

Summary of the 77th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee: 6-10 November 2023

This year, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its signing in 1973 and has achieved significant milestones in its work towards ensuring the legal and sustainable trade of wild flora and fauna. Over the past five decades, CITES has grown substantially: the Convention now has 184 parties and regulates international trade in over 40,900 species of plants and animals, including their products and derivatives. It has successfully helped detain criminals, curtail the trafficking in listed species, regulate the legal trade, and contribute to bringing back species from the brink of extinction, such as the markhor and vicuña.

With CITES’s willingness to list commercially exploited species such as rosewood and sharks, and address the impacts of trade regulations on livelihoods, animal welfare, zoonotic diseases, gender, and youth, the agenda of the Standing Committee (SC) has literally exploded.

The 77th meeting of the CITES SC (SC77) had little time to celebrate the 50th anniversary as delegates had to cover 77 items, with over 101 related documents spanning some 2,701 pages. Completing the agenda in a timely manner became quite challenging, with the SC Chair and Secretariat having to make quick decisions about “noting” 17 documents and deferring their consideration to SC78. This means that the workload for SC78 will be even heavier, prompting the Secretariat to allocate an additional 6th day to the meeting schedule. Highlights from this meeting include recommendations on:

- 11 agenda items on Article XIII compliance cases;
- the establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network;
- seizure reporting on big cats;
- monitoring elephant poaching;
- stockpiling timber; and
- consideration of possible future interaction between CITES and the new agreement on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The CITES Standing Committee convened in Geneva, Switzerland from 6-10 November 2023. Over 717 participants registered for the meeting, representing the Committee members, alternates, parties, and observers, marking the largest Standing Committee meeting ever.

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 184 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 are expected to regulate the trade of wildlife species listed in three CITES appendices. Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade, permitting such trade only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix-II species 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 subject to domestic regulation by a party requesting the cooperation of other parties to control international trade in these species.

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

Over 40,900 species—including roughly 6,610 species of animals and 34,310 species of plants—are listed under CITES. Parties regulate international trade of CITES listed species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens of these species 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).

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.

The Standing Committee provides general policy and operational direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention, drafts resolutions for consideration by the CoP, and performs any other functions entrusted to it by the CoP.

Key Turning Points

In 2010, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) was created to further enhance the international cooperation needed to support national efforts to strengthen the enforcement response.

In 2015, the United Nations Group of Friends on Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking, co-chaired by Gabon and Germany, promoted the first UN General Assembly resolution on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. Resolution 69/314 and three follow-up resolutions recognize CITES as the primary legal framework for regulating international trade in species of wild animals and plants and combating illicit trafficking in wildlife.

In 2019, General Assembly resolution 73/343 further underscored the importance of national-level action and commitment to effectively address illegal wildlife trade, urging Member States to “take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife, on the supply, transit, and demand sides, including by strengthening their legislation and

regulations necessary for the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and appropriate punishment of such illegal trade, as well as by strengthening enforcement and criminal justice responses.”

Recent Meetings of the Conference of the Parties

CITES CoP18: CoP18 convened from 17-28 August 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates addressed 57 proposals to increase or decrease controls on international trade in wildlife and wildlife products, submitted by 90 parties. In addition, a record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade in wild fauna and flora were submitted for consideration by the Conference. CoP18 added 18 more shark species to Appendix II. In response to the increasing exotic pet trade, many species of turtle, lizard, and gecko were also granted protections. CoP18 also established the CITES Big Cat Task Force.

CITES CoP19: CoP19 convened from 14-25 November 2023 in Panama City, Panama. CoP19 adopted 46 of the 52 proposals put forward to increase or decrease controls on international trade in wildlife and wildlife products, bringing many species of sharks, lizards, turtles, fish, birds, frogs, and more than a hundred tree species under CITES control to ensure the sustainability of these species in the wild while allowing their international trade. In addition, a record 365 decisions were adopted to advance protection of threatened wildlife species while at the same time allowing international trade.

SC77 Report

On Monday, 6 November, SC77 opened as the CITES Secretariat noted that, following an injury requiring surgery, SC77 Chair Rosemarie Gnam (US) would have to miss the meeting and would be replaced by Naimah Aziz (US).

SC77 Chair Aziz called for robust civil discussions to support sustainable trade and outlined her intention to move forwards on the heavy agenda. CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero noted CITES is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its signing and has achieved significant milestones. She led a moment of silence for the passing of Dr Robert ‘Hank’ Jenkins, stressing his lifelong commitment to the Convention. Underscoring an ever-increasing workload, she called for the prioritization of critical and urgent matters.

Administrative and Financial Matters

Agenda and working programme: On Monday, SC77 adopted the meeting’s agenda ([SC77 Doc.1](#)) and working programme ([SC77 Doc.2 \(Rev.1\)](#)), with changes to the order of the agenda items proposed by the Secretariat, Madagascar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Rules of Procedure: On Monday, SC77 noted [SC77 Doc.3](#).

Credentials: On Monday, SC77 noted the provisional report on credentials.

Admission of observers: On Monday, SC77 noted [SC77 Doc.5](#).

Report of the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees: On Monday, the Secretariat, on behalf of the Chair of the Animals Committee (AC), presented the outcomes of AC32 and the Chair of the Plants Committee (PC) presented the outcomes of PC26 ([SC77 Doc.6](#)).

INDIA expressed opposition to the listing of *Boswellia* species in CITES Appendix II. He noted that *Boswellia* is a common plant occurring in India and that major species of *Boswellia* can be clearly

distinguished, calling for parties and the PC's intersessional working group to consider this in discussing possible draft decisions. SC77 noted the report.

Standard disclosure form for Members of the Animals and Plants Committee: On Monday, the Secretariat recalled the amendment proposed by Israel for the conflict of interest disclosure form to refer to involvement in the "commercial" harvesting, breeding, propagation, domestic, or international trade of specimens ([SC77 Doc.7](#)). The US expressed openness to the amendment, on the condition of making an amendment to another question in the form. SC77 did not agree to the proposed amendment.

Financial matters: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.8](#), highlighting the recommendation to approve the reports on the costed programme of work for the full year of 2022 and for the period up to 30 September 2023 for the year 2023. SC77 noted the document.

Terms of reference of the Finance and Budget Subcommittee (FSBC): On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.9](#). INDIA proposed a change in the order of paragraphs of Resolution Conf. 18.2 on establishment of committees. BRAZIL, KENYA, and SWITZERLAND asked for clarifications on the proposed reshuffling. JAPAN opposed it. This matter was further discussed in the FSBC. On Friday, the FSBC Chair introduced the recommendations ([SC77 Com.3](#)), which were accepted.

Outcome: SC77 agreed that:

- the terms of reference (ToR) of the SC Finance and Budget Subcommittee as amended by the Secretariat in the Annex be annexed to Resolution Conf.18.2 on establishment of committees;
- paragraph 2 of the text of the Resolution Conf. 18.2 be amended to include a reference to the new Annex; and
- to approve the reports on the costed programme of work for the full year of 2022 and for the period up to 30 September 2023 for the year 2023.

Administrative matters: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.10.1](#), highlighting staffing issues. SC77 noted the report.

Report of UN Environment Programme (UNEP): On Monday, UNEP introduced SC77 [Doc.10.2](#), including updates on policy guidelines and procedures. SC77 noted the report.

Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties: On Friday, the SC Chair announced the SC would note this document ([SC77 Doc.11](#)).

Emerging operational matters of the committees: On Friday, the SC Chair announced the SC would note this document ([SC77 Doc.12](#)).

Access to funding: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.13 \(Rev.1\)](#) and thanked donors for their support. MEXICO asked parties to have greater flexibility in resource allocation. SC77 noted the report.

Sponsored Delegates Project: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.14](#). The EU suggested adding wording to recommendation c) about being flexible "as far as possible" regarding the use of financial contributions. NEW ZEALAND called for the budget committee to consider more permanent sources of funding; and proposed limiting the number of supported delegates to two per party. CANADA proposed that the Secretariat incorporate elements of the decision into Decision 17.3 (Rev.CoP19) on the Sponsored Delegates Project.

Outcome: SC77:

- agrees that the general provision of support under the Sponsored Delegates Project for non-member delegates attending the meetings of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees would not be possible at this time; and
- recommends to the CoP to expand the Project to the SC only in support of the participation of two delegates from each developing country party.

Arrangements for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: On Monday, Secretary-General Higuero stressed there were no proposals to host CoP20 and that past the deadline of March 2024, arrangements would need to be made to hold the conference in Switzerland. NEW ZEALAND acknowledged pressure on the depositary government (Switzerland) and Chair Aziz invited parties to consider hosting the CoP, which will be held in the second half of 2025.

Strategic Matters

CITES Strategic Vision: On Friday, the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.16](#) showing linkages between CITES and the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The US and NEW ZEALAND, supported by BAHRAIN, proposed additional indicators to be refined and reviewed further. BRAZIL noted the need for further discussion on this document. The EU proposed to refer discussion on indicators to the AC and PC. KENYA did not support the indicator for objective 1.4 on the number and proportion of species listed in appendices that have been found to meet the criteria for each appendix.

Outcome: SC77:

- invites the Secretariat to seek comments on recommendations on the mapping exercise for coordination with the GBF; and
- agrees to the indicator for objective 1.4, and to review and revise the draft indicators in paragraph (d), taking into account comments made on the floor, and report back to SC78.

Role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade: On Friday, Chair Aziz introduced SC77 [Doc.17.1](#) and [Doc.17.2](#). Many welcomed enhanced collaboration between CITES and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

At the suggestion of the UK, supported by the EU, the SC agreed to specify in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that the exchange of information and documents should also pertain to the identification of zoonotic disease risks associated with CITES activities and CITES listed species. CHAD, with GABON, suggested it also address the prevention of pathogen spillover, which found no agreement.

With regard to the joint work programme, the US suggested, and the SC agreed to add the exchange of information between WOAH and CITES on species wildlife pathogens and their common wildlife hosts and specimen types that could be of mutual interest. The US also suggested adding that the CITES Secretariat will request that parties, in collaboration with WOAH national focal points, share information on any protocols or national requirements for veterinary certificates. BELGIUM opposed, noting veterinary certificates are beyond the scope of CITES management authorities.

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) pointed to its work on animal health. The WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS) and others suggested deleting a proposed activity on supporting the development of legal, sustainable, resilient and inclusive wildlife-based economies.

Outcome: SC77:

- invites the Secretariat to finalize the draft MoU and programme of work, taking into consideration comments made on the floor; and
- requests the SC's intersessional working group to consider the information provided by the parties, the CMS Secretariat, UNEP and others in implementing its mandate.

Cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs):

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced the document ([SC77 Doc.18](#)), noting that five SC members will represent CITES at the Bern III conference on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions and that the African Group is planning to submit a draft resolution on MEA cooperation to the sixth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). The US supported enhanced cooperation, cautioning against overstressing the Secretariat's capacities and noting that synergies are most effectively leveraged at national level. With INTEGRATING WILDLIFE, MARKETS, AND CONSERVATION (IWMC)-WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST, she also cautioned against overstepping CITES' mandate.

