

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

Species specific matters

SAIGA ANTELOPE (SAIGA SPP.)

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.*

Background

2. At the 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.270 to 18.274 on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga spp.*) as follows:

18.270 Directed to range States of saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*) (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives

- a) *The range States of the saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*) and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives, as identified by the Secretariat on the basis of CITES trade data, should fully implement the measures directed to them in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2016-2020 [MTIWP (2016-2020)] and for 2021-2025 [MTIWP (2021-2025)], developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*) and its Saiga Action Plan; and*
- b) *Consistent with the measures directed to Saiga range States in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2016-2020 [MTIWP (2016-2020)], the range States of the saiga antelope are encouraged to establish internal market controls for saiga parts, including registration of stockpiles, labelling of parts and products, and registration of manufacturers and traders, and report such information to the CITES Secretariat.*

18.271 Directed to the Secretariat

Subject to the availability of external resources, the Secretariat shall:

- a) *assist the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in organizing the fourth meeting of the signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*), expected to be held in the Russian Federation in 2020;*
- b) *in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat, provide inputs as needed in developing a Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025 [MTIWP (2021-*

* 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.

2025)], developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*) and its Saiga Action Plan;

- c) *review, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, the conservation of and trade in saiga antelope, Saiga spp., based on available data on legal and illegal trade, materials and outcomes of the fourth meeting of saiga MoU signatories, and stakeholder consultations, and report any consequent findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee, and to the Standing Committee in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.3 on Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the joint CMS-CITES work programme;*
- d) *consult saiga range States and major trading and consumer States concerning their management of stockpiles of saiga specimens; review processes and practices; and provide assistance in ensuring effective stockpile management and monitoring, including the development of inventories and strengthening stockpile security; and*
- e) *report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision, as appropriate.*

18.272 Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.271, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.

18.273 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.271 and 18.272, and make recommendations as necessary.

18.274 Directed to saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders

*Saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate in the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*), and to support the implementation of MTIWP (2016-2020) and MTIWP (2021-2025).*

Activities

3. The findings and recommendations of the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.271 and 18.272 were presented to the Standing Committee in [document SC74 Doc. 78](#). The present document summarizes the information made available to the Standing Committee.

Implementation of Decision 18.270

4. On 31 August 2021, the Secretariat wrote to the range States of the saiga antelopes (*Saiga spp.*) and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives¹, inviting them to share relevant information concerning their implementation of Decision 18.270 and about their management of stockpiles of saiga specimens, as directed in Decision 18.271, paragraph d). Replies were received from China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and from Japan and these are made available in full in Annex 4 to document SC74 Doc. 78. In summary:
 - a) China: China informed the Secretariat that the saiga antelope is listed as a first-class state key protected species and given the highest level of protection under the Wildlife Conservation Law. It provided information of its stockpile management [see paragraph 5 d) A. below]. China reported that it undertakes measures annually to control the trade in the saiga antelope and its derivatives, including carrying out inspections, organizing joint law enforcement and strengthening public awareness and education. Hong

¹ China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Singapore, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam.

Kong SAR: Hong Kong SAR reported that it had no information on saiga stockpiles. They reported that the use of saiga horn is regulated under the Chinese Medicine Ordinance, under which proprietary Chinese medicines containing saiga horn must be registered prior to import, manufacture and distribution; and traders are licensed. Hong Kong SAR implements measures from *the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope* (MTIWP), including training on CITES implementation and identification of saiga products, and awareness-raising activities.

- b) Japan: Japan reported that it is implementing the MTIWP, and particularly measures relating to the sustainable use and trade in saiga. Between 2016 and 2020, customs identified 50 cases of medicines containing saiga horn which did not have export permits. They reported that these shipments came from China, Hong Kong SAR, the Republic of Korea and Singapore. Dried saiga horn is an approved ingredient for medicines. The Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations of Japan reported that between 2011 and 2020, annual imports of saiga horn for medicines averaged approximately 340 kg, with a spike in 2018 of approximately 1,400 kg, and that on average, 450 kg of saiga horn per year is used for medicine, with a slightly rising trend. Re-exports to Japan have continued since CoP18 when the annotations to the listings of *Saiga* spp. in Appendix II came into force. Following the CoP18 decisions, Japan took measures to allow the use of buffalo horn as an alternative for saiga horn in medicines.

