

## CITES CoP19 Highlights: Tuesday, 15 November 2022

The CITES Committees at CoP19 worked throughout the day with dedication. Committee I started discussion on species specific matters, while Committee II addressed financial matters, the CITES Strategic Vision and the role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence.

### Committee I

#### Species specific matters: Maintenance of the Appendices:

**Annotations:** Canada introduced CoP19 Doc.85.1, suggesting to postpone consideration of the first recommendation until discussion of CoP19 Prop 43. Committee I agreed, and adopted the remainder of the recommendations, with an amendment to the terms of reference for the SC Working Group on Annotations to examine the definitions of wood and wood products.

**Information system for trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.85.2. The EU supported conducting a feasibility study. The US suggested including consultation with the Plants Committee (PC) in the terms of reference of the feasibility study. Committee I agreed to proposed changes.

#### Identifying species at risk of extinction for CITES

**Parties:** Nigeria introduced CoP19 Doc.83. The Committee I Chair noted that the Secretariat was not supportive of the proposal. SENEGAL, NIGER, BENIN, GABON, COSTA RICA, CAMEROON, and KENYA called for more technical support to parties in drafting listing proposals and supported the proposed database. The EU, MEXICO, INDONESIA, CHINA, COLOMBIA, JAPAN, ZIMBABWE, and SWITZERLAND did not support the proposal, noting it would impose a workload and financial burden on the Secretariat and scientific committees.

The Committee I Chair suggested postponing consideration of this agenda item until the proponents refined their draft decisions for later consideration.

#### Informal review mechanism of existing and proposed

**annotations:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.85.3. The US supported the adoption of the draft decisions, noting that the review should be conducted in consultation with the Animals Committee (AC).

Committee I agreed to the document.

#### Review of the provisions of Resolution Conf. 17.7 on

**Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity:** The AC Chair introduced CoP19 Doc.54, highlighting amendments proposed to Resolution Conf.17.7 (Rev.CoP18) on review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity. Committee I Chair noted that the budget working group, and not Committee I, would determine the funding available for

the implementation of this Resolution. Several parties disagreed with proposed amendments to the resolution and suggested changes to the draft decisions.

Committee I agreed to the document with minor amendments.

**Species specific matters: Eels (*Anguilla spp.*):** The AC Chair (Switzerland) introduced CoP19 Doc.61. The UK called for strengthened coordination between export, import, and transit countries for *Anguilla spp.* IUCN, on behalf of TRAFFIC, WWF, and several other organizations, called for key export, import, and re-export countries who did not respond to the Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018 on eels to do so.

Committee I agreed to postpone discussion until the Secretariat could compile the proposed amendments for further consideration.

**Aquatic species listed in the CITES Appendices: Proposals for a new approach to the listing of sharks and rays:** Senegal introduced CoP19 Doc.87.2 on reconsidering the CITES listing criteria for sharks and rays (CITES Res. Conf.9.24 (Rev.CoP17)), calling on the Secretariat to help fund a technical workshop to examine the biological differences between these species and other highly vulnerable marine species.

BANGLADESH, SRI LANKA, GABON, MALI, and many others supported conducting a technical workshop on sharks and rays. JAPAN, the US, CANADA, and CHINA opposed the proposal, noting that the existing listing criteria (Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17)) had worked well for marine species to date.

Committee I agreed to propose a technical workshop to discuss CoP19 Doc.87.2 in the intersessional period.

**Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*):** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.77. The US noted that it remains the largest importer of Queen conch, and has actively participated in regional efforts for this species' conservation. BELIZE, as the largest exporter of Queen conch, said that its listing as an endangered species by the US will have a negative impact on his country's economy.

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions with minor amendments.

**Marine turtles (*Cheloniidae spp.* and *Dermochelyidae spp.*):** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.64.1. The US, on behalf of BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, and PERU, introduced CoP19 Doc.64.2. The UK, BRAZIL, SINGAPORE, CUBA, INDIA, JAPAN, COSTA RICA, and several other parties supported both documents.

Committee I established a working group to harmonize the documents.

### Committee II

**Administrative and financial matters: Administration, finance and budget of the Secretariat and of meetings of the Conference of the Parties:** The Secretariat introduced the report (CoP19 Doc.7.1) which Committee II noted.

**Administration of the Secretariat: Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on administrative matters:**

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) introduced CoP19 Doc7.2, stressing that UNEP and CITES remain committed to collaborating through such activities as the CITES trade database and the Green Customs Initiative. Committee II noted the report.

**Financial reports for 2020-2022:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc7.3, noting with concern that parties' delay at paying their annual contributions has resulted in a negative cash balance of 2.2 million USD. The Committee accepted the report and approved expenditures for 2020-21 and partially for 2022.

