

Summary of the 70th Meeting of the CITES

Standing Committee:

1-5 October 2018

The seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 1-5 October 2018 in Sochi, Russian Federation. Over 700 participants from national governments, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting.

The SC considered:

- The “introduction from the sea” of sei whales, determining that this activity was for commercial purposes and therefore not in compliance with the Convention. Japan committed to take swift remedial action, and to delay the departure of the concerned research whaling vessels to the western North Pacific and to not authorize any harvest of sei whales from the high seas in this region until the SC has assessed Japan’s progress in implementing the remedial actions at its next meeting in May 2019.
- The suspension of commercial trade in Siamese rosewood, including finished products, from Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) until it can be scientifically justified that such exports are sustainable. Lao PDR agreed with the recommendations and committed to report on implementation by 1 February 2019.
- Suspension of trade in African grey parrots and pangolin from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), pending compliance with the recommendations made at SC69.
- Suspension of commercial trade in rosewood until Nigeria has made a non-detriment finding for the species in the country. Draft decisions for consideration at CoP18, including asking parties to submit regular updates on audited inventories of one least a third of the stockpiles and to submit a modified use plan for consideration, approval, and further guidance from the SC.

The SC also discussed: engagement of rural communities, Asian big cats, National Ivory Action Plans, progress on harmonizing national legislation with the Convention, and annotations.

SC70 reinforced the commitment of parties to address issues related to the implementation of the Convention and major threats posed by illegal trade to an increasing number of species.

The next meeting of the CITES Standing Committee will take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 21 May 2019, one day prior to the start of the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18). The host of CoP18 announced that “20 million warm hearts are waiting to meet you in Colombo next year.”

A Brief History of CITES

CITES was established as a response to growing concerns that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many species of plants and animals around the world. The Convention was signed by representatives from 80 countries in Washington, DC, on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975. There are currently 183 parties to the Convention.

The aim of CITES is to ensure that international trade of wild animal and plant species does not threaten their survival. CITES parties regulate wildlife trade through controls and regulations on species listed in three appendices. Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade, permitting such trade only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix-II species are those that may become endangered if their trade is not regulated, thus they require controls aimed at preventing unsustainable use, maintaining ecosystems and preventing species from entering Appendix I. Appendix-III species are those subject to domestic regulation by a party requesting the cooperation of other parties to control international trade in these species.

In order to list a species in Appendix I or II, a party needs to submit a proposal for approval by the Conference of the Parties (CoP), supported by scientific and biological data on population and trade trends. The proposal must be adopted by a two-thirds majority of parties present and voting. As the trade impact on a

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species increases or decreases, the CoP decides whether or not the species should be transferred or removed from the appendices.

There are approximately 5,600 fauna species and 30,000 flora species protected under the three CITES appendices. Parties regulate international trade of CITES species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens listed in its appendices are imported, exported or introduced from the sea. Each party is required to adopt national legislation and to designate two national authorities, namely, a Management Authority responsible for issuing permits and certificates based on the advice of a Scientific Authority. These two national authorities also assist with CITES enforcement through cooperation with customs, police, and other appropriate agencies. Parties maintain trade records that are forwarded annually to the CITES Secretariat, thus enabling the compilation of statistical information on the global volume of international trade in an appendix-listed species.

The operational bodies of CITES include the Standing Committee (SC) and two scientific committees: the Plants Committee (PC) and the Animals Committee (AC).

Meetings of the Conference of the Parties

The first CoP was held in Bern, Switzerland, in November 1976, and subsequent CoPs have been held every two to three years. The CoP meets to, *inter alia*: review progress in the conservation of species included in the appendices; discuss and adopt proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II; consider recommendations and proposals from parties, the Secretariat, the SC, and the scientific committees; and recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention and the functioning of the Secretariat. The CoP also periodically reviews the list of resolutions and decisions, as well as the species listed in its appendices.

CITES CoP13: CoP13 met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 2-14 October 2004. Delegates addressed a range of topics, including 50 proposals to amend the CITES appendices. CoP13 approved the listing of ramin, agarwood-producing taxa, the great white shark, and the humphead wrasse in Appendix II, as well as the uplisting of the Irrawaddy dolphin from Appendix II to I. Regarding the African elephant, Namibia saw its request for an annual ivory quota rejected, but was allowed to proceed with a strictly controlled sale of traditional ivory carvings. Delegates also agreed on an action plan to curtail unregulated domestic ivory markets. Namibia and South Africa were each allowed an annual quota of five black rhinos for trophy hunting, and Swaziland was allowed to open up strictly controlled hunting of white rhinos. Other decisions focused on synergies with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), while enforcement issues also received considerable attention.

CITES CoP14: CoP14 met in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 3-15 June 2007. Delegates addressed a range of topics including: the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013; a guide on compliance with the Convention; management of annual export quotas; and species trade and conservation issues, including Asian big cats, sharks, and sturgeons. Delegates agreed that no cetacean species should be subject to periodic review while the International Whaling Commission moratorium is in place. CoP14 approved the listing of slender-horned and Cuvier's gazelles and slow loris on Appendix I and Brazil wood, sawfish and eel on Appendix II, and amended the annotation on African elephants to allow a one-off sale of ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe with a nine-year resting period for further ivory trade. The media spotlight was on negotiations on the future of ivory trade and African elephant conservation, with many

highlighting the consensus by African range states as a major achievement of this meeting.

CITES CoP15: CoP15 met in Doha, Qatar, from 13-25 March 2010. The meeting considered 68 agenda items and 42 proposals to amend the CITES appendices. CoP15 adopted resolutions and decisions directed to parties, the Secretariat, and Convention bodies on a wide range of topics including: electronic permitting; Asian big cats; rhinos; bigleaf mahogany; and Madagascar plant species. Regarding species listings, CoP15 decided to list, among others: Kaiser's spotted newt; five species of tree frogs; the unicorn beetle; rosewood; holywood; and several Madagascar plant species.

CITES CoP16: CoP16 met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3-14 March 2013. The meeting adopted 55 new listing proposals, including on sharks, manta rays, turtles, and timber. Nine proposals were rejected (Caspian snowcock, Tibetan snowcock, saltwater crocodile, Siamese crocodile, South American freshwater stingray, Rosette river stingray, blood pheasant, and two species of freshwater turtles). Three proposals were withdrawn: on Southern white rhino and two African elephants, and three were not considered: on Indochinese box turtle, Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtle, and Annam leaf turtle. The CoP also adopted strong enforcement measures to address wildlife crime.

CITES CoP17: CoP17 convened from 24 September to 4 October 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa. CoP17 was the largest CITES meeting to date, with more than 3,500 participants representing 152 governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and media. Delegates considered 90 agenda items and 62 species-listing proposals submitted by 64 countries. Resolutions and decisions were adopted on, *inter alia*: actions to combat wildlife trafficking; demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species; provisions on international trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II aimed at enabling better controls of the sustainable and legal origin of those specimens; illegal trade in cheetahs; elephants and trade in ivory; agarwood-producing taxa; and ebonies.

Recent Subsidiary Body Meetings

CITES AC29 and PC23: The Scientific Committees convened from 18-27 July 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. During AC29, participants piloted a new process for a review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity. They also adopted recommendations on, among other things, sharks, snakes, freshwater stingrays, sturgeons and paddlefish, and nomenclature. During their Joint Meeting, the AC and PC considered guidance on non-detriment findings, collaboration with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and annotations, and also adopted recommendations on, among other things, terms of reference for a planned study on specimens produced from synthetic or cultured DNA.

At PC23, participants adopted recommendations on, *inter alia*: rosewood timber species; timber identification; Malagasy ebonies, palisanders and rosewoods; and cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the CBD. They discussed agarwood-producing taxa, African cherry, and annotations for Appendix-II orchids. Both AC29 and PC23 adopted recommendations, for animals and plants respectively, on the review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix-II species and the periodic review of species included in the CITES appendices.

CITES SC69: SC69 convened from 27 November – 1 December 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Committee addressed a long agenda, considering, among other issues,

progress in: National Ivory Action Plans implementation; tackling illegal trade in pangolins; assessing Japan's introduction of sei whales from the high seas; and compliance with the Convention in the Lao PDR, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Guinea.

CITES AC30 and PC24: The Scientific Committees convened from 14-26 July 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The committees reviewed a wide range of issues. The AC provided technical and scientific guidance on the trade management of a variety of marine species, lions, leopard hunting trophies, and great apes. The PC focused much of its work on tree species and high-value timbers, agarwood, orchids, and African cherry. Jointly, the two committees examined how best to support the making of non-detriment findings by CITES parties, capacity-building issues, and challenges in regulating trade in wildlife produced through new biotechnology.

SC70 Report

On Monday, 1 October, Dmitry Kobylkin, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Russian Federation, welcomed participants to Sochi, highlighting the Russian Federation's efforts in expanding protection of special habitats for polar bears, tigers, and other species. SC Chair Carolina Caceres (Canada) noted the packed agenda, emphasizing optimism in considering the many detailed and technical documents in a timely manner. She highlighted the opportunity to review candidates for the CITES Secretary-General position, noting that the decision on this matter will be made by the UN Secretary-General. SC70 then adopted the meeting's agenda (SC70 Doc. 1) and the working programme (SC70 Doc. 2 (Rev.1)).

Administrative and Financial Matters

Rules of Procedure: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc.3. She noted that SC69 had adopted revised Rules of Procedure aligned as closely as possible to the CoP Rules of Procedure. She presented the proposed Rules for the SC in (SC70 Doc.3 Annex 2), noting changes involving: removal of the requirement in Rule 4.3 to have the SC Chair approve the participation of observers; Rule 14.4 on the clarification of the type of point of order that can be made; Rule 17.2 on the clarification of the process to join or withdraw from intersessional working groups; Rule 19.1 on entry into effect of the decisions of the SC; and Rule 20 on the procedure for intersessional decision making.

