



COP14  **2022**

14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**“Wetlands Action for People and Nature”
Geneva, Switzerland, and Wuhan, China 5-13 November 2022**

Resolution XIV.3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention on Wetlands

1. ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of providing effective institutional arrangements for the Convention of Wetlands, a global convention with 172 Parties;
2. RECALLING the Convention’s mission of conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world;
3. FURTHER RECALLING Contracting Parties’ commitment to work towards achievement of the Convention’s mission, both within their own territories and through cooperation globally and with other Contracting Parties;
4. ALSO RECALLING that in Resolution XIII.3 on *Governance of the Convention* the Conference of the Contracting Parties established the Effectiveness Working Group to review the governance structure of the Convention and report its final recommendations, including a draft resolution;
5. EXPRESSING ITS GRATITUDE to all bodies and working groups of the Convention for the accomplishments and benefits to the Convention realized as a result of their work;
6. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the reports and commissioned review on the governance of the Convention pursuant to Resolution XIII.3¹;
7. ALSO RECALLING Resolution XIII.4 on *Responsibilities, roles and composition of the Standing Committee and regional categorization of countries under the Convention*, and subsequent Standing Committee Decisions pertaining to the review of all previous Resolutions and decisions²;

¹ (1) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: Review of Governance Structures and Procedures – Findings: The Findings Report; (2) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: Review of Governance Structures and Procedures – A Comparison Report; (3) Final Report – Positive Indications and Measures – Ramsar Convention Governance Review.

² Standing Committee Decisions SC58-19, SC58-20 and SC58-21.

8. ACKNOWLEDGING the unique circumstances and challenges that have arisen from the global pandemic, which have highlighted the importance of effective governance under any circumstances; and
9. HIGHLIGHTING the importance of fully transparent and inclusive modalities of work under the Convention;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

10. APPRECIATES the work that has already been accomplished in the implementation of Resolution XIII.4 to retire outdated Resolutions and Decisions, and to establish a practice for the Convention to retire outdated Resolutions and Decisions automatically when they are superseded by new ones, and ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to provide administrative support to Contracting Parties, at their request, in preparing draft resolutions so as to provide transparent and timely advice regarding the cost of implementing proposed draft resolutions, and improve cross-references, avoid duplication and support consolidation of draft resolutions in future;
11. FURTHER INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to improve its communications approach towards Contracting Parties, including making recommendations and any cost assessments to that end, to continue strengthening capacity-building tools such as virtual workshops and training materials, in order to enhance support to Contracting Parties; and to submit an updated strategy for communications with Parties for consideration at the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC63);
12. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to propose approaches, including possible online systems, and in particular a closed members' portal, continuously updated member address lists, and further improved access to online documents that would enhance collaboration between Contracting Parties intersessionally, including, but not limited to, in working groups, and in the preparation of draft resolutions by allowing Parties to submit and provide comments on draft resolutions. The Secretariat is instructed to report its proposals about such technologies, including the costs and benefits of such systems and how the proposal manages any risk of creating a participation gap between Parties with different levels of internet access, to SC62, so that Parties can assess whether there is interest in investing Convention resources in implementing such technologies as a means to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Convention, and if so, recommend this matter is given priority in the deliberations of the Subgroup on Finance;
13. DECIDES that the guidelines outlined in Annex 1 of the present Resolution will be applied to all future non-permanent subgroups and working groups, ensuring that:
 - a. all new non-permanent subgroups and working groups are required to have an agreed timeline;
 - b. all groups established by the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), unless otherwise agreed by Parties or set out in the mandate for the group when it is established, are automatically retired by the next meeting of the COP; and,
 - c. clear terms of reference must be established by any new group that is stood up;
14. CALLS UPON the Contracting Parties to consider efficiencies within subsidiary bodies of the Convention related to deciding programmes of work, establishing timelines, and appointments of members of subsidiary bodies (including the Scientific and Technical Review Panel), and ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to propose solutions to allow for the efficient commencement of work immediately after each meeting of the COP;

