

CITES COP17 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2016

As CITES CoP17 Committees moved through agenda items, several working and drafting groups reported back to the Committees with finalized drafts of decisions and resolutions. Committee I continued consideration of proposal listings, including the rosewoods, which were all agreed to. Meanwhile Committee II looked at illegal trade in cheetah, pangolin and rhino and Asian big cats, adopting some decisions and deferring others to working groups.

COMMITTEE I

DRAFT RESOLUTION AND DECISIONS OF COP17 ON SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT: Switzerland, Chair of the in-session working group, introduced amendments contained in CoP17 Com.I.1 on snake trade and conservation management.

The Committee agreed to draft decisions and resolutions, noting amendments raised by the EU and links to traceability systems addressed in CoP17 Doc.45.

TOTOABA: Mexico, Chair of drafting group, highlighted minor amendments contained in CoP17 Com.I.2 on totoaba. EIA expressed support.

The Committee agreed to the document.

HUNTING TROPHIES: The EU summarized revised draft decisions and resolutions contained in CoP17 Com.I.3 on hunting trophies, noting a link to proposals contained in CoP17 Inf.68.

The Committee retained text and other amendments developed by the drafting group, adopting the document.

ROSEWOOD TRADE: The EU and Mexico introduced the document on international trade in rosewood timber species (CoP17 Doc.62 (Rev.1)). SENEGAL drew attention to a global assessment of rosewood species in trade (CoP17 Inf.48). BRAZIL, supported by ARGENTINA, KUWAIT and others, proposed that the PC consider the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assessment on the conservation of, and trade in, non-CITES listed rosewood timber species.

The Committee established a drafting group to enhance PC involvement in the ToR of this rosewood assessment.

PROPOSALS TO AMEND APPENDICES I AND II:

Rosewood: Thailand introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.53) to amend annotations to the listings of Siamese rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*) so as to include all parts and derivatives from these precious wood products and not just saw wood and veneer sheets.

Mexico introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.54) to include 13 timber species of genus *Dalbergia* in Appendix II with an annotation to allow certain export exemptions for small wood products. She explained the difficulty border authorities face in trying to distinguish among *Dalbergia* species.

Guatemala introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.55) to include the genus *Dalbergia* in Appendix II with the exception of species already included in Appendix I. He proposed annotations that exclude, *inter alia*, leaves, fruits, pollen and seeds of the

Dalbergia. He explained that the proposal would not affect medicinal and subsistence products or the transport of musical instruments by musicians.

The EU, the US, BRAZIL, KENYA, ARGENTINA, NICARAGUA, BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA and other Parties supported all three proposals on *Dalbergia*. EIA explained that illegal traffickers circumvent Appendix II compliance by setting up furniture processing centers at borders and by using counterfeit CITES permits. Noting that illegal trade of rosewood represents the largest share of any wildlife product traded illegally at the global level, UN Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) drew attention to the limits of CITES's species-specific approach.

The Committee agreed to all *Dalbergia* proposals.

Bubingas: Gabon introduced the proposal to include *Guibourtia tessmannii*, *G. pellegriniana* and *G. demeusei* in Appendix II (CoP17 Prop.56), which includes the same exemption product annotations agreed to for *Dalbergia*. The EU, the US, CAMEROON, EQUATORIAL GUINEA and other Parties supported the proposal. Noting that *G. demeusei* is not threatened in his country, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO opposed its listing. The Committee adopted the proposal of all three species.

African rosewood, Kosso: Senegal introduced CoP17 Prop.57 to include African rosewood, Kosso (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) in Appendix II without annotation, describing the regional consultations which led to the PC recommendation for the proposal. LIBERIA, CAMBODIA, the US and NIGER supported the proposal. CHINA added support, suggesting an annotation to encourage effective implementation.

The Committee adopted the proposal, but noted the concerns of CHINA.

