

**Preparation of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
(COP15):
Report of the Secretariat on COP15**

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. take note of this report and the indicative timeline of events and deadlines leading up to COP15; and
- ii. approve the proposed theme and logo for COP15.

Background

1. At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14), Zimbabwe announced its desire to host COP15 in Victoria Falls. Subsequent to this announcement, the Secretariat on 13 December 2022 received official notification from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe's invitation to host COP15.
2. At the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC62) the host country presented its plans and proposed dates for hosting COP15. In Decision SC62-08, "The Standing Committee accepted the proposed dates 23-31 July 2025 for COP15" and, in Decision SC62-09, "The Standing Committee approved the provisional agenda for COP15 with the addition of Wetland City Accreditation as an agenda item."
3. This report provides information on preparations for COP15 that have taken place since SC62.

Progress with preparation for COP15

4. The Secretariat has provided support to the Subgroup on COP15, organizing meetings on 6 September 2023 and 17 January 2024, with the next meeting scheduled for 17 April. During these meetings the host country provided updates on its plans and preparations for COP15 and received feedback and views from Subgroup members on how to organize a successful COP.
5. At the 17 January meeting of the Subgroup, Zimbabwe informed the Subgroup that the host country agreement had been approved by the Public Agreements Advisory Committee on 11 January. Subsequently, the Secretariat and Zimbabwe organized a signing event on 4 March in Harare at which the host country agreement was signed by Hon. Nqobizitha Mangaliso Ndhlovu, Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife and Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention. The event was covered by national and local media and promoted through the

Convention’s communication channels. On the margins of the event, the Secretary General was able to visit several Wetlands of International Importance and meet with national organizations assisting in the planning and hosting of COP15.

6. The proposed theme for COP15, “*Protecting wetlands for our common future*”, was shared with the Subgroup on COP15 at its 17 January meeting. Members of the Subgroup expressed support for the theme and endorsed it for approval by SC63. The host country has developed a proposed logo that will be shared with the Subgroup on COP15 at its meeting scheduled for 17 April. Following review by the Subgroup, a final proposed logo will be presented to SC63 for approval.
7. A COP15 coordination team with representatives from the Secretariat and the host country has been established to oversee ongoing preparations for COP15. This coordination team meets regularly by video conference using the Secretariat’s COP planning and organization timeline to inform discussion and decisions on required actions.
8. A second site visit by the Secretariat is planned for the week of 8 April 2024. The objective of this visit is to further logistical arrangements for the meeting venue, accommodation and the provision of technical services.

Timeline leading up to COP15

9. Table 1 provides an indicative timeline based on the approved dates for COP15. The exact dates for the deadline to submit proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure and for the submission of draft resolutions will depend on the dates selected for SC64. The dates for SC64 will be considered at SC63.

Table 1: Timeline leading up to COP15

| Date | Event |
|------------------------------|--|
| 23-31 July 2025 | 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) |
| April 25 2025 | COP15 documents published |
| March 2025 | Contracting Parties to submit to the Secretariat proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure |
| January 2025 | 64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64) |
| November 2024 | Submission of proposals for draft resolutions |
| December 2024 – January 2025 | Pre-COP regional meetings |

Pre-COP regional meetings

10. The Secretariat is supporting regions in the organization of regional pre-COP meetings. Consultations between the Secretariat and regional representatives are taking place to determine the format, modality and dates for these meetings.