

**Framework Convention
for the Protection of the Marine
Environment of the Caspian Sea**

Distr.: General
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Original: English

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fifth Meeting
Turkmenistan**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE CASPIAN SEA
(TEHRAN CONVENTION)**

Report by the interim Secretariat

I. Introduction.

In document TC/COP4/9, the Program of Work for the implementation of the Tehran Convention in 2013-2014 (POW) was budgeted at US \$ 595,000 and the arrangements for the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention at US \$ 960,000: US \$ 340,000 in 2013 and up to US \$ 620,000 in 2014. Needed for a full implementation of the POW was therefore in total US \$ 1,555,000, out of which US \$ 1,450,000 from country contributions, US \$ 50,000 from UNEP and US \$ 55,000 from the EU. The amount of US \$ 1,450,000 in country contributions was suggested to be covered from the expected end-2012 cash carry over (US \$ 289,560) and the projected contribution income for 2013 (US \$ 360,000) and 2014 (US \$ 1,000,000), in total US \$ 1,649,560.

The above calculations were based on the assumption and expectation that all countries would pay their contributions, including I.R. of Iran its arrears, and that starting in 2014 the contribution level would be raised in cash or in-kind (through staff support) from US \$ 72,000 to US \$ 200,000 per country. It was furthermore hoped that in 2013 at least one of the external fundraising efforts would bear fruit.

Already at COP4 in Moscow, 10-12 December 2012, it became clear that the Parties would not be in the position to already in 2014 raise their contribution to the budget of the Convention. Furthermore, the year 2013 started and ended without I.R. of Iran being able to pay, while also the fundraising efforts appeared to require more time before yielding results.

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Consequently the income from country contributions and cash carry over from 2012 to 2013 amounted only to US \$ 721,560: US \$ 1,649,560 – 5 X US \$ 128,000 (reduced

contributions 2014) – 2 X US \$ 72,000 (lack of Iranian contributions 2013-2014) – US \$ 144,000 (lower cash carry over due to lack of Iranian contributions before 2013).

Together with the UNEP contribution (US \$ 55,000) and a somewhat higher remainder of the EU grant (US \$ 77,000) than presented in document TC/COP4/9 and as already reported on in the TCIS Note on the Financial Situation and Perspectives of 22 October 2013, the financial resources available for 2013-2014 amounted to US \$ 853,560, well over US \$ 700,000 short of the projected amount needed for a full implementation of the POW 2013-2014.

With a projected expenditure over 2013 of around US \$ 350,000, an amount of only around US \$ 500,000 will be available for 2014, just enough to cover the core costs of the Secretariat and its operation (up to US \$ 300,000), the NCLOs and Caspian Day (up to US \$ 85,000), COP5, its PrepCom and other meetings/consultations (up to US \$ 70,000), ongoing consultancies and evaluation (up to US \$ 20,000), and US \$ 20,000 support cost.

In light of the lack of sufficient secured financial resources, it is proposed to not consider a new Program of Work but extend the present Program of Work with one year to allow for its full implementation until end 2015.

In addition, the interim Secretariat, with the assistance of its counterparts in the countries, UNEP, UNDP, GRID Arendal, and others, has during the reporting period given highest priority to fundraising, with the following results as of today:

- Continuous exchanges with and a visit to I.R. of Iran may have opened a possible avenue for I.R. of Iran to transfer and pay its contributions of 2010 through 2014;
- Based on discussions during and after COP4, including at the planning meeting of the representatives of the Parties in Baku, 22-25 April 2013, the NCLOs are expected to have initiated the internal debate and procedures in their countries for possible staff secondments to the Convention Secretariat;
- The UNDP-GEF PIF submission, endorsed by the Caspian states, is pending further review and consideration after the GEF replenishment this year;
- Discussions with the EU-EC concerning future EU support to the Tehran Convention process as part of a wider UNEP-EU cooperation in the field of assessment and information exchange, are ongoing;
- A proposal for continuing support to the operation of the Caspian Environment Information Centre (CEIC) has met approval in principle by British Petroleum;
- A project proposal on support for the Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) and Tehran Convention related governance, prepared by TCIS and by GRID Arendal, is under consideration at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- A project proposal on “governance in the Caspian Sea region” prepared by TCIS and the University of Geneva, is under consideration at the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS) in Geneva

