



THE TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA: 3-15 NOVEMBER 2002

The twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP-12) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will convene from 3-15 November 2002 in Santiago, Chile. The conference was preceded by a meeting of the CITES Standing Committee held from 1-2 November 2002.

Delegates to COP-12 will consider, *inter alia*: reports and recommendations from the Animals and Plants Committees; the 2003-2005 budget; implementation of the Convention; revision of the Convention's action plan; transport of live animals; Appendix I species subject to export quotas; trade control and marking issues; trade regimes for timber species; trade in traditional medicines; and CITES-relevant outcomes associated with the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The COP will also address trade and conservation issues relating to species such as: bears, leopards, tigers, rhinoceroses, musk deer, Tibetan antelopes, tortoises and freshwater turtles, sharks, minke whales, sturgeon, Patagonian toothfish and bigleaf mahogany. Issues related to the African elephant, both the illegal hunting of the species and the illegal trade in ivory, will also be discussed.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CITES

During the 1960s, countries became increasingly aware that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many species of plants and animals around the world. CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and furthered at the UN Conference on the Human Environment, which was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1972. The text of the Convention was agreed at a meeting of representatives of 80 countries in Washington, DC, on 3 March 1973, and on 1 July 1975, CITES entered in force. There are currently 160 Parties to the Convention.

CITES conservation goals are to: monitor and stop commercial international trade in endangered species; maintain species under international commercial exploitation in an ecological balance; and assist countries towards a sustainable use through international trade. The mechanisms by which CITES Parties regulate wildlife trade are through controls and regulations on species listed in three Appendices.

Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade. Trade of such species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II species require strictly regulated trade based on: quotas and permits to prevent their unsustainable use; and controls aimed at maintaining ecosystems and preventing species from becoming eligible for Appendix I. Appendix III species are subject to domestic regulation by a Party who requests the cooperation of other Parties to control their international trade. In order to list a species, a Party needs to submit a proposal for COP approval containing scientific and biological data on population and trade trends. The proposal must be supported by a two-thirds majority vote of Parties present at a COP. There are approximately 5,000 fauna species and 25,000 flora species protected under the three CITES Appendices. As the trade impact on a species increases or decreases, the COP decides whether or not the species should be shifted between or removed from Appendices.

CITES also regulates international trade of species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens enter or leave a country. Each Party is required to adopt national legislation to provide official designation of a Management Authority responsible for issuing these permits and certificates based on the advice of a designated Scientific Authority. These two designated national authorities also assist with CITES enforcement through cooperation with customs, police, or other appropriate agencies. Parties maintain trade records that are forwarded to the CITES Secretariat annually, the sum of which enables the Secretariat to compile statistical information on the world volume of trade in Appendix species.

COP-11: The eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP-11) convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10-20 April 2000. COP-11 considered 61 proposals to amend the CITES Appendices. The two working committees of the meeting discussed 59 other documents.

Committee I addressed, *inter alia*: the procedure for the review of criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II; quotas for species in Appendix I; conservation of and trade in rhinoceroses and elephants; trade in freshwater turtles, seahorses, bigleaf mahogany and hard coral; transport of live animals; and proposals to amend Appendices I and II. Committee II addressed, *inter alia*: the relationship between CITES and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC); national reports; law and enforcement; ranching; measures to ensure sustainable use of significantly traded plants and animals; trade in bear specimens; bushmeat; a universal labelling system for sturgeon specimen identification; and the CITES information management strategy.

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The Budget Committee considered: the financial report for 1997-1999; external funding; expenditures for 2000; Secretariat staffing; the budget for 2001-2002; and the medium-term plan for 2001-2005.

Of the 61 proposals to amend the appendices, 32 were adopted, 17 withdrawn (five of which were replaced by resolutions on further actions) and 12 rejected. In addition, four proposals on whales, four out of the six proposals on African elephants, two proposals of hawksbill turtles and three proposals on sharks were either withdrawn or rejected. South Africa's proposal to transfer its population of African elephants from Appendix I to Appendix II was adopted as amended to induce zero export quotas for raw ivory.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

SECOND JOINT MEETING OF THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS COMMITTEES: This meeting convened from 7-9 December 2000, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA, to, *inter alia*, discuss proposals by the Criteria Working Group on amendments to Resolution 9.24 on criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.

TENTH MEETING OF THE PLANTS COMMITTEE: The 10th Plants Committee met in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA, from 11-15 December 2000. The Committee addressed: follow-up of COP-11 decisions; technical proposals for COP-12, such as the definition of "artificially propagated," standard exemptions for derivatives of plant species, and definitions of technical terms used in annotations for medicinal plants; species proposals for COP-12; significant trade in plants; medicinal plants; review of appendices; and checklists and nomenclature.

SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE: The 16th Animals Committee convened from 11-15 December 2000, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA. The Committee addressed, *inter alia*: transport of live animals; trade in hard coral; traditional medicines; captive breeding and ranching; conservation of seahorses; labelling of caviar; status of sharks; trade in sturgeon, cobra and musk deer; review of animal taxa in appendices; and time-sensitive research samples.

SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE: The 17th Animals Committee met from 30 July - 3 August 2001, in Hanoi, Vietnam. Participants addressed: definition of the term "critically endangered in the wild"; the control of captive breeding, ranching and wild harvest production systems for Appendix II species; trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises; sturgeon; and review of animal taxa.

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE PLANTS COMMITTEE: The 11th Plants Committee met in Langkawi, Malaysia, from 3-7 September 2001. Participants to the meeting considered: follow-up to COP-11 decisions, such as those regarding agarwood; species and technical proposals for COP-12, such as harvesting of *Galanthus*; medicinal plants; guidelines for transport in live plants; tree species evaluation; and trade in Mexican cacti.

EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE: The 18th Animals Committee convened from 8-12 April 2002, in San José, Costa Rica, to consider, *inter alia*: implementation and review of Resolution Conf. 8.9 (Rev.) on significant trade reviews; periodic review of animal taxa; registering and monitoring of operations breeding Appendix I species for commercial purposes; trade in traditional medicines; transport of live animals; trade in hard coral; labelling of caviar; trade in the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin; control of captive breeding, ranching and wild harvest production systems; trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles in Southeast Asia; seahorses; sharks; sturgeon; and trade in alien species.

TWELFTH MEETING OF THE PLANTS COMMITTEE:

The 12th Plants Committee convened from 13-16 May 2002, in Leiden, the Netherlands to discuss, *inter alia*: follow-up of decisions taken at COP-11; technical and species proposals for COP-12; significant trade in plants; medicinal plants; review of the Appendices; checklists and nomenclature; strategic planning; and evaluation of certification schemes. Other issues included de-listing of artificially propagated orchid hybrids and potential future listings of species, such as Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum*).

STANDING COMMITTEE: The 47th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC) was held prior to COP-12 in Santiago, Chile to discuss, *inter alia*: the adoption of the Rules of Procedure, arrangements for COP-12; the Standing Committee workplan and the Strategic Action Plan for 2005; a Memorandum of Agreement between CITES and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); financial and administrative matters; and significant trade in Appendix II species.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

CITES Secretary-General Willem Wijnstekers highlighted CITES upcoming 30th anniversary and welcomed the recent ratification of two new Parties, bringing the number of CITES Parties to 160. He stressed, however, the difficulties involved in fulfilling CITES expectations with a limited budget. Wijnstekers thanked the contributions made towards the trust fund and highlighted its importance to help implementing CITES decisions, especially in developing countries. He stressed the need to make CITES simpler, cheaper and more effective.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said that wildlife conservation is a precondition for reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development. He highlighted the need to combine conservation and wise use of wildlife, eliminate illegal trade, and secure financial resources for their protection. He stressed the need to consider how CITES activities will contribute to achieving WSSD targets and the Millennium Development Goals. He also addressed: civil society participation; the interrelation between biological and cultural diversity; and the need for harmonization of reporting systems of biodiversity-related conventions, and interlinkages and synergies between multilateral environment agreements.

CITES Standing Committee Chair Kenneth Stansell pointed out that CITES has proved to be flexible, resilient and able to cope with global challenges. He said that the principles found in the CITES preamble should serve as a common bond for Parties to move forward.

Chilean Agriculture Minister Jaime Campos welcomed delegates on behalf of Chilean President Ricardo Lagos. He said that economic growth is compatible with environmental protection and that Chile's environmental policy ensures the sustainable use of natural resources for sustainable development. He stressed the need to ensure scientific input and financial resources, and urged CITES involvement with marine resources, particularly with fisheries activities. Minister Campos also highlighted the role of trade in eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns, and noted CITES' challenge in balancing trade with environmental sustainability. He officially declared COP-12 open.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary will convene at 9:00 am in Room 1 to consider strategic and administrative matters on: rules of procedure; election of the COP Chair and Vice-Chair, and Committees I and II Chairs; adoption of the agenda and work programme; admission of observers; establishment of the credentials committee; and to hear various reports. Delegates will meet in regional groups during the afternoon.