The SC noted the process outlined for the development of the draft CITES partnership strategy, agreed to coordinate the participation of its members at the Bern III Conference, and encouraged parties participating in the UNEA 6 high-level dialogues to represent the achievements, needs, and interests of CITES.

Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): On Friday, the SC Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.19](#).

Outcome: SC77 agrees to establish an intersessional working group to facilitate the review of the IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species.

World Wildlife Trade Report: On Friday, the SC Chair announced the SC would note this document ([SC77 Doc.20](#)).

CITES and forests: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.21](#). She noted financial resources are available for the preparation of an interdisciplinary study to assist decision-making processes on the future of any initiative relating to CITES and forests.

The US, supported by the UK and the EU, suggested waiting for the outcomes of the study before taking further action. BRAZIL stressed that work on forests should also focus on wildlife species affected by trade; and CITES should stick to its mandate without spilling over into that of the CBD or the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). CHINA suggested CITES work be species-focused. SENEGAL and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) stressed that funding for capacity building is key and a priority for implementation.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to delay until after the interdisciplinary study had been completed:

- consideration of Decision 19.34 paragraphs (a) and (b); and
- implementation of Decision 19.34, paragraphs (c) and (d).

Language strategy for the Convention: On Friday, the SC agreed to note this document ([SC77 Doc.22](#)).

Capacity Building

Capacity building: Implementation of Resolution Conf. 19.2 on Capacity building: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.23.1 \(Rev.1\)](#) and described the requests for scholarships received and noted additional funding would be sought. SC77 took note of the document.

Report by Sudan: On Monday, Chair Aziz noted that Sudan was absent. SC77 noted the document [SC77 Doc.23.2](#).

Capacity-building framework: On Monday, the Secretariat presented [SC77 Doc.23.3](#), pointing to work under the CBD on a long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development to support the national implementation of the GBF.

MOROCCO called for coordination among biodiversity-related national focal points to leverage synergies on capacity building. GEORGIA emphasized the importance of regional technical consultations. SC77 noted the document.

Compliance assistance programme: On Monday, the Secretariat said that six countries currently benefit from the programme ([SC77 Doc.24](#)). SC77 noted the document.

CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP): On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.25](#), noting that, after its completion, the CTSP underwent an external evaluation and the EU provided funding for bridging activities, with the Secretariat looking for other funding to support a continuation of the Programme. The US called for making the full external evaluation available to parties. Several regions and parties called for a regional expansion of the Programme and for it to cover the range of CITES listed tree species, with some urging the provision of funding.

Delegates diverged on whether to recommend that the CTSP is aligned and integrated as a dedicated funding mechanism of a CITES and forests programmatic approach. The EU and NEW ZEALAND expressed support for considering potential linkages, with the US, BRAZIL, and others considering this premature.

Outcome: SC77:

- recommends the Secretariat consider long-term sustainability options for the CTSP with a wider regional and tree species coverage, subject to the availability of funding; and
- notes while some members found there was a potential linkage to a prospective future CITES and forests programmatic approach, there was no consensus at this point.

CITES and People

CITES gender action plan: On Friday, the SC Chair announced the SC would note this document ([SC77 Doc.26](#)).

Establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN): On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.27 \(Rev.1\)](#). SINGAPORE delineated its efforts towards enhancing youth engagement and launching the CGYN. Many countries welcomed Singapore's initiative and supported the establishment of the Network, with several noting it contributes to GBF Target 22 (on participation in decision making) and that other MEAs have similar initiatives in place. SENEGAL suggested the Secretariat issue a notification inviting parties to set up youth groups at the country level to join the CGYN. CHINA indicated it will provide support for related activities.

IWMC-World Conservation Trust underscored such an initiative for youth engagement in CITES is "long overdue" and called for special attention to Indigenous youth.

Outcome: SC77:

- notes the document;
- supports Singapore's efforts in establishing CGYN;
- encourages parties and observers to nominate youths affiliated with their organization to attend the CITES Youth Leadership Programme in the first half of 2024 and Global Youth Summit from 2025 onwards; and

- requests the Secretariat to support the efforts of Singapore and relevant parties on the establishment of the CGYN.

Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities:

Report of the working group: On Friday, Canada, as Chair of the SC Working Group on engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), presented [SC77 Doc. 28.1](#).

NEW ZEALAND, supported by TRAFFIC and CANADA, proposed a new recommendation that the working group take into account the topics raised in the document “Engaging Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in international policy- and decision-making: Lessons for CITES from multilateral environmental and human rights processes” ([CoP19 Inf 29](#)) at future discussions. She cautioned about “discussing Indigenous Peoples issues without Indigenous Peoples,” and noted the influence of CITES on sacred and traditional beliefs, such as on stranded whales, and called for better outcomes for all Indigenous Peoples within CITES.

BURKINA FASO stressed, and CONSERVATION ALLIANCE KENYA concurred, that consultations should not be limited to the IPLCs involved in trade, noting some communities are affected by trade even if they don’t engage in trade directly. GABON highlighted the importance of the terminology used, particularly within legislation, explaining that in some countries there is no specific term for “Indigenous Peoples” and they are known as “local communities.”

Outcome: SC77 notes progress and next steps for the working group on engagement on IPLCs, with the recommendation from New Zealand.

Report of the Secretariat: On Friday, the SC Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.28.2](#). The EU suggested the SC may wish to clarify that IPLCs in the CITES context should be understood to include rural communities, and the matter should be discussed further in the working group. The UK underscored that “IPLCs” and “rural communities” should not be used interchangeably, and CANADA agreed that the choice of terminology warrants careful consideration. The US noted Indigenous Peoples might be granted certain rights by governments, and their knowledge should be respected and protected. ZIMBABWE and CHAD supported the recommendations.

Outcome: SC77:

- notes the document, including the consolidated summary of the responses from parties on their experiences and lessons learned in engaging IPLCs in the CITES processes in both 2020 and 2023; and
- considers including the task in Decision 17.57 (Rev. CoP19) concerning the examination of the terminology used in the CITES context when referring to “Indigenous Peoples,” “local communities” or “rural communities,” in the mandate of the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement.

Livelihoods: On Friday, Zambia, as Co-Chair of the SC Working Group on Livelihoods, provided a brief statement on [SC77 Doc.29](#). The UK supported the suggestion that parties should consult with IPLCs in their country where possible and consider livelihood matters when looking at non-detriment findings (NDFs).

Outcome: The SC notes the progress and next steps of the Working Group.

Demand reduction to combat illegal trade: On Friday, the SC Chair announced the SC would note this document ([SC77 Doc.30](#)).

Compliance

National laws for implementation of the Convention: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.31 \(Rev.1\)](#). During the discussions, delegates agreed to: add Tanzania to the list of countries commended for achieving Category 1 (legislation that is believed generally to meet the requirements for implementation of CITES); remove Ecuador and Mongolia from, and add Oman to, the list of countries recommended for trade suspension; remove Kyrgyzstan from the list of countries to issue a formal warning to.

Outcome: SC77:

- commends India, Maldives, Pakistan, Bermuda, and the British Virgin Islands for the efforts leading to their legislation being placed in Category 1;
- recommends to all parties to suspend trade in all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes with Comoros, Congo, Dominica, Libya, Oman, and Sierra Leone;
- requests the Secretariat to issue a formal warnings to Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya, Lebanon, and North Macedonia;
- agrees to add Uganda to the list of parties requiring priority attention;
- agrees with the Secretariat’s proposed way forward concerning the handling of exceptional circumstances impeding the proper functioning of CITES at the national level; and
- recognizes and welcomes the support provided in support of national CITES implementation and enforcement.

Annual Reports: Submission of annual reports: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.32.1](#).

Outcome: SC77 instructs the Secretariat to determine whether Comoros, Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, the Gambia, Georgia, Guinea, Maldives, Myanmar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, and Togo have failed to provide annual reports for three consecutive years, without having provided adequate justification; and, if so determined, the Secretariat will issue a notification recommending that parties not authorize any commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with those parties until they have provided the missing reports.

Revised Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports and Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade report: On Friday, the SC Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.32.2](#). The EU proposed to further discuss elements of the guidelines in an intersessional working group. On amendments to trade term codes in both guidelines, the US proposed a revision of the terms “thread” and “hair,” which was accepted.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to establish an intersessional working group to discuss elements of resolutions underpinning the guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports and the amendments to the guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade reports and the reporting template.

Revised Report format for implementation reports: On Friday, the SC Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.32.3](#), which SC77 noted.

Compliance matters: Implementation of Article XIII and Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) on CITES compliance procedures: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.1](#). INDIA and VIETNAM welcomed the conduct of in-country missions and ensured their collaboration.

The US emphasized that compliance measures should be taken deliberately and, when essential, precisely identifying which specific obligations are potentially not being met. She questioned whether the issues identified in the document meet this bar. In lieu of the proposed conduct of technical assessments and verification missions, she suggested the SC: take note of the report regarding Viet Nam, India, and Suriname; and request the Secretariat to engage with those parties to provide further information. CANADA suggested that written correspondence, as opposed to in-country missions, might be sufficient to gather further information.

The EU recalled the mandate from SC74 regarding Viet Nam related not only to trade in timber, but also in other species that have been illegally harvested or traded, and called for the recommendation to be amended accordingly.

The Secretariat highlighted it receives significant amounts of information on potential cases of non-compliance and underscored that the cases it brings to the SC's attention are fully substantiated and considered of highest priority. CANADA encouraged the Secretariat to provide more substance to support future deliberations on compliance.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to:

- on timber trade from or to Viet Nam, renew the mandate of the Secretariat to continue to maintain close communication and strengthen the cooperation with Viet Nam to understand how the CITES authorities ensure that timber and other species are imported and re-exported in full compliance with CITES;
- on trade in live animals to India, request the Secretariat to engage with India, as appropriate, to identify specific compliance issues, and to report back to the SC;
- on trade in live birds from Suriname, request the Secretariat to engage with Suriname, as appropriate, to identify specific compliance issues and to report back to the SC;
- on guidance on the scope and application of recommendations to suspend trade, request the Secretariat to prepare a draft decision for submission to CoP20 directing the SC to prepare draft guidance on the scope and application of recommendations to suspend trade and to consider developing standardized language for recommendations to suspend trade; and
- on the development and adoption of a compliance action plan template, instruct the Secretariat to develop a standard template to assist the Parties in the preparation of compliance action plans.

Article XIII in the EU and implementation of Article XIII and Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP19) in the UK: On Tuesday, the Secretariat presented both cases, which are similar as they relate to captive breeding of species listed in Appendix I for commercial purposes and compliance with provisions on the registration of breeding facilities. He underscored the urgency of the EU case ([SC77 Doc.33.8](#)), as it relates to highly endangered species of parrots, and relayed Germany's call for reflecting on the definition of commercial breeding with a view to clarify that it excludes hobby breeders. With regard to the UK ([SC77 Doc.33.1](#)), he noted the case relates to birds of prey of which the UK is a range state and that many of the UK's major breeding facilities are already registered.

