**12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**Punta del Este, Uruguay, 1-9 June 2015**

**Resolution XII.1**

**Financial and budgetary matters**

1. RECALLING the budgetary provisions established by paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 6 of the Convention on Wetlands;
2. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the prompt payment by the majority of Contracting Parties of their contributions to the core budget of the Convention, but NOTING WITH CONCERN that a number of Parties still have significant outstanding contributions (COP12 DOC.15 Rev1);
3. NOTING WITH GRATITUDE the additional voluntary financial contributions made by many Contracting Parties through their Ramsar Administrative Authorities and other agencies, including some development assistance agencies, and also the contributions made by non-governmental organizations and private companies for activities undertaken by the Secretariat, but NOTING WITH CONCERN the continuing decline in such voluntary contributions;
4. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the financial and administrative services provided to the Secretariat by IUCN, underpinned by the Services Agreement between Ramsar and IUCN revised in 2009;
5. NOTING that Contracting Parties have been kept informed of the financial situation of the Secretariat through the audited annual financial statements for the years from 2011 to 2014 and the reports of the Standing Committee meetings in 2012, 2013 and 2014; and
6. RECOGNIZING the need to continue to strengthen financial partnerships with relevant international organizations and other entities and to explore additional funding opportunities through their existing financial mechanisms;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. ACKNOWLEDGES that since the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP11) in 2012 the Secretariat has managed the Convention’s funds prudently, efficiently and openly;
2. EXPRESSES ITS GRATITUDE to the Contracting Parties that have served in the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee during the past cycle, and in particular to Canada, which has acted as Chair of the Subgroup;
3. DECIDES that the Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 (1993) shall be applied *in toto* to the 2016-2018 cycle;
4. FURTHER DECIDES that the Subgroup on Finance, as established by Resolution VI.17, is to continue to operate under the aegis of the Standing Committee and with the roles and responsibilities specified in that Resolution;
5. NOTES that CHF 115,000 of 2013-2015 reserve funds was used to sponsor eligible COP12 delegates in order to ensure all parties could participate effectively; and FURTHER NOTES that this does not represent a precedent for the Convention and is seen as a one-time special exception to the normal practice given the global economic climate and the difficulty in securing voluntary funds from Contracting Parties and other external sources;
6. REQUESTS the Secretary General to continue efforts to solicit external funds to repay the funds used from the reserve under these extraordinary circumstances and to report back at future meetings of the Subgroup on Finance on progress in this regard; and FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretary General to ensure that COP13 delegate sponsoring is a priority for fund-raising to avoid this situation in the future;
7. NOTES that the 2016-2018 budget includes a core element funded by contributions from Contracting Parties, prepared on the basis that there are no fundamental changes to the operation of the Secretariat during 2016-2018, and a non-core unfunded element to be financed by voluntary contributions, and APPROVES the combined budget for the 2016-2018 cycle as attached in Annex 1 to enable the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention;
8. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to revise core budgetary allocations between budget lines in the light of significant positive or negative changes during the cycle to costs, rates of inflation, interest and tax income projected in the budget, without increasing the contributions of Parties or increasing the charges paid to IUCN above the budgeted 13% maximum;
9. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to revise non-core budgetary allocations and priorities depending upon the success of the Secretariat in securing voluntary funding for these activities;
10. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to the core budget (other than those making only voluntary contributions) should be in accordance with the scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly, which for those only paying voluntary contributions is applied on an indicative basis, and except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale, could make annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention core budget of less than CHF 1,000, in which case the annual contribution will be that amount;
11. URGES all Contracting Parties to pay their contributions promptly by 1 January of each year, or as soon thereafter as that country’s budget cycle will permit;
12. URGES Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to make a renewed effort to settle them as expeditiously as possible to enhance the financial sustainability of the Convention through contributions by all Contracting Parties, and REQUESTS the Secretariat to contact Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions in excess of three years and work with them to identify appropriate options and actions for addressing the situation and initiating a plan for making payment of contributions, and to report back to each Standing Committee meeting and meeting of the Conference of the Parties on activities taken in this regard and results achieved;
13. NOTES with concern the continued decline in voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties and URGES Contracting Parties and others to seek to reverse this trend in order to fund the important non-core element of the 2016-2018 combined budget, and WELCOMES voluntary contributions from any donor for activities not mentioned in Annex 3, but which support the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
14. REQUESTS that the Secretariat continue to develop new approaches and tools, including signature initiatives, as appropriate, to secure voluntary financial support for currently unfunded priority projects, as listed in Annex 3;
15. REAFFIRMS its conviction that the Convention’s Small Grants Fund is of great value in terms of the implementation of the Convention, and URGES Parties and others to find CHF 1,000,000 over the next triennium (Annex 3) to secure the efficient operation of this programme;
16. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee review the operation of the programme during the triennium and definitively conclude whether the Parties should continue or cease the Small Grants Fund for the consideration of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
17. EXPRESSES GRATITUDE to the governments of Switzerland and the United States of America and to the Danone and MAVA Foundations for their voluntary contributions to non-core activities of the Convention; namely, the Swiss Grant for Africa, Wetlands for the Future, World Wetlands Day, and the Ramsar Culture Network, respectively;
18. REAFFIRMS the decision taken at COP11 (Resolution X1.2) that the Reserve Fund:

