

## CITES COP14 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 6 JUNE 2007

The fourteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP14) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened in two committees throughout the day. Several drafting and working groups also met. Committee I, *inter alia*, voted not to subject great whales to a periodic review as long as a moratorium in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) remains in place, and established a working group on sharks. Committee II, *inter alia*, adopted decisions on international cooperation and established working groups on CITES and livelihoods, sturgeons, compliance, and personal and household effects.

### COMMITTEE I

Committee I approved: the Philippines' proposal to register a captive breeding operation for eight Appendix-I bird species (CoP14 Doc.47), by 50 to 22 votes; and the US' proposal clarifying that plant species without annotations include all parts and derivatives (CoP14 Doc.67), by consensus. The Committee also approved plant listing proposals on: removing *Agave arizonica* from Appendix I (CoP14 Prop.22), submitted by the US; transferring *Nolina interrata* from Appendix I to Appendix II (CoP14 Prop.23), submitted by the US; deleting *Pereskia* spp. and *Quiabentia* spp. from Appendix II (CoP14 Prop.24), submitted by Argentina; and deleting *Pereskopsis* spp. from Appendix II (CoP14 Prop.25), submitted by Mexico.

### SPECIES TRADE AND CONSERVATION ISSUES:

**Rhinoceroses:** The Secretariat's recommendations on conservation and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses (CoP14 Doc.54) were accepted by consensus following a minor amendment from the EU. Supporting the proposals, NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA and SWAZILAND cautioned that information on stockpiles is sensitive and must be treated confidentially. TRAFFIC urged countries to combat poaching by strengthening cross-border law enforcement and the prosecution of smugglers. KENYA called for destroying rhino-horn stockpiles and consulting range states when preparing reports.

**Cetaceans:** JAPAN proposed a periodic review of all listed cetaceans (CoP14 Doc.51), which it said seeks to ensure that the Convention operates on the basis of current scientific information, and would not affect the IWC moratorium. Supporting the resolution, NORWAY and SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS cautioned against basing CITES decisions on criteria other than science, and CHINA welcomed additional information that would result from the review.

Opposing the proposal: AUSTRALIA emphasized current IWC findings on the state of whale stocks and said that the IWC is the agreed competent authority; ARGENTINA, on behalf of several GRULAC countries, said a review would duplicate the IWC Scientific Commission process; and the EU reminded parties of the recent IWC resolution on interaction between CITES and IWC (CoP14 Inf.44) which states that the commercial whaling moratorium is still in place. BRAZIL encouraged non-lethal use of whales. The WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY, on behalf of SSN, noted that IWC Scientific Commission reviews are based on sound scientific data.

The proposal was then rejected, by 26 to 54 votes.

**Fin whales:** ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL and the US opposed the AC proposal to include the central stock of the North Atlantic fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) in the periodic review (CoP14 Doc.8.2). AUSTRALIA's proposal that no periodic review of any great whale, including the fin whale, should occur while the IWC moratorium is in place, was approved by 59 to 21 votes.

**Sharks:** AC Chair Althaus and AC Shark Working Group Chair Rod Hay (New Zealand) introduced several AC recommendations on sharks, including three listing proposals (CoP14 Doc.59.1). AUSTRALIA introduced further recommendations (CoP14 Doc.59.2) and said CITES must continue work on sharks because of threats such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and inadequate fisheries management. The US and the EU supported the proposed listings. CHINA, NAMIBIA and JAPAN warned against duplicating FAO work and urged CITES to concentrate on listed species, with NAMIBIA opposing the proposed shark listings. Committee I established a working group, chaired by New Zealand, to consolidate and simplify the two proposals.

**PC PROPOSALS:** PC Chair Clemente presented the PC proposals (CoP14 Doc.8.3 (Rev.1)). Delegates adopted with minor amendments proposals and recommendations on:

- preventing illegal trade in Asian plant species (*Cistanche deserticola*, *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Nardostachys grandiflora*, *Picrorhiza kurroo*, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Rauvolfia serpentina*, and *Taxus wallichiana*) and promoting regional coordination;
- cooperation with the CBD on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation;
- developing criteria and indicators for implementing NDFs for taxa of high priority timber species, and *Prunus africana* and other medicinal plants;
- amending the appendices in relation to tree species using the new CITES-listing criteria and the results of regional

workshops on sustainable management of timber species, with the US noting concern over proposals to list certain groups of species rather than individual species;

- developing identification materials and amending annotations for agarwood-producing taxa, and providing a definition of non-timber forest products for CoP15's consideration; and
- amending Resolution Conf.10.13 (Rev. CoP13) on timber species, including a new definition of "artificially propagated," and the addition of voluntary annual national export quotas.

**LISTING PROPOSALS:** SWITZERLAND introduced its proposal to merge and amend annotations on *Cactaceae* spp. (#4) and *Orchidaceae* spp. (#8) in Appendix II, and all taxa annotated with #1 (CoP14 Prop.26). The US opposed the proposal, and TRAFFIC highlighted several inconsistencies, urging parties to refer the proposal to the PC for review. Discussions will continue on Thursday.

