

**“Wetlands: water, life, and culture”
8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)
Valencia, Spain, 18-26 November 2002**

Ramsar COP8 DOC. 3

Agenda item VIII

Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee

Action requested: This item will be introduced in Plenary on the afternoon of Monday, 18 November 2002. Contracting Parties and observers are invited to note the contents of the report and to raise questions and/or comment on any aspect of the Report, and/or make recommendations for the future work of the Standing Committee.

Introduction

1. The 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (1987) adopted a Resolution which established the Standing Committee. At each regular Conference, the Standing Committee membership is reviewed. COP7 adopted Resolution VII.1 on *Regional categorization of countries under the Convention, and composition, roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee, including duties of Standing Committee members.*
2. The election of Standing Committee members at COP7 was carried out in conformity with Resolution VII.1, based upon a proportional representation according to the numbers of Contracting Parties in each region. The Resolution also redefined the Ramsar regions, merging Western Europe and Eastern Europe into one region.
3. COP7 elected the following members to this Committee, representing the six Ramsar regions:

Africa	Algeria, Togo and Uganda
Asia	India and Japan
Europe	Armenia, France, Norway and the Slovak Republic
Neotropics	Argentina and Trinidad and Tobago
North America Mexico	
Oceania	Australia

In addition, the host of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Costa Rica, as well as the host of the 8th Meeting, Spain, are voting members of the Committee.

4. Switzerland and the Netherlands maintained their Permanent Observer status on the Committee by virtue of their being host countries, respectively, for the World Conservation Union (IUCN), which hosts the Convention's secretariat, and Wetlands International, a very close partner of the Convention, also associated with its inception. Finally, the four Ramsar International Organization Partners, BirdLife International, Wetlands International, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), were afforded observer status on the Committee in accordance with Resolution VII.3.

5. At its meeting following the closure of COP7 in Costa Rica, the new Standing Committee elected Australia as Chair, and Uganda as Vice Chair. Mr. Stephen Hunter, Deputy Secretary of the Australian Department of Environment and Heritage has chaired the Committee, and Mr. Paul Mafabi Gumonye, Assistant Commissioner at the Wetland Inspection Division of the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment of Uganda, has served as Vice Chair.
6. The Standing Committee has been entrusted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties with several functions, including the supervision of the implementation of policy by the Ramsar Bureau (the secretariat of the Convention), the execution of the Convention's budget, and the conduct of Bureau programmes, with special regard to the development of annual work programmes, personnel matters, and carrying out specific requests.
7. Notice of each meeting of the Standing Committee was distributed to all Contracting Parties through diplomatic notification, and Parties not members of the Committee were invited to attend in an observer capacity if they so wished. An increasing number of Parties have attended SC meetings as observers as a matter of routine. The outcomes of each Standing Committee meeting have been duly distributed to all Contracting Parties under the cover of a Diplomatic Note, with the full text of the minutes in the English language and the texts of all decisions in English, French or Spanish, as appropriate. The minutes and the texts of the decisions have also been posted on the Convention's Web site.
8. In the present report, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee highlights the main issues the Standing Committee has dealt with from 18 May 1999, the closure of the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to 15 September 2002.

Overview of the main issues considered and decisions taken

9. The Standing Committee met four times during the period under review:
 - 23th Meeting: immediately after the closure of Ramsar COP7 in San José, Costa Rica, on 18 May 1999
 - 24th Meeting: 29 November - 2 December 1999, in Gland, Switzerland
 - 25th Meeting: 23-27 October 2000, in Gland, Switzerland
 - 26st Meeting: 3-7 December 2001, in Gland, Switzerland
10. In addition, the Standing Committee Subgroups on COP8 and on Finance met in Gland, Switzerland, on 15-17 May 2002 to finalize matters related to COP8 on behalf of the Standing Committee. It should be noted that while these were meetings of the Subgroups, the interest in the issues to be considered was such that most Standing Committee members attended, together with a number of Contracting Parties that participated in an observer capacity.
11. At each of its annual meetings in 1999, 2000, and 2001 the Committee dealt with standing issues on the Committee's agenda, such as:
 - a) Review of the audited accounts of the previous years. It should be noted that the Audited Accounts for each year have been distributed under the cover of a

