



CITES COP16 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2013

In the morning, ministers and high-level representatives convened for the roundtable on combating transnational organized wildlife and forest crime. In the afternoon, participants met in Committees. Committee I discussed, *inter alia*, climate change, non-detriment findings (NDFs) and nomenclature. Committee II addressed financing and budgeting of the Secretariat and the CoP.

COMMITTEE I

Committee I was chaired by Carolina Caceres (Canada).

CBD GSPC: The Chair of the Plants Committee (PC), Margarita Clemente-Muñoz (Spain), explained the intention of a resolution on cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (CoP16 Doc.16 (Rev.1)), based on Resolution 15.19. PC Vice-Chair Hesiquio Benitez Díaz (Mexico) introduced the draft resolution.

CHINA, INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA and GRENADA supported the resolution. ARGENTINA and JAPAN also supported the resolution, specifying they preferred the Secretariat's amendments. JAPAN also urged retaining text specifying meeting participation be subject to external funding.

Following further discussions, Committee I agreed to the resolution with an amendment specifying the role would be to represent the CITES PC at meetings of the CBD subsidiary bodies and other GSPC meetings. The Committee noted the reservations of IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, as to whether the resolution was needed, and also agreed this decision repealed Decision 15.19.

IPBES: MEXICO presented the document (CoP16 Doc.17 (Rev.1)) on behalf of the Working Group. He described the four draft decisions in CoP16 Doc.17 (Rev.1), noting they were drafted before the first plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). He proposed, supported by the US, COLOMBIA, CHILE, JAPAN and BRAZIL, that a drafting group update the draft decisions.

The US raised several concerns, including on a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the IPBES Secretariat and the Liaison Group on Biodiversity-related Conventions, stating it was too early to take some decisions. CHILE agreed the draft decisions were premature, given IPBES's recent creation. Chair Caceres invited the US,

COLOMBIA, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, CHILE, JAPAN, INDIA, BRAZIL and MALAYSIA to join a drafting group on the issue.

CLIMATE CHANGE: On behalf of the SC, the US introduced the document on review of resolutions related to climate change (CoP16 Doc.27 (Rev.1)).

SWITZERLAND, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, JAPAN and PARAGUAY supported the findings of the AC and PC, as endorsed by the SC. KENYA, supported by ISRAEL and the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, preferred establishing a working group through the SC on further guidance on addressing climate change, but accepted the consensus of the Committee to take no new decision. Committee I took note of the document and recognized this repealed the three CoP15 decisions on climate change.

NDFs: PC Chair Clemente-Muñoz introduced the document on NDFs (CoP16 Doc.33 (Rev.1)).

A number of countries welcomed work on NDFs, with many, including MEXICO, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO and IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, underscoring the importance of voluntary, non-binding guidelines. CHINA called NDFs the "cornerstone of the Convention," underscoring the importance of scientific information, not just guidelines, for implementing NDFs. AUSTRALIA supported the revised draft resolution. A number of parties, including INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, JAPAN and the US, supported the intent of the resolution but preferred to continue clarifying and revising the text.

AUSTRALIA, CHINA, MEXICO, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, INDIA, the US, CANADA, JAPAN and MALAYSIA volunteered to participate in a working group to refine and clarify the draft resolution, and SOUTH AFRICA agreed to chair the group.

Chair Caceres proposed, and parties agreed, to delay discussion on the draft decisions contained in Annex 4 of CoP16 Doc.33 (Rev.1) until after discussion on the documents on agarwood-producing taxa (CoP16 Doc.67.1 (Rev. 2) and CoP16 Doc.67.2 (Rev. 1)).

NOMENCLATURE: Ute Grimm, AC Nomenclature Specialist (Germany), and Noel McGough, PC Nomenclature Specialist (UK), introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.43.1 (Rev.1)) and its annexes and reported on nomenclatural tasks addressed by the AC and PC, respectively. Parties agreed to the list of standard references (CoP16 Doc.43.1 (Rev.1) Annex 6 (Rev.1)).



Hippocampus species: SWITZERLAND introduced a document on standard nomenclature for *Hippocampus* species (CoP16 Doc.43.2 (Rev.1)). AUSTRALIA supported the resolution, and further requested the CITES nomenclature experts to consider eight additional *Hippocampus* species, currently recognized by Australia, for inclusion in the CITES database. The Committee agreed to the resolution and took note of Australia's request.

COMMITTEE II

Committee II, chaired by Robert Gable (US), convened in the afternoon.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COSTED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010-2011: The Secretariat introduced the implementation of the costed programme of work (CPW) for 2010 and 2011 (CoP16 Doc.8.1 and Annexes 1-8). Committee II accepted the expenditures incurred and approved the CPW for 2010 and 2011, as reported by the Secretariat.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COSTED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2012: The Secretariat introduced the implementation of the CPW for 2012 (CoP16 Doc.8.2 and Annexes 1-5). The US, supported by JAPAN, protested the use of the word "arrears" to refer to unpaid voluntary contributions, and requested this intervention be included in the meeting's written record. Committee II accepted the expenditures incurred and approved the CPW for 2012, including the intervention, as reported by the Secretariat.

