

## Guidance to Contracting Parties for providing their input on COP information documents

**Action requested.** The Standing Committee is invited to review and comment on the draft advisory note to Parties, and to agree the process for making it available to all Parties in advance of COP11.

1. The Standing Committee will recall its discussion during its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting (SC42) concerning the length of time taken up in plenary sessions of recent meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COPs) on interventions following a) the Report of the Secretary General and b) the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 of the Convention, as well as the associated Draft Resolution on “The Status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance”. It was noted that many of the interventions made by delegates on these items are either factual updates or corrections to the COP Information Papers on these matters, or they provide additional information on general matters of Convention implementation within countries.
2. The Standing Committee pointed out that Information Papers, as the name indicates, are provided to Parties for their information and should not be the subject of negotiation during the proceedings. In order to assist Parties in following an orderly process during COP plenaries, and to make the COP business in plenary sessions as efficient as possible, the Standing Committee adopted Decision SC43-7:

The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to draft an advisory note to Parties to guide streamlining their input to COP informational documents (including the Draft Resolution on the status of Ramsar Sites) in order to save time spent on corrections and comments during plenary sessions and, along with the COP Presidency, to structure and facilitate COP plenary sessions to seek to retain a focus on matters of significant policy and substance relevant to the conservation of wetlands during those sessions.

3. As requested the Secretariat has drafted the attached advisory note to Parties for the Standing Committee’s consideration.
4. In terms of a process for drawing this advisory note fully to the attention of the Contracting Parties in advance of and at each meeting of the COP, the Secretariat suggests that the note be issued as an Information Paper for COP11 and included in the first tranche of COP documents issued three months before the opening of the COP. It may also be helpful, however, to send the note to all Parties and/or all COP delegates separately as well so that all COP participants will be fully aware of its contents.

5. The Standing Committee may wish to consider the desirability of adding text on these matters for adoption in the COP Rules of Procedure at COP11 (DOC. SC43-11).

## **Draft COP11 DOC. xx**

### **Guidance to Contracting Parties for providing their input on COP information documents during COP plenary sessions**

#### **Background**

1. At its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting the Standing Committee considered issues of ensuring the timely and smooth running of plenary sessions during the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP11). The Committee expressed significant concerns that in recent COPs, certain agenda items have led to a very long period of plenary interventions from Parties and other delegates which are essentially addressed to information provided in COP Information Papers.
2. Parties will recall that at COP10 this resulted in the COP running out of plenary time for its consideration of one of the Draft Resolutions (concerning the status of Ramsar Sites) and that the COP President at that time had to request textual amendments from some delegations to be provided in writing to the Secretariat.
3. The agenda items which have led to lengthy plenary sessions in recent COPs are those concerning the 'Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level' and 'Consideration of the Draft Resolutions and Recommendations submitted by Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee' where it concerns the Information Paper 'Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance' and the related Draft Resolution on 'The Status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance'. The guidance provided below should be understood to apply, however, to all matters treated in Information Papers for COP11.
4. Contracting Parties and other delegates are reminded that Information Papers for the COP are provided to Parties for their information only and should not be the subject of negotiation during the meeting.
5. In order to facilitate the smooth running of COP11 in this regard, "the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to draft an advisory note to Parties to guide streamlining their input to COP informational documents (including the Draft Resolution on the status of Ramsar Sites) in order to save time spent on corrections and comments during plenary sessions and, along with the COP Presidency, to structure and facilitate COP plenary sessions to seek to retain a focus on matters of significant policy and substance relevant to the conservation of wetlands during those sessions" (Decision SC42-7).

6. This advice from the Standing Committee, adopted through Decision [SC43-xx], is provided below. Contracting Parties and other COP11 delegates are urged to heed and follow this advice on procedures to be followed during COP11 plenary sessions.

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**A) Information Papers in general, including the “Report of the Secretary General and overview of the implementation of the Convention at the global level”**

7. Parties should limit their interventions during plenary to matters of substance relevant to the agenda items, including matters of substance contained in Information Papers, for example, the Report of the Secretary General.
8. Parties should submit any proposed corrections or amendments concerning factual matters in Information Papers to the Secretariat, in writing (on paper or by e-mail), before or during the COP.
9. The Secretariat will then reflect these proposed corrections and amendments, as appropriate, in corrected versions of the Information Papers made available on the Ramsar website following the COP.

**B) The Information Paper on the “Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance”**

10. Parties should not intervene during plenary sessions merely to update, correct or amend information contained in this Information Paper.
11. Parties should submit any proposed updates, corrections or amendments concerning the status of Ramsar Sites contained in this Information Paper to the Secretariat, in writing (on paper or by e-mail), before or during the COP.
12. The Secretariat will then reflect these proposed updates, corrections and amendments in a “Rev.1 version” of this Information Paper to be made available on the Ramsar website following the COP.

**C. Draft Resolution on “The Status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance”**

13. Parties should refrain from intervening during plenary sessions simply to update, correct or amend factual information contained in this Draft Resolution.
14. Parties are requested to submit any proposed updates, corrections or amendments concerning the status of Ramsar Sites contained in this Draft Resolution to the Secretariat, in writing (on paper or by e-mail), **at least one week prior to the opening of the COP.**
15. The Secretariat will prepare a “Rev.1” of this Draft Resolution, in the three Convention languages, which will be considered by the Standing Committee acting as the Conference Committee for dissemination at the start of the COP.

16. Negotiations during the COP under this agenda item should be addressed exclusively to the content of the Rev.1 version of this Draft Resolution.

**D. The role of the COP President/Alternate President concerning these matters during plenary sessions.**

17. The COP President or Alternate President chairing the plenary session shall call a Party or other delegate to order if he/she considers that an intervention consists only of comments on factual matters contained in an Information Paper for the COP.