

## CITES CoP20 Highlights: Tuesday, 2 December 2025

Committee I started the day hearing back from African range states who successfully achieved consensus on nomenclature and amendments to harmonize conditions of trade of live African elephants. They accepted proposals to delete bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*) from Appendix II, which many delegates hailed as a “conservation success.” Committee II considered exemptions and special trade provisions, including a proposal on guidance on the term “artificially propagated,” which was accepted, and on the use of phytosanitary certificates as certificates of artificial propagation, which was rejected.

### Committee I

#### Nomenclature Matters

**Taxonomy and nomenclature of African Elephants (*Loxodonta* spp.):** Committee I Chair Mathias Lörtscher (Switzerland) re-opened [CoP20 Doc.113](#) to hear from African range states on the three proposed options for how to reflect a nomenclature change for African elephants.

ZIMBABWE noted consensus on option c with amendments to read, for Appendix I: *Loxodonta* spp. (except the populations of *L. africana* of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which are included in Appendix II subject to annotation A10).

Committee I agreed to the document as amended.

#### Proposals to Amend the Appendices I and II

**African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*):** Chair Lörtscher re-opened CoP20 Prop.14 to amend annotation A10 pertaining to harmonizing the conditions of trade in live African elephants.

ZIMBABWE, with ZAMBIA and others, opposed changing “specimen” to “parts and derivatives.” SENEGAL, with NIGER, preferred “parts and derivatives.” The Secretariat highlighted that changing “specimen” to “parts and derivatives” would mean that trade of live elephants is subject to less stringent measures. With this clarification, SENEGAL agreed to retain the use of “specimen.”

Committee I agreed to the proposal as amended.

**Bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*):** SOUTH AFRICA introduced CoP20 Prop.1 to delete this endemic species of antelope from Appendix II.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

**Cycad spurge (*Euphorbia bupleurifolia*):** SOUTH AFRICA introduced CoP20 Prop.44 to transfer this endemic dwarf succulent from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

***Avonia quinaria*:** SOUTH AFRICA introduced CoP20 Prop.50 to transfer this endemic dwarf succulent from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

**Bale and Ethiopian mountain adders (*Bitis harena* and *Bitis parviocula*):** ETHIOPIA introduced CoP20 Prop.24 to list these endemic snakes in Appendix I.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

**Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus* spp.) and Ground rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus* spp.):** MEXICO introduced CoP20 Prop.25 to include *Crotalus lepidus* and *Crotalus ravus* and the genera *Crotalus* and *Sistrurus* in Appendix II.

By a vote of 46 for, 66 against, and 26 abstentions, Committee I rejected the proposal.

**Home’s hinge-back tortoise (*Kinixys homeana*):** CAMEROON introduced CoP20 Prop.26 to uplist Home’s hinge-back tortoise (*Kinixys homeana*) from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee I approved the proposal.

**Epirus water frog (*Pelophylax epeiroticus*), pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*), marsh frog (*Pelophylax ridibundus*), and Albanian water (*Pelophylax shqipericus*):** The EU introduced CoP20 Prop.27 to include the four *Pelophylax* species in Appendix II, to be delayed by 18 months.

By a vote of 92 for, 21 against, and 26 abstentions, Committee I approved the proposal.

**Rose hair tarantula (*Grammostola rosea*) and lookalikes:** BOLIVIA introduced CoP20 Prop.38 to list the tarantula *Grammostola rosea* and 14 lookalike species in Appendix II, amended to include a 12-month delay for implementation.

By a secret ballot of 72 in favor, 54 against, and 9 abstaining, Committee I rejected the proposal.

**Non-detriment findings:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.50](#). JAPAN, the EU, CANADA, and others supported the document.

Committee I agreed to the proposed draft decision as amended by the Chair.

**Materials for the identification of specimens of CITES-listed species:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.53](#).

The US proposed adding “including guidance on referencing such materials on CITES-checklist of species.”

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions as amended.