In planning the implementation of the POW 2013-2014 the Parties initially agreed to strive towards three meetings in 2013:

- A planning meeting which took place in Baku, 22-25 April 2013;
- An Extra-ordinary meeting of the COP at the invitation of and in the I.R. of Iran to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Tehran Convention, which at the end had to be cancelled due to the presidential elections in I.R. of Iran;
- A meeting in Aktau, Republic of Kazakhstan to celebrate the entry into force of the Aktau Protocol, which, due to delayed ratification of the Protocol by the host country has been postponed till later in 2014.

In actual terms only two Convention meetings took place in the reporting period: one planning meeting in Baku, 22-25 April 2013; and one meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, to review progress in the implementation of the POW and start preparations for the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention (COP5) which is scheduled to take place in Turkmenistan the last week of May 2014, preceded by a Preparatory Meeting (PrepCom) in Turkmenistan, 26-28 March 2014.

At the meeting in Geneva it became clear that in the minimum scenario of only four countries contributing and no additional funds raised, the resources for 2014 would be barely enough to provide the traditional modest support for COP5, its PrepCom, and Caspian Day. With that in mind the representatives of the Contracting Parties at their meeting in Geneva agreed to undertake to:

- secure sufficient domestic resources for their country's participation in the meetings and events related to the Tehran Convention in 2014;
- ensure early payment of their country's contribution to the 2014 budget of the Convention.

In the reporting period all countries celebrated Caspian Day (12 August 2013) while in addition a ceremony for the 10th anniversary of the Tehran Convention was held in on 4 November 2013 in the presence of high level representatives of the Caspian littoral states.

An MOU between the TCIS and CASPCOM was signed during the 18th Session of CASPCOM in Ashgabat, 27-28 November 2013, and TCIS joined IMO in organizing the interregional workshop of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea countries on Ballast Water Management Activities, in Novorossiysk, Russian Federation, 9-13 December 2013.

II. Program of Work (POW) and Ministerial Statement and Decisions (MSD).

The Contracting Parties at COP4:

- Adopted the Ministerial Statement and Decisions and as part thereof the POW and budget of the Tehran Convention for 2013-2014 as contained in document TC/COP4/9;
- Decided to continue to collectively provide an amount of USD 360,000 per year (USD 72,000 as contribution of each Party) to the budget of the Tehran Convention;

- Agreed to consider the expediency and possibility of increasing their national contribution to the budget of the Tehran Convention, and requested the (interim) Secretariat to prepare additional substantiation on the increase taking into account the shift of the Secretariat to the territory of one of the Caspian littoral States starting in 2014;
- Requested the GEF, the oil, gas and shipping companies active in the Caspian Sea region, and other international organizations and donors, in particular GEF, UNDP, UNEP, the European Union and IMO to continue to assist the countries with the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols;

As explained in the introduction, the Contracting Parties declared they were not yet ready to consider an increase of their contribution to the budget of the Convention while all the other fund-raising efforts, although ongoing and some promising, have not yet yielded results. The report below on the implementation of the Program of Work and related decisions of COP4, as well as the suggested future action should be considered and discussed against this background.

a) *Secretariat arrangements (POW no. 2; paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 MSD).*

At COP2 in Tehran, 10-12 November 2008, the Ministers and High-level officials of the Contracting Parties pledged to seek agreement on the arrangements and location of the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention in the region, requesting UNEP, pending such agreement, to continue the functions of the Secretariat ad interim and develop a proposal for administering the Secretariat in the region.