The EU shared its view that the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation, which foresees a case-by-case scrutiny of every export of listed species and includes systematic assessments of legal origins, is stricter than the upfront general assessment of breeding facilities. She emphasized that compliance cases should relate to specific

transactions, not a legal system as a whole, and questioned what basis the Secretariat concluded that parent stocks were not acquired in compliance with CITES provisions.

The UK echoed the EU's sentiment on the effectiveness of its system, highlighting that the case of a captive-breeding facility breeding from birds not of legal origin mentioned in the Secretariat's report was identified as part of the country's routine enforcement practice, which uses DNA testing to assess parentage. He recalled that parties differ in their interpretation of Article VII, paragraph 4, and Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15). Supported by the EU, he highlighted that many parties consider the registration process for animal breeding facilities is "unnecessarily complex" and should be brought in line with the simpler process for plant species, pointing to ongoing intersessional work on the matter.

Several delegations underscored that CITES provisions, such as on the registration of breeding facilities, should be applied consistently by all parties, with INDONESIA noting opposition to the idea that some parties' systems be considered "better" than CITES provisions. NEW ZEALAND said potential non-compliance does not have to be about a specific case, but can also pertain to a system or process. CANADA and CHINA, opposed by BRAZIL, shared their view that compliance should only be assessed against articles of the Convention, not resolutions.

With regard to the EU, many parties underscored the importance of cooperation with range countries to support in situ conservation. BRAZIL commented on the case of an export of spix's macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) from Germany to India, underscoring Brazil's request that no permits for import, export, or re-export of the species be issued without consultation with the Brazilian Management Authority, as laid out in a notification issued by the Secretariat in 2001. GERMANY noted the objective of the export was to build a second reserve population with the long-term goal of reintroducing the species, excluding any commercial use. Underscoring decisions were made in good faith, he acknowledged the notification was overlooked. Both countries reported on fruitful bilateral discussions.

Several parties sought additional information on the case of parrots exported from Dominica to Germany in the aftermath of a hurricane, including in the "emergency" context and the status of the birds and their offspring. GERMANY underscored the imminent risk for the species as the rationale for concluding a breeding loan agreement at the request of the government of Dominica, despite Dominica being at the time subject to a trade suspension due to reporting issues. He noted CITES was informed of the import, but acknowledged that trade suspensions should not be breached without the SC's consent.

SWITZERLAND and CANADA called for attention to the case of hobby breeders, with SWITZERLAND noting they can play a key role in conservation and underscoring that the occasional selling of a parrot by hobby breeders should not be considered commercial. BRAZIL and others noted that the existence of economic benefits does not depend on the purpose from which this benefit is derived.

With regard to both the EU and the UK, the paragraphs on the determination of non-compliance were put up to a vote and adopted with a simple majority.

Outcome: The SC agrees to:

- urge the CITES Management Authorities of the EU and the UK to ensure facilities that are breeding specimens of Appendix-I listed species for commercial purposes be registered with the CITES Secretariat;

- ask parties to restrict imports for primarily commercial purposes of captive-bred specimens of Appendix-I species to those produced by operations included in the CITES Register and to reject any permit or certificate if the specimens concerned do not originate from a registered facility and if the permit or certificate does not describe the specific identifying mark applied to each specimen; and
- invite the Secretariat to prepare a document that includes elements of guidance on fulfilling the requirements on parent stocks traceability and the primarily commercial nature of captive-breeding operations for further consideration by SC78.

Expedited application of Article XIII for West African rosewood (*P. erinaceus*) for all range states: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.2.3 \(Rev.1\)](#) and noted that eight countries have voluntarily established zero export quotas and eight countries are submitted to a recommendation to suspend trade. SENEGAL, supported by BURKINA FASO and NIGERIA but opposed by CAMEROON, requested range states included in the Article XIII proceedings and with voluntary zero export quotas to inventory and secure stockpiles, prior to resuming trade, to ensure that any exports of *P. erinaceus* only occur for timber that was harvested under an approved NDF and with Legal Acquisition Findings (LAF). He also requested that range states produce a report confirming this. SIERRA LEONE, supported by the EU, asked for the lifting of their zero-export quota, citing progress in compliance, while the US recommended a further review before making a decision. NIGERIA asked for re-issuing guidance on how to manage stockpiles. The CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (CIEL) supported Senegal in their recommendations, as well as the intervention by the US, indicating it would be premature to authorize trade. She noted that authorizing trade without NDF and LAF would undermine those procedures.

The Secretariat proposed new recommendations on organizing a regional workshop on NDF, to which everyone agreed. The Secretariat noted Senegal's recommendation is in conflict with existing ones. CANADA and the EU opposed it. Recommendations in [SC77 Docs.33.2.1](#) and [2](#), on Senegal and Sierra Leone, respectively, were not taken up.

Outcome: SC77:

- encourages all potential transit and destination countries of shipments of illegal specimens of *P. erinaceus* from Nigeria to take appropriate measures to ensure that such timber is not illegally transported or traded;
- invites the importing parties to share with the Secretariat the administrative, legislative, and enforcement arrangements put in place to sanction illegal trade in specimens of *P. erinaceus*; and
- notes that no further recommendations with regard to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, and Senegal are required under the present agenda item.

SC77 also agreed:

- on the Gambia, to maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *P. erinaceus*; and that the recommendations have not been implemented;
- on Guinea-Bissau, agree to maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *P. erinaceus* from Guinea-Bissau under the expedited application of Article XIII until the conditions of paragraph 10 of Notification to the Parties No. 2022/045 are met; and that the recommendations have not been implemented; and

- on Mali, on the significant progress in implementing recommendations; and to maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in specimens of *P. erinaceus* until the country finishes providing the evidence of adequate LAFs to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the SC Chair;
- on Nigeria, maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *P. erinaceus* until the party concerned makes a scientifically based NDF for trade in the species and provides evidence of adequate LAF to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the SC Chair; and acknowledge the progress made in implementing the short-term Review of Significant Trade (RST) recommendation;
- on Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Togo, maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *P. erinaceus*;
- on Benin, provided it maintains its voluntary zero export quota, to acknowledge the progress made in implementing the RST short-term recommendation and that the remaining RST recommendations be addressed as a case study at the NDF workshop; and
- on Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, provided they maintain voluntary zero export quota, to acknowledge the progress made in implementing the RST short-term recommendation, and to retain the short- and long-term RST recommendations.

The SC also requested the Secretariat to organize a regional workshop on NDF and LAF for *P. erinaceus* range states, and agreed not to consider: additional recommendation proposed by Senegal; and the recommendations in SC77 Docs. 33.2.1 and 2.

Application of Article XIII in Bangladesh: Article XIII empowers the Secretariat to raise compliance issues and the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to make recommendations. On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.3](#), elaborating on the field missions it carried out. He drew attention to legislative gaps, and deficient controls at ports of air and sea cargo, and of mail parcels. He also highlighted a lack of capacity to fight transnational organized crime and monitor trade with neighboring countries. BANGLADESH welcomed the report and its recommendations, noting work needs to be done to achieve full compliance. He suggested the proposed commercial trade suspension for CITES-listed birds be limited to six months, with CHINA agreeing, and requested continued technical and financial support.

NEW ZEALAND, the US, and the WORLD PARROT TRUST suggested the trade suspension last until SC78, with CANADA noting the deadline could be revisited intersessionally should Bangladesh manage to comply within six months. In welcoming the report, BRAZIL underscored that implementation should be strengthened in both the country of origin and destination countries, while INDIA drew attention to the South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network and collaboration with neighboring countries. Chair Aziz invited the US and Belgium to produce an in-session document, to send to the Secretariat. The SC Chair requested the US and the EU to consolidate their proposed edits to the recommendations taking into account the comments made by Bangladesh and New Zealand.

On Friday, the US presented the consolidated document ([SC77 Com.2](#)). BANGLADESH, supported by INDONESIA and CANADA, accepted the recommendations but proposed some amendments, including deleting reference to "appropriate measures

for disposal of confiscated live specimens,” pointing to the possible confusion with other recommendations. BANGLADESH also proposed deleting reference to paragraph 4 of Article VIII of the Convention in the recommendation on handling of live animals and disposal of seized live animals. CANADA and the US proposed retaining reference to paragraphs 3 and 4.

Outcome: SC77 agrees:

- parties suspend commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed birds with Bangladesh until the party is in a position to adequately regulate and monitor trade in CITES-listed birds, on which progress could be revisited at SC78;
- Bangladesh should strengthen the regulatory framework in relation to management of and trade in birds and marine species, prohibit trade in violation of the Convention, and penalize offenses related to wildlife crime; and
- on handling of live animals and disposal of seized live specimens, Bangladesh will take measures to ensure strict implementation of Article VIII 4 of the Convention, taking into account the recommendations and all management options contained in Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19) on disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species, and Article VIII 3 of the Convention and recommendations included in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on compliance and enforcement.

Application of Article XIII in Cameroon: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.4](#), highlighting the verification mission conducted to understand how CITES authorities ensure that *Pericopsis elata* (African teak) is legally acquired and exported in full compliance with CITES. He suggested striking the sentence “Cameroon shall also adapt the relevant regulatory provisions to ensure that all CITES-listed timber species are considered as “managed” species in management plans of forest titles within the permanent domain so that a recovery rate of at least 50% can be applied to them.” CAMEROON, the US and EU supported the Secretariat’s recommendations. The EU suggested adding that Cameroon shall also adapt the relevant regulatory provisions to ensure that all CITES-listed timber species are “managed in accordance with the principle of sustainable trade.” The US proposed instead “managed sustainably as part of relevant forest management plans.”

Outcome: SC77 agrees Cameroon should:

- strengthen the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authorities by building their capacity in the area of forestry;
- on legislation and law enforcement, strengthen the regulatory framework on forest management; consider developing and implementing an enforcement strategy and related policies regarding illegal trade in tree species; assess relevant authorities’ law enforcement capacity, mandates, and needs to strengthen the control of trade in CITES-listed species; and establish a national platform for cooperation and coordination between competent enforcement authorities to strengthen the control of trade in CITES-listed species; and
- on issuance of export permits and 2nd generation Forest Information Management System (SIGIF2) information systems, finalize the development of the SIGIF2 as an effective information system to facilitate the issuance of CITES permits and certificates and the verification of legal acquisition of specimens in trade; and facilitate liaison and integration with

other permitting/certification systems relating to the harvest of and trade in CITES-listed species.

SC77 also:

- recommends to the Secretariat and the importing countries communicate and strengthen cooperation with Cameroon on requirements and expectations regarding the implementation of forest regulations; and
- requests that Cameroon report to the Secretariat on progress made in the implementation of these recommendations 90 days before SC78.

Application of Article XIII in China: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.5](#), noting it has been prepared by the Secretariat and should be read in conjunction with document [SC77 Doc. 33.10](#) on Application of Article XIII in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR). He expanded on the trade in live Asian elephants between China and Lao PDR over time and a Secretariat technical mission conducted in July 2023. He noted no imports into China have happened since 2019 and underscored issues that emerged in 2014-2015 pertaining to animals being “bred in captivity.”

