

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



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

Strategic matters

CITES STRATEGIC VISION: 2008-2013

1. This document has been prepared by the Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG) with the assistance of the Secretariat and is submitted by Ghana as the Chairman of the Working Group.
2. At its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004), considering that the period covered by the *Strategic Vision through 2005* was coming to an end, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 13.1 as follows:

The Conference of the Parties decides:

- a) *to extend until the end of 2007 the time validity of the Strategic Vision and its Action Plan, which were adopted with Decision 11.1 at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000) (attached as Annex 1 to [the CoP13] Decisions);*
 - b) *to establish a Strategic Plan Working Group as a subcommittee of the Standing Committee, with representation from all regions and of the Animals and Plants Committees, with the task to develop, with the cooperation of the Secretariat, a proposal for a Strategic Vision and Action Plan through 2013, in particular in order to contribute to the achievement of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010;*
 - c) *to invite input from relevant intergovernmental organizations to the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group with respect to possible synergies;*
 - d) *to urge all Parties and to instruct the Secretariat and the permanent Committees to evaluate their efforts in relation to the implementation of the existing Strategic Vision and Action Plan and to submit the outcome thereof to the Strategic Plan Working Group through their representatives on that working group;*
 - e) *that the Strategic Plan Working Group shall submit its proposal to the Standing Committee for approval at its annual meeting prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which is to be held in 2007; and*
 - f) *that the Standing Committee shall submit the proposal for a Strategic Vision and Action Plan through 2013 for adoption at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
3. At its 53rd meeting (Geneva, June – July 2005), the Standing Committee established the Strategic Plan Working Group comprising Ghana as the Chairman, Canada as the Vice-Chairman, a representative of each CITES region and the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees. It also agreed on the terms of reference of the Working Group, which can be found in document SC54 Doc. 6.1.

4. A meeting of the SPWG was organized from 24 to 28 April 2006, in Ottawa, Canada, hosted by the Government of Canada. The SPWG was assisted by the Secretariat.
5. In advance of the meeting, the Secretariat sent Notification to the Parties No. 2006/018, of 9 March 2006, inviting Parties to submit their comments for the consideration of the Strategic Plan Working Group. As a result, at the meeting, the Working Group was able to take into account submissions from Parties and non-governmental organizations, in addition to documents from the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat, and the documents referred to specifically in the terms of reference.
6. The report of SPWG was presented at the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC54, Geneva, October 2006), including a draft of a Strategic Plan for CITES for the period 2008-2013 (subsequently changed to a Strategic Vision). The document explained that, although the SPWG had followed its terms of reference closely, one issue that emerged in its discussions had caused it to stray from these terms of reference in one respect. It was noted that the Action Plan to implement the current *Strategic Vision through 2007* contained a large number of activities to be implemented by the Parties, the permanent committees of CITES or the Secretariat. Many of the Action Points had been implemented and the Secretariat provided a long list of the actions taken to achieve the implementation of the Action Plan. However, for many others, particularly those addressed to the Parties, there was no information available to indicate what action had been taken. It was also noted that some of the Action Points were expressions of policy that might be better recorded in a different way. After considerable discussion, the Working Group agreed to suggest that any specific actions to be taken by Parties, committees or the Secretariat should be specified in the Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties, and that it was not helpful to create another separate layer of instructions and recommendations. For this reason the Working Group did not prepare an action plan to implement the Strategic Vision. Rather it suggested that the new Strategic Vision should provide a framework for the future development of the body of Resolutions and Decisions, so that amendments to this soft law of CITES and any new resolutions and decisions should be designed to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.
7. Following discussion of the draft Strategic Vision at SC54, the Standing Committee requested participants who had commented on the draft during the discussion to give their comments in writing to the Secretariat by 15 November 2006, for transmission to the SPWG. The Committee requested the SPWG to prepare a revised draft of the Strategic Vision taking these comments into account, and to submit this for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14).
8. The SPWG met a second time in Geneva from 15 to 19 January 2007 and prepared a revised draft Strategic Vision taking into account all of the comments received. This is presented in the Annex to the present document.