Ad COP3 in Aktau, 10-12 August 2011, the Ministers and High-level officials repeated their pledge. The Note prepared by UNEP on the administration and financial management of the Tehran Convention (TC/COP3/7) was not considered, in light of the wish of the representatives of the Contracting Parties to deal with that matter at the time that an agreement on the location of the Secretariat would be near.

Following the guidance provided by the first PrepCom for COP4, in Geneva, 11 – 13 July 2012, Azerbaijan and I.R. of Iran were requested to consult and harmonize their views on the location of the Secretariat in the region, in order to facilitate decision-making at COP4. Delegations at the PrepCom agreed that in case of no agreement a system of full rotation of the Secretariat in alphabetical order may be decided and installed.

At the second PrepCom for COP4, in Ashgabat, 7-9 November 2012, delegations agreed with the Standardized List of Host Country Secretariat Support, prepared by the interim Secretariat (TC/COP4/6 - Annex 2).

At COP4, Moscow, 10-12 December 2012, the Ministers and High-level officials requested the Contracting Parties, in particular I.R. of Iran and Azerbaijan, to continue their consultations on the location of the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention “on a permanent basis in the territory of one of the Caspian littoral States, or on a rotational basis in alphabetical order in the English language”.

COP4 invited UNEP “to finalize the arrangements for hosting and administering the Convention Secretariat at location in the region, if thereto invited by the Contracting Parties at their fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties”.

At the Institutional and Planning Meeting in Baku, 22-25 April 2013, the representatives of the Contracting Parties reviewed a Note by TCIS entitled “Shifting/establishing the Tehran Convention Secretariat in the region” and agreed that in case no common position would emerge from the (bilateral) consultations, the Contracting Parties should consider and decide to locate the Secretariat in the territory of one of the Caspian littoral States on a (six) year rotational basis in alphabetical order of the English language.

By email of 16 May 2013 TCIS, at the request of I.R. of Iran, circulated the draft of the Ministerial Statement and Decisions to be adopted by the first Extra-ordinary Meeting of the COP, planned to be held on 12-14 August 2013, in Tehran. The draft Statement included:

- The decision to locate the Convention Secretariat in the territory of the Caspian littoral States on a rotation basis, in accordance with the alphabetical order in the English language, if by the end of November 2013 Azerbaijan and the I.R. of Iran had not been able to reach consensus on an alternative with the full support of the other Contracting Parties;
- The request to TCIS to prepare the organizational document package regarding the location of the Convention Secretariat in the territory of the Caspian littoral States on a rotation basis and present it for consideration to COP5.

As indicated above, due to the presidential elections in the I.R. of Iran the Extra-ordinary Meeting of the COP did not take place.

At the Institutional and Planning Meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, the representatives of the Contracting Parties agreed that TCIS would prepare proposals for a Secretariat, rotating every 4/6 years in alphabetical order of the English language, administered by UNEP and staffed as proposed in the revised TCIS Note on “Shifting/establishing the Tehran Convention Secretariat in the region”, circulated by letter of 22 October 2013.

The Note revealed that the Secretariat of the Convention and Protocols could best consist of: an Executive Secretary; his/her Assistant; 2 Protocol Officers; an Administrative-Finance officer; an IT/Information/Communication officer, and a Secretary, against a cost for salaries and operation of around US \$ 1.2 million per year. It suggested that, with an annual contribution of the Contracting Parties of US \$ 360,000 and a contribution – in-kind – of around US \$ 125,000 by the host country, the Secretariat could only function properly if the Contracting Parties provided additional staffing support and assist in mobilizing contributions from international organizations and the private sector for the implementation of the Programs of Work of the Convention and its Protocols.

Copy of the Note is contained in document TC/COP5/INF.3.

