



10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008

Agenda item XV

Ramsar COP10 DR 3

Draft Resolution X.3

**The frequency and timing of the meetings of the Conference of
the Contracting Parties, and of regional meetings**

Submitted by the Standing Committee

(See also COP10 DOC. 14 for background information supporting this draft Resolution.)

1. UNDERLINING the prime objectives of improving the operational procedures of the Convention according to the needs of the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat, of providing the Convention with better visibility in the regions and at national level, and of strengthening Convention implementation at all levels;
2. RECOGNIZING that both the Administrative Authorities responsible for Ramsar implementation at national level and the Convention Secretariat have limited capacities to organize ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP);
3. DESIRING to minimize the additional work for the Secretariat and the Parties in preparing meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
4. DESIRING FURTHERMORE to make the best use of the limited capacities and financial resources at Secretariat and national levels by scheduling meetings of the COP at the optimal time of the year, in order to avoid disruptions in the preparatory process due to annual holiday seasons and budget cycles, and by adapting the frequency of global and regional meetings of the Parties to regional and national needs;
5. AWARE of Decision SC37-5 of the 37th meeting of the Standing Committee that the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties should take place in the first half of 2012, 3 ½ years following COP10, in which the Committee instructed the Secretariat to adjust budget proposals and other time-delimited documents for COP10 to take account of this decision, and NOTING that this is a time of year that fits better with the UN budget cycles that are used for the determination of the annual core budget contributions of the Ramsar Parties;

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6. STRESSING the need expressed by Contracting Parties to have sufficient time to implement COP decisions and coordinate the Convention's implementation in their regions and on national level properly during the interval until the next COP, as well as to gather sufficient experience from such implementation in view of the development of new or better adapted guidance for adoption by the next COP;
7. RECALLING that the Ramsar Convention, through the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and National Ramsar/Wetland Committees, and through regional meetings of the Parties, has in recent years established good preconditions and effective mechanisms for implementation between COP meetings; and
8. RECOGNIZING the high interest for Contracting Parties' participation at Standing Committee meetings as well as the great potential of Standing Committee meetings for addressing global needs, for providing immediate guidance to Parties when challenging issues arise, and for efficient involvement in steering the global challenges of the Convention;
9. AWARE that Article 6.1 of the Convention states that the Secretariat "shall convene ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties at intervals of not more than three years, unless the Conference decides otherwise"; and
10. THANKING the government of Austria for initiating development of the proposals in the Resolution;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

11. DECIDES to modify the intervals between meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties from three to four years and to modify the budgetary and operational cycles of the Convention from three- to four-year intervals, as well as to extend the period covered by Ramsar Strategic Plans to two quadriennial cycles (e.g., 2009 to 2016);
12. CALLS upon Parties offering to host an ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to schedule such meetings, as far as possible, during the months of May to July, in order to minimize disruptions and complications of the preparatory activities due to annual budget and holiday cycles;
13. REQUESTS the Secretariat, with the support of the Standing Committee, to restructure the performance of regional meetings of the Parties in such a way that they allow participating Parties to conclude formal decisions and/or recommendations regarding the regional implementation of the Strategic Plan and of Resolutions of previous COPs;
14. REQUESTS Parties to organize regional meetings midway through each interval between two COPs, in order to maintain international contacts, assess progress in the implementation of the Convention in each region, provide sufficient visibility to the Convention in the regions, and streamline the regional consensus on future guidance and COP decisions needed;
15. INVITES interested Parties of all regions to attend annual Standing Committee meetings as observers;

16. REQUESTS the Secretariat, together with interested Parties, to assess the possibility of selecting venues for future Standing Committee meetings in different regions all over the world, situated close to a famous Ramsar site or Ramsar Centre or regional initiative whenever possible, so that Standing Committee meetings could rotate from region to region each year;
17. RECOMMENDS that the Secretariat and potential host countries for international Ramsar meetings, such as Standing Committee, STRP, and CEPA meetings, as well as Parties planning their own National Ramsar/Wetland Committee meetings, make the best use of all opportunities to make the Ramsar Convention more visible on those occasions, by arranging them close to another project event (e.g., finalization of another big water project in the region), by using those opportunities for awarding Ramsar diplomas for new sites, by inviting local site managers, selected regional and local politicians, and by arranging press releases and using the proper CEPA tools to the extent possible; and
18. REAFFIRMS the high value of National Ramsar/Wetland Committees in implementing the Convention, as well as in increasing Ramsar visibility at country level and therefore REQUESTS all Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to establish or strengthen National Ramsar Committees, ideally involving relevant administrative authorities of water, nature conservation, agriculture, forestry and other sectors and, if possible, national bodies of the five Ramsar International Organization Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, International Water Management Institute, Wetlands International, and WWF International) and other relevant NGOs, as well as national STRP and CEPA focal points.