



SECOND SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE  
CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)  
GERMANY, 25-27 SEPTEMBER 2002

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**RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO  
THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN  
MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS.**

Adopted by the Meeting of the Parties on 9 November 1999

**PURPOSE**

***Rule 1***

These rules of procedure shall apply to any Session of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, convened in accordance with article VI of the Agreement.

Insofar as they are applicable, these rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to any other meeting held in the framework of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

**DEFINITIONS**

***Rule 2***

For the purpose of these rules:

- a) "Agreement" means the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, concluded on 16 June 1995 at The Hague, the Netherlands and entered into force on 1 November 1999. This Agreement is an agreement within the meaning of article IV paragraph 3 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979).
- b) "Convention" means the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979.
- c) "Parties" means the Contracting Parties to the Agreement.
- d) "Meeting of the Parties" means the Meeting of the Parties in accordance with article VI;
- e) "Session" means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties convened in accordance with article VI of the Agreement.

- f) The “President” means the President elected in accordance with rule 21, paragraph 1, of the present rules of procedure;
- g) “Subsidiary body” means all committees or working groups established by the Meeting of the Parties;
- h) “Technical Committee” means the body established in accordance with article VII;
- i) The “Meeting Committee”, which during a session of the Meeting of the Parties plays the role of Standing Committee; shall consist of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Technical Committee, the elected President and Vice-President of the current meeting, the President of the previous ordinary meeting, the Secretary-General or the Deputy Secretary-General of the Convention and the Agreement Secretary.
- j) “Secretariat” means the Secretariat of the Agreement established in accordance with article VIII;
- k) “Proposal” means a draft resolution or recommendation submitted by one or more Parties, by the Technical Committee, by the Meeting Committee or by the Secretariat.

## **PLACE OF MEETINGS**

### **Rule 3**

1. The Meeting of the Parties shall take place in the country chosen by the previous Meeting of the Parties on the basis of a formal invitation that should have been issued to this effect by the responsible authority of that country. If more than one Party issues an invitation to host the next session of the Meeting of the Parties, and two or more invitations are maintained after informal consultations, the Meeting of the Parties shall decide on the venue of the next session by secret ballot.
2. If no invitation has been received, the session of the Meeting of the Parties shall be held in the country where the Secretariat has its seat, unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the Secretariat of the Agreement or the Secretariat of the Convention.

## **DATES OF MEETINGS**

### **Rule 4**

1. Ordinary session of the Meetings of the Parties shall be held at intervals of not more than three years.
2. At each ordinary session, the Meeting of the Parties shall determine the year and venue of the next ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties. The exact dates and duration of each ordinary session shall be established by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Convention Secretariat and the host country of the meeting. Where it is possible to do so, such sessions should be held in conjunction with the ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.
3. Extraordinary sessions of the Meetings of the Parties shall be convened on the written request of at least one third of the Parties.
4. An extraordinary session shall be convened not later than ninety days after the request in accordance with paragraph 3 of this rule has been received.
5. In the event of an emergency situation, the Technical Committee may urgently request the Secretariat to convene a meeting of Parties concerned.

### ***Rule 5***

The Secretariat shall notify all Parties of the date, venue, and provisional agenda of an ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties at least 12 months before the session is due to commence. The notification shall include the draft agenda for the meeting and the deadline for submission of proposals by the Parties. Only Parties, the Technical Committee, the Meeting Committee and the Secretariat shall be entitled to submit proposals.

## **OBSERVERS**

### ***Rule 6***

1. The Secretariat shall notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, in its role as Depositary of the Agreement, the United Nations, its specialized Agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, any Range State not Party to the Agreement, and the secretariats of international conventions concerned *inter alia* with the conservation, including protection and management, of migratory waterbirds of the session of the Meeting of the Parties so that they may be represented as observers.
2. Such observers may, upon the invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session of the Meeting of the Parties unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

### ***Rule 7***

1. Any agency or body, national or international, whether governmental or non-governmental, technically qualified in conservation matters or in research on migratory waterbirds, which has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented at the Meetings of the Parties by observers, shall be admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object. Once admitted these observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote.
2. Bodies or agencies desiring to be represented at the meeting by observers shall submit the names of their representatives, and in case of national non-governmental bodies or agencies, evidence of the approval of the State in which they are located, to the Secretariat at least one month prior to the opening of the session.
3. Such observers may, upon the invitation of the President participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.
4. Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any Range State not a Party, body or agency be present at a session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Secretariat shall notify those concerned of such limitations in advance of the meeting.
5. A standard participation fee may be fixed by the Secretariat of the Agreement, to be paid in advance of the Meeting by all non-governmental organisations. The fee will be announced in the letter of invitation and this Meeting will determine any fee for the next ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties.

## **AGENDA**

### ***Rule 8***

The Secretariat shall prepare the provisional agenda of each meeting, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Technical Committee and the Convention Secretariat.

### ***Rule 9***

The provisional agenda of each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties shall include, as appropriate:

- a) Items arising from the articles or the Annexes of the Agreement;
- b) Items, the inclusion of which has been decided at a previous meeting or which emanate from decisions taken at a previous meeting;
- c) Items referred to in rule 15 of the present rules of procedure;
- d) Any item proposed by a Party, the Technical Committee or the Secretariat.

### ***Rule 10***

The documents for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, as per Rule 54, and proposals received from the Parties, as per rule 5, shall be distributed in the official languages by the Secretariat to the Parties at least sixty days before the opening of the meeting.

### ***Rule 11***

The Secretariat shall, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Technical Committee, include any item which has been proposed by a Party and has been received by the Secretariat after the provisional agenda has been produced, but before the opening of the meeting, in a supplementary provisional agenda

### ***Rule 12***

The Meeting of the Parties shall examine the provisional agenda together with any supplementary provisional agenda. When adopting the agenda, it may add, delete, defer, or amend items. Only items which are considered by the Meeting of the Parties to be urgent and important may be added to the agenda.

### ***Rule 13***

The provisional Agenda for an extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for the extraordinary meeting. The provisional agenda and any necessary supporting documents shall be distributed to the Parties at the same time as the invitation to the extraordinary meeting.

### ***Rule 14***

The Secretariat shall report to the Meeting of the Parties on the administrative and financial implications of all substantive agenda items submitted to the meeting, before these items are considered by the meeting. Unless the Meeting of the Parties decides otherwise, no such item shall be considered until the Meeting of the Parties has received the Secretariat's report on the financial and administrative implications.

### ***Rule 15***

Any item of the agenda of an ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, consideration of which has not been completed at the meeting, shall be included automatically in the agenda of the next ordinary meeting, unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.

## **REPRESENTATION AND CREDENTIALS**

### ***Rule 16***

Each Party participating in a meeting shall be represented by a delegation consisting of a head of delegation and such other accredited representatives, alternate representatives, and advisers as the Party may deem necessary. Logistics and other limitations may require that no more than four delegates of any range State be present at a plenary session. The Secretariat shall notify Parties of any such limitations in advance of the meeting.

### ***Rule 17***

A representative may be designated as an alternate head of delegation. An alternate representative or an adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of Delegation.

### ***Rule 18***

1. The original of the statement of credentials of the head of delegation and other representatives, alternate representatives, and advisers, shall be submitted to the Secretariat of the Agreement or to his/ her designated representative if possible not later than twenty-four hours after opening of the meeting. Any later change in the composition of the delegation shall also be submitted to the Secretary or the representative of the Secretary.
2. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or his/ her equivalent. If other authorities in a Contracting Party are entitled to issue credentials for international meetings, this should have been notified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary in advance of the meeting.
3. The credentials must bear a full signature of the appropriate authority or else be sealed and initialled by that authority. The seal and/or letterheading should clearly indicate that the credentials have been issued by the appropriate authority.
4. A representative may not exercise the right to vote unless his/ her name is clearly and unambiguously listed in the credentials.
5. If credentials are submitted in a language other than one of the working languages of the Agreement (French and English), they shall be accompanied by a suitable translation into one of these two languages to permit efficient validations of the credentials by the Credentials Committee.

### ***Rule 19***

A Credentials Committee composed of at least two Parties of the African region and two of the Eurasian region, elected at the first session of each ordinary meeting, shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the Meeting of the Parties for approval.

### ***Rule 20***

Pending a decision of the Meeting of the Parties upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the meeting.

## **OFFICERS**

### ***Rule 21***

1. At the commencement of the first session of each ordinary meeting, a President and a Vice-President shall be elected from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting, on the basis of a proposal put forward by the Meeting Committee. In preparing its proposal on this matter, the Meeting Committee shall consider first the candidate(s) put forward by the host country of the meeting for the post of President of the meeting.
2. The President and the Vice President shall be entitled to join the Meeting Committee as full members for the duration of the meeting.
3. The President shall participate in the meeting in that capacity and shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a Party. The Party concerned shall designate another representative who shall be entitled to represent the party in the meeting and to exercise the right to vote.

### ***Rule 22***

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon the President elsewhere by these rules, the President shall declare the opening and closing of the meeting, preside at the sessions of the meeting, ensure the observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order.
2. The President may propose to the Meeting of the Parties the closure of the list of speakers, limitations on the time to be allowed to speakers and the number of times each Party or observer may speak on a question, the adjournment or the closure of the debate, and the suspension or the adjournment of a session.
3. The President, in the exercise of the functions of that office, remains under the authority of the Meeting of the Parties.

### ***Rule 23***

The President, if temporarily absent from a session or any part thereof, shall designate the Vice-President to act as President. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

### ***Rule 24***

If the President and/or Vice-President resign or are otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of the office, a representative of the same Party shall be named by the Party concerned to replace the said officer for the remainder of that office's mandate.

### ***Rule 25***

At the first session of each ordinary meeting, the President of the previous ordinary meeting, or in the absence of the President, a representative of the same Party, shall preside until the Meeting of the Parties has elected a President for the meeting.

## **THE MEETING COMMITTEE, OTHER COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

### ***Rule 26***

1. The Meeting Committee shall include the President of the previous ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, the elected President and Vice-President of the current Meeting of the Parties, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Technical Committee, the Secretary-General or Deputy Secretary-General of the Convention Secretariat and the Secretary of the Agreement. Observers may be invited to attend meetings of the Meeting Committee, if required. The Meeting Committee shall be chaired by the President of the previous ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties.
2. The Meeting Committee shall meet at least once daily to review the progress of the meeting, including the draft of the report of the previous day prepared by the Secretariat, and to provide advice to the President in order to ensure the smooth development of the rest of the proceedings.
3. The Meeting of the Parties may establish other committees and working groups if it deems it necessary for the implementation of the Agreement. Where appropriate, meetings of these bodies shall be held in conjunction with the Meeting of the Parties.
4. The Meeting of the Parties may decide that any such body may meet in the period between ordinary meetings.
5. Unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties, the chairperson for each such body shall be elected by the Meeting of the Parties. The Meeting of the Parties shall determine the matters to be considered by each such body and may authorize the President, upon the request of the chairperson of a body, to make adjustments to the allocation of work.
6. Subject to paragraph 5 of this rule, each body shall elect its own officers. No officers may be re-elected for a third consecutive term.
7. Unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties, these rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of such bodies, except that:
  - a) A majority of the Parties designated by the Meeting of the Parties to take part in any such body shall constitute a quorum, but in the event of the body being open-ended, one quarter of the Parties shall constitute a quorum;
  - b) The chairperson of any such body may exercise the right to vote;
  - c) There shall be no requirement to provide interpretation in committee or working group sessions, including the Meeting Committee.

## **SECRETARIAT**

### ***Rule 27***

1. The Head of the Agreement Secretariat shall be the Secretary of the Meeting of the Parties. The Secretary or the representative of the Secretary shall act in that capacity in all sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and of subsidiary bodies.
2. The Secretary shall provide and direct the staff as required by the Meeting of the Parties.

### ***Rule 28***

The Secretariat shall, in accordance with these rules:

- a) Arrange for interpretation at the meeting;
- b) Prepare, receive, translate, reproduce and distribute the documents of the meeting;
- c) Publish and circulate the official documents of the meeting;
- d) Make and arrange for keeping of sound recordings of the meeting;
- e) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the meeting;
- f) Draft the report of the meeting for consideration by the Meeting Committee first and for final approval by the Meeting of the Parties; and
- g) Generally perform all other work that the Meeting of the Parties may require.

## **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### ***Rule 29***

1. Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties shall be held in public, unless the Meeting of the Parties decides otherwise.
2. Sessions of subsidiary bodies shall be held in private unless the subsidiary body concerned decides otherwise.
3. Delegations shall be seated in accordance with the alphabetical order of the English language names of the Parties.

### ***Rule 30***

The President may declare a session of the meeting open and permit the debate to proceed if at least one half of the Parties to the Agreement are present, and may take a decision when representatives of at least two one half of the Parties are present.

### ***Rule 31***

1. No one may speak at a session of the Meeting of the Parties without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rule 32, 33, 34 and 36, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Secretariat shall maintain a list of speakers. The President may call a speaker to order if the speaker's remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
2. The Meeting of the Parties may, on a proposal from the President or from any Party, limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each Party or observer may speak on a question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour and two against a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the President shall call the speaker to order without delay.

