

Report and decisions of the 60th meeting of the Standing Committee

Saturday 5 November 2022

08:10 – 09:10 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 1: Opening statements

1. Opening statements were made by:
 - His Excellency Mr Mohamed Al Afkham, Director General Fujairah Municipality, the United Arab Emirates, Chair of the Standing Committee;
 - Dr Wu Zhimin, Director General, Department for Wetland Management, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the representative of the Host Country.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda

2. The **Chair** introduced document SC60 Doc.2 *Provisional agenda*.
3. **Sweden** suggested adding an item on “any other business”, noting, in response to a question by **Algeria**, the submission of an additional draft resolution for COP14 on the Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Oversight Panel, on important matters related to its terms of reference and governance.

Decision SC60-01: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional agenda.

Agenda item 3: Admission of observers

4. The **Secretariat** referred to document COP14 Doc.7 *Admission of observers*, inviting the Standing Committee to approve the participation of the list of organizations requesting to be represented by observers under paragraph 7.

Decision SC60-02: The Standing Committee admitted as observers the bodies and agencies listed in paragraph 7 of document COP14 Doc.7.

Agenda item 4.1: Arrangements for COP14 – Review of the provisional agenda and working programme

5. The **Chair** introduced documents COP14 Doc.3.1, COP14 Doc.3.2.1 and COP14 Doc.3.2.2.

6. The **Secretariat** expressed that it would be useful for the Conference Bureau to convene on Monday morning to discuss items to be brought before the plenary. **Sweden** reiterated its proposal for an additional draft resolution on the CEPA Oversight Panel.

Decision SC60-03: The Standing Committee agreed that the provisional agenda and working programmes for COP14 in documents COP14 Doc.3.1, COP14 Doc.3.2.1 and COP14 Doc.3.2.2 be forwarded to COP14, subject to any proposals that might arise.

Agenda item 4.2: Arrangements for COP14 – Running order and process for reviewing draft resolutions

7. The **Secretariat** introduced document SC60 Doc.4.2.
8. **Switzerland**, supported by **Japan, Mexico, New Zealand** speaking for Australia on behalf of the Oceania region, the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** and **Uruguay**, suggested a running order prioritizing the draft resolutions mandated by COP13 decisions, noting that they would probably require less discussion and provide more timely and tangible outcomes, with draft resolutions proposed by Parties to be considered later in the agenda. New Zealand also suggested prioritizing key, interdependent draft resolutions, notably those on effectiveness and efficiency, the Strategic Plan and the roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee.
9. **Algeria** requested that the draft resolution in document COP14 Doc.18.16, on the *review of the 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 country*, be brought forward in the agenda, noting that it is one of several draft resolutions likely to require more time for discussions. They suggested that an early and brief discussion of difficult resolutions that were likely to require a contact group was needed, to establish where there was no consensus, so that those groups could be created and receive the text for negotiation.
10. The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** made an intervention to condemn Russia's war on Ukraine, drawing attention to untold suffering to the people of the country and also immense and potentially long-term impacts on the environment, including on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), and stressing that the Russian Federation must urgently de-escalate and withdraw its troops and that Russia must be held accountable and stop undermining democracy, global stability, and international law.
11. **Ukraine** drew attention to its submission on 26 October 2022, along with 21 co-sponsors, of a draft resolution on the environmental emergency in Ukraine related to wetlands of international importance, stressing changes in the number of Ramsar Sites in areas under Russian occupation and the risk of further destruction, and noting the relevant Rules of Procedure for late submissions. It stated that the late submission was due to the evolving ecological situation and changes in the Sites, including those at risk of destruction, and noted Rules 34.4 and 34.6, which require submission to the Conference Bureau for consideration and which provide for proposals dealing with unforeseen circumstances.
12. The **Russian Federation** cautioned against politicizing the discussion, underlining the need for sufficient time to study the text of any additional proposals for draft resolutions, and indicated that it had not had the opportunity to review the text of the draft resolution.

13. **Sweden** suggested the need to avoid having the more controversial draft resolutions being considered simultaneously, to take into account the limitations of smaller delegations.
14. **Colombia**, supported by **Iran** and **Mexico**, agreed with the principle raised by **Algeria** that the time-consuming draft resolutions be introduced early in plenary, with interventions kept brief, with the specific aim of rapidly forming contact groups, given the limited time for negotiations.
15. In response to a request by **Spain** for clarification on a missing annex to document COP14 Doc.18.9, containing the draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the **Secretariat** advised that the annex could be introduced in plenary during the relevant agenda item, and annexed to the document if agreed by the Parties, so that the additional information may be considered.
16. The **Secretariat** highlighted information in Annex 2 to document SC60 Doc.4.2, on the proposed process for managing revisions of draft resolutions, to ensure that revisions to documents can be published in a timely manner in the three languages of the Convention for further consideration. Amendments must be proposed in plenary and submitted by email within two hours as documents showing the proposed amendments using “track changes”. A unique email address is set up for each draft resolution, e.g., dr1@cop14.org for draft resolution 1 (document COP14 Doc.18.1), and so forth. Comments will go to the relevant contact groups, which will submit the final text showing amendments in “tracked changes” for the Secretariat to prepare revisions in the three working languages. To allow for timely discussion in the last two days of COP14, submissions must be received no later than 18:00 on Thursday 10 November 2022.
17. In response to a request for clarification by **New Zealand** on the two draft resolutions provided by Sweden and Ukraine, the **Secretariat** noted that documents submitted to the Secretariat in accordance with the Rules of Procedure would be brought to the Conference Bureau at its first meeting for discussion on how these would be managed.

