

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

Interpretation and implementation matters

General compliance and enforcement

Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.*
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.88 to 18.93 on *Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa* as follows:

Directed to Parties in West and Central Africa

18.88 *Parties of West and Central Africa should:*

- a) *draw upon the information and recommendations provided in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34 and the recommendations in Annex 2 of document CoP18 Doc. 34, to strengthen CITES implementation and address wildlife crime; and*
- b) *identify priority actions that could benefit from support and present these to the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC), donors and the development community, in order to seek support to implement them.*

18.89 *Parties in West and Central Africa identified as affected by illegal trade in wildlife within the region should engage in regional and bilateral activities to share information on their national legislative and regulatory measures to address such illegal trade, exchange experiences and best practices, and identify opportunities for regional and cross-border cooperation and joint actions, including where appropriate the formulation of national or regional action plans as anticipated by paragraph 14 a) ii) and 10 f) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Compliance and enforcement, taking into consideration the provisions of paragraph 15 q) of the same Resolution.*

Directed to Parties importing CITES specimens from West and Central Africa

18.90 *Parties importing CITES specimens from West and Central Africa are encouraged to assist their counterparts in West and Central Africa, by implementing measures that will address wildlife crime and support legal trade that is limited to sustainable levels, in particular by:*

* 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.

- a) *supporting efforts to determine and ensure sustainable levels of trade through scientific studies that can facilitate the making of robust non-detriment findings;*
- b) *closely scrutinizing consignments of CITES-listed species imported from West and Central Africa and accompanying CITES documents to ensure that illegal species are not laundered into legal trade; and*
- c) *as a priority, raise any concerns about imports with the exporting State, or with the Animals Committee, Plants Committee, Standing Committee, or the Secretariat.*

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

18.91 *Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance to Parties in West and Central Africa and mobilize resources to address the matters identified in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34; the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.92 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *consider the report from the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.93, paragraph d) and progress made by Parties in West and Central Africa in strengthening CITES implementation and make further recommendations as appropriate; and*
- b) *consider any report from the Plants Committee, in response to the recommendation agreed at its 70th meeting, concerning the inclusion of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* from all range States in the Review of Significant Trade and make recommendations as required.*

Directed to the Secretariat

18.93 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *draw to the attention of relevant United Nations agencies, the African Union, the Commission of Central African Forests, the Global Environmental Facility, and development agencies, the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34 and the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, and the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and encourage these to be taken into consideration in the development of work programmes or activities initiated by these entities in the two subregions;*
- b) *subject to external funding, work with its partners in the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to support Parties in West and Central Africa in addressing illegal trade in wildlife, including addressing the matters identified in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34; the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee;*
- c) *subject to the availability of external funds and upon request from Parties, undertake general and targeted capacity-building activities to strengthen the effective implementation of CITES in the two subregions, taking into consideration the contents of information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3;*
- d) *report, as appropriate, to the Standing Committee on the results of the activities conducted in accordance with Decision 18.93 paragraphs a) to c); and*
- e) *the Secretariat shall give priority to the guidelines agreed by West African parties as contained in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3 in the course of the implementation of its capacity-building work.*

3. At its 74th meeting (SC74, Lyon, March 2022), the Standing Committee considered the report of the Plants Committee (PC25, online, June 2021), as required by Decision 18.92, paragraph b), and a report by Senegal. These two documents, [SC74 Doc. 35.1.1](#) and [SC74 Doc. 35.1.2](#) respectively, concerned the inclusion of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in the Review of Significant Trade.
4. The Committee also considered the report of the Secretariat as required by Decision 18.92, paragraph a), and a report submitted by Nigeria, Benin and Niger on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These two documents, [SC74 Doc. 35.2](#) and [SC74 Doc 35.3](#) respectively, addressed the broader aspects of wildlife crime enforcement support in West¹ and Central² Africa.

