



CITES COP16 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2013

On Friday, Committee I heard reports on the progress of working groups. Committee I then resumed its consideration of amendments to the appendices. Committee II considered rhinoceros, great apes and illegal trade in cheetah, and suspended discussions on Asian big cats to address new amendments to the draft decisions.

COMMITTEE I

PROPOSALS TO AMEND APPENDICES I AND II:

Crocodylus acutus: COLOMBIA introduced the proposal to transfer a population of *Crocodylus acutus* (American crocodile) from Appendix I to II (CoP16 Prop.23) adding an annotation preventing exchange between the population and Appendix-I listed populations as well as a provisional zero export quota (CoP16 Prop.23 Addendum (Rev.1)). He outlined a conservation project focused on the population, highlighting community participation, including former poachers.

THAILAND, PERU, EGYPT, HONDURAS, CUBA, VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, BRAZIL, LIBERIA, PANAMA, URUGUAY, MEXICO, INDONESIA, ECUADOR, PARAGUAY, SENEGAL, QATAR and ARGENTINA supported the proposal.

IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, the US, ISRAEL and SWITZERLAND noted Colombia's efforts and encouraged their ongoing work, but stated the population did not meet biological criteria for downlisting and did not support the proposal. The US raised concern that such a transfer would set a precedent for future proposals. IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, suggested alternative approaches, including submitting a proposal under the ranching resolution or drafting decisions related to ranching for consideration at CoP17.

In a vote, the proposal did not achieve a two-thirds majority, with 57 in favor, 50 opposed and 16 abstentions.

Crocodylus porosus: THAILAND introduced the proposal to transfer *Crocodylus porosus* (saltwater crocodile) from Appendix I to Appendix II with a zero quota for wild specimens (CoP16 Prop.24). He said the proposal applies only to the Thai population. GAMBIA, the PHILIPPINES, VIET NAM, MADAGASCAR, PAKISTAN, MYANMAR, COLOMBIA, CHINA, BRAZIL and CAMBODIA supported the proposal.

IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, opposed, saying reestablishment of wild populations should be the basis for downlisting. INDIA also opposed, expressing concern that downlisting would stimulate trade in

wild specimens from range states. AUSTRALIA, supported by the US, said *Crocodylus porosus* continued to meet biological criteria for Appendix I and opposed the proposal.

Noting a lack of consensus, Chair Caceres proposed a vote. THAILAND requested voting by secret ballot, which more than ten parties supported. The proposal was rejected, with 61 in favor, 54 against and 6 abstaining. The US requested its vote against the proposal be recorded in the meeting record, noting it will publicly announce its position on all secret ballots.

Crocodylus siamensis: THAILAND introduced the proposal to transfer their population of *Crocodylus siamensis* (Siamese crocodile) from Appendix I to Appendix II, with a zero quota for wild specimens (CoP16 Prop.25). THAILAND explained the zero quota placed on wild specimens would ensure only captive-bred populations, which contribute to local livelihoods, would be traded. The GAMBIA, ECUADOR, PAKISTAN, UGANDA, MADAGASCAR, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (PDR), the PHILIPPINES, CAMBODIA, INDONESIA and CHINA, among others, commended Thailand's captive breeding program and supported the proposal. The US, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, and SWITZERLAND did not support the proposal, stating that Thailand's wild population is small, fragmented and does not meet the biological criteria for downlisting, emphasizing that the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group also opposed the proposal as the species remains Critically Endangered. The proposal was put to a vote. It failed to meet the two-thirds majority needed to pass, with 69 voting in favor, 49 against and 11 abstaining.

Naultinus: NEW ZEALAND introduced the proposal to transfer all nine species of geckos in the genus *Naultinus* from Appendix III to Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.26), explaining an uplisting would increase their protection by destination states in the international pet trade. He noted *N. gemmaeus* meets the biological criteria for uplisting and said the other species meet the "look-alike" provisions. Many supported the proposal, including JAPAN, ECUADOR, MEXICO, MADAGASCAR, AUSTRALIA, SAMOA, CUBA, COLOMBIA, PERU, CHILE, KENYA, LIBERIA, IRAN, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, and PRO-WILDLIFE. Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Protobothrops mangshanensis: CHINA introduced the proposal to include all populations of *Protobothrops mangshanensis* (Mangshan pit viper) on Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.27), highlighting the small population size, restricted



distribution and threats from the international pet trade. The US, PAKISTAN and MADAGASCAR agreed with the proposed Appendix II listing.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

Chelodina mccordi: The US introduced the proposal to transfer *Chelodina mccordi* (Roti Island snake-necked turtle) from Appendix II to Appendix I (CoP16 Prop.28), highlighting that the species is listed as one of IUCN's top 25 endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles.

