

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

Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties (CoP) renewed Decisions 17.57 (Rev. CoP19), 18.31 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.32 (Rev. CoP19) on *Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities** and Decision 18.35 (Rev. CoP19) on *Livelihoods* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.57 (Rev. CoP19) *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *examine the terminology used in different Resolutions and Decisions when referring to “indigenous peoples”, “local communities” or “rural communities”; and*
- b) *make recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on whether there is need for consistency of terminology across these Resolutions and Decisions.*

18.31 (Rev. CoP19) *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *establish an intersessional working group to consider how to effectively engage indigenous peoples and local communities* in the CITES processes, taking into account the discussions from the previous intersessional periods, including the information contained in document SC74 Doc. 20.2 and SC70 Doc. 15, experiences shared by Parties and relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and international organizations, and any information provided pursuant to Decision 18.32 (Rev. CoP19); and present its findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee;*
- b) *when establishing the intersessional working group, endeavour to achieve regional balance of Parties and observers, and give special consideration to participation of representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities*;*

* For the purpose of these Decisions, “indigenous peoples and local communities” is understood to include rural communities.

- c) *develop non-binding guidance that proponent Parties may use, as appropriate, in consulting with indigenous peoples and local communities* as part of the consultations that may take place on proposals to amend the Appendices; and*
- d) *make recommendations on the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities* in CITES processes to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to the Secretariat

18.32 (Rev. CoP19) *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *issue a Notification inviting Parties to provide information on their experiences and lessons learned in engaging indigenous peoples and local communities* in CITES processes; and*
- b) *compile the information received from the Parties and provide a summary to the Standing Committee.*

18.35 (Rev. CoP19) *Subject to the availability of external financial resources, the Secretariat shall:*

[...]

- b) *organize a joint meeting of the intersessional working group on engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities and the intersessional working group on CITES and livelihoods to support the implementation of Decisions 18.31 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.34 (Rev. CoP19);*

Terminology – Decision 17.57 (Rev. CoP19)

3. At CoP17, the Standing Committee was tasked to examine the terminology used in different Resolutions and Decisions when referring to “indigenous peoples”, “local communities” or “rural communities” and to make recommendations on the necessity for consistency. The Decision was maintained by CoP19 but was not included in the mandate of the intersessional working group on the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) that was established by the Standing Committee at its 76th meeting. The Secretariat recommends that this task be included in the mandate of the intersessional working group.
4. Having reviewed the responses from Parties to the questionnaire on IPLC engagement, the Secretariat notes that Parties use different terms, and the choice of terminology implies complex political, legal and practical considerations depending on the national and local context. The Secretariat is of the view that the purpose, scope and focus of CITES deliberations should determine which terminology is more suitable and this may transcend a mere choice of words for the interest of consistency.

Questionnaire – Decision 18.31 (Rev. CoP19)

5. Pursuant to paragraph a) of Decision 18.32 (Rev. CoP19), the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/041](#) of 3 April 2023 inviting Parties to provide information on their experiences and lessons learned in engaging indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in CITES processes. Argentina, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Finland, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia, Senegal, Sweden, and Yemen responded to the [questionnaire](#). Among these Parties, Botswana, Canada, Finland, Kenya, Mexico and Namibia also responded to the questionnaire in 2020, and the new responses therefore serve as updates to their earlier responses. A total of 19 Parties responded to the questionnaire in 2020 and 2023. Amboseli Ecosystem Trust and African Wildlife Foundation, as members of the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement, also provided responses to the questionnaire in 2023.
6. The Secretariat prepared a summary of the responses and shared it with the intersessional working group in August 2023. This consolidated summary takes into account responses to the questionnaire received in 2020 and 2023 in order to facilitate the review by the intersessional working group and the Standing Committee. The summary can be found in the Annex to this document.