Implementation of Decision 18.271

5. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is in dialogue with a donor over external funding for a review of saiga stockpile management envisaged under paragraph d) of Decision 18.271 but was unable to secure external resources to support the other activities mentioned in Decision 18.271.
- a) Concerning the fourth meeting of the signatories of the *Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.)* [MOS4], the Secretariat and the CMS Secretariat organized a *Joint CMS-CITES Technical Workshop under the MOU Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.)* in April 2019, which was largely devoted to drafting a new *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025* [MTIWP (2021-2025)]. The Secretariat then assisted the CMS Secretariat and the hosts, Russian Federation, to organize the MOS4 which was held online from 28 to 29 September 2021. The meeting agreed on a MTIWP for 2021-2025 which is available in English and Russian.² The meeting also endorsed a feasibility study on the sustainable use of saiga antelopes entitled "The Sustainable Use of Saiga Antelopes: Perspectives and Prospects"³. The agenda of the MOS4, working documents and information documents, presentations and meeting outcomes can be found at: <https://www.cms.int/saiga/en/meeting/fourth-meeting-signatories-saiga-mou-mos4>.
- b) Regarding the conservation of and trade in saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.), MOS4 considered an overview report on the conservation status of saiga antelopes and the implementation of the Saiga MOU, based on National Reports and Project Reports submitted to the CMS Secretariat by signatory range States up until August 2021⁴. Key features regarding the updated conservation status of saiga antelopes are summarized below.
- i) *Saiga tatarica* occurs in Central Asia in four populations: North-West Pre-Caspian (Russian Federation), Ural (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation), Ustyurt (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and formally Turkmenistan), and Betpak-dala (Kazakhstan, Russian Federation). The population of *S. tatarica* in northwest China and adjacent areas of southwest Mongolia became extinct in the 1960s. *Saiga borealis* occurs in one population in Mongolia only.
- ii) Concerning the population numbers and trends, the following were reported at MOS4:
- A. *S. tatarica*: around 10,000 in the Russian Federation and increasing; around 842,000 in Kazakhstan and increasing; 150-200 in Uzbekistan and declining; no saiga antelopes have been observed in Turkmenistan for the last 20 years. *S. borealis*: 8,451 in Mongolia and increasing.

² <https://www.cms.int/saiga/en/document/medium-term-international-work-programme-saiga-antelope-2021-2025>

³ <https://www.cms.int/saiga/en/document/sustainable-use-saiga-antelopes-perspectives-and-prospects-0>

⁴ https://www.cms.int/saiga/sites/default/files/document/unep-cms_saiga_mos4_doc.5_rev.2_overview-report-on-conservation-status-and-mou-implementation_e.pdf

- B. The best estimation of the global saiga antelope population in 2021 is a minimum of 860,600 animals.
 - C. The status of saiga antelopes varies between populations and countries. Between 2015 and 2021, the four *S. tatarica* populations reportedly showed consistent increases. The populations in Kazakhstan increased tenfold since 2015. The Ural population has surpassed its historical maximum in 2021. The Ustyurt population is increasing, but the small population in Uzbekistan is highly threatened because the southward migration from Kazakhstan is curtailed by linear infrastructure barriers. The global population of *S. tatarica*, although not yet recovered to the levels of the 1980s and 1990s has increased substantially since the fourth meeting of the signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2015.
- iii) The extensive area of distribution, large differences between seasonal ranges, nomadic behaviour, and natural population fluctuations make accurate population estimates of saiga antelopes difficult and obscure population trends, noting that for wide-ranging ungulates such as the saiga, even well-conducted counts are likely to be underestimates. Despite growing population numbers, saiga remain adversely influenced by poaching, climate change, impacts of infrastructure barriers and disease outbreaks. As illustrated by recoveries since recent mass disease -related die-offs in the Ural population (2010; estimated mortality 12,000 animals), the Betpak-Dala population (2015; estimated mortality >200,000 animals or 88% of the population), and Mongolia (2016-17; estimated mortality ~5,000 animals or 54% of the population), population declines can be reversed very quickly in these species. However, as reported at MOS4, high saiga numbers generate increasing human-wildlife conflicts in some areas. Saiga antelopes therefore remain highly dependent on continued conservation action⁵.
 - iv) MOS4 identified several conservation challenges and threats, recognizing that saiga antelopes were perceived as less acutely threatened than in 2015, but also expressing growing concerns about the impacts of climate change and barriers to migration:
 - A. The saiga antelope populations in Mongolia, North-West Pre-Caspian and Ustyurt, particularly in Uzbekistan, remain low.
 - B. Linear infrastructure (railways, roads, pipelines and a border fence) are impacting three *S. tatarica* populations and particularly those of Ustyurt and Betpak-dala, and this may worsen given impending infrastructure projects unless mitigation measures such re-routing are implemented.
 - C. Illegal killing for meat or horns remains a concern throughout the range of the two species, suggesting the need to maintain and enhance law enforcement efforts.
 - D. Demand for saiga products in consumer countries is still appears high, illegal trade continues, stockpiles appear largely unmonitored and limited action is taken to curb illegal trade outside the range States.
 - E. Diseases and consequent mass die-offs remain a concern. As further outbreaks are to be expected, more proactive monitoring are required, particularly at the wildlife/livestock interface. Large and resilient saiga populations are needed in order for populations to rebound after a disease outbreak.
 - F. Resentment of saigas by local livestock herders because of increasing competition for grazing and water and suspected disease transmission to livestock has been noted in Kazakhstan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. While saiga populations are recovering, livestock numbers are also expanding and human impacts on saiga habitat are increasing (e.g. through infrastructure and agriculture development). It is expected that negative interactions with humans will become more frequent and incentives for local communities to coexist with saiga need to be developed.