INDONESIA, as a range state, opposed the proposal, stating that international trade is mainly in captive-bred specimens. He proposed adding an annotation to the current Appendix II listing for a zero export quota from the wild.

CHINA, QATAR and GUYANA supported Indonesia's amendment.

The US did not wish to block consensus, and so agreed to the amendment, but asked for a decision requesting the AC to undertake a Periodic Review of the species.

Committee I agreed to the amended proposal with the added annotation, and to a decision for its consideration in a Periodic Review.

Clemmys guttata: The US introduced the proposal to list *Clemmys guttata* (spotted turtle) on Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.29), noting among other reasons, its: capture from the wild for trade, primarily bound for Asia; life history characteristics and upgrading to endangered on the IUCN red list. CANADA, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, SENEGAL and SWITZERLAND supported the proposal. Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Emydoidea blandingii: The US introduced the proposal to list *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's turtle) on Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.30), noting, similar reasons to the spotted turtle, including upgrading to endangered on the IUCN red list. CANADA, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, and SENEGAL supported the proposal. Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Malaclemys terrapin: The US introduced the proposal to include *Malaclemys terrapin* (diamondback terrapin) in Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.31). The US emphasized an Appendix II listing could enhance domestic law enforcement, highlighting concerns that wild-caught specimens were being falsely declared as captive-bred in trade.

IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, the UK, BURKINA FASO, SENEGAL, SWITZERLAND, SOUTH AFRICA and CHINA supported the listing.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

Freshwater box turtles: Citing Rule 23.6, Committee I Chair Caceres indicated that this proposal (CoP16 Prop.32), as the least restrictive to trade, would be considered prior to Proposals 33-35.

CHINA introduced the proposal, submitted with the US, to include 15 species of freshwater box turtles from the Family Geoemydidae in Appendix II (*Cyclemys atripons*, *C. dentate*, *C. shanensis*, *C. oldhamii*, *C. pulchristriata*, *Geoemyda japonica*, *G. spengleri*, *Hardella thurjii*, *Mauremys japonica*, *M. nigricans*, *Melanochelys trijuga*, *Morenia petersi*, *Sacalia bealei*, *S. quadriocellata* and *Vijayachelys silvatica*) and to annotate the Appendix II listings of another 15 species with a zero quota on wild specimens for commercial purposes (*Batagur borneoensis*, *B. trivittata*, *Cuora aurocapitata*, *C. flavomarginata*, *C. galbinifrons*, *C. mccordi*, *C. mouhotii*, *C. pani*, *C. trifasciata*, *C. yunnanensis*, *C. zhoui*, *Heosemys annandalii*, *H. depressa*, *Mauremys annamensis* and *Orlitta borneensis*). He pointed to

threats to turtles, including the high risk of overexploitation from international trade. The US urged for support to list turtles at a family level, rather than taking a species-by-species approach.

JAPAN agreed with the need to protect turtles. She questioned the *Mauremys* species listing but said she would not block consensus.

PARAGUAY, PAKISTAN, SENEGAL, LIBERIA, INDONESIA and GUINEA supported the proposal. INDIA strongly supported the proposal, adding he would prefer the species be listed under Appendix I.

Chair Caceres noted that the adoption of the proposal would preclude consideration of Prop.33-35. JAPAN stated instead her intent to register a national zero export quota. VIET NAM submitted a motion to allow discussion of Prop.33 and Prop.35.

Following further discussion, Committee I agreed to CoP16 Prop.32.

VIET NAM, under Rule 18.1, appealed the Chair's ruling, based on Rule 23.6, that adoption of Prop.32 necessarily implies the rejection of Prop.33 and Prop.35. In a simple majority vote, the Chair's ruling was sustained, with 27 voting yes, 59 no and 17 abstaining.

Recognizing the outcome of the vote, VIET NAM said the species in Prop.33 and Prop.35 (*Cuora galbinifrons* and *Mauremys annamensis*) qualify for inclusion in Appendix I and asked that these species be included in the Periodic Review as a matter of priority.

Committee I agreed that Prop. 33-35 would not be addressed and noted Viet Nam's request.