Against that background, the representatives of the Contracting Parties to the Meeting in Geneva agreed that:

- The decision on a rotating Secretariat may change in case Azerbaijan and I.R. of Iran reach consensus on an alternative with the full support of the other Contracting Parties. Azerbaijan indicated that in a discussion on an alternative it will not change its position;
- The contracting Parties will actively explore and inform TCIS of the staff positions in the future secretariat in which they have an interest and for which they are willing to provide staff on secondment;
- The candidate host countr(y)(ies) will – taking into account the agreed List of Standardized Host Country Secretariat Support - inform TCIS of the support they are able to provide.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to consider the Note by TCIS and review and decide on paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

b) (Aktau) Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents (POW no. 4; paragraphss 6, 7 and 8 MSD).

Welcoming the ratification by the I.R. of Iran of the (Aktau) Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents to the Tehran Convention, COP4 urged the other Contracting Parties to finalize the ratification process as soon as possible.

COP4 furthermore welcomed the preparation process of the Caspian Sea Plan concerning Regional Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution in Cases of Emergency (Regional Contingency Plan) for the Caspian Littoral States, initiated at the IMO workshop in Baku, 18 – 20 June 2012.

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, it became clear that in addition to I.R. of Iran, Azerbaijan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan have ratified the Aktau Protocol, while Kazakhstan committed to submit its instrument of ratification in time for the Protocol to enter into force on Caspian Day, 12 August 2014.

It would be the intention of Kazakhstan to host a meeting of the Contracting Parties in Aktau in conjunction with Caspian Day 2014, with the objective to:

- Celebrate the entry into force of the Protocol;
- Reach agreement on the Caspian Sea Plan concerning Regional Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution in Cases of Emergency;
- Review national and regional strategies for private sector engagement in the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols;

- Host a workshop sponsored by OSCE/UNDP/ENVSEC in collaboration with IMO and UNEP to review/demonstrate national and regional oil spill prevention and response measures/requirements.

In Geneva, the NCLOs committed to actively promote that the letters of 5 December 2012 and 1 October 2013, in which IMO requested the Contracting Parties to provide and complete the information in the Annexes to the Regional Contingency Plan, be replied to before end January 2014, in time for the Plan to be finalized and circulated for final review and approval at the Aktau Protocol celebration meeting in August 2014.

The draft of the Regional Contingency Plan and related communications is contained in document TC/COP5/INF.4

The NCLOs would also ensure that the inputs by the nominated experts for a strategy to engage the private sector (oil, gas and transport industry) in the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols, would reach TCIS end 2013, allowing the strategy to be developed and reviewed in time for consideration and approval at the Aktau Protocol celebration meeting.

Copy of all related communications and inputs is contained in document TC/COP5/INF.7.

In Geneva it was agreed that, since there are no resources for the Aktau meeting in the Convention budget, financing will be sought and obtained from Kazakhstan, IMO, OSCE, UNDP and UNEP.

At the time of preparation of this progress report the completed Annexes from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan for the Regional Contingency Plan and the reports from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan for the private sector engagement strategy are still due.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to analyze and review the progress made and decide on paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

c) (Moscow) Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (POW no. 5; paragraph 9 MSD).

COP4 welcomed the adoption and signing of the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Tehran Convention (TC/COP4/5), and urged for ratification and implementation.

Azerbaijan is close to finalizing its accession process to the Protocol while all other countries reported an advanced stage of ratification.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to analyze and review the progress made and decide on paragraph 9 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

d) Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (POW no. 5; paragraph 10 MSD).

In the absence of an agreement on proposals presented by the Russian Federation, the Contracting Parties at COP4 decided to finalize the arrangements for adoption and signature of the Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity to the Tehran Convention as soon as possible before the fifth Meeting of the COP;

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, delegations declared they were not yet ready to discuss the revised proposals of the Russian Federation, circulated by email of 8 November 2013; the Contracting Parties would internally review their position and consult each other with a view to reach consensus at the PrepCom, so as to secure adoption and signing of the Protocol at COP5.

The text of the Protocol and the Russian proposals are contained in document TC/COP5/3.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to reach agreement on the text of the Protocol and review and decide on paragraph 10 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

e) Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (POW no. 5; paragraph 11 MSD).

