

SUMMARY OF THE SIXTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE: 27 NOVEMBER-1 DECEMBER 2017

The sixty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 27 November - 1 December 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 600 participants from national governments, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. The Committee addressed a long agenda, considering, among other issues, progress in: National Ivory Action Plans implementation; tackling illegal trade in pangolins; assessing Japan's introduction of sei whales from the high seas; and compliance with the Convention in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Guinea. The Standing Committee established 27 intersessional working groups that will report back to its next meeting in October 2018.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CITES

CITES was established as a response to growing concerns that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many species of plants and animals around the world. The Convention was signed by representatives from 80 countries in Washington, DC, on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975. There are currently 183 parties to the Convention.

The aim of CITES is to ensure that international trade of wild animal and plant species does not threaten their survival. CITES parties regulate wildlife trade through controls and regulations on species listed in three appendices. Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade, permitting such trade only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix-II species are those that may become endangered if their trade is not regulated, thus they require controls aimed at preventing unsustainable use, maintaining ecosystems and preventing species from entering Appendix I. Appendix-III species are those subject to domestic regulation by a party requesting the cooperation of other parties to control international trade in these species.

In order to list a species in Appendix I or II, a party needs to submit a proposal for approval by the Conference of the Parties (CoP), supported by scientific and biological data on population and trade trends. The proposal must be adopted by a two-thirds majority of parties present and voting. As the trade impact on a species increases or decreases, the CoP decides whether or not the species should be transferred or removed from the appendices.

There are approximately 5,600 fauna species and 30,000 flora species protected under the three CITES appendices. Parties regulate international trade of CITES species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens listed in its appendices are imported, exported, or introduced from the sea. Each party is required to adopt national legislation and to designate two national authorities, namely, a Management Authority responsible for issuing permits and certificates based on the advice of a Scientific Authority. These two national authorities also assist with CITES enforcement through cooperation with customs, police and other appropriate agencies. Parties maintain trade records that are forwarded annually to the CITES Secretariat, thus enabling the compilation of statistical information on the global volume of international trade in an appendix-listed species.

The operational bodies of CITES include the Standing Committee (SC) and two scientific committees: the Plants Committee (PC) and the Animals Committee (AC).

CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES: The first CoP was held in Bern, Switzerland, in November 1976, and subsequent CoPs have been held every two to three years. The CoP meets to, *inter alia*: review progress in the conservation of species

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included in the appendices; discuss and adopt proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II; consider recommendations and proposals from parties, the Secretariat, the SC and the scientific committees; and recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention and the functioning of the Secretariat. The CoP also periodically reviews the list of resolutions and decisions, as well as the species listed in its appendices.

CITES CoP13: CoP13 met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 2-14 October 2004. Delegates addressed a range of topics, including 50 proposals to amend the CITES appendices. CoP13 approved the listing of ramin, agarwood-producing taxa, the great white shark, and the humphead wrasse in Appendix II, as well as the uplisting of the Irrawaddy dolphin from Appendix II to I. Regarding the African elephant, Namibia saw its request for an annual ivory quota rejected, but was allowed to proceed with a strictly controlled sale of traditional ivory carvings. Delegates also agreed on an action plan to curtail unregulated domestic ivory markets. Namibia and South Africa were each allowed an annual quota of five black rhinos for trophy hunting, and Swaziland was allowed to open up strictly controlled hunting of white rhinos. Other decisions focused on synergies with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity, while enforcement issues also received considerable attention.

CITES CoP14: CoP14 met in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 3-15 June 2007. Delegates addressed a range of topics including: the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013; a guide on compliance with the Convention; management of annual export quotas; and species trade and conservation issues, including Asian big cats, sharks and sturgeons. Delegates agreed that no cetacean species should be subject to periodic review while the International Whaling Commission moratorium is in place. CoP14 approved the listing of slender-horned and Cuvier's gazelles and slow loris on Appendix I and Brazil wood, sawfish, and eel on Appendix II, and amended the annotation on African elephants to allow a one-off sale of ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe with a nine-year resting period for further ivory trade. The media spotlight was on negotiations on the future of ivory trade and African elephant conservation, with many highlighting the consensus by African range states as a major achievement of this meeting.

CITES CoP15: CoP15 met in Doha, Qatar, from 13-25 March 2010. The meeting considered 68 agenda items and 42 proposals to amend the CITES appendices. CoP15 adopted resolutions and decisions directed to parties, the Secretariat and Convention bodies on a wide range of topics including: electronic permitting; Asian big cats; rhinoceroses; bigleaf mahogany; and Madagascar plant species. Regarding species listings, CoP15 decided to list, among others: Kaiser's spotted newt, five species of tree frogs, the unicorn beetle, rosewood, holywood, and several Madagascar plant species.

CITES CoP16: CoP16 met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3-14 March 2013. The meeting adopted 55 new listing proposals, including on sharks, manta rays, turtles and timber. Nine proposals were rejected (Caspian snowcock, Tibetan snowcock, saltwater crocodile, Siamese crocodile, South American freshwater stingray, Rosette river stingray, blood pheasant and two species of freshwater turtles). Three proposals were withdrawn: on Southern white rhino and two African elephants, and three were not considered: on Indochinese box turtle, Ryukyu

black-breasted leaf turtle, and Annam leaf turtle. The CoP also adopted strong enforcement measures to address wildlife crime.

CITES CoP17: CoP17 convened from 24 September through 4 October 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa. CoP17 was the largest CITES meeting to date, with more than 3,500 participants representing 152 governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and media. Delegates considered 90 agenda items and 62 species-listing proposals submitted by 64 countries. Resolutions and decisions were adopted on, *inter alia*: actions to combat wildlife trafficking; demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species; provisions on international trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II aimed at enabling better controls of the sustainable and legal origin of those specimens; illegal trade in cheetahs; elephants and trade in ivory; agarwood-producing taxa; and ebonies.

CITES AC29 and PC23: The Scientific Committees convened from 18-27 July 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. During AC29, participants piloted a new process for a review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity. They also adopted recommendations on, among other things, sharks, snakes, freshwater stingrays, sturgeons and paddlefish, and nomenclature. During their Joint Meeting, the AC and PC considered guidance on non-detriment findings, collaboration with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and annotations, and also adopted recommendations on, among other things, terms of reference for a planned study on specimens produced from synthetic or cultured DNA. At PC23, participants adopted recommendations on, *inter alia*: rosewood timber species; timber identification; Malagasy ebonies, palisanders and rosewoods; and cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. They discussed agarwood-producing taxa, African cherry, and annotations for Appendix-II orchids. Both AC29 and PC23 adopted recommendations, for animals and plants respectively, on the review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix-II species and the periodic review of species included in the CITES appendices.

SC69 REPORT

On Monday, 27 November, CITES Secretary-General John Scanlon welcomed participants to Geneva, likening the gathering to a "mini-CoP." He highlighted a recent UN General Assembly Resolution on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife (A/RES/71/326) and called for increased efforts to put CITES-listed timber on a legal and sustainable footing. He stressed the SC's "supportive and non-adversarial" approach to CITES compliance matters. SC Chair Carolina Caceres (Canada) noted the packed agenda at SC69 and urged participants to summon a "spirit of collaboration" to complete the work required before SC70 and the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18). SC69 then adopted the meeting's agenda (SC69 Doc. 1 (Rev.1)) and the working programme (SC69 Doc. 2 (Rev.1)).

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

RULES OF PROCEDURE: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the document on the adoption of Rules of Procedure (SC69 Doc. 3). She noted that CoP17 had adopted a series of decisions on amended Rules of Procedure, aimed at aligning as closely as possible the rules of the SC and scientific committees with those of the CoP. She presented the proposed Rules of Procedure for the SC in SC69 Doc. 3 Annex 2, noting these had been prepared following comments from SC members on earlier

drafts. The SC agreed to two amendments to the draft rules: amending the language in Rule 12 on information documents to specify their definition; and clarifying in Rule 18 that both SC member and non-SC member parties may participate in subcommittees.

On admission of observers in Rule 4, the European Union (EU) proposed and the SC agreed to delete a provision that observers could be removed from the SC by a decision of one-third of the committee. On Rule 14, regarding points of order, the US proposed and the SC agreed that parties who are not members of the SC should also be allowed to raise points of order for clarification, with the understanding that such interventions not include requests for votes. The SC agreed to Japan's proposal on Rule 19 on the "Executive summary and summary record" to return to the previous practice of SC decisions coming into effect upon endorsement of the executive summary, to ensure authorities had time to prepare for implementation, although also agreed this might be further discussed intersessionally.

In light of divergent views within the SC, several matters were deferred to an intersessional working group. These include whether to mandate the Secretariat to forward requests for observer status to the Chair (Rule 4), whether decisions on participants joining and withdrawing from intersessional working groups should be made by the Secretariat or by working group chairs (Rule 17), and on the procedure for intersessional decision-making (Rule 20). On the latter, concerns included the need to clarify the rules for decisions taken intersessionally, including on postal processes and time allotted for proposed changes, and divergent views were expressed on the conditions under which intersessional working groups should be formed and whether amendments or only objections would be considered in comments on intersessional decisions.

In the interim, for the purposes of SC69, the SC agreed to the rules as specified in SC69 Doc. 3 Annex 2, with amendments to the proposed language on Rule 20 to delete text in "exceptional cases."

Outcome: The SC adopted the amended Rules of Procedure, and agreed that an intersessional working group would address the Rules of Procedure for both the SC and the CoP.

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS: On Monday, the SC noted the list of organizations invited to attend the meeting, as contained in document SC69 Doc. 5 (Rev.1).

FINANCIAL MATTERS: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 7, noting that as of 31 July 2017, more than 41% of the Secretariat's budget remained unpaid for the year and this will have a negative impact on the Secretariat's ability to fund daily operations. The SC noted the document.

ACCESS TO FUNDING: Global Environment Facility: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 8.1. The World Bank, on behalf of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), highlighted the GEF-7 replenishment entry points for CITES for accessing funding for combating illegal wildlife trafficking. Mexico called for support for funding for legal and sustainable use of natural resources. The SC noted the document.

External Funding: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 8.2 on sources of funding other than the GEF, highlighting the need for a Wildlife Donor Roundtable with a particular focus on the sustainable use of wild fauna and flora.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and encouraged parties to provide financial support for organizing a Wildlife Donor Roundtable with particular focus on the sustainable use of wild fauna and flora.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: Administrative matters including host country arrangements for the Secretariat:

On Monday, the Secretariat reported on the administrative performance of the Secretariat since CoP17 (SC69 Doc. 9.1), highlighting, *inter alia*: staffing changes, vacancies, and administrative changes introduced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The SC noted the report.

Switzerland announced it would provide 1 million Swiss Francs to the CITES Secretariat each year, starting in 2019. The US and Secretary-General Scanlon expressed gratitude for this support.

Administrative hosting models for the Secretariat: On Monday, SC Chair Caceres reported that the intersessional working group established by SC68 to review administrative hosting arrangements for the CITES Secretariat had not held discussions due to a lack of data on cost estimates for different hosting options. She proposed that the Finance and Budget Subcommittee review the matter and provide recommendations to the SC when possible. The SC noted the oral report.

Finance and Budget Subcommittee: On Friday, Norway, as chair of the Finance and Budget Subcommittee, presented the report of the working group (SC69 Com. 3), and the SC agreed to the recommendations in the report.

Outcome: The SC adopted recommendations from the finance and budget subcommittee (SC69 Com. 3), including, *inter alia*:

- on finance, to approve reports on the costed programme of work for 2016 and for 2017 up to 31 July 2017, and take note of projected overspending in 2017;
- on administration, to request the Secretariat to continue its consultations with Switzerland on the enhanced support by Switzerland to the CITES Secretariat and the implementation of the Convention; and
- on administrative hosting models for the Secretariat, request the finance and budget subcommittee to continue work on exploring the potential costs and benefits of alternative administrative hosting arrangements.

Report of UNEP on administrative matters: The SC noted SC69 Doc. 9.3.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 18TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES: On Monday, underscoring his country's commitment to sustainable trade and conservation of wild fauna and flora, Sri Lanka informed the SC of the preparations for CoP18. He announced the dates for the meeting, with SC71 starting on 21 May 2019, followed by CoP18 from 22 May to 3 June 2019. Secretary-General Scanlon lauded Sri Lanka for its cooperation and collaboration in preparing for CoP18, noting that deadlines for submitting documents prior to the CoP would be announced in a notification to parties.

