THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

61st Meeting of the Standing Committee

Geneva, Switzerland, 13 November 2022

**Report and decisions of the 61st meeting
of the Standing Committee**

**Sunday 13 November 2022**

**16.30 – 18.30 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee**

Agenda item 1: Opening statements

1. Opening remarks were made by **Sweden** as the outgoing Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda

2. The **Vice-Chair** introduced the provisional agenda in document SC61 Doc.2 and proposed that Agenda item 3 *Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair* be split into two, to become 3a) *Election of the Chair*, and 3b) *Election of the Vice-Chair*.

3. The **Republic of Korea** made an intervention.

**Decision SC61-01: The Standing Committee adopted the agenda in document SC61 Doc.2, noting that working groups established or re-established under COP14 Resolutions would be discussed under Agenda item 5 *Establishment of other subgroups and working groups (as required)*.**

Agenda item 3a): Election of the Chair

4. **China** replaced the United Arab Emirates as the Chair, as supported by nominations from **Austria**, **Sweden** and the **United Arab Emirates**.

**Decision SC61-02: China was elected as Chair of the Standing Committee.**

Agenda item 3b): Election of the Vice-Chair

5. **Gabon** was nominated by Libya on behalf of the Africa Region, and **Costa Rica** was nominated by Colombia on behalf of the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

6. Following interventions by **Algeria**, **Bolivia**, **Brazil**, **Cuba** and **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** expressing support for there to be two Vice-Chairs to the Standing Committee, and by **Czechia, Rwanda**, **Sweden** and **Switzerland** requesting there be only one Vice-Chair, and the advice of the Legal Advisor, **Colombia** retracted its nomination, emphasizing that it would be important to investigate establishing a more inclusive Standing Committee leadership selection process for the subsequent triennium.

7. **Gabon** replaced Sweden as the Vice-Chair.

**Decision SC61-03: Gabon was elected as Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee.**

Agenda item 4: Election of the Chair and members of the Subgroup on Finance

8. Interventions were made by **Canada**, **China**, **Colombia**, **Côte d’Ivoire**, **Czechia**, **Japan**, **Mexico**, **Morocco**, **New Zealand**, **Panama**, **Sweden**, **Switzerland** and **Togo**.

**Decision SC61-04: The Standing Committee elected the following Contracting Parties as members of the Subgroup on Finance, noting that the Subgroup was open to participation of interested Parties: Morocco, representing the Africa region; Japan, representing the Asia region; Georgia (if accepting this nomination), representing the Europe region upon confirmation; Brazil, representing the Latin America and the Caribbean region; the United States, representing the North America region; Australia, representing the Oceania region and Mexico, as the outgoing Chair of the Subgroup on Finance. China, Panama, Switzerland and Togo expressed interest in being members of the Subgroup on Finance.**

**Decision SC61-05: The Standing Committee agreed to defer consideration of the election of the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance until the Subgroup members could consult and submit recommendations to the Standing Committee for it to decide via electronic means.**

Agenda item 5: Establishment of other subgroups and working groups (as required)

*Ramsar Youth Working Group*

9. The **Secretariat** noted that the Resolution adopted at COP14 on *Strengthening Ramsar connections through youth* establishes the Ramsar Youth Working Group. Australia noted that the terms of reference on this Working Group allow it to elect its own Chair and nominated the Australian delegation’s Youth Focal Point to serve as interim Chair until the Working Group could meet.

10. Additional interest in joining the Working Group was noted by **Costa Rica** and the **United Arab Emirates.**

**Decision SC61-06: The Standing Committee agreed to appoint the Youth Focal Point for Australia as the interim Chair of the Ramsar Youth Working Group until its membership elected the Chair at its first meeting.**

**Decision SC61-07: The Standing Committee agreed that the membership of the Ramsar Youth Working Group comprised the following Contracting Parties: Congo, representing the Africa region; Iraq and Iran (Islamic Republic of), representing the Asia region; Austria and Slovakia, representing the Europe Region; Colombia, representing the Latin America and the Caribbean region; and Mexico, representing the North America Region.**

*Independent Advisory Committee of the Wetland Cities Accreditation*

11. The **Republic of Korea** noted that the Resolution adopted at COP14 on *Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* requests the Standing Committee to nominate representatives from each region to the Independent Advisory Committee membership, and drew attention to the updated timelines in this Resolution regarding the new membership and proposed that this be deferred to the following meeting of the Standing Committee, due to lack of time given to Regions to consult internally and the absence of International Partner Organizations, and that the current Committee members will continue their term until SC62 and communicate with the Secretariat regarding the call for application in 2023 and its deadline.