Recommendation

9. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the SPWG presents the draft resolution in the Annex and the attached *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013* for adoption by the Conference of the Parties.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat assisted the SPWG in its deliberations and supports the general approach that has been taken. Although it would certainly be possible to arrange the contents of the draft Strategic Vision in a different way, the Secretariat believes that the basic elements are sound, in particular taking into account the terms of reference that were specified by the Conference of the Parties.
- B. At SC54, some Parties expressed concerns about the draft document that was presented there. Those who commented were provided with the opportunity to submit their comments in writing for consideration by the SPWG. The Working Group discussed all of the comments received and has improved the document as a result. In some cases, the improvement was to provide a better explanation of the logic for the approach that has been taken in the revised Strategic Vision. In other cases, the change required was more substantive.

- C. The Secretariat does not share the concern of some commentators that the present draft looks too far beyond the core purpose of CITES. It is simply undeniable that developments in CITES are affected by developments in other international fora, comprising the same States, aimed at balancing environmental aims and priorities with the needs of people. CITES has shown its durability and adaptability to changing circumstances over more than 30 years, and must continue to do so.

DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION AT
THE 14TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013

RECALLING Decision 11.1, adopted at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Gigiri, 2000), through which the Conference adopted the *Strategic Vision through 2005* and the *Action Plan*;

RECALLING Decision 13.1, adopted at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004) through which the Conference extended to 2007 the period of validity of the *Strategic Vision through 2005* and established a Strategic Plan Working Group as a subcommittee of the Standing Committee to prepare a new strategic vision for the period 2008 to 2013;

RECOGNIZING, with gratitude, the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group;

CONSCIOUS of the need to improve the implementation of the Convention globally;

CONVINCED that the evolution of CITES must take into account developments in the broader international community relating to the environment and trade;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of the Conference of the Parties, expressed in Decision 13.1, to contribute to the World Summit on Sustainable Development target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

ADOPTS the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013*, annexed to this Resolution;

URGES Parties to review their policies and plans, including their biological diversity strategies and action plans where appropriate, in order to make any adjustments necessary to help ensure that the Goals specified in the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013* are achieved;

REQUESTS the Secretariat to design its programmes of work for the period 2008 to 2013 in order to support the implementation of the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013* in the Annex;

INVITES intergovernmental environmental fora, the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, other intergovernmental bodies and other organizations with an interest in the objectives of CITES to review their policies and their current and planned programmes and activities, with the aim of supporting achievement of the Goals specified in the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013*; and

INSTRUCTS the Standing Committee to review the progress in implementation of the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013*, and in achievement of the Objectives, at each of its ordinary meetings during the term of the plan, and to report at the 15th and 16th meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

CITES STRATEGIC VISION: 2008-2013

General introduction

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was concluded on 3 March 1973. It entered into force after ratification by 10 States, on 1 July 1975.

Since then, the number of countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention has continued to increase. With 169¹ Parties, CITES is widely regarded as one of the most important international conservation instruments. During this period, the Conference of the Parties has shown itself to be capable of adapting to changing circumstances and, through the adoption of Resolutions and Decisions, has demonstrated an ability to construct practical solutions to increasingly complex wildlife trade and conservation problems.

At its ninth meeting (Fort Lauderdale, 1994), the Conference of the Parties commissioned a review of the Convention's effectiveness. The principal purposes of the review were to evaluate the extent to which the Convention had achieved its objectives and the progress made since CITES came into being and, most importantly, to identify deficiencies and requirements necessary to strengthen the Convention and help plan for the future. At its 10th meeting (Harare, 1997), the Conference agreed to an Action Plan for implementing certain findings and recommendations of the review. A central finding was the need for a strategic plan and, at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), the Conference of the Parties adopted the *Strategic Vision through 2005*, and an Action Plan.

At its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 13.1, which extended the validity of the Strategic Vision and Action Plan until the end of 2007. It also established a procedure for developing a new Strategic Vision through 2013, particularly to contribute to the achievement of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The present document is the result of this process.

With this new Strategic Vision, the Conference of the Parties to CITES outlines the Convention's direction in the new millennium and takes into account, within the context of its mandate, issues such as:

- meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010;
- ensuring stewardship of natural resources and their use at sustainable levels;
- safeguarding wildlife as an integral part of the global ecosystem on which all life depends;
- achieving deeper understanding of the cultural, social and economic issues at play in producer and consumer countries;
- promoting wider involvement of civil society in the development of conservation policies and practices (including non-governmental organizations concerned with development or environment, community groups, professional associations, trade unions, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups); and
- giving greater attention to international trade in timber and aquatic species.

¹ As of January 2007.