STRATEGIC MATTERS

REVISION AND REPLACEMENT OF THE CITES

STRATEGIC VISION: 2008-2020: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 10, calling for the establishment of a Strategic Plan working group with a mandate to, *inter alia*, review progress in implementing the 2008-2020 CITES Strategic Vision against the adopted indicators, taking account of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and any emerging replacement for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets.

Outcome: The SC established an intersessional Strategic Plan working group to be chaired by the SC Chair.

RULES OF PROCEDURE: Review of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 11.1, reminding the SC of several unresolved issues on Rules of Procedure at CoP17, and noting the SC was tasked with reviewing the CoP Rules of Procedure. As recommended, the SC decided to convene an intersessional working group, chaired by SC Chair Caceres, to address the CoP Rules of Procedure and present its work to SC70 to enable the SC to propose amendments at CoP18. The working group was also tasked with addressing outstanding issues related to the Rules of Procedure of the SC (SC69 Doc. 3, see discussion above).

Review of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17): On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 11.2, noting it should be read in conjunction with documents on the Rules of Procedure and potential conflicts of interest in the AC and PC. He noted that the document contains a list of issues to consider in the review of the resolution, and highlighted that the AC and PC had endorsed the approach for the revision of their terms of reference at the joint session of the AC and PC in July 2017, and had convened an intersessional working group on the matter. The SC agreed that the AC and PC Chairs would join the intersessional working group on the Rules of Procedure.

Adoption by the Standing Committee of a Code of Responsibility for NGOs participating in CITES meetings: On Tuesday, Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, introduced SC69 Doc. 11.3 on the development of a code of conduct for NGOs at CITES, noting it was supported by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

SC Chair Caceres, supported by Israel, doubted the SC held the authority to establish such a code, pointing to the CoP as the relevant body. Israel, the EU, and New Zealand expressed views that such a code was not needed, commenting that the SC Rules of Procedure already address relevant issues of observer participation and conduct. The EU raised concern about restrictions on NGO participation. Peru conveyed concern about the scope of the proposed code of conduct, noting in particular that sovereign countries can choose their own sources of funding. China supported the document. Canada shared concerns about the scope of the proposal, but noted the importance of efforts to ensure CITES remains a safe and respectful space for dialogue. Antigua and Barbuda reiterated their views on the legal authority of the SC to establish such a code, and queried whether the matter could be addressed in the Rules of Procedure working group. SC Chair Caceres noted the lack of agreement from the SC on developing a code of conduct, but noted the working group could consider issues of conduct as they see fit and encouraged those with interest in the matter continue work together.

Outcome: The SC noted SC69 Doc. 11.3 and invited parties who have an interest in proposing a code of conduct for NGOs to have further discussions on this issue for possible submission to the CoP.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS COMMITTEES: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 12, noting that no conflicts of interest have been reported or alleged within CITES.

Portugal suggested strengthening the conflict of interest policy for the CITES scientific committees to match those of other agreements and organizations, and supported requesting the Secretariat to develop a standard disclosure form for declarations of interest. The AC Chair, on behalf of the PC Chair

and supported by the US, expressed satisfaction with the current definition of and process for dealing with conflicts of interest within CITES.

Outcome: The SC requested the intersessional working group on Rules of Procedure to: assess the conflict of interest policy in the AC and PC of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17); make recommendations for refining the definition of conflict of interest, if appropriate, and for a mechanism to deal with such conflicts; and submit findings and recommendations to SC70. The SC requested the Secretariat develop and submit to SC70 a standard disclosure form for declarations of interest.

DESIGNATION AND ROLES OF MANAGEMENT

AUTHORITIES: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 13, outlining the difficulties the Secretariat has faced in determining which of multiple authorities claiming to be Management Authorities is authorized to communicate with other parties and the Secretariat and to represent a party at CITES meetings. The Secretariat suggested drafting a CoP resolution to summarize the responsibilities allocated to CITES Management Authorities and clarify the procedures for their designation. Many parties supported forming an intersessional working group to assist with drafting such a resolution.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group to assist the Secretariat in the preparation of a new resolution on Management Authorities for consideration at SC70.

DEMAND REDUCTION: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 15, encouraging parties, *inter alia*, to make a clear distinction between legal and illegal wildlife products when undertaking demand-reduction initiatives, and avoid using “demand-reduction” as a title of future working documents, draft decisions and resolutions; and inviting the SC to agree that CITES guidance on demand-reduction strategies is needed.

The EU expressed preference for the use of the expression “demand-reduction strategies” but did not think the SC could impose language. The Secretariat agreed to withdraw this language.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and requested that the Secretariat develop guidance on demand-reduction strategies.

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 16, recalling that some parties supported the proposed draft resolution, but that others suggested either that the proponents consider presenting a revised version for consideration at CoP18 or that a new resolution was not needed, since relevant guidance was already provided in Resolution Conf. 16.6 on CITES and livelihoods.

Peru called for a working group on food security. The EU, Israel, New Zealand, the US, Kenya, Nigeria, and Humane Society International on behalf of four other organizations opposed making livelihoods or food security criteria for listings in CITES appendices, with several parties also opposing the formation of an intersessional working group on the subject. TRAFFIC and IUCN suggested that the working group, if formed, should liaise with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management.

Namibia clarified that they had no intention to change or amend CITES listing criteria, and called for an intersessional working group on livelihoods and food security.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group, chaired by Namibia, to: consider the proposed resolution on food security and livelihoods; consider incorporating these

issues into an existing resolution or a draft decision; and make recommendations to SC70.

LIVELIHOODS: Report of the Secretariat and Report on the CITES and Livelihoods workshop: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 17.1, noting that China had offered to hold a workshop on CITES and livelihoods in 2018. South Africa introduced the report on the CITES and livelihoods workshop held in Colombia in 2015 (SC69 Doc. 17.2 (Rev.1)), highlighting the creation of a CITES and Livelihoods Handbook and the recommendations generated at the workshop, including to include a new section on socio-economic considerations in the preamble to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17).

Canada noted the importance of sustainable use of wildlife to indigenous peoples and offered to assist in translating the Handbook into French. Antigua and Barbuda stressed that livelihood issues are fundamental to species survival in small island developing states. The EU, supported by New Zealand, Israel, Sri Lanka, the US, and Kenya, opposed workshop recommendations that suggest changing the definition of listing criteria or the way non-detriment findings (NDFs) are performed.

Expressing concern over the perception that CITES listings can negatively impact communities, New Zealand called for case studies of positive impacts. IUCN offered to assist with case studies on the benefits of sustainable trade for livelihoods. China called for an intersessional working group on livelihoods. Peru stressed the need for training to use the Handbook and Kenya, supported by Chad, suggested that an intersessional working group focus on practical training with the Handbook.

FAO, on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, offered support to parties in implementing CITES decisions with impacts on rural communities and livelihoods. Species Survival Network stressed that livelihood issues are addressed by a multitude of other organizations and processes.

Outcome: SC69 formed an intersessional working group on livelihoods, co-chaired by China, South Africa, and Peru, to provide advice to parties and support to the Secretariat on the implementation of Decisions 17.36 to 17.40 on livelihoods.

ENGAGEMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE CITES PROCESSES: On Wednesday, SC Chair Caceres introduced SC69 Doc. 14, noting it had been prepared in consultation with Namibia and Ethiopia.

Namibia underscored their commitment to enhancing the participation of rural communities in CITES, highlighting CoP17 decisions on the mandate, composition, and operation of the planned intersessional working group on the issue and urging that the working group meet in person to facilitate communication and exchange. UNEP committed to funding for the working group, noting a meeting would need to take place before the end of February 2018 and highlighting SC69 Inf. 26 on involving communities in sustainable wildlife management and combating illegal wildlife trade.

Several participants supported the formation of the working group, including South Africa, Indonesia, and China. Peru questioned the need for the working group, noting that in her country rural communities already participate in CITES through the government in line with national legislation. SC Chair Caceres appreciated different national contexts, but clarified that the CoP had mandated the SC to form the working group.

Canada noted the working group was in line with its reconciliation goals with indigenous people, and, with Kenya, proposed the names of potential rural community representatives.

The Bahamas, supported by Antigua and Barbuda, urged the inclusion of small island developing states in the working group. Botswana championed co-management approaches with rural communities, and Senegal urged the equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of conservation.

Numerous interventions, including those from Israel, Austria, and India, requested clarity and transparency on how rural community participants would be chosen for the working group. Brazil requested the preliminary list of rural communities. Humane Society International, on behalf of several observers, raised concern about forming the working group prior to developing criteria for the selection of rural community representatives.

Outcome: The SC identified parties interested in the intersessional working group, and tasked the working group chair, Namibia, to identify representatives of rural communities, taking into account regional balance and the advice of parties.

TERMINOLOGY IN RELATION TO RURAL, INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 25 noting the Secretariat had examined Convention resolutions and decisions and found that language on rural, indigenous, and local communities was rarely consistent. She outlined Decision 17.57, which directs the SC to consider the need to harmonize this terminology. Portugal stressed that the common understanding of the term “community” proposed by the Secretariat in the document remains unclear. The US, supported by Indonesia and Peru, proposed that the SC be asked to “note,” not “endorse,” the Secretariat’s proposed understanding of community, and to consider whether harmonization of terminology was needed.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the recommendations, with amendments, and added consideration of terminology to the agenda of the working group on engagement of rural communities (established through the amended recommendations in SC69 Doc. 14)

COMMUNITY AWARENESS ON WILDLIFE

TRAFFICKING: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 18, highlighting the proposed study on rural communities that live in the immediate vicinity of conservation areas in source countries. The SC noted the report.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 19. Secretary-General Scanlon noted how parties can access GEF funding through interrelationships between CITES and other conventions, and stressed the need to look beyond biodiversity-related conventions for opportunities for cooperation.

The EU and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) lauded enhanced cooperation between CITES and CMS. WWF, on behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), TRAFFIC, and IUCN, called attention to poaching and illegal logging at UN Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites and the need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and joint programme of work between CITES and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The SC took note of the document and of the observations provided by parties on the importance of cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES): Reports of the Secretariat and Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees: On Wednesday, the Secretariat provided an oral report on CITES' engagement with IPBES, including through an IPBES thematic assessment on sustainable use, which, he said, requires funding. The SC established an intersessional working group chaired by the SC Chair.

Outcome: SC69 noted the information provided in the oral report of the Secretariat and established an intersessional working group on IPBES, chaired by Canada, with a mandate to, *inter alia*, ensure that there is an effective two-way relationship between CITES and IPBES.

CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 21 on progress made in implementing decisions on capacity building and on consolidating and rationalizing capacity-building activities.

Niger called for transparency, and the Bahamas for balance, in the allocation of CITES resources for capacity building. Canada expressed support for developing a typology or prioritization of capacity-building activities. The US stressed the need for innovation in capacity building, including through the use of virtual methods.

Outcome: SC69 noted the document, supported the capacity-building approaches outlined therein, and requested the Secretariat to further consider these approaches and advise the SC more precisely on how to consolidate and rationalize capacity building.

UN WORLD WILDLIFE DAY: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 22, describing events organized for World Wildlife Day 2017. He announced that the theme for World Wildlife Day 2018 will be big cats with the slogan: "Big Cats: Predators under Threat."

Outcome: The SC established an intersessional working group on World Wildlife Day, chaired by China, with a mandate to contribute ideas and recommend a theme for World Wildlife Day 2019 for the Secretariat to report to SC70.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE YOUTH FORUM FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE AND SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAMME: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 23.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and encouraged South Africa to integrate CITES in its Youth Conservation Programme.

REVIEW OF RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 26, highlighting proposed corrections and revisions to certain resolutions.

Canada and the US offered several non-substantive textual amendments, and the US said it disagreed with combining two ranching resolutions.

Outcome: SC69 agreed to the proposed editorial corrections from the US and Canada.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

NATIONAL LAWS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 27 (Rev.1) on national laws for the implementation of the Convention and SC69 Inf. 20 on the status of legislative progress

for implementing CITES. Outlining the status of legislation across a number of CITES parties, she encouraged the SC to note the "immense progress" made.

