

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



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Administrative and financial matters

EMERGING OPERATIONAL MATTERS OF THE COMMITTEES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.1 to 19.3 on *Emerging operational issues of the Committees*:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**19.1** *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *prepare a document for consideration by the Standing Committee containing information relating to the risk-assessment approaches implemented by the Secretariat to determine the best course of action if intersessional work and meetings are affected by emerging operational issues, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and referred to in paragraph 2 g) of Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on Establishment of committees;*
- b) *prepare a document for consideration by the Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee reflecting the Secretariat's recommendations for the exceptional circumstances under which it may be appropriate to hold an online meeting or make hybrid options available to Parties to facilitate participation in a face-to-face meeting of the Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee; and*
- c) *based on the guidance provided to the committees relating to the use of the Rules of Procedure for the online meetings of the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee, 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and 25th meeting of the Plants Committee, provide the Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee with a document highlighting the provisions in the Rules of Procedure that may require further consideration for online and hybrid meetings.*

***Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees***

**19.2** *The Animals and Plants Committees shall:*

- a) *taking into account the document prepared by the Secretariat under Decision 19.1, paragraphs b) and c),*
- i) *consider the exceptional circumstances under which it may be appropriate to hold an online meeting or make hybrid options available to Parties to facilitate participation in a face-to-face meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees; and*

- ii) *consider whether adjustments to Rules of Procedures of the committees are required to facilitate online and hybrid meetings and decision-making where these are required and agreed; and*
- b) *propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on Establishment of committees and their Rules of Procedure, as appropriate, to the 20th meeting of the Conference of Parties.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

**19.3** *The Standing Committee shall, by its 78th meeting:*

- a) *develop and adopt guidance on a structured, risk-assessment approach to be followed to determine the best course of action if intersessional work and meetings are affected by emerging operational issues, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and referred to in paragraph 2 g) of Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 18.2. In developing this guidance, the Standing Committee will consider the document developed by the Secretariat under Decision 19.1;*
- b) *develop and adopt guidance on the exceptional circumstances under which it may be appropriate to hold an online meeting or make hybrid options available to Parties to facilitate participation in a face-to-face meeting of the Standing Committee. In developing this guidance, the Committee will consider the document prepared by the Secretariat under Decision 19.1; and*
- c) *review the Rules of Procedures of the Standing Committee, taking into account the document developed by the Secretariat under Decision 19.1, to consider whether adjustments are needed to permit and facilitate online and hybrid meetings and decision-making where these are required and agreed.*

Guidance on meeting arrangements under exceptional circumstances

3. In accordance with Decision 19.1, the Secretariat developed guidance on meeting arrangements under exceptional circumstances as presented in document [SC77 Doc. 12](#). In the paragraphs below, the Secretariat summarizes the guidance proposed in that document.
  - a) The Secretariat proposed two guiding principles to determine the best course of action if intersessional work and meetings are affected by exceptional circumstances: (1) in-person meetings are the default options for all meetings of the CITES permanent committees; and (2) online or hybrid options would be considered only when quorum as defined in the Rules of Procedure of each Committee might not be reached.
  - b) The Secretariat also proposed that, should a meeting of a Committee be postponed because of circumstances that are either global or at the location of the meeting preventing the organization of the meeting for a variety of reasons that could *inter alia* be political, or health- or security-related, agreement on the date of the postponed meeting must be reached within two months of the original date of the meeting. The postponed meeting should take place no later than six months after its original date in order to ensure that progress is made in the implementation of the Decisions directed to the Committee concerned. If no viable in-person option is identified within two months of the original date of the meeting, the meeting would be rescheduled as an online meeting with participation of Members, observer Parties and observer organizations. The Secretariat also proposed that, should circumstances arise that prevent representatives from several regions from being present in-person at the meeting and thus affect quorum, the preferred solution would be a hybrid option for the Animals and Plants Committees, represented by individual members or their alternates, while the hybrid option is less likely to be needed for the Standing Committee, as they are represented by Parties and other representatives could replace them.
4. Document SC77 Doc. 12 presented a risk matrix for convening CITES meetings included in Annex 1 to the present document for ease of reference. Furthermore, the Secretariat proposed that the online meetings be organized based on the following modalities:

