

Report and decisions of the 1st Meeting of the Council

Sunday 26 July 2026

09:00 – 09:45 Opening of the meeting

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

1.1: Opening statements

1. Following an introductory video highlighting the establishment of the IMC, Mr. Yan Zhen, Vice Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, welcomed delegates and opened the ceremony.
2. Opening statements were delivered by:
 - Mr. Jin Lei, Standing Committee Member of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee and Secretary of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee;
 - Dr. Beom-sik Yoo, Senior Advisor for Asia and Oceania, Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands;
 - Dr. Odalys Caridad Goicochea Cardoso, Director General, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Cuba;
 - Mr. RAKOTOARISOA Julien Noël, National Mangrove Focal Point, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar;
 - Mr. Wang Chen, Counselor, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China; and
 - Mr. Liu Guohong, Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China.

09:45 – 11:30 Council meeting

Agenda item 2: Welcome Member States

3. Bao Daming, Director General of the Interim Secretariat of the IMC, informed the meeting that as this was the 1st Meeting of the Council and the Council had not yet appointed its Chair, he would preside until the appointment of the Chair under Agenda item 5.

4. The Interim Secretariat introduced document IMC/MOC01/Doc.2 and reported that, upon the entry into force of the Establishment Agreement of the IMC on 5 June 2026, China, Comoros, Cuba, Guinea, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Nicaragua and Pakistan became the first eight Member States of the IMC and constituted the Council.
5. Panama reaffirmed its strong commitment to mangrove conservation and restoration, noting that, since 2022, it had worked with other countries to support the establishment of the IMC under the Convention on Wetlands. As a signatory State, Panama expressed its firm aspiration to become a Member State and its interest in receiving the support from the Secretariat in providing the requisite official documents to initiate its domestic ratification process.

Decision MOC01-01: The plenary took note of the list of Member States in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.2: the People's Republic of China, the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Guinea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of Madagascar, the Republic of Nicaragua and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Decision MOC01-02: The plenary took note of the composition of the Council.

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the provisional agenda and working programme

3.1: Provisional agenda

Decision MOC01-03: The Council adopted the provisional agenda in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.3.1.

3.2: Provisional working programme

Decision MOC01-04: The Council adopted the provisional working programme in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.3.2.

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

6. The Interim Secretariat introduced the Rules of Procedure in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.4 and noted that, in response to requests raised during consultations, it would prepare a document on the responsibilities of the hosting Member State for consideration at the 2nd Meeting of the Council.

Decision MOC01-05: The Council adopted the Rules of Procedure in document

IMC/MOC01/Doc.4.

Decision MOC01-06: The Council instructs the Secretariat to prepare a document on the responsibilities of the hosting Member State for meetings of the Council and to submit it to the 2nd Meeting of the Council for consideration.

Agenda item 5: Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

7. China, as the hosting Member State, nominated Mr. Yan Zhen, Vice Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, as Chair pursuant to Article VI, paragraphs 2.a and 3 of the Establishment Agreement. There being no objection, the Council appointed Mr. Yan Zhen as Chair.
8. For Vice-Chair, in accordance with Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure, Mr. RAKOTOARISOA Julien Noël, National Mangrove Focal Point of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar, was nominated by Comoros. There being no other nominations, the Council elected him Vice-Chair.
9. The Chair thanked the Council for its confidence and looked forward to working with all delegates to ensure the efficient and successful conduct of the remaining agenda items.

Decision MOC01-07: The Council appointed Yan Zhen, Vice Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, as Chair of the Council.

Decision MOC01-08: The Council elected RAKOTOARISOA Julien Noël, National Mangrove Focal Point of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar, as Vice-Chair of the Council.

Agenda item 6: Welcome observers

10. The Interim Secretariat introduced document IMC/MOC01/Doc.6 and noted that, in accordance with Decision SC62-22 of the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands, 40 organizations had been invited to become observers of the IMC. By the time of the meeting, 13 organizations had confirmed their acceptance and been admitted as observers.

