

Information paper by Austria, with support from other European countries, for consideration at SC 37:

Proposal for

Draft resolution X.x on The Frequency of Ordinary Meetings of the Conference of Parties (COP)

1. Background

- 1.1 Limits in capacity and budget at Secretariat and member state level.
- 1.2 Need for better implementation of the Convention in the regions and on national level.
- 1.3 If COP-resolutions are taken seriously, there is a need for more time to prepare them and to implement them properly at national and regional level.

2. Frequency of COP

- 2.1 Frequency of COPs shall be extended from 3 to 4 years.
- 2.2 Formal Regional meetings shall take place between the COPs every 4 years, e.g. mid-way through the 4 year cycle, to review in particular regional implementation level
- 2.3 Standing Committee meetings continue to take place every year, providing a good opportunity for CPs to meeting on international level constantly.

3. Advantages

- 3.1 New frequency makes better use of capacity and budget in Secretariat and member states.
- 3.2 Raises importance of Standing Committee and regional representation of CPs. Adapts character of regional meetings to regional needs.
- 3.3 Enhances importance of National Ramsar Committees for implementation.
- 3.4 4-years COP - frequency relieves Secretariat and CPs from serious work burden in the year of the COP (National Reporting, drafting activities,...).
- 3.5 CPs receive every 2 years an opportunity to attend an international Ramsar meeting - instead of every 3 years as it is now.

4. Implications

- 4.1 The convention text, Article 6, states that "COP meetings shall be convened on intervals of not more than three years unless the COP decides otherwise.." So a shift to a 4-year COP cycle could be made by adoption of a COP 10 resolution on this matter.
- 4.2 Strategic Plan could be made for 8 years instead for 6
- 4.3 Core budget would be adapted for 4 year period