- a) The length of the meeting will be two to three times longer than an in-person meeting, i.e., over two to three weeks, with one three-hour session every day. The Secretariat will aim to ensure that the timing of any online or hybrid meeting be equitable for all regions.
  - b) The plenary would break for two to three weeks in order to organize, hold and conclude the work of possible in-session working groups.
5. In 2020, the Secretariat prepared a *Guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure in an online meeting* for the Standing Committee, as contained in information document [SC73 Inf. 1](#). This guidance would also apply to hybrid meetings (see Annex 2). The Secretariat proposes to continue to apply the Rules of Procedure and the *Guidance for online and hybrid meetings* and does not foresee the need of amending the Rules of Procedure. However, the Secretariat would propose two amendments to the *Guidance*:
- a) The first amendment describes the actions the Secretariat would undertake to ensure that individuals joining online or hybrid meetings are those whose credentials have been presented by the relevant Party. This would entail adding the following sentence in the section on *Credentials* (also indicated as underlined text in Annex 2):
 

“The Secretariat will utilize the latest technology for the authentication and authorization of participants, including verifying identity via video when applicable, to ensure that the individuals joining the meetings are those whose credentials have been presented by the relevant Party.”
  - b) The second amendment aims to allow for the interventions to be posted in the meeting’s chat for participants (Members only in case of a hybrid meeting) who cannot take the floor due to technical reasons to be considered as part of the record of the meeting. This would entail adding the following sentence in the section on *Executive summary and summary record* (also indicated as underlined text in Annex 2):
 

“Statements posted in the chat will be included in the record when a participant is unable to take the floor for technical reasons and is requested by the Chair to include its intervention in the chat.”

Recommendations of the Plants and Animals Committees

6. The Secretariat consulted the Plants and Animals Committees, at their 26th meeting and at their 32nd meeting, respectively, on the proposals outlined in paragraphs 3 to 5 above. The Plants and Animals Committees agreed the following:

*The Committees agreed to support the general way forward described in document PC26 Doc. 7 / AC232 Doc. 7. The Committees requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Animals and Plants Committees through their Chairs, to prepare a document for the Standing Committee that would also propose a way to capture the guiding principles and other recommendations in document PC26 Doc. 7 / AC32 Doc. 7 in CITES official documentation, for instance in Resolution Conf. 18.2 on Establishment of Committees.*

*The Committees requested the Secretariat to organize meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees back-to-back and to ensure that the timing of any online or hybrid meeting be equitable for all regions.*

Paragraph 4 above reflects the scientific committees’ request to ensure that the timing of any online or hybrid meeting be equitable for all regions.

7. In order to capture the guiding principles and other recommendations above in CITES official documentation, the Secretariat and the Animals and Plants Committees propose adding the following text as a new section in Resolution Conf 18.2 on *Establishment of Committees*:

**Regarding exceptional circumstances:**

9. DECIDES that:

- a) should a meeting of a Committee be postponed due to circumstances that are either global or at the location of the meeting preventing its organization, the postponed meeting should take place no later than six months after its original date. If no alternative location is found within two months,

the meeting is to be organized fully online (possibly with an adapted agenda and working programme and ensuring an equitable timing for all regions);

b) should exceptional circumstances prevent Committee Members from several regions from being present in-person at a meeting and thereby affecting the quorum, the meeting of that Committee should be held in a hybrid format. The scientific committees' Members who are unable to travel to the location of the meeting would be connected online. The Standing Committee Members who are unable to travel to the location of the meeting and who do not have a diplomatic representation available at the location of the meeting would be connected online;

#### Other emerging operational matters

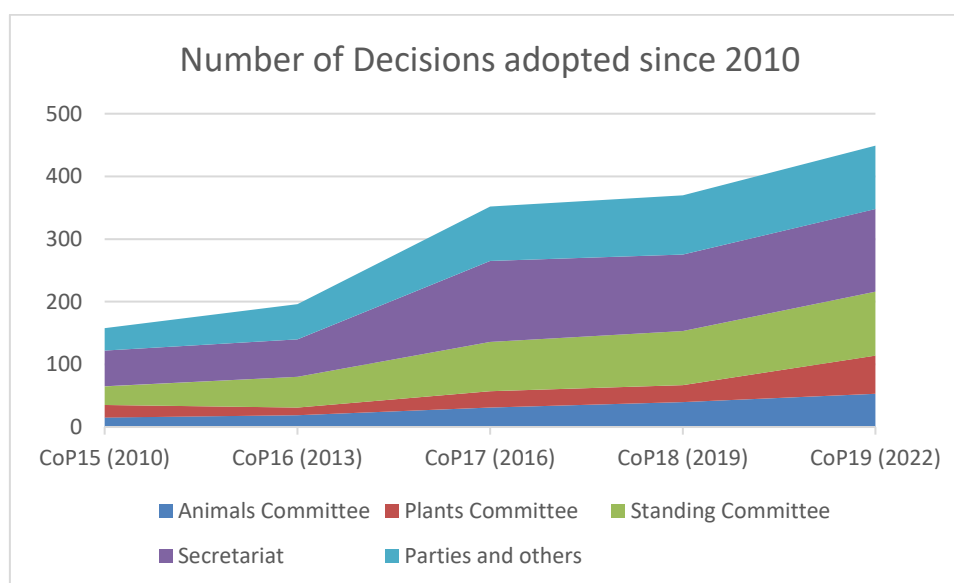
8. The Secretariat raised the following two additional considerations in document SC77 Doc. 12: options for expanding online intersessional work and for the participation of Parties directly concerned by an agenda item.