Grandidier's baobab: Madagascar introduced CoP17 Prop.58 to include *Adansonia grandidieri* in Appendix II, with an annotation limiting the listing to seeds, fruits, oil and live plants, considering increased recent trade of fruits for cosmetic and nutritional purposes. The US, SENEGAL, KENYA, CHAD and ZIMBABWE supported the proposal.

The Committee adopted the proposal.

Agarwoods: The US, as Chair of Working Group on Annotations, introduced CoP17 Prop.60 to amend the annotation in the Appendix II listing of Agarwoods (*Aquillaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp.) by adding "wood chips." CHILE and SENEGAL supported the proposal, with REPUBLIC OF KOREA and the EU noting how this addresses a loophole in enforcement measures.

The Committee adopted the proposal.

Natal ginger: South Africa introduced CoP17 Prop.61 to list Natal ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) in Appendix II, highlighting the impact of increasing demand accompanied by rising prices in poor neighboring regions. ZIMBABWE, CHAD, MOZAMBIQUE, the US, KENYA, the EU and others supported the proposal.

The Committee adopted the proposal.

Holy wood: The US as Chair of the Working Group on Annotations, introduced CoP17 Prop.62 on Holy wood (*Bulnesia sarmientoi*) to amend an annotation and add that finished products

containing such extracts as ingredients, including fragrances, are not covered. URUGUAY and the EU noted that this annotation simplified enforcement.

The Committee adopted the proposal.

Peregrine falcon: Canada introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.17) to transfer the Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) from Appendix I to Appendix II. The EU, supported by ISRAEL, NORWAY, IRAN and PRO WILDLIFE, expressed concern that downlisting may exasperate illegal falcon capture in range States that have different enforcement capacities. UAE, supported by KUWAIT and QATAR, assured that its downlisting will not affect protective legislation in countries that practice falconry. The US, supported by JAPAN, MEXICO and IUCN, supported its downlisting.

In a vote, the proposal did not obtain a two-thirds majority, with 52 favor, 57 opposed and 12 abstentions.

The Committee rejected the proposal.

COMMITTEE II

SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT: The Secretariat introduced the revised draft decision (CoP17 Com.II.1), capturing the changes proposed by Parties.

The Committee agreed to the revised text.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Standing Committee: Report of The Chair: The US introduced the issue of documents issued under court orders (CoP17 Doc.10.1.1 (Rev.1)).

The Committee adopted the document.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION RELATING TO CAPTIVE-BRED AND RANCHED SPECIMENS: The SC Chair introduced CoP17 Doc.32, including draft decisions and resolutions.

NEW ZEALAND highlighted concerns, namely the origin of the breeding stock and use of source codes. CANADA supported the principle of addressing fraudulent trade but expressed concern that the proposed resolution is based on an outdated resolution on RST. The US supported the draft resolution and decisions with some amendments. The EU and others supported the draft resolution and decisions with some suggestions.

The Committee established a working group, chaired by the EU, to address this item.

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*): Kuwait introduced CoP17 Doc.49, including the Secretariat's revisions to its draft decisions. Kuwait opposed deletion of a Decision concerning the Secretariat reporting to the SC on progress made in halting illegal trade in cheetahs.

The UAE, KENYA, SOUTH AFRICA, the EU and CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND supported the amended draft decisions. The US supported the Secretariat's amendments with the exception of removing deadlines from draft decisions 17.B and 17.C. ZIMBABWE supported the amended draft decisions but noted that relevant Parties will require funding to implement a CITES cheetah trade kit.

The Committee accepted all the recommendations and draft decisions as amended by the Secretariat, Kuwait and the US.

STURGEONS AND PADDLEFISH (*ACIPENSERIFORMES* SPP.): The SC Chair introduced CoP17 Doc.50 containing proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.12.7 (Rev.CoP16) on conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish, including changes to the definition of "country of origin of caviar."

The Committee agreed that Decisions 16.136 to 16.138 remain relevant, and recommended extending their validity until CoP18. The Committee formed a drafting group to consolidate the rest of the text.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN CYCADS (*ENCEPHALARTOS* SPP): South Africa introduced CoP17 Doc.58 including draft decisions.

