

Agenda item 7

Report on preparations for COP11

Action requested: The Standing Committee is invited to take note of progress with preparations for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) since SC40. An updated report, based on the results of the agenda of the meeting of the Subgroup on COP11 on 27 April 2010, with concrete requests to Standing Committee, will be provided under agenda item 7 in the plenary session.

1. During its 40th Meeting in May 2009, Standing Committee took Decision SC40-1 which “established a Subgroup on COP11, with Romania as its Chair and including one SC member or designated substitute from each region. The members chosen to serve are, for Africa Uganda; for Asia, Lebanon; for Europe, Croatia; for the Neotropics, Panama; for North America, [Canada]; and for Oceania, Marshall Islands, as well as the Chair of the STRP.”
2. The Subgroup met briefly and went through the draft Memorandum of Understanding concerning COP11, with the benefit of advice from Romania (host of COP11) and Uganda (host of COP9). Based on this, Standing Committee “endorsed the draft Memorandum of Understanding to be negotiated further between the Secretariat and Romania, the host country” through Decision SC40-30.
3. Romania noted during SC40 (cf. paragraph 39 of the meeting report) that the Ministry of Environment will organize an interministerial working group for the purpose of organizing and hosting COP11. Romania will use this opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of wetland conservation and the benefits of wetlands for Romanian communities. Regional cooperation among Black Sea countries and cross-border cooperation will be highlighted. The COP will be hosted in the capital city Bucharest, in the Palace of Parliament.
4. To follow up on these statements, and to establish close working relationship with the Romanian authorities, the Secretariat visited the venue of COP11, i.e. the Palace of Parliament buildings in Bucharest, and had a meeting in the Ministry of Environment with a delegation headed by State Secretary Doru Laurian Bădulescu on 25 September 2009. After the change of Government in late 2009, the Secretariat had another meeting in the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forestry on 15 February 2010, with the new Minister László Borbély.
5. At this meeting it was agreed that Romania aims to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat concerning COP11 in early April 2010, after clarification of possibly remaining minor issues. Minister Borbély assured the Secretariat

that he will set up an interministerial committee to work on the preparation for COP11, and that the Romanian delegation to SC41 will report on progress with this.

6. Following up on the suggestion to narrow the date range for COP11 (cf. paragraph 181 of the report of SC40), Romania suggested an early date after Easter holidays, possibly already in early May 2012, in order to avoid overlap with local elections in Romania in June.
7. The need to find a theme for COP11 was evoked and the wish expressed that this be consistent with the theme of World Wetlands Day 2012, possibly addressing “wetlands and tourism”. The issue was however deferred to the Subgroup on COP11, meeting on 27 April 2010 prior to SC41.
8. Romania proposes that the meeting of the Subgroup on COP11 deal with the following issues, the results of which will be reported to the plenary session of SC41:
 - update on the signature of the MoU (signed MoU will be provided in DOC. SC41-14)
 - introductory report by Romania to the Subgroup on progress with the establishment of the interministerial organization committee, including Ramsar International Organization Partners and NGOs willing to contribute to the success of COP11
 - proposed dates for COP11
 - proposed theme for COP11 and World Wetland Day 2012
 - proposed structure for COP11, in terms of duration, plenary vs. technical and regional sessions
 - proposed ceremony for the Ramsar Award/Evian Special Prize (details in DOC. SC41-16)
 - update on proposed regional Ramsar meetings in preparation of COP11.