

## **REPORT FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUB-REGION FOR THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 2003 – JANUARY 2004**

Overall, the period was one of growth in the level of compliance and awareness of CITES within the Caribbean sub-region. This was achieved through improved communication channels and technical assistance provided by the CITES Secretariat and donor Parties. The report below highlights achievements and constraints faced by Parties of the Caribbean sub-region. It includes information relayed by Suriname and Guyana, both located in South America, since these countries maintain close administrative and economic ties with Parties within the Caribbean archipelago.

### **1. Legislative, regulatory and administrative measures during the period**

#### *1.1 CITES enabling legislation*

Many Parties within the Caribbean made progress with respect to Decision 11.132. Indeed, legislative issues provided a key focus at a regional CITES training workshop held in September. Nevertheless, countries still experience delays in passing the required legislation, in some cases as they await technical advice on draft legislation submitted to the CITES Secretariat, or as they proceed through the necessary steps for enacting national legislation.

Specific constraints being faced by countries include:

- lack of funds and manpower for facilitating adequate and timely consultations on draft legislation;
- development of broad environmental legislation involving input from several national agencies to cover areas such as biodiversity, protected areas and CITES, and leading to slow progress;
- legislative units that can only focus on a limited number of draft Bills at any one time due to limited manpower;
- multi-tasked officers with a wide range of work duties (other than CITES) are often responsible for administering the process.

It should be noted that these challenges tend to hamper the pace of implementation, irrespective of the degree of priority given to individual actions and projects. It is important that CITES not penalise countries when they fail to meet deadlines if real progress is being made, taking into consideration existing manpower and fiscal constraints. To ensure timely completion of national legislation, adequate avenues must be in place to deliver the required assistance either via the Secretariat or through other Parties and relevant organisations.

Some country specific status reports include:

Antigua and Barbuda: under a national initiative, CITES legislation is being incorporated within an integrated Environmental Bill which has been drafted to provide the legislative framework for all matters relating to the natural environment. To date, this Bill has undergone a series of reviews which are contributing to its amendment. Some preliminary input had been obtained from the Secretariat. The revised draft will be submitted to the CITES Secretariat for more thorough review. Antigua has expressed a need for adequate time to continue this process, as they anticipate that the focus on impending national elections will contribute to delays within the first half of this year.

Bahamas: has submitted new draft legislation to CITES for technical review

Dominica: parliament considered various amendments to existing legislation: the Forest Act, the Wildlife Act and the Fisheries Act. Dominica recognises that there is still need for upgrading these in order for them to meet the requirements of CITES. It is envisaged that adequate legislation should be in place by the end of 2004, as a number of legislative instruments are being developed and finalised at the present time. Manpower and financial constraints have significantly slowed the rate of progress in this regard.

Guyana: environmental conservation regulations have been drafted and the 1999 Species Protection Regulations have been submitted to the CITES Secretariat for review- awaiting a technical response;

Jamaica: has drafted instructions for regulations regarding captive breeding and artificially propagated species under the Endangered Species (Protection, Conservation and Regulation of Trade) Act of 2000, giving particular attention to Appendix I species. The Minister of Land and Environment has recently approved an order to amend the CITES schedules within the Endangered Species Act.

Saint Kitts and Nevis: The first draft of the International Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora Bill has been prepared and discussed by the Scientific Authority, with copies sent to stakeholder groups and the CITES Secretariat for comments. Preliminary comments have been received from the Secretariat.

Saint Lucia: the Attorney General's (AG's) Chambers has drawn up a new Act which had been developed in consultation with the CITES Secretariat. Some final amendments were given by technical agencies and experts in October 2003. Delays in finalising the text had arisen due to manpower limitations within the AG's Chambers and concurrent priority legislative demands. It is fully expected that the law will be reviewed by the Cabinet of Ministers, given consideration by the House of Parliament in March and then gazetted no later than June 2004.

Suriname: has been able to develop new Game legislation which covers CITES and is currently in the process of implementing this new Resolution.

### *1.2 CITES administration and enforcement*

In order to improve enforcement and control, Cuba established a closer and more effective working relationship between the Scientific Authorities and Customs. Cuba also maintained good communication links with other countries such as Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Mexico, Korea, and Spain.