CHINA presented [SC77 Inf. 25](#), outlining the country’s response and stressed that China has voluntarily suspended all imports of live elephants since 2019.

In ensuing discussions, many agreed that the import of specimens had in the past not met the “bred in captivity” requirements and pondered whether zoos were to be considered primarily commercial in nature as they charge admission fees, with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums noting the information presented fails to make a compelling case either way. Several, including the EU, called for more information on source codes, and the US on elephant lease programmes.

NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, the US, and others commended collaboration between the two countries on conservation efforts. The UK noted remedial actions should come from the concerned party rather than the Secretariat, and the voluntary import ban should only be lifted after consultation with the Secretariat. LAO PDR provided information on its national context and suggested the SC invite the Secretariat to cooperate with Lao PDR, in consultation with the AC, to present further information at SC78. BURKINA FASO and SENEGAL voiced support for the recommendations, while others, including VIET NAM and CAMBODIA, aligned with China’s Inf.25 document. IWMC drew attention to ranching issues.

Chair Aziz concluded the SC: requires more information to determine whether China conformed to its requirements on breeding practices and facilities; supports China’s voluntary trade suspension; and encourages continued collaboration with Lao PDR.

Outcome: SC77:

- determines the specimens of live Asian elephants imported by China from Lao PDR did not meet the definition of “bred in captivity” and noted with appreciation the voluntary suspension by China of trade in live Asian elephants since 2019; and
- encourages China to continue to cooperate with Lao PDR to support *in situ* conservation of Asian elephants.

Application of Article XIII in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.6](#). DRC lamented the allegations made in a press release by the US concerning the illegal trade in chimpanzees, gorillas, and okapis between DRC government officials and China in exchange for bribes. CHINA emphasized compliance measures should be

supportive and lamented false accusations. He accordingly requested deletion of the paragraph referring to the press release. The EU requested clarifications on permits issued under the Ministry of Environment. The UK urged DRC to implement recommendations, expressing concern over significant illegal trade in *Psittacus erithacus* (African grey parrot) and lack of progress in implementing Decision 17.256. On the permits issued, DRC deferred the answer to importing countries. INDONESIA and ZAMBIA praised DRC for progress made and supported the deletion of the paragraph mentioned by DRC.

The US objected to the Secretariat recommendation to delete reference to the decision wherein parties shall not authorize trade of specimens from stockpiles of *Manis* (pangolin) *spp.* held in DRC.

The SC requested the EU, UK, and US to consolidate their suggested edits to the proposed SC recommendations.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to update and replace the recommendations adopted at its 75th meeting as follows:

- on management of trade in *P. Erithacus*, the parties maintain the suspension of trade pending compliance with the recommendations to: suspend the issuance of export permits for commercial and non-commercial trade in *P. erithacus* of wild origin until DRC is in a position to make scientifically based NDF; the SC notes again the moratorium announced by DRC to suspend trade and its announcement that it will not implement its reservation on the listing of the species in Appendix I;
- on illegal trade, DRC should continue its efforts to conduct analyses of available information to map organized crime groups active in the country and convene multidisciplinary teams, with a particular focus on illegal trade in *P. erithacus*, *Manis spp.* and elephant ivory;
- on legislation and law enforcement, DRC should strengthen the regulatory framework for the implementation of CITES in the country; and
- on reporting to the Secretariat, DRC should report to the Secretariat on progress made in the implementation of these recommendations 90 days before SC78.

Application of Article XIII in Ecuador: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.7](#), highlighting that a portion of the shark fins exported by Peru originally stem from Ecuador and include species listed in Appendix II, and pointing to the findings of an in-country mission.

ECUADOR and PERU delineated cooperative and national efforts to address the matter, with ECUADOR suggesting the SC encourage the provision of support through the Compliance Assistance Programme.

NEW ZEALAND suggested recommending the release of live bycaught CITES-listed sharks. Several Latin American parties suggested to grant Ecuador a grace period before considering a trade suspension, other delegations noted they had a substantive number of suggested revisions, following which a drafting group was convened.

On Friday, NEW ZEALAND presented the revised recommendations ([SC77 Com.8](#)), which ECUADOR welcomed.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to recommend that:

- parties suspend trade in specimens of sharks and rays that were listed on CITES Appendix II before CoP19, be it whether “from” Ecuador or “with country of origin” Ecuador, with the recommendation taking effect 120 days after the closure of SC77 unless Ecuador takes measures to ensure the appropriate

implementation of Article IV with respect to NDF and LAF to the satisfaction of the Secretariat in consultation with the AC Chair;

- Ecuador and Peru strengthen their regulatory frameworks for the management and trade of aquatic species by taking the appropriate measures to enforce the provisions of the Convention as provided in Article VIII;
- the Secretariat continue to monitor trade between Ecuador and Peru and make recommendations to the SC and seek an invitation from Peru to provide in-country assistance, conduct a technical assessment and a fact-finding mission to understand how national CITES authorities are ensuring that shark and rays specimens and specimens of other aquatic species are imported and re-exported in compliance with CITES.

Application of Article XIII in Guinea: On Friday, the Secretariat presented [SC77 Doc.33.9](#) and related Addendum ([SC77 Doc. 33.9 Add.](#)) containing additional information on the application of Article XIII in Guinea obtained during a recent Secretariat mission. She underscored little progress in the implementation of the SC’s recommendations, noting the Management Authority’s focus on exporting the stockpile of *P. erinaceus*.

Outcome: The SC agrees to recommend that:

- parties continue to suspend all commercial trade of CITES-listed species with Guinea;
- Guinea adopt legislative measures that meet the CITES minimum requirements set out in Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15) on national laws for implementation; and
- the Secretariat recommend that the SC ask Guinea to submit a report to the Secretariat on the implementation of these recommendations 90 days before SC78.

Application of Article XIII in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.10](#), highlighting the Secretariat’s concerns over the low results reported by law enforcement and the continued breeding of tigers in captivity. He also noted that AC32 requested the Secretariat to investigate the legal acquisition of captive stocks of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*).

LAO PDR delineated recent progress that was not considered in the Secretariat’s document, underscoring that two recent legislative revisions should allow for an upgrade to Category 1. He called for withdrawing the recommendation on suspending trade in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes.

Several delegations welcomed progress made but considered it insufficient and supported the recommendations put forward by the Secretariat, including on the suspension of trade. KENYA, GUINEA, and LIBERIA underscored their concerns regarding the export of live elephants. THAILAND opposed recommending a trade suspension and suggested providing the country more time to fulfill the outstanding recommendations. CHINA suggested compliance should be encouraged through voluntary rather than punitive measures.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to:

- recommend the suspension of trade with Lao PDR in all listed species for commercial purposes;
- request the Secretariat to investigate the legal acquisition of founder stocks of long-tailed macaques and report thereon to AC33 and SC78; and

- encourage Lao PDR to inspect the captive facilities keeping big cats, which the Secretariat could not visit during its missions and report on its findings to the Secretariat.

Application of Article XIII in Nigeria: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.33.11](#), highlighting the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in specimens of *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, while acknowledging some progress by Nigeria. NIGERIA underscored the reintroduction of a proposed bill to strengthen legislation to combat wildlife crime. The US supported maintaining the recommendation to suspend commercial trade. CANADA agreed to the revised recommendations with the exception of the recommendations directed to transit, destination countries and importing parties, noting those recommendations should be added to those directed to all range states in [SC77 Doc.33.2.3](#).

Outcome: SC77 agrees:

- to maintain the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *P. erinaceus* from Nigeria until the party makes an NDF and LAF;
- Nigeria should: strengthen the regulatory framework in relation to forestry management, including state legislation; continue implementing a strategy to counter corruption linked to illegal wildlife trade at all levels; and scale up efforts to map out organized crime groups involved in illegal wildlife trade;
- Nigeria should establish an efficient and secure information system and facilitate liaison and integration with other permitting/certification systems; and
- Nigeria should clearly define the competences of relevant institutions to ensure that adequate control measures are put in place to secure storage facilities for seized stocks of CITES-listed species, including for pangolins and ivory.

Malagasy palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia spp.*) and ebonies (*Diospyros spp.*): Report of Madagascar: On Wednesday, Madagascar introduced [SC77 Doc.33.12](#), highlighting activities to strengthen the management of timber stockpiles and combat wildlife crime. PANAMA, ITTO, and others congratulated Madagascar. The US and EU called for mechanisms to ensure that none of the stockpiled wood is used to launder freshly cut trees. WWF, on behalf of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), proposed that Madagascar set up an operational third-party independent monitoring system to ensure compliance with all facets of domestic use or trade; secure the official stockpiles; and consider countering the threat that these stockpiles will be used to launder other logs and freshly cut trees, with legal use or trade only being allowed from wood in a given single location.

Outcome: SC77 notes the report and agrees upon request by Madagascar, that together with the Secretariat they set up the ToR for a consultative group to support Madagascar in the domestic use of stockpiles.

Totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*): On Thursday, Mexico introduced [SC77 Doc.33.13.1](#), noting the trilateral contact group between China, the US, and Mexico finalized its ToR in August 2023 and will conduct its first meeting in the first quarter of 2024. The Secretariat then presented [SC77 Doc.33.13.2](#), noting despite progress, the issue of totoaba fishing and its repercussions on vaquitas remain a matter of great concern. He suggested missions be conducted to the US and China, as transit and destination countries for international totoaba trafficking.

Many delegations welcomed the proposed missions to the US and China, which both countries welcomed. CHINA reported on national measures aimed at demand reduction. The US suggested to first conduct a third mission to Mexico or have a combined mission to Mexico and the US. MEXICO emphasized the importance of work in all countries involved in the trafficking channel, calling for missions to the US and China before conducting a follow-up mission in Mexico.

Noting a recent increase in the seizure of trafficked totoaba swim bladders, the US questioned the effective implementation of compliance measures in Mexico. She underscored the US does not support the Secretariat's conclusions about the achievement of milestones in Mexico's compliance action plan, as the reporting focuses on the zero-tolerance area and on the season with the lowest habitual level of totoaba fishing, and urged reporting across seasons. Supported by NEW ZEALAND and the UK, she suggested the SC request Mexico to continue reporting on the implementation of all actions in its compliance action plan.

The EU called for reporting on issues such as the seizure of gillnets and reduction of fishing vessels in the zero-tolerance zone.

INDIA called for the SC to "urge" rather than "request" Mexico to take the Secretariat's observations into account and report back on progress to SC78. SWITZERLAND lamented the small size of the zero-tolerance zone.

Many delegations called for a technical advisory group to support compliance implementation. Executive-Secretary Higuero expressed concerns, noting compliance cases rely on the sharing of sensitive and confidential information. The Secretariat cautioned against creating new modalities for dealing with compliance cases.

Outcome: SC77:

- requests Mexico to report on progress in the implementation of targets and associated milestones in its compliance plan to ensure continued progress during the peak fishing season; and
- recommends that the Secretariat undertake missions to the US, China, and Mexico and report back to SC78.