Outcome: The Standing Committee adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee contained in the Annex to document SC70 Doc. 3 with an amendment to Rule 11 on working documents to be considered at the meeting, clarifying that working documents may be submitted by any party, the Secretariat, chairs of the SC, Animals Committee (AC) and Plants Committee (PC), or any non-party observers at the request of the Chair.

Admission of observers: On Monday, the SC noted the list of observers invited to attend the meeting, as contained in document SC70 Doc. 5 (Rev. 1).

Financial matters: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 6, noting that as of 30 June 2018, the financial information for 2017 and 2018 indicates that the core trust fund is on track to deliver within approved budgets. He noted the delay of parties in paying annual contributions, emphasizing that this will have a negative impact on the Secretariat's ability to fund daily operations.

The Secretariat also introduced SC70 Doc. 7, which proposes three alternative budget scenarios for CoP18, including: zero

nominal growth (operational budget maintained at current growth); zero real growth (maintaining the current number of staff, but entailing an increase in operation costs based on actual expenditures); and incremental growth (building on zero real growth, and including new proposals from the incoming Secretary-General related to the implementation of the programme of work and taking into account the larger meetings of the governing bodies and scientific committees as well as the high number of intersessional working groups.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 13.

Outcome: The SC noted (SC70 Com. 13):

- the report for the costed programme of work, the Secretariat's programme of work, and projected overspending, approving the reports on the costed programme of work for the full year of 2017 and for 2018 for the period up to 30 June 2018; and
- the report on proposed budget scenarios for 2020-2022.

Access to funding: Global Environment Facility: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 8, noting the World Bank's report on the impacts of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)'s Global Wildlife Programme. Israel requested clarification on guidelines regarding the source of funding to the Secretariat to avoid the risk of "greenwash" from inappropriate donors. The US suggested an amendment of text on the provision of financial assistance to ensure that funded activities are managed in an effective and accountable manner.

Outcome: The SC noted SC70 Doc. 8 and agreed to submit to CoP18 the replacement of Decisions 17.10 to 17.16 by the draft decisions on external funding contained in the annex to document SC70 Doc. 8, with amendments.

Administrative matters including Host Country

Arrangements for the Secretariat: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 9, announcing financial support from Switzerland in the form of CHF 1 million on an annual basis for four years.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and requested the Secretariat to ensure that the additional funds are available to be used for the implementation of the programme of work based on parties' priorities and to report on the usage of the funds to CoP18, subsequent meetings of the SC, and CoP19.

Arrangements for CoP18: Following an oral report by Sri Lanka on the CoP18 preparations (SC70 Doc. 10.1), the SC Chair introduced the draft agenda (SC70 Doc. 10.2), draft working programme (SC70 Doc. 10.3), and the Report of the Working Group on the Review of the Rules of Procedure of the CoP (SC70 Doc. 10.4).

The European Union (EU) suggested language for Rule 26 on voting for Regional Economic Integration Organizations. The US proposed amendments to Rule 25.6 on procedures for proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II, but the SC Chair suggested that these proposed amendments be put into a draft decision.

The SC Chair established a working group chaired by Canada to discuss Rule 26, Rule 27 on secret ballots, and Rule 32 on majority required for amending Rules of Procedure.

On Friday, the working group introduced SC70 Com. 8, noting it had reviewed the Rules of Procedure of the CoP and after discussion could not agree on any amendments to the Rules as adopted by CoP17.

Outcome: The SC, with the support of the Secretariat, agreed to review Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the CoP and to propose amendments, as appropriate, to CoP19 with the view to ensuring the effective conduct of meetings.

Sponsored Delegates Project: The SC introduced SC70 Doc. 10.6, highlighting that a quarter of the funding sought had already been secured.

Outcome: The SC:

- noted document SC70 Doc. 10.6;
- welcomed the generous support of donors; and
- recommended that the Secretariat further explore the practical arrangements for the provision of the Sponsored Delegates Project for delegates attending the meetings of the AC, PC, and SC.

Strategic Matters

Revision and replacement of the CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2020: On Wednesday, the SC Chair introduced SC70 Doc. 11 and suggested a new replacement resolution.

The EU noted that objectives would benefit from further work. Mexico added an amendment focused on “indigenous peoples and local communities,” which should align with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). CBD welcomed this language, presenting additional amendments, and suggested that parties should consider alignment with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

Outcome: The SC Chair recommended preparing a new resolution on the CITES Strategic Vision for consideration at CoP18, directing the Secretariat, *inter alia*, to undertake a comparative analysis in order to illustrate the linkages between the adopted CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030 and the goals within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, once adopted, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Review of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17): On Wednesday, the SC Chair introduced SC70 Doc. 12, which proposes in its Annex 2 a new resolution on Establishment of Committees and repeals the previous Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17), for consideration at CoP18. She also noted the template for declarations of conflicts of interest that should be included within the resolution.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 9, which includes the new draft resolution.

Outcome: The SC approved the new draft resolution contained in SC70 Com. 9, agreeing to not include the terms of reference of the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants - the Elephant Trade Information System (MIKE and ETIS) Subgroup in the proposed revisions to Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17).

Potential conflicts of interest in the AC and PC: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 13, highlighting the proposed standard disclosure form.

Outcome: The SC agreed to standard disclosure, with “conflict of interest” defined as any current financial interest that could significantly impair the individual’s impartiality, objectivity, or independence in carrying out his or her duties as a member of the Committee.

Designation and roles of Management Authorities: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 14, highlighting the draft resolution on designation and role of Management Authorities.

Outcome: The SC welcomed the draft resolution and invited parties to provide their comments in writing to the Secretariat.

Engagement of rural communities in the CITES Process: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 15, with Namibia, as Chair of the working group on this issue, noting broad agreement at a UN Environment Programme-sponsored meeting in Nairobi in February 2018 on engaging the voices of rural communities in CITES matters that impact their lives.

She noted the need for an in-session working group to continue to work on this issue and to request continued support for the working group at CoP18 for intersessional work between CoP18 and CoP19, should consensus not be reached at SC70.

She outlined suggested recommendations of the working group, including to: amend Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev.CoP17) with an added paragraph on taking rural communities into account when parties submit proposals to amend appendices, draft resolutions, and other documents for consideration by the CoP; amend Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) (Annex VI) to provide information on involvement of rural communities in the use of, trade, and management of Appendix I or II species; use three terminologies in conjunction, referring to “indigenous, rural, and local communities,” and to request that CoP18 prepare costed options for the establishment of a permanent CITES advisory committee for rural communities under Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17).

China, supported by Canada, Botswana, Cameroon, Mexico, and India, wholly or partly supported the recommendations. They suggested that the working group continue its work and that CoP18 be recommended to extend the programme of work until CoP19. Noting the inequality of singling out “rural” people, Peru, supported by Chad, Senegal, Kenya, Mexico, and Brazil, stated that national legislation already establishes mechanisms for citizen participation, and, supported by Portugal, Nigeria, Kenya, and the US, opposed a permanent CITES advisory committee for rural communities. Portugal also stressed that “views of rural communities” requires greater definition and that the terms “local,” “rural,” and “indigenous” are not always interchangeable. Israel, supported by Sri Lanka, highlighted the thorny issues of consulting with rural communities, particularly for marine-listed species, and opposed the continuation of work on this issue.

Given the lack of consensus, SC Chair Caceres, supported by Canada, Ethiopia, the EU, China, Portugal, and South Africa, and opposed by Niger, Peru, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Israel, proposed the establishment of a working group to decide whether to submit recommendations to CoP18 to continue intersessional work until CoP19.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 11 on engagement of rural communities.

Outcome: The SC (SC70 Com. 11) noted the report of the working group (SC70 Doc. 15), in particular the lack of consensus at SC70 on the recommendations, and asked CoP18 to extend the mandate of the working group on how to engage rural communities in CITES processes and report to CoP19.

Demand-reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species: On Friday, the Secretariat presented SC70 Doc. 16 on demand reduction strategies.

Outcome: The SC agreed to consider draft decisions, for submission at CoP18, directing:

- the Secretariat to contract a consultant to develop CITES guidance on demand-reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species; and submit the draft CITES guidance on demand-reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species to the SC for its consideration; and
- the SC to review the guidance developed and make recommendations for consideration by CoP19.

Livelihoods and food security: On Friday, Nigeria introduced SC70 Doc.17 on livelihoods and food security, urging that the mandate of the working group on this issue be renewed, as its work has not been completed. Israel, supported by Niger, opposed renewing the mandate. Canada, supported by China, the US, Gabon, and Botswana, urged the SC to renew the mandate of the working group.

Outcome: The SC endorsed the recommendations to allow the working group to continue its work with regard to implementation of Decisions 17.41 to 17.43 and report to SC71, and requested CoP18 to renew Decisions 17.41 to 17.43.

Community awareness on wildlife trafficking: On Friday, the Secretariat presented SC70 Doc. 18. Senegal noted the difficulties in managing resources without the cooperation of local communities. Chad expressed support for this document, highlighting the need to engage local communities.

Outcome: The SC encouraged parties to take into account the findings in the report when preparing and implementing strategies to engage rural communities in the fight against poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and when preparing draft decisions for consideration at CoP18.

Cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions: On Friday, the Secretariat presented SC70 Doc. 19. The EU suggested a notification be drafted on focal points and collaboration with the CBD.

India, supported by Mexico and the US, spoke in favor of continued collaboration with other biodiversity-related conventions.

The CBD added, in support for collaboration, that sustainable use and legal trade are important mechanisms for livelihoods and rural communities.

Outcome: The SC recommended to CoP18 that Decisions 17.55 and 17.56 be continued and requested the Secretariat to issue a notification on collaboration with the CBD.

Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the CBD: On Friday, PC Chair Adrienne Sinclair (Canada) introduced SC70 Doc. 20 with amendments, for the purpose of cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the CBD.

Outcome: The SC noted the progress in the implementation of Decisions 17.53 and 17.54.

