

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Fifteenth meeting of the Plants Committee and 21st meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 20-21 May 2005

PRODUCTION SYSTEMS FOR SPECIMENS OF CITES-LISTED SPECIES

The Working Group comprised regional representatives of North America (Gabble- Chairman), of Africa (Hafashimana) and Asia (Irawati) representatives of the Plants Committee and Oceania representatives of the Animals Committee (Hay), the observers from Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Slovakia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Zimbabwe, IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Born Free Foundation USA, IWMC-World Conservation Trust, Species Management Specialist Inc., Species Survival Network, Humane Society of the United States, Pet Care Trust and Pro Wildlife.

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking if members of the Working Group were aware of production systems that had not received adequate treatment in the documents referenced in Decision 13.68, or which presented particular difficulties in reconciling them with the present permit codes.

The observer from Israel advised that the production of animals that reproduce vegetatively (i.e., asexually), such as corals, required further scrutiny and that they should be considered in the context of production systems for plants. The observer from the United Kingdom noted that the document referenced in paragraph vi) of Decision 13.68 presented information on this issue.

The Chairman noted that, in the United States of America, tissue cultures were being viewed as a form of captive breeding for the purpose of issuing CITES documents.

The observer from Species Management Specialists suggested that some CITES decisions relative to the Significant Trade Review have been based on misunderstandings regarding the nature of trade for some species and that there is a need to be able to communicate what is actually happening rather than allow perceptions to dominate. He therefore argued that keeping the permit code system simple may not be in the best interest of furthering understanding about trade between exporting and importing countries, as well as between exporting countries and the scientific committees. He noted that simple codes may not be consistent with complex production systems.

The observer from Canada noted that some production systems are not compatible with existing permit codes. For example, *Panax quinquefolius* is grown in systems that are neither wild nor do they meet the strict definition of 'artificially propagated'. The observer from Mexico agreed that there is a need to examine production systems that are not captured by existing codes.

The Chairman noted information presented to him by Germany indicating that butterfly ranching in range countries was in actuality a form of sustained wild harvest that was not ranching. The observer from Species Management Specialists agreed that true ranching is not what really happens in many cases.

The observer from IWMC-World Conservation Trust advised that there should be two purposes to this exercise: an effort to devise more precise codes for trade and the improvement of non-detriment findings for different production systems. He noted that under the strict terms of the Convention, there are only two basic sources of specimens: wild and bred in captivity (animals) or artificially propagated (plants). The Parties have added ranching as a special case of wild. He expressed support for the development of an inventory of all production systems, with animals and plants treated separately. He advised against the use of additional codes because this would contribute to more confusion, but that more information is needed so that importing countries have a better understanding of production systems in exporting countries.

The observer from the United Kingdom stated that additional codes would not be confusing if they were clearly defined and understandable. She expressed the view that the current system is too ambiguous. The observer from Canada noted that the definition of production systems is distinct from appropriate application of permit codes.

The observer from Canada noted that much work has already been done to inventory different production systems and that we need to determine if the production systems we have identified can be categorized broadly relative to source codes. She noted mariculture and farming as systems to consider.

The observer from the United Kingdom noted the case of Indonesia, where coral harvested under two different production systems is all exported as wild (code W). This is not informative to importing countries or to the Parties when data is analyzed.

The Secretariat (De Meulenaer) suggested that the Working Group should focus on common systems first, then consider uncommon systems for a latter phase of work. He noted that some production systems are detrimental.

The observer from the United States of America suggested that production systems that have consistent characteristics in common should be lumped together.

The observer from IWMC-World Conservation Trust advised that the IUCN documents referenced in Decision 13.68 are a good basis from which to begin work, but again advised to keep animals and plants separated.

The Chairman suggested that it would be difficult for the Working Group to proceed without a synthesis of the documents referenced in Decision 13.68, which would then serve as a basis for continued work during the intersessional period. He suggested that the United States of America could generate a synthesis document for distribution to the Working Group, and he proposed a schedule for intersessional work (conducted by e-mail), as follows:

By 1 August 2005: Synthesis document drafted and distributed to Working Group members for comment

By 1 October 2005: Comments on synthesis document due to Working Group Chairman

By 1 November 2005: Revision of synthesis document returned to Working Group members for final comment

1 February 2006: Comments on revised document due to Working Group Chairman

15 April 2006: Based on the review of the synthesis document, as appropriate, draft documents for CoP14 to be distributed to Working Group members by the Chairman.

1 June 2006 : Comments on draft documents (resolutions or amendments to existing resolutions, or possibly other documents) due to Working Group Chairman, who will prepare them for submission to PC16 and AC22 for review.

The observer from the United States of America suggested that the Working Group should consider whether production systems meet the definitions discussed in the document referenced in paragraph i) of Decision 13.68

Regarding the special case of ranching, a general discussion revealed that there seemed to be support for the definition of ranching contained in AC20 WG6 Doc. 1, although there was some feeling that it is a bit wordy. However, Working Group members could not reach consensus on whether the R code should be restricted in use to only those cases of downlistings from Appendix I to Appendix II as per Resolution Conf. 11.16. Although there was agreement that the concept of ranching could be applied to Appendix-II species, it was noted by some observers that allowing the use of the R code for trade in specimens of Appendix-II species did not involve the same scrutiny of management by the Parties as in the case of Resolution Conf. 11.16. On the other hand, it was also the opinion of some Working Group members that use of R for such specimens would be more informative as to the actual level of management applied to the species. Some observers still expressed reservations about whether the use of the R code really conveys any more information than W, and that the use of the R code may convey a sense of conservation value that does not really exist. The observer from Germany in particular expressed the view that exporting countries applying the R code should first have management plans in place that have been reviewed by the Conference of the Parties.

The observer from Species Management Specialists asked whether production systems could be categorized as high, medium or low conservation risk. The observer from the United States of America cautioned against assigning a level of conservation risk to codes, since benefits and risks could be associated with any production system.