**Budget and work programme for 2023 to 2025:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.7.4, describing the three financial scenarios. Scenario 1 is zero real growth, presenting an average annual increase of US\$796,941 in the budget amount during the triennium; scenario 2 is zero nominal growth, with an average annual increase of US\$647,561; and scenario 3 is incremental growth, with an average annual increase of \$909,085. The Secretariat invited the Committee to consider scenario 3 to achieve the Convention's commitments.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION expressed support for scenarios 1 and 2, noting the need to reduce costs. BRAZIL expressed support for scenario 2. JAPAN and the US noted that none of the scenarios represent true zero nominal growth. AUSTRALIA supported scenario 3, emphasizing the world's escalating environmental challenges.

Committee II established an in-session budget working group to address documents 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, and the three budget scenarios.

**Access to funding:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.7.5, highlighting the wildlife roundtable on sustainable use convened in Kenya which explored alternative financing solutions and mechanisms for wildlife conservation. She proposed deleting the draft decisions in the document and adopting the new decisions in Annex 1.

The US supported the new draft decisions with some amendments but objected to deletion of all draft decisions in the main document. Committee I agreed to the draft decisions in Annex I as amended.

**Sponsored Delegates Project:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.7.6, highlighting proposed amendments to Resolution Conf.17.3 to ensure gender balance and a draft decision to extend sponsorship to SC meetings. Committee II agreed to amendments to Resolution 17.3 and the draft decision.

**Language Strategy for the Convention:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.8, which outlines options to expand working languages to include all six UN languages in both the CoP and the SC. KUWAIT, supported by several parties, suggested that the matter be taken up in the finance and budget working group in the coming days. Committee II agreed.

**Strategic matters: CITES Strategic Vision:** SC Chair Carolina Caceres introduced CoP19 Doc.10 and addendum, highlighting a comparative analysis of linkages between the adopted CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030 and the goals within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and a proposed map of the Vision against the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

JAPAN supported the mapping of the Vision against the GBF. NORWAY supported the view that CITES work should be undertaken in harmony with other processes. CHINA proposed

to further refine the Vision's indicators in an in-session working group.

Committee II moved to establish an in-session working group chaired by the US.

**Action plan on gender-related matters:** PANAMA introduced CoP19 Doc.25, noting that including gender issues in trade is essential to sustainability in wildlife. Parties broadly supported the initiative. INDONESIA, along with CHINA and BANGLADESH, opposed the definition of gender as "context and time-specific, and changeable," and requested revision. CANADA, supported by the US, COLOMBIA, AUSTRALIA, and ARGENTINA, suggested recognizing women and girls "in all their diversity." Committee II established a working group to consider the draft decisions and resolution.

**Maintenance of the Appendices: Communications concerning amendments to the Appendices received by the Depository Government after the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties:** The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.88, highlighting the conclusion that changes to references to resolutions are amendments that ought to follow the procedure set out in Article XV and that these may be subject to reservations.

The US, UK, PERU, CANADA, and BENIN supported the amendments proposed with some changes. Committee II established a drafting group.

**Role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade and One Health and CITES: Human and animal health risks from wildlife trade:** Committee II simultaneously considered two documents: the SC report (CoP19 Doc.23.1), and CoP19 Doc.23.2 submitted by Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal, including a resolution recommending parties to adopt a One Health approach when implementing the Convention. JAPAN, the EU, SWITZERLAND, ISRAEL, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, CHILE, the US, and the Wildlife Conservation Society largely supported adopting the SC report's recommendations. COTE D'IVOIRE, NIGER, TOGO, the US, and GABON supported adopting the recommendations in the African parties' proposal.

Committee II struck up a working group to combine the recommendations of each document into a single proposal.

***In the Corridors***

Voting is a last resort at CoP19 deliberations—consensus being the preferred tool—but it is nevertheless important to ensure that the equipment works. For this reason, day two of CoP19 began with a test vote on contentious issues: in Committee I delegates were asked, "Do you intend to watch the World Cup during CITES sessions?" while Committee II was queried, "Have you had two or more cups of coffee today?" The number of "yes" responses to each prompted much laughter and some alarm, especially when the Committee I Chair reminded delegates that "this was not a secret ballot—we know who you are!"

Despite the caffeine high, one delegate confessed that his team still wasn't "focused." This seemed true for the rest of participants: a seasoned observer noted the "slow but steady" start into proceedings. "There's time," he said, "but we need to hunker down soon." Delegates seemed most enlivened in the corridors, searching for free tote bags and stuffed animal mascots of marine species to take home as souvenirs. "It's kind of ironic," one delegate confessed: "decades of conservation work, and I'm getting a kick out of hunting sharks."