

CITES CoP19 Highlights: Wednesday, 23 November 2022

Committees gathered for the last day of deliberations before reconvening in plenary on Thursday.

Committee I

Strategic matters: Appendix-I listed species: The AC Chair (Switzerland) introduced CoP19 Doc.11.

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions as amended.

Draft decisions on non-detriment findings (NDFs): The AC Chair introduced CoP19 Doc.43.1 on NDFs.

Committee I agreed to the draft decisions as amended.

Regulation of Trade: Making non-detriment findings (NDFs) for specimens of Appendix-II species taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any state: The UK presented CoP19 Doc.43.2. The US, EU, MALI, PERU, and DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO supported the document.

Committee I agreed to the document.

Trade in stony corals: The EU presented CoP19 Doc.46. The EU, US, INDONESIA, and the UK supported the document.

Committee I agreed to the document.

Review of Resolution Conf.11.19 (Rev. CoP16): SWITZERLAND presented CoP19 Doc.44.1. MALI, INDONESIA, the EU, and the UK supported the recommendations. CHINA proposed a minor amendment.

Committee I agreed to the document.

Identification of timber and other wood products: GABON presented CoP19 Doc.44.2.

Committee I agreed to the document.

Quotas for leopard (*Panthera Pardus*) hunting trophies: The AC Chair presented CoP19 Doc.51. NIGER, opposed by many parties, proposed setting all quotas at zero until the NDF guidance on this issue is produced. The AC Chair, supported by the US and CANADA, explained that scientific assessments had already been completed by the AC, which reviewed NDFs and recommended quotas at a level determined to be non-detrimental to the survival of species in the wild. NIGER eventually withdrew the amendment.

Committee I agreed to the document as amended.

Proposals to amend the Appendices: *Claudius angustatus*: MEXICO presented CoP19 Prop.28 for the inclusion of narrow-bridged musk turtle (*C. angustatus*) in Appendix II, and highlighted that illegal harvesting for meat consumption and the pet trade remain the main threats to its population.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

***Nilssonia leithii*:** INDIA presented CoP19 Prop.33 on the transfer of Leith's softshell turtle (*N. leithii*) from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

***Kinosternon spp.*:** MEXICO introduced CoP19 Prop.29 to include twenty species of mud turtles (*Kinosternon spp.*) in Appendix II, and the *K. cora* and *K. vogti* in Appendix I.

Committee I agreed to the proposal by consensus.

***Staurotypus triporcatus* and *S. salvinii*:** MEXICO introduced CoP19 Prop.30 to include the Mexican giant musk turtle (*S. triporcatus*) in Appendix II and the Chiapas giant musk turtle (*S. salvinii*) in Appendix II.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

***Sternotherus spp.*:** The US introduced CoP19 Prop.31 to include all species of musk turtles in the genus *Sternotherus spp.* in Appendix II.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

***Apalone spp.*:** The US introduced CoP19 Prop.32 to transfer *Apalone spp.* to Appendix II, with the exception of those subspecies already listed in Appendix I.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Committee II

Strategic Matters: Role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade: CANADA introduced CoP19 Com.II.6, prepared by the working group on the basis of CoP19 Doc.23.1 and 23.2. TANZANIA suggested language requesting an assessment on the potential risk of pathogen spillover. Responding to CHILE's request to refer to "preventing" zoonotic disease, CANADA proposed using "mitigate and prevent."

Committee II accepted the document as amended.

Species Specific Matters: Elephants: Review of the National Ivory Action Plans Process: BELGIUM introduced CoP19 Com.II.7 prepared by the working group on the basis of CoP19 Doc.66.7. She noted that the timing for the SC to consider recommendations could be left more flexible. The US, supported by SENEGAL and the UK and opposed by SINGAPORE and CHINA, proposed an additional instruction in the terms of reference to consider consultations with experts to strengthen the resolution.

Committee II agreed to the document as proposed, while striking out a reference to a specific meeting of the SC.

Establishing a fund accessible to range states upon non-commercial disposal of ivory stockpiles: KENYA introduced CoP19 Com.II.9 incorporating inputs from the US and views from the Secretariat based on CoP19 Doc.66.2.2, which aims to establish an intersessional working group on sustainable financing for elephant and other wildlife conservation. GABON, TOGO, BENIN, and NIGER supported the proposal. BOTSWANA, JAPAN, SOUTH AFRICA, ESWATINI, NAMIBIA, ZAMBIA, the US, and TANZANIA rejected the document, with several elephant range states arguing that they had not been consulted in its creation, and SOUTH AFRICA calling it "mischievous and divisive." Several opposed reference to the disposal of ivory and rhino horn stocks as a prerequisite to financing for elephant conservation.

Chair Ollerenshaw proposed, as a bridging proposal, to consider the Secretariat's proposed draft decisions contained in CoP19 Doc.66.6.2. SOUTH AFRICA opposed. ESWATINI proposed establishing a new "inclusive, consultative" process on the issue. The issue went to a vote.

A motion to accept Kenya's proposal was rejected, with 50 against, 24 for, and 33 abstaining.

