



رامسار اتفاقية الأراضي الرطبة  
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands  
DUBAI · COP13 · 2018 · دبي

## 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

“Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21-29 October 2018

### Resolution XIII.4

#### Responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. RECOGNIZING the value of keeping under periodic review the responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee so as to ensure that its work continues to be delivered in as effective and cost-efficient a manner as possible;
2. NOTING that Resolution XII.4 on *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention* is out of date and that a number of the tasks specified have been implemented; and RECALLING that Resolution XII.4 seeks to strengthen transparency within the work of the Convention to facilitate the evolution of decisions, guidance and implementation of the Convention in cooperation with Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and stakeholders;
3. RECALLING that in Resolution IX.24 (2005), on *Improving management of the Ramsar Convention*, the Conference of the Parties established a Management Working Group reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties;
4. AWARE that the Standing Committee’s oversight of the Secretariat is conducted on its behalf between meetings of the Standing Committee by its Executive Team (Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance) with the Secretary General;
5. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION to the members of the Executive Team and the Management Working Group for their work;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING the potential role of the Secretariat in providing advice to Parties, at their request, in the drafting of potential resolutions, especially in providing help to ensure consistency with past decisions and clarity of language, and to reduce overlap of issues being discussed at a single meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
7. NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the steady improvement in performance, management, and optimization of resources by the Secretariat over the past triennium and the interest of Contracting Parties in re-establishing normalized levels of oversight while maintaining accountability between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat;
8. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION for the cooperation between IUCN and the Ramsar Secretariat through the IUCN/Ramsar Liaison Group to support the operations of the Secretariat;

9. APPRECIATING the results achieved by the Facilitation Working Group of the Standing Committee to facilitate discussions between the Secretariat and IUCN, in order to seek ways of improving the current operations of the Secretariat;
10. RECOGNIZING that inconsistencies and contradictions between Resolutions and decisions taken over the years can result in confusion and a lack of clarity that creates inefficiencies in the implementation of the Convention, or inadvertently adversely impact the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, and that implementation of the Convention can be improved by retiring resolutions and decisions and parts thereof that are outdated or contradictory;
11. NOTING Parties' interest in enhancing their efforts to identify and address the challenges to wetlands globally as a means to increase the relevance, timeliness, and impact of the Convention and of Contracting Parties' Resolutions related to the wise use of wetlands; and
12. NOTING the value in reviewing the Rules of Procedure to identify any inconsistencies or other elements that may negatively impact the work of the Convention or that might usefully be amended to optimize resources and/or increase efficiency;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. EXPRESSES its gratitude to the outgoing Chair and members of the Standing Committee for their support and willingness to provide additional oversight of the activities and the implementation of the Convention during the 2015-2018 triennium;
14. FURTHER EXPRESSES its gratitude to the Contracting Parties that will serve as the Chair and members of the Standing Committee following the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13), for their willingness to take on the responsibility of governing the activities and the implementation of the Convention for the coming triennium;
15. ALSO EXPRESSES its satisfaction with improvements made by the Secretariat in performance, management, and optimization of resources and its full support for the efforts of the Secretary General in this regard; and DECIDES to re-establish normalized levels of oversight by the Parties while maintaining accountability between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat;
16. REQUESTS the Executive Team to define its terms of reference for approval by the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting (SC57);
17. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to re-engage with Parties, at their request, in preparing draft resolutions, so as to improve the quality of possible decisions that are tabled for consideration;
18. REQUESTS the Secretariat to use Annex 3 of the present Resolution on *Responsibilities of Contracting Parties elected as regional representatives in the Standing Committee* as a tool to conduct a preparatory briefing for representatives of incoming members of the Standing Committee prior to the first meeting of the Standing Committee that immediately follows the close of the meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
19. INVITES incoming members of the Standing Committee to participate as observers at meetings of the Conference Bureau of the Conference of the Contracting Parties once their designation has been announced to the Conference by a representative of their region;

20. REQUESTS the Secretariat, at the beginning of each triennium and as appropriate thereafter, to bring to the attention of Standing Committee members the updated consolidated list of Resolutions and decisions generated in accordance with Resolution XIII.7 on *Enhancing the Convention's implementation, visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*;
21. ADOPTS the text in Annexes 1-4 of the present Resolution, based upon amendments that update Resolution XII.4 (2015) on *The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Ramsar Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Ramsar Convention*;

