

Decisions of the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee

Day 1 – Wednesday 26 March

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda

Decision SC47-00: The Standing Committee admitted the representative from the Czech Republic as an Alternate Member of the Standing Committee, substituting the Member representing Croatia.

Decision SC47-01: The Standing Committee adopted the agenda, as amended.

Agenda item 3: Admission of observers

Decision SC47-02: The Standing Committee admitted the Observers as listed by the Secretary General.

Agenda item 6: Progress with preparations for COP12: Report of the Subgroup on COP12

Decision SC47-03: The Standing Committee:

- a) **Recognized with appreciation the progress reported, and the efforts made by Uruguay, as well as the early signature of a Memorandum of Understanding for COP12;**
- b) **Approved the dates of COP12 in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 1 to 9 June 2015;**
- c) **Approved the logo and slogan “Wetlands for our Future” as the theme for COP12 and World Wetlands Day 2015;**
- d) **Approved the holding of a “paperless” COP12;**
- e) **Recognized the progress and ongoing efforts to close the gap in the budget for COP12 and recommended that the Subgroup on Finance consider additional ways to close the gap;**
- f) **Approved the Ramsar Wetlands Conservation Awards: categories, criteria and nomination procedures with minor amendments.**

Agenda item 7.1: Streamlining COP12 Draft Resolution style and presentation

Decision SC47-04: The Standing Committee:

- a) Declined the Secretariat's proposal for a new format for Draft Resolutions;
- b) Asked the Secretariat to work, as proposed, towards shorter Draft Resolutions and other COP12 documents.

Agenda item 7.3: Regional Categorization

Decision SC47-05: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a Draft Resolution amending the status of Israel within the Ramsar regional groupings, to be submitted for approval at SC48 for forwarding to COP12.

Agenda item 7.2: Draft Resolutions anticipated for COP12 consideration

Decision SC47-06: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised list of proposed draft resolutions, taking into account comments made during the meeting and by email, and including the author of each item, to be tabled prior to the end of SC47.

Day 2 – Thursday 27 March

Agenda item 4: Report of the Management Working Group

Decision SC47-07: The Standing Committee decided:

Concerning the report of the Review Committee on delivery of scientific and technical advice:

- a) To confirm the process recommended by the Review Committee on the delivery of scientific and technical advice (Resolution XI.16) to have a shortlist of candidates to discuss with the Chair, Secretary General, STRP Chair and Senior Regional Advisers, and to make decisions on the consultants to be hired by the close of SC47, and further requested the Review Committee to report on progress at SC48.

Concerning accommodation of UN Languages under Resolution XI.1:

- b) to address the longstanding differences in treatment of the three official Convention languages;
- c) to allocate resources from the current budget surplus to fund the costs of translating SC48 documents into French and Spanish;
- d) to instruct the Secretariat to include within all draft core budget scenarios for 2016–2018, prepared for Parties' consideration at SC48, the costs of translating all SC documents into French and Spanish;
- e) to continue considering translation of additional STRP documents into French and Spanish, based on inputs by the Secretariat and the STRP, with a view to reviewing this issue at SC48; and

- f) to request the Secretariat to prepare a draft text for a Resolution in response to Resolution XI.1 for the consideration of SC48, addressing accommodation of the Arabic Language into the Convention, supported by:
- analysis of legal considerations in relation to the Convention text as well as COP Resolutions including the Rules of Procedure;
 - options for a step-by-step introduction of Arabic into the work of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources.

Concerning Visibility & Stature and Synergies:

- g) to address these issues within the Strategic Plan Working Group and in follow-up to Resolution XI.1 for discussion at SC48 as appropriate.

Concerning the Ramsar–IUCN Task Force:

- h) to continue the negotiations on improving operations and to report on progress at SC48.