Diplomatic Note to all Contracting Parties in the three official languages as soon as they became available. No comments or questions had been received from Contracting Parties. Thus, the audited accounts for 1998, 1999 and 2000 will not be issued as COP8 documents. The Audited Accounts for 2001 will be reviewed by the Standing Committee at its meeting immediately before COP8, on 17 November 2002, and will be available for Contracting Parties that may wish to review them. As will be noted in the budget papers, these three fiscal years were closed with a surplus that, in line with Resolution VI.17 of COP6, has reverted to the Reserve Fund, allowing the Fund to exceed the level recommended by COP6, e. g., a tenth of the annual budget.

- b) Review of the financial situation of the current year and the forecast of income and expenditure until the year's end, and adoption of the budget for the following year.
 - c) Review of the implementation of the work plan of the Ramsar Bureau for the current year and discussion of the proposed work plan for the following year.
 - d) Review of reports on the implementation of the work programme of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and recommendations for its future work;
 - e) Consideration of the projects submitted under the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF) and approval of the projects to be funded.
 - f) Review of the financial and implementation status of other projects undertaken by the Ramsar Bureau.
12. In addition, the following is a list of the main issues dealt with and decisions taken by the Standing Committee at each of its meetings.

23rd Meeting: 18 May 1999, San José, Costa Rica

13. Acting upon Resolution VI.17 of COP6, the Committee established a permanent Subgroup on Finance with the following members for this triennium: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia (Chair), Japan, and Mexico. The Subgroup on Finance has convened on the day previous to each meeting of the Standing Committee to review all financial and administrative matters on the agenda and prepare recommendations to the Standing Committee. This has proved to be a very useful *modus operandi* for increasing the efficiency of decision-making by the Standing Committee. In addition, the Subgroup, and in particular the Chair of the Subgroup, has been consulted on a number of financial and administrative matters between meetings. The members of the Subgroup, and most especially its Chair, Mr. Karén Jenderedjian, Leading Specialist in the Department of Biodiversity and Land Protection of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia, should be commended for the contribution they have made to the work of the Convention during this period.

24th Meeting: 29 November - 2 December 1999, in Gland, Switzerland

14. The Standing Committee determined to renew Mr Delmar Blasco's contract as Secretary General of the Convention for a final term of three years ending 31 July 2003.

15. The SC approved the Terms of Reference for the STRP National Focal Points and urged all Contracting Parties to complete their nominations of Focal Points as soon as possible.
16. The SC expressed its members' willingness to consult with the Parties in their regions both before and after SC meetings so that they can fully represent their regions, voiced their willingness to encourage the adhesion of new Contracting Parties in close coordination with the Bureau's efforts, and identified which Contracting Parties the Regional Representatives will take 'responsibility' for liaison with in their regions. During informal consultations during the meeting, the Regional Representatives for Africa, Europe, and the Neotropics agreed upon a division of their respective regions to implement the above decision.
17. The SC agreed that the final version of the National Reports format to be used for COP8 should be approved by the Chair, after comments from members, by the end of 1999, so that the Bureau could circulate it to Parties at the beginning of 2000.
18. The SC adopted at this meeting the drafting procedure to prepare the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 for submission to COP8. The procedure began with a first draft prepared by the Bureau for circulation by 30 June 2000. The SC also decided that the regional representation on the Subgroup on the Strategic Plan would be as follows: Algeria for Africa, Japan for Asia, Slovak Republic for Europe, Trinidad and Tobago for the Neotropics, the USA for North America, and Australia for Oceania. Other members of the Subgroup were to be Paul Mafabi (Uganda) as Chair, the Chairperson of the STRP, a representative of each International Organization Partner, and the Secretary General, *ex officio*.
19. At this meeting the SC expressed strong support for Ramsar's work towards establishing synergies with other conventions and a strong sense that further efforts are also needed within the Parties at national level. It also supported efforts to ensure a high Ramsar visibility in the Rio+10 process, especially at the April 2000 meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.
20. The SC determined to continue to promote membership of the Small Island Developing States in the Convention and to continue to seek resources to establish a long-term SIDS internship within the Bureau. The SC formed a Subgroup consisting of Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Wetlands International (Oceania) to review the Barbados Programme of Action and seek input from the SIDS, and report to the next Standing Committee meeting.
21. The Standing Committee approved the Operational Guidelines 2000-2002 for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF), with amendments to require that additional co-funding for projects from foreign and in-country sources be clearly indicated as separate 'leverage effects', and it instructed the Bureau to prepare an agenda paper on the idea of the administration of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund being turned over to one of the International Organization Partners (as per paragraph 16 of Resolution VII.5) for consideration at the next SC meeting.
22. The SC approved at this meeting the establishment of a post of Development Assistance Officer in the Ramsar Bureau (subsequently renamed by the Secretary General the 'Senior