Purpose

The two-fold purpose of the Strategic Vision is:

- to improve the working of the Convention, so that international trade in wild fauna and flora is consistently conducted at sustainable levels; and
- to ensure that CITES policy developments are aligned with changes in international environmental priorities and take into account new international initiatives.

The *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013* confirms the recognition by the Parties that sustainable trade in wild fauna and flora can make a major contribution to achieving the broader objectives of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. It also recognizes that Parties must continue to ensure that proper mechanisms to regulate trade are in place. These depend upon the availability of and access to reliable scientific data and to information generated by effective monitoring systems to counter over-exploitation. But information by itself is not enough and such trade mechanisms also require strong national capacity backed by good cooperation at national, regional and global levels. However, the purposes of the Strategic Vision will be achieved only if CITES maintains a high political profile.

Structure

In order to achieve this purpose, three broad goals, of equal priority, have been identified as the key components of the Strategic Vision:

- Goal 1: Ensure compliance with and implementation and enforcement of the Convention
- Goal 2: Secure the financial basis for the Convention
- Goal 3: Ensure that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive.

The first two goals aim at consolidating the existing strengths of the Convention. The last places CITES in the wider context of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and related conventions, agreements and associations.

Within the framework provided by each of these goals, this Strategic Vision identifies a number of objectives to be achieved. And, as a basis for determining success of the Vision, when the Parties meet at their 16th meeting, in 2013, a number of specific indicators are listed under each objective.

This document provides a framework for the future development of the existing body of Resolutions and Decisions, so that amendments to this soft law of CITES and any new resolutions and decisions should be designed to achieve the goals of the Strategic Vision. It should not be considered as an action plan and it does not try to prescribe how the goals or objectives are to be achieved. Rather this is left to the Parties, the Committees or the Secretariat to decide for themselves, or for the Conference of the Parties to specify the required actions through Resolutions or Decisions.

It should be noted that all references to "trade" in the Strategic Vision refer to trade as defined in Article I of the Convention.

CITES MISSION STATEMENT

TO CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY BY ENSURING THAT NO SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA OR FLORA BECOMES OR REMAINS SUBJECT TO UNSUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE

THE STRATEGIC GOALS

The Conference of the Parties has identified three primary goals to provide the framework for the realisation of the Strategic Vision.

GOAL 1 *ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH AND IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE CONVENTION*

Introduction

The effectiveness of the Convention depends upon its full implementation by all Parties, whether they are consumers or producers of wild animals and plants. Full implementation relies, in turn, upon each Party's:

- commitment to the Convention and its principles;
- scientific expertise and analyses;
- enforcement; and
- capacity building.

Overall, implementation of the Convention should be aimed at ensuring the sustainable management of and responsible trade in wild fauna and flora and promoting the effective enforcement of the Convention.

Commitment to the Convention and its principles

The proper functioning of the Convention depends to a great extent on the commitment of Parties to comply with and implement the convention and its principles. While Parties have responsibility for conservation and management of their own fauna and flora, it is desirable that national legislation be coherent with international multilateral environment instruments and contain transparent provisions that are readily accepted and understood by all stakeholders.

Objective 1.1 **Parties comply with their obligations under the Convention through appropriate policies, legislation and procedures.**

Indicators

All Parties have appropriate policies, legislation and procedures to implement the Convention.

A significant number of Parties have undergone assessments of their wildlife trade policies in accordance with Decision 13.74.

Parties have management programmes for the conservation of CITES-listed species and the recovery of Appendix-I-listed species, with the aim that they no longer satisfy the biological criteria for inclusion in that Appendix.

All Parties have fully functional Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities and enforcement authorities that have the skills and resources necessary to undertake their Convention obligations to a high standard.

Legal-acquisition findings are made on the basis of proper documentation and evidence.

Objective 1.2 Administrative procedures are practical, kept up to date and user-friendly.

Indicators

Standard procedures for the issuance of permits have been adopted by each Party, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to ensure these are issued in a timely fashion.

As far as possible Parties have electronic systems for information management, permit issuance, marking of specimens and generating annual, biennial or other reports.

Parties are to the fullest extent possible making use of the simplified procedures provided for in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP13).

Objective 1.3 National wildlife trade policies are consistent with policies and regulations adopted at the international level.

Indicators

The Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties are implemented by all Parties in a consistent manner.

Multilateral CITES processes have been further developed that reduce the need by Parties for recourse to stricter domestic measures and reservations.

Parties have coherent positions on environment and wildlife trade in international fora.