Agenda item 5: Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group

Decision SC47-08: the Standing Committee approved the report of the Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG) and agreed:

- i) to approve the terms of reference of the SPWG;
- ii) to approve the revised draft workplan;
- iii) to allocate the funds needed to implement the revised workplan;
- iv) to request the SPWG to prepare a new Strategic Plan for the period of two triennia 2016–2021, and to take into account the elements of the discussion of the SPWG meeting:
- A review and evaluation of the current Plan and its implementation, and identification of those strategies in the current Plan of greatest importance over the coming years;
 - A review of new issues which have emerged since the current Plan was approved;
 - Specific focus on strategies to improve the visibility and stature of the Convention, and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and international entities;
 - A consideration of how the Plan might best relate to ongoing Strategic Plans and processes of other Conventions;
 - The appropriate representation of global, regional and national aspirations in the Strategic Plan;
 - There were calls for a shorter, simpler and more engaging plan, using language and consultation formats similar to the other MEAs.
- v) to invite all Parties to complete the questionnaire by 15 April;
- vi) to encourage all Parties to submit their National Reports, if possible, by 1 August, so that they can be used for preparation of the strategic plan;

- vii) to ensure synergies with the STRP review process;
- viii) to consult the Ramsar Regional Centres in preparing the strategic plan;
- ix) to recognize the challenges associated with communication and with the tight timeframe, especially for the Africa Region, and to take that into consideration in the consultation plan and process.

Agenda item 8: Financial matters: Report of the Subgroup on Finance

Concerning 2013 year-end accounting:

Decision SC47-09: The Standing Committee approved the 2013 financial statements, subject to any final minor adjustments and audit completion, and allocations of the surplus reserve fund balance of CHF 291,000 as at 31 December 2013.

Concerning the 2014 core budget / Regional Initiatives:

Decision SC47-10: The Standing Committee agreed to no changes to the COP11 approved core budget for Regional Initiatives for 2014, and endorsed the 2014 funds allocated as below:

•	East African centre	CHF 28,000
•	Niger river basin network	CHF 30,000
•	La Plata river basin network	CHF 16,000
•	Caribbean network	CHF 16,000
•	Mangroves and reefs network (Americas)*	CHF 20,000
•	Carpathian Wetland Initiative	CHF 10,000

(* Regional Initiative for the Integral Management and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs Ecosystems)

Concerning the 2014 core budget:

Decision SC47-11: The Standing Committee confirmed the 2014 budget as approved at COP11, recognising that the line item budgeting for a CHF 75,000 increase to the reserve fund in 2014 will not be required, and should be reallocated.

Concerning the 2014 non-core budget:

Decision SC47-12: The Standing Committee made no changes to budgeted non-core budget lines in the COP11 adopted budget, noting that the list of funding needs in Resolution XI.2 Annex III is not in any order of priority.

Concerning COP12 discussions:

Decision SC47-13: The Standing Committee noted the COP12 Administrative Budget shortfall of some USD 350,000 to USD 370,000, and the three key unfunded activities, and

welcomed the generosity of Switzerland and Uruguay at SC47 in offering to reduce this shortfall.

Decision SC47-14: The Standing Committee noted the need to raise a further CHF 1.2 million during 2014 and 2015 for the Pre-COP regional meetings and sponsoring of delegates to COP, and encouraged Parties and Secretariat to make COP 12 fundraising a priority.

Concerning the reallocation of surplus funds:

Decision SC47-15: The Standing Committee directed that the surplus be allocated as follows:

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| • | Strategic Plan | CHF 76,000 |
| • | Ramsar Advisory Missions | CHF 50,000 |
| • | Translation (French and Spanish) of SC 48 documents | CHF 90,000 |
| • | COP12 delivery | CHF 150,000 |

The Standing Committee asked the Secretary General (consulting with the Executive Team as necessary) to determine which of the three urgent, unfunded needs for COP12 delivery (logistics coordination, regional meeting costs, Earth Negotiations Bulletin participation) most need this funding, taking into account other voluntary contributions received for COP12 during 2014.

Concerning the Small Grants Fund:

Decision SC47-16: The Standing Committee requested an information paper for SC48 on the future of the Small Grants Fund, and for the Secretariat and Subgroup to explore further the scope for combining the funds to reap administrative cost benefits whilst still responding to the specific needs of Ramsar donors and recipients.

Concerning outstanding contributions:

Decision SC47-17: The Standing Committee noted the current status of Parties' outstanding annual contributions and encouraged the Secretariat, working with Finance Subgroup members, to continue to take collaborative actions to make progress to resolve this issue. The Standing Committee noted the Subgroup's request for prioritizing Contracting Parties that have never paid, and underlined its hope for progress by Parties that have been in arrears for more than three years.