3. A speaker shall not be interrupted except on a point of order. He may, however, with the permission of the President, give way during his/her speech to allow any other representative or observer to request clarification on a particular point in that speech.
4. During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers, and with the consent of the meeting, declare the list closed. The President may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if a speech delivered after the list has been closed makes this desirable.

### ***Rule 32***

The chairperson or rapporteur of a subsidiary body may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by that subsidiary body.

### ***Rule 33***

During the discussion of any matter, a Party may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be decided immediately by the President in accordance with these rules. A Party may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the Parties present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

### ***Rule 34***

Any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Meeting of the Parties to discuss any matter or adopt a proposal or an amendment to a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before the matter is discussed or a vote is taken on the proposal or amendment in question.

### ***Rule 35***

1. Proposals for amendment of the Agreement may be made by any Party. According to article X the text of any proposed amendment and the reason for it shall be communicated to the Agreement Secretariat not less than one hundred and fifty days before the opening of the session.
2. A new proposal, other than in paragraph 1 of this rule, that was not submitted to the Secretariat at least 60 days before the opening of the meeting and amendments to proposals, shall be introduced in writing by the Parties and handed to the Secretariat in at least one of the official languages, for submission to the Meeting Committee.
3. A new proposal shall deal only with matters that could not have been foreseen in advance of the session or arise out of the discussions at the session. The Meeting Committee shall decide if the new proposal meets this requirement, so as to introduce it formally for consideration by the meeting. If a new proposal is rejected by the Meeting Committee, the sponsor(s) shall be entitled to request the President to submit the question of its admissibility to a vote, as per Rule 34. The sponsor(s) shall be given the opportunity to make one intervention to present the arguments in favour of the introduction of the new proposal, and the President shall explain the reasons for its rejection by the Meeting Committee.
4. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any session unless copies of it, translated into the official languages of the Meeting of the Parties, have been circulated to delegations not later than the day preceding the session. Nevertheless, the President may permit the discussion and consideration of amendments to proposals or of procedural motions and, in exceptional circumstances, in cases of urgency and when deemed useful to advance the proceedings, permit the discussion and consideration of proposals even though these proposals, amendments or motions have not been circulated

or have been circulated only the same day or have not been translated into all the official languages of the Meeting of the Parties.

### ***Rule 36***

1. Subject to rule 33, the following motions shall have precedence, in the order indicated below, over all other proposals or motions:
  - a) To suspend a session;
  - b) To adjourn a session;
  - c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion; and
  - d) For the closure of the debate on the question under discussion.
2. Permission to speak on a motion falling within (a) to (d) above shall be granted only to the proposer and, in addition, to one speaker in favour of and two against the motion, after which it shall be put immediately to the vote.

### ***Rule 37***

A proposal or motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has begun, provided that the motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion withdrawn may be reintroduced by any other Party.

### ***Rule 38***

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same meeting, unless the Meeting of the Parties, by a two thirds majority of the Parties present and voting, decides in favour of reconsideration. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to the mover and one other supporter, after which it shall be put immediately to the vote.

## **VOTING**

### ***Rule 39***

Each Party shall have one vote. Regional economic integration organisations, which are Parties to this Agreement shall, in matters within their competence, exercise their voting rights with a number of votes equal to the number of their Member States which are Parties to the Agreement. A regional economic integration organization shall not exercise its right to vote if its Member States exercise theirs, and *vice versa*.

### ***Rule 40***

1. The Parties shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted and no agreement reached, the decision shall, as a last resort, be taken by a simple majority vote of the Parties present and voting, unless otherwise provided by the Agreement such as in the case of:
  - a) the adoption of the budget for the next financial period and any changes to the scale of assessment, which require unanimity (article V);

- 2 If on matters other than elections a vote is equally divided, a second vote shall be taken. If this vote is also equally divided, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.
3. For the purposes of these rules, the phrase "Parties present and voting" means Parties present at the session at which voting takes place and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Parties abstaining from voting shall be considered as not voting.

#### ***Rule 41***

If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Meeting of the Parties, unless it decides otherwise, shall vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Meeting of the Parties may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

#### ***Rule 42***

Any representative may request that any parts of a proposal or of an amendment to a proposal be voted on separately. The President shall allow the request unless a Party objects. If objection is made to the request for separate voting, the President shall permit two representatives to speak, one in favour of and the other against the motion, after which it shall be put to the vote immediately.

