

**Final reports of the Chairs of retired working groups:
Language Strategy Working Group**

Actions requested:

Standing Committee is invited to take note of the report.

1. At its 13th meeting (COP13) the Conference of Contracting Parties, through Resolution XIII.3 on *Governance of the Convention*, decided to retire the working groups listed in Annex 1 of the same Resolution, and invited the Chairs of these subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to provide to the Standing Committee the final report on the outcome of the work of their subsidiary body, to be posted on the Convention website by the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee.
2. The final report of the Language Strategy Working Group is overleaf.

Final Report:
Language strategy working group

Submitted by United Arab Emirates

1. Resolution XII.3 on Enhancing the languages of the Convention and its visibility and stature, and increasing synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions was developed and adopted at the 12th meeting (Punta del Este, 2015). In which the Conference of the Contracting Parties called on the Secretariat to develop a strategy and draft resolution that would address the inclusion of the Arabic Language into the Convention as well as the further phased integration of the Conventions existing languages.
2. At its 52nd meeting (SC52, in 2016), the Standing Committee adopted Decision SC52-21, in which: The Standing Committee requested the Ramsar Secretariat to develop a strategy, without consultant support, outlining the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention contained in the annex to Doc. SC52.03 Rev. 1.
3. At the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC53, in 2017), the Secretariat presented document SC53-06 summarizing the results of consultations on this issue, outlining points to be taken into account in the development of a strategy and draft resolution and seeking guidance from the Committee. Following discussion, and consideration in a working group, the Committee adopted Decision SC53-06 as follows: “The Standing Committee decided that the matters dealt with in document SC53-06 Preparation of a Language Strategy for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands should be taken forward intersessionally by the Secretariat in consultation with the open-ended informal working group established by SC52. The working group was asked to report to SC54 on the outcomes of its further deliberations, including any proposals that might be taken forward to COP13, subject to approval at SC54.”
4. During the 54th Meeting of the Standing Committee the Chair invited the United Arab Emirates to coordinate a “Friends of the Chair” group to prepare a revised text, taking into consideration the comments made on the document Doc. SC54-13 Rev.1 Language strategy. The group then proceeded to work to produce an agreed text regarding a proposed language strategy in document SC54-Com.1. The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to edit, finalize and publish the draft resolution contained in document SC54-Com.1 for consideration at COP13, without further substantive amendment
5. During COP 13, a working group was established to discuss the Draft Resolution XIII.6 on the language strategy for the convention, upon comments from different parties. The draft resolution was subsequently adopted at CoP13 with two key goals for the strategy: a) to have equal language service for English, French and Spanish, being the official languages of the Convention at the start of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13); and b) to aim to introduce Arabic as an official language. Marking the conclusion of the Language strategy working group.