

## Decisions of the 59th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda

**Decision SC59-01: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional agenda in document SC59 Doc.2 Rev.1, excluding those items contained in square brackets.**

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the provisional working programme

**Decision SC59-02: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional working programme in document SC59 Doc.3, amended to make provisional allowance for a further meeting of the Subgroup on Finance on Thursday 24 June, if required.**

Agenda item 4: Admission of observers

**Decision SC59-03: The Standing Committee admitted the observers listed in document SC59 Doc.4.**

Agenda item 7: Report of the Management Working Group

**Decision SC59-04: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to finalize the Global Wetlands Outlook in close consultation with the STRP, for launch in 2021 in association with the commemoration of the Convention's 50th Anniversary.**

**Decision SC59-05: The Standing Committee instructed the STRP to complete the ad-hoc task on Criterion 6, in line with the guidance provided by the Management Working Group, taking a narrow interpretation of the request made and focusing closely on the need of Contracting Parties for concrete, practical information on available data and guidance on its application.**

**Decision SC59-06: The Standing Committee encouraged the STRP to continue its work on blue carbon, in line with the current work plan, and to consider additional tasks within the current work plan that were not identified as high-priority tasks as well as any relevant emerging issues, to develop its work plan for the coming year.**

**Decision SC59-07: The Standing Committee requested the STRP to undertake discussion and analysis with a view to further developing STRP priorities for the coming triennium.**

Agenda item 5: Report of the Executive Team and Chair of the Standing Committee

**Decision SC59-08: The Standing Committee noted the Report of the Executive Team and Chair of the Standing Committee published as document SC59 Doc.5, and the preceding report published as document SC58 Doc.5.**

Agenda item 20.1: Report of the Subgroup on COP14

**Decision SC59-09: The Standing Committee took note of the Report of the Subgroup on COP14 published as document SC59 Doc.20.1.**

**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.**

**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.**

Agenda item 18: Work plan of the Secretariat for 2021

**Decision SC59-12: The Standing Committee took note of and approved the Integrated Secretariat Annual Plan 2021 as part of the approved Triennial Plan for 2019-2021.**

Mandate of working groups and decision on SC59 / SC60

**Decision SC59-13: The Standing Committee decided that its present meeting (SC59) would be divided into two parts, the second part to be held in 2022 at a proper time before the date established for COP14.**

Report from the Chair of the Subgroup on COP14 on the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards

**Decision SC59-14: The Standing Committee decided to defer consideration of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards to its next session, to be held in 2022.**

Agenda item 17.3: World Wetlands Day themes for 2022-2024

**Decision SC59-15: The Standing Committee decided that the themes for forthcoming World Wetlands Days would be:**

**2022: Wetlands action for people and nature**

**2023: Wetland restoration**

**2024: Wetlands and human wellbeing**

Agenda item 10: Report of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention

**Decision SC59-16: The Standing Committee took note of the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group; invited it to recommend to COP14 to add to the Fourth Strategic Plan thematic annexes that address emerging and other issues, noting that the existing Annex 2 will be updated to map the Ramsar Targets with the post-2020 Biodiversity Goals and Indicators when available.**

**Decision SC59-17: The Standing Committee agreed that existing guidance and tools be communicated to Contracting Parties to support the implementation of the Fourth Strategic Plan in the gap year to COP14, subject to available capacity within the Secretariat.**

**Decision SC59-18:** The Standing Committee noted that the Working Group will prepare a draft resolution about the review of the Fourth Strategic Plan, proposed thematic annexes, and areas where new guidance could be progressed in the next triennium, and 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 ahead of COP14.

**Decision SC59-19:** The Standing Committee recommended that the Contracting Parties at COP14 extend the term of the Fourth Strategic Plan from 2024 until such time as COP15 may be held, in order to ensure continuity between successive Plans.

**Decision SC59-20:** The Standing Committee established a new working group with membership from Contracting Parties, the STRP and International Organization Partners, to commence preparation of the Fifth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention, with the terms of reference and work plan to be agreed intersessionally, and be designed to accommodate the key elements and any additional priority elements and modalities for the Fifth Strategic Plan that may be agreed at COP14. The Standing Committee encouraged the participation of members of the Working Group on the Review of the Fourth Strategic Plan in the new working group, for continuity purposes.

Agenda item 21.1: Report of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group

**Decision SC59-21:** The Standing Committee took note of the progress report on the work of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives Working Group, and agreed that the draft resolution would be considered at the resumed session of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 11: Report of the Chair of the Effectiveness Working Group

**Decision SC59-22:** The Standing Committee took note of the report of the Effectiveness Working Group contained in document SC59 Doc.11.

Agenda item 14: Report of the Working Group on Observer Status in the United Nations General Assembly

**Decision SC59-23:** The Standing Committee took note of the report of the Observer Status Working Group contained in document SC59 Doc.14, and recommended that the Working Group continue its work and report back at the Committee's resumed session.

Agenda item 8: Financial and budgetary matters: Report of the Subgroup on Finance

**Decision SC59-24:** The Standing Committee adopted Part I and Part II of the Report of the Subgroup on Finance without amendment.