Concerning enhancement of the implementation of the Convention

22. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee, at its first full meeting following each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, identify, with the support of the Secretariat, a limited set of urgent challenges to the wise use of wetlands, in the framework of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and the broader environmental agenda, to receive enhanced attention during the coming triennium;
23. FURTHER REQUESTS that the Standing Committee consider these urgent challenges during its meetings throughout the triennium, inviting external expert speakers to participate in and contribute to Contracting Parties' discussions as appropriate and subject to available resources, with a view to identifying potential solutions to these challenges and reflecting them in draft resolutions for consideration at the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
24. REQUESTS the Secretariat to:
  - a. review all previous Resolutions and decisions, identifying those or parts of those, if any, that may no longer be valid or applicable, that contradict each other, or are otherwise inconsistent with current Ramsar practices, and at SC57 report its findings, including information on how it reached these conclusions (e.g. *inter alia*, that the work has been completed, superseded, is contradictory, or is incorporated elsewhere); and
  - b. based on its findings and Parties' feedback on its report to SC57, develop recommendations for Parties to consider at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58) to consider a process for: retiring outdated resolutions and decisions; establishing a practice of retiring outdated or contradictory Resolutions and decisions automatically when they are superseded by new ones; and preparing a consolidated list of resolutions and decisions, to be updated after each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and on an as-needed basis following meetings of the Standing Committee;
25. REQUESTS that the Standing Committee, at SC57, review the Secretariat's report on the validity of Resolutions and decisions and provide feedback, and consider the Secretariat's recommendations on this subject at SC58, with a view to including, in a relevant draft resolution for COP14, the retirement of outdated Resolutions and decisions and the establishment of a practice for the Convention to retire outdated Resolutions and decisions automatically when they are superseded by new ones;
26. REQUESTS the Secretariat to:
  - a. conduct a review of the Rules of Procedure, identifying text, if any, that may no longer be valid or applicable, is contradictory, is otherwise inconsistent with current Ramsar

practices, and the Rules' applicability to subsidiary bodies including the Standing Committee, working groups, and Friends of the Chair groups and, at SC57, report its findings, including information on how it reached these conclusions;

- b. in conducting the aforementioned review, give due consideration to any proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure that were not considered at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and
  - c. develop, as appropriate, based on its findings and Contracting Parties' feedback on its report to SC57, recommendations for Parties at SC58, to consider revisions that might be made to the Rules of Procedure, in preparation for COP14;
27. REQUESTS the Standing Committee, at SC57, to review the Secretariat's report on the Rules of Procedure and provide feedback, and to consider the Secretariat's recommendations on this subject at SC58 and, as appropriate, consider revisions that might be made to the Rules of Procedure in preparation for COP14;
  28. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, to consider using written submissions from their national Administrative Authorities as a means to provide opportunities for fostering increased participation and representation of views of Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the work of the Convention;
  29. REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue its efforts to deploy appropriate cost-effective communication and other technologies as a means to foster the participation and representation of the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat, increase efficiencies, and reduce costs;
  30. FURTHER REQUESTS the Secretariat to make Contracting Parties aware of the opportunities provided by these technologies to foster Convention-related capacity building and to support the efforts of the Convention bodies to enhance implementation of the Convention; and
  31. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution and its Annexes supersede Resolution XII.4.

