

Report of Host Country on the Preparation of COP14

Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this report.

Background

1. At its 57th meeting, the Standing Committee accepted by acclamation the offer of China to host the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) in Wuhan, China.
2. Following Decision SC57-18, the Subgroup on COP14 was established and chaired by China, with members including 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.
3. In early December 2019, Secretariat officials visited potential venues in Wuhan and had meetings with China Ramsar Administrative Authority and Wuhan Municipal Government on preparation of COP14, especially on the possible dates, the host country agreement, meeting requirements and logistics.
4. The Subgroup on COP14 convened virtual meetings on 8 May and 12 June 2020 regarding the Subgroup TOR and theme of COP14.
5. The Standing Committee SC58 intersessional virtual meeting adopted Decision SC58-11 on the oral report of the Subgroup on COP14 which introduced the preparatory process from December 2019 to June 2020. The theme for COP14, "Wetlands action for people and nature", was agreed and subsequently adopted by parties at ExCOP3.
6. The Standing Committee requested through Decision SC58-09 that, if possible, two days of regional meetings should be held immediately before COP14, at the same venue as COP14, and instructed the Secretariat to discuss with the host country the arrangements for holding two days of regional meetings immediately before COP14.
7. The Standing Committee agreed *via* Decision SC59-10 that 21 to 29 November 2022 would be the proposed dates for COP14 and Resolution ExCOP3.1 confirmed the postponement.

8. The Standing Committee *via* Decision SC59-11 requested the host country and the Secretariat, in consultation with the Subgroup on COP14, to continue review of options on the possible size and modalities of the meeting to ensure a “successful, inclusive, ambitious and practical” COP14 in 2022.
9. The Standing Committee noted in Decision SC59-18 and SC59-20 that the Strategic Plan Working Group will prepare basic elements for the preparation of a proposed framework for the Fifth Strategic Plan, indicating the key elements, for the Standing Committee meeting in 2022, and decided to accommodate the key elements and any additional priority elements and modalities for the Fifth Strategic Plan that may be agreed at COP14.
10. China Ramsar Administrative Authority delegation visited Wuhan in mid-May 2021 and discussed with Wuhan municipal government about possible venue, modalities and size of the COP14. Wuhan East Lake International Conference Center was proposed as the conference venue. The Subgroup on COP14 had a virtual meeting on 4 June 2021 about conference venue and modality, and reported progress to the SC59 meeting in late June.

Major progress since last report

11. China Ramsar Administrative Authority delegation visited Wuhan in early October 2021, and together with Wuhan municipal government, worked out a preliminary layout of all types of meeting rooms, and space allocation for different events and service purposes.
12. The Subgroup on COP14 met on 15 December 2021. Key activities and proposed outcomes of COP14 were discussed. The high level segment was confirmed by the host. Subgroup members agreed to propose four major outcomes: Wuhan Statement or Initiative; framework of the 5th Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention; the International Mangrove Center to be hosted by China; and an international cooperation project on wetland conservation and wise use.
13. Based on the consideration of the host country and Resolution ExCOP3.1, the duration of COP14 will be 9 days from 21-29 November 2022 with one and a half days of regional meetings taking place on 21 and 22 November.
14. The host country and the Secretariat continued to consult on the MOU for COP14 and reached consensus except for a couple of pending issues.
15. On 3 November 2021, the host country established the National Organizing Committee and National Executive Committee for COP14.
16. The dates of COP14 was announced at China’s national event to celebrate the World Wetland Day on 19 January 2022. COP14 Logo design collection from the public was launched subsequently as a means of publicity.
17. The National Organizing Committee and National Executive Committee convened meeting in mid-March and decided on the mandate and division of work for different member agencies in the preparation process.
18. China Ramsar Administrative Authority is consulting relevant national agencies which have experiences in organizing international conferences in China in the last two years in order to find a conference modality that fits COP14 within the global context of the COVID-19 pandemic.