#### *Expanding online option for decision-making on intersessional work*

9. The volume of Decisions directed to the committees by the CoP has increased substantially over the past decade (see Table 1 below). The role and significance of committee meetings have thus increased accordingly, resulting in significant impacts if meetings of the committees cannot be held. Resolution Conf. 19.1 affirms that no more than two regular meetings of each of the three committees should be convened between regular meetings of the CoP. However, it has increasingly become a challenge to implement the Decisions directed to the committees even in the absence of extraordinary events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 1:** Decisions directed to the SC and scientific committees since 2010

Decisions directed to	CoP15 (2010)	CoP16 (2013)	CoP17 (2016)	CoP18 (2019)	CoP19 (2022)
Animals Committee	15	19	31	40	53
Plants Committee	20	12	26	27	61
Standing Committee	30	49	79	86	102
Secretariat	57	60	129	122	132
Parties and others	36	56	87	95	101
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>126</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>367</b>



<sup>1</sup> The total number of Decisions adopted at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties is lower than the sum of the Decisions directed to the AC, PC, SC, Secretariat and Parties and others because some Decisions are directed to two entities at the same time, for instance to the Animals and Plants Committees.

10. The increase in workload for the committees has reinforced the need for two meetings to take place during the intersessional period, but also the need to explore ways to facilitate online intersessional decision-making. Online meetings present a valuable tool that can assist in moving intersessional work forward. Despite the pandemic having a significant impact on the face-to-face meetings of the Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee and their intersessional work, the Committees managed to implement some of the Decisions directed to them through intersessional decision-making procedures provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the committees and the establishment of intersessional working groups that addressed prioritized and complex matters through electronic means.
11. The current procedure for intersessional decision-making contained in the Rules of Procedure (AC/PC Rule 19, SC Rule 20) is a lengthy (65 to 100 days) and relatively complex procedure based on urgency and irrespective of the nature of the matter to be decided upon. The Secretariat wishes to consult the Committees to establish whether there would be interest in drafting a new Rule to establish a shorter intersessional decision-making process, possibly as a non-objection procedure by email, where the matter is related to the organization of its intersessional work. This non-objection process would be particularly useful in the period immediately after a meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, for instance, would allow the Chair to establish intersessional working group(s) to progress with the implementation of the Decisions the Conference of the Parties has directed to that Committee. For any other issues, the existing intersessional decision-making process would remain unchanged.
12. To assist the consideration of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat has prepared the following paragraph that could be added at the end of the rule on intersessional decision-making in the Rules of Procedure of the respective Committees (AC/PC Rule 19, SC Rule 20).
  6. *Notwithstanding the above intersessional procedure, the following procedure may be used where the matter is related to the organization of the intersessional work of the Committee as decided by its Chair, such as for example the establishment of intersessional working groups. If no Member objects to the recommendation of the Chair within ten days of the Chair's message, the matter is considered decided by the Committee.*

The title of the relevant Rule would be *Procedures for intersessional decision-making* (plural for Procedures) to indicate that there would be two separate procedures.

