

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Bucharest, Romania, 4 July 2012

**DOC. SC44-04**

## **Draft Annotated Agenda**

**Venue:** Palace of Parliament, Bucharest, Romania – Human Rights Room. Wednesday, 4 July 2012, 10:00-18:00

**Important Note:** Participants are advised to arrive at the venue with sufficient time for registration before the meeting. Badges will be required for gaining access to the building. Please also note that a passport or other appropriate identification document with photograph will be required for registration.

**The Registration Desk will be open from 08:30 on Wednesday 4 July.**

**10:00 - 13:00**

**Note.** The Secretariat has recognized that the issue of the process and timelines for the recruitment of the next Secretary General should have been included in the SC44 agenda (see DOC. SC44-03). At the start of its meeting, the Standing Committee may wish to add an agenda item for discussion of this matter or alternatively may take the matter under agenda item 14 (Any other business).

1. **Welcoming remarks** by the Standing Committee Chair and a representative of the host country
2. **Report on the arrangements for COP11** by the Secretary General and a representative of the host country
3. **General review of the Ramsar COP11 Provisional Agenda** (COP11 DOC. 1)

Following the issuing of COP11 DOC.1 the Secretariat has finalized topics and anticipated speakers for the plenary “special presentations” on 7-10 July. These are anticipated to be as follows:

7 July:

17:30-18:00: *Wetland conservation and sustainable use in Romania* (speaker to be confirmed by Romania)

8 July:

10:00-10:30: *Outcomes of Rio+20 summit and their implications for the Ramsar Convention* (Brice Lalonde, Executive Coordinator of Rio+20, UN-DESA)

9 July:

10:00-10:30: *Sustainable tourism and the value of wetlands* (Taleb Rifai, Secretary General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO))

10 July:

10:00-10:30: *The value and economics of water and wetlands – TEEB synthesis report* (Andrew Farmer, Director of Research, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP))

15:00-15:30: *Water security and the importance of wetlands as natural infrastructure in water resource management* (Michael Scoullos, Chair of Global Water Partnership (GWP) Mediterranean)

Under Rule of Procedure 25, “At the first session of each ordinary meeting [of the COP], the President of the previous ordinary meeting, or in the absence of the President, a representative of the same Party, shall preside until the Conference of the Parties has elected a President for the meeting.”

Thus in the opening plenary session on the morning of 7 July, the Republic of Korea will chair the session for Agenda items III, IV and V until the COP11 President is elected.

#### 4. **COP11 Rules of Procedure**

Some amendments to the COP Rules of Procedure, mostly resulting from advice provided by the Parties serving on the COP10 Credentials Committee, were considered by SC43 and are included in COP11 DOC.2 for adoption under Agenda item IV. The Secretariat understands from the USA that it has some remaining concerns about certain of these proposed amendments, and further advice will be provided on this matter.

#### 5. **Nomination of COP11 President and Vice-Presidents**

The COP Rules of Procedure state that “At the commencement of the first session of each ordinary meeting, a President, an Alternate President, and two Vice-Presidents shall be elected from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting, on the basis of a proposal put forward by the Conference Committee [about which see Agenda item 12 below]. In preparing its proposal on this matter, the Conference Committee shall consider first the candidate(s) put forward by the host country of the meeting for the posts of President and Alternate President of the meeting.”

The Ministry of the Environment of Romania will bring forward proposals for the presidency. The Secretariat will bring proposals for the two Vice-Presidents, taking into account geographical distribution, official languages, and Parties that have held these positions in previous COPs. It is anticipated that one Vice-President from the Asia region and one from the Neotropics region will be proposed.

#### 6. **Appointment of the Credentials Committee**

The COP Rules of Procedure state that “A Credentials Committee composed of one Party from each of the Ramsar regions, elected at the first session of each ordinary meeting on

the basis of a proposal from the Conference Committee, shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the Conference of the Parties for approval.”

The Secretariat will consult with pre-registered delegates about their willingness to serve in the Committee and will bring proposals for nomination, and it is anticipated that this matter will also be discussed and as necessary finalized during the regional group meetings on 5 and 6 July 2012, before appointments are made under COP11 Agenda item VI on 7 July.

