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**Inter-American Convention for the  
Protection  
and Conservation of Sea Turtles**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Parties**  
*October 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 – Lima, Perú*

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**CIT-COPE1-2007-R1**

**Establishment and Operation of a Permanent Secretariat**

CONSIDERING that the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles contemplates in Article VI the establishment and functions of a Secretariat, as well as the need to define the financial mechanisms necessary for the Secretariat to carry out its functions.

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that at the First Conference of the Parties, through Resolution CIT-COP1-2002-R1, a *Pro Tempore* Secretariat was established in Costa Rica for a period of two years, which was then extended for two similar periods at the COP2 and COP3, ends in the year 2008 after the COP4.

CONSIDERING the need to have a permanent administrative body that has the necessary financial and human resources to carry out the functions as established in Article VI of the Convention and comply with the mandates of the Conference of the Parties.

**The Conference of the Parties of the Convention resolves to:**

1- *Approve* the “Terms of Reference for the IAC Secretariat” (Annex I of this Resolution) as well as the “Procedure for Selecting the Head of the Secretariat” (Annex II).

2- *Express* the desire that the Republic of Costa Rica is the host country of the Secretariat, that is referred to in article VI of the Convention, and invite Costa Rica to present an official proposal within the next 60 days that contains the technical, financial and legal obligations they shall assume to establish itself as the host country of the Permanent Secretariat.

3- *Initiate* by means of the working group on establishing a Permanent Secretariat, created by resolution at the COP3, a new process in order to determine the host country of the Secretariat, in the event that a formal proposal by Costa Rica is not received.

4- *Instruct* the working group to work in conjunction with the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat on a draft text for the Host Country Agreement for consideration by the country that will eventually become the host, and afterwards, for approval by the Conference of the Parties.



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**ANNEX I**

**Terms of Reference for the IAC Secretariat**

**1-Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall be run by a Secretary, who shall report directly to the Conference of the Parties. The Secretary shall be responsible for all Secretariat personnel, as well as its operation, expenditure and representation. The Secretariat shall be technically and administratively linked to the bodies as provided for in the Convention.

**2-Functions of the Secretariat**

The functions and operation of the Secretariat shall be governed by the Strategic Plan and the guidelines of the biannual Work Plan and its corresponding budget, as approved by the Conferences of the Parties.

Following the direction of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat shall have the following functions:

- a. Provide assistance in convening and organizing the meetings specified in Article V, as well as any other meeting of the Parties or the other bodies as provided for in the Convention that are considered necessary;
- b. Receive from the Parties the annual reports referred to in Article XI and make them available to the Parties and the Consultative Committee and the Scientific Committee, in the agreed working languages, in addition to including new information in the IAC data bases and Web site;
- c. Prepare and make available all work documents for the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the rules of procedure;
- d. Publish and disseminate the reports, recommendations and decisions adopted at the Conferences of the Parties in accordance with the rules of procedures adopted by the Parties;
- e. Disseminate and promote the exchange of information and educational materials regarding efforts undertaken by the Parties to increase public awareness of the need to protect and conserve sea turtles and their habitats, while maintaining the economic profitability of diverse artisanal, commercial, and subsistence fishing operations, as well as the sustainable use of fisheries resources. This information shall concern, inter alia:
  - i. environmental education activities and local community participation;
  - ii. the results of research related to the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats and the socioeconomic and environmental effects of the measures adopted pursuant to this Convention;
- f. Seek economic and technical resources to carry out research and to implement the measures adopted within the framework of this Convention;
- g. Coordinate and facilitate communication between the Parties and the bodies as provided by the Convention, non-Parties and other domestic or international legal entities, or individual persons involved in the conservation and protection of sea turtles;
- h. Perform other functions as assigned by the Conference of the Parties.



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### **3-Administrative structure of the Secretariat**

#### **3.1-Technical Advisory Department**

The functions of the Technical Advisory Department shall include:

- a. The handling of information coming from annual reports;
- b. To obtain the necessary information for consistently updating the Convention's web site;
- c. To provide, at the request of the Parties or by guidance of the Conference of the Parties, advice and support for environmental training and education processes in topics relative to the conservation and protection of sea turtles and their habitat, fisheries and socioeconomic aspects, among others;
- d. To support the Secretariat in technical aspects concerning compliance with the established cooperation agreements, as well in the follow up and implementation of resolutions, the Work Plan and agreements adopted by the Conference of the Parties;
- e. To provide follow up and support for scientific research projects and other high-priority technical activities for achieving IAC objectives.