A number of countries, including Niger and China for the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), reported on progress made in their national legislation, with some, such as Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, and Botswana noting they were in the final stages of processes that would allow their legislation to be assessed as Category 1. Chile encouraged parties without CITES-compatible legislation to avail themselves of support from the Secretariat.

The EU welcomed progress on legislation by some parties, including Morocco, but expressed regret that many countries had made little or no progress. He advised additional compliance measures be taken, proposing that countries that were issued warnings following SC67 but do not report on progress by SC70 be subject to trade suspensions.

The US commended countries with legislation now in Category 1, underscoring that the lack of adequate national laws undermines the Convention. She supported the identification of additional priority countries, and counseled the consideration of further compliance measures for those that had not reported on progress in spite of warnings.

Outcome: The SC agreed to amended recommendations on national laws, to, among other things:

- congratulate Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Israel, Kuwait, and Morocco for their efforts leading to placing their legislation in Category 1;
- identify Botswana, Guinea, Congo, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), and Uzbekistan as additional parties requiring priority attention;
- request a formal letter be sent to Kazakhstan; and
- request Mongolia and Tunisia to report on progress, and issue warnings of trade suspensions if no reports are submitted.

COMPLIANCE REPORT: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the three-part compliance report (SC69 Doc. 29.1 (Rev.2)). On part one, she outlined: introduction from the sea by Japan of specimens from the North Pacific population of the sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*); trade in specimens of West African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) by China and Nigeria; CITES permits issued with the exporting or importing country listed as "Republic of Kosovo"; and associated recommendations.

Raising concerns about potential commercial purposes for processed parts and derivatives of sei whales harvested by Japan for scientific research, Niger, New Zealand, Guatemala, Senegal, Argentina, Australia, Mexico, Kenya, the US, and the EU called for a non-compliance assessment and/or a technical mission to Japan by the Secretariat. Antigua and Barbuda highlighted the conflicting demands faced by Japan under CITES and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. Japan stressed the rigor of its scientific programme and its timeliness in reporting to the Secretariat. Animal Welfare Institute, on behalf of fifteen observer organizations, urged the SC to determine that Japan is in "persistent and intentional" non-compliance with CITES.

China and Nigeria stressed the authenticity of CITES export permits issued and accepted by each party for *P. erinaceus*, and highlighted their bilateral mechanism for trade. Expressing doubts over the legality of trade in *P. erinaceus*, Senegal, the US, and the EU suggested parties should not accept any CITES permit or certificate issued by Nigeria unless its authenticity had

been confirmed by the Secretariat. The SC Chair suggested that China, Nigeria, and the Secretariat confer on China and Nigeria's bilateral mechanism.

Kosovo, supported by the EU and the US, affirmed its sovereignty and did not endorse the Secretariat's characterization of its statehood. The SC Chair suggested, and the SC agreed, that the associated recommendation be withdrawn.

On part two, the Secretariat presented suggested convening an intersessional working group to explore options to establish a Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) and improve the handling of compliance matters. The EU supported the creation of a CAP to assist countries with compliance, but said it should focus on assisting countries with achieving compliance in practice and resist changing how compliance is handled. The EU, supported by Kuwait, also suggested that the Secretariat prepare the proposal for the CAP with details on budgetary implications. Israel agreed with the addition of a request that the Secretariat issue a notification to parties and observers for input. The Secretariat agreed to these requests.

On part three, on guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of CITES specimens, the Secretariat reported that, pending confirmation, a workshop on legal acquisition would tentatively be held in Brussels from 13-15 June 2018. He noted that the workshop would consider the issue of the verification of the legal acquisition of founder stock of captive-bred CITES-listed species, citing a case involving Bolivia and the US of the hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*). The US and Bolivia expressed divergent views on the hyacinth macaw and its inclusion in the workshop agenda, with the US, supported by the EU, preferring bilateral discussions with Bolivia. Following extensive discussion, and with opposition from Bolivia on the matter of the macaw, the SC agreed that range states would be encouraged to participate in the workshop, which would include consideration of the legality of founder stock, and that the specific Bolivia-US case would be deferred to bilateral discussions.

Outcome: The SC agreed on the following (SC69 Doc. 29.1 (Rev.2)):

- with regard to Japan on introduction from the sea of specimens from the North Pacific population of the sei whale: the Secretariat should assess the response provided by Japan and, in consultation and cooperation with the party concerned and the SC Chair, determine whether there is additional information to be considered and whether a technical mission to the country should be conducted to assess the scientific, administrative, and legislative arrangements for authorizing the introduction from the sea of specimens from the North Pacific;
- with regard to trade in specimens of *P. erinaceus*: parties should not accept any CITES permit or certificate for *P. erinaceus* issued by Nigeria unless its authenticity has been confirmed by the Secretariat, noting that China and Nigeria have an existing CITES document-exchanging mechanism to verify the authenticity of CITES permits and certificates;
- regarding possible establishment of a CAP: the SC requests the Secretariat to submit to its 70th meeting a proposal on the matter;
- regarding guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of CITES specimens: the members of the SC as well as parties and interested observers are invited to provide relevant information to the Secretariat;
- regarding guidance for verifying the legal acquisition of founder stock of captive-bred CITES-listed species to be exported: the Secretariat should include the issue of the

legal acquisition of founder stock of captive-bred CITES-listed species on the agenda of the international workshop in Brussels; and

- parties concerned by potential disputes with respect to the interpretation or application of the provisions of the present Convention regulating captive-breeding operations should be encouraged to explore bilaterally all possible solutions and exhaust all possible avenues of negotiation.

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII: Application of Article XIII in Guinea: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 29.2.3, noting concerns that prompted the suspension of trade and highlighting limited progress on the enforcement of the Convention. She suggested undertaking a new technical mission to assess the administrative and legislative arrangements for the implementation of CITES in Guinea.

Outcome: The SC requested the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to conduct a technical mission to Guinea to assess the administrative and legislative arrangements for the implementation of CITES in Guinea and to consider the need for additional or revised measures.

Application of Article XIII in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Application of Article XIII in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the six themes of SC69 Doc. 29.2.1 on Application of Article XIII in the Lao PDR and, *inter alia*, recommended parties maintain the suspension of commercial trade in specimens of Thailand rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*) from Lao PDR until scientifically based NDFs are made to the satisfaction of the Secretariat. The Secretariat also advised creating a Committee on Tiger Farms composed of government officials, relevant national organizations, members of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, the CITES Secretariat, and others.

Portugal noted limited progress in the last three years, highlighting that National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs) are not in place, tiger farming continues, and illegal wildlife trade is rampant. He suggested issuing a warning to Lao PDR in addition to existing recommendations. Lao PDR invited a further fact-finding mission. The Global Tiger Forum called for phasing out of tiger farms.

The SC established an in-session working group, chaired by Portugal.

On Monday, the Secretariat also introduced SC69 Doc. 29.2.2 on Application of Article XIII in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) asking for the country to, *inter alia*: establish an efficient information system; take steps to implement CoP Decision 17.256 on African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*); not establish experimental export quotas as part of scientific surveys of the species; and take urgent steps to further the implementation of its NIAP and report on progress to the Secretariat according to the agreed deadlines.

DRC noted its implementation of reforms and affirmed its commitment to no trade in African grey parrots despite having entered a reservation to their transfer to CITES Appendix I. He also expressed concern over pangolin trade.

The SC agreed that the in-session working group on the application of Article XIII would address this issue.

On Friday, the EU introduced SC69 Com. 8, noting, *inter alia*, that, with regard to Lao PDR there is no need to define "finished products." On DRC, with regard to the African grey parrots, *inter alia*, he suggested DRC adopt a regulatory act to implement the moratorium to suspend trade.

Outcome: On Lao PDR (SC69 Com. 8), the SC recommended, *inter alia*, that parties maintain the suspension of commercial trade in specimens of the species *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, including finished products, until that party makes scientifically based NDFs for trade in the species to the satisfaction of the Secretariat. The SC recommends that the Lao PDR, *inter alia*,

- implement its new criminal legal framework in relation to illegal trade in wildlife, notably the relevant provisions of the amended Penal Code;
- develop and enact legislative guidelines for wildlife farming;
- formalize an agreement on mutual assistance between CITES management authorities and customs to strengthen cooperation and ensure the expeditious exchange of information;
- create a Committee on Tiger Farms composed of government officials, relevant national organizations, members of the Cat Specialist Group, the CITES Secretariat and others; and
- conduct an inventory of the tigers kept in captivity in the farms, combined with a marking scheme and genetic analysis of the animals to establish their origin.

On DRC (SC69 Com. 8), the SC recommended, *inter alia*, that:

- a non-party to the Convention for *P. erithacus* treat the species as if it were included in Appendix II for all purposes, and suspend the issuance of export permits for commercial and non-commercial trade in specimens of wild origin until it is in a position to make scientifically based NDFs for trade in the species; take steps to implement CoP Decision 17.256 on African grey parrots;
- the DRC not establish experimental export quotas as part of scientific surveys of the species in the country; and
- the SC invite DRC to adopt a regulatory act to implement the moratorium.

ILLEGAL TRADE IN SPECIES: GREY PARROT (*P. ERITHACUS*): On Friday, Chad, on behalf of Republic of Congo, introduced SC69 Doc. 29.4. The SC noted that many of the recommendations in this document are already reflected in SC69 Com. 8. DRC agreed and welcomed transboundary collaboration. The SC noted the document.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE IN SPECIMENS OF APPENDIX-II SPECIES: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 30, noting cases of significant trade the AC and PC identified as not related to the implementation of Article IV of the Convention on trade in selected Appendix-II species.

Outcome: The SC agreed, *inter alia*, to: retain Togo in the review of the emperor scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*) and to maintain the suspension of trade; remove the flat-faced seahorse (*Hippocampus trimaculatus*) from the review in Thailand, noting however that suspension of exports of *Hippocampus* spp. remains in force; and on *Hippopotamus amphibius* from Mozambique, to lift trade suspension and removal from the review process.

ENFORCEMENT MATTERS: Report of the Secretariat and International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 31.1 and Doc 31.2, highlighting the global collective effort in recent years to combat illegal trade in wildlife. They noted that the implementation of Decision 17.85, directing the SC to examine mechanisms to facilitate the efficient international movement of samples for forensic or enforcement purposes, was addressed under the agenda item on simplified procedures for permits and certificates. Canada lauded the fact that enforcement representatives from a variety of countries are participating in SC

meetings. Israel highlighted the “intimate links” between wildlife crime and money. Niger requested a report of the meetings attended by the CITES Secretary-General.

Outcome: SC69 noted both documents and requested the Secretariat to continue to explore options to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between CITES and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and UN Convention against Corruption, and agreed to involve the Society for Wildlife Forensic Science and its members in the implementation of Decision 17.85, and welcomed the generous support of donors for the implementation of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime Strategic Programme 2016-2020.

Combating Wildlife Cybercrime: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 31.3, calling for an intersessional working group to address the issue. Portugal noted that addressing the online dimension of wildlife crime is critical. China highlighted the commitment of Chinese websites, such as Ali Baba, to combating wildlife cybercrime.

Outcome: The SC established an intersessional working group on wildlife cybercrime, chaired by Kenya, with a mandate to consider whether further measures are required to combat wildlife cybercrime and if so, propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) or a new resolution on wildlife cybercrime of specimens of CITES-listed species and report to SC70.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION RELATING TO CAPTIVE-BRED AND RANCHED SPECIMENS:

On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 32. Peru suggested the review should not refer to “non-wild” species but rather to species “not taken from the wild.” Canada, supported by Israel, Mexico, and the US, called for a more neutral and balanced document, with the US noting that, as written, it does not address the problem of the intentional misuse of source codes to circumvent the Convention.

Global Eye drew attention to the challenge of verifying that any given specimen was bred in captivity and called for more transparency on how CITES Management Authorities make such decisions.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group, chaired by the US, to provide advice to the Secretariat upon request.

DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED SPECIMENS: Report of the Secretariat and report of the co-leads: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 34.1, highlighting a questionnaire carried out to review the use and usefulness of the CITES guidelines for the disposal of confiscated live specimens.

Outcome: The SC agreed, *inter alia*, to re-establish the working group chaired by Switzerland and Israel, taking into consideration amendments to the mandate made by parties.

SPECIMENS PRODUCED FROM SYNTHETIC OR CULTURED DNA: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 35, highlighting the annex with terms of reference for a planned study on specimens produced from synthetic or cultured DNA.

Guatemala stressed that wildlife parts or derivatives produced synthetically should be considered akin to those bred in captivity. Norway emphasized the importance of collaboration with other multilateral environment agreements (MEAs), including the CBD and its protocols, and especially the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology. The US stressed that resolving how biosynthetic materials fit within CITES should take priority over reviewing methods of production or technical classifications.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group, chaired by Mexico, to review the findings and recommendations of the Secretariat's report on wildlife products produced from synthetic or cultured DNA, as well as the recommendations of the AC and PC, and make recommendations for consideration at CoP18, including appropriate revisions to existing resolutions.

NATIONAL REPORTS

ANNUAL ILLEGAL TRADE REPORTS: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 28.3, noting that 48 reports have been received to date but none had yet been analyzed, and asking for approval of the guidelines for the preparation of the CITES illegal trade report contained in Annex 1. Several parties expressed support, with the US proposing some amendments, including that it should be noted that the guidelines are non-binding. Israel asked to include cooperation with INTERPOL and their Ecomessage system database, but the Secretariat noted that the database is not relevant.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare, on behalf of several organizations, asked for the reports to be made public in the interest of transparency.

On Friday, the SC reviewed SC69 Com. 1, which contains editorial changes to SC69 Doc. 28.3 to maintain the voluntary nature of the guidelines.

Outcome: The SC adopted the document amended to emphasize the voluntary nature of the guidelines and noted, *inter alia*, the information and preliminary proposal from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for the development of a database to store and manage illegal trade data. The SC also endorsed the requirements concerning the storage and management of data collected through the annual illegal trade reports.

SUBMISSION OF NATIONAL REPORTS: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 28.1, noting that five countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Dominican Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, and Saint Lucia, have not provided annual reports for three consecutive years without adequate justification.

Outcome: The SC determined that the named countries failed to provide reports and noted that the Secretariat would issue a notification not to issue any trade documentation until the reports are submitted.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ANNUAL REPORT DATA:

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 28.2, noting that the only way users can access the CITES Trade Database is through a simplified search interface provided by UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), which aggregates its search results automatically. He explained that, as a result, users don't know whether they are looking at information on trade at the permit level or at an aggregate level.

The US, Australia, and others favored keeping the information aggregated, noting that sharing of information at the permit level may be used for generating illegal permits and trade.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and invited the Secretariat to further explore options with UNEP-WCMC for the management and maintenance the CITES Trade Database.

TRADE CONTROL AND TRACEABILITY

PURPOSE CODES ON CITES PERMITS AND

CERTIFICATES: On Wednesday, Canada introduced SC69 Doc. 37, noting that differing interpretations of these codes by import and export countries had led to discrepancies in trade data.

Outcome: The SC agreed to an intersessional working group on the matter, chaired by Canada.

SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE FOR PERMITS AND

CERTIFICATES: On Friday, the Secretariat gave an oral report, highlighting recommendations relating to simplified procedures for permits and certificates in SC69 Doc. 31.1 on enforcement and Doc. 50 on sharks and rays, and recent notifications requesting parties to report on the use of simplified procedures and any difficulties encountered. The Secretariat suggested establishing an intersessional working group on the matter.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group, chaired by Australia, to examine relevant decisions and directions to the SC pertaining to simplified procedures and provide recommendations to SC70.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE SEA: On Friday, the SC considered SC69 Doc. 36 on decisions related to Resolution Conf. 14.6 (Rev. CoP16) on introduction from the sea.

Outcome: SC69 instructed the Secretariat to issue a notification requesting parties to submit information for consideration at SC70 on challenges faced in implementing Resolution Conf. 14.6 (Rev. CoP16), including provisions on chartering.

DEFINITION OF THE TERM "APPROPRIATE AND

ACCEPTABLE DESTINATIONS": On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 39, recalling that time and resource constraints had hindered the development of a planned report, and that AC29 had convened a working group to develop findings and recommendations for AC30 on the matter. In light of the short timelines between AC30 and SC70, the Secretariat invited the SC to convene an intersessional working group to consider the outcomes of the AC working group.

Speaking to the application of decisions on these definitions, Niger on behalf of the African Elephant Coalition, Senegal, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and Humane Society International on behalf of several observers, raised concerns about trade in, the treatment of, and destinations for African elephants. Burkina Faso pointed the SC to the information document on challenges to CITES regulation of international trade in live, wild-caught African elephants (SC69 Inf. 36).

Outcome: The SC agreed to convene an intersessional working group chaired by the US.

TRACEABILITY: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 42, including a draft work programme for the working group on traceability.

Outcome: The SC agreed to establish a working group chaired by Switzerland and Mexico.

STOCKS AND STOCKPILES OF SPECIMENS OF

CITES-LISTED SPECIES: On Wednesday, Israel introduced SC69 Doc. 43, noting the lack of consistent guidance, definitions, and procedures related to stocks and stockpiles of CITES-listed specimens, and highlighting the draft terms of reference (ToR) in the annex for a working group on the issue. The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), on behalf of three other organizations, suggested amending the ToR to include guidance for the safe disposal of dead confiscated plant materials. Israel, Canada, the EU, and South Africa agreed to meet to make minor edits to the ToR and recommendations for the SC.

On Friday, Canada, presented the revised terms of reference for the intersessional working group on stocks and stockpiles (SC69 Com. 4). He presented minor textual amendments to clarify the ToR, and the SC agreed to the terms, as revised.

Outcome: The SC formed the intersessional working group chaired by Israel (SC69 Com. 4).

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES: On Wednesday, Switzerland introduced SC69 Doc. 40, noting that a questionnaire on planned and ongoing projects for electronic CITES systems had been developed along with a framework for the implementation of electronic CITES systems. He recommended re-establishing the intersessional working group on electronic systems and information technologies.

The Bahamas said that most countries that would benefit from this system lack the resources for its implementation.

Outcome: The SC agreed to re-establish the working group chaired by Switzerland.

TRANSPORT: Transport of live specimens: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 41.1, highlighting the need for full compliance with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) live animal transport regulations along with CITES permits for trade to be legal and noting that IATA and the Secretariat are preparing a joint awareness-raising campaign for actors involved in the transport of live animals. The SC noted the document.

Request for engagement of the CEOs of airlines and maritime shipping companies and executive bodies governing their activities: On Thursday, Zimbabwe presented SC69 Doc. 41.2, explaining that the decision of several air and maritime shipping companies to stop transporting legally acquired wildlife specimens has harmed southern African economies and rural communities, and called for the SC Chair to engage with the CEOs and governing bodies of these companies to address these challenges.

Japan and Mozambique supported Zimbabwe's proposal. Canada and Israel suggested, and SC Chair Caceres agreed, that such action might be outside the mandate of the SC Chair.

Recalling that its members have authority over their own commercial decisions, IATA affirmed its willingness to continue to assist the Secretariat in providing companies with information on conservation, legal trade, and other relevant matters needed to inform their decisions.

Outcome: The SC noted the document presented by Zimbabwe, and agreed to encourage the Secretariat to continue to engage with transport sector in providing information on functioning of CITES, and noted the continued willingness of IATA to assist the Secretariat in providing information to its members.

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIMENS IN TRADE: Tiger skins and Identification Manual: Reports of the Secretariat: On Friday, the SC considered SC69 Doc. 44.1 and Doc. 44.2. The Secretariat provided an oral update with two amendments: the first concerning Thailand's response to the notification regarding photographic identification databases for tigers and the capacity to identify tigers from photographs of tiger skins; and the second concerning details provided by India on their tiger database in SC69 Inf. 34. The Secretariat noted this information would be made available on the CITES website after the meeting.

The Russian Federation informed the SC of their informal database of photographs of tiger skin obtained from camera traps. India requested the submission of photos from other parties to cross-reference with their database. Indonesia said that all range states need their own databases. Global Tiger Forum offered to serve as an intergovernmental conduit in the sharing of tiger skin photos. WWF, speaking on behalf of numerous observer organizations, encouraged parties that have made tiger skin seizures to take photographs and share them with India, Thailand,

and Russia, noting that to date only Nepal has shared photographs of seized specimens, and requested the Secretariat to issue a notification to this effect.

Outcome: The SC: noted the documents; called on tiger range states to provide the Secretariat with information requested in the relevant notification to parties; and invited parties to provide financial support to the Secretariat for assessing the feasibility of establishing a central repository of photographs of wild tigers and seized tiger skins.

SPECIES SPECIFIC MATTERS

MALAGASY EBONIES (*DIOSPYROS* SPP.) AND PALISANDERS AND ROSEWOODS (*DALBERGIA* SPP.):

Report of Madagascar and Report of the Secretariat: On Tuesday, Madagascar introduced SC69 Doc. 49.1 (Rev.1), noting that significant progress had been made since 2014, but that much work remained, requiring the involvement of all stakeholders implicated in the relevant decisions on Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) and palisander and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.) adopted at CoP17. Madagascar requested the current trade suspension to be lifted and for technical and financial assistance.

The Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 49.2, noting an ongoing lack of financial resources and good governance in implementing enforcement measures. He proposed to maintain the recommendation for parties not to accept exports or re-exports for commercial purposes from Madagascar of specimens of *Diospyros* spp. and *Dalbergia* spp. until Madagascar has complied with relevant provisions in Decision 17.204 by, *inter alia*, significantly strengthening control and enforcement measures against illegal logging and export at the national level.

The EU, supported by the US, agreed to maintain the trade suspension, noting that most of the infringement cases reported by Madagascar involve small traffickers. He expressed concern over the perverse economic incentive created by allowing the sale of seized and "declared" stockpiles.

The World Bank called for greater technical and financial assistance to Madagascar. EIA called upon Madagascar to ensure the safety of civil society who expose illegal trade in ebonies.

The SC established an in-session working group chaired by Canada.

On Friday, Canada, presented the report (SC69 Com. 10), noting that consensus was not reached. Canada said the majority of working group participants agreed to maintain the recommendation for parties not to accept exports or re-exports for commercial purposes from Madagascar of specimens of *Diospyros* spp. and *Dalbergia* spp. On the proposal to recommend that transit and destination parties suspend commercial trade in stockpiles of seized specimens of these species, China, supported by the Secretariat, Canada, and the US, said this went beyond the mandate of the SC. The US suggested that the SC urge Madagascar to make progress in its plan to identify and take control of undeclared, hidden stocks of *Dalbergia* spp. and *Diospyros* spp. The EU agreed to the deletion of reference to transit and destination parties suspending commercial trade in rosewood from Madagascar, but requested his concerns be reflected in the summary record. He also requested additional text to clarify that when developing action plans, parties should follow the guidelines of Resolution Conf. 17.8 on disposal of the illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species. Madagascar committed to "redoubling its efforts" on this issue, and invited the Secretariat for a Technical Mission before

SC70. The SC agreed to the recommendations in SC69 Doc. 49.2 as revised in SC69 Com. 10, with the amendments agreed in plenary.

Outcome: The SC agreed (SC69 Com. 10), *inter alia*:

- to maintain the recommendation for parties not to accept exports or re-exports for commercial purposes from Madagascar of specimens of *Diospyros* spp. and *Dalbergia* spp.;
- to urge Madagascar to make progress in its plan to identify and take control of undeclared, hidden stocks of these species;
- to invite transit and destination parties to implement Decision 17.203;
- and, in developing action plans, to effectively manage timber stockpiles of *Dalbergia* spp. and *Diospyros* spp. from Madagascar, to follow the guidelines of Resolution Conf. 17.8 on disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species, and report progress to SC70.

ROSEWOOD TIMBER SPECIES [LEGUMINOSAE (FABACEAE)]: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION 17.234 - FOLLOW UP ON PC23 OUTCOMES:

On Thursday, the PC Chair introduced SC69 Doc. 56, highlighting outstanding issues, including on the interpretation of pre-Convention specimens with regards to rosewood harvested from plantations, reservations entered by India and Indonesia that generated “confusion,” and documents issued for export purposes. She also highlighted the recommendation for a study on currently listed rosewood timber species, as well as on those not included in the Appendices to the Convention, in particular species highly sought after in timber trade. The US suggested that SC69 could propose such a study and seek funding for it.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and outstanding issues and encouraged interested parties to initiate a study and share results.

