

## Decisions of the 57th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda

**Decision SC57-01: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional agenda with the proposed amendments, as included in document SC57 Doc.2 Rev.2.**

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the provisional working programme

**Decision SC57-02: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional working programme with the proposed amendments, as included in document SC57 Doc.3 Rev.1.**

Agenda item 4: Admission of observers

**Decision SC57-03: The Standing Committee admitted the observers listed in document SC57 Doc.4.**

Agenda item 6: Report of the Management Working Group

**Decision SC57-04: The Standing Committee approved the nomination of the following as members of the CEPA Oversight Panel:**

- **Chair: Sweden (as the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee);**
- **Vice-Chair: Vice-Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel;**
- **Australia;**
- **Honduras;**
- **Nepal;**
- **Uganda;**
- **Ukraine;**
- **United States of America;**
- **CEPA NGO Focal Points from Iraq and Sudan; and**
- **Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) as International Organization Partner.**

**Decision SC57-05: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to liaise with appropriate bodies to develop revised processes for appointing both the CEPA Oversight Panel and the STRP.**

Agenda item 9: Report of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

**Decision SC57-06: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to share the shortlisting assessment of the candidates with the members of the Group, and include the Chair of the Working Group in panel interviews of the shortlisted candidates for the consultancy.**

**Decision SC57-07: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to proceed expeditiously with the appointment of the consultant and inception of the project work plan, in order that it**

might be well advanced before the end of 2019, to enable the submission of an advanced draft report to SC58 in 2020.

**Decision SC57-08:** The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to organize an inception meeting with the selected consultant on their appointment, to define detailed timelines and outputs, in light of existing processes such as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in October 2020 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

**Decision SC57-09:** The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to seek further responses from Contracting Parties to the survey on implementation of the current Strategic Plan, and invited regional representatives of the Standing Committee to encourage Parties in their respective regions to respond.

**Decision SC57-10:** The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to finalize the work plan of the Working Group to reflect the discussions of its meeting of 24 June 2019.

Agenda item 25: Report of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives in 2018 and 2019, and establishment of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group

**Decision SC57-11:** The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to review the reporting format and process to prepare the summary assessment requested in paragraph 28 of Resolution XIII.9 and to submit a proposal to the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 11: Final reports of the Chairs of retired working groups

**Decision SC57-12:** The Standing Committee took note of the final reports of the six retired working groups.

Agenda item 13: Review of the Rules of Procedure

**Decision SC57-13:** The Standing Committee took note of the progress in the review of the Rules of Procedure and instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised document with the comments received, to be presented at SC58.

Agenda item 18: Observer status in the United Nations General Assembly

**Decision SC57-14:** The Standing Committee agreed the following way forward on the observer status:

- a. Endorsement by SC57 of the continuity of the Observer Status Working Group (previously informal group) with the inclusion of Mexico, the Russian Federation and Switzerland;
- b. Analysis of the different options and other options that might not yet have been addressed including the inputs from the Legal Adviser and the ones received from Parties during the meeting;
- c. Allocation of funds from the surplus for the independent analysis to be presented at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Through Decision SC57-47 below, the Standing Committee subsequently approved the allocation of CHF 15,000 from the 2018 core budget surplus to “Legal status analysis consultancy”.

Agenda item 21.1: Follow up to COP13 and preparation of COP14 – Report of the Secretariat on COP13

**Decision SC57-15: The Standing Committee requested that the Subgroup on COP14 include in its remit the identification of effective actions to mark the 50th anniversary of the Convention, and engage with other Contracting Parties as appropriate to achieve this.**

Agenda item 21.1 Bis: Follow up to COP13 and preparation of COP14 – Oral report of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Award on Innovation

**Decision SC57-16: The Standing Committee decided that the Ramsar Award for Wetland Innovation for 2018 should not be presented.**

Agenda item 21.2: Follow up to COP13 and preparation of COP14 – COP14 Host and establishment of the Subgroup on COP14

**Decision SC57-17: The Standing Committee accepted by acclamation the offer of China to host the 14th Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties in Wuhan.**

