

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

51st Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 23-27 November 2015

SC51-20

Report on efforts to raise funds for COP12 delegates as per Resolution XII.1

Action requested:

The Subgroup on Finance is invited to review the actions taken by the Secretariat to seek funds for COP12 delegates

Introduction

1. As per custom, the Secretariat has been raising funds to cover the costs associated with travel and accommodation for delegates attending COP12 from countries that are listed on the OECD DAC list of aid recipients.
2. So far, CHF 443,434 has been secured for COP12 sponsored delegates. This compares with CHF 419,912 for COP11 and CHF 446,090 for COP10.
3. In Resolution XII.1 it is stated that the Subgroup on Finance:

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:

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.

4. The Secretariat provides below a summary of the current situation, and the actions taken in an effort to reach the current level of committed funds.

Actions taken prior to COP 12

5. The first letter requesting support to meet the costs of sponsored delegates attending COP 12 was sent to all Contracting Parties on November 20th 2014.
6. Senior Regional Advisors and the Head of Partnerships worked together to carry out extensive and targeted follow up. This included hundreds of logged actions, focused on 26 entities (government and non-government) that had been identified as the most likely to provide support.

Situation as of 31 July 2015

7. To summarize the status of the funds that have already been raised to cover the costs of sponsored delegates for COP12 against a budget of 560,000 CHF:

Table 1: Securing costs of sponsored delegates for COP12 (status as at 31 July 2015)

Funder	Amount Secured CHF
Star Alliance	26,000
Australia	29,660
Austria	5,166
Canada	31,155
Finland	20,604
Germany	10,479
Korea (Republic of)	23,883
Netherlands*	7,500
Norway	63,871
Sweden	55,684
Switzerland (African delegates)	115,000
Secretariat, Project Restricted	
China High Altitude	3,220
UNEP-ROWA	19,771
European RM Surplus	31,442
Subtotal	443,434
Reserve Fund	115,000
Total	558,434

8. The Reserve Fund contribution of CHF 115,000 was essential to bring delegates to COP12, and the Reserve Fund must now be built back up to its usual level. Efforts therefore continue to close the funding gap. A letter from the Secretary General was sent out on 16 July 2015, to initiate this further outreach (see Annex 1).
9. As follow up to the Secretary General's July outreach, the Senior Regional Advisors and Head of Partnerships will proactively raise the question of additional funding through engagement with Contracting Parties.
10. The Netherlands has also made a commitment to provide CHF 7,500 (* also included in the table above) and the Government of Canada has formally confirmed in writing that no additional funding would be provided.

Annex 1

Letter from the Secretary General, July 2015

From the Secretary General

Gland, 16 July 2015
SG2015-224/CHB/CHP/deb

Subject: Ramsar Convention COP 12 Sponsored Delegates Fundraising, Continued Efforts

Dear Contracting Parties,

We are all delighted and extremely grateful to those generous Contracting Parties that have already provided financial support toward the cost of COP 12 Sponsored Delegates, especially those delegates who have benefited so much from the support for your invaluable contributions to the COP. A funding gap however remains of CHF 115,000 between those costs that were budgeted and used, and the funds that have been raised so far. We would like to invite your support to help close this gap. This request is made by the Secretariat on behalf of the Parties, and in direct response to the desire of Standing Committee 50 that efforts to raise funds for sponsored delegates should not diminish or reduce, following COP 12, but continue until the gap is filled.

Therefore, please can you let us know whether there might be any possibility in your government to:

- Increase the level of financial commitment over and above your existing commitment;
- Explore the possibility of funding from any other budgets that might now be available; or
- Search for the first time for some other possible source of support that might be available

The Secretariat has explored with some non-governmental funders the possibility of their providing funds, but this approach has so far not been positively received. We have also sought funds from international and UN organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme and The Commonwealth, but again have been advised that funds for these purposes are not available.

We believe therefore that a good opportunity remains for Contracting Parties of the Convention to look at the possibilities that might be at their disposal even though they are small sums. For your reference, and in case it helps with your own efforts to speak with colleagues or other organisations, we enclose and attach the original letter that was sent out in 2014 to all Contracting Parties with an explanation of the need, and the list of all those Parties and other organizations that have already made a contribution, and the level of support provided.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request,

Yours sincerely,



Christopher Briggs