15. INSTRUCTS the Secretariat, in consultation with interested Contracting Parties including as appropriate Contracting Parties of the Management Working Group, to assess the challenges affecting the practices of the Convention during the global pandemic period and propose any ways to enhance decision-making procedures and to maintain the full and effective participation of all Contracting Parties to enable the effective operation of the Convention during exceptional circumstances, including by identifying any possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure and taking into account best practices of other international bodies as appropriate; and REQUESTS the Secretariat to present the review and proposals for consideration by Parties at COP15, if not before; and
16. DECIDES to allocate CHF 10,000 of the unspent funds for the work of the Effectiveness Working Group allocated for the 2019-2021 triennium through Resolution XIII.2, paragraph 16 approved in Standing Committee Decision SC57-36, to fulfil the mandate of the present Resolution.

Annex 1

Guidelines for non-permanent subgroups and working groups³

Establishment

As per Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure, in addition to the Standing Committee of the Convention, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel and the Conference Bureau, the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) may establish other committees and working groups if it deems it necessary for the implementation of the Convention.

When working groups are established at a meeting of the COP through a resolution, clear direction must be given to the working group through that resolution on the following matters:

- **Composition and regional representation:**
That the working group consists of interested Standing Committee representatives and other Contracting Parties, keeping in mind the desirability of equitable regional participation, and aiming to have at least one regional representative from each region and striving to be open ended. Where appropriate, Contracting Parties may invite or accept relevant observers or International Organization Partners to participate in working groups.
- **Structure:**
That the working group must designate two of its members as Chair and Co-Chair/Vice-Chair, the latter acting as Rapporteur.
- **Mandate:**
The resolution which establishes the working group must provide a clear mandate for the group, including outcomes that should be achieved and outputs that the group should produce, including any reports, guidelines or the suggestion of any draft resolutions to the Standing Committee.
- **Terms of Reference:**
That the working group must define its terms of reference for presentation to an upcoming Standing Committee.
- **Timeline:**
The resolution must set an agreed timeline⁴ for the working group, including:
 - A timeline to update an appropriate body of the Convention on its work;
 - An agreed timeline for the working group to complete its mandate, report its outcomes and produce any outputs as required; and
 - That the group will automatically be retired by the next COP, unless otherwise agreed by Parties or set out in the mandate for the group when it is established.
- **Funding:**
Clarity on any funding allocated to facilitate the working group to accomplish its mandate.

³ Guidelines may also apply *inter alia* to *ad hoc* groups established by the Standing Committee.

⁴ Other than in exceptional circumstances.

Terms of reference

Any working group which is established requires terms of reference (ToRs) which have been agreed by the group and presented to the Standing Committee. When drafting these ToRs some points should be considered, as follows:

- Reiterate the mandate and scope of the group as agreed at the meeting of the COP to provide a common and agreed understanding within the group.
- The group will take decisions by consensus.
- The anticipated roles of the Chair and Vice-Chair. These may include:
 - how they will be appointed (e.g., by group consensus following member nominations);
 - their role and the roles of the wider groups in the coordination and delivery of tasks and meetings as well as reporting the work of the group; and
 - how the Chair/Vice-Chair may facilitate decision making within the group.
- How the group will operate in order to deliver the work effectively, for example through meetings, written electronic exchange etc.
- How the group can operate in order to facilitate the full and active participation of all members and regions represented in the group.
- How to ensure the group always has a clear contact point for members of the group including if these contact points change over time.
- How the group will keep a record of its work and/or meetings.
- How working groups will report to a body of the Convention.
- If and how the group should work with any other bodies of the Convention including the Secretariat and other relevant working groups or external parties.
- Set an agreed working schedule for the working group to meet the timelines set by the COP.

Retirement

All working groups established by a COP must automatically be retired by the next meeting of the COP, unless otherwise agreed by Parties or set out in the mandate for the group when it is established.