

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

Forty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 8-12 February 1999

Implementation of the Convention in individual countries

LATE SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORTS

This document has been prepared by the CITES Secretariat.

1. In Resolution Conf. 9.4 (Rev.) on Annual Reports and Monitoring of Trade, the Conference of the Parties decided that "failure to submit an annual report by 31 October of the year following the year for which the report was due constitutes a major problem with the implementation of the Convention, which the Secretariat shall refer to the Standing Committee for a solution in accordance with Resolution Conf. 7.5", and that "the Secretariat may approve a valid request from a Party for a reasonable extension of time to the 31 October deadline for the submission of annual reports provided the Party submits to the Secretariat a written request, containing adequate justification, before that deadline".
2. The present document constitutes the report required from the Secretariat. It was compiled on the basis of information about annual reports received at the Secretariat by 30 November 1998. A table showing the reports received by the Secretariat by that date is attached.
3. The Secretariat has received the partial or complete annual reports for 1997 of 43 Parties that submitted reports before the deadline; 30 per cent of the Parties for which reports were due. An additional 10 annual reports have been received after the deadline. By 31 October 1998, four Parties had requested an extension of the deadline for the submission of their annual reports of 1997. These extensions were granted. One of the Parties concerned has since submitted its report.
4. The fact that only 30 per cent of Parties submitted a report for 1997 before the deadline marks a continued deterioration in the timely submission of reports. The percentage of submission of reports before the deadline in 1993 was 55 per cent, in 1994 and 1995 it was 44 per cent and in 1996, 39 per cent. More than 50 per cent of the countries that are member of the Standing Committee have not submitted a report on time and almost all of them have not sought an extension of the deadline.
5. At the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat asked for guidance regarding action that should be taken in cases where reports were submitted late. The Conference of the Parties agreed that it was inappropriate to take punitive action against countries that do not submit their report on time.
6. The Secretariat believes that, in order to tackle the problem of continued late submission of annual reports, it is necessary that the Secretariat continues making specific requests to Parties and offering assistance in case of particular need.

7. At previous meetings of the Standing Committee, the need for a standard computer package for preparing annual reports and for managing CITES-related data was discussed. The Secretariat indicated that this should be dealt with in the context of the Information Management Strategy (IMS). At its 10th meeting, the Conference of the Parties agreed to the first phase of the IMS, which involves developing assistance for several countries, including a standard CITES format. The Secretariat is currently reviewing a proposal for the implementation of the IMS. A progress report will be presented to the Standing Committee for discussion at its 42nd meeting.
8. The Committee is invited to note and approve the Secretariat's plans:
 - to offer further assistance to Parties that have a problem of submitting annual reports;
 - to produce a standard format for managing CITES-related data and to produce annual reports in the context of phase 1 of the IMS; and
 - to work with WCMC to improve the usefulness of the CITES trade database, the extent to which it is used and feedback provided to the Parties.
9. The Chairman of the Standing Committee should write to the Parties that have not submitted a report for 1997 to remind them of the obligation to submit their annual report, of the decision of the Conference of the Parties on this issue and of the importance of the data for monitoring purposes and to request them to send the report to the Secretariat as soon as possible and to inform the Secretariat if they require assistance in the preparation of their annual report.