12. Interest in joining the Independent Advisory Committee was expressed by **Rwanda.**

**Decision SC61-08: The Standing Committee appointed the Republic of Korea as the contact point to coordinate with support from the Secretariat the establishment of the new Independent Advisory Committee membership.**

**Decision SC61-09: The Standing Committee deferred the decision on the new membership of the Independent Advisory Committee to SC62 and acknowledged expressions of interest for membership of the Independent Advisory Committee from the following Contracting Parties:** **Rwanda, representing the Africa Region; China and Iran (Islamic Republic of), representing the Asia Region, and the Republic of Korea as the Technical Advisor; Czechia, representing the Europe Region; the United States of America, representing the North America Region; and Colombia, representing the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.**

*Strategic Plan Working Group*

13. It was noted that the Resolution adopted at COP14 on *Review of the fourth Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands, additions for the period COP14-COP15 and key elements for the fifth Strategic Plan* re-establishes the Strategic Plan Working Group.

14. Australia, supported by Colombia, nominated **Brazil** and **Canada** as Co-Chairs to the Strategic Plan Working Group, noting that this nomination would be presented to the SPWG intersessionally for its decision.

15. Additional interest in joining the Working Group was noted by **Colombia**, **Costa Rica**, **Eswatini** and **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

**Decision SC61-10: The Standing Committee agreed that:**

* **it nominated Brazil and Canada as Co-Chairs to the Strategic Plan Working Group, which would be confirmed by the Group intersessionally, along with the Vice-Chair; and**
* **the membership of the existing Strategic Plan Working Group would be expanded to include the following Contracting Parties: China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Eswatini, Iraq, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

*Management Working Group*

16. The **Chair** noted that China as the Chair of the Standing Committee would be a member of the Management Working Group and drew attention to paragraph 8 of Resolution IX.24, which establishes the composition of this Subgroup, noting that regional nominations were not needed for the Management Working Group.

17. Interest in joining the Management Working Group was expressed by **Côte d’Ivoire**, and **Switzerland** made an intervention to note its willingness to continue its work within the Group, noting it would submit its update on the budget to the Secretariat in writing.

*Subgroup on COP15*

18. **Colombia** and **Sweden** made interventions in regard to establishment of the Subgroup on COP15.

**Decision SC61-11: The establishment of the Subgroup on COP15 was deferred to the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee.**

19. Further interventions were made by **Algeria**, **Rwanda** and **Sweden**.

20. The **Chair** reminded Parties that Working Groups and Subgroups are open to all interested Parties and that Parties would have the opportunity to express further interest in joining groups following the conclusion of SC61.

Agenda item 6: Dates and venue of the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee

21. Interventions were made by **Algeria**, **Brazil**, **Colombia**, **Sweden**, **Switzerland**, the **United Arab Emirates** and **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**.

**Decision SC61-12: The Standing Committee agreed to hold its 62nd meeting (SC62) in Gland, Switzerland, from 4 to 8 September 2023.**

Agenda item 7: Any other business

22. **Sweden** noted that there were separate processes for establishing membership of the CEPA Oversight Panel and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and encouraged Parties to participate in these processes.

Agenda item 8: Closing remarks

23. Secretary General **Dr Musonda Mumba** thanked the host countries, delegates and the Secretariat staff for their support and dedication in contributing to the success of the COP. She emphasized the importance of partnership, advocacy communication, visibility and resource mobilization, including innovative financing in achieving the aims of the Convention over the coming triennium

24. The **Chair** expressed his wish that over the next triennium, the wetlands community would have the opportunity to meet each other in China.