Joint meeting – Decisions 18.32 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.35 (Rev. CoP19)

7. As mandated by Decision 18.35 (Rev. CoP19) and in close coordination with the Chair of the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement (Canada) and the co-Chairs of the intersessional working group on livelihoods (Peru and Zambia), a joint meeting of the two working groups was held from 29 August to 1 September 2023 in Cusco, Peru. The Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/070](#) to inform Parties about the meeting. The reports of the Chairs of the two working groups are contained in documents SC77 Doc. 29 and [SC77 Doc. 28.1](#) and provide more details on the outcome of the meeting.
8. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to Peru for hosting the meeting and the CITES Management Authority of Peru (Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre – SERFOR) for the warm hospitality. The meeting would not have been possible without the generous financial support provided by China.

Discussion

9. Responses from Parties to the questionnaire show that good experiences in engaging IPLCs in the CITES processes exist at all levels: participation in the value chain of legal and sustainable trade in specimens of CITES-listed species; involvement and empowerment of IPLCs in the day-to-day implementation of the Convention such as during the preparation of non-detriment findings, the Review of Significant Trade process; establishment of quotas; preparation of national positions on issues on the CITES agenda; and participation in CITES meetings. It will continue to take political will, determination and resources to ensure that IPLCs may continue to and further engage in CITES processes.
10. It is interesting to note the variability in IPLC engagement within a Party as it relates to different species and different international fora. Apart from legal obligations and political will, an important factor that affects the level of IPLC engagement in CITES processes within a given Party is the significance of the trade in CITES species to the livelihoods of IPLCs. For example, Mexico, with successful engagement of IPLCs in the harvest and trade in multiple CITES species, concludes that the success of community management is highly variable as it depends on the species harvested and the benefits derived from such harvesting and trade. In terms of engagement at national and international levels, the empowerment of the Sámi people, an indigenous group legally recognized in Finland and Sweden, can perhaps represent a best practice, where the Sámi parliament seems to play a key role. However, the Sámi people are not engaged in CITES processes mainly because the key species concerned, the reindeer, is not a CITES species. Finland states that the Sámi Parliament has prioritized participation in delegations to climate and biodiversity related meetings, but not in CITES processes. Likewise, Sweden makes it clear that there is currently no established mechanism to include IPLCs in CITES-specific processes, nor in the development of national positions in preparation for meetings of CITES Conference of the Parties meetings. This is something to bear in mind when comparing IPLC engagement in CITES and other processes.
11. Before referring to the use of terminology in the CITES context, the Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to recognize the paramount role, knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples and local communities in the conservation of CITES-listed species. They have centuries of experience achieving sustainability in their use of nature around the globe. Four hundred and seventy million members of indigenous peoples and local communities manage lands that hold over 80% of our planet's biodiversity. The IPBES assessment report on *The Sustainable Use of Wild Species* concludes that "policy options would be strengthened by recognizing and supporting multiple forms of knowledge, including indigenous and local knowledge". It also concludes "that policy and tools are most effective, among others, when they pay attention to the social and cultural contexts in which they are applied, in addition to the ecological context; when they support fairness, rights and equity; and when they are supported by robust and adaptive institutions which are inclusive and include participatory mechanisms". The concerns and experiences of indigenous peoples and local communities must be central to our efforts and their voices amplified so that CITES decision-making can take into consideration the unparalleled experiences such groups have in the pursuit of living in harmony with nature.
12. With regards to the use of terminology when referring to the communities in question, responses to the questionnaire reveal a great diversity of views and national frameworks around its scope and meaning, e.g., the recognition in national legislation of "indigenous peoples" varies significantly among Parties. The Secretariat draws the attention of the Committee to the fact that the communities that are meant to be addressed in the context of Resolution Conf. 16. (Rev. CoP18) on CITES and livelihoods are those living in and adjacent to wildlife habitats where CITES-listed species of wild animals and plants occur and whose livelihoods may be affected either positively or negatively by decisions taken in CITES.

13. In light of the above, the Standing Committee may wish to clarify that the IPLCs in the CITES context should be understood to include rural communities, as appears to be suggested in relevant CITES Decisions as well as the questionnaire. For practical reasons and to ensure that no groups of communities that should be covered in the discussions are inadvertently left out, this may appear as the more inclusive and widely accepted term in the CITES context.

