



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties: Part I, Annex V

REPORT OF THE 24TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals was held at the International Congress Centre, Bonn, Germany, on 17 September 2002. The meeting was opened at 3 pm by the Chair (Philippines, representing Oceania), who welcomed all participants.

2. The meeting was attended by:

(a) Representatives of the following members of the Committee:

Belgium (Europe), Germany (Depositary), Philippines (Oceania), Poland (Europe), South Africa (Africa) and Uruguay (Latin America);

(b) The following alternate members:

Ukraine (Europe);

(c) The following observers:

Denmark; Switzerland; United Kingdom; Chair of the Scientific Council; UNON; UNEP; African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA), Birdlife International; and

(d) The Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary who provided Secretariat services.

I. COP7 LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(a) Meeting Structure: Committees, Working Groups, Chairs

3. The Executive Secretary outlined the requirements concerning the nomination of the Chair of the Conference and the establishment of sessional committees. He stressed the role of the regional group meetings in deciding on nominations for Officers of the Conference.

(b) Programme/Timetable

4. The Executive Secretary drew attention to the provisional schedule of work of the meeting (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.3 (Rev.1) and enumerated the issues raised in the annotated agenda (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.1.1).

(c) COP Rules of Procedure (Voting eligibility issue)

5. The Standing Committee deliberated on the issue of the right of Parties whose contributions were in arrears to vote during the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In its deliberations, the Committee had before it document UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.4, on the Rules of Procedure for the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and document UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.13.1, on administrative arrangements.

6. Introducing the item, the Deputy Executive Secretary referred to Rule 14 (2) of the provisional Rules of Procedure, which stated:

“Representatives of Parties which are three or more years behind in paying their subscriptions on the date of the opening session of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall not be eligible to vote. However, the Conference of the Parties may allow such Parties to exercise their right to vote if it is satisfied that the delay in payment arises from exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, and shall receive advice in this regard from the Standing Committee”.

7. In Resolution 6.8 (Cape Town, 1999), paragraph 13, the Conference of the Parties served notice “to Parties with contributions in arrears that rule 14 (2) on withholding of voting rights will be strictly adhered to at the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties”.

8. The Committee noted that, of the 17 Parties whose contributions were three or more years in arrears, only one (Argentina) had provided an explanation for the exceptional and unavoidable circumstances which had prevented it from paying its contributions in a timely manner. In this regard, a letter to the Executive Secretary from the Government of Argentina, outlining the difficult economic situation of the country, was circulated to the members of the Standing Committee.

9. The Standing Committee decided unanimously to accept this explanation for the current meeting, enabling Argentina to retain its eligibility to vote, but with the expectation that Argentina would make a partial payment during the course of 2003 as a sign of good will. The Standing Committee decided that it was not within its remit to offer advice on any of the other Parties in arrears which had provided no such explanation. The Committee noted that the terms of Resolution 6.8 adopted by the Conference of the Parties were unambiguous inasmuch as they served notice that Rule 14.2 on withholding of voting rights would be strictly adhered to. It noted further that several Parties had benefited from a special write-off of unpaid contributions, which in most cases had not had the desired effect of encouraging those Parties to bring their remaining contributions up to date.

10. The Standing Committee strongly advised on re-opening a debate on this matter during the plenary session of the Conference of the Parties, as it considered that all Parties with arrears had been given sufficient reminders and opportunities either to pay their arrears or to offer an explanation of the mitigating circumstances. In that connection, the Committee agreed that any declaration of mitigating circumstances made by a Party in arrears after 17 September 2002 would not be taken into account, since it was explicitly stated in document UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.4, paragraph 6, that “Parties concerned are invited to bring their contributions up to date in advance of COP7 or to communicate to the Secretariat the nature of any mitigating circumstances, before the Standing Committee deliberates on this matter at its meeting on 17 September 2002 in Bonn”.

11. The Standing Committee also requested the Secretariat to review the table of Parties ineligible to vote and to re-issue it before the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

(a) Headquarters Agreement

(b) MoU Signing Ceremony

12. The Executive Secretary outlined the procedure to be followed on 18 September 2002 for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between CMS and the Government of Germany on the Headquarters Agreement, as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Germany and UNEP, and encouraged wide participation in the event. In addition institutional Memoranda of Cooperation were scheduled to be signed with UNESCO and CITES in the evening of 18 September 2002.

(c) Standing Committee: New members and alternates

13. The Deputy Executive Secretary drew attention to the required changes in the membership of the Standing Committee, in line with its Rules of Procedure, and the need for the regional groups to decide on the nomination of their respective candidates for the positions.

III. MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

(a) Report on outcome of the election of Chair, Vice-Chair

14. The Chair of the Scientific Council, Professor Colin Galbraith (United Kingdom), reported that he had accepted the nomination of the Council to serve a further term as Chair. Mr. John Mshelbwala (Nigeria) had also been elected to serve a further term as Vice-Chair.

15. Dr. Galbraith also reported on the activities of the Scientific Council at its last two meetings, and noted that, in addition to the report of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council, the Conference of the Parties would also have before it a report prepared by him on the proposed developments and changes in the processes of the Scientific Council.

(b) COP-appointed Councillors (new appointments/re-appointments)

16. The Chair of the Scientific Council reported that Mr. Noritaka Ichida had been appointed Councillor for Asiatic Fauna; Mr. John O'Sullivan, from BirdLife International, had been nominated as appointed Councillor for birds (replacing Mr. Mike Moser), subject to endorsement by the Conference of the Parties.

IV. ROLE FOR STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS DURING COP8

Organization of regional consultations

17. The Deputy Executive Secretary enumerated a list of possible agenda points for the regional consultations: explaining the Standing Committee's position on the Rules of Procedure; nomination of Standing Committee regional members; appointment of Scientific Councillors; facilitation of the preparation and sponsorship or resolutions/recommendations; sponsoring of recommendations/decisions; and canvassing of a possible host country for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18. After expressing thanks to the Government of Germany for the excellent facilities provided for the meeting of the Standing Committee and for the Conference of the Parties, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 17 September 2002.

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