

CITES WORLD

Official Newsletter of the Parties

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Issue Number 3 – June 1999

Letter from the Secretariat

The Secretariat is pleased to welcome to the ever expanding CITES family Azerbaijan which acceded to the Convention on 23 November 1998, thus becoming the 145th Party on 21 February 1999.

The Secretariat takes this opportunity also to welcome on board a new Secretary-General, Mr Willem Wijnstekers from the Netherlands. Mr Wijnstekers has been actively involved in CITES issues for many years, having worked prior to his present nomination in the European Commission's Directorate General for the Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection. We believe that with his knowledge and experience of the Convention Mr Wijnstekers will be a valuable asset to the evolution of CITES. We would also like to thank Mr Reuben Olemba, who was Secretary-General ad interim from 5 August 1998 to 31 March 1999. Mr Olemba arrived at a difficult time for the Secretariat and provided great assistance for a successful 41st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee pending the nomination of a new Secretary-General.

Among the important topics so far this year covered in this edition, are: the experimental sale of stocks of elephant ivory from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to Japan and issues related to trade measures in some Parties. Another topic is that of the technical missions tiger currently taking place, the results of which will be covered in the next edition.

We wish to remind the Parties that we welcome and count on their input in order to produce this newsletter which serves as an effective exchange of information among Parties. Any interesting activities, information or message they wish to communicate will be much appreciated. Articles can consist of only a few words or up to approximately 400 words (three-quarters of an A4 size page) and should be submitted to the Capacity Building Unit of the CITES Secretariat.

CITES on the Internet

<http://www.cites.org>

This is the official CITES Home Page administered by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC). Here you can find documentation such as the text of the Convention, the resolutions and decisions adopted at each meeting and Notifications to the Parties, as well as general CITES news in English, French and Spanish.



The Secretariat

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41st Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, Geneva, 8-12 February 1999

Statement by Mr Willem Wijnstekers, Secretary-General Designate to the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee

Dear colleagues

I hardly need to say how glad I am with this appointment, but I am above all extremely proud to from now on to be allowed to play an active role in the evolution of CITES instead of just writing the book.

I am confident that you and I can make CITES play a decisive role in the conservation and sustainable exploitation of our natural resources into the next century. Together we must make CITES work for animals, for plants and thus for people and I should like to assure you of my total commitment to that objective.

You may wonder what my intentions are and you are obviously entitled to an answer. I should like to briefly outline which main management issues I intend to tackle in directing the Secretariat. This can of course not be exhaustive and some of the points I'll make are already in hand and may even be well on the way to being resolved.

One of the first things to do concerns the situation within the Secretariat. You will agree that past events have severely damaged individual people and the relationship between staff. They even affected the Standing Committee, the interests of the Parties and the Convention as a whole. One of the first things to do therefore is to complete the re-establishment of the Secretariat as a strong, confident, professional and efficient entity in which you are able to believe. This requires the restoration of staff confidence, loyalty, solidarity, team spirit, job-satisfaction and motivation. It also requires an attitude and commitment from the staff, commensurate with their position as United Nations officials. There may still be some tough decisions to take and I shall require the full backing of the Standing Committee in taking them.



Related to this is also the need to rethink the activities of the Secretariat. I know that most of these are laid down by the Convention and by the Parties, but I also know that many of them exist for a very long time and may have become a self-perpetuating purpose. There may also be better ways to do things. Certainly, time spent on unnecessary activities should be used for a higher quality of services to the Parties. An important task of the Secretariat, which I feel has been increasingly neglected, is to give direction to the Convention, to guide the Parties, to initiate and take the lead on major policy issues. This active role should be restored and further developed in all CITES fora. As part of this more active role, the Secretariat should also take up its responsibilities as “watchdog” of the Convention and for example become more effective in preventing undesirable effects and consequences of decisions of the Conference of the Parties and its committees. Further, we should not just consolidate old recommendations, but critically look at their contribution to the current needs of the Convention and its Parties. The number of recommendations must be reduced in order to make those that really matter better identifiable, understood and implemented.

This complex area can be summarised in one sentence: The Secretariat should become a Secretariat with a capital S again.

An equally important area, which will get my undivided attention is the Secretariat’s relationship with the Parties and its other partners. We need to urgently restore the confidence of the Parties - and of the Standing Committee in particular - in the Secretariat.

Together with the Parties and the Standing Committee, I will also work towards an optimal relationship with UNEP and the other international Conventions it administers.

I’ll bring along my existing good relationship with the Secretariat’s key technical partners (IUCN, WCMC, TRAFIC, WCO, Interpol, etc) and will intensify co-operation

and co-ordination with them. Where necessary, I hope to replace an atmosphere of competition with one of collaboration and shared responsibility.

At last, but certainly not the least, point on the issue of the Secretariat’s external relationships concerns the NGO-community. Many NGOs have a keen interest in our Convention and its purposes and they cover a wide range of interests that are affected by our decisions. NGOs are also the main source of information of the press and the general public. They can do a lot of good or a lot of damage. I believe they have reason to feel ignored. This leads to frustration and makes it very unlikely to obtain a constructive NGO contribution to our work, even where we have obvious common goals. I therefore intend to intensify the Secretariat’s structural contracts with major international NGOs in all areas of interest to the Convention. This is not to say that whatever NGOs have to tell us must influence our policy. I have a long experience with all kinds of lobbies and you may rest assured that I will be no less frank and open in my contacts with them than I have been so far. In fact many of them know that I am not afraid to disagree, but appreciate the fact that I am willing to listen.

Transparency will be another key word in my activities. I intend to enhance policy transparency through a permanent, well-presented and accessible flow of information from the Secretariat to the Parties and others on activities and results. For that purpose, the Secretariat will need to improve its overall communication capacity and capabilities and make better use of the latest available technologies. I believe there is scope for an increase in the speed and timeliness of informing the Parties in general and in relation to meetings of its major committees in particular. This is crucial in both the preparation and the implementation of decisions.

