

Report of the Secretariat on the implementation of the Decisions of the Standing Committee

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to note the report prepared by the Secretariat.

Background and introduction

1. At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) in 2002, the Parties adopted Resolution XIV.5 in which, in paragraph 13, the Parties decided *“that the procedure for recording and maintaining the Decisions of the Standing Committee will be decided by the Standing Committee itself, provided that all current and previous Decisions are easily accessible through the website of the Convention”*;
2. As follow-up to this instruction, the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (SC62), in Decision SC62-21, *“agreed to the three-step process outlined in paragraph 23 of document SC62 Doc.15 for maintaining the list of current Decisions of the Standing Committee, with the proviso that older Decisions which are excluded from the list do not become defunct, but remain accessible on the Convention website and can be included in the list if they are identified as still current.”*
3. The Standing Committee at SC63 took note of the report prepared by the Secretariat and confirmed that the two lists of Decisions taken at meetings from SC24 to SC62 found at <https://www.ramsar.org/document/list-standing-committee-decisions-which-have-been-implemented-are-no-longer-effect> and at Annex 1 of document SC63 Doc.8 fulfil the first and second steps of the process approved in Decision SC62-21.
4. Further, in Decision SC63-18, the Standing Committee *“decided that the Decisions identified as “outstanding” will be presented at future meetings of the Standing Committee, as described in paragraph 4 of document SC63 Doc.8, and that Decisions identified as “implemented” will not be presented at future Standing Committee meetings. The Standing Committee recommended that, where appropriate, “outstanding” Decisions be incorporated into future Resolutions such that they can then be considered “implemented” and removed from the list of “outstanding” Decisions.”*
5. The list of outstanding Decisions is included as Annex 1 to the present document. It is comprised of five Decisions or parts of Decisions taken at SC63, three from SC62 and 12 from previous meetings. The Secretariat has noted a proposed action to close or implement each Decision, in some cases by incorporating them into draft resolutions submitted to SC64. In some cases, the Decisions have ongoing effect.

Annex 1

List of outstanding Decisions of the Standing Committee

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC63	2024	Decision SC63-13: The Standing Committee: c. approved the guidance on the Secretariat's role in engaging with Contracting Parties in preparing draft resolutions, and the processes for doing so both before and after SC64, as proposed in paragraphs 7 to 10; d. instructed the Secretariat to follow for COP15 the process for review of draft resolutions applied at COP14, applying logistical refinements as appropriate.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC63	2024	Decision SC63-22: The Standing Committee: - approved the four draft consolidated resolutions found in documents SC63 Doc.16.2, SC63 Doc.16.3, SC63 Doc.16.4 as amended in line with the Committee's discussion, and SC63 Doc.16.5; - instructed the Secretariat to submit the draft consolidated resolutions in documents SC63 Doc.16.2, SC63 Doc.16.4 as amended, and SC63 Doc.16.5 for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its 15th meeting	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC63	2024	Decision SC63-23: The Standing Committee took note of the Report of the CEPA Oversight Panel contained in document SC63 Doc.17.1 and instructed the Panel to continue discussion on the need and value of a new logo, including budget considerations, in consultation with interested Parties and the Secretariat, and to report on progress to SC67.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the current and 2025-2028 triennia.
SC63	2024	Decision SC63-27: The Standing Committee noted the progress of the Secretariat to provide a support mechanism to Contracting Parties in completing national wetland inventories and requested the Secretariat to pursue fundraising activities to amplify the development of the proposed mechanism.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC63	2024	Decision SC63-30: The Standing Committee noted the Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel as presented in SC63 Doc.19 and the comments made by Parties; requested the STRP to undertake scoping and planning for a review of the classification system of wetland type to be implemented as a high priority task in the 2025-2027 triennium; and requested the STRP, working with the Secretariat, to organize a consultation with the earth observation community on development of an initiative to foster dialogue, knowledge exchange and guidance for earth observation in support of wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and conservation.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.

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SC62	2023	Decision SC62-17: The Standing Committee established a Working Group to lead the process to achieve organizational robustness to support the implementation of the Convention, including through the preparation of a draft resolution for the consideration of the Standing Committee at its 63rd meeting.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-37: The Standing Committee noted the actions listed in paragraphs 15, 17, 18 and 19 of document SC62 Doc 8.2 to continue encouraging the payment of annual contributions by the Contracting Parties.	Incorporated into the draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters: see paragraphs 17 and 18 of the draft resolution in document SC64 Doc.9.3.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-50: The Standing Committee requested the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to discuss the application of the current Ramsar wetland classification system at its 26th meeting and to report back to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, including if required the outline of a proposed approach for a technical review in consultation with Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and other multilateral environmental agreements, and requested the STRP to consider the use of a survey of STRP National Focal Points to collate technical feedback on the classification system from different regions.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC59	2021	Decision SC59-25: The Standing Committee noted with concern the challenges caused by the timing of the arrival of the audited financial statements, which results in the late delivery of finance-related documents and prevents compliance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, and requested the Secretary General to take the measures necessary to ensure that all non-audit-related financial documents, especially those that are related to requests for additional funds, are circulated in accordance with Rule 10 ahead of the meetings of the Subgroup of Finance in order to facilitate adequate and appropriate consideration of all budgetary matters.	Ongoing.
SC57	2019	Decision SC57-38: The Standing Committee [...] approved the following actions: a. to adopt the use of the standard terms “core” and “non-core” to describe Ramsar funds; b. to agree to engage with the auditor in its annual meetings, looking at the most cost-effective way, including virtual participation, or by sharing the auditor’s report at least three months in advance of the meeting (or earlier), in accordance with the Rules of Procedure on meeting documents; and c. to request the Secretariat to collect and share questions from members of the Subgroup by email in advance and collect answers from the auditor in time for the meeting.	Ongoing.