**Decision SC57-18: The Standing Committee established the Subgroup on COP14, chaired by China and also comprising Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Costa Rica, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, to oversee the COP14 planning process and to develop ideas regarding the celebration of the Convention's 50th anniversary in 2021, seeking the support of other Contracting Parties as required.**

Agenda item 14: Review of all previous Resolutions and decisions

**Decision SC57-19: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to carry out a preliminary grouping of existing Resolutions into major thematic areas, identifying possible priority areas for further action in line with the prioritization of urgent challenges under Agenda item 8, to submit intersessionally to a group comprising the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States of America and the Chair of the STRP for their consideration, along with advice on the capacity that would be needed to take the process further.<sup>2</sup>**

Agenda item 10: Report of the Effectiveness Working Group and approval of the terms of reference of the Group

**Decision SC57-20: The Standing Committee approved the terms of reference of the Effectiveness Working Group in document SC57 Com.1 and took note of the appointment of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia as Co-Chairs of the Group.**

Agenda item 16: Work plan of the Secretariat for 2019-2021

**Decision SC57-21: The Standing Committee approved the Workplan for the Secretariat for 2019-2021, with the addition of minor editorial amendments to be submitted by Parties to the Secretariat.**

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<sup>2</sup> Through Decision SC57-47 below, the Standing Committee subsequently approved the allocation of CHF 20,000 from the 2018 core budget surplus to "Resolutions review (resolution XIII.4)".

Agenda item 15.3: Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA)  
– Implementation of Resolution XIII.1 on World Wetlands Day (UN request)

**Decision SC57-22: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to draft talking points and share them with Contracting Parties to enable consistent messaging in support of the initiative.**

Agenda item 19: Ramsar Convention Resource Mobilization Work Plan

**Decision SC57-23: The Standing Committee took note of the Ramsar Convention Resource Mobilization Work Plan.**

Agenda item 26: Wetland City Accreditation: Guidance for the 2019-2021 triennium

**Decision SC57-24: The Standing Committee approved the timeline for the process in the 2019-2021 triennium for the City Accreditation.**

Agenda item 27.1: Implications of joint meetings of the Standing Committee and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel

**Decision SC57-25: The Standing Committee agreed on the suggestion that one or more STRP members could be invited to participate in discussions during Standing Committee meetings addressing important emerging issues or those for which significant new information had become available.**

Agenda item 17: Enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

**Decision SC57-26: The Standing Committee encouraged Contracting Parties, through their Ramsar National Focal Points, to liaise and engage with their counterparts in the Convention on Biological Diversity and to participate in the development of their national positions related to the CBD's post-2020 global biodiversity framework process, in order to seek to ensure that Ramsar-relevant elements are included within country positions and submissions to the CBD process to develop the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The Standing Committee also encouraged Contracting Parties, again through their National Focal Points, to liaise and engage with their counterparts responsible for other biodiversity-related conventions so as to foster synergies at the national level.**

**Decision SC57-27: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat:**

- a. to share with Ramsar National Focal Points all relevant notices it receives from the CBD Secretariat regarding opportunities to make submissions or otherwise contribute to the post-2020 process, and to accompany these notices with a reminder of the encouragement to engage in their national processes contained in Decision SC57-26.
- b. to develop and share with all National Focal Points talking points that they could opt to draw from to help them articulate the importance of wetlands and the relevance of Ramsar's work to biodiversity, the relevance of wetlands and Ramsar's work and data to various Aichi Biodiversity Targets, gaps in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets where wetlands are currently overlooked (e.g., marine and coastal work in the Aichi Targets largely omits consideration of coastal wetlands) and the opportunities to share knowledge and data

available on Ramsar Sites and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to address efforts outside protected areas.

- c. to develop and share with all National Focal Points talking points that NFPs could opt to draw from to help them articulate the importance of wetlands and the relevance of Ramsar's work and data to their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- d. to share with all National Focal Points the document it created that maps the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals in support of their efforts to highlight the work and data of Ramsar in their country's efforts to implement their relevant commitments in CBD and SDG processes.