I don’t need to remind you of the continuing budgetary difficulties. I will want to discuss with you further about ways and means to remedy the late and non-payment of dues. Independent thereof, however, we should increase the level of realistic forecasting, planning and reporting and make more structural and consistent efforts to obtain external funding. I find it quite unrealistic to make important policy areas depend upon external funding. It only creates false expectations and is as frustrating as basing the planning of your house-hold on winning the lottery.

A final remark concerns an important principle and an idea in relation to it that I should like you to think about. There is a statement in the current Strategic Plan that the Secretariat “cannot serve only the interests of any one Party or a group of Parties”. I don’t think this is necessarily true. I rather think that the guiding principle for decisions should be that different Parties in different regions have different needs, interests and problems. They may thus require a different response, different mechanisms, tools and solutions. Wherever possible - and of course without harming other major interests - CITES policy should form a large and solid common foundation, which should leave room for offering individual solutions to individual problems.

Again, because of time constraints alone, this could not be a complete overview of my plans and intentions. They can in addition not be more than plans and intentions either. Calling them more than that would contradict what I have just said and be against my sincere commitment to dialogue,

openness and transparency vis-à-vis you and the Secretariat staff. I sincerely hope that commitment will be reciprocal. One thing the Convention can do without is a repetition of the intrigues that have polluted the atmosphere and damaged CITES so much.

Dear colleagues, I am sure that in our individual and collective contacts we will not always agree on all issues from the outset and I am sure that is not something you would expect from me. I am convinced, however, that we will agree by the time we take decisions. You have your responsibilities and I will have mine, but there should be no divergence in the aims we pursue.

An appropriate United Nations motto - and I had better get used to that - to describe what I intend to do would probably be: "Restore Confidence".

Thank you very much.

Willem Wijnstekers

Chairman's Report on the meeting

I was extremely pleased that I was able to start the meeting by announcing the appointment of Willem Wijnstekers as the new CITES Secretary General. He has of course now taken up the post and all the Standing Committee wish him well. I hope Willem's appointment marks a new phase in the CITES Secretariat's history.

Certainly I was pleased that we were able to address the complex and controversial issues around the decisions needed on the experimental sale of ivory to Japan in such a constructive climate. I shall not dwell on these further (they are fully covered elsewhere in this issue) other than to underline that this was a momentous decision for CITES which points to a new maturity in the operation of the Convention. It is vital that the experiment is conducted and monitored with the greatest care.

The other major issue facing the Committee was the need to make decisions on possible trade suspensions stemming from the Secretariat's work on the National Legislation Project. Again I was impressed by the objectivity of the debate and the seriousness and sensitivity with which Standing Committee members discharged their difficult duty. The end result was a series of decisions which could result in recommendations to suspend trade in CITES specimens with Egypt and Guyana unless they can show conclusively that steps have been taken to rectify the failings identified by the Secretariat. With regard to Sabah (Malaysia), Nicaragua and Indonesia, it was decided that trade would not be suspended. The Committee agreed to defer a decision regarding the suspension of trade in CITES with the Democratic Republic of the Congo until after a review of information at the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee. The Committee also agreed to defer until 30 September 1999 the suspension of trade in CITES specimens with Senegal and that there would be no suspension if the 42nd meeting of the Standing committee agreed, on a recommendation from the Secretariat, that Senegal's enacted legislation generally meets the requirements for the implementation of CITES. Our tough compliance policy in CITES does bear fruit and I was grateful to the efforts shown by Greece in putting in place new legislation that satisfied Committee members that

it was now fully CITES 'compliant'. The recommendation to suspend trade with Greece was accordingly lifted shortly after the meeting.

We were also able to discuss tiger conservation. It was heartening to hear of the additional steps that many Parties are taking - over and above strict CITES responsibilities - to protect this species. The technical missions are now fully under way and I hope to be in a position to lead the political mission later in the summer, both to spread examples of best practice and to reinforce the message where more can be done.

The meeting conducted important business on the Strategic and Action Plans, now being taken forward by a working group that has just met in Washington D.C. and will be reporting at the next Standing Committee meeting. On finance, the Standing Committee agreed to establish a new sub-committee, which will meet for the first time immediately before the September meeting. The Committee also agreed to fund several new items from the accumulated surplus, including the tiger missions, start up costs of MIKE and IUCN's analysis of species proposals for COP 11. In addition, UNEP was asked to investigate additional means to increase the yield on investment funds.

It was unfortunate that with so much time dedicated to discussion of elephants, several agenda items had to be noted as for information only or held over to the next meeting. This included proposals for the conduct of future meetings of the Conference, although there was some discussion of the suitability of UNEP Headquarters in Gigiri, Nairobi as the next venue. Mention was also made of a serious problem developing with illegal and unsustainable trade in bushmeat to which we will need to return at the next meeting. I was delighted that Portugal has offered to host this in September!

Robert Hepworth, Chairman of the CITES Standing Committee

Issues relating to species: elephants

With regard to African elephants, the Standing Committee decided, after full and careful consideration of a report by the CITES Secretariat, that the strict conditions set by the CITES Conference of the Parties in 1997 (COP10) for a one-off sale of raw ivory from Namibia and Zimbabwe to Japan had been met. As a result, Namibia and Zimbabwe were authorized to sell and ship 13.8 tonnes and 20 tonnes of ivory respectively to Japan on or after 18 March 1999. The funds raised by the sale would be used to support conservation and community development projects in the countries concerned. Following a further inspection mission by the Secretariat in March 1999, Botswana was found to have satisfied one important outstanding condition and was therefore also authorized to sell its 20 tonnes' stock of ivory.