Recommendations

14. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) take note of the present document, in particular of the consolidated summary of the responses from Parties on their experiences and lessons learned in engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in the CITES processes in both 2020 and 2023, contained in the Annex to the present document; and
 - b) consider including the task in Decision 17.57 (Rev. CoP19) concerning the examination of the terminology used in the CITES context when referring to “indigenous peoples”, “local communities” or “rural communities” in the mandate of the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement.

SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN IPLC ENGAGEMENT

Pursuant to paragraph a), Decision 18.32 (Rev. CoP19), the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2023/041 on 3 April 2023 inviting Parties to provide information on their experiences and lessons learned in engaging indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in CITES processes. The same questionnaire was sent to Parties in 2020 through Notification to the Parties No. 2020/040.

This summary consolidates responses in both 2020 and 2023 to facilitate the consideration by the Standing Committee and the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement. A total of 19 Parties responded to the questionnaire in 2020 and 2023: Argentina, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland, Guatemala, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Sweden, United States of America and Yemen. Among these Parties, Botswana, Canada, Finland, Kenya, Mexico and Namibia responded to the questionnaire in both 2020 and 2023, and their responses in 2023 therefore served as updates to their earlier responses. Amboseli Ecosystem Trust and African Wildlife Foundation, as members of the intersessional working group on IPLC engagement, also provided responses to the questionnaire in 2023.

The questionnaire contains the following five sections: status of IPLCs and their relationship with CITES-listed species; scale and form of engagement; successful experiences in IPLC engagement in relation to CITES; challenges and solutions, and additional information. Responses to the questionnaire are summarized as follows:

1. Status of IPLCs and their relationship with CITES-listed species

The term “indigenous peoples” and the term “local communities” do not have the same meaning for most if not all responding Parties. The situation of legal recognition of indigenous peoples varies significantly among Parties, including in countries where rural communities are widespread. In Botswana, no group of people is recognized as indigenous but local communities are widely found across the country. According to African Wildlife Foundation, indigenous peoples are not specifically recognized by law in Rwanda and Zimbabwe while rural and local communities are considered important to conservation outcomes. In its response to the questionnaire in 2020, China points out that there are no indigenous people in the country if the definition of “indigenous people” by the United Nations is applied, noting, however, that its rural population accounts for 49.73% of its total population.

Argentina states that IPLCs in the country are going through a dynamic process of self-recognition, which is why it is impossible to provide precise numbers of their populations.

Mexico notes that not all of its IPLC populations live in rural communities and not all rural communities are of indigenous descent. Canada also notes that some indigenous people reside in urban centres although the majority of them are located in rural and remote areas, and local non-indigenous communities across Canada’s extensive rural areas also live in proximity to wild animals and plants.

Approximately 6 million people in Kenya live within the wildlife conservancies and an additional 4.5 million live adjacent to wildlife protected areas, together they represent approximately 21% of Kenya’s population. In Botswana, around 40% of local communities live in proximity to wild animals and plants. In Mexico’s national census in 2022, a self-identified indigenous population of 23.2 million people was recorded, which is equivalent to 19.4% of the total population. Almost 40% of the 68 indigenous groups are considered rural population. It is inferred that these groups are the ones with the greatest proximity to the wild fauna and flora. In the State of Sabah of Malaysia, it is estimated that 53% of IPLCs live close to wild animals and plants. In Senegal, 60-70% of IPLCs live close to wildlife. In Argentina, 1,218 indigenous communities inhabit native forests, which represents 65.6% of all indigenous communities. Both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya report that 80% of their IPLCs live in proximity with wild animals and plants. In Canada, the majority of indigenous communities are located in rural and remote areas, and in close proximity to wild animals and plants. Cameroon reports that all IPLCs live permanently close to wild animals and plants because these populations live mainly on hunting, collecting and breeding of wildlife.

In general, the rights of IPLCs are legally protected in almost all Parties that responded to the questionnaire, which often include the rights of access to and the use of wild animals and plants for food, social, economic,

cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual purposes. In countries where wild animals and plants constitute an important part of local or national economies, IPLCs are often closely associated with land use in the forms of registered conservancy, forest community, community fisheries, group ranches and beach management units, e.g., in Botswana, Cambodia, Namibia and Kenya.