Agenda item 25: Report of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives in 2018 and 2019, and establishment of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group (continued)

**Decision SC57-28: The Standing Committee recognized the Working Group on Ramsar Regional Initiatives comprising the coordinators of each of the Initiatives and the regional representatives on the Standing Committee. It asked the Group to develop its terms of reference and work programme options for addressing Resolution XIII.9, and present these at SC58.<sup>3</sup>**

**Decision SC57-29: The Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to seek further guidance from the Ramsar Legal Adviser on the legal status of Ramsar Regional Initiatives and report back to SC58.**

Agenda item 20: Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, including work plan for 2019-2021

**Decision SC57-30: The Standing Committee approved the draft work plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, with the amendments agreed by the discussion group.<sup>4</sup>**

Agenda item 26: Wetland City Accreditation: Guidance for the 2019-2021 triennium (continued)

**Decision SC57-31: The Standing Committee agreed the following regional representatives on the Independent Advisory Committee of the Wetland City Accreditation:**

- **North America: no nomination;**
- **Oceania: Australia;**
- **Africa: Chad;**
- **Europe: Austria;**
- **Latin America and The Caribbean: nomination to follow.**

Agenda item 12.1: Report of the Executive Team – Terms of reference of the Executive Team

**Decision SC57-32: The Standing Committee adopted the terms of reference for the Executive Team as annexed to the report of SC57 at Annex 8.**

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<sup>3</sup> Through Decision SC57-49 below, the Standing Committee subsequently approved the use of CHF 21K carried forward from the 2018 budget line "Support to Regional Initiatives – General" for the operation of the Working Group on Ramsar Regional Initiatives as per paragraph 9 of Resolution XIII.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021*.

<sup>4</sup> The final work plan is annexed to the report of SC57 at Annex 7.

**Decision SC57-33: The Standing Committee accepted the 2018 audited financial statements as of 31 December 2018.**

**Decision SC57-34: The Standing Committee took note of the core budget results for 2018 and carry-forward of 2018 surplus.**

**Decision SC57-35: The Standing Committee took note of the status of non-core funding and voluntary contributions for 2018.**

**Decision SC57-36: The Standing Committee took note of and approved the Secretariat's adjustments to the COP13-approved core budget for 2019 (see Annex 1 of Annex 9.1 of the report of SC57), which make no changes but show for transparency and clarity the approved use of surplus from the previous triennium.**

**Decision SC57-37: The Standing Committee took note of the non-core balances.**

**Decision SC57-38: The Standing Committee took note of the progress in implementing the recommendations of the *IUCN Financial Management Review of Non-core (Restricted) Fund Accounts* and approved the following actions:**

- a. to adopt the use of the standard terms “core” and “non-core” to describe Ramsar funds;
- b. to agree to engage with the auditor in its annual meetings, looking at the most cost-effective way, including virtual participation, or by sharing the auditor's report at least three months in advance of the meeting (or earlier), in accordance with the Rules of Procedure on meeting documents; and
- c. to request the Secretariat to collect and share questions from members of the Subgroup by email in advance and collect answers from the auditor in time for the meeting.

**Decision SC57-39: The Standing Committee approved the external auditor's proposed modification for the calculation of the provision for outstanding Contracting Party contributions (document SC57 Doc.7.1, paragraph 42, option a.) and accordingly to increase the provision for 2019. The source of funding is detailed in the Report of the meeting of the Subgroup on Finance, Part II (Annex 9.2 to the report of SC57), paragraph 1.b viii.**

**Decision SC57-40: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to explore the practicality of a group approach or other creative solutions for confirmation of outstanding Contracting Party balances for the 2019 audit.**

**Decision SC57-41: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to include a note regarding the existence or lack thereof of other potential large provision items, such as future pension obligations, that are not required to be disclosed under Swiss Law, and disclose any accounting policies and information related to such potential liabilities in future financial statements.**

**Decision SC57-42: The Standing Committee encouraged the Secretariat to provide input to IUCN and invited Parties to work with their counterparts responsible for IUCN to provide feedback on any IUCN consideration of options for future auditing contracts.**

**Decision SC57-43:** The Standing Committee took note of the requests of Panama and Switzerland to join the Subgroup on Finance for the current triennium.