The Standing Committee noted the actions of Switzerland, restricting use of its additional voluntary contributions to African Contracting Parties whose contributions have been fully paid up. The Standing Committee hoped that this action will support other efforts of the Secretariat.

Agenda item 10: Secretariat Work Plan 2014

Decision SC47-18: The Standing Committee noted the workplan and asked the Secretariat to add text covering its work in preparation of the new Strategic Plan and on preparing a report for COP12 on implementation of COP11 resolutions.

Agenda item 12.1: Report of the STRP Oversight Committee

Decision SC47-19: The Standing Committee thanked the STRP for its work and endorsed the choice of the new member representing IUCN.

Agenda item 12.1: Report of the STRP Chair

Decision SC47-20: The Standing Committee noted the STRP Chair's report, and his request for Contracting Parties to consider possible ways of sourcing funding for implementation of the highest priority tasks as identified by Standing Committee 46 Decision 14.

Agenda item 7.4: Application from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) for IOP status

Decision SC47-21: The Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution for SC48 and COP12 on WWT's application for IOP status.

Agenda item 13.1: Report of the CEPA Oversight Panel

Decision SC47-22: The Standing Committee noted the report and the progress in the preparation of the new CEPA Programme.

Agenda item 13.2: World Wetlands Day 2015

Decision SC47-23: The Standing Committee approved the theme for World Wetlands Day 2015 as 'Wetlands for our Future', to correspond with the theme for COP12.

Agenda item 14.1: Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Decision SC47-24: The Standing Committee noted the report and approved the interim guidelines for submission of proposals to IPBES, and responded to the Secretary General's request for guidance on determining the appropriate interaction between bodies of IPBES and the multilateral environmental agreements.

Agenda item 14.3: Report of the Culture Working Group

Decision SC47-25: The Standing Committee noted the progress report presented, and expressed support for the activities of the Ramsar Culture Network and its cooperation with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre.

Agenda item 14.1: Regional Initiatives (Decision SC46-13)

Decision SC47-26: The Standing Committee accepted the annual reports of progress and endorsed the active four regional centres and eleven regional networks as fully meeting the Operational Guidelines 2013-2015 and operating in the framework of the Convention during this period.

The Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to:

- a) **prepare an information document with proposals for virtually linking Ramsar regional centres, considering cost implications, and to submit it to SC48 for subsequent submission to COP12; and**
- b) **to help regional initiatives to develop formal ties with regional conventions so as to strengthen their local rootedness and visibility and to provide improvement to MEA consistency.**

The Standing Committee approved the allocations endorsed by the Subgroup on Finance from Ramsar core budget line D ("Support to regional initiative network and centres") to initiatives for their activities in 2014:

• East African centre	CHF 28,000
• Niger river basin network	CHF 30,000
• La Plata river basin network	CHF 16,000
• Caribbean network	CHF 16,000
• Mangroves and reefs network (Americas)*	CHF 20,000
• Carpathian Wetland Initiative	CHF 10,000

(* Regional Initiative for the Integral Management and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs Ecosystems)

Day 3 – Friday 28 March

Agenda item 14.2: Report on Republic of Korea workshop on wetland city accreditation

Decision SC47-27: The Standing Committee noted the presentation and asked the Secretariat to prepare for SC48 a document which takes its comments into account.

Agenda item 15: Ramsar Sites
Agenda item 16: Partnerships

Decision SC47-28: The Standing Committee noted progress reports concerning:

- **The Status of Ramsar Sites (including updates from Standing Committee participants);**
- **Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) redevelopment;**
- **The Ramsar – Danone-Evian Partnership.**

Agenda item 17.1: Date and venue of SC48

Decision SC47-29: The Standing Committee agreed to reconvene for its 48th meeting from 26 to 30 January 2015, in Gland.

Agenda item 17.2: Adoption of the report of the 47th meeting

Decision SC47-30: The Standing Committee accepted the decisions of the first and second days and empowered the Chair and Vice Chair to accept the decisions of the third day and approve the report for the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee.