

## CITES COP17 HIGHLIGHTS: SUNDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2016

CITES CoP17 reconvened Sunday afternoon. After resolving the stalemate on the Rules of Procedure, participants split into two Committees to continue deliberations. Committee I addressed corals and eel, among other topics, while Committee II discussed budget issues, in particular how the Secretariat might meet the demands of increasing interest and participation in CITES. Working groups met late into the evening, including a closed Asia group on National Ivory Action Plans and the Elephant Trade Information System and a trilateral meeting with Japan, China and the US on coral.

### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

**RULES OF PROCEDURE:** The Secretariat reported back on the in-session working group. He noted that the discussion was constructive on issues raised, including those related to the participation of REIOs, and reached the compromise set forth in document CoP17 Plen.2. He emphasized that the working group asks the CoP to, *inter alia*: adopt the Rules of Procedure with the amendments proposed in Annex 2 of CoP17 Doc 4.1 (Rev.1) with the changes recorded in Annex 1 to CoP17 Plen.2; and take note of the EU statement, contained in Annex 2 of the same document. In this statement, the EU noted that it attends this COP together with the 28 Member States of the Union who are all present and accredited at the meeting and will remain present during the entire CoP17.

JAPAN supported the recommendations.

The CoP adopted the Rules of Procedure with the amendments described in document CoP17 Plen.2.

### STRATEGIC MATTERS

#### COOPERATION WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS:

**Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources:** The Secretariat introduced the document on Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) (CoP17 Doc.14.3) regarding trade in toothfish, reporting that no information has been made available by CITES to CCAMLR, in part because toothfish are not currently listed under the CITES Appendices. He noted that the draft recommendations include an invitation to CITES Parties involved in harvest and/or trade in toothfish to report to CCAMLR.

The EU, echoed by NEW ZEALAND, supported the draft decisions, underscoring the voluntary nature of engagement with CCAMLR. REPUBLIC OF KOREA and CHILE also expressed support. TRAFFIC highlighted the CITES Parties' engagement with CCAMLR, suggesting CITES consider listing toothfish in Appendix II.

The CoP adopted the document.

**Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** Mexico, Chair of the SC Working Group on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), introduced the document (CoP17 Doc.14.4) and its two draft decisions and described the "promising progress" made on fostering a relationship between CITES and IPBES.

The CoP adopted the document with a minor amendment by the US.

**Cooperation with other organizations:** The Secretariat introduced the report on cooperation with other organizations (CoP17 Doc.14.5) and stressed the importance of collaboration on marine and tropical timber species with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

BRAZIL proposed referencing the UN Agenda 2030 and SDGs in the amendments to the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2020. TRAFFIC suggested CITES work with the World Health Organization (WHO) on medicinal plant species.

The CoP adopted the document with Brazil's proposed amendments.

**Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation on Biological Diversity:** MEXICO introduced the document (CoP17 Doc.14.6 (Rev.1)) and proposed forwarding the document to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)'s COP 13.

The CoP adopted the document.

**UN World Wildlife Day:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CoP17 Doc.19) and highlighted the activities organized to celebrate World Wildlife Day.

The CoP adopted the document with a minor amendment introduced by Japan.

### COMMITTEE I

**CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN ANGUILLA SPP.:** The EU presented draft decisions on *Anguilla* spp. (CoP17 Doc.51), including recommendations from the Secretariat to make available to the SC information on illegal trade in European eel.

NEW ZEALAND, MEXICO, SRI LANKA, SENEGAL, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MOROCCO, PERU and CHINA expressed support for the proposed draft decisions.

The US expressed support and proposed amendments to further recognize the role of range States in gathering information on the species, supported by JAPAN and CANADA.

The EU accepted the US amendments.

The Committee adopted the document, including amendments by the Secretariat and US.

**REVIEW OF PRECIOUS CORALS IN**

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE:** The US presented the review of precious corals in international trade (CoP17 Doc.52). Noting the demand for corals has increased dramatically in some Asian markets, he drew attention to the document's draft decision for CITES to collaborate with FAO to undertake a study on CITES and non-CITES listed black, red and pink coral species within Antipatharia and Coralliidae.

CHINA cautioned that listing aquatic species under CITES can lead to price increases and illegal trade. Noting that the decision calls for voluntary Review of Significant Trade (RST), CHINA, supported by JAPAN, raised concerns about the reporting burden on range States. JAPAN proposed deleting questionnaires relating to raw coral used in jewelry, domestic trade and government stockpiles. The EU proposed to invite not only coral range States but also RFMOs to report data on their coral resources.

A trilateral meeting with Japan, China and US was proposed to incorporate their concerns in the document, which the Committee will revisit on Monday.

**HUMPHEAD WRASSE:** The SC presented the document on humphead wrasse (*C. undulatus*) (CoP17 Doc.54). He outlined recommendations to extend Decisions 16.139, 15.87 (Rev. CoP16) and 16.140. The Secretariat also highlighted the draft decisions on collaboration with FAO in its multi-year project to support Indonesia in achieving sustainable management.

INDONESIA and CHINA supported the proposals. FAO and IUCN described efforts to address challenges in unregulated trade and enforcement, and expressed support for the proposals.

The Committee adopted the proposals.

**COMMITTEE II**

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE SECRETARIAT:** The Secretariat introduced CoP17 Doc.7.1, highlighting that the staffing resources available to the Secretariat have been declining while the effort required to fulfill its mandates and functions has been expanding.

The Committee noted the document.

**ACCESS TO FINANCE, INCLUDING GEF FUNDING:** The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP17 Doc.7.5) summarizing the various financial resources made available since CoP16 for the implementation of the Convention. Noting that the GEF Secretariat was unable to participate in CoP17, she said interventions related to GEF-7 priorities at CITES CoP17 can be transmitted to CBD CoP13. She said the Wildlife Donor Roundtable has been postponed, and introduced the draft decision in Annex 3 on access to GEF and other sources of funding.

The document was referred to the Working Group on Budget and Finance.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER MATTERS:**

UNEP introduced the document (CoP17 Doc.7.2) and noted the withdrawal of UNEP's request to the SC for a review of the memorandum of understanding between CITES and UNEP in light of UNEA Resolution 2/18 on the relationship between UNEP and MEAs.

The Committee noted the document.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR 2014-2016 AND BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017 TO 2019:**

The Secretariat introduced the Financial Reports for 2014-2016 (CoP17 Doc.7.3), highlighting the fundraising efforts of the Secretariat, the increasing volume of documents requiring translation and a revised registration fee structure for observer organizations.

AUSTRALIA reviewed the difficulties Oceania Parties face in attending CITES CoPs, including visa issues and complicated flight itineraries, and SENEGAL and TOGO noted similar difficulties faced by African Parties. The US, supported by the EU, stated they did not support the proposal in Doc.7.3 Annex

14 to introduce consolidated executive summaries in place of summary records. ISRAEL proposed that the Secretariat collaborate with the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* (ENB) to produce a summary record of meetings, noting that ENB reports "are more complete in many ways than the official records." The RUSSIAN FEDERATION expressed concern about, *inter alia*, the existing debts of Member States. CHILE urged for prompt translation of all documentation into Spanish.

CITES Secretary-General Scanlon noted that ENB also costs money and that hiring them to create an official meeting record would not necessarily reduce the budget.

The Secretariat introduced the document on Budget and Work Programme for 2017 to 2019 (CoP17 Doc.7.4) and annexes. He highlighted that the Secretariat is too small given what it is tasked with and the increasing interest and participation in CITES meetings. The Secretariat highlighted three different budget scenarios: zero real growth, zero nominal growth and incremental growth.

AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA and BOTSWANA expressed concern over the decline in financial resources for the Secretariat, and together with ITALY and GREECE supported the incremental growth scenario. JAPAN expressed openness to discussing budget options other than the zero real growth scenario. SENEGAL recognized the need for ongoing adjustments and for exploring options for funding the Convention's work. BRAZIL expressed a preference for the zero nominal growth option. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION supported the zero real growth scenario and highlighted the increase in some expenditures even under this scenario. FRANCE also supported a zero real growth scenario.

The Committee established a working group chaired by Botswana to address items set forth in CoP17 Doc. 7.3 and CoP17 Doc.7.4.

**SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT:** The EU introduced a resolution prepared with Senegal (CoP17 Doc.8) aimed at securing funds to facilitate the participation of developing countries.

The Secretariat recommended repealing Resolution Conf. 13.8 (Rev. CoP16) on the participation of observers at CoP meetings and suggested the draft resolution's final operative paragraph instruct the Secretariat not to provide sponsorship through the Sponsored Delegates Project to any representative of a Party at a meeting of the CoP who is also an observer for an NGO. The Secretariat also proposed wording on criteria for being eligible for the sponsored delegate project.

BRAZIL expressed support for the project and the Secretariat's recommendations. KUWAIT and the US expressed support. The US also welcomed an open and transparent funding process.

The Committee adopted the resolution with the Secretariat's proposed amendment and wording on criteria for eligibility.

**IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates breathed a collective sigh of relief as the stalemate between the US and the EU on the Rules of Procedure was addressed in such a way that allows the CoP to proceed with its work: assessing the impact of trade on endangered species of flora and fauna. Marine species dominated several coffee tables conversations Sunday, with some delegates grumbling about the lack of historic data in the FAO Expert Panel assessments informing marine species listings. Others were pleasantly surprised by the relatively smooth progress on discussions about eel and Humphead wrasse, particularly since some had previously argued these marine species should be dealt with through RFMOs. Meanwhile delegates from new CITES Parties found themselves inundated with gifts of plush lions, pangolins, and elephants from NGOs eager to woo their support. Whether or not such tactics worked, these newcomers to CITES were delighted to have toys to bring home to their children.