



CITES COP-13 HIGHLIGHTS: SUNDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2004

Delegates convened in a morning Plenary session to consider strategic and administrative matters, including voting procedures, adoption of the rules of procedure, election of officers, adoption of the agenda and working programme, credentials, admission of observers and committee reports. Regional groups met in the afternoon.

PLENARY

SECRET BALLOTS: Standing Committee (SC) Chair Kenneth Stansell (US) introduced a document on the use of secret ballots (Doc.1.1). The Secretariat informed delegates that the SC had reviewed the issue, recommending that no changes be made to existing rules. The Netherlands, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), and the US stated that they continue to regard the use of secret ballots as contrary to transparency and accountability.

RULES OF PROCEDURE: SC Chair Stansell introduced a document on the Rules of Procedure (Doc.1.2 (Rev.1)). The Secretariat proposed that credentials be submitted in English, French or Spanish at least one week before the opening session of the meeting (Rule 3.2). The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed allowing credentials to be presented in a country's national language provided that they are accompanied by a translation in one of the three CITES working languages, and delegates agreed.

The Secretariat clarified that all members of the SC are part of the Bureau (Rule 15.1), and that if the COP Chair is absent or unable to fulfill his or her duties, the Bureau shall nominate one of the Vice-Chairs (Rule 15.3). Delegates then adopted the Rules of Procedure.

ELECTIONS: Delegates elected by acclamation the following COP-13 officers: Minister Suwit Khunkitti (Thailand) as COP Chair; David Brackett (Canada) and Victoria Lichtschein (Argentina) as Vice-Chairs; and Holly Dublin as Committee I Chair and Martin Brasher (UK) as Committee II Chair.

JAPAN expressed concern regarding the nomination procedure for Committee chairs, noting that consensus and transparency must be ensured.

The Czech Republic was nominated as Credentials Committee Chair, with St. Lucia, Cameroon, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates serving on the Credentials Committee. Plenary approved the nominations by acclamation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORKING PROGRAMME: Delegates adopted the agenda (Doc.3 (Rev.5)) without amendment. The Secretariat introduced the working programme for Plenary and Committees I and II (Doc.4 (Rev.1)). Animals Committee (AC) Chair Thomas Althaus (Switzerland) expressed concern regarding the scheduled simultaneous discussions of some related agenda items within Committees I and II. The Secretariat said this will be addressed by the Bureau. International Wildlife Management Consortium (IWMC)-WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST sought clarification regarding an SC proposal to include an agenda item on sturgeon. The Secretariat said the Bureau will consider this request. Delegates then adopted the working programme.

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS: The Secretariat introduced, and delegates adopted, the list of observers (Doc.6), which includes 11 intergovernmental organizations, 51 international organizations and 88 national organizations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Standing Committee: SC Chair Stansell presented the Chair's report (Doc.7.1), noting a modification to the SC's Rules of Procedure to provide for NGO participation as observers. He highlighted: agreement to amend annotations for some populations of the African elephant to allow for trade in raw ivory stocks and recommendations for measures to improve law enforcement; the success of the National Legislation Project; efforts to reflect in the budget the cornerstones of the Convention regarding scientific and legislation support, capacity building and enforcement; and the need to consider new opportunities to finance the Convention, in addition to Parties' contributions.

Animals Committee: AC Chair Althaus presented the Committee's report (Doc.9.1.1). On *Strombus gigas* (queen conch) populations that are deemed to be of urgent concern, he said the Dominican Republic and Honduras, but not Haiti, complied with the short-term recommendations within the agreed timeframe. He highlighted that too many resources are spent on *taxa* not included in the CITES



Appendices, and recommended that the AC concentrate primarily on *taxa* listed in the Appendices. On definitions of production systems or source codes, he recommended that the AC and PC be jointly involved in examining the definitions to determine the appropriate source code. He presented recommendations regarding: transport of live animals; production systems and source codes; trade in Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles; seahorses and other members of the family Sygnathidae; alien species; training; and the budget. MADAGASCAR reported on progress in implementing their Action Plan, noting financial and technical support from France and international organizations, including the World Bank. The EU, supported by AUSTRALIA, cautioned against overlooking *taxa* of species not listed in the Appendices as these could become of great conservation concern.

The WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY inquired about implementation of the outstanding recommendation on the narwhal and its inclusion in Phase 6 of the Review of Significant Trade (RST). The Secretariat responded that these inquiries should be raised in Committee I.

Plants Committee: Plant Committee (PC) Chair Margarita Clemente (Spain) presented the report (Doc.9.2.1), noting recommendations to delete all previous decisions directed to the PC, and formulating or reformulating those that require implementation in the future. Stressing the importance of regional meetings, she recommended, due to lack of funding, that seminars organized by the Secretariat be used as an opportunity to convene regional meetings as well. She said high priority had been given to the review of criteria for amending Appendices I and II, and also noted work regarding *Harpagophytum spp.* (devil's claw) and *Guaiaecum spp.* (lignum vitae). She said the PC recommended: a draft decision on exploring options for Parties to include information on the impact of CITES listing on poor peoples' livelihoods as part of the process of drawing up and reviewing proposals to amend the Appendices; and deleting the decisions on annotations for medicinal plants in the Appendices (Decision 11.118), and on establishing cooperation with the IUCN-Species Survival Commission (SSC) Invasive Species Specialist Group (Decision 10.86) regarding trade in alien species. She also mentioned PC discussions on, *inter alia*, the report of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group, trade in plants from Madagascar and using the malagasy model as a model of success, and recommendations related to *Aquilaria spp.* (agarwood).

Regarding training and promoting awareness (Objective 4.6 of the Strategic Vision through 2005), Chair Clemente said the Masters course was a useful tool for understanding and training staff working on CITES, and that a European doctoral degree was being developed. She noted the PC's recommendation to provide financial assistance to support

continuation of the Masters course, and secure external funding to support participation of students from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Regarding the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, she recommended developing synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity, and stressed that the PC must have the opportunity to debate the budget.

The EU supported extending, until COP-14, the recommendation to delete the decision on amending Appendices (Decision 12.10), and proposed that the PC, during the period between COP-13 and COP-14, "develop proposals to amend the Appendices on the basis of the contribution to an evaluation of tree species using the new CITES Listing Criteria, and the results of regional workshops on sustainable management of timber tree species in 2005 and 2006."

Nomenclature Committee: Nomenclature Committee (NC) Vice-Chair Noel McGough (UK) presented the NC report (Doc.9.3.1.). Regarding flora, he described the proposed workplan for the next two years, which includes, *inter alia*: a revision of the cactus checklist; a review of the checklist for the orchid genus *Bulbophyllum*; a review of the remaining *taxa* of orchids in trade; and the continuation of work on the development of a world checklist of orchids. Regarding the adoption of the Checklist of CITES Species compiled by UNEP-WCMC as the standard reference for species included in the Appendices (Res. 12.11), he said the NC concluded that the taxon-based checklists, used previously as standard reference, are more complete.

Regarding the NC's recommendations related to fauna, Vice-Chair McGough highlighted the proposed adoption of a basic reference for the genus *Uromastix* (lizards), *Phelsuma* (day geckos) and *Hippocampus* (seahorses).

MEXICO requested that, due to procedural issues in considering a proposal on bird nomenclature, the NC's terms of reference be revised and clarified.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Although COP-13 officers were elected by acclamation in Plenary, the lead up to these nominations in the Standing Committee appears to have been less harmonious. Some delegates thought that Japan's concerns about the Standing Committee's nomination procedure for Committee I Chair reflected its frustration at not being selected to chair this committee's important discussions on marine species.

Meanwhile, in the African Elephant Dialogue Group, range States appeared to have reached some degree of consensus, particularly on trade in elephant leather and hair goods, but remained divided on registered elephant ivory export quotas. West and Central Africa – two regions usually less vocal on the issues – were reported to have weighed in on the debate, advocating against trade and for greater protection. The elephant-ivory issue will, undoubtedly, take center stage once again.