#### **3.2-Administrative Support Unit**

The Administrative Support Unit shall attend to administrative and logistic needs required for the operation of the Office of the Secretariat, as well as provide the required support for organizing the meetings of the Parties, committee meetings and other administrative activities to be carried out within the framework of the Convention.

#### **3.3-Advice and Consultancies**

The Secretariat may contract external professional services for specific issues expressly requested by the Conference of the Parties and/or for those required to fulfill the biannual Work Plan. The hiring of any external professional service shall require having at least two bids that allow the Secretariat to select the least expensive option, except in the case that the Conference of the Parties authorizes making a direct appointment.

### **4- Legal Status of the Secretariat**

In virtue of the need to strengthen the Secretariat's operation, the Parties shall consider analyzing the adoption of a framework that provides it with an international legal status.

### **5-Nomination of the Secretary**

The nomination or removal of the Secretary shall be the exclusive competence of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the procedure described in Annex II of this Resolution.



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The Secretary must be a citizen of one of the Parties and should establish their residency in the Secretariat's host country during their post. The duration of their term shall be 4 years, with the possibility of being extended in accordance with the Parties, for a similar period. The Secretary shall not be succeeded by a person from the same nationality. Remuneration and other social benefits for the Secretary shall be determined by the Conference of the Parties.

In the event the post of Secretary becomes vacant due to unforeseen circumstances, force majeure, acceptance of resignation or dismissal, the Chairman the COP, supported by the Secretariat's administrative team, shall consult with the Parties regarding the temporary designation of a Secretary following, with the necessary adaptations, the procedure described in point 5, rule 5 of the rules of procedure contained in Resolution COP1CIT-004 while steps are taken towards the appointment of the new Secretary.

### **6-Functions of the Secretary:**

Following the direction of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretary shall have the following functions:

6.1 Coordinate and supervise the following tasks:

- a. To prepare and implement strategic plans and bi-annual plans within the framework of the Convention, to be submitted for consideration to the Conference of the Parties;
- b. To prepare budget estimates for approval by the Conference of the Parties;
- c. To prepare the reports required by the Conference of the Parties and other bodies as provided for by the Convention;
- d. To develop agenda items for the Conference of the Parties and other bodies as provided for by the Convention, in close coordination with the Chairman of the corresponding COP and in consultation with the Parties;
- e. To provide administrative and technical support to the host country for the Conferences of the Parties and other bodies as provided for by the Convention.

6.2 Convene the Conferences of the Parties;

6.3 Administer the Inter-American Convention Special Fund (SFIC), pursuant to the guidelines agreed upon by the Conference of the Parties;

6.4 Manage the personnel assigned to the Secretariat, taking into consideration whenever possible, a proportionate geographical representation in the posts, without requiring a fixed quota of personnel, or a pre-established scheme for nationality.

6.5 Promote cooperation and coordination with other organizations or individuals, as pertinent, for achieving the objectives of the Convention, pursuant to the resolutions and agreements adopted by the Conference of the Parties;

6.6 Provide follow up and coordinate the actions necessary for complying with the provisions established in cooperation agreements subscribed to by the Convention.



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### **7- General Considerations**

In carrying out their functions, the Secretary and the Secretariat's personnel shall refrain from acting in any way which is incompatible with their status or with the objective and provisions of the Convention, nor shall they have any financial interest whatsoever in activities such as research, exploration, exploitation, processing and commercialization in fisheries or of species covered by the Convention, or any other activity that goes against the Convention's objectives. Likewise, during their tenure working for the Secretariat and beyond, they shall keep confidential all information obtained, and all information they may have had access to during this time.

As Secretary, he/she shall only receive instructions from the Conference of the Parties and shall not act in any manner incompatible with such position as an international employee or hold any other post, remunerated or otherwise. The Secretary is accountable to the Conference of the Parties.