#### *Exploring the option of participation for Parties directly concerned by an agenda item*

13. Within the broader discussion of hybrid participation at meetings beyond exceptional circumstances, the Secretariat is of the view that remote participation could be considered with respect to Parties directly concerned by an agenda item that could potentially lead to compliance procedures in the Standing Committee.<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat is aware that lack of available funding is often one of the reasons Parties that are directly concerned by an agenda item, especially for compliance procedures, are unable to attend meetings of the Committee. The Secretariat draws the Committee's attention to Decision 19.10 that reads:

#### ***Directed to the Secretariat***

##### ***19.10 Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall:***

- a) *offer to provide financial support for the participation at meetings of the Standing Committee of a maximum of two delegates from each developing country Party subject to an Article-XIII process; and*
- b) *report on the implementation of paragraph a) and bring any recommendations to the attention of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

The best option would indeed be to ensure the in-person participation of any developing country Party subject to an Article-XIII process. Nevertheless, when Parties concerned are not able to attend a face-to-face meeting and furthermore cannot be represented by the Permanent Missions, remote participation could be considered. The rationale behind this proposal would be to ensure that Parties that risk being affected by compliance procedures would have the opportunity to present additional information to the Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> See Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *CITES compliance procedures*

However, decision-making by the Committees should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties to make online statements.

14. To facilitate their engagement, should a Party directly concerned by an agenda item not be able to attend in person, regional representatives of the Standing Committee could read a statement on behalf of that Party. The Secretariat notes that this has already been done in the past and recommends that the language below be added to Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of committees* in order to explicitly allow regional representatives to take on that role:

13. During meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, a regional Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party.

15. As another option and subject to the availability of funding, the Party directly affected could connect to the meeting via an online platform when the specific agenda item that affects it is considered by the Committee. This option is intended to be implemented as a low-cost option, i.e., a laptop used to call in the Party when the agenda item is discussed, when other options, such as representation by the Permanent Mission (or the embassy) or statements and information presented by the regional Member on behalf of the Party, are not possible.
16. The Secretariat proposes to also amend Annex 2 to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of committees* in order to explicitly allow regional representatives of the Animals and Plants Committees to make a statement on behalf of a Party of its region when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party (for instance when the Committee considers a species endemic to a range State that cannot attend the meeting):

*13. The duties of the Members elected to the Animals and Plants Committees and their alternates are as follows:*

[new sub-paragraph to be inserted after sub-paragraph f)]

- d) *when a region has more than one representative, the representatives should also agree which Parties each represents. Contact should also be established with non-Parties in the region;*
- e) *each Member should increase the awareness of the role and function of the committee, its mandate and the issues of concern to his/her region through mechanisms such as participation in seminars or in related meetings organized by the Secretariat and by other organizations at regional or sub-regional level;*
- f) *before the meetings of the committee, the Members should inform and consult the Parties in their regions about the agenda and in particular on matters specifically relevant to the countries of the region;*
- x) *during meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management or Scientific Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, the Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party;*

#### Comments submitted by Parties following the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee

17. Due to time constraints, the Standing Committee was not able to discuss document SC77 Doc. 12 summarized above. The Committee noted document SC77 Doc. 12 and further noted that comments on this document would be requested by Notification to the Parties.
18. In response to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/130 of 24 November 2023, the Secretariat received comments from the European Union and its Member States, from Japan, from North America and from Oceania. These comments are summarized below.

#### *European Union and its Member States*

19. The European Union and its Members States agreed with the recommendations but suggested adding the following wording in the amendment to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of committees* in order to clarify the intention of the Secretariat as outlined in paragraph 12 of document SC77 Doc. 12 (recommended additional text is underlined):

- a) *should a meeting of a Committee be postponed due to circumstances that are either global or at the location of the meeting preventing its organization, the postponed meeting should take place no later than six months after its original date. If no alternative location is found within two months of its original date, the meeting is to be organized fully online (possibly with an adapted agenda and working programme and ensuring an equitable timing for all regions);*

#### Japan

20. Japan noted that the analysis in document SC77 Doc. 12 did not include an assessment of the impact on the Secretariat's budget and carbon offsetting by face-to-face participants if the relevant meetings are held online or in a hybrid format. These should also be borne in mind when organizing future meetings. In the case of online meetings, Japan noted that they tend to be held very late at night or very early in the morning in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, which is very burdensome for participants. If online meetings are unavoidable, the Secretariat should ensure that countries in certain regions are not disadvantaged in terms of time zone.

#### North America

21. The North America region generally supported the recommendations in document SC77 Doc. 12.
- a) North America suggested the following amendment to paragraph 13 in Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of committees* (recommended additional text is underlined):
13. *During meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, a regional Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party. In exceptional circumstances, when an observer Party directly affected by compliance procedures cannot ensure in-person participation, its remote participation could be considered when the agenda item is discussed as an opportunity to present additional information and answer questions from the Committee. However, decision-making by the Committee should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties from making online statements.*
- b) In further exploring this option, North America recommended directing the Secretariat to consider measures to ensure that a Party has appropriately authorized a regional Member to speak on its behalf and what form credentialing would take to ensure that a representative of a Party participating online is duly empowered to speak on behalf of the Party and provide its recommendations to the Committee at its 78th meeting.