Differences exist in terms of ownership of the land among Parties. Argentina's National Constitution and the Civil and Commercial Code of the Nation recognize community possession and ownership of the lands that are traditionally occupied by native peoples. For the State of Sabah in Malaysia, however, land (state land, forest reserves and protected areas) and wildlife are the property of the Sabah State Government although IPLCs have legal access to wild animals and plants to support their livelihoods. Similarly, in China, wild animals and plants as well as the land are state-owned, but when the permission is granted by the government, IPLCs will have legal access to them for the purpose of captive-breeding or artificial propagation.

Over 65% of Kenya's wildlife occurs outside government-protected areas, thus hosted within community and private lands. Conservancies inhabited by rural communities in Kenya play a critical role to conserve critically endangered and threatened species. Mexico implements Management Units for the Conservation of Wildlife (UMA). In 2022, around 14,000 UMAs were reported, of which 80% are in the hands of "ejidatarios" which are usually IPLCs.

What may be unique to Canada is that treaties between indigenous peoples and the federal, provincial and territorial governments influence the laws, regulations and practices that protect wild species and govern wildlife management and trade. Since 1975, Canada has signed 26 modern treaties or comprehensive land claim agreements with indigenous peoples. Inuit rights to harvest wildlife, in accordance with their respective Land Claims Agreement, are constitutionally protected.

2. Scale and form of engagement in CITES

Whilst participation in CITES processes at local, national and international levels are reported by Parties such as Botswana, Canada, Kenya and Namibia, in most other countries, the engagement appears to be mostly at local level or national levels.

The examples in the paragraphs below are those that stand out and they therefore do not necessarily represent an overall common practice in all responding Parties. For example, Argentina makes it clear that the IPLCs do not have a direct participation in the CITES processes since this is done through the relevant technicians and provincial and national authorities. Cameroon also states that IPLCs are not engaged CITES at all levels. Yemen explains that the participation of local communities is limited to benefiting from local resources. The harvest of and international trade in such resources are mostly carried out through foreign companies, and the prevailing situation in the country does not enable the indigenous peoples to make optimal use of the resources.

a) Legal provisions

In some Parties, the constitution and relevant legislation, including those pertaining to the rights of IPLCs, call for consultation with all stakeholders concerned when reviewing and adopting legislation and decisions that may affect the local communities, which are often translated into the obligation to consult IPLCs on decisions to be taken at CITES CoPs which will have a direct impact on them. In Canada, the government has legal obligations to consult indigenous peoples, including the duty to consult, and where appropriate, accommodate indigenous groups when it considers conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights.

b) Engagement at the local level

Engagement in the CITES processes at local level can happen in the forms of decision-making, but more often in the form of participation in the production and value chain.

In Namibia, consultations with IPLCs are done at conservancy associations, conservancy meetings and fora. The engagement plan is designed to empower IPLCs who are supported with a self-governing structure where IPLCs have voting powers. IPLCs have annual general meetings to elect their committees.

In Canada, Land Claims Agreements recognize Inuit harvesting rights, and through co-management with provincial, territorial and federal governments, Inuit have an effective role in all aspects of wildlife management and decision making, including for Canadian species listed in the CITES Appendices. This includes decisions concerning harvest levels and non-quota limitations where applicable, setting research and monitoring objectives and priorities, and decisions on land use that affect wildlife. Allocation of harvest quotas to individual communities is overseen by various local hunting and trapping organizations, and regional wildlife organizations.

Nigeria states that its IPLCs are only involved at local level especially as local custodians of wildlife. Namibia has not recognized the involvement of IPLCs in the delivery of national goals and global commitments. This is mainly due to the non-formalization of the IPLC groups as well as the structural organization of the group.

c) Engagement at the national level

Responses to the questionnaire indicate that participation of IPLCs in CITES processes at the national level takes place both during the implementation of the Convention and the formulation of country positions for CITES meetings. It can also be in the form of direct involvement in international trade in CITES-listed species.

Canada consults with the Inuit communities about non-detriment findings (NDF) on a species-specific and permit-by-permit basis.