National ivory action plan process: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.34](#), expressing concern that only three National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) reports had been submitted on time, some were late, and others are still outstanding.

The UK and BELGIUM commended the countries with NIAPs and echoed concerns about lack of reporting. They stressed that oral reports cannot be considered sufficient, and parties should be given a 60-day deadline to catch up on their submissions or face a trade suspension. The EU proposed, for countries such as Togo and Viet Nam who submitted late, that the Secretariat analyze the submission within 90 days and, if unsatisfactory, recommend a trade suspension; for Gabon, Congo, and Lao PDR, the recommendation would be to provide a progress report within 60 days or face a suspension.

NIGERIA called for the Secretariat to ensure the NIAP process remains robust. DRC cited problems with armed groups as the reason for delays. GABON stressed their intention to submit their NIAP as soon as possible. MALAYSIA apologized for the delay and, with CAMBODIA, discussed their achievements. VIET NAM pinpointed a political transition period as the reason for their late submission. The ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY UK called on all parties to recommit to uphold the NIAP process.

Chair Aziz suggested the EU and UK pool their suggestions, consider comments from the floor, and provide revised language to the Secretariat.

On Friday, the EU introduced the revised recommendations ([SC77 Com.5](#)), including for the Secretariat to issue a notification recommending parties suspend commercial trade in all CITES-listed species with DRC. DRC noted this document contradicts [SC77 Com.6](#). MOROCCO, INDONESIA, GABON, KUWAIT, and MADAGASCAR opposed the recommendation of a trade suspension, with some countries suggesting DRC should be given an additional 60 days. DRC asked to be given until April 2024 given “exceptional circumstances.”

GABON spoke against being subjected to a trade suspension, noting it should be given a formal warning in writing. After some discussions, the US agreed with the proposal to give a 60-day grace period for Gabon to submit the NIAP report, but not to refer to “exceptional circumstances,” granting the window.

Outcome: SC77:

- requests DRC to submit a report by April 2024;
- agrees to an overall rating of “partial progress” for Nigeria;
- on Togo and Viet Nam, agrees if the progress reports are not to the satisfaction of the Secretariat, to request the Secretariat to issue a notification recommending parties suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species with the relevant party until it submits a satisfactory report to the Secretariat confirming progress has been made towards NIAP/National Ivory and Rhino Action Plan implementation;
- requests Gabon to submit its NIAP progress report to the Secretariat within 60 days of receiving a formal notification; and
- on Congo, Angola, and LAO PDR, if there is no satisfactory response, agrees to request the Secretariat to issue a notification recommending all parties suspend commercial trade in CITES-listed species.

Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species: Overview of the Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.35.1 \(Rev.1\)](#), detailing the 119 cases currently in the RST. SC77 noted the document.

Implementation of recommendations of the Animals

Committee: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.35.2 \(Rev.1\)](#), on 19 cases where actions were taken by parties to implement recommendations made by the AC and SC concerning fauna. The US sought clarifications on the long-standing case of Togo with regards to *Pandinus imperator* (emperor scorpion) and urged, supported by the UK, non-responsive parties to provide updates on outstanding recommendations. The AC Chair supported the removal of Morocco and European eel from the RST, opposed by the EU. The EU proposed to add a recommendation on ensuring the sustainability of the eel trade. The UK supported the removal of the eel matter, provided the annual quota is published.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to remove Morocco and European eel from the RST; requested Morocco to continue to communicate their quota to the Secretariat; and reminded Morocco that any change to this quota should be communicated to the Secretariat and the AC Chair along with a NDF, including a justification of how the change is conservative.

Implementation of recommendations of the Plants Committee: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.35.3](#), including progress on the implementation of PC recommendations for seven flora species/country combinations.

The US supported the recommendations and suggested more discussion is needed on the origin of parental stocks and the use of source codes, and proposed taking the matter up again at SC78. The EU suggested the following species/country combinations should remain in the RST process: *Dalbergia retusa*/Nicaragua (lack of information); *Pericopsis elata*/Congo; *Pericopsis elata*/DRC; *Prunus africana*/Cameroon (requires publication of 20% reduction in quota to be published on the Secretariat website); and *Pterocarpus santalinus*/India.

INDIA opposed, noting all requirements had been met and their national legislation was more stringent than CITES requirements. DRC and CAMEROON opposed, noting all recommendations had been met.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to all the recommendations for all the species/country combinations, with the exception of *Pterocarpus santalinus*/India, for which it agreed that India has complied with all recommendations for the species to be removed from the RST process.

Review of trade in specimens reported as produced in captivity: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.36](#). The EU agreed to certain species being removed from review, as long as trade from relevant facilities is not resumed. BRAZIL stressed that more information is needed on how many specimens of *Panthera onca* (jaguar) are held in captivity, noting the species’ symbolic importance for the region. The Secretariat agreed it would write to the countries in review and request follow up. The SC requested the SC members to submit their comments in writing.

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced revised recommendations ([SC77 Com.4](#)) with small edits from the US.

Outcome: SC77 agrees:

- to retain *Centrochelys sulcata* (African spurred tortoise) from Benin in the review and maintain its current zero export quota for captive bred specimens;
- remove *Centrochelys sulcata* from Ghana from the review, subject to the publication of a maximum size limit of 15cm straight carapace length with its export quota on the CITES website; and
- request that Ghana clarify if its 2023 export quotas of 3,000 wild and 9,000 ranched *Varanus exanthematicus* (Savannah monitor) were established based on the rapid assessment carried out by the Scientific Authority and explain the scientific justification for how it has arrived at these figures when it has stated that it has not been able to make an NDF.

Possession of specimens of species included in Appendix I: On Friday, the SC noted [SC77 Doc.37](#).

Illegal Trade and Enforcement

Review of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Compliance and enforcement: On Friday, the SC noted the document [SC77 Doc.38](#).

Enforcement: Enforcement matters: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.39.1](#).

GEORGIA noted the importance of capacity building in forensic laboratories to enhance national capacity. INDIA, MALAYSIA, and SINGAPORE expanded on their testing facilities. BELGIUM concurred that the database requires funding. Several supported the recommendations, while CANADA and JAPAN proposed deleting the one pertaining to the budgetary implications.

Outcome: The SC agrees to:

- encourage parties to implement the relevant decisions (Decision 19.78 and paragraph 6 (c) to (g) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19); and
- encourage parties to use the CITES directory of laboratories to conduct wildlife forensic testing.

International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime

(ICCWC): Report of the Secretariat: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.39.2](#). Delegates agreed to the recommendations.

Outcome: SC77:

- notes the efforts of parties to combat wildlife crime and welcomes the support provided by ICCWC; and
- encourages parties to actively engage in ICCWC initiatives.

CITES Big Cats Task Force: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.39.3](#), highlighting the request for guidance on the merits of a resolution on illegal trade in big cats, including a possible revision of Resolution 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) on conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species to be applicable to all big cat species.

BRAZIL recalled the work of the Jaguar Working Group and, supported by the ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, noted it would not be appropriate to discuss such a resolution until actions on jaguar are considered. The EU noted the value of such a resolution. NIGERIA, supported by the US, queried what the perceived benefit of such a resolution would be, expressing concern over negative impacts for individual species. MALAYSIA welcomed a resolution applicable to all big cat species. INDIA supported increasing the scope of the resolution.

Outcome: SC77 requests the Secretariat to issue a notification to the parties to invite perspectives on a possible resolution on all big cats, and to prepare an analysis of the merits and drawbacks of developing such a resolution, in consultation with the AC, for submission to SC78.

Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa:

On Thursday, Nigeria introduced [SC77 Doc.39.4](#), describing the activities of the Working Group on wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa. CHINA encouraged cooperation among the different wildlife enforcement networks. Noting the issue of the questionnaire on existing access to finance mechanisms for CITES enforcement has not been discussed, the EU recommended modifying the relevant recommendation to query whether such questionnaire is needed. LIBERIA, GUINEA, and BENIN supported the recommendations.

Outcome: SC77 requests the Working Group: to continue its discussions with regards to the need for the establishment and administration of a CITES enforcement fund or other mechanisms; and to discuss the need for a questionnaire on existing access to finance mechanisms for CITES enforcement.

Marine turtles (*Cheloniidae spp.* and *Dermochelyidae spp.*):

On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.40](#). The US supported the recommendation to establish a working group and amendments to Resolution Conf.19.5, but only if deemed necessary. NEW ZEALAND, INDONESIA, JAPAN and others also supported the establishment of the working group.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to establish an intersessional working group on marine turtles, with a mandate to conduct the review with a particular focus on compliance and enforcement aspects relevant to

marine turtles, and to propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 to further strengthen it, for consideration by SC78.

Asian Big Cats: Report of the Secretariat: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.41.1](#). Several parties reported on the status of ongoing conservation and monitoring measures. INDIA proposed a change in the recommendation encouraging parties to provide seizure data and formulating a mechanism strengthening reporting. SOUTH AFRICA noted that seizure data are included in their reports. The US welcomed the proposal to have country-specific recommendations.

WWF said that some country accounts do not align with WWF's observations and data. She said that variations in the quality of reporting point to insufficient CITES implementation from those parties that most need to comply to reduce the illegal trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species.

On Friday, INDIA withdrew the recommendation ([SC77 Com.1](#)), directing the Secretariat to formulate a mechanism along with an appropriate agency to ensure correctness of reporting of annual illegal trade data involving Asian Big Cats.

Outcome: SC77:

- encourages all parties to include seizure data related to Asian big cat species in their annual illegal trade reports; and
- requests the Secretariat to issue a notification to parties inviting all range states of *Panthera pardus* (leopard) within its Asian range to submit a report to the Secretariat on the conservation measures undertaken and poaching incidents detected; and develop, where possible, country-specific recommendations in its report to the SC on this agenda item.

Asian Big Cats in captivity: The Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.41.2](#), highlighting the missions to facilities of concern keeping big cats in captivity in Czechia, Lao PDR, South Africa, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The UK encouraged a mission to China in the near future and visits by CITES management authorities to facilities in Czechia and Lao PDR that were not visited. INDIA, supported by the US, suggested language to that effect in the recommendations. THAILAND highlighted new national regulations aimed at preventing illegal wildlife trade in big cats. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums, on behalf of several NGOs, requested clarification on "breeding for conservation purposes."

VIET NAM and THAILAND proposed deleting the recommendation prohibiting the establishment in their countries of new facilities keeping tigers in captivity with narrow exemptions where warranted. Several countries objected. The Secretariat proposed to draft a notification requesting parties to report on implementation. On visiting additional facilities of concern, the Secretariat proposed to revert to this at SC78. The US suggested adding a recommendation on developing guidance to evaluate the conservation purpose of captive breeding operations.

