

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



Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Improving regional communication and the regional representation

WORKING GROUP REPORT

Members of the working group

Netherlands (Chair);

Regional representatives: Schwann Tunhikorn (Asia), Katalin Rodics (Europe), Rodrigo Medellín (North America), Chair and regional representative for Europe in the Plants Committee, Margarita Clemente

Observers from Parties: Chile, the Netherlands,

Observers from UN bodies: UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre; and

The CITES Secretariat.

Summary of the discussions and recommendations

1. The working group discussed the issues in Document 5.7 and the result of the working group of the Plants Committee in Doc. AC 20 Inf. 16 and produced the draft proposal to the Conference of the Parties presented in the Annex.
2. The working group discussed the issue of the double role of the Chairman as Regional Representative. The working group felt that this problem could be solved by collaboration between the Chairman and his/her alternate. The working group therefore considered that no further action is needed.
3. The working group discussed the number of Representatives from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Due to different opinions and lack of time, the working group did not reach a conclusion.

Introduction

Concerns have been raised in the Plants and Animals Committees about a lack of adequate regional representation and regional communication. Complaints have been expressed regularly by representatives. Good regional representation and a regular regional communication are essential requirements for the effective operation of the Committees, in order to fulfil their tasks as resolved in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12). The Plants and Animals Committees see a need to improve regional representation and regional communication and have discussed these issues at PC13, PC14 and AC20.

The principal problems appear to be:

- a) Lack of time and means for the Regional Representatives to communicate;
- b) Lack of response from the Parties in the region;
- c) Lack of guidance.

The Plants and Animals Committees consider it urgent to solve these problems because they hamper the proper functioning of the Committees and thus their task to facilitate the work of the Conference of the Parties and to carry out work in between meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Regional representatives

Regional Representatives should maintain a regular communication with the Parties in their region to be able to represent the region. Regional representatives find it difficult to carry out this task because they do not have, or are not allowed sufficient time, and/or they do not have the necessary facilities, and/or they do not get adequate support from their government and/or employer. Regional Representatives need full support of their government and their employer, in order to be provided with the necessary means (time, finances, office, equipment, communication facilities, email and internet). A formal commitment of their government and employer is required.

The Plants and Animals Committee recommend amendment of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) on the Establishment of Committees, as follows:

- “a) The proposals for candidates as representatives should be supported by the relevant governments and institutions in a formal commitment in order to ensure ~~as far as possible~~ that they will obtain the necessary means to undertake their activities;”

A Regional Representative should be prepared, and be able and willing to spend a certain amount of time on his tasks for the Committee. It is not sufficient to have only a curriculum vitae of the candidate; a formal commitment is required.

The Plants and Animals Committees recommend amendment of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) on the Establishment of Committees, as follows:

- “b) The names of the proposed candidates, their formal commitment to fulfill the duties of regional representatives as specified in Annex 2, and their curricula vitae, should be circulated to the Parties of the region concerned at least 120 days before the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which the representatives will be elected;”

Many good reasons may necessitate the replacement of a Regional Representative, such as: end of term; personnel or private matters; non-functioning etc.

“Directs the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee to discuss at every meeting the follow up of representatives to ensure continuity in an effective regional representation. directs the Secretariat to assist the Chairman in consulting regions, if needed.”

A particular problem exists for the Chairmen of the Committees. The Plants and Animals Committees are concerned that it will be impossible or at least very difficult to find a Chairman from a developing country, because of lack of means. To enable proper functioning of Chairmen from developing countries as well as from developed countries, the Conference of the Parties needs to develop another mechanism, including a budget line.

To fulfill the advisory function to the Conference of the Parties as specified in RESOLVES a), or Annex 2 of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), Animals and Plants Committees Representatives should be enabled to participate in the Conference of the Parties.

The Plants and Animals Committee recommend amendment of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) on the Establishment of Committees, as follows:

- g) to the extent possible, the Secretariat shall make provision for the payment, if requested, of reasonable and justifiable travel expenses, including attendance to the relevant Committee meetings and to the Conference of the Parties, of members, and other expenses of the chairmen of the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee; in particular for representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Response from the Parties

When Regional Representatives initiate communication with Parties, they frequently do not get a response. In 2003, it appeared that only 31 Parties out of 162 responded to requests for information for the regional reports. Parties should be obliged to respond to communications of the Regional Representatives. When a regional representative sends a message to a Party, there should be a person assigned with the task of responding. The contact-person, preferably in the Scientific Authority, should be relatively free to communicate. They should be allowed to give a provisional or less formal answer, without asking approval of his or her supervisors or the Management Authority. They should also provide the regional representatives with relevant information on their own initiative.

Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), Annex 2, under the second RESOLVES, c) requires that contact persons should be identified in the countries of a region. This requirement is probably overlooked or misunderstood by the Parties. Implementation of this requirement could greatly improve communications in the region.

Directs the Secretariat to issue a notification in 2005 that all Parties must inform the Secretariat of the name and address of the contact persons for the Plants Committee and for the Animals Committee before 1 April 2005.

“Directs the Secretariat shall compile a register of contact persons and publish this on the website.”

Guidance

Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) describes several duties of the regional representatives. Their tasks could be worked out in more detail in a manual for representatives. This manual should contain chapters for the Management Authorities of Parties and governments to explain the role and duties of regional representatives.

“Directs the Plants and Animals Committees to form a joint drafting group comprising two representatives from each Committee, the Secretariat and Chris Schürmann to develop such a manual in 2005.”

The Secretariat could further guide the regional representatives by producing an annual agenda, specifying what actions are required and when.

“Directs the Secretariat to produce an annual agenda for regional representatives.”

“Directs the Secretariat to verify whether the level of communication of information from the Secretariat to the Regional Representatives is sufficient for every Representative. The Secretariat will ensure that all relevant information on CITES issues, including all documents, will be send directly to all Representatives, either in hard copy or by email, as requested by the specific Representative.”

Draft amendment to Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12)

Regarding regional representation in the Animals and Plants Committees

RECOMMENDS that the following guidelines be implemented:

A. Election of the candidates

- “a) The proposals for candidates as representatives should be supported by the relevant governments and institutions in a formal commitment in order to ensure ~~as far as possible~~ that they will obtain the necessary means to undertake their activities;”
- “b) The names of the proposed candidates, their formal commitment to fulfill the duties of regional representatives as specified in Annex 2. and their curricula vitae, should be circulated to the Parties of the region concerned at least 120 days before the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which the representatives will be elected;”

Regarding the establishment of committees

AGREES to formalize a system for the appointment of committees of the Conference of the Parties and to establish procedures to be followed when committees are created;

RESOLVES that:

- g) to the extent possible, the Secretariat shall make provision for the payment, if requested, of reasonable and justifiable travel expenses, including attendance to the relevant Committee meetings and to the Conference of the Parties, of members, and other expenses of the chairmen of the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee; in particular for representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Draft Decisions

“Directs the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee to discuss at every meeting the follow up of representatives to ensure continuity in an effective regional representation.”

“Directs the Secretariat to assist the Chairman in consulting regions, if needed.”

Directs the Secretariat to issue a notification in 2005 that all Parties must inform the Secretariat of the name and address of the contact persons for the Plants Committee and for the Animals Committee before 1 April 2005.

“Directs the Secretariat shall compile a register of contact persons and publish this on the website.”

“Directs the Plants and Animals Committees to form a joint drafting group comprising two representatives from each Committee, the Secretariat and Chris Schürmann to develop such a manual in 2005.”

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