

**23rd REGULAR MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)
(Cape Town, South Africa, 18-25 November 2013)**

Statement by the CITES Secretariat

On behalf of the Secretary-General of CITES, John Scanlon, we would like to sincerely thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving us the floor, and express our profound gratitude to the Government of South Africa for hosting the 23rd regular meeting of ICCAT in the wonderful city of Cape Town.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) is a legally binding international agreement between 179 countries. CITES and ICCAT have participated in one another's meetings over the past few years. Our interactions are now led by the *Guidelines on cooperation between ICCAT and CITES* that were agreed by each entity, and came into effect in July 2012.

This cooperation has taken on new significance with the CITES listing of several shark species, that have been discussed here and fall under the purview of ICCAT. At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16) in Bangkok in March 2013 and because they met specific trade and biological listing criteria, Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*), Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), Scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*), Great hammerhead shark (*S. mokarran*) and Smooth hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*), as well as all manta rays (*Manta* spp.), were included in CITES Appendix II - meaning that international trade is strictly regulated and controlled to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival, but is not prohibited.

The entry into effect of these listings has been delayed by 18 months until 14 September 2014 to enable CITES Parties to resolve technical and administrative issues related to their implementation. From 14 September 2014 onward, any international trade in specimens of these species will need to be accompanied by CITES permits and certificates confirming that they have been harvested sustainably and legally, and this trade will also need to be reported to the CITES Secretariat.

The collaboration between CITES authorities and fishery agencies at national and regional levels will be essential for the effective implementation of these requirements, and this will need to get assistance where required. National and regional fishery management agencies and organizations have the main responsibility for managing fishery resources, including sharks and rays. CITES, as a global instrument for regulating international trade in listed wild species, can complement fishery management to encourage fishery stakeholders - managers and fishers alike - to implement and follow sustainable and legal fishing practices for international commercial trade. Good fishery management measures based on the best scientific information available play a major role in the implementation of CITES requirements for international trade in commercially-exploited aquatic species.

To effectively implement the CITES CoP16 decisions for the 5 sharks and the manta rays, the involvement of, and support for a wide-range of stakeholders will be needed. The response to this challenge has been remarkable, with a flurry of activities being put in place since

March 2013, for which we are particularly grateful. Just to name a few: Australia and New Zealand, Brazil, China and Germany, as well as several NGOs, are planning regional capacity building workshops dealing with specific aspects of the CITES shark listings; identification materials are being developed; targeted needs assessments are being made; guidelines to determine that proposed trade levels are sustainable are being established; and the European Union and the USA, amongst others, have pledged financial support for assisting these and other efforts.

The CITES Secretariat is also committed to assist CITES Parties, especially developing countries, in being able to comply with the CITES requirements by 14 September 2014. The European Union has generously provided 1.2 million Euro to the CITES Secretariat to enhance the implementation of the legally binding CITES regulatory measures for sharks. We are closely cooperating with the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in this initiative. Our joint actions are aimed at enhancing the efforts of Regional Fishery Management Organizations, and at developing countries that are key shark fishing nations which need to strengthen their scientific, institutional or enforcement capacities.

This initiative also involves outreach and communication. The Secretariat has just launched a dedicated webpage on sharks and CITES, with comprehensive and up to date information on a broad range of range of issues such as the CITES/FAO collaboration and access to capacity building tools. The webpage is a work in progress and will be further developed over time. We invite you to visit it through our Homepage at www.cites.org. and will be happy to provide further assistance and help if and when required.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the CITES Secretariat would greatly appreciate if this Commission could consider at one of its future meetings a dedicated discussion on how ICCAT and CITES could collaborate on issues and species of common interest, including the sharks just mentioned. We would be prepared to work together with the ICCAT secretariat and its Parties in this regard, and within the overall context of our joint *Guidelines on cooperation*.

Thank you for your attention,
