

**“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**

## **Resolution VIII.45**

### **Operation of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the effectiveness of Ramsar Convention Resolutions and Recommendations**

1. RECALLING General Objective 8 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002 of the Convention, which states that “the operation of the Conference of the Parties and of Ramsar subsidiary bodies and mechanisms . . . will be kept under review to ensure that they function as effectively as possible”, that “resources will be sought to guarantee the efficient operation of these mechanisms”, and that “new mechanisms may be required at international and at national level to promote more effective implementation of the Convention”;
2. ALSO MINDFUL of Action 8.1.1 of the Strategic Plan 1997-2002, which directs the following: “Reorganise, as of the 7<sup>th</sup> COP (1999), the meeting into a business session, focusing upon administrative matters, and a technical session, focusing upon wetland conservation and wise use priorities, with smaller working groups as required”;
3. AWARE that the growth in the number of Contracting Parties, expansion of the issues addressed by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), and the mainstreaming of wetland conservation and wise use into a range of sectors has re-emphasized the need to streamline the operations of the Conference of the Parties;
4. RECOGNIZING that 121 Resolutions and Recommendations have been adopted by COPs 6, 7 and 8;
5. CONSCIOUS AND CONCERNED that the efforts of drafting, considering and adopting these Resolutions and Recommendations require deliberate and differing actions, time and significant cost to the Contracting Parties, the STRP, Standing Committee and the Ramsar Bureau;
6. RECOGNIZING the importance of the regional networks and regional debate fora in the Ramsar context, prior to the hosting of meetings of Conference of the Contracting Parties, in advancing discussions and, thus, facilitating consensus;
7. AWARE that Resolutions deal with different subjects, which can be broadly categorised as technical, administrative, or concerning interpretation of the Convention;
8. ALSO CONSCIOUS that to date there has been no global review to ascertain the utility and effectiveness of these COP decisions; and

9. AWARE of the need to optimise the use of time during COPs, and CONSCIOUS of the relevance that procedural aspects have in this regard;

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10. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to undertake, as one of its highest priorities, a general review of the effectiveness of the process of drafting, considering, adopting and implementing Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
11. DIRECTS that this review focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention, from a broad perspective rather than on a country by country basis;
12. DIRECTS the Standing Committee, based upon this review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the process of drafting, considering, adopting and implementing Resolutions and Recommendations, to prepare and circulate to Parties in a timely manner a report and recommendations on this matter, including possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure, to be considered at COP9;
13. AGREES that for COP9, draft Resolutions should be considered for division by the Standing Committee into two categories, including:
  - a) draft technical resolutions, providing technical guidance for the implementation of the Convention; and
  - b) other draft resolutions, including on, *inter alia*, administrative, procedural, and policy issues.
14. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to identify, as a high priority, those technical tasks included in the Work Plan of the STRP which could lead to draft technical resolutions to be considered at the next COP;
15. AGREES that those draft technical resolutions should be:
  - a) drafted by the STRP;
  - b) provided to STRP national focal points with a minimum of 60 days to comment;
  - c) developed to allow time for networking among Parties during consideration;
  - d) reviewed by the STRP for endorsement by the Standing Committee after preparation; and
  - e) sent to COP for endorsement and final approval.
16. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to submit draft technical resolutions and other draft resolutions to the Standing Committee before their consideration at the COP;
17. ALSO ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to submit proposals for draft technical resolutions, as referred to in paragraph 15 above, to the Bureau at least 120 days before the commencement of the COP, noting that nothing in this Resolution will prejudice the right of any Contracting Party to submit any proposals according to the Rules of Procedure;
18. REQUESTS the Standing Committee to analyse, report and provide recommendations on possibilities to improve the efficiency of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties; and

19. RECOMMENDS that in preparing the agenda and programme for future COPs the Standing Committee, host country and Bureau endeavour to maximise the wise use of time on the agreed agenda for Convention business, including reports previously circulated as conference documents.