## COMMITTEE II

**CITES AND LIVELIHOODS:** Delegates continued consideration of this issue, with many developing countries and NGOs supporting the proposed decisions (CoP14 Doc.14). CANADA noted that guidelines should be voluntary and subject to external funding and, with AUSTRALIA, the US and FIJI, cautioned that livelihood considerations should not affect the scientific decision-making process, but rather relate to CITES implementation. FFI and IWMC noted that the proposed guidelines would clarify this. BORN FREE FOUNDATION and IFAW cautioned against shifting emphasis from CITES' core biodiversity conservation tasks. A drafting group, chaired by John Donaldson (South Africa), was established.

**WILDLIFE TRADE POLICY REVIEWS:** The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP14 Doc.15), noting that reviews provide a voluntary way for countries to improve their existing wildlife trade policies. LIBERIA and MAURITIUS requested assistance to carry out reviews. VIET NAM, MADAGASCAR and UGANDA shared their experiences from the pilot phase of the project. The US noted the need to improve the framework and, supported by ARGENTINA and CHINA, emphasized that funding should come from external sources. The US, ARGENTINA and BRAZIL also expressed concern about the proposed expansion of the Secretariat's work, and SSN noted that some proposed additional tasks exceed CITES' mandate. SWITZERLAND, UNEP, TRAFFIC, and FFI voiced their continued support for the process. The Secretariat agreed to revise the text in consultation with interested parties.

**SPECIES TRADE AND CONSERVATION ISSUES:**  
**Sturgeons and paddlefish:** The Secretariat presented the report (CoP14 Doc.60.1), and urged sturgeon range states to contribute information to the recently created UNEP-WCMC database. CHINA noted that the lack of data from range states is due to zero export quotas in 2006. The EU noted that the database should be limited to caviar trade information provided by all caviar-trading countries. TRAFFIC and WWF called for an independent and transparent process for quota setting, and advocated limiting the timeframe for exports to the catch year.

IRAN presented the proposal of the SC54 Working Group on Sturgeons (CoP14 Doc.60.2.1), noting lack of consensus on several issues, which, together with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION's proposal (CoP14 Doc.60.2.2), was referred to a working group to be chaired by the EU.

**COMPLIANCE:** NORWAY reported on progress in developing guidelines for compliance with the Convention (CoP14 Doc.23). ARGENTINA, BRAZIL and JAPAN underscored that the guidelines should focus on facilitative measures. Committee II Chair Cheung established a working group to be chaired by Norway.

**PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS: CHINA** presented the report of the Working Group on Personal and Household Effects (CoP14 Doc.45). Following comments by the EU, ARGENTINA and INDONESIA, a working group, to be chaired by China, was established.

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP14 Doc.16). CHINA, MEXICO, ARGENTINA and the US emphasized that the proposed activities should be funded by external sources. On the CITES Virtual College, the EU, supported by CHILE, MEXICO, and the US, requested that the Secretariat investigate distance learning initiatives, while others emphasized existing Master's courses. PC Chair Clemente noted decisions on support for Master's courses in the joint AC/PC report (CoP14 Doc.8.4). CHINA, CHILE, KUWAIT, and SAUDI ARABIA urged provision of capacity-building tools in all UN languages. FIJI and AUSTRALIA called for an intersessional Oceania regional capacity-building workshop on enforcement. The Secretariat agreed to incorporate comments into the draft decision.

**JOINT REPORT OF THE AC AND PC CHAIRS: AC** Chair Althaus introduced the document (CoP14 Doc.8.4). Parties adopted the AC/PC Chairs' suggestions on the length of meetings, and on rules of procedure for the AC and PC meetings, including three amendments proposed by the Secretariat. On the manual for regional representatives, delegates approved a decision based on the AC/PC draft, the Secretariat's suggestions on testing the manual, and MEXICO's proposal that the Secretariat begin seeking funding for publication prior to completion of the test phase.

**COOPERATION BETWEEN PARTIES:** The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP14 Doc.17). On stricter domestic measures, the EU, *inter alia*, asserted that import permits are justified by the need to ensure wild species' survival, and disputed that negotiators of Article XIV (Effect on Domestic Legislation and International Conventions) envisioned that "stricter domestic measures would be adopted primarily by exporting and not importing countries." He supported the draft decisions but proposed several amendments, including: that the review should determine whether measures effectively achieve CITES' objectives; and that the consultant's report should assess whether there is a need to clarify, revise or repeal CoP resolutions.

The US, supported by KENYA and SSN, suggested retiring the draft decisions, saying that they could restrict sovereignty. AUSTRALIA supported the review "as and when appropriate" but said such measures must be consistent with WTO and must have a justified, positive environmental outcome. He also proposed amendments including: subjecting the review to the availability of external funds; and, opposed by NORWAY, deleting the assessment of whether parties have coherent positions on environment and wildlife trade in international fora.

Delegates approved the draft decisions, with Australia's proposed deletion accepted following a vote, and all other amendments accepted by consensus.

## IN THE CORRIDORS

On Wednesday, CoP14 discussions on marine and timber species challenged delegates to navigate the turbulent waters of big business and politics that underlie biodiversity conservation. Commenting on Committee I's rejection of a Japanese proposal to subject all listed cetacean species to periodic review, one delegate expressed relief that CITES was "out of danger" on this contentious issue, while another admitted to "understanding the whaling nations' frustration." On timber, some delegates pointed to the thorny listing proposals for cedar and rosewood, currently subject to a political tug-of-war across the Atlantic Ocean.