The Committee adopted the document with a minor amendment by the EU.

ASIAN BIG CATS: Report of the SC: The SC Chair introduced the report and draft decisions (CoP17 Doc.60.1).

NEPAL supported the draft decisions. SRI LANKA encouraged Parties to pay more attention to the conservation status of leopards. LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC supported the draft decisions and keeping Decision 14.69 on

intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale. CHINA supported most of the draft decisions as well as a review of tiger captive facilities and their connections to illegal trade, but asked to recall Decision 14.69 until the review is completed. The US and the EU supported keeping Decision 14.69.

The Committee adopted the draft decisions as amended by the Secretariat and also kept Decision 14.69.

Proposal of India: India introduced a proposal encouraging Parties to contribute to photographic identification databases for tigers (CoP17 Doc.60.2).

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and SYRIA supported India's proposal. CHINA, INDONESIA and the EU offered some changes, prompting the Committee to convene a drafting group.

The Committee in the meantime agreed to integrate the first draft decision into Resolution Conf.12.5 (Rev.CoP16).

PANGOLINS: The EU, on behalf of the SC, introduced CoP17 Doc.64, including a draft resolution on conservation of and trade in pangolins and draft decisions.

ETHIOPIA, PERU, SOUTH AFRICA, the US and SENEGAL supported the draft resolution and draft decisions with minor amendments, with the US requesting additional draft decision text on stockpiles of pangolins and derivatives of pangolins. CHINA requested preambular text on conservation challenges beyond trade threatening the pangolin, including habitat loss and climate change.

The EU, the US and CHINA held discussions to reach a compromise on the text.

The Committee accepted the document with agreed-upon amendments.

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES (*Testudines* spp.): The Secretariat introduced CoP17 Doc.73, including draft decisions (Annex 5).

The US offered a number of substantive changes, including new draft decisions focused on strengthening the enforcement and implementation of the Convention with respect to tortoises and freshwater turtles, particularly in Madagascar. MADAGASCAR requested "urgent" assistance from CITES Parties to identify smugglers. WCS and IUCN welcomed the document and the suggestions of the US and MADAGASCAR.

The Committee agreed to the draft decisions in Annex 5 and the deletion of all but one of the Decisions as recommended by the Secretariat, then postponed further discussions of CoP17 Doc.73 until the US presented its substantive changes in writing.

RHINO: The Secretariat introduced CoP17 Doc.68, including draft decisions, and amendments to Resolution Conf.9.14 (Rev. CoP15) on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses. IUCN and TRAFFIC presented on African and Asian rhinoceroses - status, conservation and trade (CoP17 Doc.68 Annex 5), highlighting that the rate of poaching of rhino in South Africa has decreased, but expressing concern as to the geographical shift in poaching.

KENYA, supported by the US and SWAZILAND, suggested language to account for transit States. The US offered amendments to several draft decisions. The EU asked to add reference to Mozambique wherever Viet Nam is mentioned in the draft decisions. CANADA supported some of the revisions but expressed concern that some of the information asked of offenders is too detailed.

The Committee established a working group, to be chaired by the EU, to address all the amendments to the draft decisions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Deliberations in Committee I heated up on Thursday as delegates climbed steadily through a mountain of proposals, adopting the first two of its draft resolutions on snake trade and totoaba to present in plenary. Transitioning with ease between issues of earth and sky, timber and birds, Chair Karen Gaynor earned praise from numerous participants for her calm and cool nature and diplomatic spirit, offering the floor not just to Parties but also NGOs on almost every issue in order to reach consensus. "You know me," the Chair said when bringing a proposal to a vote, "I try to get consensus on everything. Voting is the last resort." The mood was buoyant by the end of the afternoon—and not just because participants could look forward to two days off, or rather two days in working groups and drafting groups, as the Committees take a break on Friday and Saturday.