In the absence of an agreement on proposals submitted by Turkmenistan, the Contracting Parties at COP4 decided to finalize the arrangements for adoption and signature of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context to the Tehran Convention as soon as possible before the fifth Meeting of the COP;

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, I.R. of Iran and the Russian Federation expressed flexibility towards the proposals of Turkmenistan. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan continued to have problems since the proposals de facto change the language of similar articles in the Espoo Convention to which both countries are Party. It was agreed that the Contracting Parties would internally review their position and consult each other with a view to reach consensus at the PrepCom, so as to secure adoption and signing of the Protocol at COP5.

The text of the Protocol and the proposals of Turkmenistan are contained in document TC/COP5/4.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to reach agreement on the text of the Protocol and review and decide on paragraph 11 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

f) National Action Plans, or NCAPs, and Public Participation (POW no. 3 and 9; paragraphs 12 and 13 MSD).

The Contracting Parties at COP4:

- Welcomed the Action Plans, or NCAPs, containing measures on the implementation of the Tehran Convention at the national level;
- Noted the measures envisaged and the NCAP-Synthesis Paper annexed to TC/COP4/INF.4;
- Requested the (interim) Secretariat to promote and coordinate the required capacity-building for implementation of Action Plans, or NCAPs;
- Welcomed the finalization of the Public Participation Strategies as part of the Action Plans, or NCAPs, including, inter alia, measures related to Caspian Day celebrations;
- Committed to promote stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols; and
- Requested the (interim) Secretariat to regularly update the synthesis report on public participation (TC/COP4/INF.5).

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, it was reported that the National Action Plans, or NCAPs, have been finalized and approved in all countries, except in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, where the approval process is complicated but advanced and close to conclusion.

Delegations also welcomed the advisory opinion and recommendations of the Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention for improved public information and participation in the Tehran Convention process and agreed with the suggestion that TCIS will prepare a brief analysis and recommendation for consideration and adoption by COP5.

The Note by TCIS on the Aarhus Convention related recommendations is contained in document TC/COP5/INF.6.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to review progress in the implementation of the National Plans, or NCAPs, and the Public Participation Strategies, including the analysis contained in document TC/COP5/INF.7, and review and decide on paragraphs 12 and 13 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

g) Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) (POW no. 7; paragraph 14, 15 and 16 MSD).

The Contracting Parties at COP4 welcomed the EMP contained in document TC/COP4/7 as the basis for continuation of this activity and capacity-building and regional

cooperation for monitoring the parameters which determine the quality of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea; and requested the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate and promote its implementation with the involvement and/or support of CaspCom, the GEF, the EU, and other stakeholders;

COP4 furthermore decided to consider the expediency of developing a legal framework for the EMP in the form of a Protocol on Monitoring to the Tehran Convention and requested the (interim) Secretariat to promote and service the related process;

The meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, was informed of the outcome of the 18th Session of CASPCOM, the Coordinating Committee on Hydrometeorology and Pollution Monitoring of the Caspian Sea, in Ashgabat, 27-28 November 2013, and welcomed the MOU between CASPCOM and TCIS signed at that meeting. Note was taken of the “Regional framework and network for the Tehran Convention and Protocol compliance and assessment” prepared at the request of TCIS and it was agreed that efforts will be made to revitalize the WG on Monitoring established under the CaspEco project, with a view to prioritize and initiate the implementation of the EMP. It was acknowledged that a first meeting of the WG and initial implementation activities will depend on the availability of extra-budgetary resources.

The MOU between CASPCOM and TCIS and the regional framework prepared at the request of TCIS are contained in document TC/COP5/5.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to discuss and consider how the implementation of the EMP can be advanced, and to review and decide on paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

h) Caspian Environmental Information Center (CEIC) (POW no. 7; paragraph 17 MSD).

The Contracting Parties at COP4 welcomed the information on the virtual web-based Caspian Environmental Information Centre (CEIC) contained in document TC/COP4/8; and requested the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate and ensure its full operation with the involvement and/or support of UNEP, the GEF, the EU, and other stakeholders, including the oil and gas industry.

