

## Report of the Secretariat on COP14

### Actions requested:

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

### Background

1. At its 57th meeting (SC57) 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. The Standing Committee adopted Decision SC57-18 as follows: “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.”
3. Following the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in early 2020 and 2021, the Secretariat and the host country along with the Subgroup on COP14 continued to monitor the situation in light of the ability for Parties to meet face-to-face in Wuhan, China in 2021. Given the inability of Parties to meet physically on these dates the Subgroup recommended to the Standing Committee to postpone COP14 until 2022. In Decision SC59-10, the Standing Committee “approved 21 to 29 November 2022 as the proposed dates for COP14 and agreed to submit the new dates for COP14 to the extraordinary meeting of the COP to be held in 2021”. Further, in Decision SC59-11, the Standing Committee “requested the host country and the Secretariat, in consultation with the Subgroup on COP14, to review options on the possible size of the meeting to take account of the comments of the Standing Committee members”.
4. In accordance with Rules 4.3 and 5 (2) of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat organized the Third Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties from 25 to 29 October and 4 November 2021, for the purpose of approving a continuing budget for the Convention and approving the dates of 21-29 November 2022 for COP14.
5. In Resolution ExCOP3.1 Parties decided to postpone COP14 to 21-29 November 2022 due to the exceptional nature of the circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic; and further, requested the host country and the Secretariat with the support of the Subgroup on COP14 of the Standing Committee to continue the planning process for a successful, inclusive, ambitious and practical COP14 meeting in 2022.

## **Progress with preparation for COP14**

6. A virtual meeting of the Subgroup on COP14 was convened by China on 15 December 2021 to provide a host country update and discuss possible outcomes and modalities for COP14.
7. A presentation on the preparatory process by the host country provided Subgroup members with an update on the COVID-19 situation in China, indicating that the host country was proceeding to plan for a face-to-face meeting and was hopeful that the global situation next year would allow a face-to-face meeting to take place. The host country provided further information on the East Lake meeting venue and its proposed seating arrangement for the plenary hall, noting that the main hall could accommodate 1,066 people and that an adjacent auditorium would be available to seat additional participants.
8. The Subgroup discussed possible outcomes that would address Resolution ExCOP3.1 calling for a “successful, inclusive, ambitious and practical” COP14. Ideas discussed included a “Wuhan Declaration” which would be a non-negotiated paper, the availability of funding for wetlands projects, the establishment of an international mangrove partnership and showcasing alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework. The Secretariat has followed up on these matters with the host country and further progress will be shared with the Subgroup at the resumed session of SC59.
9. Progress continues to be made in finalizing the host country agreement with the aim that it can be concluded in the coming months.
10. During the 15 December 2021 meeting the Subgroup discussed the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards nomination process; it was agreed that the review should take place as is customary before Standing Committee and it was further agreed that the Subgroup would meet on 23 May 2022 for this purpose.

## **Update on the 50th Anniversary campaign**

11. The 50th Anniversary campaign was launched in March 2021, following World Wetlands Day. An online briefing of the campaign strategy and preview of the communications materials for Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders was held on 16 March 2021 in the three languages. A suite of campaign materials was made available to Parties on a dedicated campaign website. Assets and resources included the 50th Anniversary logo, 50th Anniversary video, brand guidelines, social media toolkit, social media tiles, fact sheets and animated gifs. All campaign resources were available in the three languages.
12. The 50th Anniversary campaign highlighted key international days throughout 2021; these included World Water Day (22 March), International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May), World Ocean Day (8 June), International Youth Day (12 August), and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (13 October). The Secretariat released written and video statements by the Secretary General acknowledging the importance of each of these days in relation to wetlands. A suite of themed communication materials for each respective international day was provided on the campaign website, which included short animation videos, social media tiles and social media posts. These materials were provided in English, French and Spanish.
13. From August to October 2021 youth were invited to engage in the campaign. The campaign website featured content from youth including an open letter and stories from youth. On 20 October 2021 the Secretariat hosted an online event, titled: “Connecting for wetlands action:

An intergenerational dialogue” which hosted a panel of speakers across different generations and was moderated by representatives of youth organisations for wetlands. The event focused on current youth action for wetlands and reflections on lessons learnt in the 50 years since the implementation of the Convention. A video of the online event is available on the Convention’s YouTube page.

14. On 15 December the *Global Wetland Outlook 2021: Special Edition* was launched as part of the 50th Anniversary. In preparation for the launch, the Global Wetland Outlook microsite was updated in line with the new document. A suite of communications materials related to the launch was also loaded to the site, these included a news story and press release, suggested social media posts and key messages, and social media tiles. An op-ed piece by the Secretary General of the Convention was published on 20 December by the Thompson Reuters Foundation.
15. Overall engagement and participation of various stakeholders in the campaign were strong. The social media analytics show 4,869 instances of the campaign hashtag being used on Twitter and Instagram posts, with a reach of 32 million viewers across all regions. There were 40,000 page visits to the 50th Anniversary website. The highest volume of interaction with the campaign was from March to May, and there was also an increase in engagement in October and December, in line with the International Youth Day activities and *Global Wetland Outlook 2021: Special Edition* launch.
16. While the 50th Anniversary campaign showed overall strong engagement globally, the analytics did provide some areas of reflection for future social media campaigns. There was a positive correlation between use of the hashtag and important events, e.g. international days. Similarly, a positive increase in engagement was seen when relating wetlands to topics such as biodiversity and climate action. Linking conversations about wetlands to these types of events or to other globally relevant topics drives more exposure online resulting in greater exposure and reach.