The Standing Committee also endorsed a project for the monitoring of the illegal killing of elephants in Africa and Asia (known as MIKE) and agreed mechanisms to ensure its implementation and further development under the direction of a Working Group reporting to the CITES Secretariat.

In addition, the meeting agreed on the operational procedures to trigger a mechanism to halt trade and possibly return those elephant populations currently listed on Appendix II (where regulated commercial trade is allowed) to Appendix I (where no commercial trade is allowed) if there is evidence of increased poaching, illegal trade, or non-compliance with the conditions agreed.

Finally the meeting asked for further donors to support the non-commercial disposal of registered ivory stocks in other countries.



Background

In 1997, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP10), held in Harare, Zimbabwe, one of the most controversial proposals discussed was the possible resumption of limited trade in elephant ivory from three African countries (Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe). CITES Parties accepted by a large majority that elephant populations in those countries were stable or growing and so should be transferred to Appendix II. Parties were concerned however that this decision should not have an adverse impact on the conservation status of the elephant and agreed that a comprehensive set of safeguards should be put in place before limited trade could resume. These included:

- the remedying of deficiencies in enforcement and control measures relating to the management of elephants and elephant products in the countries to be involved in the proposed trade identified by the CITES Panel of Experts before COP10;
- the countries concerned to withdraw their reservations allowing them to trade in ivory, notwithstanding the original CITES decisions to ban the trade;
- the countries also to be committed to international law enforcement through appropriate mechanisms;
- the countries to have mechanisms to re-invest trade revenues into elephant conservation;
- various safeguards undertaken to be put in hand at the time of any authorized sale and shipment of ivory to be in place;
- agreement by the countries concerned, the Secretariat and TRAFFIC International to an international system for reporting and monitoring legal and illegal trade and illegal killing of elephants;

- a mechanism for halting trade and retransferring one or more of the elephant populations to Appendix I if the conditions are not met or if there is an escalation of illegal hunting or of illegal trade owing to the resumption of legal trade.

The CITES Standing Committee was charged with ensuring that all of these are in place.

Progress in the fulfilment of these conditions was discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee in London in March 1998, the mechanism for halting trade and retransfer of populations was agreed and the withdrawal of reservations was noted. During the autumn of 1998 the Secretariat conducted verification missions in Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Japan in order to report as to whether all the conditions applicable to these countries had been fulfilled. In reaching their decisions the Standing Committee had before them the full verification report from the Secretariat on their findings, plus additional oral presentations by the four countries concerned.

COP10 also addressed the issue of growing stockpiles of Government held ivory in other African States. These stockpiles are costly to maintain and the Conference agreed to a system whereby they would be audited by TRAFFIC prior to being offered for non-commercial disposal. In return donors would provide funds for elephant conservation in the countries concerned. This decision will benefit conservation and take this ivory out of the system for good.

The Secretariat,

“The decision taken by the CITES Standing Committee followed a strict process ensuring that there were no deviations from the comprehensive pre-conditions that the international community has set. Like others, I’m concerned that this sensitive issue is handled properly and in an open and transparent manner. If it is, then we have taken an important step forward in preventing the re-emergence of the illegal trade in ivory. Once again, the pivotal role of the CITES Convention has clearly been demonstrated. I commend the responsible approach taken by the CITES Standing Committee which has made this judgement on the basis of thorough investigation and available information.”

The above-mentioned comment was made by Mr Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (which administers the CITES Secretariat) in UNEP News Release No. 1999/16

**Welcoming address on 9 April 1999
at the first international auction of ivory**

Windhoek, Namibia



“...It is now my privilege to welcome you on behalf of the Minister of Environment and Tourism to the first international auction of ivory in almost 10 years. I hope that everyone has had ample opportunity to

view the ivory we have on offer and that all questions asked have been answered satisfactorily.

We are all familiar with the long and tortuous history behind this issue.... We should also remember great contributions from our counterparts in Botswana and Zimbabwe, and Malawi....

I also wish to pay tribute to His Excellency, President Dr Sam Nujoma who used his influence and campaigned in support of this issue, along with the Republic of Namibia's diplomatic missions based all over the world. This was truly a team effort.

Last but not least, let us not forget the staff who have worked so hard to make this a success, from the persons shifting tonnes of ivory to those cleaning tusks and guarding our stockpile - they have all made an excellent contribution and have truly served well.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to remind you that the purpose behind this auction is the following, in case we are distracted by all the international interest and media attention given to this issue. We have done what we have done for the following reasons:

- first and foremost, as obliged by the Namibian Constitution, we are committed to the sustainable use of natural resources for the present and future generations in Namibia;
- we have gone to great lengths to prove that a developing country such as ours must play a strong role in international decision-making, that our needs must be accommodated by the international agreements in which we participate;
- we have wanted to prove that locally appropriate solutions must be found for complex biodiversity conservation problems, especially in areas used by both people and wildlife, often at the same time, and depending on the same resources such as water;
- we believe that if no one else is prepared to bear the full cost of having problematic wildlife species such as elephants around, we have to do what we can to convert these wildlife populations from liabilities into assets for the communities most affected;
- we have strived to demonstrate that trade in wildlife does not have to be chaotic or illegal, but can be disciplined, controlled and beneficial to wildlife populations and contribute to economic development;
- and lastly, to provide a mechanism of reinvesting revenues from wildlife back into conservation, protection, monitoring and community based conservation programmes. For this purpose, Parliament endorsed the establishment of the Game Products Trust Fund of Namibia by our Ministry, and we look forward to the operations of this fund.

We cannot pretend that we have already solved all problems or that we know which solutions will work tomorrow. Today's auction sale might, however, show the way forward and enable us to learn and adapt to changing conditions.

With these few words, I wish us all a successful auction. Thank you.