## ANNEX II

### **Procedure for Selecting the Head of the Secretariat**

The Parties to the IAC, hereby establish the following procedure to designate the Head of the Secretariat (hereinafter "Secretary").

#### **I. Submission of national nominations [and circulation of a vacancy announcement]**

Before the end of the Secretary's term or, in the event that the post of the Secretary is declared vacant, each Party may nominate a candidate that meets the basic requirements for the position, as described below.

To be designated Secretary, he/she must fulfill the following requirements:

- 1) To be a native of one of the Parties;
- 2) Fluency in written and spoken English and Spanish. Knowledge of other official languages of the IAC is helpful;
- 3) To have proven expertise in the Convention's subject matter, particularly in its scientific, technical and administrative aspects;
- 4) Hold an academic degree that enables him/her to attain the objectives of the Convention;
- 5) Experience working in the Greater Caribbean and Latin America;
- 6) Experience in natural resources conservation, organization and/or management, specifically with sea turtles.
- 7) Experience in handling programs concerning International Organizations, including organizing events;



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- 8) Experience in administration, such as the creation and managing of budgets, and must be experienced in managing personnel.
- 9) Experience in fund-raising, working with and management of international funds;
- 10) Excellent inter-personal and inter-institutional skills.

### **II. Submission of applications**

Each application shall be presented (officially by the Parties) to the Chair of the COP, who will then record them and, once the time period for presenting applications is closed, the Chair will distribute the list of candidates to the Parties.

### **III. Ranking of applicants**

Once the list of candidates is received by the Parties, each Party will rank them using the maximum number of points equal to the number of candidates on the list, awarding the highest score to the candidate with the highest preference, and so on with the rest of the candidates. The list will be given to the Chair of the COP, who will consider it confidential. The Chair of the COP will add up the points obtained for each individual applicant and will send them to the Parties.

### **IV. Final list**

The candidates with the four highest scores will be placed on a final list for interview by the Heads of Delegation of the COP. Should the application of any final list candidate be withdrawn, the candidate with the next highest ranking shall then be included on the final list.

### **V. Interview process**

The candidates on the final list will be notified to all Parties by the Chair of the COP, and will be invited to the subsequent COP for an interview. The interviews and the selection of the new Secretary shall take place during meetings of Heads of Delegation.

Each candidate may be interviewed for up to 45 minutes. This time should allow the candidate to present his/her candidature and respond to a number of standard questions agreed by the Heads of Delegation before the first interview. The questions shall be posed by the Chair of the COP and shall be identical for all candidates.

Following the interviews, the Heads of Delegations shall proceed to appoint the Secretary by consensus.

If a consensus is not reached, consultative rounds with the Parties will continue immediately according to the following procedure:



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-Round with four candidates:

The Chair of the COP will consult, in writing, each Party regarding their two candidates of choice and then announce the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

-Round with two candidates:

The Chair of the COP will consult, in writing, each Party on their preferred candidate. The candidate with the greatest number of preferences will be designated, by consensus, Secretary. In the event of a tie, the Parties shall try to reach consensus in a debate session and, if necessary, by new consultative rounds with the Parties, presided over by the Chair of the COP.

#### **VI. Procedure under unforeseen circumstances**

In the event that no candidate is designated as Secretary, the selection procedure will be repeated until a candidate is designated as Secretary. Under that circumstance, an Extra-Ordinary Meeting will be convened at a date agreed to by the COP, not exceeding a period of 180 days, applying the method mentioned in paragraph 3, point 5 of Annex I of this Resolution, in order to provide continuity to the Secretariat's operation.

#### **VII. Travel expenses**

Travel (economy class) and per diem expenses of candidates invited for the interviews shall be reimbursed from the IAC Special Fund.

#### **VII. Timetable for designating the Secretariat**

Chair of the COP requests the submission of applicants (by the Parties): 180 days before the end of the Secretary's term and/or the following COP.

Deadline for Parties to submit applicants to the Chair of the COP: 120 days before the following COP.

Chair of the COP sends the list of candidates to the Parties: 90 days before the following COP.

Include the topic in the COP agenda: 90 days before the meeting.

Parties notify the Chair of the COP on their list of preferences: 60 days before the following COP.

Chair of the COP informs on the final list: 45 days before the following COP.

Interviews and selection at the Conference of the Parties.