Outcome: SC77:

- urges all parties in whose territories there are facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity to strengthen compliance, monitoring, and enforcement of relevant legislative provisions;
- urges all parties in whose territories there are facilities that breed large numbers of tigers and facilities housing large numbers of tigers to consider taking a more methodical approach to these facilities to improve their conservation and educational value, as well as to put an end to the activities of facilities that do not have conservation or educational value;

- encourages Czechia to conduct an inspection of the facility that the Secretariat could not visit during its mission and provide a report on its findings to the Secretariat 30 days before the document deadline of SC78;
- encourages South Africa to strengthen legislative provisions relating to activities involving the keeping, breeding, international trade in and disposal of tigers;
- urges Thailand and Viet Nam to identify any specimens of tigers referable to the mainland Southeast Asian lineage (*Panthera tigris corbetti*) and encourage facilities to engage in coordinated conservation breeding for these animals and other appropriate actions;
- encourages those parties in whose territories there are facilities that may be of concern keeping Asian big cats in captivity and who had not yet extended an invitation to the Secretariat to undertake a mission to do so; and
- requests the Secretariat, in consultation with the AC, to develop guidance to parties on how to evaluate the conservation aspects of tiger captive-breeding facilities, subject to external funding.

Illegal trade in African great apes: On Thursday, LIBERIA presented [SC77 Doc.42](#), underscoring trade in and international trafficking of African great apes continue at unsustainable levels. He pointed to a draft decision aimed at re-establishing a CITES African Great Apes Task Force and to proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP18).

Welcoming Liberia's initiative, several parties called for further information on the expected mandate of the task force with a view to avoid duplication with other initiatives. The UK suggested it should focus on addressing enforcement and compliance challenges with regard to illegal trade, as is the case for the Big Cats Task Force, rather than on action plans. The EU noted Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP18) relates to the conservation and trade in great apes, not African great apes specifically.

Outcome: SC77 invites the Secretariat to issue a notification on behalf of Liberia to seek comments on the draft decision on the task force and the proposed amendments to the existing resolution; and invites Liberia to submit a revised proposal to CoP20.

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*): On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.43](#), including ToR for an intergovernmental platform, which the EU suggested should include options for a CITES-CMS jaguar initiative; and for the CITES and CMS to collaborate on the species, including by organizing a second range state meeting and by finding funding.

BRAZIL underscored their commitment to establish policies to protect critically endangered flora and fauna; and, with HONDURAS, MEXICO, and the US, backed the recommendations. PERU noted their national action plan for jaguars and the elaboration of a plan to address human-wildlife conflicts. CMS outlined the multiple threats of deforestation, habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, and illegal trade, and noted the development of a joint programme of work with CITES on jaguar conservation. PANTHERA stressed that jaguars are the emblematic species of the Americas, playing a fundamental role in ecosystems, and sustainable funding should be sought.

Outcome: SC77:

- requests the Secretariat to prepare the ToR for the creation of a modular system for monitoring illegal killing of jaguars, and illegal trade in their parts and derivatives;

- requests the Secretariat to prepare the ToR for the creation of an intergovernmental platform, including the option of a joint CITES-CMS jaguar initiative;
- recommends that the CITES and CMS Secretariats, subject to the availability of external funding, jointly organize a second meeting of jaguar range states to discuss the implementation of the joint working programme for jaguar conservation with the support of relevant partner organizations; and
- establishes, within the SC Working Group on Jaguars, a working subgroup on financial opportunities that should consider the possibility of creating a regional common fund for jaguar conservation.

Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*): On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.44](#)).

Rhinoceroses: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.45](#), highlighting emerging issues of concern in Angola and Namibia. The US and NAMIBIA supported the recommendations. The EU lamented limited reporting from parties affected by poaching and illegal trade. CHINA offered examples of cooperation with South Africa. NAMIBIA underscored measures taken to deal with poaching.

Outcome: SC77:

- requests relevant parties to take into consideration the observations of the Secretariat contained in the document;
- encourages Angola and Namibia to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes; and
- requests the Secretariat to review the reports from Malaysia and Viet Nam and provide feedback to these parties.

Regulation of Trade

Legal acquisition findings: On Friday, the Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.46](#). The US voiced support for exchanging knowledge and best practices, and concerns about having LAF on the website as they may contain sensitive information, proposing to amend the recommendation to include "as appropriate."

Outcome: SC77 agrees to the recommendations, including comments from the floor, on encouraging parties to use the "Rapid guide for making LAF" when preparing their LAF; and invites parties, where possible, to share their LAF.

Introduction from the Sea: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.47](#), noting it continues to monitor the implementation of Resolution Conf.14.6 (Rev.CoP16) highlighting capacity-building activities and materials on introduction from the sea. The EU highlighted the importance of interactions between CITES and the new BBNJ Agreement and indicated it would provide recommendations. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) noted more progress is necessary to implement the resolution.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to:

- review the revised 10 questions most frequently asked on "CITES trade from areas beyond national jurisdiction" and the responses prepared by the Secretariat; and
- request the Secretariat to make the document available on the CITES webpage as a living document and to use it as part of its capacity-building material.

Purpose-of-transaction codes: On Friday, the SC noted this agenda item.

Electronic systems and information technology: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.49](#)).

Stocks and Stockpiles: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.50](#)).

Stocks and stockpiles (elephant ivory): On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.51](#), underscoring it is not able to identify which parties should report on this issue, largely because there is no agreed definition of what constitutes a stockpile. She indicated that Burundi has not been responsive to the Secretariat's communication attempts, and pointed to the recent development of a secure and confidential database that will improve the tracking of information, including on destroyed stockpiles.

Delegates underscored the importance of annual reporting on stockpiles, with several highlighting reports on destroyed stockpiles. Rather than referring to "compliance" and "obligations" related to paragraph 7(e) of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), the US, supported by the UK, suggested to encourage parties to step up reporting efforts "as urged in" the resolution. KENYA suggested to "urge" rather than "encourage" parties to step up reporting efforts and proposed including a particular reference to parties in the NIAP Process, parties in which seizures or confiscations were reported to Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), and elephant range states.

Outcome: SC77:

- urges parties to step up their efforts in line with the provisions of paragraph 7 (e) of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on trade in elephant specimens concerning stockpiles, particularly parties in the NIAP process, parties that have reported seizures and confiscations to the ETIS, and elephant range states;
- recommends that parties submit information on destroyed stockpiles or absence thereof; and
- requests the Secretariat to continue to engage with Burundi to put in place arrangements to conduct a technical mission to the country.

Transport of live specimens: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.52](#), noting WCS offered to fund the virtual workshop on transport of live specimens. The US proposed changes to the ToR for the virtual workshop related to its content, including deliverables.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to hold the workshop and agrees to its ToR, as amended.

Rapid movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and musical instruments: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.53](#)).

Specimens produced through biotechnology: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.54](#)).

Dialogue meeting for African elephant range states (*Loxodonta africana*): On Wednesday, Botswana introduced [SC77 Doc.55 \(Rev.1\)](#), underscoring the importance of this dialogue meeting. The US underscored that African range states should drive the dialogue's agenda and CHAD expressed concern over its goals.

On Friday, KENYA introduced the revised recommendations ([SC77 Com.7](#)).

Outcome: SC77 agrees to:

- welcome Botswana's offer to host the dialogue;
- instruct the Secretariat to support the organization of a dialogue meeting in the second half of 2024, in collaboration with Botswana, the SC Chair, and the SC African regional representatives; and

- request the Secretariat to engage with the African Union Commission to explore the possibility of a ministerial segment on the last day of the dialogue meeting.

Disposal of confiscated specimens: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.56](#)).

Labelling system for trade in caviar: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.57](#))

Exemption and Special Trade Provisions

Review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source: On Wednesday, Canada introduced [SC77 Doc.58](#). She noted the intersessional Working Group on the matter is currently reviewing the provisions to incorporate the comments received and will present the outcomes at SC78. The EU drew attention to linkages with other agenda items at this meeting. The SC noted the document.

Review of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes: On Wednesday, the US introduced [SC77 Doc.59](#). JAPAN called for clear and easy procedures, with the UK suggesting overly burdensome proposals should be avoided and cautioning against a "one size fits all" approach. The EU and MEXICO disagreed with re-registering operations that are already registered, with Mexico calling for registration to be as straightforward as possible. The ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE called for a definition of "major changes." The SC noted the document and the comments from the floor.

Identifying information on species at risk of extinction affected by international trade: On Friday, the SC noted the document ([SC77 Doc.60](#)).

Phytosanitary certificates that are regarded as artificial propagation certificates: On Thursday, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA presented [SC77 Doc.61](#). Several delegations agreed to its recommendations and suggested editorial changes.

Outcome: SC77:

- invites parties no longer implementing special procedures in lieu of certificates of artificial propagation to inform the Secretariat thereof;
- requests the Secretariat to update the CITES website based on the information provided; and
- requests the SC Chair in coordination with the PC Chair to submit a draft decision to the next CoP meeting to further explore the applicable taxa and how parties apply the special procedure.

Species Conservation and Trade

West African vultures (*Accipitridae* spp.): On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.62](#) and noted that both the poisoning of the birds themselves and the lack of reporting from parties are of concern.

BENIN stressed the protection of the species is an emergency and called on West African range states to act. CMS drew attention to their Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures, and noted CMS COP 14 will address the species.

Outcome: SC77 agreed to:

- encourage parties, West African range states and relevant players to strengthen efforts in mobilizing activities; and
- encourage West African vulture range states to strengthen and expand initiatives aimed at implementing demand reduction strategies concerning belief-based use and consumption of vulture parts and derivatives.

Elephants: Report of the Secretariat on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19): On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.63.1 Rev.2](#) underscoring that illegal trade is still significant although the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) levels are generally declining. CHAD underscored the lack of objective criteria to identify which countries have legal domestic markets. TRAFFIC underscored funding needs to support the operation of ETIS beyond 2024. KENYA noted while the PIKE level has decreased, in West Africa the level of data submitted is low. The EU called for the support of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). The US expressed concern about parties opting out of sharing their data with the ICCWC. The UK and TANZANIA proposed a recommendation encouraging African Elephant range states to conduct surveys and provide funding to the African Elephant Fund for the revision of the AEAP. GABON highlighted the importance of an analysis of seizures of ivory and illegal markets. ZIMBABWE supported the revision of the AEAP. CMS noted that the AEAP has also been submitted for consideration at CMS COP 14.

On Friday, the EU introduced [SC77 Com.6](#) recommending that the SC request TRAFFIC, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to publish the automated aggregated elephant specimen seizure data summaries on the public section of the otherwise password-secured ETIS Online, while maintaining a link to this information on the CITES website. The recommendation was accepted.

Outcome: SC77:

- notes the downward PIKE trend in Africa and the lower number of seizures reported under ETIS and commends the efforts of elephant range states and other parties and partners in supporting actions to maintain this positive trend;
- encourages elephant range states to continue to use the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Online Database for MIKE data submission and parties to use ETIS Online to submit seizure information;
- requests TRAFFIC to publish the automated aggregated elephant specimen seizure data summaries on the public section of the otherwise password secured ETIS Online;
- provides guidance on the criteria to be used to identify countries with legal domestic ivory markets; and
- welcomes the revised AEAP approved by African range states.

Financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE and ETIS programmes: On Wednesday, the Secretariat presented [SC77 Doc.63.2](#).

The EU urged all donors to contribute, noting MIKE might need to be downsized to focus on its core mandate, and supported by UGANDA and ZAMBIA, noted the recommendation on exploring alternative funding options should also refer to ETIS. The US, supported by the EU and UGANDA, suggested the Secretariat report to SC78 to ensure continued oversight.

Great apes (Hominidae spp.): Report on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP18): On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.64](#).

The EU voiced concern about population declines and called for immediate action to implement adequate enforcement controls. The UK called for work on the matter to be reinvigorated, urging range states to report on killings and trade, including of parts and derivatives. INDONESIA expanded on their work on orangutans. The CMS drew attention to the CMS-CITES joint work programme and to the upcoming fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) of the

Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats (Gorilla Agreement) to be held from 11-15 December 2023 in Paris, France.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to:

- encourage parties and others to implement comprehensive enforcement controls to address illegal trade in great apes, including local and online sales of specimens and live apes;
- encourage all great ape range states to take urgent steps to develop, implement, or expand in situ great ape management and conservation programmes addressing the major drivers of great ape population declines and illegal trade; and
- urge all parties to provide information on illegal trade in a timely manner and contribute to the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) Apes Seizure database and the IUCN Species Survival Commission A.P.E.S. database.

Saiga antelopes (Saiga spp.): The Chair introduced [SC77 Doc.65](#). The EU voiced concern about the low levels of reporting from range states. KAZAKHSTAN provided a national perspective and lauded the recovery of the saiga antelope populations as a CITES conservation success. She cautioned that the large number of antelopes are now causing human-wildlife conflicts.

The US concurred that internal market-control decisions should be renewed and expanded to consumer countries, not just range states, and noted clarity on the status of existing stockpiles is critical.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION provided a national perspective, raising concern about the use of source code U (unknown origin). He provided a new recommendation to request the Secretariat to compile, in cooperation with interested parties, an information document on the potential impacts of introducing a suspension of applying the “source code U” to saiga specimens. CANADA opposed, suggesting the SC should take note and request parties to bring comments to the CoP.

CHINA noted the risks of epidemics connected to the rise in human-wildlife conflicts and, with NIGERIA, supported Kazakhstan in their statement on enhancing the management of wild populations and exploring legal trade options. CMS drew attention to the MoU on the Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to note the progress range state parties and important consumer and trading countries/regions of saiga parts and derivatives have made; and to recommend they refer to Resolution Conf. 18.7 (Rev. CoP19) on LAF when verifying the origin of specimens and only use “source code U” in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19)

Eels (Anguilla spp.): On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.66](#). The US, EU, and MOROCCO supported the establishment of an intersessional working group and to solicit views from AC on genus level resolution.

Outcome: SC77 notes the document and:

- invites the views of the AC on the possible development of a specific resolution on European eels or a resolution on the genus *Anguilla*;
- agrees to establish an intersessional working group; and
- encourages parties to actively engage in any operations and targeted activities to address illegal eel trade.

Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.): Evidence of continued non-compliant trade of Appendix-II listed shark species (Carcharhinus longimanus): On Thursday, the MALDIVES introduced [SC77 Doc.67.1](#), noting that since its inclusion on

Appendix II, the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (OWT) has been reassessed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as Critically Endangered globally.

Many parties highlighted the difficulties facing the OWT and agreed to prioritize it in the analysis on the mismatch between catch and trade data. The UK noted OWT should be prioritized to pave the way for other Appendix-II listed sharks. NEW ZEALAND, supported by the EU and JAPAN, proposed defining that “parties that catch pelagic sharks” should report on their national implementation efforts, and, noting obligations already exist on confiscations or seizures of specimens of illegal origin, suggested amending the relevant recommendation accordingly.

BRAZIL, INDONESIA, PANAMA, OMAN, and MOZAMBIQUE drew attention to national actions on the OWT and other sharks. ARGENTINA specified they do not land OWT and AUSTRALIA drew attention to their negative NDFs for the species. SENEGAL and OMAN called for technical and financial support and capacity building.

Outcome: SC77 requests:

- the Secretariat to prioritize *C. longimanus* in its analysis on the mismatch between catch and trade data and in monitoring introduction from the sea; and
- parties that catch pelagic sharks to report to the Secretariat on their national-level implementation efforts and regulations.

Report of the Animals Committee: On Thursday, Chair of the AC, Switzerland, presented [SC77 Doc. 67.2](#), noting the recommendation on considering the appropriate use of pre-Convention permitting for different shark and ray product types should be directed at parties.

The US, NEW ZEALAND, and the EU supported the recommendations and noted the development of new digital reporting and traceability mechanisms lies with the parties. MOZAMBIQUE called for technological and financial support.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to encourage parties to report the trade of sharks and rays using the preferred terms and units at the species level and taxon-specific terms; and consider the appropriate use of pre-Convention permitting for different shark and ray product types for specimens.

Report of the Secretariat: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.67.3](#) and the US, as Chair of the Sharks and Rays Working Group, illustrated the Group’s work.

The US, supported by NEW ZEALAND, proposed adding a recommendation to the effect that the intersessional Working Group help identify potential solutions to address the challenges associated with the transport of biological samples for research and data collection as a priority. WCS drew attention to available tools to facilitate NDFs and customs implementation.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to invite the Secretariat to consider updating the guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual and illegal reports to include explicit guidance on reporting on specimens taken from areas beyond national jurisdiction and report on this at SC78.

Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*): On Thursday, the Secretariat presented [SC77 Doc.68](#). She proposed a revision on the recommendation pertaining to the control of trade in personal and household effects, in that up to three specimens of queen conch shells—as personal or household effects—are exempt from CITES permit requirements.

The US recalled that reporting should be on the number of shells and the weight of the meat, while HONDURAS highlighted that pearls should be taken into consideration.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to remind parties the guidelines for the preparation and submission of the CITES annual illegal trade report indicate shells should preferably be reported by number and that meat should be reported in kilograms; and that, according to Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on control of trade in personal and household effects, up to three specimens of queen conch shells as personal or household effects are exempt from the requirement for CITES permits.

Products containing specimens of Appendix II orchids: On Thursday, the Secretariat presented [SC77 Doc.69](#) jointly prepared with the PC Chair. Several parties supported the recommendations, suggesting minor editorial edits.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to urge parties to improve the regulation and enforcement regarding the trade in tuberous orchid taxa; and requests the Secretariat to consider the upcoming study on Appendix-II orchid taxa that are particularly affected by wild harvest for international trade.

Appendices of the Convention

Annotations: On Thursday, the UK, as Chair of the Working Group on Annotations, introduced [SC77 Doc.70](#). SC77 noted the report.

Implications of the transfer of a species from one Appendix to another: On Friday, Chair Aziz introduced [SC77 Doc.71](#). The US supported the recommendations.

Outcome: SC77 agrees to request the Secretariat to develop draft guidance and best practices related to periods of transition and possible transitory measures; and consider, with the PC, whether special recommendations should apply in the case of a transfer of a tree species with annotation #5 or other annotated plant species.

Information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.72](#). The US expressed concerns over the development of the information system. CHINA requested the PC to provide further guidance on this item. The SC noted the document.

Informal review mechanism for existing and proposed annotations: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.73](#). The US expressed concern over the mechanism and requested the Secretariat to consult with the Scientific Committees.

Outcome: SC77 notes the report and the recommendation provided by the US.

Taxonomy and nomenclature of African elephants: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced [SC77 Doc.74](#), noting scientific consensus and agreement among responding parties that there are two distinct species of African elephants, the forest elephant (*Loxodonta cycloti*) and the savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). She noted the distinction can be implemented within CITES in one of two ways:

- recognizing the forest elephant as a distinct species in Appendix I, in addition to the existing reference to the savannah elephant; or
- adopting a genus approach, listing *Loxodonta* spp rather than the two individual species, with the savannah elephant becoming *Loxodonta africana africana*.

She underscored neither approach would alter the scope of protection for any of the *Loxodonta* species listed in either Appendix.

Delegates agreed on the need to differentiate between both species, with ZIMBABWE noting this will pave the way towards more targeted conservation measures. Although many expressed openness towards either approach, there was a noted preference towards the genus listing. BELGIUM underscored that regardless of the genus listing, permits would still need to be issued at the species level, and said MIKE should aim to operate at the species level. LIBERIA, GABON, and SENEGAL noted it can at times be difficult to differentiate between both species, especially when looking only at tusks, highlighting the technical requirements and costs related to DNA sequencing.

Outcome: SC77:

- notes the preference for changing the nomenclature of the savannah elephant to *Loxodonta africana africana*; and
- requests the Secretariat to prepare possible proposals for consequential amendments to relevant Resolutions and CITES guidelines for consideration by SC78, if AC33 agrees to the change.

Conclusion of the Meeting

UKRAINE drew attention to the war with Russia; its related CITES violations, namely of Articles 2, 3, 4 and 6; and its impact on CITES-listed species within the country as well as general environmental destruction. He bemoaned the devastation wrecked by the bombing of the Kakhovka Dam, and called for the Russian Federation to cease aggression and remove their troops.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored the war started in 2014 as a civil conflict inside Ukraine with “an economic blockade towards the population, which led to a military operation.” GEORGIA supported Ukraine and noted the conflict in their region started centuries ago.

INDONESIA lamented the situation in Ukraine and in Palestine, in particular in Gaza, stressing that Israel’s ferocious bombing was causing severe destruction and environmental devastation. The EU voiced solidarity with Ukraine and its people, and condemned Hamas, particularly the use of civilians as human shields. Further, the EU deplored all loss of civilian life.

The Secretariat announced SC78 will be held in Geneva from 3-8 February 2025, noting an extra day had been added to its schedule.

In closing the meeting, Secretary-General Higuero commended SC77 Chair Aziz for her calm demeanor and success in leading the meeting, following which SC Aziz received a standing ovation. Higuero further thanked delegates for their commitment, Switzerland as the host, the venue staff, the interpreters, translators, technicians, and the Secretariat that is “stretched so thin.” She called on parties to offer to host CoP20.

SC77 Chair Aziz commended the US team for presenting so well without their head of delegation and thanked delegates for the well wishes for Rosemarie Gnam, noting she had been following online. Chair Aziz thanked everyone for their support, in particular Sofie H. Flensburg from the Secretariat and the rest of the Secretariat staff, and delegates for their grace and patience, giving her confidence when she “felt like hiding under the desk.” Chair Aziz closed the meeting at 5:00 pm.

A Brief Analysis of SC77

The year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Over the past five decades, CITES has

grown significantly: the Convention now and regulates international trade in over 40,900 species of plants and animals, including their products and derivatives. Over time, it has successfully helped detain criminals, curtail the trafficking in listed species, regulate legal trade, and contribute to bringing back species from the brink of extinction, such as the markhor and vicuña.

The 700-plus participants at the five-day long Standing Committee meeting (SC77) covered a whopping 77 agenda items. By Wednesday, delegates found themselves more than a day behind schedule, and eventually agreed to drop consideration of some reports. As a result, they managed to conclude the meeting right on time: Friday at 5:00 pm sharp.

