

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

48th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 26-30 January 2015

SC48-06

Progress with preparations for COP12

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to take note of progress with preparations for the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP12) since SC47.

Background

1. During Standing Committee 47 in April 2014, Uruguay, as Chair of the Subgroup and host for COP12, introduced the country's natural heritage and its conference offering and presented the report of the Subgroup on COP12.
2. Under 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.
3. Concerning COP12 budget through 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.
4. To resolve the shortfall under Decision SC47-15 the Standing Committee allocated from available surplus to the reserve CHF 90,000 for translation (French and Spanish) of SC48 documents and CHF 150,000 for COP12 delivery.
5. Switzerland confirmed that it would be providing an additional voluntary contribution of CHF 100,000 for translation of documents for COP12 and also contributing to pre-COP regional meeting costs, as well as delegate travel for African delegates representing Parties without arrears.

6. The Standing Committee under decision SC47-14 also noted the need to raise a further CHF 1.2 million during 2014 and 2015 for the pre-COP meetings and sponsoring of delegates to COP, and encouraged Parties and Secretariat to make COP 12 fundraising a priority.
7. Under this agenda item, the Standing Committee will receive reports from the COP12 Host Country and the Secretariat on the progress on COP12 preparations.

Progress on COP12 preparations

Logo

8. After the approval of the logo during SC47, it is now available in the three official languages, including the COP 12 slogan as well as the slogan for World Wetlands Day 2015 “Wetlands for our Future”.

Logistics company and tourism agency

9. Uruguay has hired the companies that will be in charge of the logistics aspects at the COP12 venue and the official COP12 tourism agency. Both companies are already working jointly with the Ramsar Secretariat and making progress in the COP12 logistics.
10. On the Secretariat side, a COP12 logistic officer and junior professional temporary positions have been advertised to support the Secretariat for COP12 delivery.

Visas

11. As informed during SC47 Uruguay has set up a mechanism to facilitate the process of obtaining the visas for delegates where Uruguay does not have a consulate or an alternative procedure established to channel it. Following the accreditation or registration and request of visa and sending of a copy of the passport or basic information (name, nationality, passport number), a letter by the Uruguayan migratory authorities will be prepared for the delegate, as a permit to enter the country without visa before arrival. The instructions will be distributed through the Secretariat early in February 2015, but the visa requirements depending on the type of passport and the list of consulates may be checked in the following web pages <http://dnm09.dnm.minterior.gub.uy/visas.php> and <http://www.mapaconsular.mrree.gub.uy/>.

Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) participation

12. Uruguay understands that an IISD donor has already earmarked its 2015 voluntary contribution to fund ENB coverage at COP12 of Ramsar. More information will be provided during SC48.

Side events and exhibitions

13. Ramsar COP12 will provide the opportunity for participants to hold a number of side events on global and regional themes relevant to the Convention and the COP issues. At the end of January 2015, the Ramsar Secretariat will make public, through the web site and Ramsar forum, the call for side event proposals and request for exhibitions.

Field visits

14. Uruguay is working in the preparation of different circuit visits and there will be a selection of at least three cost-free options as well as other options with an associated cost.

Practical pre-COP information for participants

15. By the middle of December 2014, COP12 practical pre-COP information for participants will be placed on the Ramsar web site, that includes general information on COP12 (dates, venue, theme, eligibility to participate), pre-registration and practical information for participants (visas, accommodation, side events, exhibitions).

Funding of sponsored delegates to COP12

16. On 17 November, the Ramsar Secretariat sent to all Contracting Parties a diplomatic note with a letter from the Secretary General requesting financial support to sponsor delegates from the 122 Member States which are on the OECD/DAC list of aid recipients, to assist them to attend the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Secretariat is confident that Contracting Parties will take into consideration the importance of the outcomes of the 12th Conference of the Parties and the consequent need to provide funding for the presence of key representatives from developing countries in order to guarantee the success of the meeting.