*Honourable H.N. Ithete, Deputy Minister
of Environment and Tourism, Namibia*

The final consumer also protects the elephant

During the last 1200 years, our country has had the honorable tradition of utilizing ivory for various artifacts and commodities. The tradition of manufacturing ivory items has been passed from one generation to the other. Ivory manufacturing is not only an art but it requires also the know-how and associated experience. It takes approximately 10 years to learn the methodology and another 10 years to become a fledged craftsman. Over the years during the existence of the tradition, we have become aware of a wide variety of issues, the most important one being the threatened survival of the African elephant.

A few centuries ago, it was quite common to see several boats loading ivory at the African coasts to be transported to Asia. Unfortunately a non-controlled trade in ivory started to threaten the African elephant.

The Japan Federation of Ivory Arts and Crafts Associations, or Japan Ivory Association (JIA) for short, has committed itself to preserving the ivory manufacturing tradition. It is now clear that a key issue for the preservation of the ivory manufacturing tradition is the conservation of the elephant. With the purpose of assisting in the conservation of the elephant, JIA has closely followed all the resolutions of CITES.

For the JIA, today is a historic moment where the Governments of Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, the producers, the CITES Secretariat and us (JIA), the final consumers, are working together towards the conservation of the elephant in these African countries. Unified we form the chain of flow of ivory to ensure its sustainable use.

Because of its commitment to the conservation of the elephant, JIA has been selected by the Government to participate in the experimental sale of ivory from Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. This experiment has established a strict methodology closely supervised by the CITES Secretariat. For example, JIA has committed itself to fully complying with all provisions of national legislation regulating internal trade in ivory. JIA is following the voluntary "management card" scheme, which enables the government to certify the legal origin of finished ivory products. In addition to this, the Government of Japan has installed a ban on the re-export of ivory and JIA is committed to observing this regulation.

This exercise will enable JIA to acquire approximately 50 tons of ivory. All tusks included in these 50 tons come from elephants that have died naturally and/or due to a regulated population control. This ivory will enable JIA to replenish its current stocks thus ensuring the preservation of the ivory manufacturing tradition. Only if we are able to conserve the African elephant, our old Japanese tradition of ivory use will be able to continue.

Mr Ishibashi, former President of the Japanese Ivory Association

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES



With regard to enforcement, it has been brought to our attention that certain countries would benefit from gaining or increasing already acquired experience through carrying out 'exchanges' with other Parties. For example, customs officers from an Eastern European country doing a work experience in a country from Northern or Southern Europe. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to mention the following programmes run by the European Commission:

MATTHAEUS/CUSTOMS 2002 programme

The Matthaeus programme is managed by DG XXI of the European Commission and is mainly focused on customs training. Seminars uniquely devoted to CITES have taken place annually in different Member States over the last few years. All Member States' customs services were invited (also representatives from candidate EU countries) and lecturers were provided by certain Member States, the CITES Secretariat and the Commission. The Matthaeus programme will soon be included in a wider programme, Customs 2002. This year two information technology projects on the development of a computer system for the identification of endangered species or their products could be part-financed by this programme. In addition, exchanges of officials are organised between Member States to improve effectiveness in the area. Activities with non-European Community countries are also envisaged. For further information, please write to Mr Sebastian Birch at the following address, with a copy to the CITES Secretariat:

European Commission
Directorate-General XXI
(MO59 –4/005)
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
BELGIUM
Fax: (+32-2) 296 19 31.

The Secretariat

Communication on illegal trade

Whenever seizures are made or serious irregularities are noted, it is important to inform the CITES authorities of the countries of destination or origin. Such information can be useful for investigation purposes and may bring CITES authorities' attention to the wrongdoings.

The CITES Management Authority of Denmark has experienced some cases during the last year where early information from other Management Authorities could have lead to more targeted investigation and prosecution.



Sending information back

Therefore, for enforcement and investigation purposes all CITES Management Authorities are encouraged to communicate to the CITES authorities of the country of origin or destination whenever a shipment is seized or irregularities with papers are discovered. It is very important for Management Authorities of (re)exporting or importing countries to obtain specific information whenever an authority in the country of import or transit discovers irregularities with CITES shipments.

Such information should include the name and address of the (re)exporter, the content of the shipment, the modus operandi and details of the air waybill, date of (re)export, etc.

Such information - especially if the same (re)exporter is involved on several occasions in different countries - can alert authorities in the country of (re)export to monitor suspects.

Furthermore, certain countries have legislation that makes it possible to prosecute illegal export only if documentation is received from foreign authorities (for example Danish legislation contains this possibility).

Parties are also encouraged to advise the Secretariat of cases of infraction. This information is not to be compared with or to replace the anonymous information on violations of CITES submitted by Management Authorities to Interpol and the World Customs Organization.

Thor Hjarsen, Head of Section, CITES Management Authority of Denmark, e-mail: thj@sns.dk

Unusual Smuggling Method

A postal employee in Australia could not understand why a parcel declared as 'plates' had scratching noises coming from inside. Customs officers discovered 24 reptiles surrounded by foam inside four packages that were destined for Japan and described as 'crochery'. A quantity of charcoal was also found in the packages and it is believed this was there to control moisture and absorb smells.

Note from the Editor: The Secretariat thanks Environment Australia for this interesting information and encourages Parties to report other unusual smuggling detections so that we can publicize them

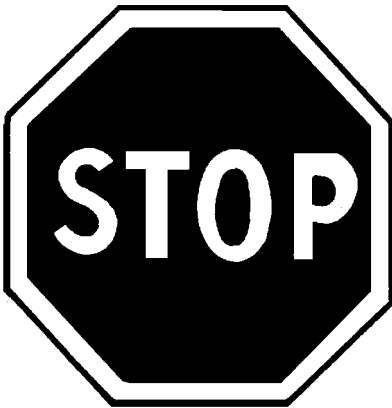
INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE TO FIGHT WILDLIFE CRIME IN AFRICA

NAIROBI, 17 March 1999 - Six countries have today formally empowered an international Task Force to fight

wildlife crime in Africa. They are: Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Referred to by many as “African Interpol” for wildlife and the first of its kind in the world, the Task Force will have its headquarters at the Kenya Wildlife Service in Nairobi.

