

## Report of the Secretariat on the implementation of the Decisions of the Standing Committee

### Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i. Note the report prepared by the Secretariat;
- ii. Note that the two lists of Decisions from SC24 to SC62 found at the linked address and at Annex 1 fulfil the first and second steps of the process approved in Decision SC62-21;
- iii. Decide that the Decisions identified as “outstanding” will be presented at future meetings of the Standing Committee as described in paragraph 4; and that Decisions identified as “implemented” will not be presented at future Standing Committee meetings.
- iv. Recommends that, where appropriate, “outstanding” Decisions be incorporated into future Resolutions such that they can then be considered “implemented” and removed from the list of “outstanding” Decisions.

### Background and introduction

1. At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) in 2022, the Parties adopted Resolution XIV.5 in which, in paragraph 13, the Parties decided *“that the procedure for recording and maintaining the Decisions of the Standing Committee will be decided by the Standing Committee itself, provided that all current and previous Decisions are easily accessible through the website of the Convention”*;
2. As follow-up to this instruction, the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (SC62), in Decision SC62-21, *“agreed to the three-step process outlined in paragraph 23 of document SC62 Doc.15 for maintaining the list of current Decisions of the Standing Committee, with the proviso that older Decisions which are excluded from the list do not become defunct, but remain accessible on the Convention website and can be included in the list if they are identified as still current.”*
3. The three steps outlined in document SC62 Doc.15 were as follows:
  - a) As a first step the Standing Committee could decide to consider all Decisions adopted before a specified meeting of the Committee date as defunct, in order to avoid the need to review hundreds of old Decisions unnecessarily. The Secretariat suggests that, for example, SC50 (2015) be established as the cut-off date.

- b) The second step would be for the Secretariat to prepare a document listing all Decisions of the Standing Committee from SC50 onwards, with a note against each one to indicate the status.
  - c) The third step would then be for the Secretariat to provide an updated version of the list of current Decisions at each meeting of the Standing Committee, indicating what had been done and which Decisions could then be marked as completed or defunct. The list for each meeting would then exclude the Decisions that had been agreed as no longer in effect.
4. The Secretariat has implemented the process agreed to at SC62 as follows:
- a) In line with Decision SC62-21 regarding the proposed first step, all Standing Committee Decisions remain accessible on the Convention website.
  - b) Regarding the first step as to what cut-off date to use for the review of Standing Committee Decisions, Standing Committee members indicated a preference for using SC24 as the starting point. The Secretariat has accordingly reviewed all Standing Committee Decisions from SC24 through SC62.
  - c) In accordance with the agreed second step outlined in document SC62 Doc.15, the Secretariat has reviewed all 1,072 Decisions taken by the Standing Committee since SC24 and, based on this, it has prepared two lists:
    - a list of all Decisions which have been “implemented” and are no longer in effect, which can be found at <https://www.ramsar.org/document/list-standing-committee-decisions-which-have-been-implemented-are-no-longer-effect>;
    - a list of “outstanding” Decisions, which is included in the present document at Annex 1.
  - d) In line with the third step, the Secretariat has added comments noting which outstanding Decisions might be marked as implemented, and so removed from the list. The Secretariat will provide an updated list of outstanding Decisions at each meeting of the Standing Committee.
5. The list of outstanding Decisions is comprised of 12 Decisions from SC62 and 13 Decisions from previous meetings. The Secretariat has noted a proposed action to close or implement each Decision. In some cases the Decisions have ongoing effect and should be incorporated into future Resolutions.

#### **Actions for consideration**

6. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee agree that the lists of Decisions linked to the present document and included in Annex 1 fulfil steps one and two of the instructions provided in Decision SC62-21.
7. The Secretariat recommends that, where appropriate, “outstanding” Decisions of the Standing Committee be incorporated into future Resolutions such that those Decisions can then be considered “implemented” and removed from the list of “outstanding” Decisions.