#### Oceania

22. Oceania welcomed the Secretariat's thorough assessment on the operation of Committees during exceptional circumstances such as those experienced during COVID19; supported the guiding principles and the exceptional circumstances identified and encouraged the use of the risk matrix to guide planning and postponing meetings.
- a) With regard to the reference that a Standing Committee Member can be represented by an embassy or permanent mission, Oceania recorded that it is most unlikely that Oceania members can be represented by an embassy or permanent delegations at Standing Committee meetings. This is because of the small capacity of many of the permanent delegations/embassies in the region; the length of Standing Committee meetings, and because of the very technical nature of the Standing Committee meetings which cannot easily be covered by a non-experienced participant. Reliance on permanent delegations to create a quorum may disadvantage Regions with smaller Parties.
- b) On the conduct of hybrid meetings, Oceania thanked the Secretariat for reflecting the feedback of Animals and Plants Committee Members in the guidance around the modalities for scheduling hybrid meetings under paragraphs 14 and 15 of document SC77 Doc. 12. In particular, Oceania supported the meetings of 3 hours at a time spread over longer duration and held at time equitable to all regions.
- c) Oceania sought confirmation in the guidance that these modalities would be applied to both hybrid Scientific Committee and Standing Committee meetings, and encouraged the guidance being made widely available and support it being posted on the web.

## Proposed way forward

23. The Secretariat proposes to include all the amendments proposed by Parties in their response outlined in the paragraphs above, with a minor change to the amendment proposed by North America as outlined below. Those additional amendments are shown as double underline in Annex 3 to the present document.

- a) In response to the comment made by Japan about the impact on the Secretariat's budget and carbon offsetting by face-to-face participants if the relevant meetings are held online or in a hybrid format, the Secretariat notes that the amount allocated by the Conference of the Parties for the organization of meetings (see the [Costed programme of work of the CITES Secretariat for 2023-2025](#)) would be enough to cover the cost of an online or hybrid meeting. The Secretariat further notes that it is committed to measuring and offsetting its carbon footprint, including that of its meetings, by using the [United Nations Carbon offset platform](#) (see document SC78 Doc. 7 on *Financial matters*). For upcoming meetings, the Secretariat will use the UN Secretariat Sustainable Event Checklist developed by the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance of the UN Secretariat.
- b) The Secretariat welcomes the amendment proposed by North America but proposes a minor change as outlined below in order to clarify who should make the request for remote participation. This minor change is indicated in **bold and underlined**.

13. *During meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, a regional Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party. In exceptional circumstances, when an observer Party directly affected by compliance procedures cannot ensure in-person participation, ~~its remote participation could be considered~~ the observer Party can request the Secretariat to arrange for their remote participation when the agenda item is discussed as an opportunity to present additional information and answer questions from the Committee. However, decision-making by the Committee should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties from making online statements.*

In response to the query from North America summarized in paragraph 21 b) above, the Secretariat notes that, based on the existing practice, regional members have been able to ensure that the individual contacting them is indeed representing their country without asking for credentials. The Secretariat further notes that, when a Party makes a statement that has an impact on Committee decision-making, such as the announcement of a quota for example, past practice has been to request such a statement from the Party in writing. This statement is then published as an information document to the meeting. Any Party, whether they are represented at the meeting or not, can request the publication of an information document. As a concrete example, at the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee, the representative of Colombia informed the Committee that, regarding *Carcharhinus longimanus*/Colombia, it had prohibited since 2021 all trade in specimens and derivatives of sharks, rays and chimaeras, including export, re-export and import in its national territory, and therefore this species/country combination should not be included in RST. The representative of Colombia indicated that it would request the Secretariat to publish a Notification informing Parties of these stricter domestic measures. The Secretariat proposes to keep to past practice and that, regardless of whether duly credentialed delegates are present in the meeting, Parties' commitments be communicated via an official correspondence from their government.

- c) In response to the query from Oceania, the Secretariat confirms that the modalities outlined in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the present document would be applied to both hybrid Scientific Committee and Standing Committee meetings.

## Recommendations

24. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) request the Secretariat to continue using the risk matrix for convening CITES meetings contained in Annex 1 to the present document;
- b) agree that online Committee meetings be organized based on the following modalities:



- i) The length of the meeting will be two to three times longer than an in-person meeting, i.e., over two to three weeks, with one three-hour session every day. The Secretariat will aim to ensure that the timing of any online or hybrid meeting be equitable for all regions.
  - ii) The plenary would break for two to three weeks in order to organize, hold and conclude the work of possible in-session working groups.
- c) agree to use the *Guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee in an online or hybrid meeting* as amended in Annex 2 to the present document when exceptional circumstances warrant the organization of an online or hybrid meeting and request the Secretariat to publish it on the CITES website;
- d) submit to the Conference of the Parties the amendments to Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of Committees* as collated in Annex 3 to the present document;
- e) agree that Decisions 19.1 to 19.3 have been implemented and can be proposed for deletion; and
- f) consider the proposal for an intersessional decision-making procedure for the organization of intersessional work as outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10 and request the Secretariat to develop a proposal for amending Rule 20 of its Rules of procedure taking into account the comments made at the present meeting for its consideration at its 81st meeting.

**RISK MATRIX FOR CONVENING CITES MEETINGS**

Risk Scenarios	Risk types	Probability (high/med/low)	Severity of impact/consequences				Risk-minimizing measures
			Timeline for decision (short/long)	Geographical impact (global/regional)	Cost implications (high/med/low)	Impact on the effectiveness and representation of the meeting (high/med/low)	
A: Circumstances preventing representatives from having a meeting at the location of the meeting	Security (e.g., crimes, terrorism, etc.)	Low	Short	Global	High	High	Follow advice from UNDSS on the security situation in-country, including on the timing of the meeting
	Medical/health	Low	Short	Global	High	High	
	Environmental (e.g., extreme weather events, natural disasters, pollution, etc)	Medium	Short	Global	High	High	Take the seasonal weather events at location into account when planning meetings
	Infrastructure (e.g., unexpected structural problems with the venue, internet availability, etc.)	Medium	Long	Global	Medium	Medium	Choose meeting venues with reliable infrastructure – consider back-up provision of Internet/electricity etc.
	Political (e.g., unexpected changes in government, economic situation, etc.)	Medium	Short	Global	High	High	Ensure high-level political commitment to hosting the meeting and avoid meetings around the time of general elections
B: Circumstances that prevent several Members from being present in-person at the meeting	Travel restrictions (e.g., due to regional health situations, extreme weather events, natural disasters, and other disruptions)	Medium	Short	Regional	Medium	Medium	Plan for hybrid participation of Members/Acting Members affected
	Political (e.g., sanctions, other travel restrictions with regard to certain nationalities, etc.)	Low	Long	Regional	Medium	Medium	Plan for hybrid participation of Members/acting Member affected
	Operational/logistical (e.g., visa processes)	Medium	Long	Regional	Medium	Medium	Plan for hybrid participation of Members/acting Members affected

## **Guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Standing Committee in an online or hybrid meeting**

*The Rules of procedure (RoP) of the CITES Committees have been developed with physical meetings in mind and the application of some of the provisions may need some guidance in the context of an online or a hybrid meeting.*

*An online meeting is a meeting held via an online platform, where the participants are not physically present at a meeting venue but are connected to the meeting via the Internet. A hybrid meeting is a meeting held in a physical location where some participants connect to the meeting via an online platform on the Internet.*

*This document provides guidance to the Chair and the participants on how to apply those provisions of the RoP where guidance for the online or hybrid settings seems necessary.*

### **Representation and attendance (Rules 1-4)**

Rule 1: It is understood that presence in meetings means physical or online presence. The former through physical presence in a room in the physical space, the latter through a connection to a meeting held online.

Rule 2: Parties that are not members of the Committee will be entitled to participate in the online meeting with a maximum of four connections per Party. A Party may include more observers on the letter of credentials, but they will have to share the four connections to the meeting platform.

Rules 3-4: Each agency or body can take part in the meeting with a maximum of two connections per agency or body. As above, more than two persons can register, but they will have to share the two connections to the meeting platform.

Rule 3: UN, specialized agencies and non-Party States may participate in the meeting with a maximum of two connections per agency or non-Party State.

Rule 4: Each agency or body fulfilling the criteria in Rule 4 can take part in the meeting with a maximum of two connections per agency or body. More than two persons can register, but they will have to share the two connections to the meeting platform. The right of any agencies or bodies to participate in meetings of the Committees may be withdrawn in accordance with Rule 4 of the RoP at any time if so agreed by the Members present.

