

Future administration of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat

Action requested. The Standing Committee is invited to review the two alternative Draft Resolutions provided by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform and consider the next steps to be taken in this matter.

Note by the Secretariat

1. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group to the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee is found in DOC. SC43-06. In that report, it is explained that at its ninth meeting, which took place on 29 June 2011, the Working Group determined that no consensus existed for deciding between the two alternatives under discussion, that is, whether the Ramsar Secretariat should be provided by UNEP or continue to be hosted by IUCN.
2. Accordingly, the Working Group, in seeking to fulfill its commission in Resolution X.5 (2008), has proposed two alternative Draft Resolutions, one for each of those two possibilities, and the two alternative Draft Resolutions are given here, in no priority of order.
3. The report of the Working Group indicates that at its most recent meeting “it was concluded that the main tasks of the WG had been fulfilled according to the mandate of Resolution X.5 and the Decisions SC41-4 and SC42-30, except for the drafting of a COP Resolution for consideration by the Standing Committee”.
4. The Standing Committee is now in a position to consider the results of the Working Group’s investigations and draw its own conclusions as to any further steps to be taken in this matter.

COP11 Draft Resolution XI.xx (alternative 1)

Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat under the administration of UNEP

1. CONFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty deposited with the United Nations and that activities mandated by its Conference of the Parties for the implementation of the Convention are activities carried out under the legal authority of an international treaty and its Contracting Parties;
2. RECALLING the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 by Resolution X.1 as the basis for the future implementation of the Convention;

3. RECALLING Resolution X.5 in which the Conference of the Contracting Parties established an Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform with the objective to recommend efficient and effective measures to improve the capacity and operation of the Ramsar Secretariat to support and facilitate the implementation of the Convention and serve the interests of the Contracting Parties, and whether the Secretariat should continue to be hosted by IUCN or should be institutionally hosted by UNEP;
4. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform and the Standing Committee, as well as to the Ramsar Secretariat, IUCN, and UNEP, for the significant work that has been carried out on this matter;
5. RECOGNIZING the need to successfully conclude the consultative process on this matter and that a decision should be taken at the latest by the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
6. RESOLVING to facilitate the current and future work of the Ramsar Secretariat without further delay;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. DECIDES that the Ramsar Secretariat should be institutionally hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
8. REQUESTS the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention to transmit the Resolution of the Conference of the Contracting Parties on institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat to the Executive Director of UNEP with a request to launch the transformation process as soon as possible;
9. REQUESTS the Secretary General of the Convention to work closely with the Executive Director of UNEP on any necessary expeditious, cost-efficient, and effective arrangements to transfer the Ramsar Secretariat from IUCN to UNEP without undermining the achievement of the goals of the Convention as stated in the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan; and
10. CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties to collaborate, as appropriate, with the Ramsar Secretariat to ensure the smooth transfer of the Ramsar Secretariat from IUCN to UNEP.

COP11 Draft Resolution XI.xx (alternative 2)

Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat under the administration of IUCN

1. CONFIRMING that the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty deposited with the United Nations and that activities mandated by its Conference of the Parties for the implementation of the Convention are activities carried out under the legal authority of an international treaty and its Contracting Parties;
2. RECALLING the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2009-2015 by Resolution X.1 as the basis for the future implementation of the Convention;

3. RECALLING Resolution X.5 in which the Conference of the Contracting Parties established an Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform with the objective to recommend efficient and effective measures to improve the capacity and operation of the Ramsar Secretariat to support and facilitate the implementation of the Convention and serve the interests of the Contracting Parties, and whether the Secretariat should continue to be hosted by IUCN or should be institutionally hosted by UNEP;
4. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform and the Standing Committee, as well as to the Ramsar Secretariat, IUCN, and UNEP, for the significant work that has been carried out on this matter;
5. RECOGNIZING the need to successfully conclude the consultative process on this matter and that a decision should be taken at the latest by the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
6. RESOLVING to facilitate the current and future work of the Ramsar Secretariat without further delay;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

7. DECIDES that the Ramsar Secretariat should continue to be hosted by IUCN;
8. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN to continue to work with the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention to evaluate the successful work already achieved and seek additional ways of improving the current operations of the Secretariat and enhancing the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on an ongoing basis; and
9. CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties to cooperate, as appropriate, with the Secretariat to enhance cooperation and coordination between IUCN and the Convention.