Implementation of Decisions 18.88, 18.89, 18.91, 18.92, paragraph a), and 18.93

5. Document [SC74 Doc. 35.2](#) submitted by the Secretariat provided information on a broad range of activities undertaken in West and Central Africa since CoP18, and support available to Parties to strengthen CITES implementation and address wildlife crime in the two subregions. It further highlighted initiatives undertaken by Parties in West Africa, under the coordination of the ECOWAS, in particular, the development of the *West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime* (WASCWC). The growing recognition of West and Central Africa as a source and transit region for illegal wildlife products had led to increased awareness amongst some of the Parties concerned, as well as an increase in interest and support amongst the international community and technical partners. However, both subregions continued to be significantly affected by wildlife crime and further strengthened efforts were needed.
6. To implement Decision 18.93, paragraph a), the Secretariat wrote to 34 organizations in March 2020, including relevant United Nations agencies, the African Union, the Commission of Central African Forests, the Global Environmental Facility and development agencies, to draw their attention to the [West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report](#), the [recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34](#) and the guidelines in information documents [SC70 Inf. 2](#) and [SC70 Inf. 3](#). The Secretariat encouraged these entities to explore, as appropriate, opportunities to take the matters outlined in the documents mentioned, into consideration in the development and implementation of any relevant work programmes or activities undertaken in the West and Central African subregions. Several organizations confirmed that relevant work was planned and undertaken through their respective agency programmes across West and Central Africa.
7. The Secretariat further reported on a suite of activities that were envisaged to be delivered in close cooperation with its ICCWC partners in support of strengthening implementation and enforcement of CITES across the West and Central African subregions. The Secretariat reported that the proposed activities are aligned with the findings emanating from the [West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report](#), recommendations from CoP18 ([Annex 2 of CoP18 Doc. 34](#)), information from Parties in the region (information documents [SC70 Inf. 2](#) and [SC70 Inf. 3](#)) and responses received from Parties requesting support. The proposed activities include training on CITES implementation and enforcement; border control activities; activities to enhance national legislation and its application; activities to support national coordination and collaboration and international cooperation; and activities in support of addressing and mitigating corruption risks, amongst others. It was reported that the envisaged activities have been designed to be coordinated, cohesive, and well targeted, complementing other initiatives underway across the Secretariat, such as the CITES Compliance Assistance Program (CAP), the CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP) and the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme.
8. Document [SC74 Doc. 35.3](#) submitted by Nigeria, Benin and Niger on behalf of the ECOWAS provided an update on the implementation of Decisions 18.88 to 18.90 by Parties in the West African region, including the validation of the WASCWC by all ECOWAS Environment Ministers (in October 2020), which represented a significant milestone for the region. The development of a West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime (WAN) as the implementing mechanism of the WASCWC and a number of capacity-building initiatives and efforts by Parties in the region to enhance the implementation of CITES, were also highlighted in the document. Further, the increasing attention concerning wildlife crime and the associated responses in the region were welcomed. The document further highlighted the need for continuing to adopt measures to combat wildlife crime across source, transit and consumer states.

¹ **West Africa:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

² **Central Africa:** Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe.

9. At SC74, the Committee agreed on a number of recommendations aimed at further strengthening responses to address wildlife crime in both subregions. The Committee:
- a) noted the broad range of activities reported upon and support available to Parties in West and Central Africa;
 - b) encouraged Parties in West and Central Africa, as well as organizations and other entities implementing projects in the two subregions, to build upon this through continued exploration of synergies and by leveraging on collective action to strengthen responses to wildlife crime affecting the subregions;
 - c) further encouraged Parties in West and Central Africa to further step up efforts to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement by actively pursuing the implementation of the Decisions adopted at CoP18 and implementing the recommendations in [Annex 2 of document CoP18 Doc. 34](#);
 - d) welcomed the adoption of the WASCWC and encouraged Parties in West Africa to actively pursue its rapid and full implementation; and
 - e) encouraged Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and interested stakeholders to provide support to the West Africa subregion in its implementation of the WASCWC.
10. The Committee further agreed to submit draft decisions 19.AA and 19.BB on *Strengthening collaboration between source, transit and consumer countries* and draft decisions 19.AA and 19.BB on *Strengthening wildlife law enforcement in West Africa*, available in Annexes 1 and 2 to the present document, for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Implementation of Decisions 18.90 and 18.92 paragraph b)