**Identification of timber and other wood products:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.54 Add.](#)

The US proposed adding a reference to enforcement authorities. INDIA encouraged parties to adopt a regional, inclusive, and technology-driven approach to implementation. The UK suggested reference to geographic origin.

Committee I accept the draft decision as amended.

**Review of Resolution Conf.8.13 (Rev. CoP17) on Use of coded-microchip implants for marking live animals in trade:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.57](#), noting the proposal by the Secretariat to include “subject to external resources.”

INDIA, supported by the US and GABON, proposed issuing a notification to parties to seek comments on the draft guidance

document. The UK, supported by NIGERIA, suggested taking into account existing materials when developing the guidance.

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions as amended.

### **Species Conservation and Trade**

**Identifying information on species at risk of extinction affected by international trade:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.72](#), highlighting the Secretariat's amendments.

JAPAN, KUWAIT, and CHINA disagreed with establishing the proposed webpage, citing concerns over the reliability of the information that parties might post on it. CANADA suggested amendments to eliminate the involvement of the Standing Committee (SC). CHINA, supported by JAPAN and GABON, suggested that range states should be consulted before information on endemic species is posted, while the UK and the EU said this was not feasible. KUWAIT, supported by CANADA, suggested deleting 20.CC on inviting intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other experts to share information with parties.

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions as amended by the Secretariat except for 20.AA d), 20.CC, and 20.DD, which were deleted by consensus, and established a drafting group to find agreement on 20.BB.

### **Appendices of the Convention**

**Standard nomenclature:** The Nomenclature Specialist introduced [CoP20 Doc.110](#) and addenda.

The US said that high priority should be given to the draft decisions on developing an updated checklist for the family *Cactaceae*, and suggested referring to AvIList with regard to updating a standard nomenclature reference for birds. CANADA suggested deleting draft decision 20.AA5. The Nomenclature Specialist suggested deleting 20.CC5, since it refers to 20.AA5. The US noted that the "CITES checklist of Diospyros: Madagascar populations, large tree species" is improperly attributed to the Secretariat, instead of the responsible taxonomists from Madagascar, and, with the UK, proposed retaining the name *Bulnesia sarmientoi*.

Committee I agreed to:

- the draft decisions as amended by the US, Canada, and the Nomenclature Specialist;
- the proposed revisions to the Annex to Resolution Conf.12.11 (Rev. CoP19) with amendments by the US and the UK;
- delete paragraph 11 of Resolution Conf.12.11 (Rev. CoP19); and
- delete the decisions proposed for deletion in the document.

**Nomenclature of Appendix-III listings:** Chair Lörtscher introduced [CoP20 Doc.111](#).

On the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on standard nomenclature, the EU proposed adding "if necessary, the taxonomic scope" when revising the nomenclature of an Appendix-III listing. NEW ZEALAND suggested referring to the "scientific" name, instead of simply the name.

Committee I accepted the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.9.25 (Rev. CoP18) and the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.12.11 (Rev. CoP19), as amended on the floor.

## **Committee II**

### **Appendices of the Convention**

**Facilitating legal trade and sustainable use during periods of transition:** The US introduced [CoP20 Doc.105.2](#).

On amending paragraph 12 a) of Resolution Conf.12.3 (Rev. CoP19), the US, with CANADA, suggested noting that a pre-Convention certificate could be issued for pre-Convention specimens. The EU opposed.

On paragraph 23 c) of the resolution, the US, supported by CANADA and BRAZIL, suggested, among others, that retrospective payment could be issued for a pre-Convention specimen. The EU, supported by NIGERIA, CHINA, and FIJI, supported the amendments by the Secretariat and recommended adding language such that a bill of lading or customs declaration could be considered further proof of export.

On amending paragraph 3 of Resolution Conf.13.6 (Rev. CoP18), the EU suggested including language on taking measures "in accordance with relevant national laws."

Committee II:

- did not accept the changes to paragraph 23 c) or paragraph 12 a) of Resolution Conf.12.3 (Rev. CoP19), and agreed to continue discussions intersessionally; and
- accepted the changes to paragraph 3 of Resolution Conf.13.6 (Rev. CoP18).