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc.21 on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The US emphasized the level of work occurring in multiple forums and urged further analysis of gaps or duplication of efforts. She added that there is a current Memorandum of Understanding on this issue and that a resolution is not needed.

Outcome: The SC agreed to propose the draft resolution on Cooperation with IPBES in Annex 1 of the document for adoption at CoP18.

Capacity building: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 22.1 on capacity-building needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The US introduced SC70 Doc. 22.2, which provides a possible framework for analyzing capacity-building needs for prioritization.

Kuwait, Portugal, Niger, and Peru announced their support for the document.

Outcome: The SC directed the Secretariat to create a capacity-building framework for consideration at CoP18, while taking into account the framework proposed by the US and the work of regional organizations.

UN World Wildlife Day: On Friday, the Secretariat presented SC70 Doc. 23 on the UN World Wildlife Day, mentioning the high level of planning work involved and requesting increased collaboration with UN agencies to better facilitate planning.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and the intention to propose amendments at CoP18.

Follow-up of the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth Conservation Programme: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 24 and proposed draft changes to Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18). Many parties welcomed efforts to improve youth engagement and provided edits to the draft revision.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and agreed to forward the draft revision of Resolution Conf. 17.5 on Youth Engagement for consideration at CoP18, with amendments.

Compliance and Enforcement Matters

National Laws for Implementation of the Convention: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 25 (Rev.1), welcoming progress made by several parties in harmonizing national legislation with the Convention. She noted that several parties identified as "priority" have reported some progress, including Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. She also highlighted that Mongolia, Botswana, and Kazakhstan, originally in the list of parties that have not reported any legislative progress, have taken some steps to remedy the situation.

Uzbekistan welcomed the support of the Secretariat and noted that new legislation will be ready by the end of 2018. Kazakhstan noted that it has taken measures to update its legislation.

Several countries on the formal warning list provided updates on progress since CoP17.

Outcome: The SC:

- commended parties that have made substantive progress in adopting measures for the effective implementation of the Convention; and
- agreed to issue a notification to all parties, taking effect 60 days after the SC70, to suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with Comoros and Ecuador.

National reports: Submission of national reports: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC Doc. 26.1 on submission of national reports. The Secretariat noted that several countries had failed to submit national reports for consecutive years. He noted that Mali, Mauritania, Samoa, and Ukraine could be deleted from the current list as they submitted their reports. He added that if the other countries listed fail to submit reports they could be subject to trade suspension measures.

Outcome: The SC directed the Secretariat to publish a notification on suspension of commercial trade if the countries listed do not submit their annual reports (2015-2017) by the 31 October 2018 deadline.

Improving access to annual report data: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC Doc. 26.2 on improving access to annual report data. Canada commented that access to the CITES Trade Database will be helpful for government officials.

Outcome: The SC noted the document with comments for consideration.

Guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of CITES specimens to be exported: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.1, highlighting a consolidated proposal on "Guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of CITES specimens" in the form of a draft resolution of the CoP for consideration by the SC.

The US concurred that legal acquisition of CITES export permits is fundamental to the Convention, but noted, *inter alia*: that guidance on due diligence and obligations of importing countries should be included in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) on compliance and enforcement; the need to ensure that guidance is non-binding, similar to non-detriment findings; and that there is no benefit to changing the terminology in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on court-ordered export permits.

The EU, supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), noted the need for the draft resolution to reflect explicit recognition of the obligations of importing countries. Canada stated that while the guidance would be of great use to parties, textual language as currently written is inconsistent with the

text of the Convention and offered to improve the language to promote flexibility and consistency with obligations under the Convention.

SC Chair Caceres established a small working group to provide clarification on this item.

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Com. 16 on the draft resolution.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the draft resolution (SC70 Com. 16), wherein, *inter alia*:

- the determination of whether a specimen was not obtained in contravention with the laws and regulations of that state for the protection of fauna and flora should take into account the whole series of actions through which the specimen is brought from its source into the possession of an exporter;
- the general principles being used by the parties for verifying the legal acquisition of specimens to be exported include procedures to conduct the verification of legal acquisition that are sufficiently flexible to allow for a risk assessment approach; and
- procedures used by a Management Authority for verifying legal acquisition of specimens to be exported are publicly available to facilitate the collection of required information and provide clarity to applicants requesting export permits.

Possible establishment of a compliance assistance

programme: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.2, noting the merits of establishing a Compliance Assistance Programme.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and instructed the Secretariat to submit, in consultation with the SC Chair, a more detailed proposal for consideration at CoP18, specifying the additional cost and source of funding for such a programme.

Application of Article XIII: Application of Article XIII in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: The Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.3.1, praising Lao PDR for the significant implementation efforts, and asked for continued momentum as illegal trade remains a concern. The Secretariat recommended, *inter alia*, suspending commercial trade in specimens of the genus *Dalbergia* spp. until Lao PDR makes scientifically based non-detriment findings (NDFs) for trade in the relevant species, including *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*, to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.

China, the EU, and the US praised Lao PDR for the progress achieved in several areas. The US, however, expressed concern over the lack of progress on SC69 recommendations.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the proposed updates to the SC69 recommendations, including that:

- on management of exports of *Dalbergia* spp., parties suspend commercial trade in specimens of the genus *Dalbergia* spp., including finished products such as carvings and furniture from Lao PDR, until Lao PDR makes scientifically based non-detriment findings for trade in the relevant species;
- on national legislation implementing the Convention, Lao PDR adopt adequate legislative measures to implement the Convention that meet the minimum requirements set out in Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15) on national laws for implementation of the Convention;
- on enforcement, Lao PDR effectively implement existing relevant plans, in particular its National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP), and report on progress in implementation according to fixed formats and deadlines; and
- on monitoring of wildlife farms, Lao PDR finalize the full audit of tigers kept in captivity, combined with a marking scheme and genetic analysis of the animals to establish their origin, in collaboration with relevant international organizations.

Application of Article XIII in the DRC: On Tuesday, the DRC introduced SC70 Doc. 27.3.2 on its progress in implementing recommendations of quota management for several species. The Secretariat added that it awaits news of national strategies for the conservation of the African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) and recommended suspending trade in stockpiled species of pangolin (*Manis* spp.) until further notice and proven under compliance.

Niger highlighted the issue of trade in pangolin scales and questioned whether it was a legally acquired stockpile. He emphasized that trade in the species would undermine conservation and discourage delegations who have been working hard to save the species. Israel, supporting Niger, noted the language about pre-listing origin of the stockpiles and that the re-sales appear as a non-compliance issue. India, supported by Gabon and the US, emphasized the ban in trade of pangolin scales.

DRC emphasized that the stockpile is legal.

Outcome: The SC reinforced that a suspension of trade in pangolin is in place until further guidance is provided by the CoP at CoP18; and agreed that:

- DRC shall strengthen its Scientific Authorities by building capacity and allocating sufficient modern resources for the making of the NDFs and the setting of annual export quotas based on the best available science;
- parties shall maintain the suspension of trade in specimens of *P. erithacus* from DRC pending compliance with the recommendations made at SC69; and
- donors and cooperation agencies are encouraged to support DRC in the undertaking of population surveys and the development of management plans for *P. erithacus*.

Application of Article XIII in Guinea: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.3.3, noting concerns on fraudulent practices prompting the suspension of commercial trade, and suggested that current recommendations to suspend trade with Guinea be maintained until a technical mission is carried out to assess the administrative and legislative arrangements for CITES implementation in the country. Senegal welcomed a technical mission, noting that porous borders between Senegal and Guinea may be allowing traffickers to avoid sanctions.

Outcome: The SC: noted the oral update by the Secretariat; agreed that the suspension of all commercial trade in CITES-listed species with Guinea be maintained; and requested the Secretariat to present the results of its technical mission in the country at its 71st meeting.

Introduction from the sea of sei whale by Japan: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.3.4 on introduction from the sea (IFS) (defined as transportation into a state of specimens of any species that were taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State) of sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), reminding parties of the importance of ensuring that compliance matters are non-adversarial and conducted with due process. Following a technical mission to Japan, the Secretariat noted that the population of sei whales has been adversely affected by commercial trade, as described in Article XIII of the Convention, and sought positions by parties on remedial actions to be taken on technical matters on issuance of IFS certificates by Japan and whether or not the sei whale is used for "primarily commercial purposes."

Japan stated it would take immediate remedial actions to ensure that specimens are not used for primarily commercial purposes by 1 February 2019. He reiterated that whale meat and blubber are used for research purposes, that whale meat is sold in

agreement with the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling obligations ancillary to research, and that proceeds of whale meat sales are used entirely for research.

Reiterating concern about the commercial use of sei whale specimens, Canada, the US, EU, Niger, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, and others affirmed that Japan is not in compliance with CITES. The US noted that correspondence with the Japanese government had shown that the 2017-2028 research plan envisions an annual harvest of 134 sei whales, raising concern about the continued primarily commercial nature of scientific whaling. Japan, supported by South Africa, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, China, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, stressed the importance of compliance with CITES, and noted that in addition to conducting remedial measures to comply with the Convention by 1 February 2019, the departure of research whaling vessels will be delayed until SC71 and the issuance of new IFS certificates will not take place until a decision is made at SC71 on the matter.

Outcome: The SC agreed that:

- the provisions of the Convention are not being effectively implemented with regard to: a) the description of the specimens introduced from the sea by Japan; b) the IFS certificates issued by the Management Authority of Japan; and c) the use of source codes in the annual reports submitted by Japan before 2016; and
- IFS of certain specimens (e.g. whale meat and blubber) of sei whales from the North Pacific population was not in compliance with CITES.

The SC further recommended that Japan take immediate remedial action to comply with the Convention and noted and accepted Japan's commitment to delay the departure of its research whaling vessels until after SC71 and to not issue any IFS certificates for specimens of sei whales prior to SC71. The SC requested Japan to report to the Secretariat on the implementation of its remedial actions and other relevant measures by 1 February 2019, in order for the Secretariat to convey this report and its recommendations at SC71. The SC agreed to review the Secretariat's report at its 71st meeting, and, if not satisfied that the provisions of the Convention are met, to take further compliance measures, including consideration of a recommendation to suspend the issuance of IFS certificates for sei whales from the North Pacific population.

Application of Article XIII in Nigeria: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.3.5, expressing concern with the increase in trade in Kosso wood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) and recommending, *inter alia*, suspension of commercial trade.

Nigeria expressed appreciation for being granted until 31 December 2019 to comply with the recommendations, but asked the SC to not impose the suspension until the NDFs are completed. The EU called on Nigeria to take strong and immediate action and supported the recommendations, including suspension of trade and stronger follow-up measures in case of non-compliance. The SC established a working group on this issue, chaired by Portugal.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC70 Com. 6.

Outcome: In SC70 Com. 6, the SC agreed that:

- parties shall suspend commercial trade in specimens of *P. erinaceus* from Nigeria until the party makes scientifically-based NDFs for trade in the species to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the PC Chair; and
- Nigeria will report to the Secretariat on progress made by 31 December 2019, in order for the Secretariat to convey recommended follow-up measures in the case of continued non-compliance to SC73.

National Ivory Action Plan process: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 27.4 and Annexes 1-27, highlighting, *inter alia*, new NIAP party categories: Category A parties (those most affected by illegal ivory trade); Category B parties (those markedly affected by illegal ivory trade), and Category C parties (those affected by illegal ivory trade). She noted that DRC, Gabon and Nigeria had submitted their NIAPs very late and that Togo had not yet submitted its NIAP, and proposed revisions to the Guidelines to the NIAP process contained in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).

The Secretariat highlighted the considerable efforts of China, the Philippines, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Thailand in implementing their NIAPs, with China, supported by Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, and Malawi, calling for countries having implemented their NIAPs to be able to exit the process while strengthening efforts to combat illegal trade in ivory.

Kenya, supported by Uganda and Tanzania, added that as countries exit the NIAP process, they require continued support as they upscale efforts at sea, land and border points in combating ivory trade. The EU, supported by the US and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), stated that parties should not be allowed to exit the NIAP process until all conditions are implemented on the ground or until consultation with outside experts is done to identify gaps, and recommended that parties exit the NIAP process only if they are not selected as Category A countries.

Niger, supported by Israel, Ethiopia, and Kenya, suggested that consultation with experts be mandatory and that a clear definition of what defines an expert be added as a footnote. South Africa requested the text be maintained as agreed by recommendations from the SC69 working group.

SC Chair Caceres established a working group, chaired by Canada, to further discuss this issue.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC.70 Com. 2.

Outcome: In SC.70 Com. 2, the SC agreed to:

- an overall rating of "limited progress" in Angola, DRC, Egypt, and Cameroon;
- an overall rating of "partial progress" in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malawi, Malaysia, Qatar, and Ethiopia;
- an overall rating of "achieved" for Mozambique and Tanzania; and
- an overall rating of "achieving" for China, Kenya, the Philippines, Thailand, and Uganda.

The SC also agreed to:

- request the Secretariat to evaluate the progress reports from Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Nigeria;
- issue a warning to Togo, requesting it to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of the conclusion of SC70;
- note the relevant legislation of Viet Nam and the report on progress with implementation prepared for SC70; and
- commend the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China for implementing its NIAP, the additional measures implemented to address the illegal trade in ivory, and its firm commitment demonstrated to build upon the progress made to date.

The SC also proposed to CoP18 amending paragraph (b) in Step 5 of the Guidelines to the NIAP process contained in Annex 3 to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on trade in elephant specimens to the effect, *inter alia*, that the Secretariat evaluates the progress reported by the party concerned and considers if sufficient detail is provided on the measures and activities implemented for each action in the NIAP to justify the allocated self-assessment progress ratings.

Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) and palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.): On Tuesday, Madagascar presented SC70 Doc. 27.5.1, highlighting the measures taken by Madagascar to control illegal trade in ebonies. He called for support to combat illegal trafficking and help with the use plan and audits, and concluded that Madagascar has no intention of selling the stocks.

The Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc.27.5.2, calling on Madagascar to halt the illegal trafficking of ebonies and rosewoods and recognizing its need for ongoing technical support and oversight. The Secretariat re-emphasized that auditing criteria have not yet been met and that the trade suspension should be maintained.

China stated that it supported the approval of the use plan (contained in Annex 3 of SC70 Doc. 27.5.1). The EU suggested that Madagascar implement a national strategy to combat illegal trafficking and to conduct NDFs. He further noted that the EU does not support approval of the use plan. Sri Lanka, supported by Senegal and the US, added that compensation for illegal loggers will send the wrong message and expressed concern with the precedent that could be set by the Secretariat if the use plan's section on compensation was approved.

The Wildlife Conservation Society, speaking on behalf of multiple groups, expressed concern with the promotion of illegal trade should compensation be paid for stockpiles that are not yet fully under control.

Madagascar stated it would review the compensation provision within the use plan. Madagascar noted that some of the stockpile declarations were legally made before 2011 and that Madagascar has no intention of compensating those who made declarations after that date.

The SC Chair established a working group, chaired by Switzerland, to address possible approval of the use plan without a compensation provision and to focus on the amendments proposed in the document.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 14.

Outcome: The SC recommended (SC70 Com. 14) that Madagascar:

- strengthen the oversight mechanism for both the financing of the plan and the allocation of revenues;
- explore alternatives to the current proposed compensation schemes to take official control of the timber stockpiles, in compliance with national legislation and relevant legal procedures in place, and ensure that there will be no financial benefit to those involved in illegal activity; and
- submit regular updates on audited inventories of at least a third of the stockpiles of species of *Dalbergia* and *Diospyros* from Madagascar.

Finally, the SC, highlighting that the plan submitted by Madagascar presents substantial improvements, noted that it cannot be approved at this stage and encouraged Madagascar to proceed with the inventory of declared stockpiles.

Domestic controls in consumer markets for specimens of CITES-listed species for which international trade is predominantly illegal: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc.28. Reporting on a review of recommendations from Decision 17.87 and 17.88 for consideration at CoP18, the Secretariat emphasized the need to: continue to ban domestic ivory markets; consider unintended effects of bans; effectively regulate online markets; and enforce existing laws.

The US agreed with the recommendations for the two decisions, suggesting that the second phase of the review be undertaken at SC73. Niger, supported by Uganda, emphasized the need to reinforce a coordinated approach to combat the domestic ivory trade and elephant poaching, and raised concern regarding

the fact that domestic bans may stimulate illegal ivory trade in neighboring countries.

Outcome: The SC agreed to:

- propose for the consideration of CoP18 the amendment to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on trade in elephant specimens contained in Annex 1 to document SC70 Doc.28; and
- present the revised Decisions 17.87 and 17.88, contained in Annex 2 to document SC70 Doc. 28, for consideration and possible adoption by CoP18, directing the Secretariat to contract independent consultants to undertake a study of the domestic controls in consumer markets for specimens of CITES-listed species for which international trade is predominantly illegal, other than elephant ivory.

Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species: Implementation of recommendations of the AC and PC and review of recommendations to suspend trade made more than two years ago: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 29.1 and 29.2, which note cases of significant trade the AC and PC identified as not related to the implementation of Article IV of the Convention and recommend that the SC suspend trade until a zero-export quota for wild specimens of certain species is provided and published on the CITES website.

Outcome: The SC agreed, *inter alia*, to:

- change the date of Togo's required update on the ornate monitor (*Varanus ornatus*) to 1 December 2018;
- ensure that Namibia publishes the establishment of a zero-export quota for wild specimens of *Hoodia gordonii* traded for commercial purposes on the CITES website;
- take note of updated nomenclature changes;
- remove the suspension of trade on pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornier*), African cherry (*Prunus africana*), and grey crowned crane (*Balearica regulorum*) only after a zero-export quota for wild specimens has been published on the website and the basis for NDFs, should Tanzania seek to resume trade in these species; and
- to take note of the need to provide notifications with updates on current or existing trade suspensions.

Country-wide significant trade review: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the document, which it had prepared together with the AC and PC Chairs (SC70 Doc. 29.3).

The US suggested convening an advisory body to help with exploring the potential benefits and disadvantages of country-wide significant trade reviews.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the draft decisions and, *inter alia*, to make recommendations for consideration at CoP19, which may include proposals for amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species or other existing resolutions, or a new resolution.

Enforcement: Report of the Secretariat and wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 30.1, followed by Niger introducing a document prepared with Senegal and Nigeria on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States and its Member States (SC70 Doc. 30.4).

Outcome: The SC requested the Secretariat, on its behalf, to take into consideration the report presented by Niger, when prioritizing CITES enforcement capacity-building activities in West Africa.

International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 30.2, noting that the implementation of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime's Strategic Programme directly

contributes to the implementation of a number of decisions and resolutions related to combating wildlife crime adopted at CoP17.

Outcome: The SC noted the report.

Combating wildlife cybercrime: On Thursday, Kenya introduced SC70 Doc. 30.3.

The Russian Federation highlighted its efforts to combat wildlife cybercrime, including amending its own legislation. Malaysia noted its creation of a wildlife cybercrime unit that will also share information and engage in intelligence-led enforcement. The US supported the document and agreed with the suggestion of consistent terminology, and offered a suggested term.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and renewed Decisions 17.92 and 17.93 therein, with minor amendments.

Trade in specimens bred in captivity or artificially propagated: Review of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the application of Article VII, paragraphs 4 and 5, and related Resolutions and Definition of the term “artificially propagated”: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 31.1 and relevant recommendations to address ambiguities in the application of provisions on captive breeding and artificial propagation. PC Chair Sinclair further introduced her report on the definition of the term “artificially propagated” (SC70 Doc. 31.2).