11. The reporting of the Secretariat in document [SC74 Doc. 35.2](#) included information on initiatives that contributed to the implementation of Decision 18.90 and the Convention, and highlighted an online seminar on *Import and Export Management and Protection of Endangered Species* organized by the National Academy of Forestry and Grassland Administration (NAFGA) of the People's Republic of China in June 2021. The Secretariat highlighted that it remains critical that Parties importing CITES specimens from West and Central Africa support their counterparts in these two subregions to determine sustainable levels of trade through scientific studies and non-detriment findings. The Secretariat noted that the implementation of Decision 18.90 is particularly relevant for trade in *Pterocarpus erinaceus*.
12. At its 70th meeting (SC70, Sochi, October 2018), the Standing Committee agreed a recommendation requesting the Plants Committee to consider the inclusion of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* from all range States in the Review of Significant Trade. Decision 18.92 paragraph b) directed the Standing Committee to consider any report from the Plants Committee, in response to the recommendation agreed at SC70 and make recommendations as required. As noted in paragraph 3 of the present document, the Committee at SC74 considered the report of the Plants Committee and a working document from Senegal on the same subject. After discussion, the Committee agreed the following:
- a) The Committee requested the Secretariat to:
 - i) open an Article XIII procedure for *Pterocarpus erinaceus* for all range States based on the exceptional circumstances due to pervasive documented illegal trade;
 - ii) issue a Notification directly after the end of SC74, requesting the range States to submit within 30 days a justification that the Article XIII procedure is not applicable to them, by either providing their non-detriment finding and legal acquisition finding, or by requesting the Secretariat to publish a voluntary zero export quota;
 - iii) after having received and analyzed the responses from the range States, in consultation with the Chairs of the Standing Committee and of the Plants Committee, issue a Notification informing Parties that a suspension is set in place for all commercial trade in *Pterocarpus erinaceus* for those Parties that did not reply or did not provide a satisfying justification.

- b) The Committee called upon the Plants Committee to expedite its Review of Significant Trade of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in order for the Committee to receive a progress report from the Plants Committee at SC75.
 - c) In anticipation of the Notification mentioned in a) iii) above, the Committee requested importing Parties to reject all export permits concerning *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, based on concerns related to the sustainability and legality of the specimens and exercising due diligence having regard to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement*, and requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to this effect.
 - d) The Committee requested that all CITES permits and certificates for *Pterocarpus erinaceus* be verified by the Secretariat prior to acceptance by importing Parties.
 - e) In the light of the recommendations in the Outcome Document of the *CITES Task Force meeting on illegal trade in specimens of listed tree species* (see document CoP19 Doc. 35), the Committee encouraged range States for *Pterocarpus erinaceus* to:
 - i) explore opportunities to initiate targeted regional operations with support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme;
 - ii) undertake risk assessments to develop risk profiles specific to *Pterocarpus erinaceus* and to reach out to the WCO for support where needed;
 - iii) capacitate and provide training to frontline officers responsible for physical inspections regarding timber identification, aiming to have at least one officer available with expert knowledge concerning timber and access to equipment to facilitate such work, seeking support from the Secretariat where required.
 - f) Further, the Committee recalled the recommendations adopted at CoP18 in [Annex 2 of document CoP18 Doc. 34](#) based on the [West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report](#) and encouraged Parties to pursue the implementation of these recommendations as relevant to them, also specifically in the context of combatting illegal trade in *Pterocarpus erinaceus*.
13. The Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2022/021](#) of 28 March 2022 to initiate the expedited application of Article XIII for West African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) for all range states. At the time of writing the present document, this process was ongoing and the matter will be further discussed by the Committee in its future meetings.

Recommendations

14. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions contained in Annexes 1 and 2 to the present document.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION
BETWEEN SOURCE, TRANSIT, AND CONSUMER COUNTRIES

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 19.AA** The Standing Committee shall establish a working group, with representation from all regions, to make recommendations for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the development and adoption of procedures that will promote enhanced collaboration between source, transit and consumer countries including (inter alia):
- a) a secure mechanism for regular exchange of seizure data between CITES Management Authorities along illegal trade chains;
 - b) the establishment of a CITES early warning mechanism (e.g. in response to heightened seizures, or identification of a new trade route) that will ensure all Parties along the supply chain are promptly made aware of priority enforcement needs and can respond accordingly;
 - c) the establishment of a forum to promote regular communication between source, transit and consumer countries on priority issues (e.g. *Pterocarpus erinaceus*); and
 - d) the need for CITES guidelines on enforcement coordination between source/transit/consumer countries

Directed to the Secretariat

- 19.BB** Subject to the availability of external funding, the Secretariat shall support the Standing Committee in the implementation of Decision 19.AA, including through the provision of technical expertise, translation and interpretation as appropriate.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON
STRENGTHENING WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT IN WEST AFRICA

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 19.AA** The Standing Committee shall establish an intersessional working group, to be comprised of representatives of regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks, to provide the newly formed West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime (WAN) with expert guidance and support as the WAN becomes operational.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 19.BB** Subject to the availability of external funding, the Secretariat shall support the Standing Committee in the implementation of Decision 19.AA, including through the provision of technical expertise, translation and interpretation as appropriate.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.