Jamaica developed guidelines for the management and cooperation of animal rescue centres, and also developed a policy on Orchid Conservation. In terms of scientific assessments, Jamaica conducted an abundance survey for Queen Conch on the Pedro banks and also undertook a study on the abundance of the Jamaica Iguana. Preliminary surveys are being developed for bottlenose dolphins, crocodiles and sea turtles. Jamaica communicated with countries such as Mexico, Cuba, the USA, and the French Antilles over issues related to trade regulation and the verification of CITES documents. Meetings were also held with representatives of Honduras to address poaching issues and Jamaica also held important bilateral talks with the Government of the Dominican Republic. Three offences arose regarding illicit trade of Queen Conch. One case involved an unauthorised export of conch to the French Antilles, with the product subsequently being recalled under the Aquaculture, Inland and Marine Products and By-Products (Inspection, Licensing and Export) Act. Failure of its return then led to the exporter being stripped of his annual quota. Additionally, Honduran fishermen were charged for illegal fishing within Jamaican waters, and a case dealing with an illegal export of mis-labelled conch product to the Bahamas is ongoing.

In an attempt to improve management for marine species listed under CITES, Saint Kitts and Nevis has revised its administration system for CITES permits and certificates. Both the Saint Kitts and Nevis Fisheries Departments have been authorised to issue export certificates for marine species. Terrestrial plants and animals will be administered by the Department of Agriculture. Improved

management plans have been put in place for the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*), with closed areas and seasonal quotas now in place for the fishery.

With funding support from WWF, Suriname has benefited from a project to strengthen the administrative and technical capacity of national agencies and enable sound management of wildlife, including the regulation of trade. The project included the development of species survey methodologies, guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of holding facilities for animals in trade, computerised systems for trade administration, effective enforcement systems and an improved capacity to investigate cross-border smuggling. Suriname strives to maintain good communication ties with Guyana and French Guyana, and in 2003, WWF Guianas and the Government of Suriname were able to host a meeting of the CITES Management Authorities of these three countries.

Guyana has initiated a new CITES administration system for more effective operation of the Management and Scientific Authorities. The Guyana Wildlife Management Authority of the Wildlife Division plays a lead role in on-the ground CITES implementation.

Saint Lucia developed a national report on the Status and Assessment of the Conch Fishery. This report was presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conch and Lobster Working Group meeting held in 2003 in Jamaica. A survey of conch fishers had been conducted to generate information relevant to the report. A funding proposal was developed for conducting a Queen Conch abundance survey in national waters and funding is currently being sought to conduct this survey.

In terms of CITES implementation, Dominica's Scientific Authority operates as a multi-agency body comprising representatives from departments/divisions related to fisheries, agriculture, livestock, and selected experts from non-governmental organisations. The Ministry of Agriculture, under the office of its Permanent Secretary is reviewing the effectiveness of the present body with the aim of improving its make-up and level of efficiency. The Management Authority- the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division- remains the focal agency for carrying out and authorising research into local flora and fauna. The Management Authority reports improved levels of awareness and support for effective implementation and administration of CITES. Overall, Dominica reports a high level of success in enforcement of existing wildlife legislation using arrests, compounding of offences and the court system to punish offenders and deter likely perpetrators. They have used broad agency involvement and community empowerment to increase enforcement capacity and success. During the period, Dominica liaised with various Caribbean countries on species-specific issues and travel of a mini-zoo/circus.

Many range states attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caricom/Cariforum Lobster/Conch Working Group meeting and the International Queen Conch Initiative – CITES Workshop in Montego Bay, Jamaica during June 2003. The Caricom/Cariforum working group undertook a review of the regional catch and effort trends in these fisheries, looked at national and regional assessments and cooperative management programmes and discussed activities needed for improved management of these species. The CITES Workshop discussed the draft Significant Trade Review on the Queen Conch. Parties present were able to raise concerns on content of the document and were subsequently given a window of time to send in amendments and further comments. The meeting adopted a series of recommendations which reiterated a commitment to effective management and regional cooperation.

Consequent to the meeting and in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.8 on the Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species, the Animals Committee formulated recommendations relating to the Queen Conch which were issued as notification 2003/057. Since that time, the Dominican Republic (and Honduras) implemented the recommended specific short-

term actions within the agreed time-frame. These Parties agreed to suspend the issuance of export permits for all specimens of *Strombus gigas* as of 29 September 2003, and reiterated their commitment to full implementation of all the other short-term and long-term actions recommended by the Animals Committee. All range States were advised to seek assistance from agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and from other Parties in implementing specific measures relating to each State as recommended by the Animals Committee.