LEGAL AND ILLEGAL TRADE IN BREAD PALMS

(ENCEPHALARTOS SPP.): On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 52. The EU suggested additional guidance for range states on the reporting of seizures.

Outcome: The SC encouraged, *inter alia*: parties to register nurseries producing artificially propagated specimens of *Encephalartos* spp. and all range states to strengthen measures to regulate the activities of exporters of artificially propagated specimens to ensure the legal origin of stocks and to prevent specimens from the wild from entering illegal trade.

ELEPHANTS: Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 51.1 and its associated annex (Doc. 51.A), outlining the four-part document. In discussions, SC members and observer parties expressed support for the first four recommendations, *inter alia*, to note the planned meetings of the Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) subgroup during SC69.

Thailand proposed an additional recommendation for Asian elephant range states to share lessons learned and experiences with registration systems. Expressing concern about poaching, trafficking, and transboundary elephant movements, Niger, supported by the EU, encouraged parties to undertake forensic analysis of ivory stockpiles. Burkina Faso advocated for increased exchange among source, transit, and destination countries to address poaching, and urged parties to provide information to MIKE and ETIS in a timely way. The United Arab Emirates

objected to a suggestion in the annex report that it was not addressing transit of ivory, pointing to ivory seizures as evidence of its work to stop illegal trade.

On the recommendation to advise the Secretariat on whether to disseminate the stockpile management system of the NGO “Stop Ivory” to parties, and make it available on the CITES website, opposing views were expressed. Namibia praised NGOs for their efforts in assisting CITES parties in addressing their commitments, but said that the Secretariat should not publish systems developed by outside organizations. Viet Nam and China pointed to the distinct situations of different countries, with Viet Nam stating that standardizing stockpile systems would impose an “undue burden” on parties. Agreeing with China that countries may choose to use different systems, the US suggested the Secretariat make the system available online as one possible tool. South Africa advised that if the Secretariat were to publish the system, it should also publish other available management systems.

On Friday, Canada presented the report of the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup (SC69 Com. 11). Singapore proposed minor amendments to, *inter alia*, the terms of reference for a review of the ETIS program.

Outcome: The SC agreed to, *inter alia* (SC69 Doc. 51.1 and SC69 Com. 11):

- encourage parties to consider trends in illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens and poaching when implementing CITES provisions on trade in elephant specimens;
- remind parties to use UNEP-WCMC guidelines when preparing and submitting CITES annual reports on trade in hunting trophies of African elephants; and
- recognize contributions made to the African Elephant Fund.

The SC also agreed to the additional recommendation to urge Asian elephant range states to exchange lessons learned and experiences regarding registration systems for live Asian elephants; and take note of the stockpile management system produced by Stop Ivory as one management system available to parties, noting that the system has been used by some parties and inviting the Secretariat to review the system and advise on aspects that may be useful for parties for meeting reporting requirements.

Implementing aspects of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. Cop17) on the closure of domestic ivory markets: On Tuesday, Niger presented SC69 Doc. 51.2, including recommendations to, *inter alia*, ask the Secretariat to issue a notification to parties to remind them of recommendations adopted by CoP17 urging the closing of domestic ivory markets (DIMs). The SC Chair, supported by Canada and Uganda, suggested deferring consideration of the recommendation pertaining to NIAPs to the agenda item on NIAPs.

The Russian Federation urged the consideration of each separate proposed DIM closure. Chad, Uganda, Gabon, and WCS on behalf of ten observer organizations, stressed the difficulty of managing illegal ivory flows as long as DIMs exist. The Secretariat noted that, as requested in Decision 17.87, they had contracted independent consultants to undertake a study of the domestic controls in consumer markets for specimens of CITES-listed species for which international trade is predominantly illegal, including ivory, and report findings to SC70.

The EU, Kenya, Uganda, and Gabon supported the recommendations as presented in the document. South Africa said that only DIMs that contribute to poaching or illegal trade should be closed. Kenya observed that no instrument exists for assessing

the contribution of legal DIMs to poaching or illegal trafficking. Senegal said that DIM closure is a matter of domestic legislation. Ivory Education Institute of Los Angeles, on behalf of IWMC World Conservation Trust, suggested that reducing ivory supply by closing DIMs without addressing demand would increase pricing and poaching.

Outcome: The SC, *inter alia*:

- commended the efforts made or underway by some parties to close their DIMs in conformity with the provisions in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17); and
- directed the Secretariat to issue a notification to all parties requesting information on the status of the legality of their DIMs and their efforts to implement the provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).

Implementing the CoP17 Decisions on ivory stocks and stockpiles: On Tuesday, Niger introduced SC69 Doc. 51.3 and highlighted the need for guidance on how to dispose of ivory stocks and stockpiles. The Secretariat said it would look at options and welcomed the financial support offered by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to undertake the relevant work under Decision 17.171 on ivory stockpiles, in particular the preparation of practical CITES guidance for the management of stockpiles, including their disposal.

Outcome: SC69 agreed to recommendations in the document, including to see a timeframe and detailed cost estimate from the Secretariat for completing the work detailed in Decision 17.171 and renew the call for further external contributions to ensure that the decisions adopted by CoP17 can be fully and swiftly implemented.

Update on the Elephant Protection Initiative: On Tuesday, Kenya introduced SC69 Doc. 51.4, asking the SC to note the Elephant Protection Initiative and its achievements to date. SC69 noted the document.

National Ivory Action Plans process: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 29.3 and Annexes 1-16, recommending, *inter alia*, issuing a “written caution” to Togo. He noted that during the Secretariat’s consultation with parties identified in the CoP17 ETIS Report as possible new participants in the NIAP process, including Singapore, several indicated that they do not agree with the methodology, findings, and conclusions of the report. He emphasized that the Secretariat conveyed the concerns regarding the ETIS report methodology raised by Singapore and SC members to TRAFFIC.

In response to the Secretariat’s request, South Africa provided a brief oral report on progress in combating illegal trade in ivory. Kenya and Uganda asked to be removed from the process. Qatar acknowledged that it is a transit point for illicit ivory consignments but noted it does not have a domestic market for ivory and its products.

The SC established an in-session working group, chaired by Canada, to discuss the document and its recommendations, with the caveat that the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup would be tasked to advise on whether a process is needed to revise the ETIS methodology.

On Friday, Canada, presented the recommendations as revised by the working group and noted that details on NIAP implementation and suggestions to improve the process would be compiled in an information document. Ethiopia, supported by Niger and Chad, suggested an extension for the timeframe for parties to submit NIAP reports and requested a reconsideration of the imposition of the trade suspension for parties who fail to submit reports on time. Kuwait requested the deferral of a

decision on the NIAP process for Qatar until SC70, following a technical mission from the Secretariat. Inviting the Secretariat for a technical mission to his country prior to SC70, Qatar outlined its efforts to combat illegal trade in ivory, and China appreciated the efforts of Qatar. The EU supported the working group recommendations, underscoring the importance of NIAPs as instruments against ivory trafficking. He added that although the EU would have preferred the inclusion of additional details on NIAPs, including the appointment of experts, in the SC recommendations, they supported the compromise decision to have these details in an information document. Canada noted that both matters had been “extensively discussed” by the working group, recalling that the 60-day timeline was in addition to an already mandated time period for parties and explaining that although Qatar had presented an information document on its efforts, the working group nonetheless requested it continue in the NIAP process.

Outcome: The SC adopted recommendations to, *inter alia*:

- include Qatar in the NIAP process;
- not include Sri Lanka and Singapore in the NIAP process at present;
- request Viet Nam and Malaysia to revise and update their NIAPs and Togo to submit its revised NIAP to the Secretariat;
- agree on an overall rating of “limited progress” for Congo, Gabon, Lao PDR, DRC, and Cambodia, and “partial progress” for Mozambique; and
- issue warnings for Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Tanzania as parties that have not submitted reports on progress with NIAP implementation to submit these reports and, if no reports are received, to impose trade suspensions.

Review of Resolution Conf. 10.9 on Consideration of proposals for the transfer of African elephant populations from Appendix I to Appendix II: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 70, calling for establishing an intersessional working group to review this resolution.

Ethiopia, supported by Niger, noted this resolution is redundant and advised to recommend that CoP18 repeal it. The US supported the establishment of a working group and disagreed at this stage advising to repeal the resolution before full consideration of all options. Namibia called upon following the mandate of the working group. New Zealand suggested that establishing the working group does not preclude recommending that it repeal the resolution.

Outcome: The SC established the intersessional working group chaired by Germany, and asked that it report back at SC70.

PANGOLINS: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 57 and its associated annexes, recalling that all eight pangolin species were uplisted to Appendix I at CoP17 and that the IUCN report indicates that large quantities of pangolin scales continue to be seized in spite of the uplisting.

SC members and observer parties shared concerns about threats to pangolins, with many interventions underscoring the challenges of illegal trade. Substantial debate focused on permits and certificates for pangolin specimens (paragraph 59a), especially with respect to the interpretation of Convention provisions around pre-Convention and pre-Appendix I-listed specimens (paragraph 49).

Many, including Niger and Senegal, emphasized the need to stop all trade in pangolin specimens, including of stocks acquired before the Appendix I uplisting. The EU doubted that NDFs could be formed for pangolin products, including for scales obtained prior to the Appendix I listing. International Fund for Animal

Welfare, with several other observers, urged against authorization of trade regardless of the source of pangolins, and suggested the destruction of stocks of scales to prevent them from entering the market.

Recalling historic interpretations of pre-Convention specimens and those from uplisted species, and recognizing the differing interpretations of parties, the Secretariat called for removing ambiguity from previous resolutions, especially Resolution Conf. 13.6, referring to Article VII on exemptions and other special provisions relating to trade. SC Chair Caceres noted that it was in the mandate of the CoP to provide final guidance on the matter, but that a SC working group could discuss how to bring this forward to the CoP.

The US said that international trade in pre-Appendix I specimens contravenes longstanding interpretation and practice of the Convention while China underscored the “principle of non-retroactivity of law.” The DRC proposed corrections to data in the document on the amount of pre-Convention pangolin stocks held in his country.

The SC formed a working group on pangolin, chaired by South Africa, tasked with focusing on, *inter alia*, the issue of stocks acquired prior to the Appendix I listing and permits and certificates for trade, including developing guidance for moving forward on the interpretation of provisions on pre-Convention and pre-Appendix I listed specimens.

On Friday, South Africa introduced SC69 Com. 9, noting support for a recommendation that parties treat pangolin specimens obtained when the species was listed in Appendix II as Appendix I specimens and regulate trade in accordance with Article III of the Convention until a decision is made by CoP18. China, supported by Kuwait, opposed language in the report of the working group, and stated that treating Appendix II stockpiles of pangolin specimens as Appendix I is a “voluntary stricter measure” that is not an obligation of a party.

Niger expressed the opinion that any species acquired before being listed under Appendix I should be treated as Appendix I, to avoid risk of pangolins being laundered as pre-Appendix I specimens. The EU proposed maintaining the recommendation that parties treat specimens as proposed by the report of the working group with the deletion of “until a decision is made by CoP18.” Canada noted that Sri Lanka supported the outcomes of the working group with no amendments. Ethiopia, Israel, and New Zealand supported the report’s recommendations. The Russian Federation, noting that “we cannot ignore China,” highlighted similarities between saiga horn and pangolin stockpiles and called for establishing baselines.

The Secretariat noted that it is not within the SC’s mandate to interpret the language and thus this issue would have to be considered by CoP18. SC Chair Caceres emphasized that the recommendation to treat pre-Appendix I specimens as Appendix I is “guidance.” Israel called for a vote under Rule 15.1 (SC69 Doc. 3 Annex II).

The SC was called to vote on the entire set of recommendations in SC69 Com. 9. Ethiopia, Niger, the EU, Israel, Portugal, Canada, New Zealand, Indonesia, Bahamas, Guatemala, and Peru supported the recommendations. China, the Russian Federation, and Kuwait opposed them. As per Rule 15.2 (SC69 Doc. 3 Annex II), with a simple majority achieved, SC69 Com. 9 was adopted. China asked for their dissent to be recorded.