Decision MOC01-09: The Council took note of the list of observers in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.6: China Wetlands Association (CWA), East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI), Mangrove Conservation Foundation (MCF), Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia (RRC-EA), Ramsar Regional Centre for Training and Research in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO), Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs, Ramsar Regional Initiative on Black and Azov Seas Coastal Wetlands (BlackSeaWet), Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands,

Wetlands International (WI), World Coastal Forum (WCF), WWF International and WWT.

Agenda item 7: Appointment of the Director General

11. China nominated Mr. Bao Daming for appointment as the first Director General of the IMC pursuant to Article VI, paragraph 2.a, and Article VII, paragraph 3 of the Establishment Agreement. China also informed the Council that it had appointed Mr. Xu Songming as Deputy Director General for administrative matters and finance pursuant to Article VII, paragraph 2.b of the Establishment Agreement. The Council took note of the appointment.
12. Cambodia expressed its strong support for the appointment of Mr. Bao Daming as the Director General of the IMC for the 2026-2029 term and further expressed its appreciation for his leadership and significant contribution to the establishment and development of the IMC. Cambodia reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the Secretariat and Member States to advance international cooperation on the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of mangroves and adjacent wetlands.
13. Mr. Bao Daming thanked the Council for its trust and committed to building an effective Secretariat that would serve the priorities of Member States.
14. The Chair noted that pursuant to Article XIII, paragraph 2 of the Establishment Agreement, the Interim Secretariat was automatically dissolved and the Secretariat was formally established.

Decision MOC01-10: The Council appointed Bao Daming as Director General of the IMC for a three-year term, from 26 July 2026 to 25 July 2029. The Council also took note of Xu Songming, appointed by China, as Deputy Director General of the IMC for administrative matters and finance.

Decision MOC01-11: The Council noted the automatic dissolution of the Interim Secretariat and the formal establishment of the Secretariat upon the appointment of the Director General.

Agenda item 8: Report of the Director General

15. The Director General reported the work undertaken by the Interim Secretariat since its establishment in December 2024 as set out in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.8. He highlighted the main progress in four areas: expansion of IMC membership, institutional development, implementation of activities under the four objectives of the IMC, and preparations for the 1st Meeting of the Council. He also thanked China for its extensive support throughout the preparatory period.

16. Madagascar thanked the Director General for the report and took note of its contents. It welcomed the IMC's responsiveness to the needs of Member States, the development of baseline mangrove mapping products, and the opportunity to second a Malagasy official to the Secretariat.
17. China thanked the Director General for the report and the Interim Secretariat for its work in support of the establishment of the IMC and preparations for the 1st Meeting of the Council. It welcomed the value of the IMC Mangrove Atlas 3 m (IMA-3m) as a global public knowledge product and encouraged the Secretariat to build on this work and develop further flagship products in mangrove conservation. China reaffirmed its continued support for the Secretariat.

Decision MOC01-12: The Council took note of the Report of the Director General in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.8.

Agenda item 9: Consideration of the foundational documents of the IMC

9.1: Strategic Plan (2026-2034)

18. The Secretariat introduced the IMC Strategic Plan (2026-2034) in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.1 and noted that it had been developed in consultation with Member States, signatory States and observers to provide strategic direction for the work of the IMC. It further noted that a three-year implementation plan would be developed following the adoption of the Strategic Plan, with efforts to mobilize non-baseline funds.
19. Madagascar welcomed the Strategic Plan and commended the inclusive consultation process. Madagascar supported the preparation of annual work plans aligned with the Strategic Plan and the development of a three-year implementation plan setting clear priorities, timelines and responsibilities.
20. Zimbabwe welcomed and supported the Strategic Plan, noting its alignment with the IMC's mandate, the inclusive process through which it had been developed, and the clarity of its objectives.
21. Cambodia supported adoption of the Strategic Plan and the proposed follow-up actions, including preparation of the three-year implementation plan under the guidance of the Council and development of future annual work plans aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Decision MOC01-13: The Council adopted the IMC Strategic Plan (2026–2034) in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.1.

Decision MOC01-14: The Council instructs the Secretariat to develop the IMC's annual work plan in line with the adopted Strategic Plan (2026–2034).

Decision MOC01-15: The Council instructs the Secretariat to initiate consultations on a three-year implementation plan, with efforts to mobilize non-baseline budget resources, and to submit the draft three-year implementation plan to the 2nd Meeting of the Council for consideration.