### *1.3 Submission of annual and biennial reports*

Both the CITES Secretariat and the regional representative placed considerable effort in assisting Parties to submit their annual reports on a timely basis, and to enhance the level of capacity at the national level for such an undertaking.

Saint Lucia took part in the Working Group on Reporting established by SC49, and incorporated the range of constraints faced by Caribbean Parties (regarding both annual and biennial reporting) into the group's deliberations.

Constraints have prevented Saint Kitts and Nevis from submitting their 2002 report, but the should be submitted by the end of January, 2004. Guyana had made use of the assistance available at WCMC for preparation of its 2002 annual report. Suriname has been delayed in submitting its 2002 annual report due to the implementation of a new system for the administration of permits. They will seek to submit their report at the earliest opportunity. Dominica reported the re-export of three dolphins back to the USA, for which they sought advice from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Antigua is putting additional measures in place to achieve more timely and thorough compilation of annual reports.

### *1.4 Sub-regional communication*

An electronic mailing list has been developed to include a range of technical and administrative officers directly involved in CITES implementation within the Caribbean. This is now available for distributing information and for seeking input on issues of interest to the region. The system should continue to improve as it can provide a fast and comparatively cheap means of communication among Parties within the sub-region.

Communication with Parties of the broader region, including those of Central and South America, still requires significant enhancement, as language remains a significant barrier to easy and efficient information flow and effective communication.

## **2. CITES Training**

The National Environmental and Planning Agency of Jamaica developed a training curriculum for Customs officers. A number of Parties of the sub-region took part in the UNEP Enforcement and Compliance Workshop held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2003.

During 2003, Cuba held two national workshops regarding the sustainable use of marine turtles and dolphins.

Suriname conducted training exercises for game wardens, the military police and Customs officers, focusing on the country's new Game Resolution.

Dominica held a training workshop in October 2003, aimed at introducing new Customs officers to CITES issues.

At the request of Parties of the Caribbean region, the Saint Lucia CITES Management Authority organised what was deemed a successful **regional capacity-building training workshop**, from September 15-19, 2003. The objective of the workshop was to achieve regional harmonisation to implement and enforce the Convention, taking into account fundamental issues relating to trade in and conservation of CITES-listed species, CITES permitting and reporting requirements, the development of national legislation bearing in mind the Parties' expertise and the similarities in legal systems and cultures, non-detriment findings, enforcement issues, intra-regional communication and other administrative matters on CITES implementation.

The workshop brought together participants from management and scientific authorities, as well as legislative and enforcement agencies of Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica, Suriname, Barbados, French Departments (represented by Martinique), Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and UK Overseas Territories (represented by Anguilla). The Dominican Republic was also slated to attend, however problems arose with travel arrangements made for the three nominees. Unfortunately, attempts to reschedule their arrival proved unsuccessful.

The workshop was jointly funded by the CITES Secretariat, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (NFWS) and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States. Workshop sessions were facilitated by technical and training experts of the CITES Secretariat, the NFWS of the US, and an expert from TRAFFIC- Mexico, with case studies/reports being presented by participants from Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Anguilla, Cuba, Saint Lucia, Barbados and the Bahamas.

The key accomplishments of the workshop were as follows:

- Participants benefited from a wide range of technical presentations on aspects relating to CITES and its administration;
- Participants and technical experts learned from case studies delivered by selected country participants and also benefited from discussion on specific agenda items;
- Participants engaged in a number of practical exercises which provided hands-on knowledge;
- Participants and technical experts gained some first hand knowledge of resource management and conservation activities and approaches used in Saint Lucia through participating in a field excursion;
- Participants were able to generate recommendations for further action with regard key elements of regional CITES implementation and capacity building through the output of working groups set up to discuss several key aspects: technical training, improved enforcement, public awareness, compliance in reporting, and improved regional communication.

Countries felt they benefited substantially from the regional workshop and many are now better able to implement operational and administrative improvements to achieve more effective CITES administration and enforcement. The sub-region wishes to express its thanks to the CITES Secretariat, NFWS and NOAA for the considerable level of support given for this event.

### **3. Preparation for COP 13**

Cuba has developed and submitted a proposal for transferring the *Acutus* crocodile from Appendix I to II. Antigua and Barbuda are considering preparing a proposal to admit the Antigua Racer Snake to Appendix I, subject to the availability of adequate scientific information on this endangered species.

Parties of the sub-region recognise the vital importance of holding an intercessional meeting for the South America, Central America and the Caribbean region of CITES. Such an event is needed to allow for discussion of proposals from the region and to review other issues of common interest.