### **Regulation of Trade**

**Disposal of confiscated specimens:** Committee II Chair Anna Wong (Singapore) indicated that [CoP20 Doc 64.1](#) and [CoP20 Doc.64.3](#) would be considered together.

On the amendments to Resolution Conf.17.8 (Rev. CoP19), ISRAEL suggested specifying "registered" commercial facilities. The EU, AUSTRALIA, and SENEGAL expressed concern that there may not be sufficient registered facilities. The US suggested a compromise of "preferably registered," which was accepted.

On the renewal of decisions on disposal of confiscated specimens, the US introduced [CoP20 Doc.64.3](#) and [CoP20 Inf.78](#). MALAYSIA, the EU, SOUTH AFRICA, and others opposed the establishment of a voluntary register of placement facilities, given that this issue is already addressed by Annex 3 to the resolution.

On the insertion of a new paragraph 7 in the resolution, the EU proposed an amendment to clarify that relevant authorities can request financial support. The US emphasized the need to capture costs associated with care and transport. The UK proposed an edit to ensure support could be proactively provided. Chair Wong proposed a compromise, which was accepted.

KENYA introduced [CoP20 Doc.64.2](#).

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE), MEXICO, the EU, and others opposed replacing "disposal" with "custody," underscoring that the change would require significant changes in national legislation.

Committee II:

- agreed to the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.17.8 (Rev. CoP19) contained in [CoP20 Doc.64.1](#), as further amended by the Secretariat and on the floor;
- rejected the draft decisions in [CoP20 Doc.64.3](#);
- agreed to retain decisions 19.169, 19.171, and 19.173, without the proposed amendments in [Inf.78](#);
- accepted the new paragraph 7 of the resolution, as amended by the Secretariat and on the floor; and
- rejected the proposal to replace "disposal" but agreed to the Secretariat's proposed amendments to Annex 1, Option 1.e in the resolution.

**Exemptions and special trade provisions: Review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.67.1](#).

The US and ISRAEL opposed the draft decisions, which would establish an intersessional workshop, but did not break consensus.

Committee II agreed to the document with minor amendments.

**Legal acquisition findings:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Com.II.2](#), and parties made extensive recommendations. On paragraphs establishing an intersessional working group, they agreed to, *inter alia*:

- per BRAZIL, changing decision 20.EE b to add reference to operationalizing Article 7, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Convention;
- per the US, removing language from decision 20.EE d on amendments to Resolutions;
- per the US and EU, changing decision 20.FF to include language on submitting revisions to the draft guidance on the chain of custody to CoP21; and
- on decision 20.GG, deleting reference to specimens for re-export and parental/breeding stock in the sentence.

BRAZIL suggested reopening the draft “Guidance on the chain of custody required for demonstrating the legal acquisition of the parental/breeding stock” to include language on founder stock where relevant. CANADA, the UK, and JAPAN opposed.

Committee II first voted to reopen discussion of the draft guidance, with 38 in favor, 29 against, and 10 abstaining; and, with a second vote of 52 in favor, 9 against, and 15 abstaining, to re-include discussion of founder stock as relevant.

### Exemptions and Special Trade Provisions

**Review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source: Considerations and recommendations for ranching of aquatic species:** The US introduced [CoP20 Doc.67.2](#).

The EU, supported by HONDURAS, requested extending the decisions to terrestrial species. The UK, CANADA, and others opposed, citing the Animal Committee’s (AC’s) workload.

Committee II agreed to the document without amendment.

**Review of Resolution Conf.12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.68](#).

MEXICO, supported by CHINA, SWITZERLAND, and others, and opposed by the US, requested deletion of the reference to the SC in the amended paragraph 5 h) of Resolution Conf.12.10 (Rev. CoP15). The EU, the UK, and UAE suggested other amendments.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

### Regulation of Trade

**Electronic systems and information technologies and authentication and control of permits:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.56.1](#) and SWITZERLAND introduced [CoP20 Doc.56.2](#).

