

Decisions of the Meeting

Agenda item 4: Report of the Secretary General

Decision SC41-1: The Standing Committee warmly welcomed the Secretary General's report and took note of the accomplishments included in the report and mentioned in the discussion; requested the Secretariat to report back to the SC on progress in the matters raised; requested the Secretariat to continue developing its important strategic partnerships with the international organizations; asked the Secretariat, given the importance of climate change issues, to continue providing input in appropriate fora so that the Ramsar Convention will be an important player in that context; and requested the Secretariat to provide relevant information on the ECOSOC process for those Parties willing to help obtain consultative status.

Agenda item 6: Report of the Management Working Group

Decision SC41-2: [This decision was subsequently revised and now appears as Decision SC41-37.]

Decision SC41-3: The Standing Committee urged the Secretariat, working with IUCN, to continue to seek as rapidly as possible a solution to the work permit problems with the Swiss authorities, and it thanked Switzerland for its efforts in helping to resolve these matters.

Agenda item 14: Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform

Decision SC41-4: The Standing Committee took note of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group and, noting that a large majority of states at the above Working Group concluded that there is strong evidence that a Ramsar Secretariat provided by UNEP would more effectively implement the Ramsar Convention and recommended that the Secretariat be hosted by UNEP, therefore decided to mandate the Working Group to:

- 1) determine the concrete modalities for implementing a transfer of the Ramsar Secretariat to UNEP and in doing so to explore:
 - a) further options for reducing the costs of a UNEP-administered Ramsar Secretariat;
 - b) transition arrangements;
 - c) timing and a timeline for implementation;
 - d) the best possible staff arrangements; and
 - e) the added benefits to the Convention;

- 2) draft a Resolution including a plan for implementation of the UNEP-administered Ramsar Secretariat for consideration by the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- 3) in fulfilling its mandate, consider the importance of supporting and facilitating the Convention and serving the interest of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 5: Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee

Decision SC41-5: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a briefing paper on correlations between the Rules of Procedure for the COP and Resolution VII.1 on the Standing Committee and requested the Secretariat to seek legal advice on the questions concerning Switzerland's Permanent Observer status and potential election as a voting SC member. The SC felt that it is inappropriate for the Netherlands and other host countries of the IOPs to have the status of Permanent Observer.

Agenda item 7: Progress with preparations for COP11

Decision SC41-6: The Standing Committee decided that the date of COP11 should provisionally be set for the second half of May 2012, pending information about possible clashes with dates of other meetings.

Decision SC41-7: The Standing Committee determined that for planning purposes the duration of the COP should be set at nine days and that the structure of the agenda and other similar details should be the same as in previous COPs.

Decision SC41-8: The Standing Committee agreed that the theme for World Wetlands Day 2012 and COP11 should be linked and related to the broad theme of "Wetlands, Tourism, and Recreation", with the exact wording to be formulated at a later date.

Decision SC41-9: The Standing Committee thanked the Danone Group for providing the Evian Special Prize since COP7 in 1999 to accompany the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award, approved the criteria, procedures, and eligibility for the Award, and approved the calendar for the nomination and decision process.

Agenda item 8: Financial matters

Decision SC41-10: The Standing Committee:

- a) noted the small core budget surplus for 2009 and approved the release of CHF 25,000 of the Reserve Fund to support additional anticipated travel costs during 2010;

- b) noted with concern the continued decline in voluntary contributions and the increasing dependence upon non-Contracting Parties as a source for these contributions; and
- c) approved the Financial Statements for 2009 as presented in DOC. SC41-3, noting that these will be formally signed off by the auditors in May 2010.

Decision SC41-11: The Standing Committee noted the satisfactory progress with the implementation of the May 2009 Secretariat services agreement with IUCN.

Decision SC41-12: The Standing Committee noted the Contracting Parties in each region that have long overdue contributions, particularly those that have never paid since acceding to the Convention, and strongly encouraged those Parties to begin to address their arrears. The SC urged SC and Subgroup members to work with Parties in their regions to help them to resolve their overdue contributions.

Decision SC41-13: The Standing Committee noted the staff salary awards process and requested the Secretariat to keep its implementation under review and report back to the Subgroup on Finance on this matter.

Decision SC41-14: The Standing Committee approved the allocations of the 2010 core budget as presented in DOC. SC41-8.

Decision SC41-15: The Standing Committee thanked those Parties that have made additional voluntary contributions and noted the continuing decline in such contributions. The SC urged SC members and the Secretariat to redouble their efforts to find voluntary funding to support COP-mandated activities, including the work of the STRP, the Small Grants Fund, and Ramsar Advisory Missions, as well as for delegate support for COP11 and its preparatory regional meetings.