The Secretary General has designated Ms Claudia Fenerol, supported by Mr Dave Pritchard, to serve the Credentials Committee on the Secretariat’s behalf during the COP.

The proposed initial schedule of meetings of the Credentials Committee is as follows:

Saturday, 7 July, 15:00-18:00 (Room: Mihai Viteazu)  
Sunday, 8 July, 08:30-12:30 (Room: Mihai Viteazu)  
Monday, 9 July, 08:30-12:30 (Room: Mihai Viteazu)

The Credentials Committee must have completed its work not later than 18:00 on Tuesday, 10 July, in order to be able to prepare its report to plenary under COP11 Agenda item XVI on the morning of 12 July. At its meeting on 9 July the Committee, if its work should still be unfinished, it will determine a schedule of times and location for future meetings to achieve the deadline.

## 7. **Establishment of COP11 Committees**

The draft Agenda for the COP includes “Item VI. Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees.”

Pursuant to Rule of Procedure 26, the COP may wish to establish, as is usual practice, a Committee on Finance and Budget.

The Secretariat also recommends that the Standing Committee give consideration to proposing to COP that a second Committee should be established to address the issues of the future institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat (COP11 DR1).

### 7.1 **Committee on Finance and Budget**

The Secretariat proposes that, as is established practice, the core group of this Committee be the members of the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee, namely (Finland (Chair), China, Jamaica, Marshall Islands, Mexico, and Nigeria).

In addition, in line with previous practice and consistent with achieving regional balance, the Secretariat recommends inviting one additional Party per Ramsar region to serve on this Committee. Identification of these Parties should be made during the meetings of regional groups on 5 and 6 July in case this proposal is accepted. In any event, as established by the Rules of Procedure, meetings of the Committee should be open, unless otherwise decided by the Committee. The Secretary General will serve on this Committee *ex officio*, assisted by the Secretariat’s Finance Officer, Anna Goodwin.

Since the Draft Resolution (COP11 DR2) on financial and budgetary matters will be introduced in plenary under Agenda item XIII on the morning of Sunday, 8 July, the schedule of meetings of the Committee is proposed as follows:

Sunday, 8 July, 13:15-14:45; 18:30-21:00 (Plenary Hall – Cuza)  
Monday, 9 July, 08:30-09:45; 18:30-21:00 (Plenary Hall – Cuza)  
Tuesday, 10 July, 08:30-09:45; 13:15-14:45 (Plenary Hall – Cuza)

Note: Once the Committee has been established under Agenda item VI, it could begin its work prior to Agenda item XIII, in which case it could also meet on Saturday, 7 July, as follows: 13:15-14:45 and 18:30-21:00 (Plenary Hall – Cuza). Additional meetings could be agreed by the Committee, if required.

## 7.2 Committee on COP11 DR1 (Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat)

Given the potential significance of this Draft Resolution and in recognition that there may be divergent views from Parties on this matter, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee propose the establishment by the COP of a Committee on COP11 DR1. This will reduce the risk of lengthy debates and negotiation in plenary that could jeopardize the overall plenary process and completion of the COP's business.

The Secretariat suggests that this Committee could be composed of two Parties from each Ramsar region, nominated by each regional group during their meetings on 5 and 6 July. An initial schedule of meetings of this Committee is proposed as follows:

Saturday, 7 July: 13:15-14:45; and 18:30-21:00 (Room: Branco-Vanesc)  
Sunday, 8 July, 08:30-09:45; 13:15-14:45; 18:30-21:00 (Room: Branco-Vanesc)  
Monday, 9 July, 08:30-09:45; 13:15-14:45; 18:30-21:00 (Room: Branco-Vanesc)

Additional meetings could be agreed by the Committee, if required.

The Standing Committee/Conference Committee should provide advice to this Committee concerning the conduct of its business, along the lines that the Committee should:

- a) establish as rapidly as possible whether or not a consensus can be reached on either DR1 alternative 1 (IUCN hosting) or DR1 alternative 2 (UNEP hosting); and
- b) should no clear consensus be deemed achievable, prepare a recommendation to plenary as to how to conclude the matter, taking into account the terms of the COP Rules of Procedure.