### **Credentials (Rule 5)**

For Rule 5 on credentials, please note that signed credentials should be scanned and submitted to the Secretariat by email at least one week in advance of the meeting. The signature may be a handwritten signature or an electronic equivalent. In the case of Members of the Committee, the credentials must clearly indicate the name of the Representative, alternate Representative and any Advisors of that Member or Acting Member. The Secretariat will utilize the latest technology for the authentication and authorization of participants, including verifying identity via video when applicable, to ensure that the individuals joining the meetings are those whose credentials have been presented by the relevant Party.

### **Officers and the Secretariat (Rules 6-7)**

The Chair will preside the online meeting from their remote location or from the physical location of the meeting for a hybrid meeting. The Vice-Chair will assist the Chair from their remote location or from the physical location of the meeting for a hybrid meeting. The Secretariat will service and act as secretary for the meeting and will also assist with the technical aspects of the meeting in collaboration with the operators of the online platform.

### **Arrangement of the meeting (Rules 8-10)**

Notice of the meeting of the Standing Committee should be done in accordance with Rule 8.

Rule 9 on seating arrangements will not apply in online setting. The screen of the meeting will at all times show the Chair, the Secretary-General and the person who has been given the floor by the Chair of the Committee.

Important: Participants logging on to the meeting platform, must indicate first the Member, Party or agency or body that they represent and then their first name and last name (COUNTRY/ORGANIZATION – NAME). Participants who have not identified themselves this way will be requested to do so in order to be able to take the floor. Participants are strongly encouraged to log in at least 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Rule 10 on working languages of the meeting will be applied as simultaneous interpretation into the three working languages of the plenary sessions of the meeting will be provided through the online platform.

### **Documents (Rules 11-12)**

Rule 11 on working documents requires no interpretation.

Rule 12 on information documents will apply with the exception that paper copies will not be required for distribution. Information documents submitted by Parties and by the Secretariat will be made available on the CITES website as usual. Information documents submitted by a clearly identified observer body or agency will be made accessible by the Secretariat as well.

### **Rules of order and debate (Rules 13-16)**

Rule 13 on quorum shall mean that at least seven Regional Members or Acting Members from at least four regions are connected to the session, either in person or online. If a Member or Acting Member steps away from the meeting while leaving the device connected, they will be considered to be present in the meeting and count for the quorum.

If a Member or Acting Member is unwillingly disconnected for technical reasons, they should immediately alert the Secretariat (contact information will be provided in advance of the meeting) by an alternative means of communication and a technical solution should be found as soon as possible; the meeting will not be disrupted. The Member or Acting Member who was unwillingly disconnected from the meeting will be able to make their position known during the adoption of the executive summary or the summary record of each session (see below).

If more Members or Acting Members are disconnected from the meeting for technical reasons, the Chair may decide to adjourn the session until the matter is resolved. There is no Rule on adjournment of the session in the Rules of Procedure. However, Rule 21 of the RoP allows the Chair to apply the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in matters not covered by the RoP of the Standing Committee; in this case Rule 18, paragraph 2 e) of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties would apply.

Rule 14: Participants that are duly identified in accordance with Rule 9 above will be able signify their desire to speak using the “Request to Speak” button on the online platform. Once the Chair calls upon the participant to take the floor, they will be able to turn on their microphone and camera and keep it on while they speak. Once the intervention is completed, they will release the microphone and the camera will be turned off.

A Member or a non-member Party wishing to make a point of order will be able to do so by using the “Point of Order” button on the online meeting platform. This will allow the Chair to take up the point of order immediately.

The Chair of the Standing Committee can propose to limit the time to be allowed to each speaker, for instance a maximum of 5 minutes per intervention for Committee Members, 4 minutes for Parties and 3 minutes for other observers. The Committee may be invited to agree to this proposal in line with paragraph 6 of Rule 14. The meeting platform has a timer that may or may not be used by the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

The Chair may call a speaker to order if their remarks are not relevant for the subject under discussion or if they are not respecting any time limits on interventions agreed by the Committee.

Participants are invited to submit written statements in advance of the meeting.