a. provides for unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures;

b. receives realized core budget surpluses (or is applied to deficits);

c. should not be lower than 6% of the annual core budget of the Convention and not greater than 15%;

d. should be administered by the Secretary General with the approval of the Subgroup on Finance as established by the Standing Committee;

1. REQUESTS the Secretariat to endeavour to maintain the Reserve Fund over the 2016-2018 triennium in accordance with this budget and to report annually to the Standing Committee on the status and propose to its Subgroup on Finance for its concurrence prior to any uses of the Fund;
2. APPROVES the staffing table for the Secretariat in terms of staff numbers and position (according to the IUCN Human Resources Function Group) for the triennium, as contained in Annex 4, and NOTES that any requested changes to staff numbers or function group of staff is to be discussed with the Executive Team for its concurrence;

27. REQUESTS that the Secretary General does not use consultants on a regular basis as a way of delivering core Secretariat functions and that all consultants are used for very short-term, fixed tasks deemed necessary to deliver on the implementation of the Convention, and FURTHER REQUESTS that anything beyond this normal practice be discussed with the Executive Team;

1. REQUESTS the Secretariat to utilize the UN Conference on Trade and Development’s list of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) when determining eligibility for sponsorship for delegate travel and to consider SIDS as eligible for support whether or not they are formally classified as such on economic grounds in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list;
2. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to ensure that COP13 is prepared in such a way as to enable negotiations on the draft resolutions to commence as early as possible and no later than the afternoon of the first day of COP; and
3. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to make all efforts to ensure that revised draft resolutions are translated into all official languages during COP13 to enable full and effective participation by all delegations.

**Annex 1 Combined budget for 2016-2018**

**Annex 2 Illustrative core budget contributions by Contracting Party for 2016-2018**

**Annex 3 Analysis of 2016-2018 budgeted non-core items, in order of priority**

**Annex 4 Approved Secretariat staff (core) for 2016-2018**

**Annex 1**

**Combined budget for 2016-2018**



**Annex 2**

**Illustrative core-budget contributions by Contracting Party for 2016-2018**



\* Revised UN Scale will be applied, when released.

\*\* As previously, 22% of total contributions from Parties.



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**Annex 3**

**Analysis of 2016-2018 budgeted non-core items, in order of priority**



**Annex 4**

**Approved Secretariat staff (core) for 2016-2018**



\*2015 staff numbers and position (according to the IUCN Human Resources Function Group) shown for reference.

\*\*Team refer to the categorization of Expenditures as listed in Annex 1: Secretariat Senior Management (ASMGT); Partnership Coordinator (BPART); Regional Advice and Support (CREGS); Scientific and Technical Services (ESTRP); Communications (FCOMM); Administration/RSIS/Web (GADMI).