The Standing Committee or Conference Committee may request the advice of the legal advisor engaged by the Secretariat concerning certain aspects of the due process which need to be followed on this matter under the Rules of Procedure and terms of the text of the Convention. Further information on this will be provided to the Standing Committee at its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting. The legal advisor will also be available to provide advice to the Committee and plenary during the COP.

Should the COP plenary decide not to establish a Committee on DR1, it will be opened for interventions in plenary under Agenda item XV on the morning of Sunday, 8 July. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee advise the COP President or Alternate President chairing that plenary session that DR1 should be open for interventions for a limited period only, specifically so as to establish whether or not a consensus on either of the DR1 alternatives is likely to be achieved. If at that point no such consensus appears likely, the Chair of that plenary will need to propose a way forward, such as through the establishment of a contact group, to continue consultations (see below).

**14:00 – 18:00**

#### **8. Establishment of contact groups**

A number of Draft Resolutions may prove to require consultations among Parties outside of the plenary sessions in order to arrive at a consensus text. It may therefore be necessary for the COP President to establish open-ended contact groups in such cases. The Secretariat will conduct informal consultations with registered Contracting Party delegations in order to identify potential Lead Parties for contact groups, should they need to be established.

As far as possible, a senior member of Secretariat staff will be made available to provide support and advice to any contact group established by the COP, and where a contact group is consulting on a Draft Resolution with scientific and technical content, relevant members of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will also be available to provide technical advice, as needed.

Some meeting rooms have been earmarked for contact groups to conduct their work, should they be needed. The Standing Committee should note, however, that the availability of such rooms is very limited. Furthermore, in order to facilitate participation in contact groups by all Contracting Party delegations who wish to take part, including Parties with small delegations, the Secretariat will endeavor as far as possible to arrange for no more than two contact groups to be meeting simultaneously.

Where possible, when consultations among Parties are needed, the COP President will therefore seek to encourage these to be undertaken through informal consultations and groups, especially if one or more contact groups has already been established on other DRs.

Since most Draft Resolutions will be introduced in plenary on the morning and afternoon of Sunday, 8 July, the first time any such contact group could meet is the evening of that day. However, regional group meetings are scheduled for the evening of Sunday, 8 July, so any contact group would be unlikely to be able to convene until Monday, 9 July.

Times available for any contact groups to meet are as follows:

Monday, 9 July: 08:15-09:45; 13:15-14:45; 18:15-21:00

Tuesday, 10 July: 08:15-09:45; 13:15-14:45

Wednesday, 11 July: 09:00-13:00

Contact groups will need to complete their work no later than 13:00 on Wednesday, 11 July (and preferably by the evening of 10 July) in order to give time for the Secretariat to finalise, translate and copy any revised Draft Resolutions for circulation to delegates on Thursday, 12 July, for final plenary approval.

9. **Issues arising from previous COP Resolutions and Recommendations**

Under this Agenda item XII, scheduled for the afternoon plenary session of Saturday, 7 July, the COP will consider any issues from previous COPs that may not have been covered by the reports of the Standing Committee Chair, the STRP Chair, and the Secretary General, the report on the CEPA programme implementation, or by COP11 Draft Resolutions.

The Secretariat is not presently aware of any such issues which would most appropriately be addressed under this Agenda item, but will advise the Standing Committee if any others are identified before the COP.

10. **Consideration of the Draft Resolution on “The status of Ramsar Sites” (COP11 DR4)**

The Standing Committee will recall that, in order to ensure that the information provided to Parties in both this Draft Resolution and the supporting Article 8.2 Information Paper (COP11 DOC.8) is as up to date as possible, at its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting the Committee decided (in Decision SC43-30) that the following process should be followed for COP11 consideration of these matters:

- i) Concerning COP11 DOC. 8, Contracting Parties were requested to provide to the Secretariat any updated and/or new information (subsequent to information provided to the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee and included in DOC. SC43-29) not later than 2 June 2012.
- ii) All such updated and/or new information received by the Secretariat by 2 June 2012 is being incorporated into COP11 DOC. 8, which will then be issued in mid-June, prior to the start of COP11.
- iii) Concerning COP11 DR4, an outline text was provided to SC43, and on the basis of all information received from Parties by 2 June 2012 and included in COP11 DOC.8, the Secretariat is preparing a revised version of COP11 DR4.
- iv) This COP11 DR4 Rev. 1 will, in accordance with Decision SC43-30, be issued to Parties in the three Convention languages shortly before the opening of the COP.