Decision SC60-04: The Standing Committee approved the process proposed by the Secretariat in document SC60 Doc.4.2 for the consideration of draft resolutions by Parties at COP14, taking into account the comments made.

Agenda item 5: Nomination of COP14 President and Vice-Presidents
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18. The **Chair** recalled Rule 21.1, and invited nominations for President, Alternate President and two Vice-Presidents.
19. As host country, **China** nominated: as President, H.E. Mr Li Chunliang, Deputy Administrator of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and Director General of the Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office; as Alternate President, Dr Wu Zhimin, Deputy Director General, Department for Wetland Management, National Forestry and Grassland Administration.
20. The **Secretariat** acknowledged China’s proposals and invited the regional groups to discuss nominations for the two positions of Vice-President, and to propose the two nominations to the Conference Bureau on Monday morning.

Decision SC60-05: The Standing Committee agreed to forward to the Conference Bureau the two nominations received, so that it could complete discussions when it convenes on 7 November to receive nominations for the two positions of Vice-President.

Agenda item 6.1: Establishment of COP14 committees – Committee on Finance and Budget

21. The **Chair** introduced the agenda item on establishing the Committee on Finance and budget, which was approved without further comments by the Standing Committee.

Decision SC60-06: The Standing Committee agreed to propose to the Conference Bureau that membership of the Committee on Finance be the same as the Subgroup on Finance and be open to all Parties, and encouraged all regions to ensure appropriate representation.

Agenda item 6.2: Establishment of COP14 committees – Credentials Committee

22. The **Secretariat** recalled that, under Rule 19, each region is required to make a nomination for election to the Credentials Committee, for consideration by the Conference Bureau at its meeting on Monday morning. The received nominations were outlined as follows: Zambia (Africa), Fiji (Asia), Armenia (Europe), Panama (Latin America and the Caribbean), and the United States of America (North America).
23. **Indonesia** requested that the regional groups be given additional time for discussion at the afternoon's regional meetings, and **New Zealand** acknowledged this request.

Decision SC60-07: The Standing Committee agreed that the received nominations for the Credentials Committee would be brought forward to the Conference Bureau.

Agenda item 7: Secretariat's report on administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions

24. The **Secretariat** briefly introduced document COP14 Doc.14, noting that the projections outlined in the document fall in two categories: additional staff days; and cash expenses in Swiss Francs (CHF). The Secretariat further noted that these are the best estimates based on the current draft resolution texts and may change as texts are revised. It invited input and comments from the Parties.

Decision SC60-08: The Standing Committee took note of document COP14 Doc.14 Secretariat report on administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions.

Agenda item 8.1: Financial and budgetary matters – 2022 core budget update

25. The **Secretary General** introduced document SC60 Doc.8.1, noting that the Standing Committee had approved further adjustments to the 2022 budget, initially shared at the third extraordinary meeting of the COP in October 2021, at the resumed session of its 59th meeting in May 2022. She underlined that there was no change proposed to the total amount, as proposed changes are budgetary re-allocations, and invited the Standing Committee to approve the proposed

allocations. She further noted that the final report on 2022 would be delivered, together with the auditor's report, at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee, in May or June 2023.

Decision SC60-09: The Standing Committee approved the re-allocation of the 2022 core budget update as proposed in document SC60 Doc 8.1 *Financial and budgetary matters: 2022 core budget update*.

Agenda item 8.2: Financial and budgetary matters – Update on Decision SC59/2022-42
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26. The **Secretariat** briefly introduced Decision SC59/2022-42, and reported that the contingency allocation outlined in the Decision was not necessary, as the host country was covering all costs pertaining to the meeting in Geneva. The Secretariat noted the authorization, on an exceptional basis, of the allocation of core budget funds for sponsored-delegate support, and the planned discussions of these matters within the Committee on Finance and Budget after COP14.
27. **Switzerland** noted that the Convention on Wetlands is the only multilateral environmental agreement that does not have a budget line for meetings of the Conference of the Parties. It underlined the need for such a line in the core budget for future COPs so that host countries do not have to carry this financial weight.

Decision SC60-10: The Standing Committee took note of the update by the Secretariat regarding Decision SC59/2022-42 and Decision Post-SC59/2022 Intersessional Decision 1.

Agenda item 9: Agenda for the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee
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28. The **Chair** introduced document SC61 Doc.2.

Decision SC60-11: The Standing Committee approved the provisional agenda for the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee published as document SC61 Doc.2.