Platysternidae: VIET NAM introduced the proposal to transfer *Platysternidae* (big-headed turtles) from Appendix II to Appendix I (CoP16 Prop.36). She said, *inter alia*, populations have decreased in markets, indicating that they are rare in the wild, and that they are not known to breed in captivity. Noting *Platysternidae* requires unpolluted high mountain streams in closed canopy forests, which are uncommon habitats, the US, as the co-proponent, urged support for the proposal. SENEGAL and IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, supported the proposal. Committee I agreed to accept the proposal.

Geochelone platynota: The US introduced the proposal to transfer *Geochelone platynota* (Burmese star tortoise) from Appendix from II to I (CoP16 Prop.37). She said the species, *inter alia*: is included on the IUCN's list of the world's 25 most endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles; may be extinct in the wild; and experiences ongoing demand from the high-end pet trade.

IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, supported the proposal. Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Softshell turtles: The US introduced the proposal, co-sponsored by CHINA, to include in Appendix II eight species of softshell turtles (*Aspideretes leithii*, *Dogania subplana*, *Nilssonina formosa*, *Palea steindachneri*, *Pelodiscus axenaria*, *P. maackii*, *P. parviformis* and *Rafetus swinhoe*) from the family Trionychidae, and to transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I two *Chitra* species (*Chitra chitra* and *C. vandijkii*) (CoP16 Prop.38). CHINA underscored the high demand for these species in international trade.

PARAGUAY, THAILAND, INDIA and HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL (HSI) supported the proposal, with INDIA noting his preference for an Appendix I listing and HSI lauding China's co-sponsorship of the proposal.

Committee I accepted the proposal.

***Epipedobates machalilla*:** ECUADOR introduced the proposal to include *Epipedobates machalilla* (Machalilla poison dart frog) on Appendix II (CoP16 Prop.39). He noted that *machalilla*, which had been recently transferred from the genus *Colostethus*, was the only species in the *Epipedobates* genus not included in the standard reference for amphibians adopted at CoP15 (Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev.CoP15)). Nomenclature Specialist Ute Grimm (Germany) said that from a taxonomic point of view, the AC Nomenclature Specialist Working Group felt unable to give a recommendation on whether *E. machalilla* was covered in the original *Epipedobates* listing in 1987, and therefore recommended that Ecuador, as the range state, undertake an investigation and submit a proposal.

BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, URUGUAY, VENEZUELA, ARGENTINA, MADAGASCAR and DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE supported the proposal. Committee I agreed to the proposal.

***Rheobatrachus silus* and *Rheobatrachus vitellinus*:**

Following a request by AUSTRALIA, parties agreed to discuss together the proposals to delete *Rheobatrachus silus* (southern gastric-brooding frog) (CoP16 Prop.40) and *Rheobatrachus vitellinus* (northern gastric-brooding frog) (CoP16 Prop.41) from Appendix II. Following explanation from Australia that the species are extinct, the Committee agreed to support the proposals.

SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION

MANAGEMENT: Committee I addressed amended text on Asian snakes (Doc.Com.I.2) and amended text on non-detriment findings (NDFs) as contained in Doc.Com.I.3. SWITZERLAND, on behalf of Indonesia, suggested amendments related to, *inter alia*, guidance on NDFs and management systems for wild populations and, where possible, standardization of NDFs by range states sharing CITES-listed species. Committee I agreed to the revised text, with additional amendments on NDFs and quotas from CHINA and JAPAN, and repealed Decisions 15.75, 15.76, 15.77 and 15.78.

NDFs: SOUTH AFRICA introduced the revised document (CoP16 Com.I.3) on behalf of the Working Group and emphasized extensive consultation on the original document, including by the AC and PC.

CHINA requested: deleting reference to considering illegal trade and replacing “national and international” with “range states” in text on considering population structure, status and trends. The US, supported by SOUTH AFRICA, the UK, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, and the PC Chair, opposed these changes, noting in particular that one of the proposed deletions is of Convention text. CHINA said it would not block consensus but requested its comments be recorded in the Committee I summary.

Parties agreed to adopt CoP16 Com.I.3 with a minor amendment proposed by Mexico.

COMMITTEE II

TRADE CONTROL AND MARKING: Purpose codes on CITES permits and certificates: CANADA introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.38 (Rev.1)), which contains proposed revisions to Resolution Conf.12.3 on permits and certificates. INDONESIA, AUSTRALIA, CHINA, the PHILIPPINES, PERU, SOUTH AFRICA and LEWIS AND CLARK COLLEGE opposed the deletion of certain purpose codes in the revised resolution. The majority of parties supported retaining Decision 14.54, which requests the SC to re-establish an intersessional working group to review the use of purpose-of-transaction codes. The Committee accepted the retention of Decision 14.54 with its dates amended.