China noted the need for a simple coding system. Further, supported by Lao PDR, he expressed disagreement with the proposed changes to Resolution Conf.12.10 (Rev. CoP15) that urge parties, especially Appendix-I Asian big cat range states, with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, to implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers and not to breed tigers for trade in their parts and derivatives.

Australia and Canada expressed general support for many of the recommendations, noting however that some would benefit from further technical review. Mexico requested a revised version of SC70 Doc. 31.1, noting some parties' comments are not reflected and, given the complexity of the document, a decision on it would not be possible at SC70.

Humane Society International, on behalf of several NGOs, expressed concern that the proposed draft decision to devise an intermediate source code between “bred in captivity,” “artificially propagated,” and “wild caught” could create loopholes for laundering wild-caught specimens as raised in captivity.

SC Chair Caceres established a working group, chaired by the US, to explore the application of Article VII, paragraphs 4 and 5, the engagement of a technical committee, a possible new resolution or amendments to existing ones.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 12.

Outcome: In SC70 Com. 12, the SC:

- agreed to establish an intersessional working group at SC72 to carry out the decision directed to the SC;
- asked the AC and PC to: consider the Secretariat's update of the review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source; identify the key scientific issues and challenges in the application of the Convention to non-wild specimens; and provide their recommendations to SC73; and
- agreed to consider at SC73 the Secretariat's update of the review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source.

Implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.7 on review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity: On Tuesday, AC Chair Mathias Lörtscher (Switzerland) introduced SC70 Doc. 31.3, noting an agreed-upon compliance process as specified in Resolution Conf. 17.7 (Rev. CoP17) concerning trade

in specimens using source codes C, D, F, or R between 2011-2015. He stated that in 23 cases, trade had not been in compliance with the Convention. The EU, supported by Israel and AC Chair Lörtscher, encouraged the SC to endorse the recommendations contained in SC70 Doc. 31.3 and offered textual changes for two countries, suggesting that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia establish a zero-export quota for specimens of Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) from all sources and for Sudan to establish a zero-export quota for specimens of fennec fox (*Vulpes zerda*) and African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*) from all sources until the information requested is provided by 1 February 2019, and that the Secretariat review this information in consultation with the AC Chair before SC71.

Outcome: The SC agreed that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia shall establish immediately, and until the SC recommends otherwise, a zero-export quota for *T. hermanni*, and Sudan shall establish a zero-export quota for *V. zerda* and *C. sulcata*.

Observations and recommendations regarding the first iteration of Resolution Conf. 17.7 on review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity: On Thursday, AC Chair Lörtscher introduced SC70 Doc. 31.4, noting that the work is still ongoing but preliminary results are included in the report. The EU noted progress will be compromised by the ongoing need for funding.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the proposed amendments and to forward the draft decisions contained in SC70 Doc. 31.4 to CoP18.

Disposal of confiscated specimens: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 32 on the report of an intersessional working group on the disposal of confiscated live animal and plant specimens, chaired by Switzerland. Switzerland concluded that main challenges included a lack of financial resources related to the recovery of costs of seizure and disposal, limited capacity, and resources of rescue centers. He suggested minimum standards for the creation of rescue centers, the need to develop a list of rescue centers approved by CITES, and the use of an alternative term to “disposal of confiscated specimens.” Israel, as working group co-chair, added that CITES resolutions must be consistent with the intent of the Convention and suggested replacing the word “disposal” with “custody.” Portugal, supported by the US, noted that a list of CITES-approved rescue centers should not be prioritized.

SC Chair Caceres suggested the formation of a drafting group, chaired by Switzerland, to draft a decision on this issue.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC70 Com. 3.

Outcome: The SC agreed (SC70 Com. 3) to forward to CoP18 draft decisions:

- calling on the Secretariat to collect information on existing networks and resources on the management of seized and confiscated live animals and make it available to parties; and
- encouraging parties to make use of the information collected by the Secretariat.

Specimens produced from synthetic or cultured DNA: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 33 on specimens produced from synthetic and cultured DNA, noting that an intersessional working group, chaired by Mexico, had been established to review the findings and recommendations from the Secretariat's report contained in Decision 17.89 as well as recommendations of AC29 and PC23. Mexico reported on further recommendations proposed by the intersessional working group, including how the term “derivatives” in Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) could be widened to consider trade in biotechnology products and to discuss requirements on permits, source codes, and marking and labeling requirements for these

products. China, supported by the US, noted that a clarification of “readily recognizable” synthetic specimens produced through biotechnology is needed. The US added that it is not beneficial to discuss new source codes for synthetic specimens, but rather to first focus on whether and how to regulate products of biotechnology.

The SC Chair established a working group, chaired by Mexico, to further review this issue.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC70 Com. 5. Mexico suggested adding in the draft decision a request to clarify “readily recognizable.”

Outcome: The SC agreed (SC70 Com. 5) that specimens produced through biotechnology, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP16), should be “readily recognizable” and requested that it be defined how they be recognizable.

Introduction from the sea: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 34 on introduction from the sea. Portugal, with Israel supporting, noted consensus on document and timeframe.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and agreed to forward the draft decisions contained therein to CoP18.

Trade Control and Traceability

Purpose codes on CITES permits and certificates: Canada presented SC70 Doc. 35. The SC Chair suggested that a working group continue discussion on a clear definition of purpose codes and come to a consensus on additions and deletions of codes.

The US emphasized that this process should not be rushed and that a draft decision should be written for CoP18. The SC Chair directed the working group, chaired by Canada, to propose amendments to the current decision or draft a new one for CoP18.

On Friday, the SC considered SC70 Com. 4.

Outcome: The SC agreed (SC70 Com. 4) to forward to CoP18 draft decisions asking the SC to re-establish an intersessional joint working group to review the use of purpose of transaction codes by parties.

Simplified procedure for permits and certificates: On Thursday, Australia, as Chair of the SC Working Group on simplified procedure for permits and certificates, highlighted recommendations in SC70 Doc. 36 on: the movement of CITES samples for forensic or enforcement purposes; the introduction from the sea of CITES biological samples; and the urgent international movement of CITES biological samples for diagnostic and other disease-related purposes. Australia also requested the SC to transmit several recommendations in the form of draft decisions on the issue to CoP18.

Outcome: The SC:

- agreed with proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP17) on non-commercial loan, donation, exchange of museum and herbarium specimens, and Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on permits and certificates; and
- in consultation with the Secretariat and the Chair of the intersessional working group, agreed to take comments into account, including on the title of Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP17), to reflect forensic research as well as clarifications in specifications to scientific institutes, and to provide revised versions for transmission to CoP18.

Physical endorsement of permits and certificates: On Thursday, the SC introduced SC70 Doc.37.

Outcome: The SC noted the document.

Definition of the term “appropriate and acceptable decisions”: On Thursday, the three co-chairs of the intersessional working group on the implementation of Decisions 17.178-17.180 on the definition of the term “appropriate and acceptable decisions” introduced SC70 Doc. 38.1-38.3, noting a set of

recommendations provided by AC30 on non-binding guidelines for determining whether recipients of living specimens of CITES Appendix I and II species are suitably equipped to house and care for them.

Senegal, supported by Gabon, Nigeria, Uganda, and the Born Free Foundation, on behalf of several observers, raised concern with trade in live elephants as mentioned in SC70 Doc.38.3 since the recommendations do not state that the only “appropriate and acceptable” destinations for live wild elephants are *in situ* conservation programmes. The US, supported by South Africa and Zimbabwe, opposed reference to the necessity of *in situ* conservation programmes in Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP17), as this was considered “pre-decisional” and did not involve prior analysis to support this conclusion.

Outcome: The SC:

- agreed with recommendations from AC30 in fulfillment of Decisions 17.179 and 17.180 and agreed that these be transmitted for CoP18;
- took note of the issues raised in SC70 Doc. 38.3; and
- requested the Secretariat to consult with parties whose elephants are listed in Appendix II and have exported live elephants to non-elephant range states and seek information on how importing states made their determination to be suitably equipped to house and care for them.

Electronic systems and information technologies: On Thursday, Switzerland introduced SC70 Doc. 39 and invited parties to consider the proposed decisions.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and supported an intersessional discussion on this issue.

Traceability: On Thursday, Switzerland introduced SC70 Doc. 40 (Rev.1).

Outcome: The SC requested the Secretariat to, *inter alia*: continue to provide information on traceability projects and latest developments on the CITES web page on traceability; and continue to support parties in the implementation of traceability systems.

Stocks and stockpiles of specimens of CITES-listed species: On Friday, Israel introduced SC70 Doc. 41, including the draft decision directing the SC to continue its review of the existing provisions agreed by the parties concerning controls on stocks and stockpiles of specimens of CITES-listed species.

Outcome: The SC agreed to take the draft decision forward to CoP18.

Identification of specimens in trade: Identification Manual and identification of tiger skins: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 42.1, highlighting that funding was not available to implement Decision 17.164 on developing a central repository of photographs of wild tigers and seized tiger skins.

Outcome: The SC agreed to note the document and the Secretariat’s proposed approach to develop a decision for furthering review of Resolution Conf.11.19 (Rev.CoP16) on the Identification Manual.

Identification of CITES-listed tree species: On Thursday, PC Chair Sinclair introduced SC Doc. 42.2. Canada urged the Secretariat to continue to focus on this identification list as well as enforcement of illegal trade in timber species.

Outcome: The SC noted the report.

Species-Specific Matters

Illegal trade in cheetahs: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 43 on the illegal trade in cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and noted that the CITES cheetah trade resource kit has not been completed due to funding constraints. Kuwait commended the efforts made by the Secretariat and the parties that submitted information. Ethiopia noted the large threat

posed by trade to cheetahs and the small population left in the country. The US cautioned against the language suggesting a “low level of trade” as this was based on a very limited study. She suggested coordination with the working group on confiscated specimens as related to work on confiscation of traded live cheetahs.

Kenya suggested extending the mandate of the working group, noting that the information available is based on very limited responses from parties and the Secretariat and thus does not provide a full picture of the illegal trade.