9.2: Financial Regulations

22. The Secretariat introduced the Financial Regulations of the IMC in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.2 and noted that the draft had been prepared with reference to the financial regulations and practices of relevant international organizations and in consultation with Member States and signatory States.
23. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands commended the Secretariat of the IMC for its work and the quality of the documents prepared, particularly the Strategic Plan. It expressed interest in exploring cooperation with the IMC on Small Grant Programmes to enhance synergies and deliver more tangible results on the ground. It also sought clarification on the definition, anticipated volume, and reporting of non-baseline funding.
24. In response, the Secretariat explained that non-baseline funding would principally comprise funds for IMC project activities, including special funds, cooperative projects, grant-making activities and other non-baseline operational funds. Such funds would be managed separately in accordance with dedicated financial management regulations, while the scale of resource mobilization would depend on future work plans and available opportunities.

Decision MOC01-16: The Council adopted the Financial Regulations of the IMC in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.2.

Decision MOC01-17: The Council instructs the Secretariat to manage the IMC's baseline operational fund in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations of the IMC.

9.3: Human Resources Regulations

25. The Secretariat introduced the Human Resources Regulations of the IMC in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.3 and noted that the draft had been developed in consultation with Member States and signatory States.

Decision MOC01-18: The Council adopted the Human Resources Regulations of the IMC in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.3.

Decision MOC01-19: The Council instructs the Secretariat to implement the adopted Human Resources Regulations of the IMC, with the recruitment of Secretariat staff to

be carried out under the authority of the Director General.

9.4: Operational Guidelines for the Scientific and Technical Subgroup

26. The Secretariat introduced the Operational Guidelines for the Scientific and Technical Subgroup (STG) in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.4 and noted that the draft had been developed with reference to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Convention on Wetlands and similar bodies, and in consultation with Member States, signatory States and observers. Following the adoption of the Guidelines, the Secretariat would facilitate the establishment of the STG and the convening of its first meeting.
27. Madagascar supported adoption of the Guidelines, welcomed the multidisciplinary and geographically balanced composition of the STG, encouraged broad regional representation in nominations, and requested that Member States have an opportunity to provide input into the development of the STG work plan.
28. Cuba expressed support for the work of the IMC, emphasizing its important role in supporting national mangrove conservation, developing professional capacity and creating opportunities for local communities.
29. Cambodia supported adoption of the Guidelines and the timely establishment of the STG, and looked forward to its first meeting to identify priority areas and develop its initial work plan.

Decision MOC01-20: The Council adopted the Operational Guidelines for the Scientific and Technical Subgroup in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.9.4.

Decision MOC01-21: The Council instructs the Secretariat to initiate the process for establishing the STG in accordance with the adopted Operational Guidelines.

Decision MOC01-22: The Council requests the Secretariat to facilitate the convening of the first meeting of the STG to identify the priority areas of the IMC and develop a work plan for consideration at the 2nd Meeting of the Council.

Agenda item 10: Consideration of the annual work plan and budget of the IMC

10.1: Work plan of the International Mangrove Center for 2026

30. The Secretariat introduced the IMC 2026 work plan in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.10.1 and noted that it had been prepared in line with the four objectives and main functions of the IMC and with reference to the format for annual work plans submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands.

31. Cambodia supported adoption of the work plan and encouraged the inclusion in future annual work plans of additional activities directly supporting Member States, including capacity building on remote sensing, GIS and AI-based mangrove monitoring, ground truthing and ecological zonation, pilot conservation and restoration projects, blue carbon assessment and project development, and regional technical cooperation and knowledge exchange.
32. Sierra Leone supported the work plan, highlighting its alignment with relevant international objectives and its contribution to institutional development, management and science-based action, and expressed interest in capacity-building opportunities.

Decision MOC01-23: The Council adopted the work plan of the IMC for 2026 in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.10.1.

Decision MOC01-24: The Council noted that the IMC's future annual work plans will be developed in line with the Establishment Agreement and the adopted Strategic Plan 2026–2034.

