



**Regional consultation in Asia/Oceania in preparation for the 14th meeting
of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands
Online, 4-5 April 2022, 08:00 to 11:00 CEST**

Summary report

4 April 2022

Agenda item 1. Welcome to the meeting

1. Bhutan, as a regional representative, welcomed Asian and Oceanian Contracting Parties to the Convention and highlighted that the purpose of this regional preparatory meeting was to discuss the upcoming 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and ensure Parties understand how the COP will be organized and to provide an opportunity to have a regional discussion on the draft resolutions that have been submitted.
2. The Secretary General welcomed the Parties and provided an overview of the ongoing work by Standing Committee, its working groups, STRP and the Secretariat support to these activities and the Parties. She emphasized the importance of this regional meeting in building regional consensus in preparation for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda item 2. Election of the Chair of the meeting

3. At the nomination by Japan, and seconded by Australia and the Republic of Korea, the Parties elected Bhutan to chair this Asia/Oceania regional consultation meeting.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the agenda

4. The provisional agenda of the meeting was presented and approved by consensus.

Agenda item 4. Review of the status of implementation of the Convention and establishment of priorities for the new triennium including priorities for the STRP.

5. The Secretariat presented the Global Report on the implementation of the Convention to COP13 based on national reports submitted by Contracting Parties.
6. The Secretariat stressed that the progress in implementing the Convention's Strategic Plan 2016-2024 is assessed from the National Reports Parties have submitted following Rules 9a and 26.3 of the Rules of Procedure. The Secretariat further informed the Parties that the global implementation report of the Convention for the triennium 2018-2021 is under preparation and

will be presented at the COP14 and encouraged those Parties who have not submitted their national reports to do so as soon as possible.

7. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) presented the STRP's work plan and proposed priorities for the next triennium (2023-2025). The STRP Chair outlined the significant outputs and achievements of the STRP over the triennium 2019-2021, including a special edition of the Global Wetlands Outlook, the Ramsar Briefing Notes and Technical Reports.
8. China commended the STRP's work plan for the next triennium, in particular, works on climate change and its impact on wetland and will be guided by discussions on the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Agenda item 5. Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee regional representatives, National Focal Points and STRP Focal Points.

9. The Secretariat presented on responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention based on Resolution XIII.4.
10. Some Standing Committee members shared their experience as regional representatives. Australia shared its experience as a regional representative, overcoming challenges in the past several years due to the pandemic and looked forward to meeting face to face in the future.
11. Chair shared Bhutan's experience as a regional representative and invited newly joined Contracting Parties to consider serving as a regional representative as this role and responsibility provide valuable experience in understanding and contributing to the processes of the Convention.
12. The Secretary-General highlighted to Parties the important role regional representatives play in the working of the Convention.

Agenda item 6. Nominations of regional representatives to the Standing Committee for the next triennium.

13. Chair informed the Parties that there will be one and a half day of regional consultation after the opening of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and invited Parties to initiate the national consultation process in order to be ready to indicate their interest in nomination for the regional representatives for the next triennium.

Agenda item 7. The accreditation process for COP14

14. The Secretariat provided a detailed overview of generating and submitting credentials by Contracting Parties as outlined by Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure for the Convention on Wetlands meetings.
15. The Secretariat further informed the Parties that a Diplomatic Note will be issued in July, updating all Parties on the registration process and other relevant information concerning the COP14. Parties needing further information or who have any questions in regard to credentials should send a query to the Secretariat through the dedicated email address: sc@ramsar.org.

16. Australia reminded the Parties of the challenges with accreditation process for the 3rd Extraordinary COP and the importance of the timely submission of credentials following the guidance provided.

Agenda item 8. Discussion of the draft resolutions
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17. The Secretariat informed the Contracting Parties that thirty draft resolutions were received by the submission deadline. Of the thirty draft resolutions, six were prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Parties, six by Subsidiary Bodies and Working Groups, and eighteen by Parties.
18. The Secretariat introduced the document SC59/2022 Doc. 8.3 Budget Scenarios for 2023-2025 and draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters. Japan asked when information on financial implications of submitted draft resolutions and on residuals from the budget will be available. The Secretariat responded that financial implication of submitted draft resolutions and audited financial statements¹ will be available as soon as possible.
19. The Secretariat introduced the documents SC59 Doc.13.1 Draft Resolution on “Process for the review and consolidation of Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference of the Parties, and Doc.13.3 Draft consolidated resolution on “Consolidation of valid Resolutions on Inventories”.
20. Australia and Japan highlighted the inconsistencies between the report and DR prepared by the Secretariat on retiring resolutions (Docs SC59-13, SC59-13.1 and SC59-13.2) and some draft resolutions submitted by Parties. The meeting noted that draft resolution submitted by the Effectiveness Working Group acknowledges the work undertaken to retire outdated resolutions and a process for the Secretariat to support Parties, which includes consolidation of resolutions (Operative Para 9 of Doc SC59.11). New Zealand welcomed the approach by the Secretariat taken on resolutions relating to wetland inventories. The Secretary-General reminded the Parties that these draft resolutions were prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Parties during the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Party and the meeting of the Standing Committee.
21. The Secretariat introduced the document SC59 Doc.15 Draft Resolution on “Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee” and highlighted that the Secretariat will update Annex 2 and 4 . The Secretariat also introduced the document Doc.16 Draft Resolution on “Enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions”.
22. The Secretariat introduced the “Update on the status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance”. The Secretariat also reported on issues raised by Parties of Sites of International Importance in disputed territories.
23. Several Parties expressed their support to discuss during the next meeting of the Standing Committee updated information on the List of Wetlands of International Importance be prepared by the meeting of the Conference of Parties.
24. Australia, as the chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group introduced the “Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Ramsar Convention, additions for the 2022-2024 triennium and key

¹ See: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/report_auditor_ramsar_2021_e.pdf

elements for the fifth Strategic Plan, highlighting the addition of three new thematic annexes and update of Annex 2 for SP4, and the basic elements proposed to inform development of the fifth Strategic Plan.

