

CITES COP17 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2016

CITES CoP17 Committees quickly moved through many agenda issues. Committee I agreed to list several species under Appendix I, including all pangolin species. Committee II agreed to the first dedicated decision on fighting wildlife cybercrime as well as a resolution to combat corruption.

COMMITTEE I

PROPOSALS TO AMEND APPENDICES I AND II:

IUCN requested guidance from Parties on the application of the precautionary principle. FAO underscored it does not advise Parties on listings but rather provides them with transparent and objective best available data.

Wood bison: Canada introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.1) to delete the Wood Bison (*Bison bison athabascae*) from Appendix II. The US, the EU, QATAR, BRAZIL, NORWAY, KENYA, CHILE and CHINA voiced support.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Western Tur: Georgia introduced the proposal to list the Western Tur (*Capra caucasica*) (CoP17 Prop.2) in Appendix II, with a zero quota, noting declines and high demand for hunting trophies.

The EU, as co-proponent, added that impacts of unsustainable trade and overharvest could be detrimental to the species.

INDIA and UKRAINE supported the listing. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION expressed opposition, noting hunting is a strong incentive for conservation. CANADA and the US noted that a proposal without the zero quota would be more appropriate. SOUTH AFRICA said that only a subspecies of Western Tur meets the listing criteria.

Georgia offered an amended proposal, without the zero quota, supported by CANADA and GUYANA. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed an Appendix III listing, not accepted by the co-proponents, and finally agreed to not block consensus.

The Committee adopted the proposal without the zero quota.

Vicuña: Peru introduced the proposal for Vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*) (CoP17 Prop.3), unifying five annotations in Appendix II to achieve clarity and better control of trade. Noting recent consultations among range and importing States, Peru, supported by ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA, CHILE and others, requested a postponement to allow Parties to review updated documents.

The Committee I agreed to suspend discussions until all Parties can review the amended proposal.

Florida and Eastern puma: Canada introduced the proposal on two Puma species (*Puma concolor coryi*, *Puma concolor cougar*) (CoP17 Prop.5) as a result of a joint periodic review and AC recommendation to transfer the listing from Appendix I to II. The US, saying that these species meet biological criteria for listing but do not meet trade criteria, withdrew support for the proposal and expressed that they will abstain from voting.

The EU, with MEXICO, SWITZERLAND and others, expressed support for the proposal.

Committee I adopted the proposal with updated taxonomic references.

Zebra: South Africa introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.6) to transfer Mountain zebra (*Equus zebra zebra*) from Appendix I to Appendix II, noting the success story of its conservation and sustainable use. The Committee adopted the proposal.

Indian pangolin: India introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.9) to transfer the Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) from Appendix II to Appendix I. The US said illegal hunting to supply scales to Asian markets continues to be its main threat. NEPAL, the US, SRI LANKA and MALI expressed support.

The Committee agreed to the proposal.

Philippine pangolin: The Philippines introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.10) to transfer the Philippine pangolin (*M. culionensis*) from Appendix II to Appendix I, urging all Parties to support both Asian and African pangolin species uplisting.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Sunda pangolin and Chinese pangolin: Viet Nam introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.11) to transfer the Sunda pangolin (*M. javanica*) and the Chinese pangolin (*M. pentadactyla*) from Appendix II to Appendix I. He noted that zoo associations concur on the unfeasibility of its captive and commercial breeding.

INDONESIA expressed concern that its uplisting will increase its popularity and demand in the black market. PERU, EGYPT, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, SINGAPORE, ISRAEL, EU, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, BRAZIL, PAKISTAN, BOLIVIA and NEPAL supported the proposal.

The Committee adopted the proposal, with 114 in favor, 1 opposed and 5 abstentions.