ZSL, on behalf of multiple NGOs, opposed language in the recommendations suggesting that the illegal trade in cheetah is not significant. She noted that the new information from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Yemen will offer a more complete picture, including on trade in bones and the role of social media.

Outcome: The SC agreed to:

- extend the mandate of the intersessional working group on cheetahs until SC71;
- encourage parties to communicate the establishment of the cheetah closed user group to their relevant national authorities;
- encourage parties affected by illegal online trade of cheetahs to, as appropriate, review their implementation of paragraphs 11 and 12 under “Regarding e-commerce of specimens of CITES-listed species”, in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) on compliance and enforcement, and to pursue the full implementation of these provisions; and
- encourage parties affected by illegal trade in live cheetahs to, in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 17.8 on disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species, pursue the development of a plan of action that can be executed without delay in the event that live specimens are seized.

Sturgeons and paddlefish: Definition of country of origin of caviar: On Thursday, Japan introduced SC70 Doc. 44.1 on sturgeons and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.), suggesting to renew the existing draft decisions. The EU and US offered some amendments.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and invited the Secretariat to forward the draft decisions to CoP18, taking into account the views of the US and the EU.

Identification of sturgeons and paddlefish specimens in trade: On Thursday, Switzerland introduced SC70 Doc. 44.2.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and invited the Secretariat to submit renewed or, as necessary, revised decisions concerning identification of products of sturgeon and paddlefish specimens in trade for consideration at CoP18.

European eels: On Monday, the Secretariat presented SC70 Doc. 45 on European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*), highlighting full implementation of the recommendations.

Spain highlighted the collaborative progress and joint enforcement efforts by multiple parties. She asked for the SC to provide advice on risks and benefits of returning eels to the wild and to use this advice as non-binding guidance for the parties. The US noted that there is a significant illegal trade in European eel and suggested adding language to the decision that includes trade in both live and processed eel.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) noted that there is a strong indication of involvement of organized crime in the trade of both live and processed eel. He noted that stock recovery efforts are being examined as well as a potential Appendix-II listing.

The SC convened a working group, chaired by Spain, to formulate recommendations.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC70 Com. 1.

Outcome: The SC, in SC70 Com. 1:

- encouraged range states along with aquaculture, transit and consumer parties to build on the successes of existing enforcement efforts through cross-border as well as cross-agency collaboration and sharing of intelligence;
- encouraged all range states’ management, scientific, and enforcement authorities to participate in ongoing and future *A. anguilla* initiatives and/or anti-smuggling operations;
- called on law enforcement agencies in range states along with aquaculture, transit, and consumer parties to strengthen regional initiatives to plan targeted operations focusing on anguillid eels; and
- encouraged parties to monitor aquaculture facilities and points of sales to ensure illegally traded European eels are not being misrepresented as legal.

The SC also proposed a draft decision for adoption at CoP18 directing the SC to consider information relating to illegal trade in European eel at SC73 and SC74.

Review of precious corals in international trade: On Friday, Switzerland introduced SC70 Doc. 46 on precious corals (Order Antipatharia/Family Coralliidae) in international trade, noting that the work could not be completed.

Outcome: The SC agreed with the recommendations and proposed an extension of Decisions 17.192 and 17.193 to CoP18, noting that this would request the SC to consider the information and recommendations of the AC and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for communication to the parties or for consideration at CoP18.

Humphead wrasse: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the report on the humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulates*) (SC70 Doc. 47).

Outcome: The SC proposed the adoption of a draft decision directing the CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, to invite the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and IUCN Groupers and Wrasses Specialist Group to assist it in supporting major exporting and importing countries of the wrasse, upon request, to address remaining CITES implementation challenges and ensure well-regulated, sustainable management of, and trade in the species.

Sharks and rays: On Thursday, Indonesia presented SC70 Doc. 48.1. The Secretariat followed with its related report, SC70 Doc. 48.2.

Peru, supported by Chile and Argentina, emphasized that the Secretariat needs to work with regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to gather more information on shark catches. Japan added that RFMOs do not have the mandate to provide NDFs to CITES.

Senegal shared concerns about the task of monitoring sharks and rays and urged that sub-regional groups cooperate on these tasks. The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) highlighted the recently listed species under its convention. FAO commented on its work on enforcement and a shark identification tool. The Global Guardian Trust welcomed the report but noted that RFMOs and FAO should be the primary organizations for shark fisheries management. She stated that NDFs are additional burdens for RFMOs.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and directed the Secretariat and the AC to draft new decisions.

Elephants: Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 49.1, noting that a drop in the number of ivory seizures was reported in 2017, but that the level of poaching remains of concern, especially in Central Africa. She also proposed an amendment of the report, suggesting that the SC may wish to formally review practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, as referenced in Decision 17.171.

India, Singapore, Malaysia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique reported on national efforts and international collaborations to control trade in elephant specimens. Tanzania additionally called on strengthening the methodology for collecting MIKE data and the need to georeference all incidents of elephant poaching. The EU, supported by Sri Lanka and the US, suggested an amendment to expand the decision to also apply to trade in live elephants as well as their “parts and derivatives.”

The US encouraged range states to adopt double marking and registration to trace trade in live elephants. Kenya suggested encouraging parties to provide large-scale seizure samples of 500 kg for forensic analysis and that analysis of MIKE and ETIS reports be divided into segments ranging from 2008-2013 and 2013-2017, so that countries can assess the impact of NIAPs with the aim of filling in data gaps. Thailand requested the Secretariat issue a notification on the implementation of Decision 17.217, seeking any information gaps in the needs of range states to be included in the recommendations.

On Friday, the SC considered SC70 Com. 18.

Outcome: The SC, in SC70 Com. 18, noted the report and agreed:

- to request the CITES Secretariat, together with TRAFFIC, to prepare an annex containing the comments received from parties on the ETIS report and circulate it as part of the document to be considered by the parties at CoP18; and
- to request TRAFFIC to compile aggregated summaries of the validated ETIS data on an annual basis for presentation on the CITES website.

Decisions 17.171 to 17.172 on stocks and stockpiles

(elephant ivory): On Wednesday, Ethiopia, introduced SC70 Doc. 49.2.

China agreed that stockpile management is important to controlling the trade in ivory. The US, supported by Israel, Kenya, and the EU, shared Ethiopia’s concern on progress. Uganda mentioned that more emphasis should be placed on elephant range state stockpiles.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and:

- noted that the Secretariat intends to finalize the development and dissemination of practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles in time to report to SC71; and
- agreed to propose to CoP18 the replacement of Decision 17.172 with a draft decision directing the SC to review the practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, prepared by the Secretariat and make recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration at CoP19.

Terms of reference for a review of the ETIS programme:

On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 49.3 on review of the ETIS programme.

China stated concern with shortcomings in the review, especially in light of the ETIS report playing a role in the NIAP process. He said it is therefore important that the review be independent and transparent. Israel expressed concerns that some parties fail to report to ETIS because the information could be used to affect their entrance to or exit from the NIAP process.

Kenya echoed some concerns of China for lack of consultation with the parties on data. The US expressed hope that ETIS will be further strengthened and noted that the independent review is the most important aspect of the process.

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Com. 15.

Outcome: The SC, in SC70 Com. 15:

- adopted the terms of reference for a review of the ETIS programme; and
- requested the Secretariat to appoint a group of independent experts to carry out the review of the ETIS programme under the oversight of the MIKE and ETIS subgroup and a

nominated member of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group; and issue a notification to parties requesting them to submit written observations on the ETIS methodology to be considered in the review process to the Secretariat by 28 February 2019.

Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and other marine turtles (Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae): On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 50, noting that the proposed study on the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles was not completed and is only available in draft form.

The US recommended that the working group review the report when completed in November 2018, before formulating recommendations, and requested an extension of relevant SC69 decisions.

WWF objected to “rolling over” the decisions, noting the urgency to take new measures to protect marine turtles, especially hawksbill turtles.

Outcome: The SC endorsed the recommendation of the working group to propose at CoP18 to extend SC69 Decisions 17.222 and 17.223.

Asian big cats: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 51. The Russian Federation highlighted conservation efforts to protect its big cat species and the importance of transboundary cooperation. China opposed the methods used in compiling the review of facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity (Annex 2 Rev.1). The EU, supported by Peru, welcomed review of captive tiger facilities and supported the report. He added that there has been increasing evidence of illegal trade of tiger parts originating from captive facilities. He further encouraged increased cross-border law enforcement efforts between Lao PDR, Myanmar, and China, as well as enhanced review of captive breeding facilities.

India requested that the SC consider additional measures if no sufficient progress is made, and asked the Secretariat to give directions to parties to phase out tiger farms and amend relevant national laws. The US expressed hope that the SC will come up with draft decisions addressing: poaching, non-trade-related killing of Asian big cats, the role of captive facilities in supplying trade, the presence of other big cat species in illegal trade for parts, social media’s role in the illegal trade, and addressing illegal trade routes.

Brazil, supported by Peru, added that the Asian demand for tiger parts is driving a trade for parts of other big cat species, such as the jaguar (*Panthera onca*), and that demand reduction should also be addressed. Peru highlighted possible plans for a bilateral cooperation on the illegal trade in jaguar with Bolivia.

Thailand invited review of its facilities by the Secretariat. Malaysia supported conservation efforts of the tiger and the mission of the Secretariat to key countries with captive facilities.

The American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, on behalf of multiple zoo associations, welcomed addressing the issue China raised about the conservation programmes and the numbers of tigers in facilities. The Wildlife Protection Society of India, on behalf of multiple NGOs, recommended that a law enforcement expert join the missions and urged the SC to direct the Secretariat to publish a report of the missions by January 2019, providing enough time to draft decisions for CoP18.

The SC Chair convened a working group to consider the report and formulate draft decisions.

