

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Resumed session
Gland, Switzerland, 23-27 May 2022

SC59/2022 Doc.24.17

**Proposed draft resolution –
Online drafting and preparatory negotiations of documents**

Submitted by Sweden

Secretariat cover note:

This DR is related to the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands adopted by the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, and documents SC59 Doc.13 *Review of all previous Resolutions and Decisions*, SC59 Doc.13.1 *Review of all previous Resolutions and Decisions: Process for conducting the review*, and SC59 Doc.13.2 *Draft list of Resolutions that are effectively defunct*. This draft Resolution is also directly linked to *Draft resolution – how to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages* (document SC59/2022 Doc.24.18). The DR does not address matters of a scientific or technical nature requiring review by the STRP.

Action requested:

- i, The Standing Committee is invited to review the attached Draft Resolution and forward it for consideration by the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

1. The objective of this draft resolution is to improve the efficiency and quality when drafting all kinds of document and decision where the Contracting Parties and IOPs etc participate. This is to be done by establishing work areas on-line where there are possibilities to comment and suggest amendments along the way to the final version of a text;
2. The on-line work will not replace the final negotiations face-to-face, but it will increase the possibility to have improved texts presented at meetings, most often as a REV_1;
3. Such preparatory on-line drafting will also increase the possibilities for countries that have small or no delegation present at meetings, to be more involved and be able to leave their input in advance on-line. That will increase the legitimacy of the Convention;
4. Such preparatory online drafting will also decrease the workload at meetings. The Secretariat does not have to take care of multiple suggestions about the same kind of amendments, for example changes for the same incorrect use of terminology. Even the suggested amendments for sentences etc may be less numerous due to that language improvements have been made in earlier stages. The CPs may also get a more reasonable workload during meetings when better prepared documents can ease the negotiations. Maybe too many parallel break-out groups etc can be avoided. This may increase time at COP that can be spent for other work, for example visit side-events, discuss present and future work of the Conventions with other delegates, establish Convention bodies and let them meet and do work already at the COP venue, and have enough time in plenum to let IOPs and other organisations speak;
5. The preparatory work can also be done at any time of the day when it suits the user independent on time zone, the time needed for on-line meetings with the disadvantages of being in different time zones will probably be reduced;
6. In short, the draft resolution includes...
 - that online drafting is used as a complementary method to suggest improvements for Convention documents.
 - that a new work cycle for drafting documents is made and that the responsibility for the Standing Committee to put brackets in draft resolutions is changed to other responsibilities;

Financial implications of implementation

6. To establish facilitates for online work will have costs, but also benefits. How big such cost will be depends on what technical system that is chosen. There can be a special data program bought or paid for in another way (for example the IUCN MS), that is advanced enough to ensure that what one party writes is not able to be changes by another one, describing all opinions. But there can also be simpler programs and tools used. Such facilities already exist at the Secretariat. The Secretariat can arrange that their Word 365 is used for drafting and asking for amendments and other input during specific time frames. The only extra cost would be for the Secretariat to arrange different places in Word 365 where the person responsible for that

area can have the documents for amendments available and to be able to invite different groups interested in the work during different time frames to work on-line in these documents.

| <i>Paragraph (nr/key part of text)</i> | <i>Action</i> | <i>Cost (CHF) and benefits</i> |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All | All | Very difficult to estimate both short-term and long-term costs and benefits. There is probably a benefit compared with the way things are done today. It may also be beneficial for Contracting Parties, maybe reducing number of travel days or number of individuals in the delegations. |

Annex 1 Draft Resolution XIV. ~~xx~~ Online drafting and preparatory negotiations of documents

1. RECOGNIZING that the technical development and the availability of good internet connection has increased and that this allows the Convention to do drafting and amending of documents in separate on-line areas for that purpose;
2. ALSO RECOGNIZING that face-to-face meetings are often necessary for negotiation of the final versions, and for complementing with input from those that haven't been able to do on-line work or have considered the information to be too sensitive to post on-line;
3. FURTHER RECOGNIZING that work on-line for drafting and the initial inputs of suggested amendments and commenting can save the Chairs/vice Chairs of Ramsar bodies, Contracting Parties and the Secretariat a lot of time, and also increases the possibilities to prepare for chairing meetings in a better way;
4. AWARE of that implementing such work methods will increase the legitimacy of the Convention, giving the Contracting Parties not normally present at COP or having small delegations, an opportunity to give their input on-line ahead of the meeting;
5. ALSO AWARE that this may increase the efficiency of negotiations including how time is spent in plenum, parties will have better possibilities to take part in more activities at the COP if the time used for negotiating separate resolutions at the COP is decreased, which will be the case if better prepared;
6. ALSO AWARE of that when a lot of work is done on-line, the role the Standing Committee will have to be changed when it comes to reviewing draft resolutions, no need for the Standing Committee to provide input, that will already have been provided on-line by all concerned;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. DECIDES that the Secretariat as a first step is to set up permanent work areas on Word 365 for different Convention bodies and processes according to annex 1, or when so requested by a temporary Working Group or a Contracting Party that wish to have input on something they are writing;
8. ALSO DECIDES that the person/-s responsible for such area can invite different groups of representatives during different time frames for their comments and suggested amendments, with responsibilities according to annex 2;
9. ALSO DECIDES that the documents available at such work areas are to be available in the official languages during different work stages as presented in annex 2, for example not providing translation to French and Spanish in the early and non-official stages of the drafting;
10. DECIDES to change the work cycle for the drafting of documents, the number of days they are to be published in advance of meeting etc according to annex 3, ALSO DECIDES that the Rules of Procedure is to be updated accordingly;
11. DECIDES that the main author is responsible for providing the following at the works area:
 - the file available for amendments