Pangolins (*Manis spp.*): The UK presented CoP19 Com. II.8, prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of CoP19 Docs.71.1 and 71.2, tabling a compromise package separate from the document, to be adopted by consensus. This package proposed that, rather than closing domestic pangolin markets, parties would ensure that domestic markets do not contribute to illegal international pangolin trade. CHINA, NEPAL, ZAMBIA, CHILE, ESWATINI, and the US supported the package, while KENYA, BANGLADESH, the EU, MALAYSIA, GABON, TOGO, BURKINA FASO, and BENIN rejected it. CHINA called for a vote.

A motion on whether to accept the UK proposal was rejected, with 64 against, 36 for, and 9 abstaining. A motion on whether to accept the original proposal passed, with 78 for, 17 against, and 14 abstaining. CHINA reminded parties that any decision interfering with its national sovereignty would be unacceptable.

Committee II agreed to the original proposal.

Tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines spp.*): The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.78. INDIA, PERU, and the EU expressed concern for the status of tortoises and turtles. The EU, supported by the US and PERU, offered draft decisions calling on monitoring illegal trade in Madagascar. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO rejected them. The EU proposed a revised amendment asking Madagascar to report back to the AC, which they accepted by offering to report back to AC34.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*): The UK introduced CoP19 Com.II.12, prepared by the working group on the basis of CoP19 Doc.75 (Rev.1). The US proposed language empowering the SC to lead on this issue.

Committee II agreed to the document.

Interpretation and implementation matters: General Compliance and Enforcement: CITES and Forests: The UK introduced CoP19 Com.II.11, prepared by the working group on the basis of CoP19 Doc.19. AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND supported the document, with the latter proposing to expand the proposed study to CITES-listed forest-dwelling fauna.

Committee II agreed to the draft decisions.

Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa: BELGIUM introduced CoP19 Com.II.13, prepared by the working group on the basis of CoP19 Docs.36.1 and 36.2, noting consensus reached.

Committee II agreed to the document.

Malagasy palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia spp.*) and ebonies (*Diospyros spp.*): The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.29.3, which considers, among others, a draft decision for Madagascar.

MADAGASCAR presented edits to the proposed draft decision, notably to have language to "strengthen management" of wood stocks "through traceability and control systems." The US, BOTSWANA, SENEGAL, GABON, ZIMBABWE, COMOROS, and NIGER supported the proposal. The EU proposed "securing and strengthening" management.

Committee II accepted the proposal as amended.

Regulation of Trade: Electronic systems and information technologies and authentication and control of permits: SWITZERLAND introduced CoP19 Doc.41. BOLIVIA proposed additional text.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

Disposal of confiscated specimens: The SC Chair introduced CoP19 Doc.50. The US, supported by ISRAEL, proposed an additional draft decision.

Committee II agreed to the document with additional draft decision.

Exemptions and special trade provisions: Review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source: The SC Chair introduced CoP19 Doc.53, noting some of the AC work was not fulfilled and therefore requesting for work to continue intersessionally. The US, supported by the EU, the UK and CANADA, provided some language to make the mandate more concrete.

Committee II agreed to the draft resolution and decisions as amended.

Guidance on the term "artificially propagated": AUSTRALIA introduced CoP19 Doc.56.

Committee II accepted the document as amended.

Specimens grown from wild-collected seeds or spores that are deemed to be artificially propagated: AUSTRALIA introduced document CoP19 Doc.56.

Committee II agreed to it as amended.

Specimens produced through biotechnology: The US introduced CoP19 Com.II.10, prepared by the US, on the basis of CoP19 Doc.47. The EU remarked that the document only focuses on guidance materials and proposed adding reference to resolutions. The US agreed.

Committee II agreed to the document.

Maintenance of the Appendices: Products containing specimens of Appendix-II orchids: AUSTRALIA introduced CoP19 Doc.86. The US, PERU, and others supported the document with a small amendment offered by the EU.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

Administration, finance and budget of the Secretariat and of meetings of the CoP: Budget and work programme for 2023 to 2025: LIECHTENSTEIN introduced CoP19 Com.II.14, prepared by the budget working group on the basis of CoP19 Docs.7.1, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4, noting that the working group could not reach consensus on the language strategy.

Committee II agreed to the document as amended.

Language strategy for the Convention: Committee II Chair asked parties to find resolution to this. KUWAIT, on behalf of several countries, proposed to use on an exceptional basis funds from Trust Fund to translate resolutions and decisions into Chinese, Russian, and Arabic; and provide for translation in the three languages during the CITES meetings with extrabudgetary funding. The EU and the US lamented that the strategy was left out of the budget in-session working group discussions. The EU and US supported option 2 - a limited language strategy supported by extrabudgetary funding.

Committee II Chair asked KUWAIT to prepare a new in-session document.

In the Corridors

"Stop right now/thank you very much," Committee I Chair Fleming said as he raised his hands in the immortal Spice Girls dance move and gavelled his meeting to a close. With one Chair drawing a standing ovation and the other choking up with emotion, it was clear that the Committees had discovered the value of somebody with a human touch. As 2 Became 1 and proceedings moved into plenary, delegates were pleasantly optimistic that solid achievements might Viva Forever.

Yet for everything the plenary might Wannabe, one longtime observer warned that delegates would do well to follow Scary, Sporty, Baby, Posh, and Ginger's advice: "Slow it down, read the sign/just to know where you're going." He warned if they wanted agenda items' future acceptance, such as the Appendix II listing on sharks, they might need to forget their past—and compromise. "Otherwise, it's certain the next two days are going to... spice up our lives!"