## Annex 1

### The responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention

1. Considering that it is useful for the effective functioning of the Ramsar Convention that Contracting Parties should have a clear process for the operation of its Standing Committee, in Resolution VII.1 (1999) the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) adopted guidelines on the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the Standing Committee and the regional categorization of countries under the Convention. In Resolution XII.4 (2012), the Parties amended that text and the list of countries and Contracting Parties assigned to each of the six Ramsar regions, in order to bring them up to date.
2. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will have the following regional groups:
  - Africa;
  - Asia;
  - Europe;
  - Latin America and the Caribbean;
  - North America; and
  - Oceania.
3. Contracting Parties and States that are eligible to accede to the Convention are assigned to the above regional groups, but Contracting Parties that are geographically near to the boundaries of the allocated region, as given in Annex 2, may, at their own request, participate in the activities of a neighbouring alternative regional group, while remaining a member of their allocated geographical regional group, upon formal notification of this intent to the COP.<sup>1</sup>
4. The composition of the Standing Committee will be determined by means of a proportional system, by which each regional group listed in paragraph 2 above will be represented by voting members in the Standing Committee according to the following criteria:
  - a. one representative for regional groups with 1 to 12 Contracting Parties;
  - b. two representatives for regional groups with 13 to 24 Contracting Parties;
  - c. three representatives for regional groups with 25 to 36 Contracting Parties;
  - d. four representatives for regional groups with 37 to 48 Contracting Parties; and
  - e. five representatives for regional groups with 49 to 60 Contracting Parties.
5. Each region may appoint an alternate member for each appointed member with full power to represent the region if the appointed member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Standing Committee.
6. The host countries of the previous and next meetings of the COP are also voting members of the Standing Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> See Resolution X1.19. "Participate" is defined in this context as different from membership within the alternative region. Participation confers to the State the right to be present in meetings, to speak, to exchange information, to submit reports, to cooperate on a scientific and practical level, and to contribute to joint projects. It does not include the right to be a representative of this alternative region nor to participate in the nomination of its representatives. It does not confer the right to vote within the alternative region.

7. The regional members and their alternate members will be elected by the Conference of the Contracting Parties on the basis of nominations received from the regional groups established in paragraph 2 above. Initial consideration of nominations by regional groups will be undertaken at any intersessional regional COP preparatory meetings that take place, and nominations will be finalized by regional groups in their regional meetings at the COP venue immediately prior to the opening of the COP, so that appointments of the new members of the Standing Committee can be made as early as possible in the COP proceedings, thus permitting the new members of the Committee to participate as observers in Conference Bureau meetings during the COP.
8. The terms of office of the regional representatives will commence at the close of the meeting of the COP at which they have been elected and will expire at the close of the next ordinary meeting of the COP, and each Contracting Party may serve on the Standing Committee for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
9. Contracting Parties that are voting members of the Standing Committee will convey to the Secretariat, through their diplomatic channels, the name(s) of the officer(s) in the designated national Ramsar Administrative Authority who act as their delegates on the Standing Committee, as well as the names of their substitutes, should they be needed.
10. The Contracting Party acting as host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat will continue to have the status of permanent observer in the Standing Committee. If the host country of the institutional host of the Secretariat stands for, and is elected as, a member of the Standing Committee representing its regional group, it will have voting status for that triennium in lieu of its permanent observer status.
11. The Secretariat will continue to notify all Contracting Parties of the date and agenda of meetings of the Standing Committee at least three months in advance of each meeting, so that they may, as appropriate, make arrangements to be represented at the meeting as observers.
12. Countries that are not Contracting Parties but that have expressed an interest in acceding to the Convention may also be admitted as observers at meetings of the Standing Committee.
13. The Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) will be invited as an observer to Standing Committee meetings, as well as other experts and/or institutions that the Standing Committee may deem appropriate for assisting in its consideration of particular agenda items.
14. International organizations that are official International Organization Partners in the work of the Convention will be invited to participate as observers in meetings of the Standing Committee.
15. If an extraordinary meeting of the COP is held between two ordinary meetings, the host country may participate as an observer in the work of the Committee on matters related to the organization of the meeting, provided that the country in question is not already present in the Committee as a member or permanent observer.
16. The Contracting Parties in regional groups with one representative in the Standing Committee will use a rotation system for the nomination of their regional representative. In regional groups with two or more representatives the selection will be made in such a manner as to achieve a balance in relation to biogeographical, geopolitical, and cultural considerations.

