

Preparation of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties Report of the Secretariat

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to note this report.

Background

1. At its 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015), the Conference of the Contracting Parties accepted the generous offer of the United Arab Emirates to host the 13th meeting (COP13).
2. At its 51st meeting (Gland, 2015), through the adoption of Decision SC51-16, the Standing Committee established a Subgroup on COP13 with the following membership: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Honduras, Romania, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (Chair) and Uruguay.
3. At the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (Gland, 2016), following a discussion of the report of the Subgroup, the Committee adopted Decisions SC53-05 and SC53-16, as follows:

Decision SC53-05: The Standing Committee approved the main theme of COP13 as 'Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future', which would also serve as the theme for World Wetlands Day in 2018. The Standing Committee confirmed that the logo of COP13 would be finalised by the Host Country, taking into account comments made by the Sub-group on COP13. The Standing Committee approved the Provisional Agenda for COP13 contained in document SC53-08, and the addition of the high-level segment and correction of the title of item XIV), and requested the Host Country, in consultation with interested Parties and the Secretariat, to further develop plans for the organisation of a high-level segment.

Decision SC53-16: The Standing Committee decided that COP13 would take place from 21 to 29 October 2018, and thanked the Host Country for its proposal to hold a high-level segment, noting the need to take into account the dates of the high-level segment of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Progress with the preparations for COP13

4. Following SC53, the Host Country for COP13 and the Secretariat continued their discussions of the Memorandum of Understanding for the hosting of the meeting in order to clarify all requirements and responsibilities. In January 2018, agreement was reached on the final text. At the time of writing, a plan had been agreed for the Secretariat to inspect the proposed venue for the meeting and the designated conference hotels, in Festival City, Dubai, and for a ceremony to sign the host country agreement on 24 January 2018.

5. The United Arab Emirates redesigned the logo for COP13, taking into account the comments it has received at SC53. This was agreed with the Secretariat and will be published on the Ramsar Convention website.
6. On 18 October 2017, the provisional agenda for COP13, as agreed by the Standing Committee, was distributed to Parties through the diplomatic channel. On 24 October, it was distributed to Ramsar Convention Administrative Authorities by email, through the Ramsar Exchange.
7. The Host Country and the Secretariat are in discussion regarding the organization of a possible high level event in association with COP13. The Host Country will report on developments at SC54.
8. In the meantime, the Secretariat has arranged for the holding of regional meetings in February and March, to prepare for COP13, particularly for preliminary discussion of draft resolutions that are to be considered at the present meeting of the Standing Committee.
9. At the present meeting, the Host Country will provide an oral update on its progress in the preparation of the meeting. The Secretariat will also be able to provide an update on developments following the publication of this document.