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OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF PARTIES IN THE AFRICAN REGION IN CITES AND
STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CITES THROUGHOUT AFRICA

This information document has been submitted by Mr Khaled Zahzah and Mr Richard Kiome Bagine, the regional representatives for Africa.*

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

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1. This document has been prepared by Dr. Richard Bagine and Dr. Khaled Zahzah, Regional Representatives of Africa on the Animals Committee with the support of Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tunisia.

Background

2. CITES Resolution Conf.11.11 provides that the Standing Committee is to, *inter alia*, “a) provide general policy and general operational direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention”, “c) oversee, on behalf of the Parties, (...) all aspects of fund raising undertaken by the Secretariat in order to carry out specific functions authorized by the Conference of the Parties”; and “d) provide coordination and advice as required to other committees and provide direction and coordination of working groups established by either itself or the Conference of the Parties.”
3. Roughly five thousand species of animals and twenty-eight thousand species of plants are listed in the CITES Appendices (www.cites.org). Analyses by UNEP-WCMC on listed mammals, birds, reptiles and Tridacna clams for the African region show that over 70% of CITES listed taxa have African ranges. Out of the twenty-two countries classified by the United Nations as countries with “low human development”, all are CITES Parties in the African region (the African region includes fifty-two Parties, twenty-five are classified by the United Nations as countries with “medium human development” and twenty-two are classified as countries with “low human development”, Human Development Index, Human Development Report 2007/2008). The African region is therefore the CITES region with the richest diversity of species and the least developed Parties.
4. Very few countries in the African region submit reports to their Regional Representatives on the CITES scientific committees before each meeting: out of fifty-two Parties in the African region, only five countries reported at the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee and nine countries reported at the 16th meeting of the Plants in 2006; at the 23rd meeting of the Animals Committee, eight countries submitted reports, and six countries reported at the 17th meeting of the Plants in 2008.
5. Parties at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14) endorsed the creation of a Manual for Regional Representatives of the Scientific Committees to facilitate communication between representatives to the committees and delegates from their region (see CoP14 Decision 14.9 and Annex to Document PC16/AC22 WG2 Doc. 1). Decision 14.9 provides that “when it has been tested by members of the scientific committees and updated accordingly, and funds are available” the Secretariat must “organize the publication and distribution of printed and electronic versions of the manual as capacity-building materials for regional representatives of the scientific committees.”
6. While recognizing the usefulness of the work undertaken by the CITES scientific committees to improve regional communication, the African regional representatives of the Animals Committee believe that the problems they are encountering when trying to link with others in the region are symptoms of a greater problem affecting the overall participation of African countries in CITES. The representatives have therefore organized regional consultations to identify measures needed to facilitate the participation of African Parties in CITES and to improve CITES implementation in Africa. These regional consultations took place during a meeting of the African region organized during the 23rd meeting of the Animals Committee on Monday April 19, 2008 and after this meeting through an exchange of email communications.
7. This document proposes the creation of a Working Group on the participation of the African region in CITES. Proposed terms of reference for this Working Group are included in the Annex and are based on the regional consultations which were led in the region by the Animals Committee representatives for Africa.
8. Objective 1.8 of the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013* adopted at the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties is that “Parties and the Secretariat have adequate capacity-building programmes in place.” (CITES Resolution Conf. 14. 2, Annex).The Working Group proposed in this document would assist the African region in defining its needs for capacity-building.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE PARTICIPATION OF THE AFRICAN REGION IN CITES

1. These terms of reference have been produced by Dr. Richard Bagine and Dr. Khaled Zahzah, regional representatives for Africa on the CITES Animals Committee.

2. Goals

The African Region Working Group has two complementary general goals:

- a) To strengthen cooperation and coordination between countries in the African region in order to implement the CITES Strategic Vision.
- b) To identify practical measures needed to facilitate the participation of African Parties in CITES and to improve CITES implementation in Africa.

3. Objectives

Core objective: To support Parties in the African region in the preparation of an action plan based on broadly shared priorities to improve the implementation of CITES.

Specific objectives:

- a) To identify the main difficulties linked to the implementation of CITES in Africa and in particular the priorities linked to:
 - the scientific basis of decision-making
 - the availability of technical and financial resources
 - the synergy between environmental agreements
 - the need for stronger understanding of CITES by the entities potentially involved in its implementation
 - administrative resources and the legal basis of CITES
- b) Prepare recommendations for each difficulty identified, starting with measures that can be implemented immediately or in the near future, including the preparation of proposals for securing the necessary funding.