Advisor on Environment and Development Cooperation') and endorsed the terms of reference for the post.

23. The SC also approved the establishment and proposed terms of reference for the Voluntary Fund for the Convention's Outreach Programme 1999-2002, as per paragraph 18 of Resolution VII.28.
24. The Subgroup on Finance was requested to prepare a recommendation on the issue of unpaid contributions by Parties, as per paragraph 16 of Resolution VII.28, for consideration at the 25th meeting of the Committee.
25. Also at this meeting the SC established a Subgroup on Ramsar COP8 and adopted its terms of reference. In addition, the SC appointed the following membership to the Subgroup: Togo for Africa, India for Asia, France for Europe (with Slovenia as observer), Costa Rica for the Neotropics, Mexico for North America (with the USA as observer), Australia for Oceania, with Spain serving as Chair.

25th Meeting: 23-27 October 2000, in Gland, Switzerland

26. Acting upon Resolution VII.12 on "Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance: official descriptions, conservation status, and management plans, including the situation of particular sites in the territories of specific Contracting Parties", the SC decided to:
 - a) request the Bureau to make further contacts with Contracting Parties about their actions concerning their commitments embodied in Resolution VII.12, in order to obtain the most up-to-date information and encourage their further action;
 - b) invite SC members to encourage Parties in their respective regions to follow up on those commitments; and
 - c) receive the Bureau's report on Resolution VII.12 implementation at SC26, and then decide how best to deal with the remaining issues in advance of COP8.
27. Recognizing the need to give increased attention to the fuller implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention, the SC requested the Bureau, with the assistance of the members of the Standing Committee, BirdLife International and other International Organization Partners, and the STRP's Expert Working Group on Ecological Character, to prepare a paper for consideration by its 26th Meeting, for possible transmittal to COP8. (The end results of this process are embodied in document COP8 DOC. 20 and draft Resolution COP8 – DR 8.)
28. At this meeting, the SC expressed its support for the Bureau's efforts to develop synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity and endorsed further work towards a third Joint Work Plan (subsequently endorsed by the SC and CBD's COP6). In addition, the SC registered its support for the Bureau's cooperative efforts with other related conventions and institutions, in particular with the global treaties, and looked forward to observing benefits from these efforts flowing to the Contracting Parties.
29. The SC determined that the priorities in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States (SIDSs) should be adopted as a focus for

the development of specific actions to be considered for incorporation in the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008, and it urged further consultations with SIDSs on their needs relative to wetlands.