Scientific expertise and analysis

For CITES to be an effective instrument in the conservation of wildlife, Parties must ensure that international trade is not detrimental to the survival of the species throughout their range and that species remain at a level consistent with their role in the ecosystem. In addition, the listings in the Appendices must appropriately reflect the current conservation needs of the species and be in accordance with the criteria set out in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP13). Regular review of the Appendices should form part of the process to achieve these aims. The listing of species is not an end in itself but should be accompanied by management or recovery plans as appropriate. Both, non-detriment findings and listings of species in the Appendices, must be made based on sound scientific information on the species' biology, distribution, population status, harvest and other biological and ecological factors.

Objective 1.4 The Appendices correctly reflect the conservation needs of species.

Indicators

The Animals and Plants Committees, supported by the Parties, regularly review species in the Appendices to verify that they are appropriately listed on the basis of the agreed criteria, and to identify species that are not at risk from trade and might be considered for removal from the Appendices.

A resolution has been adopted specifying the procedure for the submission of amendment proposals regarding the species identified through this review.

A mechanism is in place for the regular evaluation of trade and biological information on unlisted species subject to significant levels of international trade to determine whether they would benefit from inclusion in the Appendices.

Objective 1.5 Robust scientific information is the basis for non-detriment findings.

Indicators

The Conference of the Parties has adopted guidelines on the making of non-detriment findings, including guidance in relation to specific taxonomic groups.

The collection of information on species in trade, through field research and monitoring programmes, has been strengthened.

Non-detriment findings are made on the basis of sound and relevant scientific information and appropriate risk assessment.

Objective 1.6 Parties cooperate in managing shared wildlife resources.

Indicators

Cooperative recovery plans are in place for shared populations of Appendix-I species.

Cooperative management plans are in place for shared populations of Appendix-II species.

Enforcement

The effective implementation of CITES requires regular monitoring and inspection of CITES trade and timely and proportionate enforcement responses to detected violations. This presupposes the development or enhancement of strong multi-agency coordination mechanisms involving both CITES authorities and enforcement agencies, parity between wildlife enforcement officers and other law enforcement officers, increased attention to wildlife offences and heightened awareness among prosecutors and judges regarding their role in deterring wildlife crime. Although enforcement of the Convention is primarily a matter of national competence, bilateral, regional and global cooperation to combat illegal wildlife trade is essential. CITES implementation and enforcement depend to a large degree on efficient border and trade controls.

Objective 1.7 Parties are enforcing the Convention to reduce illegal wildlife trade.

Indicators

A national wildlife enforcement coordination network is established by each Party with representation from all relevant enforcement bodies.

Mechanisms are developed to understand more precisely the scale of and trends in illegal trade in species in high demand and to assess the effectiveness of the corresponding enforcement measures.

Cooperation exists between national, regional and international law enforcement agencies and CITES authorities to effectively combat illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.

Parties have strengthened their enforcement of the Convention to ensure that punitive action against offenders is commensurate with the seriousness of the offence.

Capacity building

Capacity building is a common thread throughout this Strategic Vision. Improved national capabilities should in turn enable better management and conservation of wild animals and plants, and thus reduce the need to include species in the CITES Appendices. It is also important to consider the potential of regional coordination and cooperation for national capacity-building efforts.

Objective 1.8 Parties and the Secretariat have adequate capacity building programmes in place.

Indicators

Capacity building programmes have been developed for training trainers.

All Parties, in collaboration with the Secretariat where appropriate, provide their staff responsible for implementing CITES with access to adequate training and information resources.

National and regional training programmes are in place for all aspects of the implementation of CITES, including the making of non-detriment findings, issuance of permits and enforcement.

The Secretariat plays an active role in coordinating the production of identification materials to ensure consistency and prevent duplication of effort.

GOAL 2 *SECURE THE FINANCIAL BASIS FOR THE CONVENTION*

Introduction

Successful implementation and enforcement of the Convention requires an appropriate level of funding at national and international levels.

At the national level, Parties must ensure that resources are allocated to implement the Convention so that they are able to effectively meet their obligations under the Convention. In order to offset or cover certain implementation costs, a number of countries charge for issuing permits and certificates. Other Parties are encouraged to explore these and other cost recovery options.