African pangolins: Senegal and Nigeria introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.12) to transfer the Giant pangolin (*M. gigantea*); South African pangolin (*M. temminckii*); the White-bellied pangolin (*M. tricuspis*) and Long-tailed pangolin (*M. tetradactyla*) from Appendix II to Appendix I. Noting that the pangolins are the world's most trafficked mammals, SENEGAL underscored the importance of uplisting all African and Asian pangolins to avoid look-alike issues at customs. CÔTE D'IVOIRE noted that the collapse of Asian pangolin populations has triggered an increased demand from African species. GUINEA, ANGOLA, TOGO, KENYA, GABON, LIBERIA, SOUTH AFRICA, CAMEROON, the US, COLOMBIA, TANZANIA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, MALI and TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO supported the proposal.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Barbary Macaque: Morocco introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.13) to uplist the Barbary Macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*) from Appendix II to I. The EU, with TUNISIA, SENEGAL, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, CHILE, QATAR, MAURITANIA, SOMALIA, OMAN and COMOROS, with several observers, reported that the species is the most frequently CITES-listed live mammal seized in the EU.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

African Lion: Niger introduced the proposal on the African lion (*P. leo*) (CoP17 Prop.4), and with CHAD and GUINEA, requested discussions be postponed to allow Parties time to review relevant draft decisions (CoP17 Inf.68), as it was not available in French.

The Committee established a working group, co-chaired by Niger and the EU, to consider the proposal.

Ponytail palm, Elephant-foot tree: Mexico introduced CoP17 Prop.50 to include Ponytail palm and Elephant-foot tree (*Beaucarnea* spp.) in Appendix II. The US, SENEGAL, CANADA and DCSP expressed support. The EU supported the proposal, but preferred an annotation to restrict focus on species from range States. SWITZERLAND, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and CHINA expressed support on the condition of the inclusion of the EU-proposed annotation.

Committee I adopted the proposal: 69 Parties supporting; 27 Parties abstaining; and 8 Parties opposing.

Maury's Tillandsia: Mexico introduced CoP17 Prop.51 to remove Maury's *Tillandsia* (*Tillandsia mauryana*) from Appendix II based on no evidence of international trade, no look-alike issues with other CITES-listed species and existing national protection measures. Committee I adopted the proposal.

Fishhook and Hookless cacti: The US introduced the proposal (CoP17 Prop.52) to transfer New Mexico fishhook cactus (*Sclerocactus cloverae*), Siler's fishhook cactus (*S. sileri*) and Blaine's fishhook cactus (*S. spinosior blainei*) from Appendix II to Appendix I. BRAZIL, MEXICO, SENEGAL, CANADA, GUATEMALA, KENYA, SOUTH AFRICA and others supported the proposal.

Committee I agreed to the proposal, with minor amendments, on nomenclature.

COMMITTEE II

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY: Antigua and Barbuda introduced a draft resolution on livelihoods and food security (CoP17 Doc.17).

Given mixed support for the resolution, the Committee agreed to recommend to the SC to set up an intersessional process.

DEMAND REDUCTION: Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species and Development of CITES demand-reduction guidelines: The US introduced CoP17 Doc.18.1 and its draft resolution, followed by Gabon, that introduced draft decisions on demand reduction guidelines in CoP17 Doc.18.2. The Committee Chair reminded Parties to consider the draft decision on demand reduction from CoP17 Doc.25 together with CoP17 Doc.18.2.

Many Parties expressed support. SOUTH AFRICA opposed the draft resolution but did not block it.

The Committee adopted the draft resolution and decisions with minor amendments.

CITES COMPLIANCE MATTERS: The Secretariat introduced CoP17 Doc.23 and the draft decisions focused on assessing and bridging gaps in CITES compliance matters.

The EU, supported by the US, suggested deleting text directing the SC to: explore ways to further improve the handling of compliance matters; and assess the factors and criteria for deciding on compliance measures in accordance with Resolution Conf.14.3. The US, supported by NEW ZEALAND and AUSTRALIA, suggested additional text concerning founder stock of captive-bred CITES-listed species.

The Committee agreed to the draft decisions with the deletions suggested by the EU and the addition suggested by the US.

