

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

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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Convention Permanent Secretariat Arrangements

(Note by the interim Secretariat)

Introduction

1. The Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea was signed in November 2003 and entered into force on the 12th August 2006 following its ratification by all Caspian littoral States.
2. The implementation of the Tehran Convention is governed by a Conference of the Parties and serviced by a Convention Secretariat.
3. A Convention Secretariat is an international entity responsible to provide organization, technical and administrative support to a proper and efficient implementation of the Convention. The functions of the Tehran Convention Secretariat are listed in Art. 23 of the Convention.
4. The physical location of a Convention Secretariat should secure the most favourable conditions for the effective functioning of the Secretariat, taking into account the relevant political and financial considerations.
5. The location of the Tehran Convention permanent Secretariat has been subject to extensive inter-governmental consultations, but no final decision has been reached to date. Both Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have officially submitted offers to host the Convention permanent Secretariat. The Russian Federation has at several occasions confirmed their readiness to host the permanent Secretariat, whereas both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have indicated their interest.
6. In line with article 22.9 (b) of the Convention, the first Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention was requested to decide on the

arrangements for the Convention permanent Secretariat, including its location and staffing. Following an intensive exchange of views on the issue the Meeting decided “to continue further discussions on the institutional arrangements of the Convention at the second and subsequent Meetings of the Conference of the Parties in view to finalize and reach consensus on these issues” (para 7 of the Statement of Ministers and Decision V of COP I).

7. Pending the final decision on the location, staffing and funding of the permanent Secretariat, the Parties to the Convention requested UNEP to continue the functions of the Convention Secretariat ad interim (para 4 of the COPI Ministerial Statement and Decision IV of COPI). The interim Secretariat is hosted by UNEP’s Regional Office for Europe, located in Geneva, Switzerland.

8. The need to settle the issue of the Convention permanent Secretariat was emphasized in the Declaration of the Presidents of the Caspian littoral States issued at the Second Caspian Summit, (Tehran, I.R of Iran, 16th October 2007). In the Declaration the Presidents confirmed their satisfaction that the Tehran Convention has been signed and entered into force and “stressed the need to – as soon as possible finalize the procedural aspects of this convention, especially as regards the location of the permanent secretariat of the convention”.

Suggested action:

9. The Conference of the Parties may wish to review and consider the current status of the inter-governmental consultations for the establishment of a Convention permanent Secretariat in light of the Decisions and the Ministerial Statement of the first Meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the Presidential Declaration issued at the Second Caspian summit, and take a decision on the next steps in this process.