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SC57	2019	Decision SC57-50: In accordance with the responsibilities defined in Resolution 5.2 on Financial and budgetary matters, Annex, 3, paragraph 8, the Standing Committee agreed that uncommitted/unexpended balances for budget lines can be carried forward to the next year within the triennium and presented to the following meeting of the Subgroup on Finance.	Incorporated into the draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters: see paragraph 25 of the draft resolution in document SC64 Doc.9.3.
SC53	2017	Decision SC53-22: The Standing Committee decided that its future meetings would continue to be held in Gland, and welcomed the offer of Switzerland to work with the Secretariat to consider the feasibility of a visit to a Swiss Ramsar Site at a future meeting, without drawing on core budget funds.	Ongoing.
SC43	2011	Decision SC43-8: In order to streamline the process of replacing members of the CEPA Oversight Panel when necessary, the Standing Committee decided that, if one of the CEPA National Focal Points leaves during the first half of the triennium in which she or he has been elected, the Secretariat should select a replacement based on the nominations received for the triennium without regard to the maintenance of regional balance.	Superseded by the new arrangements described in Annex 2 to the draft resolution on CEPA in document SC64 Doc.15.2.
SC42	2011	Decision SC42-8: The Standing Committee determined that the election of the new SC should be conducted early in the COP proceedings to allow time for the new members to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The SC determined that the pre-COP regional meetings should begin to identify their new representatives for COP appointment to the Standing Committee and complete their nominations during the regional meetings just before the opening of the COP; following the election of the new SC members, they will be charged with participating as observers in the meetings of the Conference Committee throughout the COP, and will take over as the new Standing Committee at the close of the COP.	Incorporated into the draft resolution on roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee: see paragraphs 6 and 9 of Annex 1 to document SC64 Doc.13.
SC42	2011	Decision SC42-32: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue discussions with Switzerland on options for the future in regard to its permanent observer status and to continue to seek legal advice for interpretation of the Rules of Procedure with regard to the Standing Committee's practices.	Ongoing.
SC40	2009	Decision SC40-4: The Standing Committee agreed that a general principle should be to establish continuity (past Chairs, etc.) in all Standing Committee subgroups, in particular the Subgroups on Finance and on the COP.	Incorporated into the draft resolution on roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee: see paragraph 8 of Annex 1 to document SC64 Doc.13.

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		For the STRP Oversight Committee, the former Chair of Standing Committee should be added, and for the CEPA Oversight Panel, the former Vice-Chair of Standing Committee should be added to achieve this continuity – but because, for these two groups, a COP decision will be needed to formally introduce these additions, it would be valuable to initiate this during the current cycle as “ex officio” roles, provided there are no additional cost implications.	Implemented regarding the STRP Oversight Committee: Resolution XII.5 instructs the Management Working Group of the Standing Committee to take over the role of the STRP Oversight Committee, and Resolution IX.24 determines that the former Chair of Standing Committee is a member of the MWG.
SC34	2006	Decision SC34-2: The Standing Committee noted the report of the February 2006 IOPs/Secretariat meeting and encouraged the Secretariat and IOPs to institutionalize similar meetings on an annual basis. The SC urged the IOPs to establish direct contacts with the Parties’ National Focal Points and to collaborate with one another when more than one is located in a Party, and it encouraged the Parties to include local officers of the IOPs in their National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees. The SC also urged SC members to explain the role of the IOPs in Ramsar to other officials in their governments. The SC urged the IOPs to assist the Parties, where appropriate, in implementing the Ramsar/CBD Joint Work Plan, and it invited the IOPs to report regularly to the SC on their relevant activities.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into a future draft resolution
SC30	2004	Decision SC30-9: The Standing Committee recognized the value of mid-term meetings of regional groupings of Parties and pre-accession countries and adopted as a goal that there should be at least one intersessional meeting of each regional grouping in each triennium. The SC recommended that proposed meetings should be the responsibility of a country or countries in the regional grouping concerned to organize, with the Bureau, and that the purpose of the meeting and the issues to be discussed be kept flexible so as to meet the priority issues and needs of the countries concerned. Opportunities should be sought to capitalize on other relevant meetings taking place in the region. The Bureau will provide advice to organizing countries and participate in any such meetings as appropriate.	Incorporated into the draft resolution on roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee: see paragraph 5 of Annex 3 to document SC64 Doc.13.

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC26	2001	<p>Decision SC26-40: The Standing Committee decided that, when not otherwise established by Resolutions of the Conference of Contracting Parties, the allocation of funds by the Bureau for sponsored delegates to Ramsar meetings shall be as follows:</p> <p>a) funds should be directed first to one delegate from each Ramsar Contracting Party in the UN list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs);</p> <p>b) additional funds should be allocated to one delegate from Contracting Parties that are developing countries and countries with economies in transition;</p> <p>c) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from LDCs; and</p> <p>d) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.</p>	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into a future draft resolution
SC25	2000	<p>Decision SC25-28: The Standing Committee decided that:</p> <p>a) the OECD/DAC List of Aid Recipients should continue to be used, mutatis mutandis as applying to Ramsar Contracting Parties and other countries eligible for accession, for eligibility for SGF as established by Resolution VI.6;</p> <p>b) the Bureau, when allocating assistance for participating at Ramsar meetings, should use the OECD/DAC list in the following order of priorities:</p> <p>i) Contracting Parties in Part I of the List;</p> <p>ii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: Central and Eastern European Countries and New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; and</p> <p>iii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: More advanced Developing Countries and Territories;</p> <p>c) the Bureau should prepare a report on the regulations and practice applied on this matter by other environment-related conventions for consideration at the next Standing Committee meeting and possible transmission with recommendations to COP8.</p>	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into a future draft resolution.