17. At its first meeting immediately after the close of a meeting of the COP, the Standing Committee will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the members and Chair of the Subgroup on Finance established by Resolution VI.17 (1996).
18. The Standing Committee will normally meet once each year, normally at the seat of the Convention Secretariat, according to the indicative schedule provided as Annex 4 to this Resolution. Further meetings of the Subgroup on the COP and the Subgroup on Finance may be envisaged during the year before COP, if required and if sufficient funds are available, in order to ensure the timely and efficient preparation of meetings of the COP. The costs of participation of Committee members eligible for sponsorship will be borne by the Convention.
19. Within the policies agreed by the Conference of the Parties, the functions of the Standing Committee will be to:
  - a. carry out, between one ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next, such interim activity on behalf of the Conference as may be necessary, giving priority to matters on which the Conference has previously recorded its approval and noting that the Standing Committee is not mandated either to take decisions that would normally be taken by the Conference of the Contracting Parties or to amend any decision taken by the Conference of the Parties;
  - b. make preparations on issues, including *inter alia* draft resolutions and recommendations, for consideration at the next meeting of the COP;
  - c. supervise, as a representative of the COP, the implementation of activities by the Secretariat, the execution of the Secretariat's budget, and conduct of the Secretariat's programmes;
  - d. provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention, on the preparation of meetings, and on any other matters relating to the exercise of its functions brought to it by the Secretariat;
  - e. act as Conference Bureau at meetings of the COP in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
  - f. establish subgroups as necessary to facilitate the implementation of its functions;
  - g. promote regional and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
  - h. approve the work plan of the STRP on the basis of the decisions of the COP, receive the reports of the STRP on the progress made with its implementation, and provide guidance for its future development;
  - i. adopt for each triennium the Operational Guidelines for the Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use and decide on the allocation of funds;
  - j. review each triennium the criteria for the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award established by Resolution VI.18 and select the laureates; and
  - k. report to the COP on the activities it has carried out between ordinary meetings of the Conference.

20. The tasks of the regional representatives elected to serve in the Standing Committee are contained in Annex 3 of this document.
21. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, shall take into consideration, within available resources, the need for interpretation at its subgroup meetings when it is requested by its members.
22. The Contracting Parties and the Secretariat will endeavour to secure additional voluntary funding to enable simultaneous interpretation at meetings of the Subgroup on Finance and the Subgroup on the COP.
23. The Standing Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, will be governed, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference.



## Annex 2

### Allocation of Contracting Parties and non-party States to the six regional groups

*NOTE:* Names of countries in capital and bold letters denote Contracting Parties to the Convention at the time of approval of this Resolution.

#### **AFRICA:**

**ALGERIA**

Angola

**BENIN**

**BOTSWANA**

**BURKINA FASO**

**BURUNDI**

**CAMEROON**

**CABO VERDE**

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

**CHAD**

**COMOROS**

**CONGO**

**CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

**DJIBOUTI**

**EGYPT**

**EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

Eritrea

**ESWATINI**

Ethiopia

**GABON**

**GAMBIA, THE**

**GHANA**

**GUINEA**

**GUINEA-BISSAU**

**KENYA**

**LESOTHO**

**LIBERIA**

**MADAGASCAR**

**MALAWI**

**MALI**

**MAURITANIA**

**MAURITIUS**

**MOROCCO**

**MOZAMBIQUE**

**NAMIBIA**

**NIGER**

**NIGERIA**

**RWANDA**

**SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE**

**SENEGAL**

**SEYCHELLES**

**SIERRA LEONE**

Somalia

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**STATE OF LIBYA**

**SUDAN**

**SOUTH SUDAN**

**TOGO**

**TUNISIA**

**UGANDA**

**UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

**ZAMBIA**

**ZIMBABWE**

**ASIA:**

Afghanistan

**BAHRAIN**

**BANGLADESH**

**BHUTAN**

Brunei Darussalam

**CAMBODIA**

**CHINA**

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**INDIA**

**INDONESIA**

**IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF**

**IRAQ**

**JAPAN**

**JORDAN**

**KAZAKHSTAN**

**KUWAIT**

**KYRGYZSTAN**

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**LEBANON**

**MALAYSIA**

Maldives

**MONGOLIA**

**MYANMAR**

**NEPAL**

**OMAN**

**PAKISTAN**

**PHILIPPINES**

Qatar

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Saudi Arabia

Singapore

**SRI LANKA**

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**TAJIKISTAN**

**THAILAND**

**TURKMENISTAN**

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

**UZBEKISTAN**

**VIET NAM**

**YEMEN**

***EUROPE:***

**ALBANIA  
ANDORRA  
ARMENIA  
AUSTRIA  
AZERBAIJAN  
BELARUS  
BELGIUM  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
BULGARIA  
CROATIA  
CYPRUS  
CZECH REPUBLIC  
DENMARK  
ESTONIA  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GEORGIA  
GERMANY  
GREECE  
Holy See  
HUNGARY  
ICELAND  
IRELAND  
ISRAEL  
ITALY  
LATVIA**