**Decision SC59-25:** The Standing Committee noted with concern the challenges caused by the timing of the arrival of the audited financial statements, which results in the late delivery of finance-related documents and prevents compliance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, and requested the Secretary General to take the measures necessary to ensure that all non-audit-related financial documents, especially those that are related to requests for additional funds, are circulated in accordance with Rule 10 ahead of the meetings of the Subgroup of Finance in order to facilitate adequate and appropriate consideration of all budgetary matters.

**Decision SC59-26:** The Standing Committee:

- accepted the 2020 audited financial statements as of 31 December 2020;

- noted the core budget results for 2020;
- noted the non-core balances and voluntary contributions for 2020; and
- noted the unspent/uncommitted balances that are carried forward from 2020 to 2021, as described in paragraph 20 of document SC59 Doc.8.1.

**Decision SC59-27: The Standing Committee:**

- approved and noted the proposed adjustments to the COP13-approved core budget (see Annex 1 of Annex 4 of the SC59 report); and
- approved the presentation of the “other benefits” within the merged budget line “salaries, social costs and other benefits” for each budget area in the future budgets, recognizing that this change in location of the funding between budget lines does not reflect a change to funding levels.

**Decision SC59-28: The Standing Committee approved the allocation of CHF 72,000 from savings from the 2020 core budget to accommodate the increase of provisions for outstanding contributions in the 2021 budget.**

**Decision SC59-29: The Standing Committee approved the following uses of 2020 core budget savings:**

**For 2021:**

- CHF 25,000 for the development and production of World Wetlands Day 2022 resources;
- CHF 86,000 for improvements to the Convention’s website.

**For 2022:**

- CHF 76,000 to cover the core budget gap for core activities of the Secretariat for 2022 (subject to approval of the 2022 budget by the extraordinary COP).

**Decision SC59-30: The Standing Committee:**

- took note of the status of annual contributions;
- noted the actions listed in paragraphs 14 and 15 of document SC59 Doc.8.2 on group confirmation of outstanding contributions as part of the audit process;
- noted the actions listed in paragraphs 17, 19, 20 and 21 to continue encouraging the payment of annual contributions;
- noted the change in annual contributions receivable and in the annual provision against contributions receivable; and
- noted the status of the African voluntary contributions.

**Decision SC59-31: The Standing Committee:**

- took note of the contents of document SC59 Doc.8.3;
- approved the one-year budget for 2022 (see Annex 2 of Annex 4 of the SC59 report) for submission to the extraordinary COP based on budget Scenario A at 0% increase presented by the Secretariat; and
- requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution on the budget for approval by the extraordinary COP.

**Decision SC59-32: The Standing Committee approved the allocation of CHF 90,000 from savings from the 2020 core budget for the work of the Working Group on the Review of the Strategic Plan, in accordance with Decision SC59-20 by the Standing Committee to establish a new working group.**

**Decision SC59-33: The Standing Committee approved the allocation of CHF 25,000 to each of the four eligible Ramsar Regional Initiatives for their activities in 2021 from the core budget line D**

**“Support to Regional Initiatives”, provided that receiving RRIs conform to sub-paragraph 8.d. of Resolution XIII.9.**

**Decision SC59-34: The Standing Committee decided that any request for core funds by Ramsar Regional Initiatives should include a rationale about how they support Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention and its Resolutions and guidance, and that requests must be provided in English or with an English translation (with informal “google translate” translations, screened by the country’s National Focal Point, acceptable), to enable the Subgroup of Finance to make informed decisions in a timely manner.**

**Decision SC59-35: The Standing Committee approved, pending confirmation that the funds would be spent in alignment with paragraph 8 of Resolution XIII.9, the remaining budgeted allocation of CHF 10,000 from the original proposal in 2020 of CHF 25,000 to two of the four eligible Ramsar Regional Initiatives in the context of Decision SC58-28, for their activities planned in 2020 but delayed to 2021 and for disbursement in 2021, from the 2020 core budget savings, taking into account the current exceptional circumstances of the global pandemic. The two RRIs are the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Senegal River Basin (SenegalWet) and the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Amazon River Basin, and the allocations are made provided that receiving RRIs conform to sub-paragraph 8.d. of Resolution XIII.9 and other relevant rules and regulations related to reporting on use of core funds.**

Agenda item 27: Dates and venues of the 60th and 61st meetings of the Standing Committee

**Decision SC59-36: The Standing Committee decided that the resumed session of its 59th meeting would take place between 23 May and 27 May 2022, with the possibility of extending the session for another two days if required once the provisional agenda had been finalized. Those Contracting Parties that had submitted draft resolutions for the present meeting could submit revised versions by 24 March 2022. Working Groups whose mandate included submission of draft resolutions for consideration by COP14 could also submit draft resolutions by 24 March 2022.**

**Decision SC59-37: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to seek legal advice on whether, under the current Rules of Procedure, Contracting Parties could submit new draft resolutions by 24 March 2022 for consideration by COP14 in the context of the decision to have a resumed session of SC59 in 2022, and whether it was possible for the Standing Committee to hold the second part of its 59th meeting and its 60th meeting back-to-back.**

Agenda item 28: Adoption of the report of the meeting

**Decision SC59-38: The Standing Committee adopted the reports of the first and second days of the meeting, and instructed the Secretariat to share the report of the fourth day with the Committee, and revise the reports of the third and fourth days in accordance with the comments received.**