BUDGETARY PROPOSALS FOR 2014 TO 2016: The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CoP16 Doc.8.3) on budgetary proposals for 2014 to 2016. The Secretariat encouraged parties to consider the Zero Real Growth budget scenario. NORWAY, INDIA, AUSTRIA, BRAZIL, RUSSIA, SWEDEN, SOUTH AFRICA and BOTSWANA agreed. JAPAN differed, stating that it supports a Zero Nominal Growth scenario. The US, MEXICO, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, JAPAN, GERMANY, FRANCE, IRELAND on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, the UK, BOTSWANA, BELGIUM, NORWAY, AUSTRALIA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, COLOMBIA, CHINA, the PHILIPPINES, KENYA and INDONESIA volunteered to participate in the Working Group on Budget. SWITZERLAND offered to chair it. The Working Group will report back on Wednesday, 6 March.

ACCESS TO GEF FUNDING: The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CoP16 Doc.8.4) and: the proposed text for the resolution on financing and the CPW for 2014-2016; the recommendation that the CoP accept the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a financial mechanism for CITES; and the draft decisions contained in Annex 2. He noted that the draft decisions, *inter alia*, request the GEF to serve as a financial mechanism for CITES, and enhance its biodiversity focal area in its Sixth Programming Strategy.

AUSTRALIA, concerned that there is not a robust analysis on the implications of the proposal, asked what would happen to the CITES Trust Fund. IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, noted that the GEF could already support countries in their national activities and that access to GEF funding is a country-driven process. He also stressed that CITES-related activities should be embedded in the CBD National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). JAPAN proposed some changes to the decision, including that the GEF is "invited," rather than "requested," to consider serving as the financial mechanism. The US noted that some CITES activities carried out at the national level may already be eligible for GEF funding. He also stressed that while the US does

not want to block the proposal, it would have to be evaluated carefully before the next GEF Council. CANADA said greater legal clarity might be needed before considering the proposed draft resolution. PERU, SAINT LUCIA, BOTSWANA, IRAN, SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE, NORWAY and BAHRAIN generally supported the proposal. KENYA and SOUTH AFRICA supported the opportunity to include CITES activities in the Sixth Programming Strategy.

In closing the discussion, the Secretariat noted that: the request has no impact on the Trust Fund; the Secretariat seeks to work through the NBSAPs and GEF Focal Points at the national level; and priorities would be articulated by working with the SC. In closing, Chair Gable proposed the Working Group on Budget take up this issue.

ACCESS TO OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.8.5), which reports on its investigation of ways to secure funding to support the provision of technical assistance to CITES parties, as directed in Decision 15.20. He highlighted the six proposed draft decisions (contained in Annex 1). In the document, the Secretariat recommends that the CoP: adopt the draft decisions; delete Decision 15.20; and delete all decisions calling on the Secretariat to seek external funding for specific activities and avoid the adoption of new decisions of that nature.

The US suggested the SC serve as the oversight and enabling body for such funding initiatives, and opposed the recommendation on deleting decisions calling on the Secretariat to seek external funding for specific activities. The US and IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, supported the draft decisions. The Secretariat withdrew the proposal to delete all decisions on external funding, and the Chair closed the issue.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS: RWANDA introduced the relevant document (CoP16 Doc.9 (Rev.1)). The Secretariat was not supportive of the proposal, which he said would draw down limited funds and require additional staff. The Chair requested parties to consult with the Secretariat before pursuing the matter through formal channels.

IN THE CORRIDORS

"Where there are loopholes, there will be prospectors," said a speaker at a lunchtime side event on tigers, implying that whenever CITES leaves anything unspecified, traders move in to exploit that space. In the case of tigers, "space" is created by legal trade in captive-bred tiger skins, which, some claim, stimulates demand for tiger parts and leads to more poaching. Many NGOs have long questioned the effectiveness of banning international trade when domestic trade persists. According to one delegate, Thailand's Prime Minister's statement hinting at a ban on domestic trade in ivory might signal that certain parties are asking similar questions. Yet some countered that species such as rhinos, tigers and elephants, which are severely vulnerable to poaching, cannot wait for demand to ease. These commenters pointed to captive-bred populations—such as rhino farms in South Africa—as the only hope for their protection, and one expressed hope that debates later in the week on implementation of the Convention for captive-bred and ranches specimens would help to support those efforts. Delegates left the meeting to prepare for tomorrow morning's extraordinary plenary which will re-address the question of voting by secret ballot. As one delegate commented, "this is a very hard start to a CoP," as bridging the divisions that emerged on the first day will likely be challenging.