

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

CITES and people

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CITES GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK

1. This document has been prepared jointly by Singapore and the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17; Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf 17.5 (Rev. CoP18) on *Youth Engagement*. In paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Resolution, the Conference of the Parties:
 1. *ENCOURAGES Parties to explore opportunities to engage today's youth in CITES and other wildlife conservation issues, for example through internship or mentoring programmes;*
 2. *INVITES Parties and the CITES Secretariat to work with universities, youth groups, and other relevant associations and organizations, to create educated and engaged youth networks that can inform and influence conservation decisions;*
3. In line with Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18), several initiatives have been undertaken by the CITES Secretariat to engage with youths:
 - a) The theme of World Wildlife Day (WWD) 2017 was *Listen to Young voices*;
 - b) A World Wildlife Day Youth Art Contest has been held together with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) every year since 2019;
 - c) The CITES Secretariat invited Parties and observer organizations to inform the Secretariat regarding their youth delegates attending CoP19, so that they may be invited to become part of the CITES Youth network (See [Notification to the Parties No.2022/072 of 4 October 2022](#));
 - d) The Secretariat also organized a youth webinar on 8 February 2023 in preparation of the World Wildlife Day 2023 (see [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/012 of 6 February 2023](#)).
4. Singapore has also been actively engaging youths both locally and regionally. Over 400 youths from 18 different nationalities in the Southeast Asian region participated in the inaugural World Wildlife Day Regional Youth Symposium in 2022 and its subsequent iteration in 2023. Led by youths, for youths, the annual Youth Symposium aims to grow a community of youths passionate about conservation in Southeast Asia; connect them to regional mentors and role models; and raise awareness of regional conservation efforts. Youths have had the opportunity to learn from 44 distinguished speakers and guests through a range of engaging programmes, including presentations, panel discussions, and workshops. The event is supported by the CITES Management Authority (National Parks Board of Singapore - NParks), in partnership with Mandai Nature and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity. Two youth representatives, one of whom is from the organizing team of the Regional Youth Symposium, delivered a presentation at the World Wildlife Day 2023

and at CITES@50 celebration event in Washington DC as a prime example of youth empowerment, capability and partnerships.

5. Locally, youths have been involved in policymaking and biodiversity conservation through the Youth Stewards for Nature programme (YSN) implemented by NParks, where they are given the opportunity to lead and implement real-world projects in the fields of landscape design, horticulture, nature management or biodiversity conservation. In 2021, Singapore held consultations with youths to seek their input on legislative amendments to Singapore's Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act. A youth was also invited to join the Singaporean delegation at the recent CoP19 meeting.
6. In continuing the spirit of the Youth Forum on People and Wildlife held in 2016 (as reported in document [CoP17 Doc.20](#)) that led to the adoption of Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18), and acknowledging the importance of youths as future decision-makers, Singapore proposes to kickstart the establishment of a CITES Global Youth Network to engage a broader community of youths, with two of its active youths identified as Co-Founders. This initiative seeks to build a platform for youths to be equipped with the capacity to objectively understand and manage the intricacies of sustainable wildlife trade.
7. Singapore calls for the nomination of 40 youth representatives from different geographical regions to be part of the founding members of the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN). Youths will participate in the CITES Youth Leadership Programme, hosted by Singapore in 2024, to build their knowledge on CITES-related issues; develop leadership skills; and forge cross-cultural bonds and partnerships. As founding members, they will co-create the network's vision, mission, and terms of reference and execute the planned activities for one year.
8. Founding members of CGYN will organize the inaugural Global Youth Summit in 2025 in Singapore to continue engaging with youths around the world and develop their capacity in understanding CITES-related matters. The Global Youth Summit will be held annually, and in conjunction with the World Wildlife Day, where possible. The Global Youth Summit will provide the platform for the youths to:
 - a) learn about the functions and benefits of CITES;
 - b) learn from experts on emerging issues and understanding various topics discussed at permanent committees and working groups;
 - c) discuss documents and reports from the permanent committees and working groups; and
 - d) share about challenges and success stories.
9. Singapore, in support of the founding members of CGYN, will facilitate the youths' consultation with the Secretariat on the organization of the Youth Symposium. It seeks the Secretariat's support to secure the necessary resources in creating an educated and engaged youth network in accordance with Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18), and invites interested Parties to join in this effort. Singapore, through the Secretariat, will communicate the logistical arrangements to Parties and stakeholders, including participant nomination, provisional programme and agenda, participant support, resource persons, and others.
10. In cooperation with the founding members of CGYN and in consultation with the Secretariat, Singapore plans to report on the outcome of the Symposium and the Youth Leadership Programme to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting (SC78). At SC78, Singapore will also propose draft decisions on CGYN to invite Parties, CITES Committees, and the Secretariat to continue to commit on undertaking youth engagement activities at the global level in line with the recommendations of Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18), and suggest amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18) as appropriate, to reflect the establishment of CGYN.

Recommendations

11. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) support Singapore's efforts in establishing the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN);
 - b) invite interested Parties to join Singapore's effort in the establishment of the CGYN;

- c) encourage Parties and observers to nominate youths affiliated with their organization to attend the CITES Youth Leadership Programme in March 2024 and Global Youth Summit from 2025 onwards; and
- d) request the Secretariat to support the efforts of Singapore and relevant Parties on the establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network.