On the occasion of CITES’ 50th birthday, this brief analysis looks back on SC77, specifically at the issues of compliance and cooperation, to perform a checkup of the Convention.

Compliance as the Teeth of the Convention

CITES is most often envied by those engaged in other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) for its voting procedure, but the Convention’s multifaceted approach to compliance is another contender. Albeit at parties’ invitation, the Secretariat can conduct in-country missions to assess compliance matters, including through visits to breeding facilities and customs control agencies. Most notably, the SC can recommend trade suspensions against non-compliant parties. While it remains up to parties to implement these suspensions, such a provision stands out amid an MEA landscape that often relies on collective assessments of progress and only reputational repercussions.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that compliance discussions took up a fair part of the week. Participants not only addressed the many specific cases of (potential) non-compliance on the meeting’s agenda, but also brought more fundamental points to the fore.

A key point is that SC77 showcased the diverging interpretations of what compliance is to be assessed against. Canada and China championed a narrow view, whereby compliance is assessed against obligations related to the articles of the Convention, not expectations contained in non-legally binding resolutions and decisions. Many others opposed this interpretation, underscoring that the implementation of resolutions and decisions is crucial for the effective implementation of the Convention and that the CITES rules of procedure themselves were adopted in the form of a resolution.

The reason this divergence in interpretation kept resurfacing was that many found that the cases presented at SC77 lacked clarity. Many parties underscored it was difficult for them to follow the Secretariat’s rationale for identifying cases of non-compliance, prompting them to request clarifications as to what CITES provisions are not being met. They also questioned the basis upon which the Secretariat decided to bring specific cases to the SC’s attention. “It seems that regional consideration might have been at play,” shared a seasoned observer.

The case brought forward against the UK left many especially puzzled, as Peregrine falcons, of which the UK is a range state, are considered a species of “least concern” on the IUCN Red List. “If the idea was to infuse some regional balance to the compliance discussions, there would have been better candidates,” reflected a delegate, pointing to the captive breeding of big cats in the US. Regional dynamics also played out in the compliance discussions themselves. Parties showed a marked tendency for leniency regarding their regional neighbors’ compliance cases and pushed

for the provision of grace periods before the issuance of trade suspensions.

Several delegations expressed concern over the ability of the already thinly stretched Secretariat to handle so many compliance cases, which entail missions, reports, and review of follow-up activities. Canada suggested written correspondence might be sufficient in some cases. The high number of compliance cases also proved challenging for the SC to handle. Noting how much space the discussions took during the week, the idea of a dedicated compliance committee working alongside the Standing Committee resurfaced.

One thing is clear: the cost of non-compliance can be high for the survival of entire species populations. It is therefore crucial for CITES to find a way to unleash the full potential of its comparatively strong compliance mechanisms.

Half a Century of Cooperation

CITES never walked the road alone. Over the past 50 years, its membership grew from ten to 184 parties and various other stakeholders came on board. As with all MEAs, so much of CITES hinges on fruitful collaboration and cooperation, and this came to the fore at SC77, with regard to the triad of cooperation between countries, with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and with other MEAs.

While each CITES party is responsible for upholding the Convention's provisions within its own territory, putting an end to wildlife trafficking requires cooperation between countries of origin, transit, and destination. This need for cooperation was particularly highlighted in the discussions related to Totoaba trafficking along the Mexico-US-China route and to shark fins from Ecuador being exported through Peru. While countries of origin need to focus on tackling poaching, it is key that transit countries uphold effective customs control and destination countries address demand reduction.

NGOs also have a key role to play at CITES, especially with regard to transparency and the production of quality reports, which in turn form the basis of robust informed decision making. For example, CITES relies on accurate scientific data on species trends, often collected and elaborated by experts and NGOs, which require funding. For example, delegates stressed the need for resources to conduct Red List assessments for the tuberous orchid taxa.

The validity of parties' reporting also came under close scrutiny, with NGOs highlighting discrepancies with their own observations, for instance on the seizure data for Asian Big Cats. On more than one occasion, NGOs offered parties their support towards enhanced CITES implementation and enforcement, for instance through the provision of specifically developed digital traceability tools to follow shark species from the country of origin to their destination.

SC77 further illustrated a tendency to keep disappointments under wraps. Country-mediated field missions, for instance, sometimes direct the Secretariat's engagement on the ground, limiting visits to captive-breeding facilities or engagement with different types of stakeholders. As one seasoned observer underscored, "discussing thorny issues can sometimes be risky, and not everyone is in a position to express themselves freely."

SC77 also illustrated the importance of MEA collaboration. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) made many interventions at SC77, pointing to ongoing work on jaguars, vultures, elephant ivory, great apes, and various other issues. Delegates also made progress towards enhanced engagement between CITES and the World Organization on Animal Health (WOAH). Cooperation with

law enforcement agencies is another natural avenue for CITES as it relates to regulating wildlife trade. SC77 saw the celebration of EUROPOL's Operation LAKE, which led to the arrest of 256 persons responsible for the trafficking of approximately 25 tonnes of live glass eels. Such positive news is key to reinvigorate spirits and also help to raise the Convention's profile and underscore the magnitude of the illegal trade in wildlife species.

CoP 20 – Getting Past the Middle Age

While SC77 managed to address a range of issues, delegates were already looking towards the next Conference of the Parties (CoP), scheduled for 2025. Discussions related to both the frequency of the CoPs and logistics around their hosting.

Contrary to other processes, which have their governing bodies meet annually or every two years, CITES CoPs are held every three years. However, there are growing calls to hold the CITES CoP every two years to better address the larger workload and urgency of enhancing conservation efforts.

Not everything can be decided at the SC level, yet the time lag between CoPs creates a backlog. One case at hand, which was discussed during the week, is that of the saiga antelope population in Kazakhstan. Saiga have increased from 21,000 individuals in 2003 to 1.318 million in 2022. Against this background, Kazakhstan reported on the need to move from protection towards establishing market controls. The country emphasized it has already developed a mechanism for marking saiga horns and reviewed studies on the feasibility and conditions for sustainable commercial use of specific saiga populations.

Another delegate thought the increased frequency of CITES CoPs is unlikely, citing funding constraints, but also capacity within ministries to keep up with the meetings. Another big constraint is the already crowded MEA calendar, especially near the end of the year.

In closing the meeting, Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero asked parties to come forward with an offer to host the CoP 20. Typically, by now there would already be an offer on the table. Without one by April 2024, the Secretariat will need to make arrangements to host the CoP in the depository country, Switzerland. Higuero even went as far as to call for "creative solutions," inviting parties to submit joint offers.

Regardless of who comes forward to host the next CoP or whether Switzerland has to rise to the challenge once again, it is obvious that "CITES at 50" still has much to do as its aim "to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species" is still far from being fulfilled.

Upcoming Meetings

CBD WG8j-12 and WG DSI-1: The first meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI on Genetic Resources is focusing on further developing and operationalizing the multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI on genetic resources. The 12th meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) is addressing: implementation of the priority tasks of the multi-year programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions; the knowledge management component of the GBF; the joint programme of work on the links between biological and cultural diversity; and the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous

Issues. **dates:** 12-18 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland
www: cbd.int/meetings

59th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Sessions of the Associated Committees: The Council is the International Tropical Timber Organization's governing body. It meets once a year to discuss wide-ranging issues of interest to members, including those related to the legal trade of tropical timber and the sustainable management of tropical forests. **dates:** 13-17 November 2023 **location:** Pattaya, Thailand **www:** itto.int

International expert workshop on Non-Detriment Findings: At its 19th meeting, the CITES CoP adopted Decisions 19.132-19.134 on NDFs. In coordination with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to the CITES NDF Project, the Secretariat is organizing an international expert workshop to review and improve draft NDF guidance materials that are currently being developed. **dates:** 4-8 December 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** cites.org

Songbird trade and conservation management: At its 19th meeting, the CITES CoP adopted Decisions 18.256 (Rev. CoP19) to 18.259 (Rev. CoP19) on songbird trade and conservation management. This technical workshop will consider the findings of the preliminary study on the scale and scope of international songbird trade as well as the management and conservation priorities of songbird taxa involved in such trade. **dates:** 11-14 December 2023 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **www:** cites.org

Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats: Parties will review the implementation of the Gorilla Agreement, the Action Plans and the resolutions, among others. **dates:** 11-15 December 2023 **location:** Paris, France **www:** cms.int/gorilla/en/meeting/fourth-meeting-parties-agreement-conservation-gorillas-and-their-habitats-ga-mop4

Bern III Conference on Cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal GBF: The Bern III Conference aims to contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by identifying opportunities to drive and coordinate an inclusive collaborative approach towards implementation of the framework while respecting the respective mandates of biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant multilateral agreements and the UN. **dates:** 23-25 January 2024. **location:** Bern, Switzerland **www:** unep.org/events/conference/bern-iii-conference-cooperation-among-biodiversity-related-conventions

14th meeting of the COP to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS): CMS COP 14 will convene to review implementation of the Convention. CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, recognizes states must be the protectors of migratory species that live within or pass through their national jurisdiction and aims to conserve terrestrial, marine, and avian migratory species throughout their ranges. This meeting will, among others, discuss the proposed inclusion of species, including the Peruvian Pelican and the Sand Tiger Shark, in the Convention's appendices. **dates:** 12-17 February 2024 **location:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan **www:** cms.int/en/meeting/fourteenth-meeting-conference-parties-cms

Sixth meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6): UNEA-6 convenes under the theme "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution." It will be preceded by the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, which

will take place from 19-23 February 2024. **dates:** 26 February – 1 March 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly/unea-6

World Wildlife Day: Under the theme "Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation," the World Wildlife Day 2024 celebrations will aim to raise awareness on the latest applications of digital technologies in wildlife conservation and trade and the impact of certain digital interventions on ecosystems and communities around the world. **date:** 3 March 2024 **location:** worldwide **www:** cites.org

SBSTTA 26: The twenty-sixth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will continue preparations for the next meeting of the CBD COP. **dates:** 13-18 May 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Fourth meeting of the CBD SBI: This meeting will review implementation of the CBD in advance of the next COP. **dates:** 21-29 May 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** cbd.int/meetings

11th Session of the IPBES Plenary (IPBES 11): IPBES 11 will consider the assessment on interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health and the transformative change assessment. **dates:** 10-16 December 2024 **location:** Windhoek, Namibia **www:** ipbes.net

CITES SC78: The Standing Committee meeting will convene in 2025. **dates:** 3-8 February 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland (TBC) **www:** cites.org

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

AC	Animals Committee
BBNJ	Biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction
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
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
ICCWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IWMC	Integrating Wildlife, Markets, and Conservation – World Conservation Trust
LAF	Legal Acquisition Findings
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MIKE	Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDF	Non-detriment finding
NIAP	National Ivory Action Plan
PC	Plants Committee
RST	Review of Significant Trade
SC	Standing Committee
ToR	Terms of reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society