30. At this meeting, and in relation to the analysis by IUCN's Environmental Law Centre of interpretation of Articles 2.5 and 4.2 of the Convention, the SC requested the Bureau to translate the paper into French and Spanish and circulate it to the Contracting Parties for comment; to convey any comments received to the ELC for consideration in a further draft of the paper; and to present that revised draft to the SC at the next meeting. (The end result of this process is embodied in draft resolution COP8 – DR 20.)
31. Also at this meeting the SC requested the Bureau, with assistance from BirdLife International, to prepare an analysis of the issue of “a procedure for the review of Ramsar site boundaries for reasons other than urgent national interest, without prejudice to other international obligations” (Resolution VII.23, para. 9). (The end result of this process is embodied in draft resolution COP8 – DR 22.)
32. The SC noted the concerns of the STRP's Chair and members about its *modus operandi*, mandates from the COP, and high turnover. The Committee established a Subgroup on the STRP to study these issues, approved its terms of reference and requested the Bureau to prepare a discussion paper for consideration by the Subgroup. The Subgroup consisted of Armenia, France, Japan, Uganda, BirdLife International, the Chair of STRP, the USA as observer, the Deputy Secretary General (*ex officio*), and the past Chair of STRP. (The end results of this process are contained in document COP8 DOC. 14 and in draft resolution COP8 – DR 28.)
33. The SC endorsed the Bureau's participation in the development and implementation of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and expressed the willingness of SC members to assist the MA Board by nominating suitable experts and suggesting likely pilot sites for local assessments. (See document COP8 DOC. 8.)
34. At this meeting, the SC adopted the provisional Agenda and Programme for Ramsar COP8 and the schedule of regional meetings in preparation for the COP.
35. The SC adopted a series of decisions to streamline the operations of the Ramsar Small Grants Fund. In relation to the feasibility of transferring the operation of the SGF to one of the International Organization Partners (IOPs) (see paragraph 21 above), the SC decided that the administration of the SGF should be kept within the Ramsar Bureau and invited the IOPs to strengthen their support for Ramsar SGF project design, evaluation, implementation and monitoring.
36. Concerning the unpaid contributions from the Contracting Parties (see paragraph 24 above), the SC considered the paper requested at the previous meeting and determined to submit to COP8 a draft Resolution establishing that, in order to encourage timely and regular payment of annual contributions, as from 1 January 2003 there should be sanctions applied for nonpayment of dues. This decision was reversed at the subsequent meeting, and consequently no Resolution has been proposed to the COP on this matter.
37. Concerning the use of the OECD/DAC list to determine eligibility for Ramsar financial assistance, the SC decided that:

- a) the OECD/DAC List of Aid Recipients should continue to be used, *mutatis mutandis* as applying to Ramsar Contracting Parties and other countries eligible for accession, for eligibility for SGF as established by Resolution VI.6;
 - b) the Bureau, when allocating assistance for participating at Ramsar meetings, should use the OECD/DAC list in the following order of priorities:
 - i) Contracting Parties in Part I of the List
 - ii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: Central and Eastern European Countries and New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; and
 - iii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: More advanced Developing Countries and Territories;
 - c) the Bureau should prepare a report on the regulations and practice applied on this matter by other environment-related conventions for consideration at the next Standing Committee meeting and possible transmission with recommendations to COP8.
38. Concerning the location and financing of the MedWet Coordination function, the SC, having received the generous proposals submitted by Spain and later by Greece for hosting the Coordination of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), including a pledge for financial contributions towards the salary of the MedWet Coordinator and other expenses, accepted the recommendation of the interested countries that the MedWet Coordination function should continue to be based in Athens, Greece, for the interim period until 31 December 2002, when the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties will have taken a more permanent decision. At the same time, the SC authorized the Secretary General to enter into an appropriate agreement with the Government of Greece concerning the MedWet Coordination office and its financing.
39. In relation to the procedure for selection of a new Secretary General, the SC decided to put in motion a process for taking a decision on this matter at its next meeting.

26th Meeting: 3-7 December 2001, in Gland, Switzerland

40. This meeting of the SC was devoted primarily to considering some 30 draft documents and draft Resolutions prepared by the STRP and the Bureau for possible transmittal to COP8. Some of these proposals were referred to the Subgroups on COP8 and on Finance for consideration at their respective meetings in May 2002. In total, 28 draft Resolutions and nine information papers have been submitted to COP8 with the endorsement of the Standing Committee.
41. In relation to the report on practices of other environment-related conventions concerning delegate support, which had been requested from the Bureau, the SC decided that, when not otherwise established by Resolutions of the Conference of Contracting Parties, the allocation of funds by the Bureau for sponsored delegates to Ramsar meetings shall be as follows:
- a) funds should be directed first to one delegate from each Ramsar Contracting Party in the UN list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs);

- b) additional funds should be allocated to one delegate from Contracting Parties that are developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
 - c) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from LDCs; and
 - d) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
42. Concerning the selection procedure for the new Secretary General, the SC adopted the procedure contained in Annex 1.