Outcome: The SC, in the interim and until a decision is made by CoP18, recommended that parties treat specimens, including stockpiles, of Appendix I species of pangolin obtained when the

species was listed in Appendix II as Appendix I specimens and regulate trade in accordance with Article III of the Convention, and to:

- maintain an inventory of government-held stockpiles of pangolin scales and other specimens, including seized and confiscated specimens and, where possible, of significant privately held stockpiles of pangolin scales within their territory, and inform the Secretariat of the level of this stock and date of acquisition, the source of the stockpile, and the reasons for any significant changes in the stockpile before 28 February;
- provide, to the Secretariat, scanned copies of all permits and certificates that have been issued prior to January 2017, but not yet used, to authorize trade of stocks obtained prior to the transfer of all pangolin to Appendix I, as well as the NDFs; and
- inform the Secretariat if presented with any fraudulent documents involving pangolin specimens.

RHINOCEROSES: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 60, highlighting missions by the Secretariat to Mozambique and Viet Nam and the recent approval of amended conservation laws and penal codes in these countries, enabling authorities to take stronger action against wildlife crime.

Noting that only ten parties had declared stocks of rhinoceros horn to the Secretariat, as urged for in Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17), Kenya requested that the SC urge parties to fully comply with these declarations using the template provided by the Secretariat. The EU, supported by the US and IUCN, on behalf of TRAFFIC and WWF, called for the establishment of an intersessional working group on rhinoceros and requested reports from priority countries, including Namibia and China, at SC70. Canada suggested rewording certain recommendations directed at Mozambique and Viet Nam to focus on the illegal rhinoceros horn trade, rather than wildlife crime more broadly. India requested a status update from Viet Nam at SC70 on the implementation of their new penal code, and the US requested that this report also include updates on regional and bilateral activities.

Outcome: The SC encouraged:

- Mozambique to strengthen efforts to address criminal syndicates and initiate targeted, intelligence-driven law enforcement action; and include in its report on the implementation of its National Ivory and Rhino Action Plan to SC70 details on the implementation of and arrests and convictions associated with the amended Conservation Law;
- South Africa to closely review poaching and trafficking trends to ensure that any new crime trends that may emerge regarding any regulatory measures for domestic trade in rhinoceros horn in South Africa are swiftly identified and addressed; and
- Viet Nam to scale up efforts to map out organized crime groups active in the country that deal in rhino horn; and through Viet Nam Wildlife Law Enforcement Network, convene multi-disciplinary investigative teams to work in close collaboration with local authorities in key areas involved in the illegal rhino horn trade; to institutionalize the collection of samples of rhino horn from seizures for forensic analyses; to develop country-specific guidelines and materials that can assist officers to identify worked rhinoceros horn and ivory specimens worn as jewelry; and to submit a progress report on the implementation of the new Penal Code 2017 at SC70.

The Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on rhinoceroses, chaired by the UK, to, *inter alia*: make recommendations, as appropriate, with a focus on countries

identified for priority attention; and review and evaluate reports submitted by Mozambique and Viet Nam when available.

GREAT APES: On Friday, the Secretariat offered a brief oral report, highlighting the partnership with the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) and the need to engage on this topic by establishing an intersessional working group. The SC noted the report and agreed to establish an intersessional working group chaired by the SC Chair.

ILLEGAL TRADE IN THE HELMETED HORNBILL (*RHINOPLAX VIGIL*): On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 61 (Rev.1). Indonesia called stepping up efforts to conserve the helmeted hornbill. The SC noted the document.

CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*): On Wednesday, the Secretariat presented SC69 Doc. 45, which provides an update on the implementation of decisions on cheetahs adopted at CoP17 as well as recommendations adopted at SC66. The Secretariat noted it had not yet received funding to develop a CITES cheetah trade resource kit.

Kuwait observed that the 2018 UN World Wildlife Day theme presents a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of cheetah conservation, illegal trade, and threats to their survival in the wild. CMS highlighted the Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivores Initiative, which aims to bring more coherence to the implementation of relevant conservation measures within CITES and CMS. The Zoological Society of London, on behalf of a number of other organizations, expressed concern about the limited response to the notification inviting parties to submit information on their measures to halt illegal trade in cheetahs.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group on cheetahs, chaired by Kuwait, to: review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, once developed, and the recommendations of the Secretariat as outlined in Decision 17.125; formulate comments and recommendations on the finalization and dissemination of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit for consideration by SC70; and provide advice to the Secretariat to support their fulfillment of Decision 17.127.

AFRICAN LION (*PANTHERA LEO*): On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 58, noting that the AC will prepare recommendations in time for SC70. He also suggested convening a second meeting of African lion range states as well as establishing an intersessional working group with a broader mandate similar to a task force. Niger, supported by Kenya and Botswana, welcomed the working group, suggesting that it consider developing an enforcement task force. Nigeria said that the working group should not replace the task force.

CMS highlighted the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative and emphasized the need to coordinate implementation of CMS and CITES decisions on the African lion. WCS called for greater transboundary collaboration and supported the establishment of the enforcement task force.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and noted the recommendation allowing the intersessional working group chaired by Niger to consider and provide ToR and *modus operandi* for a CITES task force on African lions.

ASIAN BIG CATS (*FELIDAE SPP.*): On Friday, China introduced SC69 Doc. 54, announcing, *inter alia*, a snow leopard workshop in China in 2018.

Outcome: The SC encouraged all parties, in particular Asian big cat range states and parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cats, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs to use World

Wildlife Day 2018 to enhance public awareness campaigns to promote the conservation of Asian big cats.

ASIAN BIG CATS IN CAPTIVITY: On Friday, the SC considered SC69 Doc. 33. India expressed concern that “little progress” had been made in implementing decisions. The EU stressed the need to deal with “problematic tiger farms.” Israel called attention to the government of India’s database of tiger skin photographs, and encouraged the Secretariat to consult with India to see if the database could be expanded into an international context. The Russian Federation and Thailand described actions to prevent criminal activities involving captive tigers in their country. EIA, on behalf of numerous observer organizations, voiced concern over a lack of urgency concerning parts sourced from captive facilities.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and requested the Secretariat to issue a notification on the implementation of Decision 17.226, concerning parties with facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity. The SC also requested an early deadline on notification responses in order to make information available to SC70.

ILLEGAL TRADE IN TIBETAN ANTELOPE (*PANTHOLOPS HODGSONII*): On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 59 and commended the initiative taken by Switzerland to strengthen enforcement cooperation at a global level concerning illegal trade in Tibetan antelope.

The SC Chair established an in-session working group, chaired by Switzerland, to review the report resulting from the “Operation Ring” workshop held in July 2016 and prepare draft recommendations for consideration by the SC.

On Friday, Switzerland introduced SC69 Com. 5. The US provided minor amendments.

Outcome: The SC encouraged countries affected by the illegal trade in parts and derivatives of the Tibetan antelope to:

- identify whether there are any stockpiles of raw wool or finished products of Tibetan antelope specimens in their country and report this to the Secretariat by 31 May 2018;
- consider analyzing such stockpiles for information regarding their origin to address the divergence in reported numbers of confiscations and poaching incidents;
- continue efforts towards strengthening enforcement controls; and
- identify national and/or regional enforcement strategies where the illegal trade of Tibetan antelope specimens takes place, and implement those to strengthen enforcement cooperation.

HUMPHEAD WRASSE (*CHEILINUS UNDULATUS*): On Tuesday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 48 and its associated annex. He presented recommendations that the SC be invited to, *inter alia*, review reports on the humphead wrasse, including the IUCN Species Survival Commission Specialist Group report contained in the annex, and convene an in-session working group to develop recommendations to improve the regulation of international trade and the enforcement of controls for humphead wrasse. The SC agreed to convene an in-session working group, chaired by New Zealand.

On Friday, New Zealand introduced SC69 Com. 2 and relevant recommendations.

Outcome: The SC:

- urged source and consumer states of humphead wrasse to intercept and take action on illegal shipments and share information on such illegal catch and illegal trade; and

- recognized that the novel practice of grow-out and ranching of newly settled humphead wrasse in shallow water algal beds may offer significant livelihood and stock recovery opportunities that would benefit from further research support.

STURGEONS AND PADDLEFISH

(ACIPENSERIFORMES SPP.): Definition of country of

origin of caviar: On Wednesday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 46.1, inviting the SC to consider whether the Secretariat's proposed amendments to the definition were sufficient, and, if not, to convene an intersessional working group. He also encouraged the SC to consider "creative solutions" beyond definition amendments to address issues in caviar trade and labelling. The EU, supported by Canada, appreciated the Secretariat's efforts but disagreed with the proposed interpretation of the definition, calling for a working group. Japan supported the Secretariat's proposed amendments to the CITES guidelines for a universal labelling system for the trade in and identification of caviar, following the draft definition supported by the majority of the working group on the matter at SC66. The US opposed developing a new definition for country of origin, preferring instead to revise caviar labelling guidelines. The International Caviar Importers Association raised concerns about the potential complexity of labels that might arise, and suggested the development of a companion document to CITES export documents with simplified information.

Outcome: In light of divergent views on the proposed amendments outlined in SC69 Doc. 46.1, and after discussions on issues of shared stocks, the SC agreed to a working group, chaired by Japan, to develop recommendations for SC70 on country of origin of caviar.

Stocks shared by range states and the respective species:

Report of the AC: On Wednesday, AC Chair Mathias Lörtscher introduced the document on stocks shared by range states (SC69 Doc. 46.2), highlighting recommendations to encourage CITES parties in the region to collaborate on research and, in the case of insufficient research, consider amendments to the table in Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP17) on sturgeon stocks.

Ukraine, supported by the EU and Georgia, opposed changes to the table, pointing to, *inter alia*, the outcomes of research projects in the region. The Russian Federation supported changes to the table, stating there is no available science to support the separation of sturgeon populations in the Black Sea.

Outcome: The SC agreed to encourage CITES parties in the region to collaborate on research and, while noting divergent views, to amend the recommendation on Annex 3 to specify that in the absence of clear research results, the interpretation of shared stocks will remain as it stands.

SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.): The Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 50 and its annex. Indonesia highlighted challenges related to the listings of sharks and rays, including NDFs and traceability. China noted progress on capacity building and databases on shark and ray listings, but stated that the listings were not based on science. Canada supported further discussions, but, with Sri Lanka, the US, Mexico, and Peru, opposed the amendment of Resolution Conf. 10.3 on the designation and role of scientific authorities, stating that parties have authority over their NDFs. Peru viewed Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) as a useful source of information, but clarified that countries' Scientific Authorities are responsible for NDFs. CMS encouraged the working group to review how to take account of measures under other bodies,

including RFMOs and other MEAs. IWMC World Conservation Trust noted the complexity of issuing certificates for species such as mobula rays listed under both CITES and CMS.

Outcome: The SC agreed to the amended ToR for the intersessional working group chaired by Indonesia, adding consideration of introduction from the sea of species caught as bycatch, striking consideration of amendments to Resolution 10.3, and agreeing to leave aside discussion of simplified procedures.

EELS (ANGUILLA SPP.): On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the report of the Secretariat on eels (SC69 Doc. 47.1) and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea advice for 2017 on European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) (SC69 Inf. 40), and the EU introduced the document on illegal trade in the European eel (SC69 Doc. 47.2). The Secretariat invited the SC to consider establishing an intersessional working group to review the anticipated information prior to SC70. The EU highlighted the scale of illegal trade in European eels, and encouraged range, transit, and import countries to join efforts against eel trafficking.

Underscoring the importance of eel aquaculture to domestic markets in his country and efforts to promote domestic eel management, China confirmed that they would strengthen cooperation with other parties to address illegal trade.

IUCN, on behalf of TRAFFIC and the Zoological Society of London, raised concerns about the uncertainty of modes of shipments and routes for illegal trade, and, noting shifts in demand resulting from a restriction in legal supplies of eel, urged range states of other *Anguilla* species to ensure trade is legal and sustainable.

Outcome: The SC noted the documents and agreed to establish an intersessional working group on European eel, chaired by Spain, to review information as and when it becomes available and report to SC70.

HAWKSBILL TURTLE (ERETMOCHELYS IMBRICATA) AND OTHER MARINE TURTLES (CHELONIIDAE AND DERMOCHELYIDAE): On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 53, proposing to establish an intersessional working group.

Outcome: The SC noted the document and agreed to establish the working group chaired by the US.

QUEEN CONCH (STROMBUS GIGAS): On Friday, the SC considered SC69 Doc. 63.

Outcome: The SC: took note of the document, thanked range states for the information submitted in response to the request by the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, and encouraged range states that have not yet submitted such information to do so.

