

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)  
51st Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee  
Gland, Switzerland, 23–27 November 2015

## Decisions of the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 2: Admission of observers

**Decision SC51-01: The Standing Committee admitted the observers listed by the Secretary General.**

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the revised draft agenda

**Decision SC51-02: The Standing Committee approved the revised agenda, subject to the inclusion of items on Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation and on the National Report Format.**

Agenda item 4: Matters arising from Decisions of the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> meetings of Standing Committee

**Decision SC51-03: The Standing Committee took note of the matters arising from Decisions of the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> meetings of Standing Committee as contained in DOC. SC51-02.**

Agenda item 5: Matters arising from COP12 Decisions

**Decision SC51-04: The Standing Committee noted DOC. SC51-03 and asked the Secretariat to take note of the suggestions made regarding format and presentation of meeting documents.**

**Decision SC51-05: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to re-draft DOC. SC51-04 for submission to SC52, taking into account the comments made at the present meeting and any further comments that Parties who had intervened might wish to make.**

**Decision SC51-06: The Standing Committee urged that the Secretariat ensure that the cost implications of draft resolutions be made available to Contracting Parties in advance of the consideration of the draft resolutions, as called for in Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure.**

Agenda item 6: Video report of the Chair of STRP and consideration of STRP work programme, and update on inputs to IPBES

**Decision SC51-07: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to present an amended STRP work plan to SC52, prioritizing tasks and reflecting budgetary constraints, taking into account the comments made and seeking further input from Contracting Parties and their STRP National Focal Points.**

Agenda item 9: Report of the Chair of the Management Working Group *and*  
Agenda item 10: Report of the Chair of the Standing Committee

**Decision SC51-08: The Standing Committee took note of the Management Working Group recommendations, and decided to mandate the Standing Committee Chair to share with the Secretary General the conclusions reached by the Standing Committee during its closed meeting.**

**Decision SC51-09: Based on the decisions taken in this respect the Standing Committee authorized the Executive Team of the Standing Committee to take the necessary steps to implement these conclusions.**

Agenda item 11: Secretariat Work Plans for the 2016-2018 triennium

**Decision SC51-10: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised Secretariat Work Plan for the 2016-2018 triennium, taking into account the comments made, for consideration by SC52.**

Agenda item 12: Report of Ramsar Regional Initiatives in the framework of the Convention and approval of new Initiatives for the period 2016-2018

**Decision SC51-11: The Standing Committee agreed to establish a new Working Group to examine the implications of the proposed new Operational Guidelines for Regional Initiatives and asked the Secretariat to support the setting up of this group.**

**Decision SC51-12: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to complete the assessment of existing Ramsar Regional Initiatives and to support a common communications strategy taking into account the comments made at the meeting.**

**Decision SC51-13: The Standing Committee agreed that a one-day workshop to revise the Operational Guidelines for Regional Initiatives should be held immediately before SC52.**

**Decision SC51-14: The Standing Committee agreed that proposed new Ramsar Regional Initiatives be invited to submit relevant documentation against a checklist of requirements to be provided by the Secretariat for consideration by SC52.**

Agenda item 13: Progress report on the preparation of the National Report Format for COP13

**Decision SC51-15: The Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to amend DOC. SC51-09 on the development of the format for National Reports to COP13, updating it with progress made based upon these comments, and submit the amended version to SC52.**

Agenda item 7: Establishment of the Standing Committee Sub-Group on COP13

**Decision SC51-16: The Standing Committee agreed to establish a Sub-Group on COP13 with the following composition: Australia representing Oceania, Cambodia representing Asia, Canada representing North America, Honduras representing Latin America and the Caribbean, Romania representing Europe, Tunisia representing Africa, United Arab Emirates (Chair) as host country for COP13, and Uruguay as host country for COP12. Other Contracting Parties could serve as observers of the Sub-Group.**

Agenda item 14: Report of the Standing Committee Sub-Group on COP13

**Decision SC51-17: The Standing Committee noted the proposed dates and venue for COP13 and instructed the Secretariat to check that the dates did not clash with those of other important international environmental meetings.**

Agenda item 15: Report on implementation of the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention, and selection of an Independent Advisory Committee

**Decision SC51-18: The Standing Committee noted the presentation on process and proposals for a timeframe to implement the Wetland City accreditation of the Ramsar Convention given at SC51 and agreed that the Secretariat could continue its work along the lines indicated in the presentation.<sup>1</sup>**

Agenda item 16: Progress on implementing Resolution XI.6 on Partnership and synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other institutions to the Standing Committee and plan on how to increase cooperation with other MEAs (DOC. SC51-10) with updates on formal agreements and joint work plans of the Ramsar Convention and partners (DOC. SC51-23 Rev.2 Annexes 2, 3 and 4), and on UNEP's options paper on enhancing synergies between MEAs (SC51 InfDoc.04).

**Decision SC51-19: The Standing Committee decided to defer until SC52 consideration of the new agreements and joint work plans of the Ramsar Convention and partners as set out in Annexes 2 to 6 of DOC. SC51-23 Rev.2.**

**Decision SC51-20: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to pursue renewal of the agreement with Stetson University College of Law and other necessary renewal processes.**

Agenda item 17: Report on CEPA Oversight Panel composition and CEPA Action Plan (DOC. SC51-14 *CEPA Action Plan for the Ramsar Secretariat 2016-2024*) and  
Agenda item 18: Report on preparations for World Wetlands Day 2016 and World Wetlands Themes for 2017 and 2018 (DOC. SC51-15 *World Wetlands Day themes*)

**Decision SC51-21: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to present for consideration at SC52 a shorter, more focused CEPA Action Plan for the Ramsar Secretariat that was more clearly aligned to Resolutions and the Strategic Plan, taking into account any written comments received from Contracting Parties, and including plans for future World Wetlands Day celebrations.**

Agenda item 19: Report of the Sub-Group on Finance

**Decision SC51-22: The Standing Committee adopted the report of the Sub-Group on Finance and the recommendations made in it, and took note of interventions made regarding a possible Regional Officer for Asia. Specifically, the Standing Committee:**

- approved the Sub-Group's proposed reallocation of 2014 surplus funds;
- approved the audited 2014 financial statements as presented in document SC51-18, Annex 1;
- recorded its thanks to all Contracting Parties and partners that had made voluntary contributions in 2015;
- approved the new 2015 income statement presentation for Swiss statutory reporting requirements as required by Swiss law;

<sup>1</sup> The presentation is available on the Ramsar web site at [http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/presentation\\_wetland\\_city\\_accreditation.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/presentation_wetland_city_accreditation.pdf)

- regarding COP12 finances, noted that Uruguay transferred USD 180,000 (CHF 173,118) in June 2015 and thanked Uruguay for the prompt payment;
- instructed the Secretariat to discontinue fundraising for COP12 at the end of 2015 and take the sponsored delegate deficit of CHF 125,000 from the 2014 surplus reallocation;
- instructed the Secretariat to begin fundraising for COP13 from 2016;
- noted the current status of Contracting Parties' outstanding annual contributions, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue to take actions to resolve this and report to SC52;
- noted the actions of the Secretariat since SC48 to reduce the number of outstanding contributions;
- encouraged Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to resolve them with the Secretariat; and
- agreed to changes to the COP12-approved 2016 core budget for a variety of line items, while noting that the overall budget remained the same.

Agenda item 21: Date and venue of the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee

**Decision SC51-23: The Standing Committee decided that the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee would be held in Gland, Switzerland, from 13 to 17 June 2016, and that a one-day meeting on Regional Initiatives would be held in Gland on 12 June 2016.**