKINA FASO	8,968	>7 *	2,000	Asia	JORDAN	1,000	1
Africa	CONGO	8,774	>7 *	2,000	Asia	KYRGYZ REP	1,000	1
Africa	DJIBOUTI	8,000	>7 *	2,000			44,327	
Africa	LIBERIA	7,000	>7 *	2,000				
Africa	ALGERIA	5,817	1	-	Europe	AUSTRIA	38,159	1
Africa	COTE D'IVOIRE	5,723	6	2,000	Europe	IRELAND	18,074	1
Africa	TOGO	5,007	5	2,000	Europe	PORTUGAL	14,131	<1
Africa	CAPE VERDE	5,000	5 *	2,000	Europe	ROMANIA	7,937	1
Africa	SUDAN	5,000	5	2,000	Europe	MONTENEGRO	1,000	1
Africa	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	4,000	4	2,000	Europe	MACEDONIA	1,000	1
Africa	SAO TOME & PRINCIPE	4,000	4	2,000			80,301	
Africa	NIGER	3,192	3	2,000				
Africa	CAR	3,000	3	2,000	Americas	MEXICO	198,156	2
Africa	MALAWI	3,000	3	2,000	Neotropics	VENEZUELA	29,939	3 *
Africa	CAMEROON	2,097	2	2,000	Neotropics	NICARAGUA	10,810	>7
Africa	MALI	2,044	2	2,000	Neotropics	PARAGUAY	9,438	3
Africa	BENIN	2,000	2	2,000	Neotropics	SAINT LUCIA	8,000	>7
Africa	LESOTHO	2,000	2	2,000	Neotropics	CUBA	7,762	3
Africa	ZAMBIA	2,000	2	2,000	Neotropics	ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	5,000	5
Africa	SENEGAL	1,329	1	2,000	Neotropics	GUATEMALA	4,075	3
Africa	TUNISIA	1,329	1	-	Neotropics	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2,365	1.5
Africa	GAMBIA	1,257	1	2,000	Neotropics	SURINAME	2,000	2 *
Africa	MADAGASCAR	1,122	1	2,000			277,545	
Africa	TANZANIA	1,000	1	2,000				
Africa	MOROCCO	204	0	-	Oceania	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	11,205	>7
Africa	BURUNDI	168	0	2,000	Oceania	PALAU	8,000	8 *
Africa	GABON	-	0	2,000	Oceania	MARSHALL ISLANDS	5,000	5
					Oceania	SAMOA	512	0.5
Africa	GHANA	-	0	1,000			24,717	
Africa	MOZAMBIQUE	-	0	1,000				
Africa	NAMIBIA	-	0	1,000				
		220,749		65,000				
					Key			
					*	No payment since acceding to Convention		
GRAND TOTAL	647,639	(2009 - CHF480,001)						
ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS								

(Please note, voluntary contributions from Africa are recognized only as received and do not form part of the core budget. They are shown in the annex for general information.)