

CITES COP14 HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2007

The fourteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP14) to CITES convened in two committees throughout the day. Several drafting and working groups also met. Committee I, *inter alia*, addressed ivory trade, mahogany and freshwater turtles. It adjourned in the afternoon, and discussions continued in a Friends of the Chair group on elephant proposals. Committee II, *inter alia*, adopted decisions on introduction from the sea and great apes.

COMMITTEE I

Delegates adopted by consensus revised decisions on hawksbill turtle (CoP14 Com.I.11), and on cedar and rosewood (CoP14 Com.I.10).

BIGLEAF MAHOGANY: PC Chair Clemente and MEXICO, as Chair of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group (BMWG), presented the report (CoP14 Doc.64 (Rev.1)) and introduced draft decisions on: NDFs for tree species; annotations for tree species on Appendices II and III; and an action plan for the control of international trade in bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*). HONDURAS and PERU welcomed the BMWG's progress and suggested minor amendments, which were finalized in a small drafting group. The Committee adopted the decision by consensus.

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES: The Secretariat proposed streamlining reporting requirements (CoP14 Doc.57) and the EU and TRAFFIC voiced concerns about illegal trade in these species in Asia. MALAYSIA supported the proposal and MADAGASCAR called for further cooperation to stop illegal trade. The decisions were adopted by consensus.

CENTRAL AFRICA BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP: The Secretariat introduced the working group's report (CoP14 Doc.65 (Rev.1)). The EU noted concerns over persistent illegal bushmeat trade. Supported by TRAFFIC and WWF, the EU, proposed, and delegates agreed, to encourage the working group to collaborate with the CBD liaison group on non-timber forest resources.

SEA CUCUMBERS: The NETHERLANDS presented revised decisions (CoP14 Com.I.1), noting they include components on livelihood issues and cooperation with FAO. ECUADOR, on behalf of several GRULAC countries, supported the proposal, while NORWAY opposed, cautioning that it would expand CITES' scope to species management. The proposal was adopted with 77 votes in favor and four against.

ELEPHANTS: MIKE report: The Secretariat reported on the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme (CoP14 Doc.53.3).

The US expressed its continued support for the MIKE programme and stressed the need to ensure regular communication with range states and donors. KENYA urged making MIKE baseline information more easily understood by range states. The EU called for ensuring MIKE's viability and announced France's contribution of US\$50,000 to its South Asia sub-regional unit. BOTSWANA, supported by SOUTH AFRICA, urged range states to include MIKE activities in their national budgets. ZIMBABWE and ZAMBIA emphasized political will, law enforcement and strengthened management to combat elephant poaching.

ETIS report: TRAFFIC, as Chair of the MIKE-ETIS Working Group, presented the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) report (CoP14 Doc.53.2), noting that the ETIS database contains 12,378 seizure records from 82 countries and territories since 1989, totaling 322 tonnes of ivory. He said the analysis shows a decline in illicit ivory trade from 1999-2004, followed by a sharp increase since 2005, and identified the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Thailand, Nigeria, Cameroon and China as countries of major concern. He also underscored that ETIS data does not support a correlation between changes to the listing of elephant populations in CITES appendices or the resumption of legal ivory trade, and an increase in poaching and illegal trade. Instead, he identified unregulated domestic ivory markets, organized crime, and poor governance as key drivers of illegal trade.

CHINA stated that information in the ETIS report relating to its national legislation and trade controls is misleading and does not concur with the Secretariat's assessment following its mission to China. He expressed concern that not designating China as a trade partner in the one-off ivory sale would lead to a reemergence of illegal trade. NIGERIA and DRC reported on improvements in national legislation and enforcement to address illegal wildlife trade. ZAMBIA and BOTSWANA supported the ETIS findings.

Listing proposals: Chair Leach noted that, as the African Elephant Range States Dialogue did not achieve consensus, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, listing proposals would be considered starting with those least restrictive for trade.

SOUTH AFRICA presented an amended proposal (CoP14 Inf.53) combining the original proposals by Namibia and Botswana (CoP14 Prop.4), Botswana (CoP14 Prop.5), and Kenya and Mali (CoP14 Prop.6). She highlighted common ground reached during negotiations on: conservation of elephants and their role in economic development; the need to address illegal trade and ivory stockpiles; and monitoring illegal trade through MIKE and ETIS. She outlined a proposed amendment to the listing annotation, which includes:

- trade in hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes, hide and hair;
- trade in registered raw ivory whole tusks and pieces subject to, *inter alia*, verification of trading partners, registered government-owned stocks, proceeds being used exclusively for conservation and community development;
- a one-off ivory sale of a maximum of 70 tonnes for Botswana, 50 tonnes for Namibia, 40 tonnes for South Africa and 15 tonnes for Zimbabwe, in addition to the quantities agreed at CoP12; and
- a provision that no further trade can take place before CoP16, with the SC mandated to take a further decision on export quotas and continuity of trade.