BAHRAIN, supported by UAE and RUSSIAN FEDERATION, proposed an amendment to ensure the feasibility study would address, *inter alia*, legal and cyber-security concerns, and stressed that any hub should be voluntary. The US proposed an additional decision to consider technical options related to implementation of nomenclatural changes.

Committee II agreed to both documents as amended.

**Risk assessment and analysis for border control of CITES-listed species:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.58](#).

The UK suggested bringing the substance of soon-to-be deleted Decision 19.153, on integrating risk profiles into broader national customs risk management systems, into the text of the resolution. KYRGYZSTAN requested two additional draft decisions: recommending that parties unofficially translate inspection and risk assessment guidelines for CITES trade controls; and, with the US’ amendment, encourage parties to share information on lessons learned.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

**Guidance of the term “artificially propagated”:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.69](#).

FIJI requested a new draft decision encouraging parties to verify and document the legal origins of parental stock for specimens produced under source codes A or Y and requested reference to the use of source code Y.

Committee II agreed to the decisions as amended.

**Use of phytosanitary certificates as certificates of artificial propagation:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.70](#), which was rejected by Committee II.

### Species Conservation and Trade

**Products containing specimens of Appendix-II orchids (*Orchidaceae* spp.):** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.96](#). Committee II agreed to the document as amended by the Secretariat.

### Strategic Matters

**CITES and forests:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.18](#).

CHINA opposed the deletion of the decisions since the second draft of the “Report of the interdisciplinary study and the potential scope of an initiative on CITES and Forests” has not yet been reviewed, and the EU proposed amendments to allow for Plant Committee (PC) review. CANADA proposed, *inter alia*, to consider a potential amendment of the CITES tree species programme instead of a new initiative. Proposing several amendments, BRAZIL suggested that CITES maintain a clear focus on its established mandate. Committee II formed a drafting group.

**CITES Tree species programme:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.23](#).

CANADA suggested amendments to, *inter alia*, ensure that the PC and SC have a role in providing guidance on priority activities. The US suggested allowing the PC and SC to provide guidance on “funding decisions, as appropriate.”

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

### CITES and People

**United Nations World Wildlife day:** Chair Wong introduced [CoP20 Doc.24](#), which was accepted.

**CITES Global Youth Network:** KUWAIT introduced [CoP20 Doc.26](#).

The US requested the addition of the phrase “subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources” and “as appropriate” across the operational paragraphs to take into account resource constraints. FIJI requested an additional paragraph encouraging parties and the Secretariat to ensure balanced regional representation in the Network.

Committee II accepted the document as amended.

### In the Corridors

New week, new month, new CoP?

With only two days left for committee meetings, the pressure was high on delegates to complete the agenda items before a return to plenary. Unfortunately, this was a challenge made more daunting by the “plague” sweeping through the Convention’s delegates.

“I hope you didn’t get sick, like many others,” Chair Lörtscher remarked futilely in the morning. Despite the runny noses, Committee I slithered through its agenda, considering many creepy-crawly proposals on reptiles and arachnids. Committee II, on the other hand, appeared to be more afflicted, with very sluggish discussions throughout the morning. The Committee experienced a rebound in the afternoon but still lags behind by half a day.

Disease did not stop delegates from continuing to approve a large number of decisions despite the CITES Secretary General’s plea at the outset of the session to pare down new decisions as much as possible. Plenary discussions will need to be concise, which means parties are expected to work hard over the next few days. “We need to get better to do better,” one delegate said, coughing at the end of the afternoon.

**Follow daily coverage and photos of the  
20th Meeting of the CITES  
Conference of the Parties**



 [enb.iisd.org](http://enb.iisd.org)

 [subscribe at bit.ly/enbupdate](https://bit.ly/enbupdate)

 [@enb.iisd.org](https://twitter.com/enb.iisd.org)

 [/earth-negotiations-bulletin](https://www.linkedin.com/company/earth-negotiations-bulletin)