In Guatemala, IPLCs are part of the National Working Group on Timber Species of Guatemala that are included in CITES, with the objective of contributing to the good governance of CITES implementation in the country.

The CITES authorities of Mexico routinely consult and request information and inputs from the UMAs or other relevant actors on the management, conservation and use of wildlife in preparation for periodic reviews, the Review of Significant Trade, the review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity, or to prepare proposals for amendments to the Appendices.

In Namibia, any quota setting and harvesting will involve IPLCs. At national and regional levels, the three Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Support Organisations working groups have learning and reflection sessions to improve the provision of services to conservancies. During the pandemic, these platforms were critical lifelines that enabled partners to voice their concerns about current challenges and for communities to know that they were being heard by the relevant stakeholders.

In Peru, most of the vicuña populations are managed by peasant communities and under the silvestria modality. IPLC communities directly export their vicuña fibre to importing countries around the world, most notably to Europe.

In Botswana, representatives of communities are involved in the development of the Party's positions for issues to be addressed at CITES CoPs.

In Canada, indigenous peoples provide input into the development of Canadian CITES positions on species and issues relevant to their communities. Inuit representatives also attend CITES related meetings at the national level. The consultations with the indigenous peoples, which take place in two steps, concern both amendment proposals and working documents sponsored by Canada and those put forward by other Parties. Details of the consultation and call for proposals are posted on a dedicated website and the information is also shared by email with all stakeholders including indigenous organizations. Canada also created an informal ad-hoc group with a number of Inuit organizations to improve the level of engagement and coordination with a general focus on CITES CoP related issues and with a specific focus on the polar bear.

IPLCs in Kenya are involved in stakeholder consultation on the development of amendment proposals for consideration at CITES meetings and the development of country positions at CITES meetings. For example, communities have been engaged in the development of amendment proposals for the inclusion of East Africa Sandalwood (*Osyris lanceolata*) in Appendix II at CoP16; the uplisting of pangolins to Appendix I at CoP17; and on-going consultations for inclusion of *Boswellia* spp. in CITES Appendices.

In Mexico, prior to each meeting of the CITES CoP, the Coordinating Unit for Social Engagement, Human Rights and Transparency of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources will team up with the CITES Authorities of Mexico to convene those interested and involved in the management of CITES species, including IPLCs, to a public consultation to exchange information and opinions on the issues to be discussed during the meeting, including proposals for the amendment of Appendices. Inputs of IPLCs are collected to define the national position in this regard.

In the United States of America, IPLCs have been engaged in CITES processes through the CITES Export Programme (CEP) for furbearers, ginseng and alligators and also through harvest and trade in paddlefish and freshwater turtles. The public process allows all stakeholder groups, including IPLCs, to contribute to the development of US negotiating positions through the Federal Register Notices.

d) Engagement at the international level

Indigenous peoples from Canada attend CITES CoPs both as members on Canada's national delegation and as observers.

Representatives of local communities in Kenya are nominated and funded to attend every meeting of CITES CoPs as observers.

The Namibian Government works closely with IPLC representatives to ensure that IPLCs are represented at CITES meetings. In the meantime, the IPLCs also give mandates to civil society organizations to represent their views during CITES meetings.

e) Reinvestment in conservation and community development

The practice of reinvesting proceeds from trade in CITES-listed species in species conservation and community development programmes exists in a number of Parties that responded to the questionnaire.

In Cambodia, it is a government policy that companies that trade in CITES-listed species must pay or contribute to the conservation of the species and its habitat.

In Cameroon, proceeds from trade in species listed in the CITES Appendices are reinvested in conservation projects. A part is donated to the communities for their development because the law has made the distribution as follows: 50% for the State, 40% to the municipalities of the locality and 10% for the neighboring communities.

The Seri or Comca'ak indigenous communities in Mexico receive between 85% and 90% of the total sale of hunting trophies. These profits represent up to 65% of the annual income for the ejidatarios, for which they created a trust for the use of derived income of the hunt. Through several decades, it has invested in infrastructure (such as public lighting and paving) as well as granting scholarships to low-income students.