Meetings of the Standing Committee Subgroups on COP8 and on Finance in Gland, Switzerland, on 15-17 May 2002

43. The Subgroup on COP8 dealt with 22 issues of substance that are in the agenda of COP8 and took decisions on them on behalf of the Standing Committee.
44. The two main decisions taken by the Subgroup on Finances on behalf of the Standing Committee were the approval of the draft budget 2003-2005 for transmission to COP8 (see COP8 – DR 27), and the proposal to establish a Ramsar Endowment Fund (see COP8 – DR 29).

Concluding remarks

45. The period since COP7 has been a busy and constructive one for the Standing Committee. This is reflected in the substantial body of draft Resolutions and information papers that it has endorsed for consideration by COP8.
46. This output would not have been possible without the mandate created for the Standing Committee by Resolutions of COP 7, the prodigious efforts of the STRP and the Bureau and the substantial work of the members of Standing Committee itself, its observers and the International Organization Partners.
47. Against this background it is important that COP8 set a forward agenda for the Standing Committee, STRP and Bureau that is achievable and carefully targeted towards issues of strategic importance to the Convention and its effectiveness. The finalisation of the Convention's Strategic Plan will be very significant in this regard
48. In reviewing the work of the Standing Committee and the Convention more broadly over the past three years, a number of features stand out. The first is the highly cooperative spirit that has characterised activity at all levels of the Convention. The second is the deepening and increasing effectiveness of the cooperative activities of the Convention with other international instruments. A third is the effectiveness of the Convention's Strategic Plan in ensuring that activities between COPs are directed within a framework agreed to by the Contracting Parties. The fourth is the continuing trend both within the work of the Convention and more generally to address issues of wetland conservation and wise use in their broadest context. This has meant that much closer attention is being given to the impact upon wetlands of events well beyond their immediate boundaries as well as to social and economic considerations whether they are of immediate or more general impact. At the same time much greater attention is also being paid to the role of wetlands

in the provision of vital social ,economic and ecosystem services at all scales from local to global.

49. These are positive trends which if continued will help secure the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of the Convention

Acknowledgements

50. On behalf of the Standing Committee I wish to record gratitude for the work of all staff of the Bureau of the Convention. My predecessor noted in her report to COP 7 that the Bureau produces great value for little money. I cannot improve on that description except to say that if it was accurate in 1999 it is all the more so today, with the substantially increased number of Contracting Parties as well as other growing demands on the Bureau.
51. In particular I wish to recognise the energy, leadership, skill, expertise and capacity for sheer hard work that has been demonstrated and modelled throughout the Bureau by the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. Contracting Parties owe a great deal to their personal efforts.
52. I also wish to record the appreciation of Standing Committee for the great volume and quality of the work of the Chair and members of the STRP. Their skills and dedication have contributed greatly to many of the draft Resolutions now before the COP for consideration.
53. I thank all members of Standing Committee and the many observers who have attended and contributed to its meetings since COP7. Your willingness to work closely with each other, to constructively address issues of importance to the Convention and constantly seek to advance the effectiveness of Ramsar in the conservation and wise use of the earth's wetlands has made my job as Chair both easy and enjoyable. I am honoured to have been able to serve in this role
54. Finally I pay special tribute to the Secretary General, Delmar Blasco. I believe he has made an extraordinary personal and professional contribution to the Ramsar Convention. He has been a fine leader of the Bureau, a strong and conscientious servant of the Contracting Parties, and a source of vision for the conservation and wise use of the world's wetlands.