## Annex 1

### List of outstanding Decisions of the Standing Committee

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-17: The Standing Committee established a Working Group to lead the process to achieve organizational robustness to support the implementation of the Convention, including through the preparation of a draft resolution for the consideration of the Standing Committee at its 63rd meeting.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-18: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to follow approach 1 as defined in document SC62 Doc.12, using existing tools in preparing a plan to be presented to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, recognizing that the implementation of those tools should not replace in-person negotiations, and noting that further discussions to refine the process will be held.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-21: The Standing Committee agreed to the three-step process outlined in paragraph 23 of document SC62 Doc.15 for maintaining the list of current Decisions of the Standing Committee, with the proviso that older Decisions which are excluded from the list do not become defunct, but remain accessible on the Convention website and can be included in the list if they are identified as still current.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-23: The Standing Committee took note that a call for proposals for new Ramsar Regional Initiatives had been made in accordance with Resolution XIV.7, with a deadline for responses of 30 September 2023; and that the Secretariat will report the result of the call to the Standing committee at its 63rd meeting.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-25: The Standing Committee selected "Inventories", "CEPA", "Water, water-related, and water-management-related" and "Assessment of wetland values and services" as categories for which draft consolidations will be prepared for consideration at SC63.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-34: The Standing Committee noted the next steps in the support provided by the Secretariat to Contracting Parties on the completion of national wetland inventories, taking into account the amendments proposed.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-37: The Standing Committee noted the actions listed in paragraphs 15, 17, 18 and 19 of document SC62 Doc 8.2 to continue encouraging the payment of annual contributions by the Contracting Parties.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-49: The Standing Committee requested the Management Working Group to prepare a document that identifies the process for recruiting a new Secretary General, for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 63rd meeting, noting that this Decision supersedes Decision SC59-40.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-50: The Standing Committee requested the Scientific and Technical Review Panel to discuss the application of the current Ramsar wetland classification system at its 26th meeting and to report back to the 63rd meeting of the Standing Committee, including if required the outline of a proposed approach for a technical review in consultation with Contracting Parties, International Organization Partners and other multilateral environmental agreements, and requested the STRP to consider the use of a survey of STRP National Focal Points to collate technical feedback on the classification system from different regions.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-53: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to submit a report to SC63 on the challenges and opportunities related to the submission and updating of Ramsar Information Sheets, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• systemic, procedural and other technical challenges and options; and</li> <li>• financial challenges, needs and opportunities.</li> </ul> In doing so the Secretariat will obtain and collate inputs in consultation with Contracting Parties, the STRP and other stakeholders. The Secretariat will develop the approach to undertake the task in consultation with Contracting Parties through written procedures and online session(s).	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-54: The Standing Committee decided that the global report on the status of the List of Wetlands of International Importance is to be prepared by the Secretariat only once per triennium, for presentation to the COP, and repealed Decision SC35-28 on the same matter.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.
SC62	2023	Decision SC62-55: The Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to send a notification to National Focal Points inviting the submission of proposals on strengthening the process to include a Site on the List of Wetlands of International Importance, and prepare a report compiling these inputs, accompanied by the opinion of the Legal Advisor, for consideration at SC63.	Elements of the Decision are ongoing for the duration of the triennium.
SC59	2021	Decision SC59-25: The Standing Committee noted with concern the challenges caused by the timing of the arrival of the audited financial statements, which results in the late delivery of finance-related documents and prevents compliance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, and requested the Secretary General to take the measures necessary to ensure that all non-audit-related financial documents, especially those that are related to requests for additional funds, are circulated in accordance with Rule 10 ahead of the meetings of the Subgroup of Finance in order to facilitate adequate and appropriate consideration of all budgetary matters.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into a future draft resolution.