NAMIBIA highlighted the livelihood and conservation benefits of ivory trade, calling on parties to support the proposal. He stressed that: southern African elephant populations are robust and should be treated under CITES provisions for trade in Appendix-II species; the proposed no-trade period of six years should enable parties to establish appropriate monitoring measures; and a future decision-making mechanism is urgently needed at the SC level for managing trade in these elephant populations.

The EU highlighted elephants' global charismatic appeal, but reiterated that while other countries may help by facilitating discussions, the core issues should be resolved by African countries. Suggesting that consensus could be near, he noted the EU proposal (CoP14 Inf.54), stating that it reflects potential common ground, and proposed further negotiations.

KENYA agreed that finding common ground would be preferable to applying different solutions in different parts of Africa, and sought an adjournment to continue negotiations towards combining various proposals, including its revised joint proposal with Mali (CoP14 Inf.55). The adjournment was approved by consensus.

COMMITTEE II

Committee II addressed and approved by consensus: a draft decision on reporting on trade in artificially propagated plants, with a minor amendment (CoP14 Com.II.14); a draft decision on electronic permitting (CoP14 Com.II.13); and draft decisions on the crocodilian tagging system presented orally by the EU, with minor amendments.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE SEA: SC Chair Maquieira summarized the report of the SC54 working group (CoP14 Doc.33), highlighting progress on definitions but noting persistent divisions on key aspects of "introduction from the sea." He outlined a draft decision to extend the working group's mandate.

On defining "the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State," delegates supported the "alternative" definition proposed by a majority of the working group, with many stating that CITES' work on marine jurisdictional issues must conform to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Delegates adopted by consensus the "alternative" definition and the draft decision, including a timeframe proposed by the EU.

GREAT APES: The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP14 Doc.50) and recommended a CITES verification mission to Egypt to assist in addressing reported illegal trade.

INDONESIA agreed to report to the SC, THAILAND noted ongoing efforts to combat illegal trade and CAMBODIA welcomed assistance on CITES implementation. EGYPT welcomed the CITES verification mission and said illegally-traded great apes would be repatriated. As UNEP/GRASP Chair, CAMEROON noted the potential negative effect on neighboring countries of Gabon's export quota of gorilla heads and hands. Several delegates called for CITES technical missions to African great ape range states. TRAFFIC and BORN FREE

FOUNDATION, on behalf of SSN, encouraged Central African range states to focus on addressing domestic and transborder bushmeat and live-animal trade.

Delegates noted the report and endorsed the proposed CITES/GRASP mission to Egypt.

ASIAN BIG CATS: The Secretariat noted the need for improved enforcement in some range states, but highlighted the success of the Inspection Tiger Brigades in the Russian Federation (CoP14 Doc.52). Reporting on a recent mission to western China, he said that illicit trade in big-cat skins appears to have declined but noted room for improvement regarding enforcement. A draft decision will be discussed on Wednesday (CoP14 Inf.50).

TIBETAN ANTELOPE: The Secretariat summarized the SC's work on the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) (CoP14 Doc.55 (Rev.1)), highlighting that population increases mark a success for CITES protection of Appendix-I species. SWITZERLAND, THAILAND and INDIA shared experiences with national enforcement. The Committee noted the report.

REPORT OF CCAMLR ON TOOTHFISH: The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) reported on legal and illicit trade in *Dissostichus* spp. (toothfish) (CoP14 Doc.61). The EU and AUSTRALIA called on parties to implement Res. Conf.12.4 (cooperation between CITES and CCAMLR), while SINGAPORE and NORWAY noted that toothfish are not CITES-listed species. The Committee noted the report.

TRADE IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINES: AUSTRALIA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, introduced a proposal to address trade in traditional medicines containing CITES-listed species (CoP14 Doc.63).

The PHILIPPINES opposed the proposal, as did CHINA, who underscored the Secretariat's lack of support for the proposal. The EU welcomed the proposal but proposed amendments deleting references to the development and use of alternative ingredients in preference to captive breeding. ECUADOR, INDONESIA, INDIA, WWF and others supported the proposal. TRAFFIC highlighted recent research indicating that trade in traditional medicines containing endangered species derivatives could affect wild populations.

Delegates voted and agreed with the EU's amendments, and approved the decision by consensus.

WORKING GROUPS

BUDGET: The group addressed, *inter alia*, the costed work programme, the resolution on budget, and the terms of reference for the CITES Trust Fund. Participants did not reach agreement on a budget increase, with parties divided between working on the basis of a 0% or a 21% nominal increase. Countries opposing a significant increase noted that it may lead to arrears or delays in payments, cautioning this could affect the CITES Secretariat's work.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Wednesday's much-awaited Ministerial Roundtable has attracted 46 high-level representatives, around half of whom are ministers, coming predominantly from African, Asian and Eastern European countries. Strategically, the meeting aims to mainstream and boost political awareness about CITES. However, some observed that real success depends on addressing key questions on CITES' role regarding commercially-important timber and marine species, and effective enforcement measures given the Convention's limited resources. Rumor has it elephants may also lumber onto the agenda following a last-ditch attempt to come up with an "African solution" to the issue in an evening Friends of the Chair group which evolved into a constructive tête-à-tête between two key African ministers.