The Task Force functions under the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, signed in Lusaka in 1994.

The objective of the Agreement is to reduce and ultimately eliminate illegal trade in wildlife. So far six countries (mentioned above) have adopted the Agreement which entered into force in 1996. The establishment of the Task Force will strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).



The Governing Council of the Lusaka Agreement, composed of all six Parties and presided over by the Honourable Cecil Holmes, Zambian Deputy Minister of Tourism, has been meeting at Kenya Wildlife Service headquarters since 15 March 1999 with the objective of making the Task Force fully operational. Also present at the meeting are observers from CITES, Interpol and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The Task Force was the idea of a group of wildlife law enforcement officers from eight African countries who met in Lusaka in 1992. They recognized the need for international cooperation in order to fight wildlife crime successfully. In doing this they were far ahead of the G-8 industrialized countries, which only last year

took similar steps to combat organized crime.

The Task Force is composed of seconded national law enforcement officers from each Party and designated National Bureaux. The National Bureaux will work together with Task Force Headquarters on joint cross-border operations against wildlife crime. The Director, Intelligence Officer and support staff are expected to be appointed in the next few weeks.

Additional Field Officers will be deployed at the designated National Bureaux.

The United Republic of Tanzania became the first Party to make a contribution to the budget of the Task Force, and Zambia and Lesotho made a commitment to pay their full contribution immediately. The remaining contributions will be made later this year. To expedite matters, the Government of Kenya offered free office accommodation. The David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, through the Government of Zambia has offered to support a specialized three-week training course for the National Bureau Officers and Field Officers of the Task Force.

Mr Donald Kaniaru, Director, UNEP, ELI/PAC, P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya. Originally published in UNEP News Release.

A day in the process of permit confirmation at the Secretariat

On arrival at the offices of the Secretariat at approximately 08h30, having battled with the typically horrendous Geneva traffic (as usual it would have been better to take public transport which is much more efficient), I go to pick up the pile of papers in the permit confirmation in-tray and go to prepare a good coffee to prepare for the grueling task of sorting through them.

Among the papers are the confirmation slips of faxes sent the previous day (normally successfully to developed countries and more often than not unsuccessfully to developing countries), regarding the validity of permits. The two piles remain to be separated and – back to the drawing board for those that were not successful.

Upon discovering certain uncommon communication problems, the only answer is to send the correspondence by express mail – yet another form to fill in; oh well, it’s all part of the process. Back to the rest of the correspondence; it’s best to put some order before settling into the new requests – just love that copying and filing! Ah, this request to confirm a re-export certificate is pending an answer from the Management Authority of the country of origin regarding the validity of the original export permit. I had better put that in the pile of urgent things to follow-up. That reminds me, I need to resend a request for the others that are still pending an answer...

I had better also file the piles of copies of permits received from the issuing countries before attacking the job of entering onto the database of the necessary information from the permits for which confirmation of validity has been requested. Another 20 concerning corals – those can be done practically on automatic pilot now knowing the necessary code for the scientific names etc. Just when I thought I was going to be able to whizz through the pile the telephone rings – oh no, another frustrated trader calling today and wanting to receive his permit yesterday. Having calmly explained to him that the policy of the Secretariat is such that traders need to communicate through the CITES Management Authority of their country, I go back to the data entry. Oh, oh, this one mentions a species that does not seem to exist in the mentioned country of origin – one to be queried with the boss.



After a short but welcome lunch break, it’s time to tackle the less common correspondence, i.e. a request for more permit forms to be printed for one of the Management Authorities and an

urgent one for security stamps as they have almost run out of them. We certainly don't want to run the risk of false documents being used and, with the time it takes in the post, plus the administrative process to arrange the printing, I have to make this a priority. Yet another phone call – this time from one of the Management Authorities wanting to know whether for a particular permit the Secretariat is or is not going to recommend its acceptance. Just a little query to make on the database. Yes, we have actually already sent a reply on that one. Yes I'll refax it today. Almost 17h30, so it's time to print out the corresponding faxes for the permits entered today, get them signed by the boss and then put them in the memory of the fax machine to be sent. Let's see what tomorrow brings and whether Notification to the Parties No. 1999/27 will have some effect on my day...

The Secretariat

THE IMPORTANCE OF RED LISTS FOR MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

The lists of endangered species ("Red List") were previously prepared primarily for a public of scientists (Scott et al., 1987¹) But as the decrease in biodiversity has become more apparent, the general public and decision makers have taken much more interest in the growing list of threatened species. Governments now frequently prepare national lists of endangered species or national red lists in fulfillment of legal requirements. In the case of the Central American countries, these lists have often been prepared on the basis of subjective data and seldom with sufficient scientific rigour. There is an obvious need to use more resources for the study of especially vulnerable species.

On October 12, 1994, the Central American presidents signed the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALI-DES). The goal of this alliance is to implement a sustainable development model for the Central American region. One of the

recommended actions of this Alliance was to create a regional list of endangered and threatened species of fauna and flora.

The Central American Commission of Environment and Development (CCAD), with the technical support of World Conservation Union Regional Office for Mesoamerica (ORMA–IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Regional Office for Central America, have begun to meet this goal, with the publication of *Lista de Fauna de Importancia para la Conservación en Centroamérica y México*, a compilation of the information about endangered and threatened species of the region. The financial support of PROARCA-CAPAS-AID, Conservation International and NORAD (Norwegian Development Agency) made the preparation of this document possible.