The one-day regional meeting held immediately prior to COP12 did not allow for adequate time and opportunity to identify areas of common concern and consensus. The short intercessional period between COP 12 and 13 places extraordinary pressure on the region and donor countries to secure fiscal and other means to hold a regional meeting in mid 2004. Nonetheless, assistance is being sought within and beyond the region to make such a meeting a reality.

#### **4. Public education and awareness**

The National Environmental and Planning Agency of Jamaica launched a CITES website as part of its World Environment Day celebrations.

Saint Lucia benefited from the increased publicity brought about by hosting the Regional CITES Training Workshop. Considerable press coverage and public discussion took place both prior to and following the event.

The Bahamas has incorporated CITES awareness into its Ministry of Tourism's training programme for personnel within the tourism sector. This has proven an effective means for promoting issues of threatened and endangered species, including those relevant to CITES.

#### **5. Priority needs for the sub-region**

Working Groups at the Regional Workshop in Saint Lucia identified a range of needs to be addressed in order for effective CITES implementation and administration within the sub-region. These needs included:

##### *Technical Training for better implementation of the Convention within the Caribbean Region:*

- Improved capacity in species recognition, identification of fraudulent documents, profiling and smuggling, proper handling of confiscated specimens, and collection of intelligence and other information;
- Special training for policy makers and management and scientific authorities;
- Expanded public education programme targeting traders and the public at large;
- Long-term specialist training (Masters or PhD level) for increased capacity in specialised areas, e.g. herpetology.

##### *Improving Enforcement at the Regional Level*

- Adequate legislation in place at the national level;
- Effective enforcement of legislation;
- Enforcement training and education for all relevant agencies;
- Improved regional and domestic networking;
- Improved infrastructure for CITES implementation.

##### *Public Awareness Initiatives at the Regional Level*

- A regional task force to be set up by Parties of the region (with membership from the management and scientific authorities), to develop a regional public awareness strategy to target: schools, community and resource use groups, importers and exporters, visitors;
- National CITES programmes to be developed in line with the regional strategy, with synergies found for securing funding and producing common literature and other tools for awareness building;
- A regional newsletter should be developed to inform on national/regional issues and developments in the field of CITES.

### *Improving Level of Compliance in Reporting (Annual and Biennial)*

- Access to database software and training;
- Access to model permits with colour coding;
- Development of a user friendly format for the biennial report.

### *Improving Regional Communication and Action*

- Communicating on critical issues within and among countries (including the overseas territories and departments within the region) via: designating national focal points for species groups, sensitizing on issues among agencies and establishing formal inter-agency bodies. The Standing Committee representative should be responsible for gathering and disseminating information on focal points and key issues;
- Communicating within the broader region via establishing regional links on CITES website, holding regular regional meetings by securing adequate financing for such meetings;
- Considering SIDS issues within CITES (using CBD example) by having a SIDS focus at regional meetings and meetings of COP – spearheaded by Parties of the Caribbean region. A special regional committee should be formed to coordinate this initiative;
- Sharing of technical expertise within the region by identifying existing expertise and gaps/needs through electronic means and securing financial support for attachments and workshops.

In addition, specific needs have been more recently identified by Parties:

- Many countries recognise the need urgent for focused training for their Customs officials, as Customs is a key agency in the administration and effective enforcement of CITES;
- Several countries have been unable to make their desired progress with regard to finalisation of CITES enabling legislation; this is primarily due to manpower and fiscal limitations;
- Financial constraints faced by Parties also limit the level of public education work, particularly regarding the production of leaflets and videos to boost awareness and compliance. Funding assistance is requested for facilitating regional work in this regard;
- Ready access to CITES technical assistance is needed by many Parties of the region where manpower and fiscal constraints are often extreme. Much assistance has been gained through the efforts of Ms Marceil Yeater as well as technical staff of the various units within the Secretariat. It is important to note that such assistance can be instrumental in assisting Parties, particularly small States, to meet deadlines and make real progress in national capability. There is need to provide increased avenues to such forms of assistance.
- Guyana seeks technical assistance and funding for conducting relevant surveys of highly traded species;
- Dominica highlighted a need for technical assistance with regard to its legislation;

These needs should guide technical and financial interventions at the national, regional and international scales. The assistance of the CITES Secretariat and other Parties will be required in order to effectively address many of these issues and needs. Parties of the sub-region look forward to working with others in achieving continued progress in this regard.