

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee
Gland, Switzerland, 16-20 May 2011



Agenda item 6

Report of the Management Working Group

Composition of the Management Working Group: Chair and Vice Chair of COP9 Standing Committee, Chair and Vice Chair of COP10 SC, COP9 and COP10 Chairs of Subgroup on Finance, STRP COP9 Chair, STRP COP10 Chair, Secretary General (*ex officio*), Contracting Party representatives (Czech Republic, Japan, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Paraguay), IOP representative (WWF International)

Personnel matters

1. The Management Working Group met on 16 May at 1000 h.
2. The Secretary General explained that the Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr Kim, has now been appointed as Ambassador to Republic of Kenya and has now taken up that office, and expressed his gratitude to Mr Kim for his work for the Convention. The Republic of Korea has designated Mr Yoo Yeon-Chul as the new Chair of the Standing Committee. The members of the Management Working Group introduced themselves, and warmly welcomed Mr Yoo as the new Chair of the Standing Committee.
3. Apologies for absence were noted from the Vice-Chair and Subgroup on Finance Chair of the previous triennium.
4. The COP9 Finance Subgroup Chair, USA requested adding a) an update on Decisions from the previous Management Working Group meeting; and b) the evolution of the STRP's work, in relation to the assessment of the accomplishments of the STRP in its guidance preparation and the terms of Resolution VIII.45. It was agreed that the latter item should be taken in plenary under the agenda item on the Report of the STRP Chair, who will be speaking in her report to such matters.

a) **Review of issue with work permits and other arrangements for internship programme (Verbal response to Decision SC41-3)**

5. The Secretary General outlined the Secretariat's discussions with the Swiss authorities on these matters. He affirmed that the problem has been resolved and has ensured the timely recruitment of new staff since SC41, and thanked those in the Swiss authorities for their help in resolving the issue. The link between this issue and the discussions on the future legal status of the Secretariat was noted.

The Group **recommends** that the Standing Committee notes that the work permit issue has now been resolved, and thanks the Swiss authorities for help in resolving this matter.

b) **Strategy to maximize synergies within the Secretariat (Decision SC41-37c) (DOC. SC42-02)**

6. The Secretary General reported on his establishment of an ongoing process for strengthening synergies and team work within the Secretariat, including a 'Ramsar Staff Advance' day facilitated by an external facilitator, and all staff undertaking a 'Strengthsfinder' exercise to better understand their own personal strengths and also to look comparatively across the strengths of all staff. He noted that improving effective communication is a commonly recognized issue, and that new ways of holding staff meetings had been introduced to more fully involve all staff.
7. The strategy involves promoting a better work environment, better recognizing the role of each staff member, and further developing effective teamwork, and supporting each other in working and meeting deadlines. The process has helped to identify specific skills in individual staff which might be better uses, and the next steps will include a further 'staff advance' in August 2011.
8. It was suggested that a form of award scheme for staff, in addition to any monetary recognition through salary increases, should be considered to recognize good work of staff to increase motivation, and that '360 evaluations' might be a useful tool for involving all staff in evaluating each other's performance and achievements, and it was noted that IUCN are planning to introduce such a procedure for all senior staff. It was also recalled that a grievance process for Ramsar Secretariat staff, differing from that in IUCN, had been put in place in previous triennia.

The Group **recommends** that the Standing Committee

- a) notes the Secretary General's progress in establishing a strategy and its implementation for the maximisation of Secretariat synergies;
- b) urges that the process should continue, fully involving all Secretariat staff; and
- c) requests that further advice on current staff award systems, including options for non-monetary awards, should be provided to the Management Working Group at its future meeting; and
- d) review the current grievance process for Secretariat staff so as to ensure that it remains appropriate for the present operations of the Secretariat and Secretary General.

c) Criteria and methodology for the annual evaluation of the Secretary General (Decision SC41-37d) (DOC. SC42-03)

- 9. The Secretary General advised that further to DOC. SC42-03 that a set of assessment criteria, developed by and external consultant, had been shared with the Executive Team, and at their request the Secretariat had further revised the these criteria. These have now been agreed with the Executive Team and are now being applied for the Secretary General's 2010 assessment, and that these will be kept under review.
- 10. It was requested that the assessment criteria should be shared with the Management Working Group, and this was agreed by the Executive Team that it should be circulated to all Standing Committee members.

The Group **recommends** that the Standing Committee notes the progress made by the Executive Team in establishing clear process and criteria, and that these criteria will be circulated to all Standing Committee members.

d) Implementation of Management Working Group recommendations to SC41

- 11. It was confirmed that all recommendations made by the Management Working Group to SC41 had been addressed in SC41 Decisions and the subsequent further actions reported to this meeting of the Management Working Group and are reflected in its Recommendations to SC42 in this report.

e) Any other business

- 12. The Secretary General reported that he had received a request from Panama and Paraguay to explore the potential for providing simultaneous interpretation for Management Working

Group and Subgroup on Finance meetings, in addition to Standing Committee plenary sessions. The Secretary General noted that this should be considered by the Standing Committee in plenary, it may require amendment to amend the relevant COP rule of procedure as it applies to the Standing Committee, and also noted that since such additional interpretation has significant cost implications for the Convention's current and future budget there would need to be advice from the Subgroup on Finance as to how any such additional costs could be found.

13. It was asked how the figures for the additional costs had been calculated, and it was clarified that this is the standard cost of one or two days additional payments to interpreters; whether there would be any cost differences depending on the location of the SC meeting; and whether the additional costs could be found from cost savings in other parts of the Standing Committee budget line.
14. It was further noted that there is no such interpretation in any subgroups operating under any of the UN processes, because of high cost implications, and that under the UN processes it countries wish to have such interpretation they bring their own interpreters, and that it is important particularly for understanding discussions in the corridors that there is a common language of understanding between the professional delegates to such meetings.

The Group **recommends** that the Standing Committee and the Subgroup on Finance, working with the Secretariat, a) may wish further examine options, costs and benefits of introducing simultaneous interpretation in SC subgroup meetings, noting that this is not current practice in any UN process, and b) assess whether such an introduction of interpretation would need any COP amendments to the rules of procedure as they apply to the Standing Committee.

15. It was asked if previous issues on the process of selection of new Standing Committee and its meeting immediately following COP to appoint its Chairs and whether that meeting could be made more effective. It was suggested to establish a small group to advise on further procedural improvements.

The Group **recommends** that a small group should be established to review the processes of appointment of new Standing Committee members at COP, and recommend any procedural improvements for that process including the first meeting of the newly-appointed SC immediately after the close of the COP.

16. It was also noted that there may be a need to develop clear Terms of Reference for the work of the Management Working Group for consideration at SC43.