The next step is to start a regional discussion process, using the *Red List for Central America and Mexican Fauna* as a tool to analyze the differences between the official lists and the criteria used to create them. The aim is to unify the criteria to finally create a Regional Red List and discussed about possible agreements concerning regional policies for the protection of endangered species.

In parallel the CCAD is working together with CITES Authorities and PROARCA-CAPAS to strengthening the application of CITES by making national and regional plans, and providing training to the Central American Customs officers, the police and the army to learn about the objectives and goals of this global treaty.

Both initiatives will provide a solid base to generate wildlife conservation regional policies.

The inclusion of a species in a "Red list" will not ensure its long-term conservation. It is clearly more important to reduce pressure on nature and the unsustainable use of the most vulnerable species. Action beyond the simple numerical listing of species is necessary. The following actions should be taken:

- Adoption in all countries of the governing principle of sustainable use for the conservation of natural resources and, as a result, assign-

ment of an economic and social value to wild resources;

- Improvement of institutions responsible for the management and effective monitoring of this resource;
- Promotion of a common behaviour favourable to the sustainable use of nature;
- Assurance of an equitable distribution of benefits derived from the sustainable use of nature's resources;
- Reduction of loss of habitat and over-exploitation;
- Organization of regional meetings on trade in species in order to reach regional agreement on this topics;
- Increased support by the whole region for international treaties related to wildlife conservation.

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¹ Scott, P., Burton, J.A., Fitter R., 1987. Red Data Books: the historical background. Pages 1-5 in Fitter, R. And Fitter, M. (eds) "The road to extinction" IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

A Day in the Management Authority of China

On this morning early in March, it is still a bit chilly in Beijing. Before 8 o'clock, staff of the CITES Management Authority of China (CNMA) are coming to their offices on the 10th floor of the fairly new and modern office building of the State Forestry Administration (SFA). Some CITES employees come by SFA's shuttle buses which pick up people from their apartments (also provided by SFA) and which normally arrive at around 07h30. Some people come by bicycle, while others walk in from adjacent apartments. Quite a few of them even

have their breakfast in the dining hall of SFA, which is not only for lunch! This is another busy day for CNMA. With a total of 130 staff (30 at the headquarters in Beijing), CNMA is at the same level as the Wildlife Conservation Department of the former Ministry of Forestry, perhaps the highest level MA among the CITES Parties. It is not easy to be responsible for 130 employees; Mr. Zhen Rende, Director General of CNMA starts to review his speech to be made at a meeting to be attended by all the heads of 17 branch offices of CNMA from across the country. The Division of General Service is taking care of this meeting. Today, they also need to discuss with the Legislation Office of the State Council in an effort to expedite the promulgation of the new legislation for the implementation of CITES in China.

Today, the Division of External Relations will be attending a meeting with a delegation from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to discuss their cooperation in the next biennium. Also urgent for today, documents for the CITES tiger technical mission are to be finalized.

Staff from the Divisions for Fauna and Flora are processing applications for CITES permits. They issue urgent CITES permits only; the rest of the permits are to be issued by branch offices with prior approval from Beijing. As applications are piling up, some anxious clients insist on waiting outside to obtain their CITES permits. They are kindly invited to wait at the "business lounge" specially designated for them to relax. Frequently you can see them reading newspapers, enjoying cigarettes, making phone calls, etc. By the end of the day, 30 permits have been issued.

The end of the day is approaching. Satisfied customers are leaving the relaxing atmosphere of the business lounge having obtained the necessary permits. Representatives from the Divisions for Fauna and Flora have just finished their negotiations with the Foreign Trade Ministry and the Customs General Administration regarding modifications to the customs computerized coding system. This system presently includes nearly all species of

fauna and flora. CITES species presently take up no more than 30% in this system. There have already been complaints from traders about the quantity of species listed. The purpose of the discussions was therefore to reduce the number of species in the system.

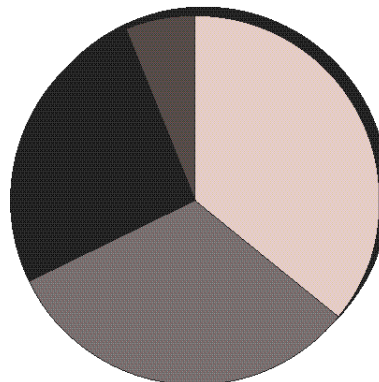
At the end of another day, at around 5 o'clock, an exhausted staff starts to make their way home via their various methods of transport.

Meng Xianlin, Deputy Director-general, CITES Management Authority of China

The National Legislation project

CITES is not a self-executing convention, consequently domestic measures must be in force at national level to provide Parties to the Convention with the authority to:

1. designate at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority;
2. prohibit trade in specimens in violation of the Convention;
3. penalize such trade; and
4. confiscate specimens illegally traded or possessed.



Category 1 (26%)
 Category 2 (36%)
 Category 3 (32%)
 Not analyzed (6%)

In 1992, at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Kyoto, Japan, Resolution Conf. 8.4 was adopted as a basis for evaluating whether CITES Parties comply with Articles VIII and IX of the Convention. This decision marked the start of the «National legislation» project. Under this project, the Secretariat was

assigned the following tasks: verify that Parties have adopted all necessary legislation to implement the provisions of the Convention; and support countries in reaching their obligations.

In order to facilitate the presentation of the results of its verification, the Secretariat suggested that the legislation of the Parties be classified in three categories, which were agreed upon at the ninth and tenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties (Doc. 9.24 (Rev.) and Doc. 10.31 (Rev.)):

- «Category 1: legislation which is believed generally meet the requirements for the implementation of CITES;»
- «Category 2: legislation which is believed generally not to meet all the requirements for the implementation of CITES; and»
- «Category 3: legislation which is believed generally not to meet the requirements for the implementation of CITES.»