At the international level, funding is needed to meet the requirements of operational effectiveness of the Convention, to provide a platform for international coordination and cooperation. The Conference of the Parties, when adopting Resolutions or Decisions requiring specific activities to be undertaken, should determine whether such activities will be carried out subject to external funding. As appropriate, the Conference provides guidance regarding the priority of these activities so that Parties, the Committees and the Secretariat, use this guidance to prioritize their own activities.

Parties ensure that their agreed contributions are made so that the costs to support the work and administration of the Convention are adequately covered. The Conference of the Parties, taking into account the difficulties associated with the collection of arrears, should consider mechanisms to encourage Parties to make these contributions.

In view of the financial limitations for all Parties when considering the need to increase the budget for administration of the Convention and the implementation of Resolutions and Decisions, other ways should be explored to meet this need.

Objective 2.1 Financial resources are sufficient to ensure full implementation of the Convention.

Indicators

As far as possible, Parties are recovering the costs of implementing the Convention.

Appropriate measures are in effect in relation to Parties that have repeatedly failed to meet their obligations with regard to their assessed contributions to the Trust Fund.

At the time of adoption of Resolutions and Decisions, the Conference of the Parties determines how their implementation will be funded.

The examination of sources of additional funding for implementation of CITES at national and international levels includes non-traditional sources.

GOAL 3 *ENSURE THAT CITES AND OTHER MULTILATERAL INSTRUMENTS AND PROCESSES ARE COHERENT AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE*

Introduction

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) called for a significant reduction by 2010 in the current rate of loss of biological diversity, and called for actions at all levels. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Global Biodiversity Outlook highlighted once again in 2006 the need for considerable additional efforts to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current negative trend. Significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss is also essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and WSSD objectives relating to poverty eradication, food security, health, environmental sustainability and water. CITES contributes to achieving these goals by ensuring that international trade does not threaten the survival of wild fauna and flora. The target of the WSSD of

significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss would be more easily achieved through cooperation among Parties, environmental, trade and other organizations.

The need for a coordinated process of implementation has grown as the Convention grows in complexity. It is also recognized that for CITES to successfully fulfil its mandate of ensuring that no species of wild fauna or flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation through international trade, the evolution of CITES must take into account its continued contribution to the broader international environmental agenda. Parties should implement the provisions of the Convention, Resolutions and Decisions ensuring that CITES actions are supportive of international trade, environmental and other obligations, where such an approach contributes to the reduction of unsustainable exploitation of wildlife. Social and economic incentives can be useful in some circumstances to bring local communities and local authorities into partnership with government under an appropriate policy, legislative and financial framework.

Mutual supportiveness and effective implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and enhanced cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and processes is considered to be an important condition for effective measures to halt the loss of global biodiversity. CITES role is key towards this end.

CITES has proven to be an effective instrument for agreeing on objectives, targets and measures that prevent over-exploitation of species as result of international trade in threatened, commercially important species. In light of the high political commitment to the 2010 challenge, it is opportune to extend this role now to all species of animal and plant subject to trade that are likely to become endangered if current levels of exploitation are maintained. In this way CITES, will become an instrument for enhancing sustainable management of natural stocks and the sustainability of trade in such commodities. Although CITES does not have a definition of sustainable use, elements of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on Sustainable Use are already implicit in the functioning of CITES.

The role of CITES in achieving the above challenges is crucial and requires an effective communication strategy.

Objective 3.1 Funding and common implementation of CITES-related conservation projects by international financial mechanisms and other relevant institutions is significantly increased.

Indicators

CITES-related projects have been developed that contribute to poverty alleviation and livelihoods of local communities.

Social and economic instruments are in place to provide benefits to local communities and conservation from wildlife trade, to an extent commensurate with the value of the specimens traded.

Objective 3.2 Awareness of CITES is increased and it is understood to be the proper global instrument to ensure the sustainability of wildlife trade.

Indicators

A communication strategy is developed, where appropriate with other MEAs, for conveying concise, accurate and objective information about the Convention and its achievements.

A list has been developed of CITES accomplishments and lessons learned.

CITES permits are considered as a certification of sustainable trade.

Objective 3.3 Strategic alliances are forged with environmental and trade organizations.

Indicators

Common biodiversity conservation goals, objectives and principles are integrated with those of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and related conventions, agreements and associations.

Scientific and technical programmes of the Convention are coordinated with those of relevant technical partners and other competent organizations and agencies, particularly the multilateral environmental agreements.

CITES has observer status in the formal trade negotiating forum of the World Trade Organization and a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation has been concluded between the two bodies.