#### ***Rule 43***

If the motion referred to in rule 42 is adopted, those parts of a proposal or of an amendment to a proposal, which are approved, shall then be put to the vote as a whole. If all the operative parts of a proposal or amendment have been rejected, the proposal or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

#### ***Rule 44***

A motion is considered to be an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from, or revises parts of that proposal. An amendment shall be voted on before the proposal to which it relates is put to the vote, and if the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

#### ***Rule 45***

If two or more amendments to a proposal are put forward, the Meeting of the Parties shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the amendment next furthest removed there from, and so on, until all amendments have been put to the vote. The President shall determine the order of voting on the amendments under this rule.

#### ***Rule 46***

Voting, except for elections and the decision on the venue of the next ordinary meeting, shall normally be by show of hands. A roll-call vote shall be taken if one is requested by any Party; it shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Parties participating in the meeting, beginning with the Party whose name is drawn by lot by the President. However, if at any time a Party requests a secret ballot, that

shall be the method of voting on the issue in question, provided that this request is accepted by a simple majority of the Parties present and voting. The President shall be responsible for the counting of the votes, assisted by tellers appointed by the Meeting, and shall announce the result.

#### ***Rule 47***

1. The vote of each Party participating in a roll-call vote shall be expressed by "Yes", or "No", or "Abstain" and shall be recorded in the relevant documents of the meeting.
2. When the meeting votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call vote.

#### ***Rule 48***

After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual proceedings. The President may permit the Parties to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, but may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The President shall not permit those who put forward proposals or amendments to proposals to explain their vote on their own proposals or amendments, except if they have been amended.

#### ***Rule 49***

All elections and the decision on the venue of the next ordinary meeting shall be held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.

#### ***Rule 50***

1. If, when one person or one delegation is to be elected, no candidate obtains a majority of votes cast by the Parties present and voting in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be taken between the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If, in the second ballot, the votes are equally divided, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.
2. In the case of a tie in the first ballot among three or more candidates obtaining the largest number of votes, a second ballot shall be held. If a tie then results among more than two candidates, the number shall be reduced to two by lot and the balloting, restricted to them, shall continue in accordance with the procedure set forth in paragraph 1 of this rule.

#### ***Rule 51***

1. When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, the number of candidates must not exceed the number of such places, those obtaining the largest number of votes and a majority of the votes cast by the Parties present and voting in the first ballot shall be deemed elected.
2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of persons or delegations to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places. The voting shall then be restricted to the candidates that obtained the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot and shall not exceed twice the places that remain to be filled. After the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for any eligible person or delegation.
3. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots shall be restricted to the candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots and shall not exceed twice the places that remain to be filled. The following three ballots thereafter shall be unrestricted, and so on until all the places have been filled.

## **LANGUAGES**

### ***Rule 52***

The official and working languages of the Meeting of the Parties shall be English and French.

### ***Rule 53***

1. Statements made in an official language shall be interpreted into the other official language.
2. A representative of a Party may speak in a language other than an official language, if the Party provides for interpretation into one such official language.

## **DOCUMENTS**

### ***Rule 54***

1. Official documents of the meetings shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official language.
2. Financial limitations may make it necessary to limit the number of documents provided to each Party and observer. The Secretariat shall encourage Parties and observers to download the documents from the Agreement Web site on the Internet or to receive them on a computer diskette, so as to save costs of photocopying and mailing.
3. Any documents, including proposals, submitted to the Secretariat in any language other than a working language shall be accompanied by a translation into one of the working languages.
4. When in doubt, the Secretariat shall ask the approval of the Meeting Committee for issuing a document as an official document of the meeting.
5. Parties and observers wishing to distribute documents that have not been approved as official documents of the meeting shall make their own arrangements for distribution, after having sought the advice of the Secretariat on how to proceed.

## **SOUND RECORDINGS OF THE MEETINGS**

### ***Rule 55***

Sound recordings of the Meeting of the Parties, and whenever possible of its subsidiary bodies, shall be kept by the Secretariat.

## **ENTERING INTO FORCE AND AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### ***Rule 56***

These rules of procedure shall enter into force immediately after their adoption and shall remain in effect for an indefinite period, unless one or more Parties and/or the Technical Committee submit amendments to them. Amendments to these rules shall be adopted by consensus by the Meeting of the Parties.

## **OVERRIDING AUTHORITY OF THE AGREEMENT**

### *Rule 57*

In the event of a conflict between any provision of these rules and any provision of the Agreement, the Agreement shall prevail.