25. Republic of Korea introduced the Draft Resolution on “Wetland education in the formal education sector” sponsored by the Republic of Korea and co-sponsored by China. Parties expressed its support to this draft resolution and its willingness to explore ways to introduce wetland education in schools.
26. China, introduced the Draft Resolution on “Guidance on conservation and management of small wetlands” noting that it is co-sponsored by the Republic of Korea.

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27. Day 2 of the meeting started with a brief summary of the Chair on the previous day. Contracting Parties continued with the discussion on draft resolutions. The Secretariat introduced the document SC59 Doc.21.1 on Ramsar Regional Initiatives on behalf of Costa Rica – the chair of the Regional Initiatives Working Group. The draft resolution presents the work of the Working Group including a new operational guideline for Ramsar Regional Initiatives and highlighted that some languages are in brackets and need to be addressed in the resumed session of SC59.
28. The Secretariat introduced more in detail the document SC59. Doc.26 on the Draft Resolution on “Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025” submitted by STRP, following up on the presentation on Day 1 by the Chair of STRP on priorities for the next triennium. New Zealand expressed its support for updated thematic areas and Pakistan emphasized the need to find synergies with work of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
29. The United Kingdom introduced the report of the Effectiveness Working Group and a Draft Resolution on the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Ramsar Convention highlighting wide participating of the Working Group in support of the independent consultant report.
30. At the request of Parties, Sweden was invited to introduce documents SC59 Doc.17.1 and Doc.17.2 as the chair of CEPA Oversight Panel as well as seven draft resolutions submitted by Sweden, i.e. SC59 Doc.27.7 on “Ramsar Wetland Awards”, Doc.24.9 on “Ramsar Regional Initiatives – the Basics”, Doc.24.10 on “Ramsar Regional Initiatives – COP14-COP15”, Doc.24.11 on “Ramsar Regional Initiatives – addressing old decisions”, Doc.24.15 on “The Ramsar Convention’s Scientific and Technical work – The basics”, Doc.24.16 on “The Ramsar Convention’s Scientific and Technical bodies COP14-COP15”, Doc.24.17 on “How to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages”, and Doc.24.18 on “Online drafting and preparatory negotiations of documents”.
31. Parties inquired on what is the basis for Sweden in determining the need for these new proposals and the consultation processes involved pointing out some of these changes are drastic. Sweden responded that these are reflection from many years of participation in the Convention including working group meetings.
32. Parties then discussed amongst themselves and expressed the need to use existing working groups mandated by the COP or Standing Committee for resolving issues of the Convention and avoid duplication of work. Several Parties expressed their concerns that a large number of draft

proposals with conflicting views would overwhelm the discussion and hinder efficient exchange of views during the resumed meeting of the Standing Committee, and that efforts should be made to consolidate views before the Standing Committee meeting. There was discussion on how views of the Asia/Oceania region in regard to these draft resolutions can be conveyed to other regional meetings. Based on these comments and recommendations from the parties, the Chair concluded the discussions by taking up the recommendation to start a conversation with the Chair of other regional meetings during the 59 SC meeting.

33. China introduced the draft resolutions on “Integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategy”, which aims to promote ‘wetland-based’ sustainable development. New Zealand pointed that Spain has submitted a Nature-based Solution related draft resolution and asked if there are similarities between these two draft resolutions. China responded that draft resolution submitted by Spain seems focused on climate change while this draft resolution is focused on sustainable development planning.
34. China introduced the Draft Resolution on “Establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the Framework of the Ramsar Convention” which is co-sponsored by Australia, Madagascar and Cambodia (TBC) that aims to create an international cooperation mechanism focused on training and research on Mangrove protection. Australia remarked that a discussion is taking place with China to widen the scope of the work of the centre to tidal flats, seagrass and salt marshes.
35. Republic of Korea introduced the Draft Resolution on “Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention” co-sponsored by Tunisia, Austria & China, which suggests a new operational guideline for Wetland City Accreditation.
36. Australia introduced the Draft Resolution on “Strengthening Ramsar connections through youth” and shared the importance of youth engagement in wetland protection.
37. Australia introduced the draft resolution on “Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates” allowing for the use of alternative data to the Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE) for the application of Criterion 6, where the WPE is out of date and does not reflect the best available scientific information.
38. The Secretariat provided brief introduction of the three remaining draft resolutions on “Guidance on protection management and restoration of Mediterranean wetlands as nature-based solutions to address environmental climate changes”, “Review of Ramsar criteria, and delisting of Ramsar Sites located in territories which are not recognized at the UN level as part of the territory of the submitting”, and “Development of legal indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Ramsar convention”.

Agenda item 9. Inputs to regional meetings at COP14

39. The Secretariat further informed Parties that there would be one and half days for the Regional meetings at the opening of the COP14 in Wuhan, China on 21 and 22 November as an opportunity for Contracting Parties in each region to develop consolidated positions on the draft resolutions. In addition, there will be daily regional meetings.

Agenda item 10. Adoption of the report of the meeting

40. The Chair informed Contracting Parties that the draft report of the meeting would be made available by the Secretariat and encouraged the Parties to review the draft report when it is made available. The final report will be posted on the Convention's website.

Agenda item 11. Closing remarks.

41. The Secretary General expressed gratitude to the Chair for facilitating the meeting and thanked the Contracting Parties who participated.
42. The Chair thanked all Contracting Parties and the Secretariat for the success of the meeting and closed the meeting.

List of Participants

Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Rep. of Korea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu