

THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Resumed session
Gland, Switzerland, 23-27 May 2022

Report and Decisions of the resumed session of the 59th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Tuesday 24 May 2022

10:05 – 12:35 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 1: Opening statements

1. Opening statements were made by:
 - H.E. Eng. Mohamed Al Afkham, Chair of the Standing Committee;
 - Mr Stewart Maginnis, Deputy Secretary-General IUCN;
 - Ms Priyanie Amerasinghe, International Water Management Institute, on behalf of the six International Organization Partners (IOPs); and
 - Ms Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Convention.
2. Ukraine made a statement on the potential consequences of environmental changes of 20 Ramsar Sites as a result of Russian aggression. Interventions were made by France, China, Japan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda

3. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda in document SC59/2022 Doc.2 Rev.1.
4. Some participants raised concerns regarding the inclusion of proposed Agenda item 27 under Other Matters, considering that the issue raised would be more appropriately addressed under other fora. Other participants expressed support for its retention.
5. After some considerable discussion in which participants could not agree on the way forward, advice was sought from the Convention's Legal Advisor, who explained that under recognized international law, consensus indicated that participants were generally in agreement. The legal advisor also drew attention to Rule 39 of the current Rules of Procedure which indicated that, should it not be possible to reach agreement, members of the Standing Committee could vote on the issue, the outcome to be decided by a simple majority.
6. Algeria, China and Iran (Islamic Republic of) wished their objections to the inclusion of this agenda item to be reflected in the report of the meeting.
7. A proposal was made to amend the proposed agenda item to: "Consideration of the potential consequences of environmental changes of 20 Ramsar Sites in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression". This received widespread support.

8. China wished it to be recorded in the report of the meeting that it had no comment to make on the proposed amended agenda item.
9. Interventions were made by Algeria, Australia, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uruguay.

Decision SC59/2022-01: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional agenda in document SC59/2022 Doc.2 Rev.1, with Agenda item 27 amended to: Consideration of the potential consequences of environmental changes of 20 Ramsar Sites in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression.

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the provisional working programme

10. The Chair introduced the provisional working programme in document SC59/2022 Doc.3 Rev.1.
11. A request was made to bring forward discussion of Agenda item 11 *Report of the Effectiveness Working Group* from Wednesday morning to Tuesday afternoon, between items 10 *Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group* and 21 *Ramsar Regional Initiatives*.
12. A request was also made to remove the proposed closed session on Friday afternoon regarding item 22 *Report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation* and to include this under the same item, to be addressed on Thursday afternoon.
13. Interventions were made by Australia and Republic of Korea.

Decision SC59/2022-02: The Standing Committee adopted the provisional working programme in document SC59/2022 Doc.3 Rev.1 as amended.

Agenda item 4: Admission of observers

14. The Secretariat outlined the key paragraphs of document SC59/2022 Doc.4 *Admission of observers*.

Decision SC59/2022-03: The Standing Committee admitted the observers listed in document SC59/2022 Doc.4.

Agenda item 5: Report of the Executive Team and Chair of the Standing Committee

15. The United Arab Emirates introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.5 *Report of the Executive Team and Chair of the Standing Committee*.
16. The Executive Team and Chair of the Standing Committee were thanked for their hard work, particularly under the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic.
17. An intervention was made by China.

Decision SC59/2022-04: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59/2022 Doc.5.

Agenda item 7.1: Report from the Chair of the Selection Committee on the recruitment of the next Secretary General

18. The Chair of the Selection Committee provided an oral update noting that the Committee had met on 2 March 2022 and had agreed a timeline. The Committee intended to complete its work by the end of June 2022.

Agenda item 7.2: Report of the Management Working Group

19. The Chair of the Management Working Group introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.7.2 summarizing the work of the Group since the Standing Committee's 59th meeting (SC59) in June 2021, and the report of the Working Group discussions at its meeting on 23 May.

Decision SC59/2022-05: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59/2022 Doc.7.2.

Agenda item 6: Report of the Secretary General

20. The Secretary General introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.6 summarizing the work of the Secretariat from 1 May 2021 to 28 February 2022.
21. The Secretariat was particularly thanked for the work done and its efforts in finding creative ways to support Contracting Parties during the pandemic.
22. Concerns were raised by Sweden and Switzerland concerning the Secretariat's support of the project funded by the German Climate Initiative (IKI). In response, the Secretary General reminded participants that this issue had been discussed extensively by the Standing Committee and the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13) resulting in paragraph 26 of Resolution XIII.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*, which clarifies the role of the Secretariat in supporting this and other Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs). The Secretariat is strictly following and implementing this mandate as well as other guidance provided by the Standing Committee on the management of non-core funds. Sweden stated that the IKI project was not a listed and accepted non-core project and that the paragraph the Secretary General was referring to is therefore not applicable. To this and further questions from Sweden and Switzerland the Secretary General reminded Contracting Parties of Annex 3 of Resolution XIII.2 which provides that Regional Initiatives is one of the Secretariat's priorities for fundraising for non-core resources, and she recalled the information provided in the financial report on non-core projects, and Annex 3 of the Subgroup on Finance in the Report and Decisions of SC59 in June 2021 which refers to this project. It was also reiterated that the decision of COP13 mentioned previously regarding non-core projects, which is also repeated in the COP13 Resolution on Regional Initiatives, responded to and applies to this project and the Secretariat is following this mandate. Germany encouraged Contracting Parties to directly contact the Secretariat should they have any questions with regards to the German funded IKI project.
23. Interventions were made by Algeria, China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Youth Engaged in Wetlands.

Decision SC59/2022-06: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59/2022 Doc.6.

14:30 – 18:35 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 10: Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group

24. Australia, as Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group, introduced the Group's report in document SC59/2022 Doc.10. The Group had met the previous day and had prepared draft terms of reference for a Strategic Plan Working Group for the Fifth Strategic Plan (SP5), available on the Ramsar website as document SC59/2022 Com.1.
25. Participants proposed various amendments to document SC59/2022 Doc.10 and were asked to submit these, and any comments on document SC59/2022 Com.1, electronically to the Secretariat so that amended versions of both documents could be prepared for further consideration at the present meeting.
26. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Sweden, Uganda and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Agenda item 11: Report of the Effectiveness Working Group

27. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Chair of the Effectiveness Working Group, introduced the Group's final report in document SC59/2022 Doc.11 along with the draft resolution contained in its annex, noting that both were the outcome of consensus within the Group.
28. The Chair of the Working Group stated that the Group would consult informally with Contracting Parties which had commented, and would provide a revised draft for further consideration by the Committee.
29. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, China, France, Japan and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Agenda item 21.2: Report of the Secretariat on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives

30. The Secretariat introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.21.2. In item iii) in the first part of the document, regarding the proposed new RRI in the Southern African Development Community region, the Secretariat proposed changing "consider" to "approve".
31. Concern was expressed that the consultant's assessment referred to in paragraph 22 of the document contained errors that had been incorporated into the draft resolution on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2022-2024* in document SC59 Doc.21.1. Costa Rica as Chair of the Working Group on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives clarified the scope of the consultant's assessment and noted that concern was also raised regarding the lack of financial information from some RRIs, as noted in paragraph 9 of the document.
32. Interventions were made by Costa Rica, Japan, Republic of Korea, Uganda and the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia.

Decision SC59/2022-07: The Standing Committee took note of the annual reports submitted by the Ramsar Regional Initiatives for 2021 in accordance with Resolution XIII.9 on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2019-2021*.

Decision SC59/2022-08: The Standing Committee approved the proposed new reporting format for Ramsar Regional Initiatives contained in Annex 2 of document SC58 Doc.22.2.

Decision SC59/2022-09: The Standing Committee approved the proposal for a new Ramsar Regional Initiative in the Southern African Development Community region, within the framework of the Convention, in line with paragraph 12 of Resolution XIII.9, contained in document SC59 Doc.21.2.

Decision SC59/2022-10: The Standing Committee took note of and approved the review by the Secretariat's Legal Advisor of existing relevant Resolutions and decisions on Ramsar Regional Initiatives, in line with paragraph 30 of Resolution XIII.9 and contained in document SC58 Doc.22.4.

Decision SC59/2022-11: The Standing Committee took note of the summary assessment of the operations and achievements of the Ramsar Regional Initiatives operating during the period 2019-2021, in Annex 3 of document SC59 Doc.21.2, prepared by the Secretariat for submission to COP14 in line with paragraph 28 of Resolution XIII.9.

Agenda item 21.1: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2022-2024
Agenda item 24.9: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – the basics (*Submitted by Sweden*)
Agenda item 24.10: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – COP14-COP15 (*Submitted by Sweden*)
Agenda item 24.11: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – addressing old decisions (*Submitted by Sweden*)

33. Costa Rica, as Chair of the Working Group on the Ramsar Regional Initiatives, introduced the outcome of the Group's work in document SC59 Doc.21.1 and its annexed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2022-2024. The Chair of the Working Group drew attention to those parts of the text that were still in square brackets, and sought input as to how these could be resolved.
34. Participants made various observations and recommended courses of action to address those parts of the document, and were asked to submit these electronically to the Secretariat so that a revised version could be completed.
35. After some debate, Sweden was invited to present the three draft resolutions on Ramsar Regional Initiatives that it had submitted (documents SC59/2022 Doc.24.9, SC59/2022 Doc.24.10 and SC59/2022 Doc.24.11). Sweden explained that: the first of these was intended to include long-standing agreements that would not need to be addressed at each meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP); the second would include matters of specific interest for the forthcoming COP; and the third would address old decisions and Resolutions that were no longer valid and could be retired.
36. After further debate, the Chair of the Standing Committee established an open-ended contact group to examine the various proposed draft resolutions and report back to the Committee with recommendations for a way forward. He charged the contact group with determining its own terms of reference.

37. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica on its own behalf and on behalf of Panama, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Japan, Mexico, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia.

Agenda item 24.3: Draft resolution on development of legal indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention (*Submitted by Burkina Faso*)

38. The Chair introduced document SC59 Doc.24.3, noting that Burkina Faso, the proponent of the draft resolution, was not present at the meeting.
39. Several participants expressed concern that such a resolution, as currently drafted, would be difficult to implement and would have financial implications. They believed the activities proposed should be further considered among Parties, with their inputs leading to the possible submission of a proposal after COP14. It was noted that this issue could also be considered in the development of the Fifth Strategic Plan (SP5), and that the Standing Committee had identified a review of policy and legal frameworks for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands as a priority cross-cutting issue at SC57.
40. The Chair asked the Secretariat to contact Burkina Faso to relay the concerns raised by the Committee and request that it consider withdrawing the draft resolution, and report back any response received.
41. Interventions were made by Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Japan, Slovenia and Uruguay.

Agenda item 24.17: Proposed draft resolution – Online drafting and preparatory negotiations of documents (*Submitted by Sweden*)

42. Sweden introduced the proposed draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.17, indicating that this was intended to improve the efficiency of work under the Convention and emphasizing that online preparatory work was not intended to replace face-to-face negotiations.
43. During discussion, several participants noted they considered the intent behind the proposal to be sufficiently well captured in the proposed draft resolution prepared by the Effectiveness Working Group under Agenda item 11. Concern was also expressed about the possible financial implications of implementing such a resolution. It was suggested that part of the content of the proposed draft resolution might be further elaborated in a set of voluntary guidelines prepared for Contracting Parties. The possibility of establishing a pilot phase for COP15, if necessary through a brief associated resolution, was also raised.
44. The Chair asked Australia, Brazil, Japan, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to meet informally and propose a way forward.

Wednesday 25 May 2022

10:10 – 12:45 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 20.1: Report of the Subgroup on COP14

45. China provided an oral presentation of recent work undertaken by the Subgroup on COP14, which had most recently met on 23 May. The report of the meeting would be sent to the Secretariat for distribution through its website.
46. Participants expressed concern that there was little detailed information available on the practical arrangements in place, and asked that an alternative plan (Plan B) be prepared before the end of SC59, in order to safeguard the COP should it not prove possible to host the COP in Wuhan. Several participants stressed the importance of holding the meeting before the end of 2022.
47. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked the Working Group to report back before the end of the present meeting with other possible options for holding the COP.
48. Interventions were made by Algeria, Austria, China, Czech Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union as President of the Council of the European Union, United Arab Emirates and Youth Engaged in Wetlands.

Agenda item 24.18: Proposed draft resolution on how to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages (*Submitted by Sweden*)

49. Sweden introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.24.18, indicating that the draft resolution was intended to improve the efficiency of work done under the Convention. Sweden also highlighted that the old decision on drafting draft resolutions is outdated, due to the fact that consolidation processes might give reason for changing the Convention's present way of writing them.
50. Some participants queried what specific problems the draft resolution was intended to address. Others observed that the subject matter covered in the draft resolution was similar to that included in Decision SC58-19, directed to the Secretariat. It was suggested that this was not an appropriate subject for a resolution of the COP. One participant noted that the draft resolution contained some useful elements.
51. After further discussion and following a suggestion from a participant, the Standing Committee agreed to forward the draft resolution to COP14 for further consideration, with all the text of the document included in square brackets.
52. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and the Secretary General.

Decision SC59/2022-12: The Standing Committee decided to forward the draft resolution on how to structure, write and handle Convention documents and messages contained in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.18 to COP14 for further consideration with all the document's text in square brackets.

Agenda item 25: Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel
Agenda item 26: Draft resolution on future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025 (*Submitted by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel*)

53. The representative of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) presented the panel's report in document SC59/2022 Doc.25 on behalf of the Chair of the STRP. He thanked the Secretariat for its support in the challenging circumstances of the past triennium. He drew attention to the 13 high priority tasks identified in Annex 2 and noted that these, if approved, could help to ensure that the STRP made a timely start in its work for the next triennium, subject to the availability of resources.
54. In discussion, participants expressed their appreciation for the work of the STRP, particularly commending the special edition of the *Global Wetland Outlook*.
55. Participants were asked to submit to the Secretariat any suggested amendments to the draft resolution in the document, for incorporation into a revised version.
56. Interventions were made by Australia, China, Costa Rica, Sweden and Uruguay.

Agenda item 24.14: Proposed draft resolution on the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical work – The basics (*Submitted by Sweden*)
Agenda item 24.15: Proposed draft resolution on the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical bodies COP14-COP15 (*Submitted by Sweden*)

57. Sweden introduced documents SC59/2022 Doc.24.14 and SC59/2022 Doc.24.15, indicating that these were intended to improve the governance and efficiency of the Convention's scientific and technical work.
58. During discussion, some participants noted that the work of the STRP had been revised in depth at COP12 and questioned the need for further extensive review. Others sought clarification on the mandate for the proposed resolutions. Some noted that the draft resolutions contained useful elements that could improve the operations of the STRP, particularly in broadening its engagement.
59. The Chair asked that an informal open-ended group, to include Australia, Austria, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the representative of the STRP, meet to consider the three draft resolutions on scientific and technical matters, and propose a way forward.
60. Interventions were made by Austria, Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, the Secretary General and the representative of the STRP.

Agenda item 15: Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee

61. The Secretariat introduced the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.15 and its annexes, indicating that it would be updated to reflect changes in Annex 4 and Angola's accession to the Convention.

62. During discussion, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union observed that the roles of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee were not specified. It was recommended that these be included in Annex 3.
63. Sweden suggested that this point be reopened in the light of decisions that will be taken at the COP.
64. Participants were asked to send any comments to the Secretariat so that a revised version of the draft resolution could be prepared.
65. Interventions were made by China, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, and Sweden.

Agenda item 24.1: Proposed draft resolution on Protection, management and restoration of wetlands as Nature-based solutions to address the climate crisis (*Submitted by Spain*)

66. In the absence of the proponent, the Secretariat introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.1 Rev.1.
67. During discussion, participants generally expressed support for the draft resolution, though several drew attention to its focus on the Mediterranean region and considered that its scope should be expanded to global level. A number of participants expressed serious reservations about the use of the term “nature-based solutions” as they did not believe that this had a settled definition in a multilateral environmental context and considered that use of such terms should be avoided in official documents. Others drew attention to the recent UNEA-5 meeting, which had agreed a resolution on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development.
68. Following further discussion, the Chair asked an open-ended group of Contracting Parties, to include Austria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Indonesia and Slovenia, to meet informally and propose textual amendments to the draft resolution.
69. Interventions were made by Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mexico, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay on behalf of Argentina.

15:00 – 19:10 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 23: Update on the status of Sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance

70. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.23 Rev.1, drawing attention to the actions requested and noting that the document had been prepared in February 2021 and could be updated if the Committee so asked.
71. During discussion, a request was made that the information in Annex 1 be updated taking into account the latest information uploaded by Contracting Parties to the end of June 2022. Other discussion concerned paragraph iv) in the section under “Actions requested”. Some considered this to raise issues not relevant to a document they considered to be essentially of a technical nature, and asked that it be deleted. Others felt strongly that the paragraph should be retained and the requested action addressed. The Secretary General noted that the

paragraph highlighted a request from the Secretariat for the guidance of the Standing Committee.

72. In the absence of agreement, the Chair decided to defer further discussion until Agenda item 24.2 had been addressed.
73. Interventions were made by Algeria, Australia, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mauritius, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay on behalf of Argentina and the Secretary General.

Agenda item 24.2: Draft Resolution on review of the Ramsar criteria, and delisting of Ramsar Sites located in territories which are not recognized at the UN level as part of the territory of the submitting country (*Submitted by Algeria*)

74. Algeria introduced the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.2, stating that its adoption would increase transparency and ensure the Convention adhered to established legal norms appropriate to multilateral environmental agreements.
75. During discussion, some participants strongly supported the draft resolution. Others were strongly opposed to it, stating that they believed the issues it raised go beyond the intent of the Convention and would be more appropriately dealt with in other fora.
76. As it was not possible to reach a consensus, the Standing Committee agreed that the draft resolution should be forwarded to COP14 for further consideration with the whole text in square brackets.
77. Interventions were made by Algeria, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Chad, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

Decision SC59/2022-13: The Standing Committee decided to forward the draft resolution on review of the Ramsar criteria, and delisting of Ramsar Sites located in territories which are not recognized at the UN level as part of the territory of the submitting country, in document SC59 Doc 24.2, to COP14 for further consideration with all the document's text in square brackets.

Agenda item 24.4 Draft resolution on Guidance on Conservation and Management of Small Wetlands (*Submitted by China, cosponsored by the Republic of Korea*)

78. China, as co-sponsor, introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.4 and invited further input from participants.
79. During discussion, the intent behind the draft resolution was broadly welcomed. However, concerns were expressed about the introduction of new and potentially complex classification systems as proposed in the document's annex. Some Parties requested that certain points of the resolution be more flexible and less restrictive for Parties.
80. The Chair asked that a group, to include Australia, China and the representative of the STRP, meet in order to prepare an amended version of the draft resolution for further consideration by the Committee.

81. Interventions were made by Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, Mexico, Uruguay and the representative of the STRP.

Agenda item 24.5: Draft Resolution on Integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategy (*Submitted by China*)

82. China introduced the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.5.
83. During discussion, the draft resolution was widely welcomed. Several participants proposed changes to the text, in particular recommending that use of terms that did not have settled definitions in an international environmental context should be avoided.
84. The Chair asked participants who had amendments to the text to send these to the Secretariat so that a revised version could be presented to the Committee.
85. Interventions were made by Austria, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uruguay.

Agenda item 24.6: Draft Resolution on Wetland education in the formal education sector (*Submitted by China and Republic of Korea*)

86. The Republic of Korea introduced the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.6.
87. The draft resolution received strong support from participants, some of whom made proposals for minor changes to the text.
88. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked participants who had amendments to the text to send these to the Secretariat so that a revised version could be presented to the Committee.
89. Interventions were made by Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Finland, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Sweden and Youth Engaged in Wetlands.

Agenda item 27: Draft Resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Awards (*Submitted by Sweden*)

90. Sweden introduced the draft resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Awards, noting that most of the draft resolution was based on the same information as that contained in Resolution VI.18 *Establishment of the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards* and existing Standing Committee decisions about the Awards. More substantive changes were summarized in the document's introduction.
91. During discussion, the draft resolution was generally supported. It was noted that there was no reference in it to conservation. The importance of balancing Ramsar objectives was stressed, as was the need for maintaining full transparency.
92. Participants were asked to submit their amendments to the Secretariat for incorporation into a revised version of the draft resolution.

93. Interventions were made by France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay.

Agenda item 14: Report of the Working Group on Observer status in the United Nations General Assembly

94. Mexico, as Chair of the Observer Status Working Group, presented the Group's report in document SC59/2022 Doc.14 and sought guidance on how the Group might continue its work.
95. During discussion, several participants stressed the importance of the work undertaken and thanked Mexico for its efforts. Others noted that the issue had been the subject of discussion in Ramsar Convention fora for many years and that it had proven difficult to make substantive progress. It was also noted that there had been a low level of engagement and participation among Contracting Parties. There was general agreement that the work undertaken to date was of value to the Convention and that, although not urgent, some mechanism should be found to allow its continuance. A proposal was made that the Standing Committee establish an open-ended working group with broad regional participation to continue the present Group's work. Concerns were raised regarding the title and remit of any such group.
96. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked interested Contracting Parties to consult with their regions and return to the meeting with proposals for a way forward.
97. Interventions were made by Brazil, Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and the Secretary General.

Thursday 26 May 2022

10:10 – 13:00 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 8.1: Report on financial matters for 2019-2021 and 2022 including the audited statements for 2021
Agenda item 8.2: Status of annual contributions
Agenda item 8.3: Budget scenarios for 2023-2025 and draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters
Agenda item 8.4: Potential financial implications of draft resolutions

98. Mexico, as Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, introduced documents SC59/2022 Doc.8.1, SC59/2022 Doc.8.2, SC59/2022 Doc.8.3 and SC59/2022 Doc.8.4, these representing the outputs of the Subgroup's work, noting that document SC59/2022 Doc.8.3 contained a draft resolution on *Financial and budgetary matters*. He commended the Secretariat for its meticulous financial management and thanked his colleagues for their hard work under the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. He noted that the Subgroup had met on 23 May 2022. Its report was available as document SC59/2022 Com.2.
99. During discussion, minor amendments to document SC59/2022 Com.2 were proposed. One participant, supported by several others, suggested that the Secretariat find ways of encouraging Contracting Parties to pay their annual contribution in a timely fashion, noting that Contracting Parties making voluntary contributions might like to consider the state of annual contributions should they wish to attach conditions to the disbursement of those funds. They asked that this view be reflected in the report of the meeting.

100. The report of the Subgroup was approved with the suggested minor amendments. The Chair of the Subgroup on Finance announced that the Subgroup would meet again briefly on Friday to check whether adjustments were needed as a result of the Standing Committee discussions. If needed, these would be reflected in a revised final report of the Subgroup of Finance and the approved decisions would be reflected in the Friday report of the Standing Committee.
101. Interventions were made by Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mexico, Switzerland and Uruguay.

Agenda item 24.16: Draft Resolution on the Establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the Framework of the Ramsar Convention (*Submitted by China and cosponsors*)

102. China introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.16, noting that Cambodia's co-sponsorship had now been officially approved. China was willing to host an international mangrove centre.
103. During discussion, the importance of mangroves as components of wetland ecosystems was widely acknowledged. However, serious reservations were expressed concerning gaps in information in the draft resolution, particularly concerning proposed governance, funding mechanisms and data management. Some participants asked whether the proposed centre might more appropriately form the basis for a Ramsar Regional Initiative.
104. The Chair asked China to consult with other interested Contracting Parties and report back to the Committee with proposals for a way forward.
105. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Sweden.

Agenda item 24.13: Draft Resolution on Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates (*Submitted by Australia, in consultation with the Chair of the STRP*)

106. Australia introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.13, noting that it was the output of work undertaken over a number of years, and drew on a policy brief prepared by the STRP.
107. Participants largely welcomed the draft resolution. Some made suggestions for minor amendments to the text.
108. The Chair asked all those with amendments to forward these to the Secretariat so that a revised version of the draft resolution could be prepared for later consideration.
109. Interventions were made by China, Costa Rica, Finland, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the representative of the STRP, and Wetlands International.

Agenda item 22: Report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation

110. Austria, as Co-chair, introduced the report of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) on Wetland City Accreditation in document SC59/2022 Doc.22. He summarized the work of the IAC and reported that all 25 cities that had applied for accreditation had been accepted. These were:
- Canada: Sackville.
 - China: Hefei; Jining; Liangping; Nanchang; Panjin; Wuhan; Yangcheng.
 - France: Belval-en-Argonne; Seltz.
 - Indonesia: Surabaya; Tanjung Jabung Timur.
 - Iran (Islamic Republic of): Bandar Khamir; Varzaneh.
 - Iraq: Al Chibayish.
 - Japan: Izumi; Niigata.
 - Morocco: Ifrane.
 - Republic of Korea: Gochang; Seocheon; Seogwipo.
 - Rwanda: Kigali.
 - South Africa: Cape Town.
 - Spain: Valencia.
 - Thailand: Sri Songkhram District.
111. During discussion, participants lauded members of the IAC for their hard work and commitment and emphasized the importance of Wetland City Accreditation in raising the profile of the Convention.
112. Interventions were made by Canada, China, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

Decision SC59/2022-14: The Standing Committee took note of the 25 cities that had been approved for Wetland City Accreditation and accepted the report of the Co-chairs of the Independent Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation in document SC59/2022 Doc.22.

Agenda item 24.8: Draft Resolution on Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention (*Submitted by Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Austria and China*)

113. The Republic of Korea introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.8, thanking the IAC for its work and drawing attention to Annex I of the document, which contained a proposal for operational guidelines for Wetland City Accreditation.
114. During discussion it was noted that implementation of the draft resolution would have some financial implications. It was recalled that Resolution XII.10 on *Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* specifically excluded the use of core funds in the accreditation process, and concern was expressed that a precedent might be set.
115. The Chair asked those concerned to confer and present a revised proposal later in the meeting.
116. Interventions were made by Austria, Japan, Sweden and United States of America.

Agenda item 24.12: Draft Resolution on Strengthening Ramsar Connections Through Youth
(Submitted by Australia and Costa Rica)

117. Australia, as co-sponsor, introduced the draft resolution in document SC59/2002 Doc.24.12.
118. The draft resolution was widely welcomed and supported in discussions, with participants suggesting some minor amendments.
119. The Chair asked all those who had suggested amendments to forward these to the Secretariat so that a revised version of the draft resolution could be prepared.
120. Interventions were made by Australia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Youth Engaged in Wetlands.

15:30 – 19:00 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 12: Review of the Rules of Procedure

121. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.12, noting that it was an update of a document originally prepared for SC58, prepared by the Secretariat and the Ramsar Legal Advisor.
122. During discussion, participants stated they considered that further work was needed on the issue.
123. Interventions were made by Switzerland and Uruguay.

Decision SC59/2022-15: The Standing Committee noted document SC59 Doc.12.

Agenda item 13: Review of all previous Resolutions and decisions

124. The Secretariat introduced documents SC59 Doc.13, SC59 Doc.13.1, SC59 Doc.13.2 and SC59 Doc.13.3, noting that these were the response to a number of Standing Committee decisions and seeking guidance on how best to proceed with reviewing previous Resolutions and decisions.
125. During discussion participants thanked the Secretariat for the work it had undertaken to date. They acknowledged the scale and complexity of the task and were concerned that future work should not put undue pressure on the Secretariat's resources and capacity. There was agreement that document SC59 Doc.13.2 *Draft list of Resolutions that are effectively defunct* could be forwarded to COP14 for its consideration.

Decision SC59/2022-16: The Standing Committee agreed to forward document SC59 Doc.13.2 *Draft list of Resolutions that are effectively defunct* to COP14 for its consideration.

Decision SC59/2022-17: The Standing Committee requested that the Secretariat produce options to continue the review of all previous resolutions and decisions for consideration at COP14. It should cover:

- **Options for prioritizing the consolidation of Resolutions by theme, including but not limited to, ranking from a list of identified topics, or undertaking a consolidation exercise associated with new resolutions;**
- **An estimate of the timeframes and resources required for the Secretariat to undertake this work.**

The Standing Committee requested that the Secretariat prepare a draft resolution with the above elements for consideration and approval by COP14.

Agenda item 17.1: Report of the Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel

126. Sweden, as Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel, introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.17.1, noting that its Annex 2 contained the text of a draft resolution on the new CEPA approach. This drew on the results of a survey of CEPA focal points, summarized in Annex B of the document.
127. During discussion, the report was widely welcomed and Sweden was thanked for its work. There was broad support for the new approach to CEPA outlined in the report. Concerns were raised regarding the use of the term “nature-based solutions” in the draft resolution. Some participants stated that these should be deleted or replaced with the term “ecosystem-based approaches”. Other participants wished to retain the term “nature-based solutions”. Concern was also raised regarding changes in governance included in the proposed draft resolution. Some participants considered that these went beyond the mandate of the report and wished to see them removed.
128. After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the draft resolution could be forwarded to COP14 for its consideration if the term “nature-based solutions” were replaced with “nature-based solutions/ecosystem-based approaches” in square brackets and if references to governance were also placed in square brackets.
129. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked all those who had made interventions to forward these to the Secretariat so that a revised version of the draft resolution could be prepared.
130. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, Mexico, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

Agenda item 16: Enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

131. The Secretariat introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.16. This was an update of document SC59 Doc.16, the annex to which contained the text of a draft resolution. The Secretariat noted that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity had expired. Development of a new MoU and joint work plan would depend on the final outcome of the post-2020 biodiversity framework.
132. During discussion, one Party recognized the actions of the Secretariat to collaborate with secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements, making the Convention very

visible. A proposal was made to amend the draft resolution in the annex of document SC59 Doc.16. Other participants stated that they could not decide on the proposed amendments until they had had the opportunity to examine them more carefully.

133. The Chair asked the interested Parties to conduct consultations and to forward the proposed amendments to the Secretariat so that these could be distributed for further consideration by participants.
134. Interventions were made by Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, Mexico and Switzerland.

Agenda item 18: Work plan of the Secretariat for 2022

135. The Secretariat introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.18, containing the Integrated Secretariat Annual Plan for 2022 as an extension of the approved Triennial Plan for 2019-2021, noting that the extension was a result of the postponement of COP14.

Decision SC59/2022-18: The Standing Committee took note of and approved the Integrated Secretariat Annual Plan for 2022 in document SC59/2022 Doc.18.

Agenda item 27: Consideration of the potential consequences of changes of 20 Ramsar Sites in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression

136. Ukraine read out a statement regarding this Agenda item and asked that it be included in full in the record of the meeting. It is therefore annexed to this report as Annex 1.
137. During discussion, a range of views was expressed. Some participants strongly supported Ukraine's statement; others took issue with it, believing that focusing on this issue was not appropriate and would distract the Convention from fulfilling its mandate. There was general agreement that, when conditions permitted, the status of the Ramsar Sites in question should be assessed and actions undertaken for any restoration needed.
138. Interventions were made by Algeria, Australia, China, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Russian Federation (which asked that its intervention be included in the report of the meeting; see Annex 2), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

Decision SC59/2022-19: The Standing Committee took note of the intervention made by Ukraine.

Friday 27 May

10:00 – 10:30 Closed Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 20.3: The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards

10:30– 13:00 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 20.3: The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards (continued in open session)

139. China announced the winners of the Ramsar Conservation Awards as follows:

- Mr Kurechi Masayuki, Board Member, Ramsar Network, Japan, Ramsar Conservation Award for Wetland Wise Use;
- Ms Carla Ximena Giraldo Malca (Peru), Ramsar Conservation Award for Wetland Innovation;
- Ms Fernanda Samuel, National Coordinator of Mangrove Protection and Restoration off the Coast of Angola (Angola), Ramsar Conservation Award for Young Wetland Champions;
- Mr Jérôme Bignon Président de l'Association Ramsar France (France), Ramsar Conservation Merit Award.

140. The winners were greeted with acclamation.

Agenda item 20.1: Report of the Subgroup on COP14

141. China, as Chair of the Subgroup on COP14, reported on progress made with arrangements, indicating that it had not proven possible during the course of the meeting to obtain any more detailed or definite information than that which had been presented on 24 May.
142. During discussion, participants underscored the great importance of holding the COP in 2022 and asked that a decision be taken at this Standing Committee to start preparations for an alternative plan, in the absence of a confirmation to host the COP in Wuhan during the Standing Committee as originally intended.
143. Switzerland, as host country to the Convention, indicated that a provisional blocking of dates for 5-13 November had been made at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), pending a formal decision by the Standing Committee, adding that this could not be held open indefinitely if another organization requested to book the venue with the same or overlapping dates.
144. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked China and Switzerland to confer further and report back to the afternoon session, with a view to making a final decision.
145. Interventions were made by Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and the Secretariat.

Agenda item 10: Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group

146. Australia, as Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group, reflected on the progress of the review of the draft resolution. On the terms of reference for SP5 in document SC59/2022 Com.1 Australia informed participants that the Standing Committee will need to approve them intersessionally.

Agenda item 11: Report of the Effectiveness Working Group

147. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Chair of the Effectiveness Working Group, introduced document SC59/2022 Com.3 containing a draft resolution on the *Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Ramsar Convention*, noting that Sweden had agreed to withdraw the proposed draft resolution on online drafting and preparatory negotiations of documents in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.17.

Decision SC59/2022-20: The Standing Committee approved the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Com.3 on *Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Ramsar Convention* and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 15: Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee

148. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.15 Rev.1, containing a revised draft resolution on roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee. These were approved without comment.

Decision SC59/2022-21: The Standing Committee approved the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.15 Rev.1 on *Roles and responsibilities of the Standing Committee* for forwarding to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 10: Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group

149. Australia, as Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group, introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.10 Rev.2, noting further amendments from Contracting Parties to paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and the addition of a new paragraph to be added to the preambular text that is bracketed as well as other amendments.

150. A request was also made to replace all references in the draft resolution of “AGREES” with “DECIDES”. This was agreed by the Committee.

151. An intervention was made by Japan.

Decision SC59/2022-22: The Standing Committee approved the draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.10 Rev.2 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* as amended and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 17.1: Report of the Chair of the CEPA Oversight Panel

152. The Secretariat introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.17.1 Rev.1, noting that the draft resolution on a new CEPA approach contained in Annex 2 had been revised on the basis of information received by the Secretariat.

153. An intervention was made by Australia.

Decision SC59/2022-23: The Standing Committee approved document SC59/2022 Doc.17.1 Rev.1 and agreed to forward the draft resolution in Annex 2 of the document to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.4: Draft Resolution on Guidance on Conservation and Management of Small Wetlands (*Submitted by China, cosponsored by the Republic of Korea*)

154. China introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.24.4 Rev.1, containing a revised version of the draft resolution and thanking Australia, the Secretariat, and the STRP for their input.

155. An intervention was made by Australia.

Decision SC59/2022-24: The Standing Committee approved document SC59/202 Doc.24.4 Rev.1 and agreed to forward the draft resolution in the document to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.3: Draft resolution on development of legal indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention (*Submitted by Burkina Faso*)

156. The Secretariat reported that it had contacted Burkina Faso, which had agreed to withdraw the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.3.

Agenda item 24.5: Draft Resolution on Integrating wetland conservation and restoration into national sustainable development strategy (*Submitted by China*)

157. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc. 24.5 Rev.1 containing a revised version of the draft resolution incorporating comments it had received.

158. During further discussion a proposal was made to modify paragraph 2 of the draft resolution by inserting “mitigation and” before “adaptation to climate change”. This was agreed by the Committee.

159. Many participants opposed the reference to ecological civilization and some opposed the reference to nature-based solutions in new paragraph 3. The Standing Committee agreed to this paragraph being retained in square brackets.

160. Interventions were made by Brazil, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Slovenia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Decision SC59/2022-25: The Standing Committee approved the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.5 Rev.1 with amendments to paragraphs 2 and 3 as agreed by the Committee, and agreed to forward this to COP14 for its consideration.

14:40 – 19:00 Plenary Session of the Standing Committee

Agenda item 23: Update on the status of Sites on the Lists of Wetlands of International Importance

161. The Secretary General sought further guidance on paragraph iv) under 'Actions requested' in document SC59 Doc.23.Rev.1.

162. During discussion, participants pointed out that the substance of this issue would be addressed in the draft resolution submitted by Algeria in document SC59 Doc.24.2, which the Committee had decided to forward to COP14 in square brackets.

163. Mauritius and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland read out statements, both asking that these be included in the report of the meeting. The statements are annexed to the present report as Annexes 3 and 4 and will be included in the report by the Secretariat to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) pursuant to Article 8.2 of the Convention concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Decision SC59/2022-26: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59 Doc.23 Rev.1 *Update on the status of Sites on the Lists of Wetlands of International Importance* and agreed to include in the report by the Secretariat to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting

Parties (COP14) pursuant to Article 8.2 of the Convention concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance the request on paragraph iv) of document SC59 Doc.23 Rev.1 and the read out statements of Mauritius and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Agenda item 24.6: Draft resolution on Wetland education in the formal education sector (*Submitted by China and Republic of Korea*)

164. The Secretariat introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.6 Rev.1, which incorporated changes it had received.
165. During further discussion, proposals were made to replace “REQUESTS” at the start of paragraph 26 with “ENCOURAGES” and to add "if appropriate" before “in accordance to CEPA” in paragraph 23bis. A proposal was also made to accept “integrate” as a replacement of “mainstream” in paragraph 17. The Committee agreed to these changes.

Decision SC59/2022-27: The Standing Committee accepted the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.6 Rev.1 on *Wetland education in the formal education sector* as amended, and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.7: Draft resolution on the Ramsar Wetland Awards (*Submitted by Sweden*)

166. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.24.7 Rev.1, which contained a revised version of the draft resolution, incorporating comments it had received.
167. An intervention was made by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Decision SC59/2022-28: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.6 Rev.1 on *The Ramsar Wetland Conservation Awards* and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.8: Draft resolution on Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention (*Submitted by Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Austria and China*)

168. The Republic of Korea noted that a small informal group had met and agreed the changes to the draft resolution set out in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.8 Rev.1.

Decision SC59/2022-29: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.24.8 Rev.1 on *Updating the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention* and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.12: Draft resolution on Strengthening Ramsar Connections Through Youth (*Submitted by Australia and Costa Rica*)

169. Australia introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.12 Rev.1, noting that there was a small amount of bracketed text.
170. An intervention was made by Colombia and Japan.

Decision SC59/2022-30: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.12 Rev.1 on *Strengthening Ramsar Connections Through Youth* and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 24.1: Proposed draft resolution on Protection, management and restoration of wetlands as Nature-based solutions to address the climate crisis (*Submitted by Spain*)

171. Slovenia introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.1 Annex 1 Rev.1, noting that text still remained in square brackets.

172. Interventions were made by Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Slovenia.

Decision SC59/2022-31: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.1 Annex 1 Rev.1 on *Protection, management and restoration of wetlands as [nature-based solutions][ecosystem-based approaches] to address the climate crisis and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.*

Agenda item 24.13: Draft Resolution on Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates (*Submitted by Australia, in consultation with the Chair of the STRP*)

173. Australia introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.13 Rev.1, and thanked Finland, Sweden and the STRP for their input.

174. Australia noted the proposed amendments that had been agreed, including the removal of the bracketed text.

Decision SC59/2022-32: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.13 Rev.1 on *Waterbird population estimates to support new and existing Ramsar site designations under Ramsar Criterion 6 – use of alternative estimates, with the removal of the text in square brackets, and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.*

Agenda item 26: Draft Resolution on Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025 (*Submitted by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel*)

175. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland introduced the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.26 Rev.1, indicating that the text had been fully agreed.

176. Sweden, as a consequence of the revised SC59/2022 Doc.26, withdrawn its draft resolutions on the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Work and its Scientific and Technical Bodies in documents SC59/2022 Doc.24.14 and SC59/2022 Doc.24.15.

177. Interventions were made by Brazil and Sweden.

Decision SC59/2022-33: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.26 Rev.1 on *Future implementation of scientific and technical aspects of the Convention for 2023-2025 and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.*

Agenda item 21.1: Draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2022-2024
Agenda item 24.9: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – the basics (*Submitted by Sweden*)
Agenda item 24.10: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – COP14-COP15 (*Submitted by Sweden*)
Agenda item 24.10: Proposed draft resolution on Ramsar Regional Initiatives – addressing old decisions (*Submitted by Sweden*)

178. France introduced document SC59 Doc.21.1 Rev.1, reflecting progress made in the contact group to merge the four draft resolutions on Ramsar Regional Initiatives, noting that a large amount of text remained in square brackets, and indicating that the resulting document remained large, complex and difficult to assess.
179. During discussion, concern was raised that parts of the document appeared to contravene existing Resolutions on Ramsar Regional Initiatives and that some of it addressed issues that had been dealt with in-depth at previous COPs. More specifically, objection was raised regarding the inclusion of terms associated with treaty language, such as “shall” in paragraph 13 of the draft resolution. It was requested that all such terms be removed in the revised document. It was further requested that the original text of the draft resolution prepared by the Working Group be retained as well as the alternative text proposed by the contact group. Any text not in the original draft should be placed in square brackets.
180. Interventions were made by Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Japan, Mexico and Sweden.

Decision SC59/2022-34: The Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to revise the draft resolution in document SC59 Doc.21.1 Rev.1 ensuring that the original text of the draft resolution prepared by the Working Group will be retained as well as the alternative text proposed by the contact group. Any text not in the original draft should be placed in square brackets. All references to “shall” in the document will be removed. The Standing Committee agreed to forward the draft resolution to COP14 for its consideration.

Agenda item 16: Enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions

181. Mexico introduced the proposed amendments to the draft resolution adding a preambular paragraph after paragraph 7 on the matters of the legal status of the Secretariat, and an operative paragraph after paragraph 21 establishing an Open-Ended Working Group with regionally balanced representation for the analysis of the legal status of the Secretariat.
182. During discussion, Contracting Parties expressed concern about the process in which the resolution was introduced, which made it difficult to find the big, sudden changes in the resolution. Parties also expressed different views of support and concerns to the newly proposed amendments, that the matter has not been discussed intersessionally nor requested by the COP, it is reopening discussions from COP11/12 and questioned its pertinence to the original draft resolution. After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the draft resolution could be forwarded to COP14 for its consideration with the proposed new insertions in square brackets.
183. Proposals were also made to put in square brackets the term “nature based solutions”, and “ecosystem based approaches”.

184. Belgium and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland read out interventions, both asking that these be included in the report of the meeting. The interventions are annexed to the present report as Annexes 5 and 6.
185. Interventions were made by Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Decision SC59/2022-35: The Standing Committee accepted the revised draft resolution in document SC59/2022 Doc.16 Rev.1 *Enhancing the Convention's visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions with the proposed amendments in square brackets and agreed to forward it to COP14 for its consideration.*

Agenda item 8: Financial and budgetary matters
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186. Mexico, as Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, informed the Committee that the Subgroup had met again as planned and introduced the revised report of the Subgroup in document SC59/2022 Com.2 Rev.1 (Annex 7 of the present report), drawing attention to the three annexes that had been attached to the draft resolution (Annex 2 of the report of the Subgroup). He stated that, should it not prove possible to hold COP14 in China, the Subgroup had decided that the Secretariat could on a one-time exceptional basis make use of up to CHF 250,000 to assist in preparations for holding the COP at an alternative venue.

Decision SC59/2022-36: The Standing Committee approved the report of the Subgroup on Finance in document SC59/2022 Com.2 Rev.1 (Annex 7 of this report), including the following Decisions SC59/2022-37 to SC59/2022-42.

Decision SC59/2022-37: The Standing Committee:

- i. took note of the status of annual contributions;
- ii. noted the actions listed in paragraphs 12 and 13 of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.2 on group confirmation of outstanding contributions as part of the audit process;
- iii. noted the actions listed in paragraphs 16, 18, 19 and 20 of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.2 to continue encouraging the payment of annual contributions by the Contracting Parties;
- iv. noted the changes in annual contributions receivable and in the annual provision against contributions receivable; and
- v. noted the status of the African voluntary contributions.

Decision SC59/2022-38: The Standing Committee:

- i. accepted the 2021 audited financial statements as of 31 December 2021;
- ii. noted the core budget results for 2021;
- iii. noted the status of the non-core balances and voluntary contributions for 2021;
- iv. approved the Secretariat's proposed adjustments to 2021, as described in paragraphs 9.f, 13, 14 and 15 and presented in column H of the table in Annex 2 of document SC59/2022 Doc. 8.1; and
- v. approved that the pre-committed funds in amount of CHF 765,000 are carried forward from 2021 to 2022, as included in column C of the table in Annex 1 Core Budget 2022 of the Subgroup on Finance report contained in document SC59/2022 Com.2 Rev.1 (see Annex 1 of Annex 7 of this report).

Decision SC59/2022-39: The Standing Committee:

- i. took note of the contents of document SC59/2022 doc.8.3;

- ii. instructed the Secretariat, due to exceptional circumstances, to present to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties only one budget scenario A, representing a 0% increase compared to the 2016-2018 and 2019-2021 triennia and 2022, as described in document SC59/2022 Doc.8.3; and
- iii. approved the draft resolution on the financial and budgetary matters to be considered at COP14, as presented in the Annex 2 of the report of the Subgroup on Finance contained in document SC59/2022 Com2. Rev1 (see Annex 2 of Annex 7 of this report).

Decision SC59/2022-40: The Standing Committee took note of the projected administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions submitted to SC59/2022 which would be revised on the basis of the draft resolutions agreed by the SC59/2022.

Decision SC59/2022-41: The Standing Committee:

- i. approved allocation of 2021 surplus and approved option a) to allocate CHF 228,000 to cover the budget gap as per the Resolution XIII.2, paragraph 15, as described in paragraph 40 of document SC59/2022 Doc. 8.1;
- ii. approved allocation of 2021 surplus of CHF 360,000 for the increase of outstanding provisions in 2023-2025 triennium with the condition that any unused portion be returned to the surplus for further allocation at the end of each year within 2023-2025 triennium; and
- iii. noted the intersessional allocation of funds to adjust the ExCOP3-approved core budget for 2022, as described in paragraphs 22 and 38 of document SC59/2022 Doc 8.1. and as presented in Annex 1 of the report of the Subgroup on Finance contained in document SC59/2022 Com2.Rev1 (see Annex 1 of Annex 7 of this report).

Decision SC59/2022-42: In the event of COP14 being held in Geneva in November 2022 (“Plan B”), the Standing Committee approved on a one-time exceptional basis the allocation of up to CHF 250,000 from the 2019-2021 core surplus, to supplement the non-rent expenses related to hosting the event, as necessary. This contingency allocation should not be considered as setting a precedent for future COP-related budget discussions (see report of the Subgroup on Finance in Annex 7 of this report).

Agenda item 9: Urgent challenges to the wise use of wetlands to receive enhanced attention: Best practices in the development of wetland inventories

- 187. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.9, indicating that it had been prepared the previous year in response to instructions from the Standing Committee, and noting that some of its contents had been drawn on for the draft resolution prepared under Agenda item 16 on *Enhancing the Convention’s visibility and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements and other international institutions*.
- 188. During discussion, one participant stated they would like to see the document developed further.
- 189. An intervention was made by Sweden.

Decision SC59/2022-43: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59 Doc.9.

Agenda item 17.2: Report of the Secretariat on World Wetlands Day

190. The Secretariat gave a presentation on World Wetlands Day 2022, summarizing activities that had taken place around the world and noting that the theme for World Wetlands Day 2023 was wetland restoration.

191. The Standing Committee thanked the Secretariat for its report by acclamation.

Agenda item 17.3: Implementation of Resolution XIII.1 on World Wetlands Day (declaration by the United Nations General Assembly)

192. The Secretariat introduced document SC59/2022 Doc.17.3, summarizing work to date on implementing Resolution XIII.1 on World Wetlands Day, underscoring the importance of 2 February in raising the visibility of the Convention.

193. One participant explicitly thanked the Secretary General, Costa Rica and Slovenia for all their efforts in encouraging Contracting Parties to support the recognition by the UN General Assembly of 2 February as World Wetlands Day.

194. An intervention was made by Mexico.

Decision SC59/2022-44: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59/2022 Doc.17.3.

Agenda item 19: Managements of requests for data

195. The Secretariat introduced document SC59 Doc.19, noting that the document had originally been prepared for SC58.

196. One participant wanted paragraph 15d) deleted, since open data should be possible to use for any purpose that is not illegal.

197. An intervention was made by Sweden.

Decision SC59/2022-45: The Standing Committee took note of document SC59 Doc.19.

Agenda item 24.16: Draft Resolution on the Establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the Framework of the Ramsar Convention (Submitted by China and cosponsors)

198. China reintroduced document SC59/2022 Doc.24.16, noting that the International Mangrove Center would be funded by China and operated in an open and transparent manner. It is emphasized that the Center would be a platform focusing on proactive, collaborative and synchronized actions to fulfil the mandate of the Ramsar Convention in conserving the important coastal blue carbon ecosystems. The modality of the Center will be similar to a cross-regional initiative, like EAAFP. Its actual mandates, structure, operation, administration and other business will be discussed and decided by all parties involved.

199. During discussion, one participant generally reiterated the concerns they had raised when this Agenda item had first been addressed. It was emphasised that, should such a resolution be adopted, it should have no impact on the Convention's core budget as any financial contributions would be entirely voluntary. Another participant emphasized that the function of the Center should be more clear in the draft resolution and averred that the draft

resolution would be better treated as a concept paper, as there were no procedures to re-develop Resolutions after the Standing Committee.

200. Interventions were made by China, Japan and the United States of America.

Decision SC59/2022-46: The Standing Committee agreed to forward the draft resolution on the Establishment of the International Mangrove Center in the Framework of the Ramsar Convention in document SC59/2022 Doc.24.16 to COP14 for its consideration, with the entire resolution in square brackets.

Agenda item 29: Adoption of the report of the meeting

201. The Chair of the Standing Committee presented documents SC59/2022 Rep.1, Rep.2, Rep.3, Rep.4, Rep.5 and Rep.6 for approval by the Committee. He noted that the report of the final day of the meeting would be shared for review and approval by the Committee.

202. Costa Rica, France on behalf of the member states of the European Union, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Uganda requested amendments to reports.

203. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked all those who had announced amendments to forward these to the Secretariat for incorporation into revised reports.

Decision SC59/2022-47: The Standing Committee approved the report of the resumed session of the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee in documents SC59/2022 Rep.1, Rep.2, Rep.3, Rep.4, Rep.5 and Rep.6 as amended.

Decision SC59/2022-48: The Chair of the Standing Committee noted that the Standing Committee would approve the report of the final day of the resumed session of the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee on the basis of comments received by the Secretariat.

Agenda item 28: Dates and venues of the 60th and 61st meetings of the Standing Committee

204. The Chair of the Standing Committee indicated that the 60th and 61st meetings of the Standing Committee would be held just before and just after COP14 at the venue of COP14 and that the specific dates would depend on the final dates and venue chosen.

Agenda item 20.1 Report of the Subgroup on COP14

205. China, as chair of the Subgroup on COP14, presented a draft decision for the Standing Committee's consideration regarding the process to be followed should it not be possible to hold COP14 in Wuhan. The Standing Committee agreed to this.

Decision SC59/2022-49: The Standing Committee decided to delay the final decision on the definitive venue of COP14 until 20 June 2022, by which time the SC shall receive a final answer from China on the possibility of holding the COP14 by China as decided at SC 57 (Decision 57-17). In case a final answer, encompassing the full modalities regarding the holding of COP14 in 2022, as agreed at SC57, is not received by 20 June 2022, or the dates proposed are beyond 2022, the Chair of the Standing Committee will convene an emergency virtual SC meeting on 21 June 2022. At that meeting, the Standing Committee will decide on the definitive venue and dates of COP14.

Agenda item 30: Any other business

206. No items were raised.

Agenda item 31: Closing remarks

207. In closing the meeting, the Chair of the Standing Committee, Algeria, Australia on behalf of the Oceania region, Brazil, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic on behalf of the Caribbean region, France, Indonesia, Japan on behalf of the Asia region, Mexico, Uganda on behalf of the Africa region, the Iran (Islamic Republic of), and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on behalf of members of the Europe region offered heartfelt thanks to the Ramsar Secretary General, Ms Martha Rojas Urrego, as she is finishing her second term, for her leadership, hard work and dedication over the past two triennia and particularly her efforts to modernize the running of the Convention and improve its visibility after a difficult period. Participants thanked the Chair of the Standing Committee for successfully steering the Committee through the pandemic as well as through the present meeting, and thanked the Secretariat for its work to support the meeting. The Secretary General, acknowledging the thanks, said it had been an honour to serve the Ramsar Convention; she expressed appreciation to the Chair, the Executive Team, the Parties, observers, the Secretariat, the legal Advisor Emma Carmody, who was finishing her engagement in the Convention, the interpreters and translators, the rapporteur, IUCN and all those who had supported the meeting.

208. An intervention was made by Youth Engaged in Wetlands.

Annex 1

Statement made by Ukraine during the discussion of Agenda item 27 on 26 May 2022, afternoon session

Mr.Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Under this agenda item we would like to raise our concerns and draw your attention to the threat to ecological condition of the 20 Ramsar sites in Ukraine.

The unprovoked and unjustified war started by Russia against Ukraine more than 3 months ago have already resulted in human suffering, damage to critical infrastructure, destruction of medical facilities, as well as unprecedented environmental consequences.

Since the first days of Russian aggression which de facto started 8 years ago, when in February 2014 the Russian Federation occupied part of the territory of Ukraine – the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as well as parts of the Donetsk and Lugansk Regions, 4 Ramsar sites were fully occupied (Aquatic-cliff complex of Cape Kazantyp, Aquatic-cliff complex of Karadag, Aquatic-coastal complex of Cape Opuk, Kryva Bay and Kryva Spit) and 3 Ramsar sites were partially occupied by the Russian Federation (Central Syvash, Eastern Syvash, Karkinitska and Dzharylgatska Bays). Moreover, Kryva Bay and Kryva Spit in the Donbas Region and Aquatic-coastal Complex of Cape Opuk in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, have been used as plots for military training of the Russian Armed Forces.

Since the beginning of the full-fledged military invasion by Russia of Ukraine in February 2022 another 13 Ramsar sites in South and East parts of Ukraine were occupied by Russian Federation and were used for military activities. All these wetlands are critically important for migration and breeding of waterfowl birds.

In addition to this 5 Ramsar sites located at the Black Sea coastal zones in the Odesa and Mykolaiv Regions are under threat due to the shelling from the Russian ships and 1, in Sumy region in the north on the border with Russia, because of the permanent military actions.

7 Ramsar sites are near the border with the Republic of Belarus which serves as a military base for Russian troops for missile attacks on Eastern and Northern parts of Ukraine and could be destroyed during the next phase of the invasion.

In total, **17** Ramsar sites are now fully occupied by the Russian Federation, 3 are under the threat due to missile attacks and 14 Ramsar sites are under threat of extension of military activities and occupation.

As a result of this blatant violation by the Russian Federation of the Ramsar Convention, Ukraine is deprived of its rights under Convention «to protect, restore and sustainably use the Ramsar sites and their flora and fauna», as set out in Articles 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Ramsar Convention. We could continue to speak endlessly about the possible negative immediate and long-lasting consequences and potential changes of the ecological character of these sites, but we are fully aware of the limited time we have here. I just want to stress that we don't have any access to the mentioned Ramsar sites and given the fact that Russian troops are doing unimaginable in 21-century atrocities regarding

the civil population: by torturing and killing civilians, raping kids, women and elderly people - we don't have any illusions about the conditions of our Ramsar sites which are now being under occupation.

Such mass-scale destruction of wetlands has never happened before. We believe that this unprecedented situation when one contracting Party occupies and destroys 20 Ramsar sites of the international importance of another sovereign and independent Party is unacceptable and requires a firm and consolidated response from the Parties to this Convention.

Russia's actions must be condemned, and we should recognize that the Russian Federation blatantly violated the Ramsar Convention principles and that it threatens the ecological character of 20 Ramsar sites in Ukraine.

We believe that we should discuss the possible support to Ukraine to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the caused environmental damage, as well as technical assistance in the restoration of damaged Ramsar sites.

We also believe that the Party that acts against the main principles and ideas of the Ramsar convention can participate neither in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention, nor in working groups for developing resolutions for this Convention. Likewise, such a party can't be elected to the principle and subsidiary bodies of the Ramsar Convention.

For those who are still considering the importance of continuation of the dialogue with Russian scientific community, just think about the Ukrainian one: many scientists and managers of the Ukrainian Ramsar sites in the occupied territories had to flee their homes, leaving behind the scientific data they were collecting their whole lives. Some of those Ukrainian nature conservationists have been killed, some of them were injured and the lives of others for the moment are just ruined as they left their homes together with their kids and families looking for safer places all over the world.

Having said that we believe that the scientific community must not stand aside from the sufferings of innocent people and the destruction of wetlands of international importance.

The situation in Ukraine is unfolding. Only during 3 months of occupation 13 Ramsar sites were occupied and given the fact that there are no signs that Russia is ready to end the war: on the contrary, it is preparing for a long-term military operation, we can't predict what would happen in 5-6 months which are left before next COP.

Thus, Ukraine is working with partners to support the Ramsar Convention in addressing environmental emergency challenges in Ukraine stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression and we count on the support of all the Parties who are committed to the values and main mission of the Ramsar Convention.

I would like this statement to be included in the report of the meeting.

Annex 2

Statement made by the Russian Federation during the discussion of Agenda item 27 on 26 May 2022, afternoon session

Thank you Mr Chairman,

We oppose the politicization of the discussion within the framework of the Standing Committee. We call on the parties to refrain from biased assessments of the situation in Ukraine. I must only say that the “war” that the representative of Ukraine spoke about did not begin in February this year, but eight years ago. And it was not Russia that started it.

In this regard, I must note that it is unacceptable to speak of “aggression” or “occupation” in this context. Russia's actions in Ukraine are aimed at demilitarizing this country and bringing it to the status of a neutral and peaceful state. Russia exercises the right to self-defense on the basis of Article 51 of the UN Charter, of which it notified the UN Security Council accordingly.

In this regard, we would not like to act in the same way as the Ukrainian delegation, and would rather not speak about the damage caused by Kiev to the ecology of the south-east of this country by the eight-year economic blockade. We will also not mention in the framework of our meeting the water blockade of the Crimean peninsula, the purpose of which was nothing more than to harm the inhabitants of Crimea, whom until recently the Ukrainians considered their fellow citizens.

In the part concerning the subject of our discussion - the state of wetlands, we reject the accusations against the Russian side of causing damage. At the same time, we want to carefully study the data provided by the Ukrainian delegation. We are ready for consultations with the Ukrainian side if the latter wishes so, and would like to request the materials on the basis of which the Ukrainian speech is built.

We underline that without scientific assessments of environmental damage the information provided is not more than a politically motivated statement of one side. Further discussion on this issue within the framework of the Ramsar Convention, in our opinion, is counterproductive and distracts attention from relevant issues of the environmental agenda.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the activities of the Ramsar Convention as an important international legal instrument for environmental protection and fully fulfills its Convention obligations.

We presume that all parties will be committed to the principles and objectives of the Ramsar Convention. We believe that war rhetoric is incompatible with the principles of sustainable development and request the Chair not bring this issue up for discussion under the Convention in such terms.

Thank you for attention.

Annex 3

Statement made by Mauritius during the discussion of Agenda item 23 on 27 May 2022, afternoon session

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation notes that according to the document currently under consideration (SC59 Doc.23 Rev.1), one of the required actions is for the Standing Committee to provide guidance to the Secretariat and to Contracting Parties with regard to the objection of Mauritius to the extension by the United Kingdom of the Ramsar Convention to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

As members of the Committee will be aware, the Chagos Archipelago is, and has always been, part of the territory of Mauritius, as authoritatively determined by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 on the *Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965* and confirmed by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/295 and the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) of 28 January 2021.

In its Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice found that the decolonization of Mauritius was not lawfully completed in 1968 upon its accession to independence in view of the unlawful excision of the Chagos Archipelago by the United Kingdom from Mauritius in 1965. Accordingly, the Court went on to hold that the United Kingdom’s ongoing administration of the Chagos Archipelago as the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” is an internationally wrongful act of a continuing nature that engages the international responsibility of the United Kingdom. The Court determined that the United Kingdom is under a legal obligation to bring to an end its unlawful colonial administration as rapidly as possible. It further determined that all UN Member States have an obligation to cooperate with the United Nations to complete the decolonization of Mauritius, including an obligation not to support the continuing wrongful conduct of the United Kingdom in maintaining its colonial administration in the Chagos Archipelago.

On 22 May 2019, the UN General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority of 116 votes to 6, adopted Resolution 73/295 which fully endorsed the findings of the International Court of Justice. In this resolution, the General Assembly affirmed that the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and demanded the United Kingdom to withdraw its colonial administration from the Chagos Archipelago unconditionally within a maximum of six months, that is, by no later than 22 November 2019. The United Kingdom failed to meet that deadline.

Moreover, the General Assembly called upon Member States to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure the completion of the decolonization of Mauritius as rapidly as possible and to refrain from conduct that might impede or delay the completion of the process of decolonization. It further called upon the United Nations and all its specialized agencies as well as all other international, regional and intergovernmental organizations, including those established by treaty, to recognize that the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, to support the decolonization of Mauritius as rapidly as possible, and to refrain from impeding that process by recognizing, or giving effect to any measure taken by or on behalf of, the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

Following the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 73/295, the United Nations modified in February 2020 its official map to clearly depict the Chagos Archipelago as an integral part of the

territory of Mauritius. In August last, the Universal Postal Union adopted a resolution by which it, *inter alia*,

- (a) formally acknowledged that for the purposes of its activities, the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius; and
- (b) instructed the International Bureau of the Union to cease the registration, distribution and forwarding of any and all postage stamps issued by the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

On 28 January 2021, the Special Chamber of ITLOS gave a Judgment in which it confirmed that Mauritius has undisputed sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. It, *inter alia*, ruled that the determinations made by the ICJ in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 have legal effect for the legal status of the Chagos Archipelago, that the continued claim of the United Kingdom to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago cannot be considered anything more than “a mere assertion” and that Mauritius is the coastal State in respect of the Chagos Archipelago.

It is crystal clear that as a matter of international law, Mauritius is the only State lawfully entitled to exercise sovereignty and sovereign rights over the Chagos Archipelago and its maritime zones and that the United Kingdom is not in a position to claim any rights over the Chagos Archipelago. The Chagos Archipelago cannot accordingly be considered a territorial disputed area.

In the light of the foregoing, Mauritius requests that:

- (a) the Contracting Parties should formally acknowledge that for the purpose of the Ramsar Convention, the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius and that the purported extension by the United Kingdom of the Ramsar Convention to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” is invalid; and
- (b) the Secretariat should ensure that no reference is made to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” in any documentation relating to the Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Annex 4

Statement made by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the discussion of Agenda item 23 on 27 May 2022, afternoon session

- The United Kingdom's full position in respect of our continued sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory is set out in the United Kingdom's submission to the report of the Secretary General (A/74/834) dated 18 May 2020. The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the territory, which has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius has never held sovereignty over the territory, and we do not recognise its claim. However, we have a long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. We stand by that commitment.
- The United Kingdom was disappointed that this matter was referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), contrary to the principle that the Court should not consider bilateral disputes without the consent of both States concerned. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom respects the ICJ and participated fully in the ICJ process at every stage and in good faith. The 2019 Advisory Opinion was advice provided to the United Nations General Assembly at its request; it is not a legally binding judgment. The United Kingdom has considered the content of the Advisory Opinion carefully, however we do not share the Court's approach. Moreover, UN resolution 73/295, adopted following the ICJ's Advisory Opinion, does not and cannot create any legal obligations for UN Member States.
- The UK Government is aware of the judgment of 28 January by the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) formed to deal with a dispute concerning delimitation of a maritime boundary claimed by Mauritius to exist between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean. The UK is not a party to these proceedings, which can have no effect for the UK or for maritime delimitation between the UK (in respect of the British Indian Ocean Territory) and the Republic of the Maldives.
- The United Kingdom remains open to dialogue with Mauritius on matters of shared interest, including the marine protected area and implementation of the 2015 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Arbitral Award.
- I would ask that this statement be recorded in the record of this meeting.

Annex 5

Intervention made by Belgium during the discussion of Agenda item 16 on 27 May 2022, afternoon session

Belgium wants to thank the Delegation of Mexico for all their efforts to prepare their text on the amendments to DR16. We are aware that this is a very important issue. However, Belgium opposes this procedure of working. The proposed extended amendments to the Draft Resolution 16 were not distributed beforehand for consideration and discussion by the Contracting Parties, which we very much regret.

Annex 6

Intervention made by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the discussion of Agenda item 16 on 27 May 2022, afternoon session

The UK would like to reflect upon the comments made by distinguished colleagues from Belgium and Japan regarding the conduct of the meeting and integration of comments into text. We appreciate that the Secretariat has not been able to conduct the incorporation of text and its translation in as timely a manner as would have been desirable given the time available to them. The UK will continue to review the documents as they are published and will return to them to reflect on any changes which we believe are required when the documents are scrutinised by all Contracting Parties at COP14.

Annex 7

Report of the Subgroup on Finance, 23 and 27 May 2022

This Report includes the recommendations for the consideration of the Standing Committee made during the meeting of the Subgroup on Finance on 23 and 27 May 2022. This revised report includes the recommendations for the Standing Committee and will be included in the final report of the meeting.

The Chair opened the meeting and asked the Subgroup to refer to the actions requested in documents on financial and budgetary matters, noting that the discussions on surplus, allocation of surplus and adjustments to the 2022 budget would be considered after those on the annual contributions, budget scenarios, draft resolution on finance and budgetary matters and the financial implications of draft resolutions.

1. Status of annual contributions (document SC59/2022 Doc.8.2)

The Secretary General briefly summarized the document, noting that the total of contributions due had decreased by 8% compared to 2020. The Secretariat noted the actions on group confirmation of outstanding contributions had been effective in meeting the auditor's requirements.

The Subgroup acknowledged the positive results and thanked the Secretariat and the Subgroup for the good job undertaken. The group also welcomed the decrease in total contributions since 2020, recognizing this outcome as exceptional among comparable organizations, and acknowledged the Secretariat's actions to this end.

The Secretary General noted that the role of the regional representatives in the Standing Committee had been an important factor in the decrease, as well as efforts by the Secretariat to raise the awareness of the Contracting Parties, including the regular reminders sent to the Parties and by highlighting the issue during the regional meetings held in preparation for the Third Extraordinary meeting of the COP in 2021 and COP14 in 2022. She noted that the actions of single Parties could influence the ongoing positive trend and noted the risks associated with long-term outstanding contributions.

The Secretariat clarified its conservative approach to the calculation of related provisions given the new calculation methodology that has been introduced in 2019. The Secretariat has therefore recommended that any unused funds allocated from savings to provisions for outstanding contributions be returned to the surplus for future allocation under this approach.

Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:

The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. take note of the status of annual contributions;***
- ii. note the actions listed in paragraphs 12 and 13 of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.2 on group confirmation of outstanding contributions as part of the audit process;***
- iii. note the actions listed in paragraphs 16, 18, 19 and 20 of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.2 to continue encouraging the payment of annual contributions by the Contracting Parties;***
- iv. note the changes in annual contributions receivable and in the annual provision against contributions receivable; and***
- v. note the status of the African voluntary contributions.***

2. Report on financial matters for 2019-2021 and 2022 (document SC59/2022 Doc.8.1)¹

The Secretary General introduced the elements of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.1 relating to the 2021 financial statements, highlighting the inclusion of the audited statements, and noting that the external auditors had found no issues to raise, thus confirming the positive results and improvements of the past years. She noted the savings accumulated in 2019-2021 triennium due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in low implementation in budget lines, in particular on travel, Ramsar Advisory Missions and meetings.

The Subgroup noted the relatively high budget implementation (89%) on salary costs, which has a positive outcome in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other organizations and acknowledged the Secretariat for efforts in this regard.

Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:

The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. review and accept the 2021 audited financial statements as of 31 December 2021;***
- ii. note the core budget results for 2021;***
- iii. note the status of the non-core balances and voluntary contributions for 2021;***
- iv. approve the Secretariat's proposed adjustments to 2021, as described in paragraphs 9.f, 13, 14 and 15 and presented in column H of the table in Annex 2 of document SC59/2022 Doc. 8.1; and***
- v. approve that the pre-committed funds are carried forward from 2021 to 2022 in amount of CHF 765,000, as included in column C of the table in Annex 1 Core Budget 2022 of the present report.***

3. Budget scenarios for 2023-2025 and draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters (document SC59/2022 Doc.8.3)

Budget scenarios for 2023-2025

The Secretariat presented the three scenarios prepared for the 2023-2025 triennium in document SC59 Doc.8.3: Scenario A (0% core budget increase); Scenario B (2.8% increase, with contributions increasing by 2.7%) and Scenario C (4.4%² increase, with a 4.3% increase in contributions).

Scenario A requires the allocation of surplus to cover the gap in the budget created with the addition of a position of the Finance and Accounting Assistant and for the increase in the provision for outstanding contributions. Scenario B would include in addition funds for increases in salaries as a result of staff performance management and promotions as per IUCN guidelines implemented by the Secretariat since 2019; and Scenario C would include COP15 hosting costs in the core budget as it is the practice in some other comparable Conventions.

The group thanked the Secretariat for the information and the increase in transparency on issues related to the surplus. It considered that the large surplus makes the cases for scenarios B and C more difficult, and recommended to present the Scenario A of 0% in core budget increase for the

¹ Continued at item 5 below.

² This is a correction to document SC59/8022 Doc.8.3.

COP14 approval. The Subgroup agreed to continue to fund the addition of a Finance and Accounting Assistant and the estimated increase in outstanding provisions with the 2019-2021 surplus.

The Subgroup highlighted that in light of recent reforms, it was important to continue to keep the budgeting discipline of what is covered by the core and what is covered by non-core funds under the Convention. Also, it was recommended to include in the report a sentence to highlight the exceptional circumstances on which the choice of 0% increase budget was made.

Draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters

The Secretariat highlighted that the draft resolution is prepared at the same basis as the Resolution XIII.2 and includes the amendments made by the Subgroup in June 2021, as reported in the June 2021 report – Part I.

The Subgroup agreed on the draft resolution on finance and budgetary matters and no amendments were proposed (see Annex 2 of this report).

The Subgroup requested that the preliminary list of 2023-2025 of suggested non-core items, in no order of recommended priority is presented in Table 1 below, to enable development of the new list of the priorities at -COP14.

Table 1: 2023-2025 suggested non-core fundraising priorities based on SC59 decisions

Non-core funds 2023-2025*	3-year funding estimates (CHF)
Ramsar Advisory Missions	225,000
Youth and wetlands	280,000
Regional Initiatives networks and centres support	150,000
World Wetlands Day	250,000
Complete wetland inventories to report on indicator 6.6.1 including digital mapping and online reporting	165,000
COP15 sponsorship for eligible delegates	600,000
Ramsar CEPA Programme	200,000
Supporting STRP work	300,000

**in no order of priority*

Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:

The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. take note of the contents of document SC59/2022 doc.8.3;***
- ii. instruct the Secretariat due to exceptional circumstances to present to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties only one budget scenario A, representing a 0% increase compared to the 2016-2018 and 2019-2021 triennia and 2022, as described in document SC59/2022 Doc.8.3; and***
- iii. approve the draft resolution on the financial and budgetary matters to be considered at COP14, as presented in the Annex 2 of this report.***

4. Potential financial implications of draft resolutions (document SC59/2022 Doc.8.4)

The Secretary General introduced the document and explained that this was a preliminary document, that the estimates were presented on the basis of the estimates made by the Parties. She further described that the Secretariat had added input when required and that the staff days required to fulfil activities and task that are already included in the core areas of work of the Secretariat and its work plan are not included. The Secretary General noted that the financial and administrative implications of the draft resolutions will depend on the decisions made by the Standing Committee regarding the content of the draft resolutions. The document will thus need to be revised after the Standing Committee and submitted to the COP14.

The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. take note of the projected administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions submitted to SC59/2022 which would be revised on the basis of the draft resolutions agreed by the SC59/2022.*

5. Report on financial matters for 2019-2021 and 2022 (document SC59/2022 Doc.8.1) - continued³

The Secretariat introduced the elements of the core budget surplus as of the end of 2021, as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: 2021 core surplus to be allocated (in '000 CHF)

(I) Fund balance at 31 December 2021 per audited statements	3,738
Reserve, approved and pre-committed:	
Reserve fund at 15% (Resolution XIII.2, paragraph 33)	762
ExCOP3-approved use of 2020 budget savings (to fill the gap and for outstanding provisions)	196
Pre-committed balances	765
April 2022 SC intersessional budget approval for the recruitment of the next Secretary General	89.5
(II) Total reserve, approved and pre-committed	1,813
(III=I-II) 2021 core surplus after approved and pre-committed - to be allocated	1,926

The Secretary General listed the options for possible use of 2021 savings suggested in paragraph 40 of document SC59/2022 Doc.8.1. Regarding the option c) on funding COP14 sponsored delegates' travel costs, the Secretariat explained that the fundraising the full costs would be very challenging given the number international meetings taking place this year for which other Secretariats were fundraising and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Subgroup expressed preference that the non-core budget items continue to be covered by the non-core resources. They trusted that the Secretariat will continue its efforts to fundraise for this purpose.

³ Continued from item 2 above.

The group expressed approval of option a) of allocating CHF 228K to cover the core budget gap for core activities of the Secretariat in 2023-2025 triennium. The Subgroup suggested that it was premature to consider option b) to allocate additional resources for the consolidation of Resolutions, as it needed to be subject to further discussion and a decision by the Standing Committee.

The Subgroup also approved the allocation of CHF 360K for the increase of outstanding provisions with the condition that any unused portion be returned to the surplus for allocation at the end of each year within 2023-2025 triennium.

The Secretary General presented the proposal to allocate the remaining balances of “SC58 - 2020 budget and uncommitted carry forward savings” as additional reserve fund savings. The Subgroup expressed that these resources should be maintained in the surplus for allocation by the Standing Committee rather than the creation of a new operational reserve, in the absence of a relevant reserve policy.

The Subgroup recommended that the Standing Committee approve the allocation of 2021 surplus as summarized in Table 3 below and in the Annex 1 of the present report:

Table 3: Allocation of 2021 core surplus (in '000 CHF)

(I) SC59/2022 Allocation of core surplus:	1,926
Authorised use of surplus to cover the core budget gap in 2023-2025 triennium, the same as in Resolution XIII.2, paragraph 15	228
Authorised use of surplus to cover increase in provision of outstanding contributions in 2023-2025 triennium, the same as in Resolution ExCOP3.2*	360
(II) Subtotal 2021 surplus allocated	588
(III=I-II) Core surplus balance remaining for future allocations	1,338

* Any unused portion to be returned to the surplus for allocation at the end of each year within 2023-2025 triennium

Recommendation for decision by the Standing Committee:

The Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee:

- i. approve allocation of 2021 surplus and approve option a) to allocate CHF 228K to cover the budget gap as per the Resolution XIII.2, paragraph 15, as described in paragraph 40 of the document SC59/2022 Doc. 8.1;***
- ii. approve allocation of 2021 surplus of CHF 360K for the increase of outstanding provisions in 2023-2025 triennium with the condition that any unused portion be returned to the surplus for further allocation at the end of each year within 2023-2025 triennium; and***
- iii. note the intersessional allocation of funds to adjust to the ExCOP3-approved core budget for 2022, as described in paragraphs 22 and 38 of document SC59/2022 Doc 8.1. and as presented in Annex 1 of the present report.***

6. Other matters discussed

In the event of COP14 being held in Geneva in November 2022 (“Plan B”), the Subgroup on Finance recommends that the Standing Committee approve on a one-time exceptional basis the allocation of up to CHF 250,000 from the 2019-2021 core surplus, to supplement the non-rent expenses related to hosting the event. This contingency allocation should not be considered as setting a precedent for future COP related budget discussions.

**Annex 1 to the Report of the Subgroup on Finance
Core Budget 2022**

(CHF '000s, includes possible rounding differences)

2022 Ramsar Budget ExCOP3 Approved CHF '000s	Approved budget (ExCOP3-approved) (A)	SC59 authorised use of 2020 budget savings (ExCOP3 approved) (B)	Pre-committed 2021 to be spent in 2022 (C)	SC59/2022 adjustments to 2022 ExCOP3 approved budget (D)	Total 2022 budget (E)=(A)+(B)+(C)+(D)
INCOME					
Parties' Contributions	3,779	0	0	0	3,779
Voluntary contributions	1,065	0	0	0	1,065
Income Tax	225	0	0	0	225
Other Income (including Interest Income)	12	0	0	0	12
TOTAL INCOME	5,081	0	0	0	5,081
EXPENDITURES					
A. Secretariat Senior Management	1,030	5	0	0	1,035
Salaries, social costs and other benefits	990	0	0		990
Travel	40	5	0		45
B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach	594	45	211	0	850
Salaries, social costs and other benefits	438	0	0		438
CEPA Program	30	0	56		86
Comms, Translations, Publications and Reporting Implementation	60	40	57		157
WWD	0	0	12		12
Web/IT support and Development	56	0	0		56
Web re-development	0	0	86		86
Travel	10	5	0		15

2022 Ramsar Budget ExCOP3 Approved CHF '000s	Approved budget (ExCOP3-approved) (A)	SC59 authorised use of 2020 budget savings (ExCOP3 approved) (B)	Pre-committed 2021 to be spent in 2022 (C)	SC59/2022 adjustments to 2022 ExCOP3 approved budget (D)	Total 2022 budget (E)=(A)+(B)+(C)+(D)
C. Regional Advice and Support	1,237	10	96	0	1,343
Salaries, social costs and other benefits	1,170	0	0		1,170
Travel	67	10	0		77
Ramsar Advisory Missions	0	0	96		96
D. Support to Regional Initiatives	100	0	76	0	176
Regional networks and centres**	100	0	0		100
Amazon Basin 2021 carry over	0	0	76		76
E. Scientific and Technical Services	839	5	224	0	1,068
Salaries, social costs and other benefits	651	0	0		651
Travel	18	0	10		28
Travel STRP Chair	5	0	12		17
STRP implementation	35	5	40		80
STRP meetings	50	0	0		50
Strategic Plan SP5 (2022 - 2024)	0	0	90		90
SDG 6.61 (Inventories)	0	0	72		72
Ramsar Sites Information Service (maintenance and develop)	80	0	0		80
G. Administration/Web	481	11	73	89.5	655
Salaries, social costs and other benefits	337	0	0		337
Staff hiring and departure costs	49	0	0	89.5	139
Travel	0	0	0		0
Equipment/Office Supplies	95	0	0		95
Planning and Capacity building	0	11	73		84

2022 Ramsar Budget ExCOP3 Approved CHF '000s	Approved budget (ExCOP3-approved) (A)	SC59 authorised use of 2020 budget savings (ExCOP3 approved) (B)	Pre-committed 2021 to be spent in 2022 (C)	SC59/2022 adjustments to 2022 ExCOP3 approved budget (D)	Total 2022 budget (E)=(A)+(B)+(C)+(D)
H. Standing Committee Services	150	0	23	0	173
Standing Committee delegates' support	45	0	0		45
Standing Committee meetings	10	0	9		19
SC translation	60	0	0		60
Simultaneous interpretation at SC meetings	35	0	0		35
Effectiveness Working Group	0	0	14		14
J. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (max.)	541	0	0	0	541
Administration, Human Resources, Finance & IT services	541	0	0		541
K. Miscellaneous - Reserve Fund	109	120	62	0	291
Staff Provisions	20	0	0		20
Provision for outstanding contributions*	30	120	0		150
Exchange rate gains / losses	0	0	0		0
Legal Services	59	0	62		121
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,081	196	765	90	6,132

Note:

* any unused portion to be returned to savings

**for consideration by SC62 (May-June 2023) for any new Regional Initiatives approved by COP14

Annex 2 to the Report of the Subgroup on Finance
Draft Resolution 14.xx
Financial and budgetary matters

1. RECALLING the budgetary provisions established by paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 6 of the Convention;
2. RECALLING Resolution XII.7 on *Resource mobilization and partnership framework of the Ramsar Convention* and the related provisions of Resolution XIII.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters* and Resolution ExCOP3.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters: 2022 core budget*;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the prompt payment by the majority of Contracting Parties of their contributions to the core budget of the Convention; but NOTING WITH CONCERN that a number of Parties have significant outstanding contributions (see document COP14 Doc.xx, *Report on financial and budgetary matters*);
4. NOTING WITH GRATITUDE the additional voluntary financial contributions made by many Contracting Parties, including those from Contracting Parties of Africa specifically earmarked for African Regional Initiatives (in accordance with paragraph 23 of Resolution X.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*), and also the contributions made by non-governmental organizations and private companies for activities undertaken by the Secretariat;
5. RECALLING the *Delegation of Authority to the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands* signed by the Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Chairman of the Convention's Standing Committee on 29 January 1993, and the *Supplementary Note to Delegation of Authority* signed on the same date;
6. ACKNOWLEDGING WITH APPRECIATION the financial and administrative services provided to the Secretariat by IUCN, underpinned by the Services Agreement between Ramsar and IUCN revised in 2009;
7. NOTING that Contracting Parties have been kept informed of the financial situation of the Secretariat through the audited annual financial statements for the years from 2018 to 2021 and the reports of the Standing Committee meetings from 2019 to 2022; and
8. RECOGNIZING the need to continue to strengthen financial partnerships with relevant international organizations and other entities, and to explore additional funding opportunities through their existing financial mechanisms;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

9. APPRECIATES that, since the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP13), in 2018, the Secretariat has continued to substantially improve its management of the Convention's funds, prudently, efficiently and openly;
10. EXPRESSES ITS GRATITUDE to the Contracting Parties that have served in the Subgroup on Finance of the Standing Committee during the 2019-2021 triennium and 2022, and in particular to Mexico, which has acted as Chair of the Subgroup;

11. DECIDES that the *Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention* contained in Annex 3 to Resolution 5.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters* (1993), is to be applied *in toto* to the 2023-2025 triennium;
12. FURTHER DECIDES that the Subgroup on Finance will be continued and operate under the aegis of the Standing Committee and with the roles and responsibilities specified in Resolution VI.17 on *Financial and budgetary matters* (1996), and will include one Standing Committee representative from each Ramsar region plus the immediately prior Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, as well as any other interested Contracting Parties, bearing in mind the desirability of equitable regional participation and the need to keep the group to a manageable size, and will designate one of its members as its Chair; and NOTES that travel support for eligible Contracting Parties to attend Subgroup meetings will be limited to the regional representatives of the Standing Committee;
13. NOTES that the 2023-2025 budget includes a core element funded by contributions from Contracting Parties, and that the Secretariat will seek additional non-core resources in line with the priorities identified by the Conference of the Parties, which are listed in Annex 4 of the present Resolution; and REQUESTS that the Secretariat continue to develop new approaches and tools to secure voluntary financial support for currently unfunded priority projects;
14. APPROVES the core budget for the 2023-2025 triennium as presented in Annex 1 of the present Resolution, to enable the implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024;
15. APPROVES the use of surplus from the core budget for the 2019-2021 triennium of CHF 228,000 to supplement the approved 2023-2025 triennium budget in the following areas: CHF 120,000 for Communications, Translation, Publications and Reporting Implementation, CHF 60,000 for staff travel (CHF 15,000 for travel of Secretariat Senior Management, CHF 15,000 for travel of Resource Mobilization and Outreach and CHF 30,000 for travel of Regional Advice and Support), CHF 15,000 for STRP Implementation, and CHF 33,000 for Planning and Capacity Building; and REQUESTS the Secretariat to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the 2023-2025 triennium;
16. APPROVES the use of CHF 360,000 from surplus from the 2019-2021 triennium to increase the provision on outstanding contributions for the 2023-2025 triennium;
17. URGES Contracting Parties with outstanding contributions to make a renewed effort to settle them as expeditiously as possible to enhance the financial sustainability of the Convention through contributions by all Contracting Parties;
18. REQUESTS that the Secretariat contact Contracting Parties that have outstanding contributions in excess of three years and assist them to identify appropriate options to rectify the situation and to request a plan for making payment of contributions, and report back at each meeting of the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Contracting Parties on activities taken in this regard and results achieved; and AGREES that the Standing Committee should continue to consider appropriate action concerning Parties that have neither paid their outstanding contributions nor submitted a payment plan for this purpose;
19. REQUESTS regional representatives in the Standing Committee to engage Parties from their respective regions with outstanding contributions to encourage them to identify appropriate options to rectify the situation;
20. NOTES WITH CONCERN the situation with non-core contributions from Contracting Parties; and ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and others to increase such contributions;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties and INVITES other governments, financial institutions, International Organization Partners and other implementing partners to support the implementation of the Ramsar Convention;
22. NOTES the resource mobilization work plan for the Convention approved by the Standing Committee and REQUESTS the Secretariat to update it to reflect the priorities identified by the Contracting Parties at COP14 and make it available to the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting, for its consideration;
23. NOTES WITH APPRECIATION the alignment of the Secretariat with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) policies and procedures for managing non-core funding;
24. REQUESTS the Secretariat to provide to the Ramsar Regional Initiatives (RRIs) in Africa, on an annual basis, the available balance of the African voluntary contribution fund; and INVITES those RRIs to submit requests to the Secretariat as part of their reports to access available funds in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 14.xx on *Ramsar Regional Initiatives 2023-2025*;
25. INVITES the African regional representatives in the Standing Committee to decide on the use of those funds referenced in paragraph 24 of the present Resolution, based on the requests submitted by the RRIs, and inform the Secretariat accordingly;
26. REAFFIRMS the decision taken by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties that requests the Secretariat within its existing legal framework and mandate to assist, as appropriate, Contracting Parties in the administration of non-core funded projects, including but not limited to successful fundraising for RRIs; and that further instructs Secretariat staff identified in Annex 3, supported with core funds, not to be involved in the day-to-day administration of non-core funded projects as this role would be the responsibility of any Secretariat staff supported with non-core funds for that specific purpose;
27. AUTHORIZES the Standing Committee, with the advice of its Subgroup on Finance, to transfer core budget allocations between budget lines as may be required in the light of significant positive or negative changes during the triennium to costs, rates of inflation, interest and tax income projected in the budget, without increasing the assessed contributions of Parties or increasing the charges paid to IUCN above a maximum of 13% of the budget;
28. RECOGNIZES the benefits of flexibility in travel budget lines to deliver on the Secretariat Work Plan for the triennium; and REAFFIRMS the decision taken at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties that authorizes the Secretary General to transfer resources between travel budget lines, ensuring that the Subgroup on Finance is informed and that such transfers are reported to the Standing Committee at its next meeting;
29. DECIDES that the contribution of each Contracting Party to the core budget should be in accordance with the most recent scale of assessments for the contribution of Member States to the United Nations budget as approved by the UN General Assembly, except in the case of Contracting Parties which, in applying the UN scale of assessments, would make annual contributions to the Ramsar Convention core budget of less than CHF 1,000, in which case the annual contribution is to be that amount. Estimated core budget contributions for the 2023-2025 triennium are presented in Annex 2 of the present Resolution;

30. URGES all Contracting Parties to pay their contributions promptly by 1 January of each year, or as soon thereafter as that country's budget cycle will permit;
31. EXPRESSES GRATITUDE to the governments of Finland, Germany, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America and to Danone and the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation for their voluntary contributions to non-core activities;
32. REAFFIRMS the decision taken at the 11th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties (in Resolution XI.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*) that the Reserve Fund:
- a. provides for unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures;
 - b. receives realized triennial core budget surpluses (or deficits);
 - c. should not be lower than 6% of the annual core budget of the Convention and not greater than 15%; and
 - d. should be administered by the Secretary General with the approval of the Subgroup on Finance established by the Standing Committee;
33. REQUESTS the Secretariat to endeavour to maintain the Reserve Fund over the 2023-2025 triennium and to report annually to the Standing Committee on its status and to seek the concurrence of the Subgroup on Finance prior to any use of the Fund;
34. REAFFIRMS the decision taken at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (in Resolution XII.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*) that authorizes the Secretary General, within the rules of IUCN, to adjust the staffing levels, numbers and structure of the Secretariat presented in Annex 3 of the present Resolution, provided that the adjustments are within the costs indicated and made in accordance with the 1993 *Delegation of Authority to the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands* and its *Supplementary Note*;
35. NOTES with appreciation the transparency and accountability regarding Secretariat operations that the Secretary General has fostered during the past triennium; NOTES that, as a means to further enhance these efforts, the Secretariat has established a section of the Convention website to publish information to ensure transparency and accountability, including *inter alia*: completed and accepted audit reports; financial rules and regulations; annual reports of the Secretary General to the Standing Committee; procedures for engagement with the private sector; materials related to staff codes of conduct and professional ethics; the 1993 delegation of authority and its supplementary note; anti-fraud policies; anti-harassment policies; whistle-blower rules and protections; policies on conflict of interest; policies on gender equity and equality; and any other relevant information; and REQUESTS that the Secretariat pursue these efforts in 2023-2025;
36. REQUESTS the Secretariat to consider Contracting Parties that are on the UN Conference on Trade and Development's List of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as eligible for sponsorship for delegate travel, whether or not they are formally classified as such on economic grounds in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list; and
37. CONFIRMS that the present Resolution and its annexes supersede Resolution XIII.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters*, Resolution ExCOP3.2 on *Financial and budgetary matters: 2022 core budget* and paragraph 11.a of Resolution VI.17 on *Financial and budgetary matters*.

**Annex 1 to Draft Resolution 14.xx
Core Budget 2023-2025**

Ramsar Core Budget 2023-2025 CHF 000'S	Budget 2023	Budget 2024	Budget 2025	Total Budget 2023-2025
INCOME				
Parties' Contributions	3,778	3,778	3,778	11,334
Voluntary Contributions	1,066	1,066	1,066	3,198
Income Tax	225	225	225	675
Income Interest	12	12	12	36
TOTAL INCOME	5,081	5,081	5,081	15,243
EXPENDITURES				
A. Secretariat Senior Management & Governance	1,050	1,062	1,057	3,169
B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach	508	508	508	1,524
C. Regional Advice and Support	1,309	1,316	1,318	3,943
D. Support to Regional Initiatives	100	100	100	300
E. Science and Policy	840	817	820	2,477
G. Administration	474	478	478	1,430
H. Standing Committee Services	150	150	150	450
I. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (maximum)	541	541	541	1,623
J. Miscellaneous - Reserve Fund	109	109	109	327
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,081	5,081	5,081	15,243

Annex 2 to Draft Resolution 14.xx
Estimated core budget contributions by Contracting Parties for 2023-2025

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 January 2022)	2022-2024 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Annual contribution 2019-2021	Estimated annual contribution 2023-2025	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Albania	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Algeria	0.109	0.112%	6,755	5,337	(1,418)
Andorra	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Angola	0.010	0.010%	0	1,000	1,000
Antigua and Barbuda	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Argentina	0.719	0.738%	44,786	35,204	(9,582)
Armenia	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Australia	2.111	2.167%	108,171	103,361	(4,810)
Austria	0.679	0.697%	33,136	33,246	110
Azerbaijan	0.030	0.031%	2,398	1,469	(929)
Bahamas	0.019	0.020%	1,000	1,000	0
Bahrain	0.054	0.055%	2,447	2,644	197
Bangladesh	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Barbados	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Belarus	0.041	0.042%	2,398	2,007	(391)
Belgium	0.828	0.850%	40,185	40,541	356
Belize	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Benin	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Bhutan	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.019	0.020%	1,000	1,000	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.012	0.012%	1,000	1,000	0
Botswana	0.015	0.015%	1,000	1,000	0
Brazil	2.013	2.067%	144,293	98,562	(45,731)
Bulgaria	0.056	0.057%	2,252	2,742	490
Burkina Faso	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Burundi	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Cabo Verde	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Cambodia	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Cameroon	0.013	0.013%	1,000	1,000	0
Canada	2.628	2.698%	133,818	128,674	(5,144)
Central African Republic	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Chad	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Chile	0.420	0.431%	19,921	20,564	643
China	15.254	15.660%	587,595	746,880	159,285
Colombia	0.246	0.253%	14,096	12,045	(2,051)
Comoros	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Congo	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0

* As per UN resolution A/RES/76/238; a revised UN Scale will be applied when released.

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 January 2022)	2022-2024 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Annual contribution 2019-2021	Estimated annual contribution 2023-2025	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Costa Rica	0.069	0.071%	3,035	3,378	343
Côte d'Ivoire	0.022	0.023%	1,000	1,077	77
Croatia	0.091	0.093%	3,769	4,456	687
Cuba	0.095	0.098%	3,916	4,651	735
Cyprus	0.036	0.037%	1,762	1,763	1
Czech Republic	0.340	0.349%	15,222	16,647	1,425
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Denmark	0.553	0.568%	27,116	27,076	(40)
Djibouti	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Dominican Republic	0.067	0.069%	2,594	3,281	687
Ecuador	0.077	0.079%	3,916	3,770	(146)
Egypt	0.139	0.143%	9,104	6,806	(2,298)
El Salvador	0.013	0.013%	1,000	1,000	0
Equatorial Guinea	0.012	0.012%	1,000	1,000	0
Estonia	0.044	0.045%	1,909	2,154	245
Eswatini	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Fiji	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Finland	0.417	0.428%	20,606	20,417	(189)
France	4.318	4.433%	216,684	211,421	(5,263)
Gabon	0.013	0.013%	1,000	1,000	0
Gambia	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Georgia	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Germany	6.111	6.274%	298,081	299,212	1,131
Ghana	0.024	0.025%	1,000	1,175	175
Greece	0.325	0.334%	17,914	15,913	(2,001)
Grenada	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Guatemala	0.041	0.042%	1,762	2,007	245
Guinea	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Guinea-Bissau	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Honduras	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Hungary	0.228	0.234%	10,083	11,164	1,081
Iceland	0.036	0.037%	1,370	1,763	393
India	1.044	1.072%	40,821	51,117	10,296
Indonesia	0.549	0.564%	26,578	26,881	303
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.371	0.381%	19,480	18,165	(1,315)
Iraq	0.128	0.131%	6,314	6,267	(47)
Ireland	0.439	0.451%	18,159	21,495	3,336
Israel	0.561	0.576%	23,984	27,468	3,484
Italy	3.189	3.274%	161,864	156,142	(5,722)
Jamaica	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0

* As per UN resolution A/RES/76/238; a revised UN Scale will be applied when released.

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 January 2022)	2022-2024 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Annual contribution 2019-2021	Estimated annual contribution 2023-2025	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Japan	8.033	8.247%	419,173	393,318	(25,855)
Jordan	0.022	0.023%	1,028	1,077	49
Kazakhstan	0.133	0.137%	8,712	6,512	(2,200)
Kenya	0.030	0.031%	1,175	1,469	294
Kiribati	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Kuwait	0.234	0.240%	12,334	11,457	(877)
Kyrgyzstan	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Latvia	0.050	0.051%	2,300	2,448	148
Lebanon	0.036	0.037%	2,300	1,763	(537)
Lesotho	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Liberia	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Liechtenstein	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Lithuania	0.077	0.079%	3,475	3,770	295
Luxembourg	0.068	0.070%	3,279	3,329	50
Madagascar	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Malawi	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Malaysia	0.348	0.357%	16,691	17,039	348
Mali	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Malta	0.019	0.020%	1,000	1,000	0
Marshall Islands	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Mauritania	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Mauritius	0.019	0.020%	1,000	1,000	0
Mexico	1.221	1.253%	63,238	59,784	(3,454)
Monaco	0.011	0.011%	1,000	1,000	0
Mongolia	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Montenegro	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Morocco	0.055	0.056%	2,692	2,693	1
Mozambique	0.004	0.004%	1,000	1,000	0
Myanmar	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Namibia	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Nepal	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Netherlands	1.377	1.414%	66,371	67,422	1,051
New Zealand	0.309	0.317%	14,243	15,130	887
Nicaragua	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Niger	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Nigeria	0.182	0.187%	12,236	8,911	(3,325)
Norway	0.679	0.697%	36,905	33,246	(3,659)
Oman	0.111	0.114%	5,629	5,435	(194)
Pakistan	0.114	0.117%	5,629	5,582	(47)
Palau	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0

* As per UN resolution A/RES/76/238; a revised UN Scale will be applied when released.

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 January 2022)	2022-2024 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Annual contribution 2019-2021	Estimated annual contribution 2023-2025	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
Panama	0.090	0.092%	2,203	4,407	2,204
Papua New Guinea	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Paraguay	0.026	0.027%	1,000	1,273	273
Peru	0.163	0.167%	7,440	7,981	541
Philippines	0.212	0.218%	10,034	10,380	346
Poland	0.837	0.859%	39,255	40,982	1,727
Portugal	0.353	0.362%	17,131	17,284	153
Republic of Korea	2.574	2.643%	110,960	126,030	15,070
Republic of Moldova	0.005	0.005%	1,000	1,000	0
Romania	0.312	0.320%	9,691	15,276	5,585
Russian Federation	1.866	1.916%	117,715	91,365	(26,350)
Rwanda	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Saint Lucia	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Samoa	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Senegal	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Serbia	0.032	0.033%	1,370	1,567	197
Seychelles	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Sierra Leone	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Slovakia	0.155	0.159%	7,489	7,589	100
Slovenia	0.079	0.081%	3,720	3,868	148
South Africa	0.244	0.250%	13,313	11,947	(1,366)
South Sudan	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Spain	2.134	2.191%	105,038	104,487	(551)
Sri Lanka	0.045	0.046%	2,154	2,203	49
State of Libya	0.018	0.018%	1,468	1,000	(468)
Sudan	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Suriname	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Sweden	0.871	0.894%	44,345	42,647	(1,698)
Switzerland	1.134	1.164%	56,337	55,524	(813)
Syrian Arab Republic	0.009	0.009%	1,000	1,000	0
Tajikistan	0.003	0.003%	1,000	1,000	0
Thailand	0.368	0.378%	15,026	18,018	2,992
Republic of North Macedonia	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Togo	0.002	0.002%	1,000	1,000	0
Trinidad and Tobago	0.037	0.038%	1,958	1,812	(146)
Tunisia	0.019	0.020%	1,224	1,000	(224)
Turkey	0.845	0.867%	67,105	41,374	(25,731)
Turkmenistan	0.034	0.035%	1,615	1,665	50
Uganda	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Ukraine	0.056	0.057%	2,790	2,742	(48)
United Arab Emirates	0.635	0.652%	30,151	31,091	940

* As per UN resolution A/RES/76/238; a revised UN Scale will be applied when released.

Contracting Party (Membership as at 1 January 2022)	2022-2024 UN Scale*	% Ramsar total	Annual contribution 2019-2021	Estimated annual contribution 2023-2025	Estimated change in annual contribution compared to previous triennium
United Kingdom	4.375	4.491%	223,536	214,212	(9,324)
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010	0.010%	1,000	1,000	0
Uruguay	0.092	0.094%	4,258	4,505	247
Uzbekistan	0.027	0.028%	1,566	1,322	(244)
Vanuatu	0.001	0.001%	1,000	1,000	0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0.175	0.180%	35,633	8,568	(27,065)
Viet Nam	0.093	0.095%	3,769	4,554	785
Yemen	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Zambia	0.008	0.008%	1,000	1,000	0
Zimbabwe	0.007	0.007%	1,000	1,000	0
Total	75.978	78.0000%	3,778,998	3,779,000	2
Other contributions**					
United States of America		22%	1,065,799	1,065,799	0
Grand Total			4,844,797	4,844,799	2

* As per UN resolution A/RES/76/238; a revised UN Scale will be applied when released.

** As previously, voluntary contribution of 22% of total contributions from Contracting Parties.

Annex 3 to Draft Resolution 14.xx
Secretariat staff (core) for 2023-2025 as per budget in Annex 1

Team	2022	2023	2024	2025
Secretariat Senior Management	1 S, 1 D, 1 P2, 2 A3	1 S, 1 D, 1 P2, 2 A3	1 S, 1 D, 1 P2, 2 A3	1 S, 1 D, 1 P2, 2 A3
Resource Mobilization and Outreach	2 P2, 1 A3			
Regional Advice and Support	4 M1, 4 junior professionals			
Science and Policy	1 M1, 2 P2, 1 P1	1 M1, 2 P2, 1 P1	1 M1, 2 P2, P1	1 M1, 2 P2, 1 P1
Administration	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A3	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A3	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A3	1 P2, 1 P1 (50%), 1 A3
Total	22.5 staff	22.5 staff	22.5 staff	22.5 staff
Total costs (in '000 CHF)	3,586	3,586	3,603	3,603

Note:

2022 staff numbers and positions shown for reference. Costs budgeted and allocated to budget lines on the basis of current core-funded positions. Team refers to the categorization of expenditures as listed in Annex 1.

Levels as per IUCN HR policy and guidelines on position classification.

S = Secretary General; D and M1-M2 = management positions; P1-P2 = professional positions; A1-A3 = support positions

Annex 4 to Draft Resolution 14.xx - to be finalized at the COP14