Transport of live specimens: AUSTRIA introduced the relevant document (CoP16 Doc.39 (Rev.1)), highlighting proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.10.21 (Rev.CoP14). The Committee adopted the document with some textual changes proposed by IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia.

USE OF TAXONOMIC SERIAL NUMBERS: CANADA introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.41 (Rev.1)), highlighting CoP15 decisions that the CoP is asked to adapt. The US objected to the draft decision directing the Secretariat to compile information on the usefulness of incorporating taxonomic serial numbers in their domestic data. The Committee agreed to the document with the US amendment.

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL: Report of the Secretariat: The Secretariat introduced the report (CoP16 Doc.44.1). IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, supported by MEXICO, welcomed the revisions to Resolution Conf.11.19 except for the requested reporting requirements. The Committee agreed to the revisions as amended.

Report of the PC: PC Chair Clemente-Muñoz introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.44.2 (Rev.1)), noting its aim to improve identification and guidance. The US proposed some textual changes, which were agreed.

E-commerce of specimens of CITES-listed species: The Secretariat introduced document (CoP16 Doc.45) and reported on the development of a CITES website portal on the e-commerce of CITES-listed species, and work with INTERPOL on creating a forum for sharing intelligence on internet-related wildlife crime. He stated that Decision 15.58 had been implemented.

The US proposed a recommendation that asks the SC, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to liaise with the World Customs Organization with regards to including CITES-listed species in the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System. The Committee accepted the deletion of Decision 15.58 and accepted the recommendation proposed by the US.

EXEMPTIONS AND SPECIAL TRADE PROVISIONS:

Personal and household effects: CHINA introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.46 (Rev.1)) and the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.13.7 (Rev.CoP14), as well as the proposed annex containing a set of guidelines for interpretation of personal and household effects.

IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, supported by KENYA and ISRAEL, proposed an additional amendment to Resolution Conf.13.7 (Rev.CoP14) to exclude all hunting trophies from exemptions for personal and household effects. SOUTH AFRICA, supported by CANADA, MEXICO, NAMIBIA and BOTSWANA, proposed excluding only rhino and elephant hunting trophies. The US suggested further discussion was needed on the appropriate scope of exclusion were it to extend beyond rhinos and elephants. SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL noted that widening the scope of exclusion would go against the consensus of the Working Group on Personal and Household Effects.

Chair Gabel suggested establishing a small working group, including IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, the US and CHINA, as Chair of the SC Working Group on Personal and Household Effects, to discuss the scope of exclusions from exemptions for hunting trophies. The Working Group will report to the Committee on Monday, 11 March.

Implementation of the Convention relating to captive-bred and ranched specimens: The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.48 (Rev.1)), highlighting that the issue

was raised in the SC because a number of parties issue permits for specimens declared as captive-bred or ranched without confirming these declarations.

SWITZERLAND, the US and IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, welcomed the draft decisions, with the latter noting that many specimens have been incorrectly marked as “ranched” in the past. INDONESIA proposed adding a paragraph in the first draft decision calling for the development of socio-economic feasibility studies. The Committee accepted the draft decisions with minor revisions.

RHINOCEROSES: The UK presented the report of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses (CoP16 Doc.54.1 (Rev.1)), which included: an annex on a strategy for reducing the demand for rhino horn products of illegal origin; and recommendations on international movement of rhino horns and rhino protection measures.

The Secretariat introduced its report (CoP16 Doc.54.2 (Rev.1)) explaining *inter alia*: the work of CITES Ivory and Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force, where information was exchanged on illegal rhino horn trade; the use of DNA forensics in cases of illegal trade; and guidelines for international exchange of CITES specimens to be used as evidence in court.

IUCN introduced its report (CoP16 Inf.51), explaining that although rhino populations had grown over the last two decades in Africa, poaching was reversing these gains. He emphasized the need for each country involved to apply “strong and deterrent penalties” to offenders, flagging Mozambique and Kenya as transit states with weak prosecution.

