

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-21 April 2011

Cooperation with advisory bodies of other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements

Climate change

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

1. This document has been prepared by Canada and the United States of America^{*}.
2. At its 15th Meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties discussed climate change as an emerging issue that may have actual and potential impacts on CITES implementation, based on the discussion document submitted by the Secretariat (CoP15 Doc. 10.1). The Parties agreed that climate change within the CITES context should be limited to aspects of science-based decision-making and adopted Decisions 15.15-15.17, as follows:

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

- 15.15 *Given the implications of climate change for science-based decision-making, the Animals and Plants Committees shall identify the scientific aspects of the provisions of the Convention and of Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties that are actually or likely to be affected by climate change, report their findings, and make recommendations for further action in relation to the Convention and to Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate, at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Secretariat

- 15.16 *The Secretariat shall request from the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements information on their activities that may be linked to climate change and CITES, and report to the Animals and Plants Committees and the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 15.17 *The Standing Committee shall consider the reports of the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat and report at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

^{*} *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

3. It is our view that the challenge of incorporating the threat posed by climate change into science-based decision-making can be met through lessons learned from similar initiatives to address other large scale threats, such as habitat loss and threats from alien invasive species. To this end, the recommendation in this document is provided to help focus discussions on the scope of our task within the Convention, and on some similarities and dissimilarities of climate change to other threat processes.
4. As noted by the Secretariat in CoP15 Doc. 10.1, the Convention does not have a significant role to play in addressing the causes of climate change or the overarching mitigation and adaptation measures required to deal with it. Thus, efforts should focus on any needed additional guidance within the scope of the Convention to adequately address climate change as it relates to the central mandate of the Convention.
5. Like other broad-scale, complex environmental processes that introduce instability into an ecosystem, climate change can impact a species or its habitat through changes in fire frequency, hydrology, species interactions, habitat suitability, or disease frequency (IUCN 2010). These tangible impacts can be used to evaluate the potential consequences of climate change on a species within the context of international wildlife trade. It is worth noting that these factors are already well-entrenched in the CITES decision-making provisions and are already taken into account to varying degrees in a non-prescriptive manner.
6. Given that the impact of climate change is expected to be highly variable depending on the species or habitat, and also given that climate change science is an evolving field of study, the Animals and Plants committees have been tasked to more carefully examine how best to address climate change within CITES. As such, we suggest that considerations of the impacts of climate change would be best focused in the following science-based decision-making processes:
 - Non-detriment findings (Articles III and IV)
 - Species listings [Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP15) and 9.25 (Rev. CoP15)]
 - Significant Trade [Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13)] – to the extent that this pertains to Article IV (non-detriment findings)
 - Trade in alien invasive species [Resolution Conf. 13.10 (Rev. CoP14)]
 - Quotas [Resolution Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP15)]
 - Periodic Review of the Appendices (Resolution Conf. 14.8)

Recommendation

7. We recommend the Plants and Animals Committees consider specifically the above-mentioned science-based decision-making processes in implementing Decision 15.15.

Citation

IUCN Standards and Petitions Subcommittee. 2010. Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Version 8.1. Prepared by the Standards and Petitions Subcommittee in March 2010. Downloadable from <http://intranet.iucn.org/webfiles/doc/SSC/RedList/RedListGuidelines.pdf>.