Decision SC41-16: The Standing Committee welcomed the proposals for a new budget framework for presentation to COP11 covering voluntary and in-kind contributions towards COP-mandated but unfunded activities, and requested the Secretariat to prepare indicative 2011 budgets on this basis for further consideration by the Subgroup on Finance and the 42nd meeting of the SC.

Decision SC41-17: The Standing Committee

- a) urged SC members and other Contracting Parties to work with their delegations to GEF meetings to secure recognition of the GEF as a recognized funding mechanism for Ramsar and wetlands;
- b) requested the Secretariat to explore whether an appropriate process to achieve this would be through the preparation of a Ramsar COP11 draft Resolution recognizing the Parties' willingness to accept GEF as a funding mechanism for the Convention,

- under GEF focal areas including international waters, climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity, noting the Convention's role as lead implementation partner of the CBD for wetlands; and
- c) requested the Secretariat to explore the development (simultaneously or subsequently) of an MOU with the GEF on these matters.

Decision SC41-18: The Standing Committee once again urged Parties and others to find ways to support the SGF and increase its capacity to fund more excellent projects.

Decision SC41-19: The Standing Committee approved allocation of funds for Regional Initiatives for 2010 as follows (in CHF):

i) networks

High Andean	22,000
West African coast	nil
Carpathian	37,500
Caribbean	32,000
American mangroves	25,000
La Plata river basin	20,000
Black Sea coast	nil
Total for networks	136,500

ii) centers

CREHO – Panama	23,643
RRC-CWA – Ramsar	60,000
RAMCEA – Kampala	40,000
Total for centers	123,643

Decision SC41-20: The Standing Committee approved the accrual of any unallocated funds for Regional Initiatives in 2010 for allocation under the same budget line for 2011 at the 42nd meeting of the SC.

Decision SC41-21: The Standing Committee approved the improved “Combined format for annual reporting and forward planning” by the Regional Initiatives, as presented in DOC. SC41-13, annex I.

Decision SC41-22: The Standing Committee welcomed the model contract (“letter of agreement”) presented in DOC. SC41-13, annex II, used by the Secretariat to disburse annual core budget allocations to Regional Initiatives, which specifies the reporting requirements, subject to minor textual corrections and an amendment proposed by Panama.

Agenda item 9: Regional Initiatives 2009-2012 in the framework of the Convention

Decision SC41-23: The Standing Committee noted the Secretariat's report on Regional Initiatives, endorsed the three new Initiatives (Black Sea Coast, Caribbean, and American Mangroves) as operating under the framework of the Convention, adopted the combined format for reporting and forward planning, and welcomed the model contract for disbursing annual budget allocations to the Initiatives.

Agenda item 10: Progress report on appointment of a Partnership Coordinator

Decision SC41-24: The Standing Committee took note of the Secretary General's report on the recruitment of a Partnership Coordinator.

Agenda item 11: COP10 outputs requiring action by the SC

Decision SC41-25: The Standing Committee determined that assessments of the Strategic Plan will be included in the National Reports format rather than by using a parallel process of mid-term review. The SC requested Parties to put forward at SC42 information about their progress in implementing the Strategic Plan and any difficulties encountered, as well as any suggestions for amending the Plan in a midterm review at COP11.

Agenda item 12: Collaborative review with the International Organization Partners

Decision SC41-26: The Standing Committee noted the report on the relationship with the International Organization Partners and requested the Secretariat to provide a comprehensive summary of collaborative activities with the IOPs for SC42. The SC encouraged the Secretariat to hold a meeting with all of the IOPs as soon as convenient and report on the results to the next SC meeting.

Agenda item 13.1: Promotion and utilization of the Changwon Declaration

Decision SC41-27: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat and Contracting Parties to redouble their efforts to disseminate the Changwon Declaration by utilizing various ways and means, including the preparation of related fact sheets, at various levels of meetings. The SC encouraged the Secretariat and STRP to prepare concise briefing notes drawn from the Changwon Declaration for important meetings of other processes.

Agenda item 13.2: Secretariat work plan 2010

Decision SC41-28: The Standing Committee took note of the activities undertaken since January 2010 on the basis of the 2010 Secretariat work plan and encouraged the Secretariat to continue using the work plan to inform its planning and implementation.