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES (TESTUDINES SPP.): On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 64 with some amendments.

CITES Secretary-General Scanlon presented India with an award for "Operation Save Kurma," in which 15,912 live tortoises and turtles were seized and 55 suspects arrested.

Outcome: The SC adopted the recommendations developed by the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force, including, *inter alia*, the Secretariat's recommendation to use platforms such as INTERPOL's Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Management meetings, and the Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement meetings of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, for information sharing regarding trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles; and requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft revised version of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on the conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles.

TOTOABA (TOTOABA MACDONALDI): Report of the Secretariat and implementation of Decisions 17.145 to 17.151 on totoaba: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 65.1, noting the endangerment of totoaba and its grave implications for vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) as a result of bycatch.

Mexico introduced SC69 Doc. 65.2, highlighting progress on the implementation of relevant decisions and measures taken to increase cooperation with China and the US to combat illegal trade in totoaba.

China supported the recommendation to commission a study on the current status of totoaba and vaquita and combat illegal trade.

The EU, supported by New Zealand, expressed concern for the status of vaquita, noting strong implementation efforts are needed to avoid its extinction. Several NGOs highlighted the “catastrophic declines” of vaquita as a result of illegal gillnets, noting bans on the use of gillnets in Mexico have been insufficient.

Outcome: The SC noted progress achieved by Mexico, China, and the US in the implementation of Decisions 17.145 to 17.151 and encouraged parties to contribute to a study to be developed by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with relevant organizations such as FAO and IUCN.

SNAKES (SERPENTES SPP.): On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 62. India expressed concern for the illegal trade in snake parts for snake venom. The US, supported by Switzerland, but opposed by China and Viet Nam, recommended that Decisions 17.278 (on illegal and unreported trade in specimens, whether live or parts and derivatives, of CITES-listed snakes), and 17.281 (on reporting to the Secretariat on implementation of 17.278) remain open agenda items as they have not been implemented, with five countries failing to submit reports.

Outcome: The SC noted the report and encouraged the Secretariat to: liaise with the five remaining countries that have failed to submit reports according to Decision 17.281, and report back to SC70.

CITES APPENDIX III: On Wednesday, New Zealand introduced SC69 Doc. 66, noting that Appendix III is the least used and most poorly understood of all CITES appendices.

Outcome: SC69 established an intersessional working group, chaired by New Zealand, to: develop guidance for exporting and importing countries on the effective implementation of Appendix III, including measures to address suspected illegal international trade in Appendix III-listed specimens; and develop advice on characteristics of species that may benefit from inclusion in Appendix III.

MAINTENANCE OF THE APPENDICES

PROCEDURE FOR ENTERING RESERVATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I, II AND III: On Friday, the Secretariat introduced SC69 Doc. 67, which concerns the filing of late reservations to amendments to the CITES appendices. Switzerland described its practice of accepting late reservations in the absence of an objection, as established under customary international law, and requested guidance on whether this practice should continue for CITES. Israel, the EU, and the US said the 90-day deadline for filing reservations to amendments of CITES appendices was firm, and called for amending Resolution Conf. 4.25 (Rev. CoP14) on reservations to clarify this matter.

Outcome: SC69 welcomed the intentions of the Secretariat to submit a proposal to amend relevant elements of Resolution Conf. 4.25 (Rev. CoP14) on reservations to provide clear guidance on deadlines for submitting reservations.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE APPENDICES: REPORT OF THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS COMMITTEES: PC Chair Adrienne Sinclair introduced SC69 Doc. 68, highlighting Annexes 1 and 2, which report commercial trade data from wild sources (wild (W), ranches (R), source unknown (U), and no source reported) over the period 2006-2015. China called for argali range states to cooperate on research.

Outcome: SC69 noted the document, encouraged parties to consider allocating funds towards the periodic review process, and requested the Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC, to look into records in Annex 1, consulting with relevant parties as necessary, and report issues of concern to SC70.

LISTING OF MARINE SPECIES: Cooperation under the FAO-CITES 2006 MoU, with Special Reference to the Scientific and Technical Evaluation of Commercially Exploited Aquatic Species Listing Proposals: On Thursday, Japan introduced SC69 Doc. 71.1 and outlined a number of challenges involved in assessing listing proposals and offered recommendations to the SC to consider how to strengthen the process for providing scientific and technical advice.

Niger, supported by Sri Lanka, Israel and India, disagreed that changes were needed to the current system for scientific and technical advice. He underscored that determining positions on CITES listings is a matter of national sovereignty. Canada, supported by Norway, encouraged consultation between the FAO and CITES to improve the coherence of their advice, but viewed a formal process as unnecessary.

The EU stressed the importance of transparency in the appointment of experts to the FAO panel. China supported Japan's recommendations and stated that some proposals for commercially exploited marine species have lacked scientific data and have improperly applied listing criteria.

FAO underscored the importance of the proposal, noting it raised questions about the content and application of the CITES listing process, particularly with regard to whether it offers conservation value, respects participants, and involves the best available information in a timely way. IUCN and TRAFFIC welcomed increased efficiency and cooperation in the provision of advice on marine species.

Outcome: Noting disagreement from one SC member, who preferred to consider draft decisions on a process to strengthen scientific and technical advice, the SC agreed to: support the continued collaboration of the FAO and the CITES Secretariat and the effective implementation of the MoU; and encourage parties to consult with the CITES AC and other relevant organizations as soon as possible when parties are considering submission of proposals for marine species.

Analysis of the Relevance of the Advice Provided by the FAO Panel of Experts for Proposals on Marine Fish Species and Evaluation of the Conservation Benefits of Marine Fish Species Listed at CITES CoP16 and CoP17 On Friday, the SC noted that SC69 Doc. 71.2 was provided.

ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE CRITERIA OF RESOLUTION CONF. 9.24 (REV. COP17): On Friday, the SC noted that SC69 Doc. 72 was provided.

ANNOTATIONS: Interpretation of Annotation #15:

On Tuesday, PC Chair Sinclair introduced SC69 Doc. 69.3, recommending, *inter alia*, that several transactions be considered “non-commercial,” including: the cross-border movement of musical instruments for purposes including, but not limited to, personal use, paid or unpaid performance, display, or competition; and the cross-border movement of an item (such as a musical instrument) for the purpose of being repaired.

The EU suggested amending some of the definitions proposed by the PC. Japan asked to include “donations” among “non-commercial” transactions. On the 10kg per shipment limit, Japan suggested language indicating that when the weight of the *Dalbergia* portion is not clear, the weight limit assessment should be made on a case-by-case basis. Canada supported the interim guidance in the document but noted further clarification is needed, especially on the interpretation of the 10kg per shipment exemption. The International Association of Violin and Bow Makers, on behalf of several other groups, indicated their support for efforts to address the practical implementation challenges.

The SC established an in-session working group chaired by PC Chair Sinclair.

On Friday, the PC Chair introduced SC69 Com. 6.

Outcome: The SC agreed (SC69 Com. 6) on interim definitions for annotation #15 for the intersessional period between CoP17 and CoP18, including:

- that the following transactions be considered “non-commercial”: the cross-border movement of items (such as musical instruments) for purposes including, but not limited to, personal use, paid or unpaid performance, display, or competition; and when cross-border movement will not lead to the sale of the item and the item is returned to the country where the item is normally held; and
- that for non-commercial transactions as outlined above and for shipments for non-commercial purposes, the 10kg per shipment weight limit be interpreted as referring to the weight of the individual portions of each item in the shipment made of wood of the species concerned.

Establishment of a Working Group on Annotations: On Thursday, Canada introduced SC69 Doc. 69.1, describing the mandate of the working group on annotations and asking for its re-establishment.

Outcome: The SC agreed to re-establish the working group chaired by Canada.

Annotations for Appendix II Orchids: Report of the Plants Committee: On Thursday, the PC Chair introduced a brief oral report. The SC noted the report.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday, the SC noted the receipt of all regional reports (SC60 Doc. 73.2-6), with the exception of the report from Africa, which Botswana noted had not yet been posted.

Mexico reiterated its gratitude to the US and China, among others, for work on totoaba, and invited Secretary-General Scanlon to join a high-level mission to his country planned for 2018.

SC Chair Caceres acknowledged the SC had accepted the Russian Federation’s offer to host SC70 in Sochi, from 1-5 October 2018. The Russian Federation welcomed participants to his country.

In closing remarks, parties and SC members offered thanks to, *inter alia*, participants, the Secretariat, and Switzerland for hosting, and gave a standing ovation to SC Chair Caceres for her skill in guiding the deliberations. India presented a gift to the

Secretary-General and SC Chair in appreciation of their work. Secretary-General Scanlon underscored the complexity of the issues considered by CITES.

SC69 was gavelled to a close at 6:20 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF SC69**“DO YOU WANT TO GO FAST IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, OR VERY SLOWLY IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?”**

This question, posed by Juan Carlos Vasquez, CITES Secretariat, on the opening day of the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, underscores that progress towards species conservation and sustainable trade in wildlife requires patience and a plodding kind of perseverance. This is a difficult reality for participants to face in light of the pressing urgency of the CITES mission. Along with continued threats to iconic CITES-listed species such as African elephants and rosewood, the vaquita faces imminent extinction and illegal trade is rampant in European eel and pangolins. When it comes to conservation, there are no second chances for endangered species, yet rushing into the wrong decisions could also condemn them to extinction. As such, SC69 walked a fine line between the need for rapid action and the importance of careful deliberation, and recently-elected SC Chair Carolina Caceres (Canada) spent the week deftly navigating a packed agenda while allowing sufficient discussion on each issue.

The meeting in Geneva brought few surprises to seasoned participants, although it did offer some tense moments and, for pangolins, a vote in the final plenary. As anticipated, SC69 focused its attention on thorny debates on enforcement, illegal trade, and interpretation matters, with many issues referred to intersessional working groups. Lengthy discussions took place on how to address stocks and stockpiles of specimens from Appendix I-listed species, including elephant ivory, rhinoceros horn, and pangolin scales. Other discussions concerned interpretations and exemptions for listings, notably on annotations for high-value timber, to ensure that CITES regulations focus on the true threats to species from trade. Throughout SC69, interventions recalled the importance of trade, sustainable use, and conservation for communities, who hold close relationships to the flora and fauna at the core of CITES processes, and both contribute directly to species conservation and bear the burden of CITES regulations. That said, the definition of “community” remained subject to debate in CITES, as did the formal mechanisms through which local voices can be heard in CITES processes.

Can the Convention continue its delicate balancing act between dual commitments to wildlife conservation and sustainable use, and the paradoxical imperatives to move quickly but with considerable caution? This brief analysis considers the SC discussions in relation to increasing pressures from illegal wildlife trafficking and enforcement, long-standing debates over interpretation matters, and the call by some CITES parties for more direct community participation and outreach.

PANGOLINS PULLED IN TWO DIRECTIONS: STOCKPILED SPECIMENS WHEN TRADE HAS BEEN BANNED

The uplisting of all eight species of pangolin at CoP17 was widely hailed as a Convention success story—but the story doesn’t end there. Species listings and uplistings in the Convention only take place when international trade is deemed a threat to their survival. Consequently, stockpiles of specimens traded prior to a species listing, as well as products seized from

illegal trade following a listing, pose a particular challenge under CITES rules. Debates have raged over the decades on how to manage (and possibly dispose of) such stocks—and whether to allow parties to trade them—and participants at SC69 continued to diverge on these matters, particularly as they pertain to stocks of pre-Appendix I listing pangolin scales. Many pangolin range states urged for the treatment of all specimens under Appendix I, with concerns about the laundering of species through various exemptions and loopholes. Others argued that stockpiles of pangolin specimens acquired before the uplisting should be treated as though still listed on Appendix II. This debate continued through an in-session working group throughout the week, and provoked a vote in the final plenary on Friday afternoon, with the view prevailing—albeit contested—that it is the CoP, not the SC, that holds the authority for such interpretations. In the interim, the SC agreed to treat all pangolin parts and derivatives as though they have always been listed on Appendix I, putting the debate aside until CoP18.