10.2: Budget of the International Mangrove Center for 2026
--

33. The Secretariat introduced the IMC 2026 budget in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.10.2 and noted that it constituted the baseline budget funded by voluntary contributions from China. China was expected to contribute USD 1 million in 2026, together with carry-over funds from the previous year, bringing the total budget to USD 1.765 million.
34. The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands expressed its appreciation for the strong support provided by the Host Country and the host city of Shenzhen to the IMC, as a Ramsar Regional Initiative, and emphasized that the IMC's long-term sustainability depends on the continued contributions and commitments of all Member States, including financial support, in-kind contributions, or other forms of assistance, and cited the MedWet RRI as an example.
35. The Chair welcomed the remarks and underscored the importance of partnership and cooperation, including in finance and policy coordination.

Decision MOC01-25: The Council adopted the 2026 budget of the IMC in document IMC/MOC01/Doc.10.2.

Agenda item 11: Hosting Member State of the 2nd Meeting of the Council
--

36. The Secretariat informed the Council that China had expressed its willingness to host the 2nd Meeting of the Council in 2027, with the specific date and venue to be coordinated between China and the Secretariat and communicated in due course.

37. China confirmed its offer and readiness to work closely with the Secretariat on preparations. Zimbabwe supported China's offer to host the meeting.
38. The Chair welcomed China's offer and expressed the hope that the 3rd Meeting of the Council would be hosted by another Member State.
39. Comoros requested that the Secretariat consider providing French interpretation at the 2nd Meeting of the Council, where feasible, to facilitate the participation of French-speaking Member States and enable them to express their views fully. The Chair requested the Secretariat to consider the request.
40. The Chair recalled that the next Chair of the Council would be nominated by the hosting Member State and invited China to nominate a candidate. China noted that it would complete its internal procedures and communicate its nominee through the Secretariat.
41. The Chair proposed that Madagascar continue to serve as Vice-Chair to ensure continuity in the work of the Council. No objections were raised.

Decision MOC01-26: The Council decided that the 2nd Meeting of the Council would be held in China in 2027, with the specific date and venue to be coordinated by the Secretariat and China.

Decision MOC01-27: The Council agreed that China would nominate a representative to serve as Chair. The nominee would be communicated by the Secretariat once determined.

Decision MOC01-28: The Council agreed that Madagascar would continue to serve as Vice-Chair. The nominee would be communicated by the Secretariat once determined.

Agenda item 12: Thanks to the Host Country

42. The Secretariat introduced document IMC/MOC01/Doc.12, inviting the Council to express its appreciation to the Government of China for its significant contributions to advancing the IMC from its preparatory phase to formal operation, and for successfully hosting the 1st Meeting of the Council. It also acknowledged the efforts of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government in meeting arrangements and on-site support.
43. Following the adoption of the document, the Chair, on behalf of the Council, once again expressed appreciation to the Government of China for its contributions to development of the IMC and the successful convening of the 1st Meeting of the Council.

Decision MOC01-29: The Council adopted document IMC/MOC01/Doc.12, entitled "Thanks to the Host Country, the People's Republic of China", and expressed its appreciation to the Government of China for its contributions to the development of

the IMC and the successful convening of the 1st Meeting of the Council.

Agenda item 13: Any other business

44. The Chair invited the plenary to raise any other matters. No intervention was made, and the agenda item was concluded.

Agenda item 14: Adoption of the report of the 1st Meeting of the Council

45. The Chair informed the Council that the draft report of the 1st Meeting of the Council would be prepared by the Secretariat and circulated by email within two weeks after the meeting for review. If no comments regarding further amendments were received within two weeks of circulation, the report would be deemed approved and final.

Decision MOC01-30: The Council agreed that the draft report of the 1st Meeting of the Council would be circulated by email within two weeks after the meeting. If no proposed amendments were received within two weeks following its circulation, the report would be deemed approved.

Agenda item 15: Close of the meeting

46. The Chair expressed gratitude to all delegates for their active engagement and constructive contributions; highlighted the adoption of important institutional documents and work arrangements that laid a solid foundation for the formal operation and future development of the IMC; and called for continued cooperation to advance the conservation, restoration, and wise and sustainable use of mangroves worldwide.
47. The Chair closed the meeting.