Agenda item 15: National Reports format

Decision SC41-29: The Standing Committee approved the draft National Report format for COP11, with the incorporation of any advice from the CEPA Oversight Panel, and agreed the timelines for issuing the format in January 2011 with a deadline for Parties' submission to the Secretariat of September 2011 (subject to confirmation of the dates of COP11). The SC requested the Secretariat to look for ways to reduce the number of indicators below 88 if possible and to revisit the questions concerning the Changwon Declaration.

Agenda item 16: Status of Ramsar sites

Decision SC41-30: The Standing Committee took note of the Status of Ramsar Sites report in DOC. SC41-25 and urged those Parties identified in paragraphs 6, 8, 9, and 11 to provide the information requested as soon as possible. The SC requested the concerned Parties to take steps to remove their sites from the Montreux Record to the extent possible, and urged Parties to provide voluntary financial support to the Secretariat to send Ramsar Advisory Missions when they are needed. The SC urged Parties that need to provide RISs or updated RISs to do so as a matter of high priority.

Agenda item 17.1: Report of the STRP Oversight Committee

Decision SC41-31: The Standing Committee noted the report of the STRP Oversight Committee and recognized the invaluable efforts of the STRP members and their organizations that are providing *pro bono* and in-kind work. The SC expressed its gratitude to the governments of Finland, Norway, Tanzania, and the UK for their voluntary contributions to the work of the STRP.

Agenda item 17.2: Report of the Chair of the STRP and the STRP work plan for 2010-2011

Decision SC41-32: The Standing Committee noted the report of the STRP Chair and endorsed the updated STRP work plan for 2010-2011. The SC approved the allocation of up to 50,000 Swiss francs from the Reserve Fund for the priority work of the STRP in 2010 and expressed its gratitude to Finland for its generous voluntary support.

Agenda item 17.3: Progress with ecological outcome-oriented effectiveness indicators

Decision SC41-33: The Standing Committee took note of the progress on the development of effectiveness indicators.

Agenda item 17.4: Progress with the IPBES

Decision SC41-34: The Standing Committee noted the information contained in DOC. SC41-27 and asked the Secretary General and Chair of the STRP to prepare a short briefing paper on the various options in the IPBES process.

Agenda item 18: Update on business partnership activities

Decision SC41-35: The Standing Committee noted the Programme Officer's report and acknowledged the very valuable inputs from the present partners. The SC requested the Secretariat to continue to seek to diversify its business partnerships and encouraged the Secretariat to further explore any new potential partnerships, with due consideration for the objectives of the Convention.

Agenda item 19.2: Theme for World Wetlands Day 2012

The CEPA Programme Officer recalled that the SC has already decided that the WWD theme for 2011 would be focused upon wetlands and forests, in the International Year of Forests, and with the 40th anniversary message built into that. For 2012, the SC has already agreed to link the WWD theme with that of COP11 and it will focus on "Wetlands, Tourism, and Recreation".

Agenda item 19.3: The Convention's 40th anniversary

Decision SC41-36: The Standing Committee noted the preparations underway for celebrating the Convention's 40th anniversary and encouraged the Parties to prepare for and become involved in 40th anniversary celebrations.

Agenda item 6 (continued)

Decision SC41-37: The Standing Committee

- a) noted the Secretariat's recommendations concerning amendments to the past recruitment process for Secretary General;
- b) decided to renew the Secretary General's contract for another term;
- c) requested the Secretary General to develop and implement a strategy to maximize synergies within the Secretariat, and to report the outcome assessed by the Executive Team to the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- d) requested the Executive Team to improve the criteria and methodology for the annual evaluation of the Secretary General on the basis of, *inter alia*, the terms of reference for the post and the approved Secretariat Work Plan.

Agenda item 20: Date and venue of the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee

Decision SC41-38: The Standing Committee determined to hold two full SC meetings in 2011 and to agree the dates when the full picture becomes more clear, and it requested the Secretariat and Romania, the host of COP11, to propose COP11 dates as soon as possible for electronic approval by the Committee.

Agenda item 22: Any other business

The SC agreed the following statement by consensus:

The Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands expresses its deep concern at the news of the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, now reaching the coast of Louisiana and its internationally important wetlands.

The SC urges the extractive industries concerned to take all possible measures to ensure that no further such incidents occur and to undertake due diligence in their business operations to minimize any risk of such spillages occurring in the future.

The Ramsar Convention has instructed its Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to prepare guidance for its Contracting Parties on addressing and managing issues of extractive industry business in relation to wetlands and that work is presently underway.

Agenda item 21: Report of the meeting

Decision SC41-39: The Standing Committee adopted the report of the first two days of the meeting, as amended, and mandated the Chair to approve the report of the third day on its behalf.