The process outlined here has been designed also to help streamline COP plenary processes by minimizing the need for Parties to make plenary interventions to provide detailed updated factual information on Ramsar Sites for inclusion in the final text of COP11 DR4, and also by making unnecessary any interventions concerning only information provided in COP Information Papers, such as COP11 DOC. 8 pursuant to Article 8.2, which are not the subject of COP negotiation.

The Standing Committee will also recall that at its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting it expressed concern at the undue length of time taken up during plenaries of recent COPs by interventions concerning only the content of COP Information Papers and the information in the “Status of Ramsar Sites” Draft Resolution, and at its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting the Committee approved guidance to Parties on these matters, “to be provided as a COP11 Information Paper, and to be specifically drawn to the attention of all Parties and delegates who will participate in the COP” (Decision SC43-1).

This Information Paper has been issued in the three Convention languages as COP11 DOC.3 Add.1 “Guidance to Contracting Parties for providing their input on COP information documents and COP11 DR4 during COP11 plenary sessions”. COP11 DOC. 3 itself provides general guidance concerning the overall “Procedures for the preparation and approval of decisions by Ramsar Contracting Parties at COP11”.

The Article 8.2 Information Paper (COP11 DOC.8) is being finalized by the Secretariat and will be posted on the COP11 documents webpage in mid-June. It is anticipated that the full text of the Draft Resolution (COP11 DR4) will be posted at the end of June, and all Parties will be alerted to its availability at that point.

#### 11. **COP11 opening ceremony and social functions**

The Secretary General and host country representative will provide a review of the arrangements and procedures. A programme for the opening ceremony, which includes COP11 Agenda items I (Opening of the meeting) and II (General statements and keynote addresses) and the presentation of the Ramsar Awards, scheduled for the evening of Friday, 6 July, will be available at the meeting.

Romania is expecting to appoint a ‘master of ceremonies’ to lead items I and II of the Opening Ceremony.

At the time of preparation of this paper, the Secretariat is aware of the following planned social functions during COP11:

- 6 July, 19:00: Welcome reception (following the opening ceremony), hosted by the Romania Ministry of the Environment.
- 7 July, 18:15: Host country reception for Heads of Delegations (by invitation only).
- 9 July, 18:15: Reception and launch of Ramsar tourism publication, hosted by the Romania Ministry of Regional Development & Tourism.
- 13 July, 18:30: Closing reception (to be confirmed).

#### 12. **Conference Committee**

Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure adopted by COP10 indicate that:

- “1. The voting members of the Standing Committee of the Convention shall constitute the Conference Committee, which shall also include the elected President, Alternate President and Vice Presidents of the current meeting. Observers may be invited to attend meetings of the Conference Committee, if required. The Conference Committee shall be chaired by the chairperson of the Standing Committee during the period previous to the current meeting.

2. The Conference Committee shall meet at least once daily to review the progress of the meeting, including the draft of the report of the previous day prepared by the Secretariat, and to provide advice to the President in order to ensure the smooth development of the rest of the proceedings.”

Thus, under Rule 26 the meetings of the Conference Committee are closed, and not generally open to observer Parties or organizations, unless an observer Party or organization is invited specifically by the Committee to contribute to an issue or issues.

However, since the Conference Committee should also operate under the same rules as the Standing Committee, this would appear to be in contradiction of the terms of Resolution VII.1, through which permanent observers to the Standing Committee are participants and other observers can be admitted to participate by the Committee.