⁵ https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/unep-cms_saiga_mos4_doc.5_rev.2_overview-report-on-conservation-status-and-mou-implementation_e.pdf

- G. The impacts of climate change on saigas are poorly understood but likely to include habitat changes that may increase competition for water and pasture resources; greater susceptibility to diseases; mortality caused by extreme weather conditions; and shifting migration patterns.
- H. Continued resources and financial support from national authorities and international donors are required for the implementation of priority actions under the MTIWP 2021-2025.
- v) *S. tatarica* and *S. borealis* have been included in CITES Appendix II since 1995. At CoP18, it was agreed to amend the listing of both species in Appendix II by adding the following annotation: “A zero export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes”. The annotation applies to exports of saiga specimens of wild origin for commercial purposes taking place under the provisions of Article IV, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Convention. It does not apply to re-exports of specimens of *Saiga* spp. under the provisions of Article IV, paragraphs 4 and 5, which can continue for commercial or non-commercial purposes. Detailed information on legal and illegal trade in saiga specimens was included in document [SC74 Doc. 78](#). The range States of *S. tatarica* stopped commercial exports of specimens of saiga antelope around 2005. Since that time, the legal international trade in saiga specimens was essentially based on saiga horns that were imported by trading and consumer countries before these export suspensions took effect. The number of seizures of saiga specimens reported decreased annually from 2016 to 2020.
- d) Concerning the management of stockpiles of saiga specimens, Parties responding to the Secretariat’s consultation in August 2021, replied as follows:
- A. **China** reported that it strictly controls saiga stockpiles. Old saiga stockpiles must be registered, sealed in a standardized manner and held at designated venues after verification of the legality of acquisition. Stockpiles resulting from law enforcement seizures must be supervised throughout the process from confiscation to preservation. China noted that the management of stocks and stockpiles is mainly a domestic issue, which has been recognized as such at meetings of the Standing Committee. **Hong Kong SAR** informed the Secretariat that licenses are not required for the possession of parts and derivatives of Appendix II species. Because saiga is only traded as parts and derivatives in Hong Kong SAR, information on the size and nature of saiga stockpiles is not available.
- B. **Japan** reported that it monitors the importation and use of saiga products but did not provide details on stockpiles.
- The Secretariat notes the apparent existence of relatively large saiga horn stockpiles in Ukraine, which were partially exported to China in 2019.
- e) The Secretariat reported to the Animals Committee in documents [AC31 Doc. 32](#) and [AC31 Doc. 32 Addendum](#) and to the Standing Committee in document [SC74 Doc. 78](#).

Implementation of Decision 18.272

6. The Animals Committee considered the reports of the Secretariat in documents [AC31 Doc. 32](#) and [AC31 Doc. 32 Addendum](#) and agreed to propose the renewal (with amendments) of Decisions 18.270 to 18.274 to the Standing Committee for onward submission to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Animals Committee forwarded these recommendations to the Standing Committee in document SC74 Doc. 78 which was jointly submitted with the Secretariat.

Implementation of Decision 18.273

7. At its 74th meeting (SC74, Lyon, March 2022), the Standing Committee noted the joint report of the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in document SC74 Doc. 78, commended the saiga antelope range States for their efforts in restoring saiga antelope populations in the wild, and saiga range States and major trading and consumer States for their contributions to the implementation of the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope*; and agreed to submit the draft decisions in Annex 1 to the present document to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Recommendations:

8. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to the present document.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON SAIGA ANTELOPE (SAIGA SPP.)

Directed to range States of saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*) (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives

- 19.AA** a) The range States of the saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*) and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives, as identified by the Secretariat on the basis of CITES trade data, should fully implement the measures directed to them in the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025* [MTIWP (2021-2025)], developed in support of the *Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.)* and its *Saiga Action Plan*; and
- b) Consistent with the measures directed to saiga range States in MTIWP (2021-2025), the range States of the saiga antelope are encouraged to establish internal market controls for saiga parts, including registration of stockpiles, labelling of parts and products, and registration of manufacturers and traders, and report such information to the CITES Secretariat.

Directed to the Secretariat

19.BB Subject to the availability of external resources, the Secretariat shall:

- a) review, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, the conservation of and trade in saiga antelope, *Saiga spp.*, based on available data on legal and illegal trade, materials and outcomes of the fourth meeting of Saiga MOU signatories, and stakeholder consultations, and report any consequent findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee, and to the Standing Committee in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.3 on *Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)* and the joint CMS-CITES work programme;
- b) consult saiga range States and major trading and consumer States concerning their management of stockpiles of saiga specimens; review processes and practices; and provide assistance in ensuring effective stockpile management and monitoring, including the development of inventories and strengthening stockpile security;
- c) provide training to strengthen cross-border cooperation in CITES implementation, identification of saiga products and techniques for countering illegal trade; and
- d) report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision, as appropriate.

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.CC The Animals Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 19.BB, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.DD The Standing Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 19.BB and 19.CC, and make recommendations as necessary.

Directed to saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders

19.EE Saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate in the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.), and to support the implementation of MTIWP (2021-2025) as well as the technical coordination of the Saiga MOU.

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.