At present, in 1999, the project is in its third Phase (Phase I: 1992-1994; Phase II: 1994-1997). After almost seven years, the results of the activities are as follows. The analysis and review, or update, of the national legislation of 133 Parties have been performed. The legislation of 33 (25%) of them is currently classified as category 1, of 53 (40%) as category 2 and of 47 (35%) as category 3. These figures do not include six of the Parties that were contacted during Phase III and did not respond to the Secretariat's request for information. It should be noted that nine countries acceded to the Convention after 1996 and are still in the process of adopting new legislation for the implementation of CITES. Also, these results do not highlight the progress made by 19 Parties whose legislation had been first classified in category 2 or 3 and later upgraded to category 1 or 2. This was a consequence of the interest raised by the project in legal matters over seven years of contact and follow-up with the Parties. Indeed, in these particular countries the staff of the relevant ministry collected additional information and/or prepared draft laws that were adopted by the government. Their new laws significantly improved the implementation of CITES by these Parties.

With regard to the support provided to Parties for the review and drafting of legislation, the *Guidelines for Legislation to Implement CITES*, by Cyrille de Klemm (IUCN, 1993), and the *Reference Guide; European Community Wildlife Trade Regulations* (European Commission/TRAFFIC/WWF, 1998) were sent to many countries. A checklist for reviewing CITES legislation and a questionnaire are now available in English, French and Spanish in order for Parties to perform their own review of the legislation. A Model Law in English was prepared for the implementation of CITES by Parties that apply Common Law, and in Spanish for countries in Latin America. A Model Law is currently being formulated for French-speaking Parties in West and Central Africa.

The National Legislation project is an on-going process in which each Party is consulted and given independent advice tailored to its needs. The project has a clear and immediate objective: *to increase the effectiveness of CITES.*

C. Raymakers and J-C. Vasquez, Consultants to the CITES Secretariat

Spring Bear Warning



The last two years have seen unprecedented growth in bear populations in Alaska and the Rocky Mountain area. As spring approaches, tourists are warned to wear small bells on their clothing when hiking in bear country. The bells warn away most bears. Tourists are also cautioned to watch the ground on the trail, paying particular attention to bear droppings, to be alert for the presence of grizzly bears. One can tell grizzly droppings because they have small bells in them....

Note from the Editor: The Secretariat thanks George A. Furness, Jr, President, Conservation Treaty Support Fund, for this story.

New focus for WCMC

UNEP will use the occasion of the Commission on Sustainable Development's High-level Ministerial segment, on 21 April, to announce a new biodiversity information and assessment project. UNEP, the UK Government and IUCN-the World Conservation Union have agreed that the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, located in Cambridge, will be reconstituted as an integral part of UNEP and be the centre of its biodiversity monitoring, management and development systems. WCMC is well-known for its wide range of conservation information services, including the Red Data books of endangered species.

Excerpt from UNEP News Release, 15 April 1999. For further information, see UNEP Information Note 1999/14 available through Robert Bisset, tel: (+254-2) 623084, e-mail: bisset@unep.org.

World Trade Organization High Level Symposium on Trade and Environment, Geneva, 15-16.3.99

In mid-March, the WTO organised two high-level symposia; one on trade and the environment and the other on trade and development. Participants included senior government officials from capitals and missions in Geneva, and representatives of intergovernmental organisations, civil society, the private sector and academia.

In his opening address, WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero called for the establishment of a World Environment Organisation – 'a similar multilateral rules-based system for the environment to be an institutional and legal counterpart to the World Trade Organisation.' In this context, UNEP's Executive Director Klaus Töpfer highlighted his organisations's strong new mandate to 'assume a key role on environment and trade', and said he was

exploring modalities for enhanced institutional co-operation between the WTO and UNEP.

Trade and the environment

"While protection is the ultimate goal of environmentalists, protectionism is the ultimate fear of the trade community. This reality creates a cultural gap between the two communities. However, to this observer, at least, this Trade and Environment Symposium witnessed some very specific and pragmatic proposals to help bridge this gap and to move thinking and action forward. A pragmatic agenda includes both substantive and procedural aspects. Top of the list on the substantive proposals: the refinement of Article XX – General Exceptions – in order to rebalance trade and environmental goals, flexibility to negotiate environmental standards that relate to production processes and methods (PPMs), the negotiation of the relationship of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to the WTO, and the elimination of environmentally harmful and trade distorting subsidies, particularly in fisheries, agriculture and energy. Procedural proposals include aspects such as increased transparency and allowing more NGOs participation in some WTO activities. It is a fact that civil society has now emerged as a new actor in the trade dialogue. Some of these groups have led opposition movements to freer trade and spearheaded the so-called 'globalization backlash' in some countries. This poses a challenge not only for governments but also for the business communities to educate and to counteract globophobic attitudes with arguments and convincing evidence about the benefits of free trade and open markets. More participation and transparency could go a long way in reducing the perception of the WTO or other trade negotiations as 'black boxes' in which the concerns of civil-society are not heard.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is heartening to see that governments and international institutions are engaged in an open dialogue that revisits all these issues and that developing countries and NGOs

are fully engaged in this exercise. The debates in these events strongly suggest that this is a time, not to change, but certainly to revise our paradigms, both policy and managerial paradigms, a time to think anew about the balance of free markets and regulation, about the balance of state and private sector, about international coordination and cooperation. Particularly important, it is a time to talk about international institutions, now that so many questions have been raised about the international institutional architecture, both multilateral and regional. Thus, international institutions and governments should be commended for organizing these events."

Excerpt from article by José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Chief Trade Advisor, Organization of American States and former Minister of Foreign Commerce of Costa Rica - originally published in BRIDGES Between Trade and Sustainable Development Year 3 No. 2.