**LIECHTENSTEIN  
LITHUANIA  
LUXEMBOURG  
MALTA  
MONACO  
MONTENEGRO  
NETHERLANDS  
NORWAY  
POLAND  
PORTUGAL  
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA  
ROMANIA  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
San Marino  
SERBIA  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
SLOVENIA  
SPAIN  
SWEDEN  
SWITZERLAND  
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF  
MACEDONIA  
TURKEY  
UKRAINE  
UNITED KINGDOM**

***LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:***

**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

**ARGENTINA**

**BAHAMAS**

**BARBADOS**

**BELIZE**

**BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)**

**BRAZIL**

**CHILE**

**COLOMBIA**

**COSTA RICA**

**CUBA**

Dominica

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

**ECUADOR**

**EL SALVADOR**

**GRENADA**

**GUATEMALA**

Guyana

Haiti

**HONDURAS**

**JAMAICA**

**NICARAGUA**

**PANAMA**

**PARAGUAY**

**PERU**

Saint Kitts and Nevis

**SAINT LUCIA**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

**SURINAME**

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**URUGUAY**

**VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)**

***NORTH AMERICA:***

**CANADA**

**MEXICO**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

***OCEANIA:***

**AUSTRALIA**

Cook Islands

**FIJI**

**KIRIBATI**

**MARSHALL ISLANDS**

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Nauru

**NEW ZEALAND**

Niue

**PALAU**

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**SAMOA**

Solomon Islands

Timor Leste

Tonga

Tuvalu

Vanuatu

## Annex 3

### Responsibilities of Contracting Parties elected as regional representatives in the Standing Committee

Ramsar Regions are to designate their delegates to the Standing Committee, taking into account their significant responsibilities as regional representatives, and should make every effort to ensure that their delegates or their substitutes attend all meetings of the Committee. The Contracting Parties that have accepted to be elected as regional representatives on the Standing Committee will have the following responsibilities:

1. when there is more than one regional representative in a regional group, to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the other regional representative(s);
2. to maintain regular contacts and consultations with the Contracting Parties in their regional group, and to use the opportunities of travel within their regions, and of attending regional or international meetings, to consult about issues related to the Convention and to promote its objectives. To this effect, when there is more than one regional representative, they will agree among themselves which Contracting Parties in their region will be the responsibility of each regional representative;
3. to commit to preparing for meetings by reviewing papers and other background information prior to the session during which the matters will be discussed;
4. to solicit the opinions of the Contracting Parties in their regional group before meetings of the Standing Committee and to be empowered by their group to use their best judgment to make decisions during meetings as needed;
5. to advise the Secretariat in setting the agenda of regional meetings;
6. to commit to engaging in a collegial, professional, respectful, ethical, and constructive manner;
7. to commit to familiarizing themselves with the Rules of Procedure, and to adhering to them;
8. to commit to actively engage in the deliberations as a means to ensure the views of the region they represent are well understood and considered;
9. to assume additional responsibilities by serving as members of the subgroups established by the Standing Committee and to respect and honour the outcomes of the work of all subgroups;
10. to provide advice as requested by the Chair of the Standing Committee, the chairs of subgroups, or the Secretariat of the Convention;
11. to commit to reaching agreements that are guided by the goals of the Ramsar Strategic Plan and that foster the implementation of the Convention; and
12. in relevant regions, to make efforts to encourage other countries to accede to the Convention.

## Annex 4

### Indicative schedule for Standing Committee intersessional meetings post-2018, and for the 2019-2021 triennium

*NOTE:* This schedule is predicated on future cycles being three calendar years, with the meetings of the Conference of the Parties in May/June of the final year of each cycle.

	<b>General timelines, post-2018</b>	<b>2019-2021 triennium</b>
<b>First full meeting</b>	9 months after COP13	<b>SC57</b> – June/July 2019
<b>Second full meeting</b>	21 months after COP13	<b>SC58</b> – June/July 2020
<b>Subgroup on COP</b> (if required)	1 year before COP14	<b>Subgroup on COP14</b> (if required) – June/July 2020
<b>Third full meeting</b>	6 months before COP14	<b>SC59</b> – January 2021
<b>Pre-COP meeting</b>	Immediately prior to COP14, at COP venue	<b>SC60</b> – June/July 2021