Stephen Hunter
Chair
Standing Committee

Annex 1

Procedure and timetable for the selection of the new Secretary General

The timetable

1. The contract of the Secretary General, Delmar Blasco, expires on 31 July 2003. The new Secretary General should commence duty, if at all possible, by Monday 21 July 2003, in order to provide for a handover period of nine working days.
2. Thus, the timetable for the selection process shall be as follows:
 - a) announcement of the vacancy: 1 April 2002
 - b) closing date for applications: 30 September 2002
 - c) initial consideration of the applications by the First Selection Panel (see below): October 2002
 - d) finalization of the short list of candidates to be interviewed: 26 November 2002 (during COP8)
 - e) interviews by the Second Selection Panel (see below): 4-5 February 2003, [Note: new dates proposed are 24-25 February 2003] immediately before the first meeting of the Standing Committee elected by COP8
 - f) formal consideration of the recommendation of the Second Selection Panel at the Standing Committee meeting of February 2003.
3. In particular this timetable seeks to take into account the following:
 - sufficient time to attract a good field;
 - an allowance of at least three months for a successful candidate to take up duty at the Bureau;
 - appropriate transition arrangements in recognition of the fact that a new Standing Committee will be in place following COP8;
 - an opportunity for formal signoff of an appointment by Standing Committee; and
 - maximum use of existing scheduled meetings (COP8 and Standing Committee in February 2003) as an opportunity for selection Panel meetings in order to contain costs.

Search procedure

4. The vacancy announcement shall be sent by diplomatic note to all Contracting Parties, posted on the Ramsar Web site, and circulated as an insert in the Ramsar Newsletter, currently with some 5,000 addressees on its mailing list.
5. In addition, members of the Standing Committee and all Contracting Parties are encouraged to identify suitable candidates and approach them with an invitation to apply for the position.

Selection procedure

A First Selection Panel

6. At its meeting on 3-7 December 2001 the Standing Committee shall agree the composition of a First Selection Panel responsible for the shortlisting of candidates. This First Selection Panel shall be composed of the Standing Committee Chair, the Vice Chair, the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, and one Regional Representative from each of the six Ramsar Regions, as follows: for Africa, Algeria; for Asia, Japan; for Europe, France; for the Neotropics, Argentina; for North America, Canada, with Oceania represented by the Chair of the SC. The Secretary General shall be an *ex-officio* member to assist the Panel in its work.

Note: Canada will continue to represent the North American region in the second selection panel (see below) as well.

7. To assist the shortlisting process, a form to evaluate the applications shall be prepared by the Secretary General with inputs from members of the first selection panel and approved by the Chair. By 15 October 2002, the Secretary General shall circulate the applications received to all members of the Panel, with a recommendation as to the applicants to be further considered and those who should be eliminated.
8. Each Panel member shall be asked to fill out the forms and return them to the Secretary General by courier by 30 October 2002. The SG shall then circulate all the evaluation forms to all members by 15 November 2002.
9. Based upon the evaluations by Panel members, the Chair shall then submit to the Panel his proposal for short-listing. The Panel could then meet at appropriate times for two or three evenings during Ramsar COP8 to finalize the short list of candidates, which in principle should be limited to five in order to keep the interview process focused and to limit travel costs of candidates to be met by the Convention. If need be, the Panel shall hold a final meeting after the close of Ramsar COP8 on 26 November 2002.

Interviews – The Second Selection Panel

10. Under this timetable, short-listed candidates shall be approached during December 2002 and shall be invited for an interview on 4/5 February 2003 [Note: proposed new dates are 24/25 February 2003], at the Ramsar Bureau.
11. Interviews shall be carried out by a Second Selection Panel composed of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee and the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance elected at Ramsar COP8, Regional Representatives of the six Ramsar regions identified by the Chair through appropriate consultations, and the Director General of IUCN.
12. The Chair shall distribute in advance a proposal for how to conduct the interviews. It may be appropriate, for example, to invite each candidate to prepare a 15- to 20-minute presentation on his or her vision of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 that will have been approved by COP8.

Final decision

13. If at all possible the Second Interview Panel shall present its recommendation for the appointment of the new Secretary General to the Standing Committee at its meeting to be

held immediately after the interviews (6-8 February 2003) [Note: The Secretary General has proposed that the Standing Committee meeting be postponed until 26-28 February 2002], so that the appointment can be formally made by the Standing Committee. It would be necessary for the appointment to be considered in closed session by voting members of Standing Committee only.

14. The decision of the Standing Committee shall be communicated to the selected candidate in the week of 10 February 2003. [Note: with the proposed changes of dates, this should be done in the first week of March 2002.] All Contracting Parties shall be informed by diplomatic notification as soon as the Bureau has received written acceptance of the job offer.