**Decision SC57-44:** The Standing Committee took note of the status of annual contributions and the actions taken to encourage payment of outstanding contributions, and instructed the Secretariat to continue encouraging timely payments of annual contributions.

**Decision SC57-45:** The Standing Committee took note of the change in annual contributions receivable and in the annual provision against contributions receivable.

**Decision SC57-46:** The Standing Committee took note of the current status of a balance of CHF 91K of the voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties in the Africa region.

**Decision SC57-47:** The Standing Committee approved the allocation of 2018 surplus as per Table 1 of Annex 9.2 of the report of SC57.

**Decision SC57-48:** The Standing Committee approved the allocation CHF 100K from the core budget to Ramsar Regional Initiatives as per Table 2 of Annex 9.2 of the report of SC57, and instructed the Secretariat:

- a. to contact SenegalWet regarding the unspent balance from previous years and its capacity to implement an additional contribution for 2019;
- b. if this additional allocation of CHF25K was not needed by SenegalWet or the Initiative's representatives do not respond by the Secretariat's deadline, to allocate then the amount equally between the remaining three initiatives listed in Table 2; and
- c. to report to the Subgroup on Finance inter-sessionally on the outcome of this situation.

**Decision SC57-49:** The Standing Committee approved the use of CHF 21K carried forward from the 2018 budget line "Support to Regional Initiatives – General" for the operation of the Working Group on Ramsar Regional Initiatives as per paragraph 9 of Resolution XIII.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021*.

**Decision SC57-50:** In accordance with the responsibilities defined in Resolution 5.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*, Annex, 3, paragraph 8, the Standing Committee agreed that uncommitted/unexpended balances for budget lines can be carried forward to the next year within the triennium and presented to the following meeting of the Subgroup on Finance.<sup>5</sup>

**Decision SC57-51:** The Standing Committee took note of the actions taken by the Secretariat to phase out the Small Grants Fund programme, approved the selection of recipients to receive funding from the Small Grants Fund proposed at Table 4 of Annex 9.2 of the report of SC57, and approved the use by the Secretariat of the remaining Small Grants Fund balance of CHF 2.8K for the development of updated guidance for Contracting Parties on preparing and writing project proposals.

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<sup>5</sup> The Contracting Parties decided at COP13, in paragraph 11 of Resolution XIII.2, that the *Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention* contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters* (1993), shall be applied *in toto* to the 2019-2021 triennium.

Agenda item 22: National Reports for COP14

**Decision SC57-52: The Standing Committee approved the format for National Reports as presented in Annex 10 to the report of SC57, subject to the inclusion of the editorial amendments noted.**

Agenda item 8: Urgent challenges to the wise use of wetlands to receive enhanced attention

**Decision SC57-53: The Standing Committee decided to focus on the topic of inventories for the current triennium in order to allow Parties to focus on measures to address this urgent challenge, potentially resulting in a draft resolution or resolutions for consideration at COP14, and to use the outline attached to guide this work.**

**Decision SC57-54: The Standing Committee decided to allocate time on the agenda of SC58 for discussions on current best practices in the development of wetland inventories and to create an opportunity for an engagement between Parties, STRP representatives, the CEPA Oversight Panel, IOPs, the Ramsar Secretariat, and others on tools and approaches to address the challenges for many Parties in developing, improving, finalizing, and maintaining wetland inventories.**

Agenda item 24: Ramsar Advisory Missions: Operational guidance

**Decision SC57-55: The Standing Committee adopted the amended version of the operational guidelines for Ramsar Advisory Missions as annexed to the report of SC57 at Annex 12.**

Agenda item 28: Adoption of the report of the meeting

**Decision SC57-56: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to submit the draft report of the final day to Standing Committee members for review and approval, and approved the draft daily reports of the previous days, subject to the amendments submitted.**

Agenda item 27.2: 58th meeting of the Standing Committee - Dates of the 58th meeting

**Decision SC57-57: The Standing Committee decided to hold its next meeting from 22 to 26 June 2020.**