FACING THE MUSIC: WHEN TRADE BANS HURT RATHER THAN HELP

A question pangolins and many other species would very much like the answer to, if they knew how to ask, is whether CITES trade bans protect wild flora or fauna or, by providing perverse incentives in the market, increase their market value, increase illegal harvest, and contribute to their decline? Queries on these dynamics echo longstanding debates in conservation of elephants, with the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme seeking to assess to what extent observed trends in illegal elephant hunting are a result of decisions taken by the CoP. Along with concerns about the increased value and illegal trade in listed and uplisted species, CITES parties also must consider the spillover pressure that trade restrictions can have on look-alike species. In discussions on eels (*Anguilla* spp.), SC participants discussed the threats to all eels, including the American eel (*A. rostrata*), from the decrease in supply in European eels (*A. anguilla*) following their Appendix II listing.

Along with the questions about illegal trade, with a report on Madagascar highlighting the problem of organized crime networks of “rosewood barons,” the SC also considered not only how the species listing posed a threat to the species itself, but also to associated artistic pursuits. The cross-border movement of rosewood-containing musical instruments—such as violins, cellos, and guitars—was thwarted in the wake of CoP17 due to new trade regulations. Industry representatives came to the recent AC and PC meetings, and again to SC69, to inform the debates on exemptions for “non-commercial” transactions of musical instruments containing rosewood. Although exemptions risk opening a can of worms, with certain parties pushing for “donations” of rosewood-containing instruments to be exempt from CITES, the SC settled on interim measures that allow the cross-border movement of instruments that doesn’t lead to the sale of the item or the item being left in a different country.

IT TAKES AN ORCHESTRA: STAKEHOLDERS AND CONSERVATION UNDER CITES

On the subject of symphonies, in which many different sounds come together, SC69 considered a suite of documents concerned with bringing the voices of indigenous people and rural and local communities into the CITES chorus. These discussions on livelihoods, food security, communities, and the definitions of these terms must be understood within the context of a broader effort across MEAs to engage stakeholders in environmental

protection and sustainability efforts. At the SC, UNEP shared an information document outlining opportunities and constraints for local stakeholders to participate in wildlife conservation across conventions, including CMS, the CBD, and CITES. Many questions were raised about how to achieve robust stakeholder engagement in both CITES decision-making and enforcement processes, while ensuring balanced representation and fair access.

While supporting non-state involvement in CITES, several NGOs pointed out that rural communities can be hard to define, and wondered how local community representatives would be chosen. Beyond the need to identify these communities, and who among them are qualified to speak for the whole—including the clarification by some governments that they already represent all their citizens—some participants noted the difficulty of ensuring that those who speak for their communities can do so without negative consequences. After all, the need to have this discussion on engagement of local communities in the first place stems from the recognition that some perspectives are not adequately heard. These discussions also highlighted the challenges CITES faces in defining the scope of its mandate. While some participants voiced the need for more direct participation by those most affected by CITES processes, especially as a way to build the trust needed to achieve effective implementation, others saw such efforts as belonging to the mandate of other international bodies and processes.

In spite of uncertainties about whether and how to expand CITES participation among stakeholders, many discussions at the SC addressed the local impact of CITES. Some comments highlighted the burdens of CITES regulations on communities. Yet other participants pointed to the positive impacts of CITES listings for communities, where much-needed wildlife resources are conserved through trade controls, noting the need for more case studies on positive impacts. In some cases, indirect impacts to local economies were highlighted; for instance, southern African countries raised concern about commercial transportation companies refusing to carry specimens—from trophy hunts, for example—despite such transport being legal under CITES. The discussions revealed an ongoing, underlying question in the Convention of how to assess and address the impact of CITES on both species and communities.

CITES: A CONVENTION OF SUPERLATIVES

In recent years, each CITES meeting has earned its own superlative: the longest agenda; the most species listing proposals; the largest participant list. As one long-standing CITES delegate observed, participation in SC69 nearly equaled some of the early CITES CoPs, and with an agenda to match. “I’m an optimist,” SC Chair Caceres confessed, “but I must admit that when I looked at this agenda, my optimism was challenged.” Nevertheless, she persisted, capably steering the gathering to an on-time conclusion, and earning a standing ovation for her work. Between now and SC70 in Sochi, Russia, twenty-seven intersessional SC working groups will convene and prepare reports, which represents a tremendous workload for parties and the Secretariat, whose staff will already be busy with technical missions, preparing studies, regional workshops, and capacity-building endeavors. As the number of species on the Appendices swell, the workload to fulfill the core requirements of the Convention for Reviews of Significant Trade, periodic reviews, and non-detriment findings for listed species also increases. Additional monitoring and reporting requirements are added—from National Ivory Action Plans to national legislation updates—as new rules and compliance measures are adopted. In light of all this, the

announcement from Switzerland of a million Swiss francs each year of future support for CITES was extremely welcome. And while the long agendas, burgeoning species lists, and ever-larger meetings pose challenges for negotiators, implementing agencies, and committees alike, the expansion of the Convention reveals that the international community is taking the threat trade poses to endangered species seriously.

While less media-worthy than musicians with violins made of rosewood or large-scale seizures of elephant tusks, procedural aspects of the Convention merit particular attention for those concerned about the future of threatened species. CITES' effectiveness hinges on the development of clear national laws, the training of border officials, and the participation of local communities in ensuring sustainable harvests and the integrity of protected areas. While discussions at the SC tackled new technological developments such as synthetic DNA, they also revealed that some CITES fundamentals remain weak, with ongoing confusion as to the appointment and identity of official Management Authorities hindering communication between the Secretariat and certain parties, not to mention between source, transit, and destination countries. As CITES parties and observers look towards the next SC meeting in Russia in 2018, then ahead to CoP18 in Sri Lanka in 2019, they will continue to walk the tightrope between urgency and caution, and between addressing new challenges while ensuring the basic administrative arrangements of CITES remain in order. At stake is the wellbeing of CITES-listed species, and also the livelihoods of the communities who live with and among them.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNEA-3: The third meeting of the Assembly, with the overarching theme of pollution, aims to deliver a number of tangible commitments to end the pollution of air, land, waterways, and oceans, and to safely manage chemicals and waste. **dates:** 4-6 December 2017 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-1234 **email:** beatpollution@unenvironment.org **www:** www.unep.org/environmentassembly/assembly

CBD SBSTTA-21 and Article 8(j) Working Group-10: The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will address, *inter alia*, the links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs, biodiversity and health, and biodiversity mainstreaming in the energy, mining and infrastructure sectors. The tenth meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will meet in parallel to SBSTTA-21. **dates:** 11-16 December 2017 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** https://www.cbd.int/meetings/

6th International Marine Debris Conference: This conference will examine the pressing need to address and reduce the impacts of marine debris to vital natural resources, human health and safety, and the economy. Objectives include: sharing lessons learned and best practices to reduce and prevent marine debris and its impacts; exchanging innovative ideas such as market incentives and communication strategies; and sharing the latest research initiatives, methods, and results. **dates:** 12-16 March 2018 **location:** San Diego,

California, US **contact:** 6IMDC Registration Coordination Team **phone:** +1-603- 862-1545 **email:** info@6IMDC.org **www:** http://internationalmarinedebrisconference.org/

IPBES-6: The sixth session of the IPBES Plenary will consider for approval four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration. The plenary is also expected to conduct regular elections of the Multi-Disciplinary Expert Panel and consider the review of effectiveness of the Platform. **dates:** 17-24 March 2018 **location:** Medellin, Colombia **contact:** IPBES Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-0570 **email:** secretariat@ipbes.net **www:** https://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-6-plenary

World Fish Migration Day: World Fish Migration Day is a one-day event seeking to raise awareness on the importance of open rivers and migratory fish. The Day takes place under the theme "Connecting Fish, Rivers and People." **date:** 21 April 2018 **location:** worldwide **contact:** World Fish Migration Day Organizers **email:** info@fishmigration.org **www:** http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com/

6th Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP): The ACAP MOP brings together the decision making body of the Agreement every three years, with MOP6 to be held in mid-2018. **dates:** 7-11 May 2018 **location:** Skukuza Rest Camp, Kruger National Park, South Africa **contact:** ACAP Secretariat **phone:** +61-3-6165-6674 **email:** secretariat@acap.aq **www:** https://acap.aq/

World Migratory Bird Day: World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. **date:** 12 May 2018 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariat **email:** contact@worldmigratorybirdday.org **www:** http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/

4th World Conference on Marine Biodiversity: This meeting will bring together scientists, practitioners, and policy makers to discuss and advance understanding of: climate change impacts on marine biodiversity; cumulative impacts of human activities on marine biodiversity; marine ecosystem safety; role of systematics in understanding ocean change; bioinformatics and data delivery; analytical approaches in marine biodiversity science; integrative frameworks for linking environmental and biological drivers of biodiversity; linking biodiversity to ecosystem function and services; blue biotechnology and marine genetic resources; marine policy and law; marine biodiversity and human health; marine biodiversity education and outreach; and strategies for conservation of marine biodiversity. **dates:** 13-16 May 2018 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** 4th WCMB Congress Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-287-9898 ext. 334 **fax:** +1-514-287-1248 **email:** wcmb2018secretariat@jpdil.com **www:** http://www.wcmb2018.org/

CBD SBSTTA-22: The twenty-second meeting of the CBD SBSTTA will address, *inter alia*: protected areas, marine and coastal biodiversity, biodiversity and climate change, and digital sequence information on genetic resources. **dates:** 2-7 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-22

CBD SBI-2: The CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation will address: review of the effectiveness of the Nagoya Protocol, the global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism under the Protocol, and specialized international access and benefit-sharing mechanisms in light of Nagoya Protocol Article 10. **dates:** 9-13 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=5691>

CITES AC30, PC24, and joint AC-PC: The thirtieth meeting of the CITES Animals Committee and the twenty-fourth meeting of the CITES Plants Committee will meet for their separate meetings as well as a joint session. **dates:** 16-27 July 2018 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland (to be confirmed) **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/eng/com/ac/index.php> and <https://eng/com/pc/index.php>

IWC-67: The 67th session of the International Whaling Commission will take place in 2018, with the dates and precise location to be confirmed. **dates:** September 2018 (to be confirmed) **location:** Bahia, Brazil (to be confirmed) **contact:** IWC Secretariat **phone:** +44-1223-233-971 **fax:** +44-1223-232-876 **www:** <https://iwc.int>

CITES SC70: The seventieth meeting of the CITES Standing Committee will take place in Sochi, Russia. **dates:** 1-5 October 2018 **location:** Sochi, Russia **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/eng/com/sc/index.php>

2nd Arctic Biodiversity Congress: The second Arctic Biodiversity Congress builds on the outcomes of the first Congress, held in Trondheim, Norway, in 2014, with the aims, among other things, of: assessing the Arctic in the context of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the SDGs; and facilitating interdisciplinary discussion, action, and status updates on the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendations and implementation actions. **dates:** 9-11 October 2018 **location:** Rovaniemi, Finland **contact:** CAFF International Secretariat **phone:** +354-462-3350 **email:** caff@caff.is **www:** www.arcticbiodiversity.is/congress

CBD COP14: The fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is expected to be held in November 2018 in Egypt. **dates:** 10-22 November 2018 (to be confirmed) **location:** Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt (to be confirmed) **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** www.cbd.int/meetings/

Raptors MoU MoS: The 3rd Meeting of the Signatories (MoS3) to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia will take place in late 2018. **dates:** last quarter 2018 **location:** to be confirmed **contact:** Raptors MoU Coordinating Unit **phone:** +971-2-6934-437/541 **email:** cmsoffice.ae@cms.int **www:** <http://www.cms.int/raptors/>

Ramsar COP13: The 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will convene under the theme “Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future.” **dates:** 21-29 October 2018 **location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Ramsar Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-01-70 **email:** ramsar@ramsar.org **www:** <http://www.ramsar.org/>

AEWA MOP7: The 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP7) to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is scheduled to take place in late 2018. **dates:** 4-8 December 2018 (to be confirmed) **location:** to be confirmed **contact:** UNEP/AEWA Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2413 **fax:** +49-228-815-2450 **email:** aewa@unep.de **www:** <http://www.unep-aewa.org/>

CITES CoP18: The 18th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18) will be held in Sri Lanka. **dates:** 22 May – 3 June 2019 **location:** Sri Lanka **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

AC	Animals Committee
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CoP	Conference of the Parties
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EIA	Environmental Investigation Agency
ETIS	Elephant Trade Information System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MIKE	Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDF	Non-detriment finding
NIAP	National Ivory Action Plan
PC	Plants Committee
SC	Standing Committee
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCMC	UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society