4. Tasks

The African Region Working Group will address three immediate tasks:

- a) A draft document, with recommendations, for submission to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15) will be prepared by the Working Group and provided to the members of the Animals and Plants Committees and of the Standing Committee by postal procedure for comment;.
- b) The Working Group will identify priorities, as defined by the African Region, to be integrated into the Secretariat working program for capacity-building prepared for CoP15; and.
- c) The Working Group will identify CITES-related regional priorities and individual Parties' needs so that these may be taken into account when defining actions taken by CITES Parties, the CITES Secretariat, non-governmental organizations and other stake-holders.

5. Membership

Membership of the Working Group will be limited to representatives of the fifty-two African countries that are Parties to CITES. These Parties will be able to participate either directly or through the participation of elected sub-regional representatives designated to speak on behalf of their sub-region. The participation of elected representatives from a sub-region does not preclude the participation of Parties for the same sub-region. At the time of its first meeting, the Working Group will designate a chairman, a vice-chairman and a rapporteur.

6. Input from CITES Parties outside the African region, non-governmental organizations and the CITES Secretariat.

The Chairman, with the agreement of the Working Group, can decide to consult CITES Parties outside the African region, the CITES Secretariat and non-governmental organizations on specific issues. The Chairman, with agreement of the Working Group, can decide on a case by case basis to invite CITES Parties outside the African region, the CITES Secretariat and non-governmental organizations to participate in meetings of the Working Group.

7. Terms of reference

7.1 The Working Group is to define, list and prioritize difficulties encountered in the region, focusing on the following:

a) *Logistical difficulties:*

- access to communication tools (computers and laptops, printers, fax machines, telephones, internet, costs linked to sending regular mail and mail via DHL, etc.) and availability of office supplies (ink cartridges, printing paper, CD Rom, writing tools, etc.)
- access to translators and interpreters (availability of translators and interpreters on staff to communicate with other countries in the region, need for a full-time translator to assist the region)
- access to existing CITES material (paper copies of the CITES identification manuals, existing software for the identification of CITES species, information on rules for transport of live specimens, etc.)
- access to new technologies (microchips, e-trade, e-permitting, tools developed over the Internet, etc.)

b) *Communication problems:*

- between African countries and their regional and subregional CITES representatives;
- between African countries themselves;
- between African countries and other CITES Parties
- between African countries and the Secretariat;

c) *Regional communication and regional coordination:*

- occurrence of regional discussions outside of CITES meetings
- organization and funding of regional meetings with participation from a sufficient number of representatives per country
- organization of sub-regional communication and consultation
- use of the Manual for regional representatives of the scientific committees

d) *Access to training and resources for outreach on CITES:*

- access to resources needed to organize CITES training for customs, CITES authorities, the judiciary and implementation authorities in the African region
- potential for use of a school in Africa (such as the Garoua school of Fauna in Cameroun) to create and teach a bilingual CITES curriculum (on the same model as the CITES Masters Program in Madrid, but geared towards African issues and more accessible to African representatives)
- development of outreach material on CITES for use by countries in the region (posters, brochures, movies to educate the public about CITES, the identification of CITES species, etc.)

e) *Implementation difficulties:*

- Difficulties in complying with CITES reporting requirements
- Difficulties in the preparation of non-detriment findings and/or export quotas
- Other (to be defined through a review of the trade suspensions involving African countries)

f) *Clarification of Procedures / Access to information:*

- clarification of requirements for submission of documents to the CITES Secretariat, including proposals to amend the Appendices

- clarification of the procedure to apply for funding as sponsored delegates
- accessibility of procedural information distributed by the CITES Secretariat exclusively through internet notifications, noting that many Parties in Africa do not have access to the internet.

g) *Other* (to be determined as the Working Group progresses in its discussion)

7.2. After prioritizing difficulties, the Working Group is to determine which problems need to be addressed as a matter of urgency, and will prepare recommendations on a way forward for each difficulty encountered, starting with measures that can be implemented immediately or in the near future, including proposals for securing the necessary related funding

7.3. The Working Group will develop a format to allow individual countries to report their specific needs and will circulate this document to all African Parties. The Working Group will decide on a date by which countries will have to submit this information. The Working Group will compile the information received in a document which will be made available on the CITES website to allow interested Parties, non-governmental organizations and the CITES Secretariat to provide assistance as necessary.

8. Modus Operandi

The Working Group will start working electronically until funding is secured for the organization of a five-day meeting of representatives from the African region. CITES Parties, the CITES Secretariat, non-governmental organizations and other stake-holders are encouraged to provide assistance to the African region in securing funding for the organization of the meeting of the Working Group. Decisions of the Working Group will be adopted by consensus.