

## 51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

*Gandhinagar, India, 22 February 2020*

UNEP/CMS/StC51/Report

### MEETING REPORT

#### 1. Opening remarks and introductions

The Executive Secretary, Amy Fraenkel explained that as the newly composed Standing Committee had not yet elected its officers, she would preside over the meeting as foreseen in the rules of procedure.

As the new Standing Committee was meeting for the first time, Ms Fraenkel read out a list of the Parties that had been elected or re-elected as full members or alternates. She explained that Germany as depositary and India as host of COP13 would also serve on the Committee as would the host country of COP14 as soon as it was confirmed. She conducted a *tour de table* so that the members could introduce themselves. A full list of participants at the meeting can be found in Annex 1.

The required quorum of members had been reached despite several of the newly elected full members of the Committee not being present; they were represented by alternates.

#### 2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda and list of documents as presented in document UNEP/CMS/StC51/Doc.2.1 was adopted.

#### 3. Elections of officials to fill the posts of Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Standing Committee for 2020-2023

Ms Fraenkel said that one nomination had been received proposing that India serve as Chair of the Standing Committee. There being neither any other nominations nor objections, India was duly elected.

No nominations had been received for the post of Vice-Chair. Ms Fraenkel invited nominations from the floor.

Uganda (Alternate Member for Africa) nominated Algeria, confirming that Algeria, which was not present, was willing to serve.

The list of members of the Standing Committee for 2020-2023 can be found in Annex 2

#### 4. Elections of the members of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee

Ms Fraenkel explained that the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee comprised five members, one from each of the CMS regions. The role of the Sub-Committee was to assist oversee all financial matters and advise the Executive Secretary on the conduct of the Convention's budget.

Ms Fraenkel called upon each region in turn to nominate its member of the Sub-Committee.

For the African region, Uganda nominated Kenya, confirming that the nominee, which was not present, was willing to serve. For the Asian region, Uzbekistan nominated Saudi Arabia. For South and Central America and the Caribbean, Costa Rica nominated Uruguay. New Zealand as the sole representative of its region would represent Oceania. France (Alternate Member for Europe) pointed out that two of the region's three full members were not present and therefore suggested informing the Secretariat of Europe's nominee after consultations had taken place.

Ms Fraenkel said that the Sub-Committee needed to elect a new chair, as this role had been fulfilled by Mongolia in the previous triennium; Mongolia had now rotated off the Standing Committee. In the absence of any nominations, it was agreed that the election of a chair would be followed up intersessionally.

## **5. Dates and venue of 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

Ms Fraenkel pointed out that the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14 would be unusually long, if, as expected, COP14 was held as was customary, towards the end of the third year of the triennium. Some thought had been given at the 49<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee to the timing of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, bearing in mind operational requirements, timetabling concerns and budgetary considerations. No decisions had been made, as it was thought more appropriate to let the newly constituted Standing Committee consider the options.

Different options had been devised for scheduling meetings of the Standing Committee and the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council throughout the intersessional period 2020-23 schedule, with the assumption that COP14 would take place in late 2023.

The first option for the Standing Committee foresaw three rather than two intersessional meetings, taking place in late 2020, late 2021 and late 2022. Option 2 foresaw two meetings, with StC52 taking place in early 2021 and StC53 taking place in late 2022. Option 2 ensured that meetings were spaced out evenly across the intersessional period, avoided clashes with other biodiversity-related meetings and reduced pressure on the CMS budget, but would mean that there would be no intersessional meeting of the Standing Committee in late 2020.

Three options were considered for the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC). The first foresaw ScC-SC5 taking place in late 2020, no meeting in 2021, ScC-SC6 taking place in mid-2022 and ScC-SC7 in mid-2023. This would lead to timing clashes with the COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and increase pressures on the CMS budget. The second option also foresaw three meetings of the Sessional Committee, but with different timings, namely early 2021, mid-2022 and mid-2023. The third option foresaw only two meetings, one in late 2020 and a second in mid-2023, and this would require more intersessional work.

Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica, New Zealand and France expressed a preference for the second options for both the Standing Committee and the ScC-SC.

The Seychelles pointed out that with so many members of the Standing Committee being new, it would be preferable for its next meeting to be held sooner rather than later.

Germany said that budgetary considerations should be taken into account. Timing clashes with the CBD COP and CITES Standing Committee should be avoided.

Ms Fraenkel added that the United Nations Biodiversity Summit was scheduled to take place in New York in the autumn of 2020.

Uganda favoured option 2 and expressed the view that the decision should not be deferred.

Ms Fraenkel asked whether the meeting wanted to make a decision immediately or consult further.

New Zealand thought that the views of the Scientific Council should be sought on how it felt it could best deal with its workload.

Ms Fraenkel said that there was a clear consensus on Option 2 for the Standing Committee. A meeting of the ScC-SC in mid-2023 was common to all three options, leaving open just the question of having one or two further meetings of the ScC-SC. The Secretariat would consult further.

With regard to the hosting of the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties, some expressions of interest had been received but no firm offers had been made. The Convention's rules stated that the hosts of the next COP should be identified within 180 days of the conclusion of the previous one.

The Secretariat stood ready to provide details of the requirements to any Party interested in hosting the COP and the members of the Standing Committee were asked to help identify suitable candidates.

## **6. Any other business**

No items were raised under this agenda point.

## **7. Concluding remarks**

Ms Fraenkel expressed her thanks to the members of the newly constituted Committee and that she was looking forward to working with them over the next triennium. The meeting concluded at 18:07.

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	Uzbekistan	Pakistan
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	Panama	Costa Rica
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Host COP14	TBD	N/A
Host Government/Depositary	Germany	N/A