- an accompanying file where comments can be written
 - a back-up of the original file of each version that is not possible to amend,
 - a back-up of all the amendments suggested when starting to do a new version;
12. DECIDES that all non-accepted input from participants of all Conventions bodies must be available for the Standing Committee when reviewing draft resolutions submitted to the COP;
 13. DECIDES that the Standing Committee's preparations for the COP no longer includes to discuss what sentences in draft resolutions that may be put in brackets or not, instead they are to check if the draft resolutions are submitted according to the Rules of Procedure, maybe add some text on their opinion into the introduction text for the resolution and suggest a suitable order to negotiate the draft resolutions in;
 14. DECIDES that documents on sensitive issues handled by the Management Working Group cannot be uploaded or drafted at a work area arranged by the Secretariat;
 15. REMINDS of that the suggested technical solution allows for texts to be manipulated and therefore cannot be used during late stages of negotiations, and ENCOURAGES everyone suggesting amendments in such documents to respect other individuals work not deleting or accepting it but only to add their own amendments with track-changes and write their comments in the accompanying;
 16. DECIDES that during early stages of drafting it is the main author that have the authority to accept or reject suggested amendment, this based upon their own decision, or if being a representative of a Ramsar body, the decision by that Ramsar body;
 17. DECIDES that it is the Secretariat that have the responsibility for compiling amendments etc to new versions during the later stages after the draft resolutions have been addressed by the Standing Committee;

Instructions for the Secretariat

18. INSTRUMENTS the Secretariat to set up such on-line workplaces before the 1 March 2023; and in all possible ways assist in a way that make this work smoothly;

Future developments

19. AFFIRMS that this resolution is a starting point for change towards more efficiency and on-line work, it is not to stop further development on work methods, that may be suggested because of new technical development or better ideas on how to use present tools further development can be allowed without having to make a resolution of it;
20. AFFIRMS that a future step may be to start work in the IUCN MS when their new version is finalized or using a similar system that is safer than a Word 365 work area, and that may also be using during the meetings, ALSO AFFIRMS that such system does not have to have the "Ramsar language" for different functionalities, other kinds of terminology can be "translated" into the Ramsar language used in Ramsar processes, for example, it is not necessary to reject a system that has a voting function, such function can be translated to Ramsar language and terminology such as "Do we have consensus?";

Annex 1

How to structure the work areas on-line

| Word area – Level 1 | Word area – Level 2 | Word area – Level 3 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Permanent working groups and coordination groups | CEPA CG | Potential additional CEPA working groups |
| | ST CG | ST WG 1 |
| | | ST WG 2 |
| | | ST WG 3 etc |
| | Effectiveness Working group | |
| | Ramsar City Wetland Accreditation | |
| Temporary working groups | The strategic Plan 5 WG | |
| Standing Committee | Sub-group on finance | |
| | Sub-group on next COP | |
| | The Management Working Group (non-sensitive documents only) | The Recruitment Committee (non-sensitive documents only) |
| COPs and Extraordinary COPs | Thematic groups of draft resolutions | |

Annex 2

Work phases, the responsibility for the next version, the access and the target audience

| Work phase with amendments of the text | Responsible for how to respond to delivered input | Responsibility for access and invitation | Audience to get access for suggesting amendments or make comments | Language versions available |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A - Early drafting | Main authors (Chairs, vice chairs or separate CPs) for drafting the resolution | Main author | The participants in the body the work is done by, representatives of other bodies or organisations etc if there is a wish for an early input. | English, also French or Spanish for drafts originally written in those languages and supposed to be submitted by a Contracting Party |
| B - Last version before publishing the first official version | Main authors (Chairs, vice chairs or separate CPs) for drafting the resolution | Main author | The participants in the body the work is done by and representatives of other Convention bodies that they have been asked by the COP to liaise with. Others can be invited as well by choice of the main author. | English, also French or Spanish for drafts originally written in those languages and supposed to be submitted by a Contracting Party |
| C - The first official version | Main authors (Chairs, vice chairs or separate CPs) for drafting the resolution | Main authors | Everyone involved in Ramsar work as part of Ramsar body or as Ramsar NFP. | All three languages |
| D – the REV_1 | Contracting Parties | The Secretariat | | All three languages |
| E – Later REVs | Contracting Parties | The Secretariat | | All three languages |

Annex 3

New work cycle for the development of documents and other texts

| Work phase with amendments of the text | Other steps in the work process | Time frame for online work (days before the first day of the meeting) | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | For SC documents | For draft resolutions |
| A - Early drafting | None | Before countdown is started | |
| | Invitation to the last version before publishing the first official version published | As decided by main author | |
| B - Last version before publishing the first official version | | As decided by main author | |
| | Deciding on final version to submit | As decided by main author | |
| | Submission of first official version | 91 | |
| | Submission of first official version from submitting Contracting Party | 70 | |
| | Translation and publishing | 57-90 | |
| | Deadline for the first official version to be published and made available at web and work area. | 56 | |
| C – Work on the first official version to a Rev 1 | Regional meeting and momentarily translation of suggested amendments | 22-55 | |
| Time for translation | Time for check final translation | 15-21 | |
| The Rev_1 is made available for SC representatives | | 14 | |
| The first day of the meeting | | 0 | |
| E – Later REVs | | During SC meeting | |
| | The first official version published and made available at work area | | 91 |
| C – Work on the first official version to a Rev 1 | Momentarily translation | | 43-90 |
| | Time for checking translation | | 22-42 |
| The Rev_1 as made available for COP delegates | | | 14-21 |
| The first day of the meeting | | | 0 |
| E – Later REVs | Compiled and translated by Secretariat and made available ASAP. | | During COP or EXCOP |
| | One accepted REV made into final version | | During COP or EXCOP |