On Friday, the SC considered SC70 Com. 7. Peru asked to include reference to illegal trade in jaguar as a step towards formulating decisions for CoP18.

Outcome: The SC, in SC70 Com. 7:

- requested the Secretariat to present the updated and revised report to CoP18, and on the basis of the report and any

additional information, to prepare draft decisions for consideration by CoP18;

- encouraged all parties, in particular parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens, to draw upon the best practices and challenges contained in the review on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on the conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species to inform their decision making when they develop appropriate law-enforcement responses to address illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens, in particular taking note of the information concerning crime trends and illegal trade routes in the review; and
- requested parties to take note of the concerns regarding illegal trade in leopard parts and derivatives.

Great apes: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 52, recognizing that effective measures to protect great apes involve both great ape range states and the parties that import, or act as trade conduits for, live great apes, great ape meat, other body parts and derivatives, as well as other natural resources extracted from great ape habitats.

Outcome: The SC requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the SC Chair, the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) and IUCN, to review the current provisions in Resolution Conf.13.4 (Rev. CoP16) on conservation of and trade in great apes, and, taking account of recommendations emanating from the report in the annex to document SC70 Doc. 52 and from the SC's intersessional working group, propose as appropriate, amendments to the resolution for consideration at CoP18. The SC also agreed that Decisions 17.232 and 17.233 have been fully implemented.

Rosewood timber species: On Thursday, PC Chair Sinclair presented the report on rosewood timber species (*Leguminosae* (*Fabaceae*)) (SC70 Doc. 53). The US supported the efforts to further evaluate rosewood species in trade and requested development of an additional draft decision on implementation and enforcement issues.

Outcome: The SC directed the PC Chair to submit draft decisions for consideration at CoP18.

African lion: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced its report on the African lion (*Panthera leo*) (SC70 Doc.54.1), highlighting the implementation of Decisions 17.241 to 17.245. Niger introduced the report of the working group (SC70 Doc. 54.2), highlighting the potential negative impact of the legal trade in lion parts and demand in Asia for such parts on the conservation of lions in the wild.

Outcome: The SC:

- welcomed the announcement by the CMS Secretariat to convene a meeting of range states for the Joint CMS/CITES African Carnivores Initiative in November 2018 and address the implementation of Decision 17.243; and
- requested the AC to prepare a report for CoP18 on the implementation of Decisions 17.241 to 17.245.

Quotas for leopard hunting trophies (*Panthera pardus*): Introducing SC70 Doc. 55 on Thursday, Switzerland requested, *inter alia*, the SC to consider establishing a process to review, and, if necessary, revise quotas for Appendix-I species that have been established by the CoP in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.21 (Rev. CoP13) on interpretation and application of quotas for species included in Appendix I, such as those for leopards in Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP16), and make recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration at CoP19.

The EU highlighted that there is no quota review mechanism for Appendix-I species and supported the suggestion to establish a formal process by directing the AC to review Resolution Conf. 9.21 (Rev.CoP13) accordingly.

Outcome: The SC agreed to request the Secretariat to revise the resolution to develop a formal process to review the quotas and provide recommendations to CoP18.

Rhinoceroses: On Wednesday, the UK, Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceros, introduced SC70 Doc. 56. She stated that the working group recommends that the SC agree: that Mozambique, South Africa, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe remain on the list of Countries for Priority Action, as recommended in CoP17 Doc. 68 (Annex 5); and that China and Namibia continue to be considered for inclusion as Countries for Priority Attention.

The US supported the consideration of China and Namibia for inclusion as countries requiring priority attention and expressed concern with the paucity of countries that have reported on their stockpiles of rhinoceros horn, reminding parties to identify, mark, and register such stocks. Viet Nam, India, and Zimbabwe reported on domestic efforts to combat illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens.

SC Chair Caceres established a working group chaired by the UK.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 10.

Outcome: The SC, in SC70 Com. 10:

- requested the Secretariat to take into consideration the summary of the working group on rhinoceros as presented in document SC70 Doc.56;
- encouraged parties concerned to submit additional information, if any, on the matters outlined in the summary of the working group on rhinoceros by 30 November 2018 so that such information can be included in the Secretariat's report to the CoP, as appropriate; and
- submitted a draft decision to CoP18 for consideration calling on the Secretariat, in consultation with interested parties and the IUCN/Species Survival Commission's African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC, to explore options to reflect on challenges and best practices to assist countries in addressing rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking in the Specialist Group's report prepared for the CoP, and to prepare recommendations for consideration by the SC.

Illegal trade in the helmeted hornbill: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the document on the helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) (SC70 Doc. 57), calling on parties to continue targeted conservation efforts.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and agreed to review the implementation of decisions directed to the parties and the Secretariat on the basis of the Secretariat's reporting, and, as appropriate, report to CoP18.

Saiga antelope: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 58 on saiga antelopes (*Saiga* spp.), calling on the development of a new five-year Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for the period 2021-2025.

Outcome: The SC noted the successful collaboration between CITES and CMS on saiga antelopes and reviewed the draft decisions proposed by the CITES and CMS Secretariats.

Snakes: On Friday, Switzerland introduced SC70 Doc. 59 on snakes (*Serpentes* spp.).

Outcome: The SC agreed to implement Decision 17.280 by: considering the reports and recommendations of the AC concerning the implementation of Decision 17.276 by Benin, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, and Togo, and the suggestion from the AC to examine the relevant species - range states combinations under the RST process.

Queen conch: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 60 on queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) and added that extra funding had been secured to carry out the work.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and recommended that Decisions 17.286 and 17.289 be extended, including the request

that the SC review enforcement and traceability issues concerning international trade in queen conch.

Tortoises and freshwater turtles: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 61 on tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines* spp.). Canada reminded parties that domestic management issues are not within the scope of CITES, so the resolution should “consider developing” actions rather than offering prescriptive activities that might not be relevant to national contexts.

Outcome: The SC:

- noted the reports received from China, Thailand, and the US;
- requested other parties, in particular those affected by illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, to provide reports for consideration at SC71; and
- agreed to submit proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on the conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles at CoP18.

Totoaba: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC70 Doc. 62.1 on totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*), highlighting that the study to assess threats has not been carried out due to funding constraints.

Mexico introduced its report (SC70 Doc. 62.2), highlighting enforcement efforts concerning illegal fishing and trafficking in totoaba.

Animal Welfare Institute, on behalf of several NGOs, noted a series of actions that Mexico has failed to implement in addressing the illegal fishing and trafficking of the species. He also called for the permit for captive breeding of the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), bycatch of totoaba, to be withdrawn. The EU, echoed by Israel, expressed concern over both the captive breeding of vaquita and the risk to vaquita as bycatch from the totoaba illegal fisheries on the conservation of the species in the wild.

Outcome: The SC:

- encouraged donors to contribute funding to the study;
- asked the Secretariat to issue a notification to range, transit and consumer states to implement Decisions 17.146-149 and provide other information, as relevant;
- noted Mexico’s invitation for a high-level mission in 2019 and encouraged an oral report of the mission to CoP18; and
- requested the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the relevant decisions to CoP18, including reporting on information gathered via the notification.

Possible amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.13 (Rev. CoP15) on implementation of the Convention for timber

species: On Friday, PC Chair Sinclair introduced SC70 Doc. 63.

Outcome: The SC considered the draft amendments to Resolution Conf.10.13 (Rev. CoP15) for submission to CoP18.

Appendix-III listings: On Friday, New Zealand introduced SC70 Doc. 64. on proposed guidance for exporting and importing countries with respect to the effective implementation of Appendix III, including measures to address suspected illegal international trade in Appendix III-listed specimens.

Outcome: The SC:

- noted that parties consider that there are benefits for listing species on Appendix III, but implementation needs to be more effective and consistent;
- agreed to consider the issues of nomenclature as they relate to Appendix III;
- asked the Secretariat to prepare draft amendments to Resolution Conf.9.25 (Rev. CoP17) on inclusion of species in Appendix III in consultation with the working group for consideration at CoP18.

Maintenance of the Appendices

Guidance on the application of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) when preparing to list commercially exploited aquatic species in the Appendices: On Friday, Israel introduced SC70 Doc. 65, offering practical guidance for the consideration of parties intending to submit proposals to include commercially exploited aquatic species in the CITES Appendices.

Outcome: The SC noted the report.

Periodic review of the Appendices: On Friday, Switzerland presented SC70 Doc. 66 on periodic review of the appendices by the AC and PC.

Outcome: The SC took note of the document on implementing Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP17) and the conduct of periodic reviews.

Annotations: On Wednesday, Canada, as Chair of the SC working group on annotations, introduced SC70 Doc. 67.1, recommending, *inter alia*, exploring two approaches for amending or replacing Annotation #15. She said the document also recommends: eliminating the administrative and enforcement burden generated through regulation of finished musical instruments and cross-border movement of musical instruments containing rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp.); that the definition of the terms “transformed wood,” “musical instruments,” and “furniture” in the revision of Annotation #15 be defined using the Harmonized Item Description and Coding System; and extending the scope of Annotation #15 used for *P. elata* by extending the scope of the annotation to include plywood and transformed wood.

The EU emphasized that both approaches fulfill the objectives of excluding musical instruments and including furniture in the annotation. Peru, supported by Argentina, noted its preference for the first approach on Annotation #15, suggesting changing the weight limit for excluding finished products, including parts and derivatives, to a maximum total weight of 5 kg per shipment, expressly excluding finished musical instruments. Brazil suggested drafting a list of what a “finished musical instrument” would look like.

Upon lengthy discussion among parties, SC Chair Caceres established a working group to discuss the two approaches regarding Annotation #15, taking into account Peru’s amendments to the first approach and to explore remaining elements of Decision 16.162 and to determine whether and if to propose future action to CoP18.

On Friday, the SC introduced SC70 Com. 17. The US provided some amendments to the language on musical instruments in Annotation #15.