TRAFFIC introduced its report, contained in Annex two on African and Asian rhinos, highlighting a report by South Africa (CoP16 Inf. Doc.38) showing that half the hunting applications received have been from Viet Nam nationals. He recommended that South Africa, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe continue to report intersessionally, along with Mozambique and China, which he said are emerging as “countries of concern.”

VIET NAM, MOZAMBIQUE, ZIMBABWE and KENYA affirmed they were amending their current legislation to apply stricter penalties. ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (EIA) and WWF underscored the need for time-bound reports on CITES commitments along with recommendations for compliance measures where progress is not made. With wide support for all the reports, SOUTH AFRICA, the UK, ZIMBABWE, IRELAND on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, WWF, the US, SWAZILAND, SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL, JAPAN, KENYA, MOZAMBIQUE, CHINA, VIET NAM, NAMIBIA, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA and the SPECIES SURVIVAL NETWORK (SSN) volunteered for the Working Group, with the UK as chair.

GREAT APES: The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.49) and the draft revision of Resolution Conf.13.4 on conservation of and trade in great apes (CoP16 Doc.49 Annex 1). She reviewed the report of the Secretariat’s technical missions to Gabon, Cameroon and Uganda to assess current enforcement activities and identify best practices and challenges in these gorilla range states.

UGANDA, supported by CAMEROON, SIERRA LEONE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, RWANDA, TRAFFIC and UNEP, requested the establishment of a working group to draft amendments to Resolution Conf.13.4 concerning, *inter alia*, a monitoring system to mitigate illegal trade. TRAFFIC underscored the scale and severity of illegal international trade in great apes, driven by demand in Asia. CHINA stated that they followed CITES regulations when importing great apes.

The Committee convened a drafting group to prepare a decision directing the SC to establish an intersessional working group to further revise Resolution Conf.13.4, and UGANDA agreed.

The Committee noted the document (CoP16 Doc.49) and accepted the proposed revisions to Resolution Conf.13.4 (CoP16 Doc.49 Annex 1), with the understanding it can be further revised. The Committee also noted the recommendations (CoP16 Doc.49 Annex 2), and suspended further discussion until a new draft decision had been finalized.

ASIAN BIG CATS: The Secretariat introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.50 (Rev.1)), highlighting a “relatively poor” response rate on reporting in compliance with Decisions 15.46 and 15.47 on Asian big cats. He also noted the activities of the Global Tiger Initiative, Project Predator and the guide for enforcement officers prepared by the EIA.

The discussion was suspended to allow parties time to review the document, in light of new comments from the Secretariat. The US, INDIA, IRELAND, on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, CHINA and MALAYSIA offered to confer with the Secretariat to review those revisions. Discussion on this item was postponed until Monday, 11 March.

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAH: ETHIOPIA introduced the document (CoP16 Doc.51 (Rev.1)), highlighting that Somalia, in particular, has been reported as a commonly used transit route for the illegal trafficking of cheetahs.

SOUTH AFRICA supported the amendments on the draft decisions submitted by the Secretariat. She objected to employing an independent consultant for the study, noting range states could provide the information to the Secretariat. BOTSWANA and the Secretariat agreed. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES noted that the document does not explain the other threats to the species. ETHIOPIA, in response to a question from QATAR, said the goal of proposed decisions is to assess the scale of the trade, not to blame the Middle East.

The Committee accepted the document and draft decisions with the Secretariat’s amendments.

IN THE CORRIDORS

In theory, the weekend offers delegates a break from business attire, meeting rooms and agenda items after six non-stop days of CITES negotiations, not to mention the Standing Committee meeting that preceded the CoP. In practice, delegates will be busier than ever as they dash from working groups to drafting groups to regional meetings and back to working groups. The IPBES working group has completed its tasks, but the working groups on trade in elephant specimens, CITES and livelihoods and permits and certificate verification are still deliberating and while the one on the cross-border movement of musical instruments continues to be conducted. “At the CoP at The Hague, we used to ride bicycles on the weekend,” one participant reminisced jokingly. “Here I don’t have time to go on a CITES field trip!” But CITES is renowned for accomplishing ambitious agendas despite being short on time and other resources. “The crammed days can be a strain,” said another participant, “but we’ve also made good progress on many agenda items in and out of official meeting hours.” On Friday alone, over twenty turtle species were listed in Appendix II, with annotations and Appendix transfers of several others, prompting one delegate to crown it “the turtle CoP.” Delegates hope the weekend will prove equally productive in advancing the CITES agenda in other ways pointing to opportunities to convince additional parties to support species listings.