ENFORCEMENT MATTERS AND ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE: The Secretariat introduced the relevant document and draft decisions (CoP17 Doc.25), followed by South Africa, introducing the document on international trade in wildlife (CoP17 Doc.26). She proposed to withdraw it if the issues could be included in Resolution Conf.11.3 on compliance and enforcement.

The EU called for strengthening Resolution Conf.11.3 and suggested forming a drafting group to address all proposed amendments. CHINA supported the draft decisions in general but noted that the proposed amendments to the Resolution place too much emphasis on importing countries.

The Committee Chair suggested addressing draft decision 17.A with CoP17 Doc.28 on corruption; and draft decision 17.B with CoP17 Doc.18.2.

The Committee called for a drafting group to prepare a clean text including the proposals by the US and Canada.

PROHIBITING, PREVENTING AND COUNTERING CORRUPTION WHICH FACILITATES ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION:

The EU introduced CoP17 Doc.28 and the draft resolution contained in its Annex, noting the latter aims to strengthen the measures implemented by Parties to combat corruption.

The US, supported by JAMAICA and NEW ZEALAND suggested a number of textual amendments and supported the Secretariat's suggestion to delete text on the reporting of activities undertaken by Parties to counter corruption as it relates to CITES implementation, citing the reporting burdens of Parties. The EU opposed this deletion. BRAZIL suggested textual amendments. SOUTH AFRICA called for enhancing existing documents rather than creating new ones. CHINA suggested that CITES work with existing UN instruments to combat corruption rather than set up a separate mechanism.

The Committee agreed to the draft resolution with amendments as agreed upon by the EU, the US, BRAZIL and CHINA, including the addition of an operative paragraph on cooperation between CITES, the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

COMBATING WILDLIFE CYBERCRIME: Kenya introduced CoP17 Doc.29, noting that, in lieu of the original draft decisions, they accepted the Secretariat's proposed draft decision directing the Secretariat to engage with INTERPOL on efforts to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet, but disagreed with deleting Decision 15.57 on e-commerce. Kenya suggested two additional draft decisions, one requesting the Secretariat to report to Parties at SC69, SC70 and CoP18 on their engagement with INTERPOL.

SYRIA, GUINEA, ISRAEL, INDONESIA and others supported the revised draft decisions, with the EU, *inter alia*, calling for the incorporation of draft decision 17.C from CoP17 Doc.49 on wildlife cybercrime into the document, minus specific reference to cheetah.

The Committee agreed to the revised draft decisions.

WILDLIFE CRIME ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA: Senegal introduced CoP17 Doc.30 and accepted the Secretariat's revisions of certain draft decisions and the deletion of others.

GUINEA, CAMEROON, NIGER, LIBERIA, and NIGERIA supported the document as amended. IUCN emphasized the importance of engaging communities in combating wildlife crime.

The Committee agreed to the amended draft decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE CONVENTION AS IT RELATES TO THE TRADE IN SPECIES LISTED IN APPENDIX I: The US introduced the relevant document (CoP17 Doc.31) with proposed changes to existing Resolutions.

The Committee agreed.

DISPOSAL OF ILLEGALLY-TRADED AND CONFISCATED SPECIMENS OF APPENDIX-I, -II AND -III SPECIES: Switzerland introduced the document (CoP17 Doc.34), calling for combining three existing Resolutions dealing with the disposal of confiscated illegally traded specimens of CITES-listed species, and the included draft decisions.

The Committee adopted the combined resolutions with amendments as well as the draft decisions as amended.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On what was hailed by many as a historic day, Committee II agreed to the first-ever CITES Resolution on combating corruption, and Committee I agreed to list all pangolin species in Appendix I. Until three years ago, when CoP15 met in Thailand, the plight of the pangolin—a cute, prehistoric-looking scaly mammal widely acknowledged as the world's most trafficked animal—was poorly known. Dan Challender, Co-Chair of the IUCN Pangolin Specialist group, was one of the first to present analyses of the illicit pangolin trade in Asia, which informed the current proposals. These listings are cause for celebration but also despair, for they signal that, as one delegate put it, “yet another species is on the brink of extinction because of unsustainable patterns of use and trade.”