

**Preparation of the 15th meeting of the Conference  
of the Contracting Parties (COP15):  
Report of the Secretariat on COP15**

**Actions requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. take note of this report;
- ii. accept the proposed dates of 23-31 July 2025 for COP15;
- iii. take note of the indicative timeline of events and deadlines leading up to COP15; and
- iv. approve the provisional agenda for COP15.

**Background**

1. At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14), Zimbabwe announced its desire to host COP15. Subsequent to this announcement, the Secretariat on 20 December 2022 received official notification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe's invitation to host COP15.

**Progress with preparation for COP15**

2. The Secretariat met representatives of Zimbabwe on the margins of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) on 15 December 2022 to discuss roles and responsibilities of a host country and the preparatory process for a COP. During this meeting the Secretariat was informed of Zimbabwe's intent for the COP to take place in Victoria Falls. As a follow-up to this meeting the Secretariat provided Zimbabwe with a sample host country agreement.
3. On 25 January 2023 representatives of the Secretariat met the Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and World Trade Organization at the Zimbabwean Permanent Mission in Geneva to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the host country and the preparatory process for a COP. During the meeting the importance of an initial site visit and formation of a planning team was stressed.
4. On 2 March 2023 the Secretariat received an invitation from Zimbabwe for an initial site visit to be conducted from 29 to 31 March 2023. A delegation comprised of the Deputy Secretary General, the Senior Advisor for Africa and the Conference and Governance Services Officer met

with representatives of different ministries and agencies in Harare on 29 March. During these meetings the Secretariat explained in detail the roles and responsibilities of hosting a COP, an indicative preparatory timeline – noting the importance of identifying dates as soon as possible – and the technical and logistical requirements. The Secretariat shared lessons and best practices from previous COPs as well as the experiences of the COPs of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The Secretariat also provided guidance on the preparation of a presentation by the host country to the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC62).

5. On 30 and 31 March the Secretariat delegation and representatives of different ministries and agencies, along with several service providers, travelled to Victoria Falls to inspect the proposed venue, Elephant Hills Resort and Conference Centre, and available accommodation and meeting services. At the conclusion of the visit, the Secretariat identified the following priority actions for the host country: 1) to propose dates for COP15; 2) to undertake an analysis of available meeting space at the conference venue and identify temporary meeting space needed to accommodate meeting requirements; 3) to block hotel rooms based on proposed dates; and 4) to begin the process of reviewing and approving the host country agreement.

### Timeline leading up to COP15

6. Zimbabwe subsequently informed the Secretariat that it proposes that COP15 take place from 23 to 31 July 2025. An indicative timeline has been prepared based on these dates, as shown in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Indicative timeline leading up to COP15*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>23-31 July 2025</b>	<b>15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15)</b>
April 2025	COP15 documents published
January 2025	64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64)
November 2024	Submission of proposals for draft resolutions
May 2024	63rd meeting of the Standing committee (SC63)
To be determined	Pre-COP regional meetings

7. At SC62 Standing Committee members will be invited to establish the Subgroup on COP15 in accordance with Decision SC61-11, which deferred the establishment of the Subgroup to that meeting.

### COP15 provisional agenda

8. The Rules of Procedure adopted by the Contracting Parties at COP14 indicate that the Secretariat “shall prepare the provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting for consideration and approval by the Standing Committee at its annual meeting in the year following the meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties” (Rule 8) and “shall notify all Contracting Parties of the dates, venue, and provisional agenda of an ordinary meeting at least 12 months before the meeting is due to commence” (Rule 5.1).

9. Rule 9 indicates that:

“The provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting shall include, as appropriate:

- a) The report of the Secretary General on the work related to the Convention;

- b) Items arising from the articles of the Convention;
  - c) Items the inclusion of which has been decided at a previous meeting or which emanate from decisions taken at a previous meeting;
  - d) Items referred to in Rule 15 of the present Rules of Procedure;
  - e) Any item proposed by a Contracting Party and received by the Secretariat before the provisional agenda is approved by the Standing Committee;
  - f) A comparative report on actual versus projected expenditures and human resource needs over the past triennium for the work of the Convention and the operation of the Secretariat.”
10. Standing Committee is accordingly requested to approve the provisional agenda for COP15 in Annex 1 of the present document, which has been prepared in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

## **Annex 1**

### **COP15 provisional agenda and working programme**

#### **15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands**

**Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe 2025**

#### **Provisional Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. General statements and keynote addresses
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure
5. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents and remarks by the President
6. Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees
7. Admission of Observers
8. Report of the Chair of the Standing Committee
9. Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level
10. Report on implementation of the CEPA Programme
11. Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
12. Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
13. Secretariat's report on administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions
14. Financial report for 2022-2025 by the Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance and proposed budget for the 2025-2027 triennium
15. Election of Contracting Parties to the Standing Committee 2025-2027
16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee
17. Report of the Credentials Committee
18. Report on the discussions, conclusions and recommendations in the preceding sessions
19. Adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations
20. Date and venue of the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
21. Any other business
22. Adoption of the report of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
23. Close of the meeting

## **Provisional working programme**

### **Day 1**

Registration of delegates (continues each day)

**65th meeting of the Standing Committee** (subsequently to meet as the Conference Bureau)

**Regional meetings** (including discussions on Contracting Parties to be proposed for election to the Standing Committee. Plenary agenda item XIV)

Meetings of Ramsar Regional Initiatives

### **Day 2**

Registration (continued)

#### **Regional meetings**

**Opening ceremony and welcoming statements** (includes Agenda items 1 and 2 and Ramsar Award Ceremony)

### **Day 3**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau

#### **Plenary Session**

3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure
5. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents and remarks by the President
6. Appointment of the Credentials Committee and any other committees
7. Admission of Observers
8. Report of the Chair of the Standing Committee

#### **Plenary Session**

9. Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level
10. Report on implementation of the CEPA Programme
11. Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP)
12. Issues arising from Resolutions and Recommendations of previous meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

13. Secretariat's report on administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions

#### **Day 4**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau

##### **Plenary Session**

14. Financial report for 2022-2025 by the Chair of the Standing Committee Subgroup on Finance and proposed budget for the 2025-2027 triennium
15. Election of Contracting Parties to the Standing Committee 2025-2027
16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee

##### **Plenary Session**

16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

#### **Regional Meetings to prepare and canvass views for the upcoming sessions**

#### **Day 5**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau (with Standing Committee 2025-2027 appointees as observers)

##### **Plenary Session**

16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

##### **Plenary Session**

16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

#### **Day 6**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau with Standing Committee 2025-2027 appointees as observers

### **Plenary Session**

16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

### **Plenary Session**

16. Consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee (continued)

Preparatory meeting of the appointees to the incoming Standing Committee 2025-2027

## **Day 7**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau (if needed) with Standing Committee 2025-2027 appointees as observers

## **Day 8**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau with Standing Committee 2025-2027 appointees as observers

### **Plenary Session**

17. Report of the Credentials Committee
18. Report on the discussions, conclusions and recommendations in the preceding sessions

### **Plenary Session**

19. Adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations

## **Day 9**

Registration (continued)

Meeting of the Conference Bureau with Standing Committee 2025-2027 appointees as observers

### **Plenary Session**

19. Adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations (continued)

### **Plenary Session**

20. Date and venue of the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

21. Any other business
22. Adoption of the report of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
23. Close of the meeting

**66th meeting of the Standing Committee** (incoming members to elect officers and subgroup members, and agree the date and venue of the first full meeting)