The Experience of an intern in the CITES Management Authority of Senegal (A New Species in Senegal: the Grandius Canadianus)

Note from the editor: With the assistance of Environment Canada, Traffic and the CITES Secretariat, Mr Jack DeJong spent six months working with CITES Senegal. Mr DeJong provided technical assistance setting up an internal computer network. The work done is described in a technical report. For the purpose of the CITES Newsletter, Mr DeJong describes herein an interesting personal experience.

"I left for Senegal in September, to work for six months as an Information Management Specialist for the capacity enhancement of the CITES Management Authority of Senegal. My role in the office was to assess and improve the computer systems of the Senegal office, to assist them in monitoring trade of endangered species.

My first experience of the communication system of the office was when I arrived in Dakar. Nobody had received any of the messages confirming my

arrival date, and to their surprise I showed up the next day at the CITES Management Authority of Senegal. Luckily, I had landed in the same office that had confirmed their interest in receiving me as an intern; they were just unsure of when this was going to happen. Nevertheless, my welcome was very warm and I felt very much at ease in my new work environment.

After a while, I realized that my initial surprise was not caused only by communication differences. In fact, I discovered a whole new perception of time. My comrades in the office used to refer to the Senegalese "15 minutes" wait: whenever you are waiting, expect it to last at least 15 minutes. I learned that human relations are more important than time management in a Senegalese work environment. My scheduling was based around this reality.



Over time, I established valuable contacts with the people in the office, who affectionately referred to me as the *grand canadien* (The Tall Canadian). At my farewell party, I received very warm wishes and gifts from many of the other divisions working in Parc de Haan. One gift in particular came to my attention: it was a purse for my fiancée. When I realized it was snake-like material, I thought to myself "this must be an imitation", but as I looked closer, I realized it was an actual Python sebae Purse! The director of the Management Authority of Senegal, Abdoulaye Kane, was amused by the surprise and advised me that I would need a permit to bring this gift back, since the pathon was on Appendix II of CITES..

Toothfish and CITES

There are two species of toothfish; the Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*), which has been in the news recently, and the Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsonii*). Both species are found in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic waters. The Patagonian toothfish in particular is being targeted by both longline and bottom-trawl fishing. Concerns over the incidence of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing has lead to the Australian Government investigating options to control and reduce fishing pressure on this species.

Consideration and examination of the issues effecting toothfish are continuing in a number of fora, including the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) where a catch certification scheme is being considered. Another option may be to submit the species for listing in the appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Environment Australia is currently investigating whether CITES can play a positive role in protecting stocks of toothfish. Such a move would ensure that all trade in toothfish products would be required to be monitored and reported, thus providing additional support to efforts in controlling and enforcement of fishing activity.

A definitive decision is yet to be made by Australia on whether to proceed with a CITES proposal. However, in order to examine what role CITES could play in conserving toothfish stocks, information on the biology, ecology, population status, legal status, utilisation and trade of the two species is being compiled.

Tom Kaveney, Wildlife Population Assessment Section, Environment Australia. Originally published in 'The Monitor' newsletter (see Web sites of interest).



CITES meetings (planned and potential)

CITES Training Seminar

28-30 June 1999

Republic of Korea

15th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee

5-9 July 1999

Madagascar

The International Association of Forensic Sciences

15th triennial meeting¹

22-28 August 1999

Los Angeles, United States of America

42nd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee

27 September-1 October 1999

Lisbon, Portugal

CITES Training Seminar (potential)

September 1999

Uzbekistan

CITES Regional enforcement training seminar

November 1999

Hong Kong

CITES Secretariat

¹ The National Forensics Laboratory of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to co-chair a Forensic Wildlife component of the meeting.

This meeting should be of interest to forensic scientists engaged in CITES issues and the CITES Secretariat may be able to assist in providing financial assistance to delegates wishing to attend. Contact should be made with the Secretariat for further details.

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**If you would like to submit an article,
or make suggestions or comments,
please contact the Capacity Building
Unit.**

CITES Secretariat



Web Sites of Interest

The Conservation Treaty Support Fund, United States of America, which has helped raise support for many CITES-approved projects

www.conservationtreaty.org

includes information on CTSF, the treaties it supports, grants it has made and educational and informational materials including those of CITES.

Environment Canada – Law Enforcement Division

www.ec.gc.ca/enforce/homepage

a wealth of information relating to wildlife law enforcement and the various activities that the agency is engaged in, available in English and French.

Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom

www.rbgekew.org.uk/herbarium/caps/cites/index.htm

A newsletter that will eventually be accessible through the CITES web site www.cites.org

CITES NEWS – Plants.

Environment Australia – Biodiversity Group

www.biodiversity.environment.gov.au/plants/wildlife/intro.htm

A newsletter – The Monitor, accessible through the above-mentioned site, will be produced quarterly by the Wildlife Population Assessment Section and aims at keeping readers up-to-date on matters surrounding the harvesting of wildlife.

Centre for Science and Environment, India

www.cseindia.org or www.oneworld.org/cse

includes their science and environment bulletin, Down To Earth, a weekly feature service of articles on environment and a daily environmental newflash by subject. It also give regular updates on their campaigns involving biodiversity, water resources, wildlife, forests, etc. and has an online library of books, journals, images and videos searchable through a thesaurus of environmental keywords.

The International Institute For Sustainable Development (IISD), Canada - Earth Negotiations Bulletin

www.iisd.ca

an electronic clearing-house for information on past and upcoming international meetings related to environment and development policy.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - Biodiversity Action Network (BIONET), United States of America

www.igc.org/bionet

An NGO network to strengthen biodiversity policy and law which provides information to support effective implementation of the CBD, such as BIONET documents, lists of biodiversity publications and web sites, calendars of events, etc.

The Editor