

Provisional Report and Decisions of the 57th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Thursday 27 June 2019

15:30 – 16:45 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

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)

1. Costa Rica presented the report of the meeting that had been held regarding implementation of Resolution XIII.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021*, noting that representatives of ten Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) had met, along with nine other Contracting Parties.
2. The group had determined that the Working Group on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives should be made up of the coordinators of each of the RRIs and the regional representatives on the Standing Committee. Preliminary discussion on operational guidelines had focused on: identifying specific characteristics of each of the RRIs; the allocation of funds, administration and implementation of individual projects; and mobilization of resources.
3. The group had stressed that work should focus on identifying successful experiences for the implementation of RRIs in all regions, and on how they might support their effective implementation of the Convention. The Group expected to present its terms of reference and work programme to the next SC58
4. Australia noted that the financial implications of the Group's work had been addressed by the Sub-Group on Finance and would be discussed under agenda item 7.

Decision SC57-25: 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 their terms of reference and work programme options for addressing Resolution XIII.9, and present these at SC58. The fund allocations for this working group will be decided by the Subgroup on Finance.

Decision SC57-26: 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 12.1: Report of the Executive Team - Terms of reference of the Executive Team (continued)

5. The Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee introduced amendments to the terms of reference which the Executive Team had compiled following comments received.
6. Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States of America made further comments on the presented text, including regarding the need to avoid inappropriate use of formal treaty language.
7. The Chair of the Standing Committee deferred further discussion to the following plenary session.

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

8. The United States of America presented changes proposed by the discussion group tasked by the Chair of the Standing Committee to consider amendments to the draft work plan for 2019-2021 of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (document SC57 Doc.20 Rev.1). The group had inter alia refined the titles of some of the thematic work areas.
9. Regarding the selection of priority tasks, the group had further recommended that the STRP be allowed flexibility to take advantage of funding opportunities for lower priority tasks on the understanding that this would not interfere with the successful completion of high priority tasks.
10. Regarding possible updates to the *Global Wetland Outlook*, the group had agreed that it would be premature to produce a comprehensive revised version in the immediate future but strongly supported the production of a special edition linked to the Convention's 50th anniversary. The group had considered that the STRP should be invited to advise on an appropriate theme or themes.
11. The group considered the draft terms of reference for the Ramsar Culture Network (annex 3 of the same document) well crafted, and commended the STRP on its efforts. They proposed that these be forwarded directly to the Network.

Decision SC57-27: The Standing Committee approved the draft work plan of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, with the amendments agreed by the discussion group.

Agenda item 21.2: Follow up to COP13 and preparation of COP14 - COP14 Host and establishment of the Subgroup on COP14 (continued)

12. China, as Chair of the Subgroup on COP14, presented an oral summary of the first meeting of the Subgroup. Two separate workstreams had been identified, one focusing on the logistical tasks ahead, and the other on possible activities for the 50th anniversary of the Convention.
13. Regarding the 50th anniversary, initial ideas mooted had included: a high-level segment at COP14; a special award; 2021 as a year of wetlands, running from World Wetlands Day to the COP; key concepts of water, youth, future responsibility, and value. Wider consultation would follow.
14. In logistical terms, the need to define the event dates quickly was underlined, to avoid clashes and synchronize with other related processes.

15. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization offered, as the current Vice-Chair of UN-Water, to support efforts to promote partnership with Ramsar and its COP14 messages. The representative recalled that the period from 2018 to 2028 has been identified the Water Action Decade, drew attention to major New York events upcoming in 2021 and 2023, and encouraged joint action to make Ramsar more visible on the decennial website.
16. Uganda noted that the most recent Ramsar high-level segment had been held at CPO9 in Kampala, and offered to share experience as needed.