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC57	2019	Decision SC57-38: The Standing Committee took note of the progress in implementing the recommendations of the IUCN Financial Management Review of Non-core (Restricted) Fund Accounts and approved the following actions: a. to adopt the use of the standard terms “core” and “non-core” to describe Ramsar funds; b. to agree to engage with the auditor in its annual meetings, looking at the most cost-effective way, including virtual participation, or by sharing the auditor’s report at least three months in advance of the meeting (or earlier), in accordance with the Rules of Procedure on meeting documents; and c. to request the Secretariat to collect and share questions from members of the Subgroup by email in advance and collect answers from the auditor in time for the meeting.	Subgroup on Finance could recommend to Standing Committee that this Decision be repealed as this Decision was specific to group confirmation of outstanding contributions.
SC57	2019	Decision SC57-50: In accordance with the responsibilities defined in Resolution 5.2 on Financial and budgetary matters, Annex, 3, paragraph 8, the Standing Committee agreed that uncommitted/unexpended balances for budget lines can be carried forward to the next year within the triennium and presented to the following meeting of the Subgroup on Finance.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.
SC53	2017	Decision SC53-22: The Standing Committee decided that its future meetings would continue to be held in Gland, and welcomed the offer of Switzerland to work with the Secretariat to consider the feasibility of a visit to a Swiss Ramsar Site at a future meeting, without drawing on core budget funds.	Ongoing.
SC52	2016	Decision SC52-11: The Standing Committee decided that the Management Working Group be asked to review all new MOUs and other such agreements between the Ramsar Secretariat and other bodies, at its meeting immediately before the Standing Committee meeting at which the agreements were to be submitted for approval.	Ongoing. Management Working Group to consider if it recommends the Standing Committee repeal this Decision.
SC43	2011	Decision SC43-8: In order to streamline the process of replacing members of the CEPA Oversight Panel when necessary, the Standing Committee decided that, if one of the CEPA National Focal Points leaves during the first half of the triennium in which she or he has been elected, the Secretariat should select a replacement based on the nominations received for the triennium without regard to the maintenance of regional balance.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC42	2011	Decision SC42-8: The Standing Committee determined that the election of the new SC should be conducted early in the COP proceedings to allow time for the new members to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The SC determined that the pre-COP regional meetings should begin to identify their new representatives for COP appointment to the Standing Committee and complete their nominations during the regional meetings just before the opening of the COP; following the election of the new SC members, they will be charged with participating as observers in the meetings of the Conference Committee throughout the COP, and will take over as the new Standing Committee at the close of the COP.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.
SC42	2011	Decision SC42-32: The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue discussions with Switzerland on options for the future in regard to its permanent observer status and to continue to seek legal advice for interpretation of the Rules of Procedure with regard to the Standing Committee's practices.	Ongoing.
SC40	2009	Decision SC40-4: The Standing Committee agreed that a general principle should be to establish continuity (past Chairs, etc.) in all Standing Committee subgroups, in particular the Subgroups on Finance and on the COP. For the STRP Oversight Committee, the former Chair of Standing Committee should be added, and for the CEPA Oversight Panel, the former Vice-Chair of Standing Committee should be added to achieve this continuity – but because, for these two groups, a COP decision will be needed to formally introduce these additions, it would be valuable to initiate this during the current cycle as “ex officio” roles, provided there are no additional cost implications.	Could be incorporated into future draft resolution if requested by the Standing Committee.
SC34	2006	Decision SC34-2: The Standing Committee noted the report of the February 2006 IOPs/Secretariat meeting and encouraged the Secretariat and IOPs to institutionalize similar meetings on an annual basis. The SC urged the IOPs to establish direct contacts with the Parties' National Focal Points and to collaborate with one another when more than one is located in a Party, and it encouraged the Parties to include local officers of the IOPs in their National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees. The SC also urged SC members to explain the role of the IOPs in Ramsar to other officials in their governments. The SC urged the IOPs to assist the Parties, where appropriate, in implementing the Ramsar/CBD Joint Work Plan, and it invited the IOPs to report regularly to the SC on their relevant activities.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution

Meeting	Year	Title	Comment / Proposed action
SC30	2004	Decision SC30-9: The Standing Committee recognized the value of mid-term meetings of regional groupings of Parties and pre-accession countries and adopted as a goal that there should be at least one intersessional meeting of each regional grouping in each triennium. The SC recommended that proposed meetings should be the responsibility of a country or countries in the regional grouping concerned to organize, with the Bureau, and that the purpose of the meeting and the issues to be discussed be kept flexible so as to meet the priority issues and needs of the countries concerned. Opportunities should be sought to capitalize on other relevant meetings taking place in the region. The Bureau will provide advice to organizing countries and participate in any such meetings as appropriate.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution
SC26	2001	Decision SC26-40: The Standing Committee decided that, when not otherwise established by Resolutions of the Conference of Contracting Parties, the allocation of funds by the Bureau for sponsored delegates to Ramsar meetings shall be as follows: a) funds should be directed first to one delegate from each Ramsar Contracting Party in the UN list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs); b) additional funds should be allocated to one delegate from Contracting Parties that are developing countries and countries with economies in transition; c) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from LDCs; and d) in case funds are still available, they should be allocated to a second delegate from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution
SC25	2000	Decision SC25-28: The Standing Committee decided that: a) the OECD/DAC List of Aid Recipients should continue to be used, mutatis mutandis as applying to Ramsar Contracting Parties and other countries eligible for accession, for eligibility for SGF as established by Resolution VI.6; b) the Bureau, when allocating assistance for participating at Ramsar meetings, should use the OECD/DAC list in the following order of priorities: i) Contracting Parties in Part I of the List; ii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: Central and Eastern European Countries and New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; and iii) Contracting Parties in Part II of the List: More advanced Developing Countries and Territories; c) the Bureau should prepare a report on the regulations and practice applied on this matter by other environment-related conventions for consideration at the next Standing Committee meeting and possible transmission with recommendations to COP8.	Ongoing. Could be incorporated into future draft resolution.