

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



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Strategic matters

LANGUAGE STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.38 and 19.39 on the *Language strategy for the Convention* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

19.38 *The Secretariat shall, subject to extrabudgetary contributions:*

- a) *provide for the translation of all valid Resolutions and Decisions into the three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) drawing on available informal and official translations; and*
- b) *arrange for the translation of the CITES website into these additional languages.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.39 *The Standing Committee shall, at its 77th meeting, consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention in order to provide interpretation in all six languages at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, with emphasis on the interpretation at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, subject to extrabudgetary contributions.*

Implementation of Decision 19.38

3. The Secretariat thanks Switzerland for its generous funding of USD 80,000 towards the translation of all valid Resolutions and Decisions into Arabic, Chinese and Russian. The Secretariat explored the most efficient way of translating all valid Resolutions and Decisions, while ensuring the quality of the translations. As the most cost-effective option, the Secretariat is currently engaging an external translation company that already has a contract with the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) with a price that allows the Secretariat to translate all valid Resolutions and Decisions within the funding provided by Switzerland. China has informed the Secretariat that it is expecting to finalize the translation of all valid Resolutions and Decisions by the end of October 2023. The Secretariat is consulting with China in order to determine whether a revision of all Chinese translations would be beneficial. There are currently 103 valid Resolutions and 367 valid Decisions so the translation might take some time, but all valid Resolutions and Decisions should be available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
4. The Secretariat is currently working on the translation of the website in Arabic, Chinese and Russian by using automated translation thanks to funding from Switzerland. The Secretariat notes that it does not have the funding or human resources to check the quality of the automated translation of the website but hopes that this translation will nevertheless help Parties and the broader public better understand the Convention and its requirements. The CITES website should be available in all six United Nations languages by early 2024.

Implementation of Decision 19.39

5. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 19.39 in order to ensure that the Standing Committee will consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention. Interpretation into all six United Nations languages would benefit the Convention, facilitate its implementation and allow more experts to be involved in the meetings of the CoP. The Secretariat notes, however, that it has not received any pledge to finance the interpretation of the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties into Arabic, Chinese and Russian. As a reminder, in its document to CoP19 (see document [CoP19 Doc. 8](#)), the Secretariat had estimated the cost of providing interpretation into Arabic, Chinese and Russian at CoP meetings at USD 205,900. The Secretariat encourages Parties in a position to do so as well as other donors to provide financial resources for the interpretation into Arabic, Chinese and Russian of the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
6. The Secretariat notes that this amount does not cover the travel and per diem for the Arabic, Chinese and Russian interpreters that would need to be covered by the host country. The Secretariat further notes that it would need to receive funding at least six months prior to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties in order to ensure the timely recruitment of the interpreters. It is recalled that the date and venue of CoP20 is to be discussed by the present meeting of the Standing Committee.

Recommendations

7. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the Secretariat's update on the implementation of Decision 19.38; and
 - b) consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention in order to provide interpretation in all six languages at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, with emphasis on the interpretation at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, subject to extrabudgetary contributions.