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, the representative of GRID Arendal informed the representatives of the Contracting Parties of the plans for training and supporting the designated Information Officers with a view to ensuring a fully operational and Caspian states “owned” CEIC. Once the formal approval of the BP grant has been received, a detailed plan for the year ahead would be developed and implemented.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to review the situation regarding the CEIC and consider and decide on paragraph 17 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

i) National and State of the Environment (SOE) reporting (POW no. 7, paragraph 18 MSD).

At the meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, it was reported that based on the Unified Reporting Format, national reports have been submitted by Kazakhstan (2011) and Russian Federation (2006 – 2010).

The meeting agreed that ideally national reports should cover the period until the end of the year before the year of submission, and urged countries to reach as close as possible to that ideal and ensure that their national reports, including an executive summary in English, be submitted and put on the website in time for COP5 to be informed, and as a basis for future SOE reporting.

Delegations furthermore discussed and agreed that there is a need for more clarity as to the scope, timing and process of SOE reporting. It was agreed that TCIS will prepare a brief Note with proposals as a basis for discussion by the PrepCom and decision-making by COP5.

The Note by TCIS with proposals on SOE reporting is contained in document TC/COP5/6.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to review the state of National and SOE reporting, including the proposals prepared, and review and decide on paragraph 18 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

j) Ballast Water Management Activities (POW no. 6; paragraph 22 MSD).

COP4 expressed gratitude to IMO and the State Maritime Administration of Azerbaijan for organizing the Workshop on a Regional Strategy and Action Plan to implement the Ballast Water Management Convention, Baku, 9-11 July 2012; welcomed the Strategy and Action Plan; and requested the Contracting Parties, assisted by IMO and the (interim) Secretariat, to ensure that the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is integrated in the implementation of the SCAP and NCAPs, as well as in the reporting thereon.

The meeting in Geneva, 19-20 December 2013, was informed of the outcome of the Black Sea – Caspian Sea Ballast Water Management Activities, 9-13 December 2013, in Novorossiysk, Russian Federation, organized by IMO in collaboration with the Black Sea Secretariat and UNEP/TCIS. Based on the discussions at that workshop an inter-regional Black Sea-Caspian Sea GEF project may be developed.

The report of the workshop in Novorossiysk and proposed elements for a GEF project are contained in document TC/COP5/INF.5.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to review the report of the Workshop and review and decide on paragraph 22 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

III. From COP5 to COP6 (paragraphs 19, 20, 21, 23 and 24 MSD).

The question arises whether in this period of institutional change and financial uncertainty a new Program of Work is needed. The implementation of the POW 2013-2014 is far from completed. All fundraising proposals under consideration pertain to the implementation of the present POW and to support the shift of the Convention Secretariat and arrangements to/in the region.

Consideration should therefore be given to extending the implementation of the POW until end 2015 and advancing the holding of COP6 to the fall of 2015, allowing for a timely consideration and approval of a new POW.

In the meantime all fund-raising including for increased/additional contributions by the Contracting Parties in cash or in-kind, should continue with a view to establish a solid and sound resource base for the new POW and the supporting secretariat arrangements in the region.

In case the Contracting Parties decide on a permanent Secretariat arrangement on the basis of rotation in alphabetical order of the English language, the holding of COP6 may be made to coincide with the inauguration of the first Secretariat location in Baku, Azerbaijan.

In case the Contracting Parties decide on a rotation scheme of 6 years, they may have that decision accompanied with a decision that from COP6 onwards, the Meetings of the COP will take place every three years instead of two years, thus leaving and freeing more time and resources for the implementation of the POW.

COP5 at the recommendation of its PrepCom is invited to consider and review the situation and suggestions outlined above, and based on that review and decide on paragraphs 19, 20, 21, 23 and 24 of the draft Ministerial Statement contained in document TC/COP5/7.

TCIS, 10 February 2014.