In Botswana, proceeds from sales of elephant quotas are deposited into the Conservation Trust Fund. Local communities within the elephant range apply for funding for livelihoods projects and species conservation projects. The Fund Order states that 40% should go to the communities and 60% goes to private research and government projects relevant to the species. Similarly, revenue generated from trophy hunting is directly used by the local communities for their own benefit in Namibia. Some trophy hunting operators have built schools, clinics, tourism facilities, water infrastructures, and erected communal structures such as community halls. Such fund is also used to off-set costs caused by human wildlife conflict.

In Peru, communities reinvest part of the proceeds from the sale of the vicuna fibre in the conservation of the species, especially in control and surveillance (communal guards, control and surveillance booths, equipment such as binoculars, etc.).

According to AWF, community infrastructure in Zimbabwe such as schools, clinics and water sources have been constructed using proceeds from trade in CITES-listed species. Community assets such as grinding mills and transportation vehicles have been acquired through revenues generated from trade in CITES-listed species. Communities have also benefited from these proceeds from household dividends.

3. Successful experiences in IPLC engagement in relation to CITES

As noted in Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP18), successful experiences in the engagement and empowerment of IPLCs in the CITES processes largely depend on an enabling environment, which can include, but should not be limited to, factors such as community governance/institutions; traditional leadership and use of traditional knowledge; establishment of trust and integrity; laws ensuring adequate benefit sharing or other well-established mechanisms; support from the government; support from non-governmental organizations; capacity-building for IPLCs; and awareness and education campaigns. These factors are listed in the questionnaire for respondents to indicate which ones have been most relevant to their experiences.

In general, respondents seem to agree that all the listed factors can potentially contribute to successful IPLC engagement. Government support and capacity-building seem to be more important. Several Parties underline the importance of fair benefit sharing. Botswana, Kenya and Canada provided detailed explanations on how each factor contributes to success. Mexico used species examples (crocodile, bighorn sheep, mahogany) to explain why such factors are critical. Peru attributed the active participation of peasant communities and the support of the State to the successful recovery of vicuña through sustainable and well-regulated trade. Canada considers the “increased recognition of benefits of legal and sustainable trade to livelihoods and species conservation” as vitally important for many indigenous nations who are advocating for their rights, interests, and role within CITES decision-making and CITES in general.

In terms of level of success, most respondents have indicated either “low” or “medium”, while Kenya, Namibia and Senegal have indicated “high”. Canada explains that while Canada has had a greater degree and consistency in engaging with Inuit communities in CITES processes, the same cannot be said for other IPLCs in the country.

Mexico notes that the success of community engagement is highly variable as it depends on the species harvested and the benefits derived from this management/harvesting.

4. Challenges and solutions

Illiteracy, inequality, lack of capacities (technical, legal, financial, experts/experienced people), dispersed distribution, social insecurity, negative perceptions about CITES and lack of a clear framework for collaboration are among the gaps and challenges found by the responding Parties. On a broader scope, Canada believes that, at the structural level, CITES has been slow to embrace the value of different knowledge systems including that of IPLCs in understanding how decisions can best achieve conservation outcomes.

Botswana points out that if IPLCs benefit from coexisting with wildlife, the need to be part of decision-making in CITES will increase.

Guatemala highlights the challenge at the country level to coordinate with various institutions in order to generate a positive and immediate impact on the communities.

Kenya considers the absence of a mechanism for IPLC engagement in the CITES framework, the absence of means to identify legitimate IPLCs in meetings of CITES governing bodies among the key challenges.

Senegal notes that the participation of IPLCs is limited to the national level since there is not yet a legal framework that allows their participation at the international level within the framework of CITES.

Solutions proposed include providing capacity-building and funding support; developing evaluation methods and models to promote and encourage IPLC participation; strengthening communities' governance structures to improve benefit sharing; establishing and enhancing formal or informal interactions and communications during CITES CoP cycles to identify CITES issues that affect IPLCs; and exploring the possibility of creating mechanism for IPLC engagement similar to other Multilateral Environmental Agreements within the CITES context since many of the same Parties in CITES are also engaged in these same fora.