Outcome: The SC agreed to proposing at CoP18 a recommendation that Annotation #15 include all parts and derivatives, except leaves, flowers, pollen, fruits, and seeds; finished products to a maximum weight of wood of the listed species of 5 kg per item; and finished musical instruments, finished musical instrument parts, and finished musical instrument accessories.

Appendix-II orchids: On Wednesday, PC Chair Sinclair introduced SC70 Doc. 67.2 on Appendix-II orchids.

The US suggested amended language for the annual report trade data with regard to amending appendices.

Outcome: The SC noted the documents and agreed to submit draft decisions at CoP18 directing, *inter alia*, the PC to seek information on the trade in orchid parts and derivatives (wild and artificially propagated) in consideration of the potential conservation impact of exempting orchid products from CITES controls.

Review of Resolution Conf. 10.9 on consideration of proposals for the transfer of African elephant populations from Appendix I to Appendix II: On Friday, Germany introduced SC70 Doc. 68, noting the working group recommendation to either repeal Resolution Conf.10.9. and not work further on Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17), or develop another mechanism to review proposals to amend the listing of the African elephant.

Outcome: The SC endorsed the recommendation of the working group to repeal Resolution Conf. 10.9.

Closing Plenary

On Friday, SC Chair Caceres noted the reports of representatives from the regions (SC70 Doc.69).

In closing, parties and observers thanked SC Chair Caceres, the Secretariat, and the host country, the Russian Federation.

SC Chair Caceres thanked participants for their commitment and the Secretariat staff members, emphasizing that over the last few months, each one of them “has been doing the work of five.” She gavelled the meeting to a close at 5:44 pm.

A Brief Analysis of CITES SC70

Held at the site of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, the CITES “Olympics” at its 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC) involved a packed agenda, first-ever night sessions, continued urgency to combat illicit trade in crucial CITES-listed species, as well as the emergence of contentious concerns regarding the involvement of rural communities in CITES proceedings. In its long and illustrious tradition as one of the largest and earliest multilateral environmental agreements, CITES took on the challenge of addressing increasing pressures due to wildlife trafficking, enforcement issues, and progressively thorny debates on interpretation and implementation matters.

SC69 was the last meeting with John Scanlon as CITES Secretary-General. Many participants recognized that since being appointed in 2010, he has left an indelible mark by strengthening efforts against the illegal trade of wild animal and plant specimens, particularly by fulfilling the Convention’s desire for increased transparency, and to putting pressure on parties to meet their national commitments. But as CITES awaits the appointment of its new Secretary-General, emerging questions arise as to the future of the Convention, particularly in the face of an ever-increasing agenda. Should the CoP move back to its original time frame of meeting every two years, as stated in the Convention, or limit the scope of its agenda? Many believed if something is not done with regard to the size of the agenda, and the necessary funding required to implement the increasing agenda, CITES could collapse under its own weight. As SC Chair Carolina Caceres noted on the first day of SC70, the SC has become as large as some of the earliest CITES CoPs.

While the institutional structure of CITES has necessarily focused on trade at the species level, a delegate noted that the reference to CITES in “The Future We Want,” the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, reminds us that CITES lies at the intersection between trade and the social, economic, and environmental impacts of wildlife trade. Thus, the positioning of CITES amongst these goals highlights its critical role in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

This brief analysis considers the perpetual discussions on existing and emerging threats to wildlife posed by illegal trafficking, enforcement concerns, debates on interpretation issues, and an increasing imperative to reflect on the role of local communities.

Going for the Gold: Contention but Willingness to Collaborate

Throughout the week, on several agenda items, participants made significant efforts to reach consensus on highly contentious issues. One example of the collaborative spirit at SC70 was the discussions on the sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*). The Secretariat’s technical mission indicated that Japan was transporting wild specimens of the Appendix I sei whale taken from the marine environment into the country for commercial purposes, a clear violation of the Convention. However, Japan’s willingness to take immediate action and to halt all new certificates offered a degree of collaboration seen to be highly commendable to parties. As a result, time was given to Japan to resolve the issue before the likelihood of the SC considering possible compliance measures. The implication of this outcome is that Japan will be under increasing scrutiny to ensure that it complies with the Convention on its whaling programme for the sei whale.

Several delegates underscored other successes, including: the strengthening of cross-border law enforcement efforts, a greater commitment to CITES compliance by parties in the welcoming of technical missions and committing to phase out tiger farms, greater transparency with more accurate reporting on poaching and seizure numbers, and captive breeding facilities.

Silver and Bronze Winner: Still More Effort to Go

The National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process illustrates a good example of how time-bound country-specific tasks can be effective in managing illegal trade not only in elephants, but also in rhinoceros horn. With this in mind, some participants saw the SC decision to allow China, Kenya, the Philippines, Thailand, and Uganda to exit the NIAP process as premature, arguing that NIAPs should rather be strengthened and revised over time. Some participants noted there is a need to reflect on the theory of change underpinning the NIAP process, particularly as it might relate to the implications of Article XIII (International Measures) provisions which extend beyond the ivory trade alone to general non-compliance.

Bringing in the Spectators: the Inclusion of Local Voices in CITES Processes

One issue that proved to be particularly complex at SC70, and which resulted in a futile attempt at consensus among the parties, was the discussion on the role of rural, local, and indigenous communities in CITES decision-making processes. The divide on this position was driven largely along ideological lines, with some observers and parties believing that an inclusion of rural communities undermines CITES.

The rationale for this sentiment, according to some parties, is that CITES is fundamentally about trade in wildlife, rather than its conservation, which would be better supported by the work of other conventions. For others, the engagement of rural communities in CITES does not reflect an attempt to overwrite scientific guidelines, but rather to identify aspects of such guidelines that might affect the livelihoods and well-being of rural communities and seek to mitigate those aspects. From this perspective, some participants noted that the failure to provide recommendations on this issue will continue to put rural communities in a squeeze between the actions of illegal wildlife traders and law enforcement agencies. Still others believed that the issue of local engagement is indeed relevant for CITES, but the Convention should not impinge upon efforts of citizen representation within national legislation, and not reinvent the wheel with respect to livelihoods and CITES processes.

On a practical level, it remains to be determined how rural communities will be defined, who will be chosen to represent multiple local voices, and how the numerous CITES working groups, amendments, decisions, and resolutions could be democratized. Overall, while failing to make headway at SC70, all indications suggest that the issue of rural community engagement will emerge again at CoP18 as the parties decide whether to renew the intersessional working group's mandate to refine what parties and the Secretariat should do about this issue.

Training for CoP18 Ahead

CITES lies at the crossroads of efforts to control illicit wildlife trade, ensure the conservation of increasingly threatened species, and incorporate the social and economic implications of trade in wildlife from both consumers' and range states' perspectives, while also prioritizing immediate action to end continued trade in listed Appendix I and II species. Against this background, a critical question arises as to the limits of the CITES mandate. Does the increasing scope of discussions at the SC suggest that CITES is overburdened? What does it signify for the future direction of the Convention?

Moving ahead to CoP18 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2019, parties look forward to revisiting the issue of sei whales, Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros spp.*), progress of parties in meeting national commitments, as well as considering potential new species listings such as: Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), giraffes (*Giraffa spp.*), tarantulas (*Poecilotheria spp.*), an uplisting of Saiga antelopes (*Saiga spp.*), eels (*Anguilla spp.*), and a potential—and as one key range country noted “unwelcome”—downlisting of the markhor (*Capra falconeri*). Some participants wondered whether there should a “Big Cats” agenda item versus an “Asian Big Cats” one, considering the increasing interconnections between Asia and the rest of the world when it comes to how trade, both legal and illegal, affects big cats, including leopards, cheetahs, lions, and now also jaguars.

As the agenda becomes increasingly heavy, the Secretariat will have the challenging task of balancing expediency in actions taken on listed species with new and emerging issues on addressing perennial implementation and interpretation matters. Importantly in this context, CITES will look forward to direction from its new Secretary-General to ensure that it is well equipped to expertly slalom through these upcoming challenges.

Upcoming Meetings

2nd Arctic Biodiversity Congress: The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF, the biodiversity Working Group of the Arctic Council), and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment will host the 2nd Arctic Biodiversity Congress. This Congress will build on the success of the first Congress, held in Trondheim, Norway, in 2014, and will discuss ways to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity. **dates:** 9-12 October 2018 **location:** Rovaniemi, Finland **contact:** Arctic Council Secretariat **phone:** +47-77-75-01-40 **email:** acs@arctic-council.org **www:** <https://www.arcticbiodiversity.is/congress>

First Meeting of Range States for the Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivores Initiative: This meeting will be held in Germany. **dates:** 5-8 November 2018 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/>

2018 UN Biodiversity Conference: The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the 9th Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (CBD COP 14, Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 9, and Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 3) are expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. It will be preceded by a high-level segment on 14-15 November. **dates:** 17-29 November 2018 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2018>

AEWA MOP7: The 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP7) to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is scheduled to take place in late 2018. **dates:** 4-8 December 2018 **location:** Durban, South Africa **contact:** UNEP/AEWA Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2413 **fax:** +49-228-815-2450 **email:** aewa@unep.de **www:** <http://www.unep-aewa.org/>

Third Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks: The third meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOS3) will address amendment proposals, among other issues. **dates:** 10-14 December 2018 **location:** Principality of Monaco **contact:** Andrea Pauly, UNEP/CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2401 **fax:** +49-228-815-2449 **email:** andrea.pauly@cms.int **www:** <https://www.cms.int/sharks/en/MOS3>

CITES CoP18: The 18th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18) will be held in Sri Lanka, directly following 71st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC71) on 21 May 2019. **dates:** 22 May – 3 June 2019 **location:** Sri Lanka **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

Glossary

AC	Animals Committee
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CoP	Conference of the Parties
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ETIS	Elephant Trade Information System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MIKE	Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants
NDFs	Non-detriment findings
NIAP	National Ivory Action Plan
PC	Plants Committee
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SC	Standing Committee
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZSL	Zoological Society of London