To clarify this matter (and noting also that during recent COPs observer Parties and others have regularly attended Conference Committee meetings), an amendment has been proposed to Rule 26.1, so that it would read:

“The voting members of the Standing Committee of the Convention shall constitute the Conference Committee, which shall also include the elected President, Alternate President, and Vice Presidents of the current meeting. **[Other Contracting Parties and permanent observers to the Standing Committee may attend meetings of the Conference Committee. Other o]**bservers may be invited to attend meetings of the Conference Committee, if required. The Conference Committee shall be chaired by the chairperson of the Standing Committee during the period previous to the current meeting.”

The Standing Committee will recall that at its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting it determined to take Agenda item XIV concerning the election of Contracting Parties for the Standing Committee 2013-2015 earlier than has been done in previous COPs. This item is scheduled for Sunday, 8 July. Thereafter, SC43 determined that the newly appointed members of the Standing Committee 2013-2015 would be invited to attend Conference Committee meetings as observers (since the new Committee does not formally come into existence until after the COP).

According to Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure, “(c) There shall be no requirement to provide interpretation in committee or working group sessions, including the Conference Committee.” For COP11, however, simultaneous interpretation will be provided for the Conference Committee meetings. The Standing Committee practice of providing documentation only in English should also apply to the Conference Committee (for reasons of cost as usual, but also because of inadequate turnaround times for translation and because the translation teams will be otherwise engaged on COP documents throughout the COP).

In line with established practice, the Secretary General and/or Deputy Secretary General will be available *ex officio* at Conference Committee meetings to provide advice on issues and processes as needed.

In the COP11 agenda (COP11 DOC.1) it is proposed that the Conference Committee meet every day from 08:45 to 09:45 in Room: Human Rights, starting from Saturday, 7

July. On the day of field visits (Wednesday, 11 July), it may not be necessary for the Conference Committee to meet.

However, following discussion during the Oceania regional pre-COP meeting in Palau, the Secretariat has received a request for the timing of the meetings of the Conference Committee during COP11 to be adjusted to start and finish earlier than is indicated in COP11 DOC.1. This would be to permit time before the start of morning plenary sessions at 10:00 for the regional Conference Committee representatives to brief, as necessary, their regional groups on issues addressed by the Committee and the upcoming schedule for the day.

It is suggested, therefore, that the Standing Committee consider changing the Conference Committee meeting times from the present 08:45-09:45 to 08:30-09:30.

### 13. **Agenda for the 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

Following the appointment of the Standing Committee 2013-2015 on Sunday, 8 July, under Agenda item XIV, the COP11 agenda has scheduled from 18:30-20:00 on Tuesday, 10 July, a “Meeting of the appointees to the incoming Standing Committee 2013-2015 (election of Chairs, date and venue of their first full meeting of the new term)”. This brings forward the timing of what would be treated as the 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee from the timing of previous such meetings immediately after the close of the COP.

This meeting of the new Standing Committee will take place in Room: Human Rights.

It is a short meeting with three main purposes:

- i) for the new Standing Committee to elect from its members the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee;
- ii) for the Committee to elect one member from each Ramsar region to serve on the Standing Committee’s Subgroup on Finance, and from those members to elect the Chair of the Subgroup; and
- iii) to agree the date and venue of the Committee’s first full meeting in the 2013-2015 triennium.

In addition, as is explained in DOC. SC44-03 concerning the recruitment of the next Secretary General, the new Standing Committee must also address this matter at this meeting on 10 July, taking into account any advice provided by the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee.

The proposed outline agenda for this meeting of the new Standing Committee is thus as follows:

- Agenda item 1: Opening remarks
- Agenda item 2: Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee
- Agenda item 3: Election of the Subgroup on Finance
- Agenda item 4: Process and timelines for the recruitment of the next Secretary General (DOC. SC44-03)

Agenda item 5: Date and venue of the next meeting

Agenda item 6: Any other business

Agenda item 7: Closing remarks

14. **Any other business**

As is noted under Agenda item 7.2 above, the Secretariat has been able to secure the services of Mr Veit Koester, an experienced international environmental legal advisor, who will be available to provide advice to Contracting Parties on any issues of a legal or procedural nature which may arise during COP11. The legal advisor is preparing advice on some specific issues prior to the COP so that this can be provided to SC44 under the appropriate agenda items, as needed.