Rule 15: In accordance with the Rules and normal practice, the Committee will as far as possible take decisions by consensus. Consensus means that no Member/Acting Member objects to the decision proposed by the Chair. If the Committee fails to reach consensus, the Chair or regional Members/Acting Members from at least two regions may call for a vote. In case of a vote, regional Committee Members/Acting Members will be called upon one by one by the Chair in the order decided by the Chair. They will express their vote by orally stating yes, no

or abstain. In the event of such a roll-call vote, should any regional Member/Acting Member fail to cast a vote for any reason during the roll call, they shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the Member/Acting Member fail to cast a vote on the second roll call, they shall be recorded as absent. The decision shall be taken by simple majority of the Members/Acting Members expressing an affirmative or negative vote. In case of a tie, the motion shall be considered rejected unless the tie is broken by the vote of the Depositary Government.

Rule 16 on closed sessions will apply in the following way: If a motion for a closed session is carried, the Committee shall postpone the discussion of the item to a later session that will be closed to other observers than Parties. The Secretariat will assist the Chair during the closed sessions.

### **Working groups (WGs) (Rule 17)**

The Standing Committee may establish such intersessional and in-session working groups as necessary in accordance with Rule 17.

In-session WGs will work in between the sessions of the plenary of the Committee without interpretation in a manner determined by the chair of the WG. The number of such WGs will be limited to those items where a discussion and agreement on a recommendation at the meeting is needed. The chair and membership of in-session WGs will be determined by the Chair. Members and observers will be invited to express their interest in taking part in in-session WGs during the session at which the WG is established.

### **Executive summary and summary record (Rule 19)**

The executive summary of the decisions of the Committee will be prepared by the Secretariat for endorsement by the Committee. Depending on the working programme, a consolidated summary of the sessions of the Committee will be produced and posted during the break for adoption during the sessions in the last week. A consolidated executive summary of the sessions in the last week will be circulated for approval as soon as possible after the meeting to the Members/acting Members of the Committee for endorsement. The decisions shall come into effect as soon as the consolidated executive summary has been endorsed by the Committee.

The Summary record will be prepared based on paragraph 2 of Rule 19 and include further details on the discussions at the meeting.

Any comments or views expressed in the chat of the meeting must be made in a cordial and respectful manner and should be related to the issues discussed by the Committee. Comments or views expressed in the chat of the meeting will not be included in the summary record unless such comments have been read into the record of the meeting. Statements posted in the chat will be included in the record when a participant is unable to take the floor for technical reasons and is requested by the Chair to include its intervention in the chat. Reference is made to Rule 4 of the RoP of the Standing Committee and to Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in case of abusive language orally or in the chat.

### **Establishment of subcommittees (Rule 18), Procedure for intersessional decision-making (Rule 20) and Final Provisions (Rules 21-22)**

No further interpretation of these provisions is required for the meeting in an online or hybrid setting.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO  
RESOLUTION CONF. 18.2 ON *ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES*  
(new text is underlined; additional text following SC77 is shown as double underline)

RECALLING Resolution Conf. 9.1 (Rev.), adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) and amended at its 10th meeting (Harare, 1997), and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17) relating to the establishment of committees;

RECALLING the Preamble of the Convention, including its recognition that international cooperation is essential for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora against over-exploitation through international trade;

RECOGNIZING the importance of maintaining CITES species throughout their range at a level consistent with their role in the ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING the increasing role of the Convention since its entry into force in 1975, including the growth in number of species listed on the CITES Appendices, number of Parties, number of CITES trade transactions, and range of issues addressed by the Conference of the Parties;

REAFFIRMING the role of the Conference of the Parties in setting the policy direction for the Convention and reiterating the importance of its instructions;

RECOGNIZING the importance of providing guidance on steering the work and performance of the Convention between meetings of the Conference of the Parties;

STRESSING the importance of scientific advice and expertise to support the actions and policies adopted by the Conference of the Parties and aimed at fulfilling the purposes of the Convention;

RECOGNIZING the importance of providing adequate biological data and expert knowledge of animal and plant trade and management to the Conference of the Parties and individual Parties;

RECOGNIZING that aligning rules of procedure adopted by each committee established by the Conference of the Parties as far as practicable will help facilitate the operation of all CITES meetings;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

***Regarding the establishment of committees***

1. ESTABLISHES the Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parties, which shall be the senior committee and shall report to the Conference of the Parties in accordance with its Terms of Reference as found in Annex 1 of this Resolution;
2. DIRECTS the Standing Committee to establish a Finance and Budget Subcommittee and specify its terms of reference;
3. ESTABLISHES the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee as its scientific advisory bodies, which shall report to the Conference of the Parties at its meetings and, if so requested, to the Standing Committee between meetings of the Conference of the Parties in accordance with their Terms of Reference as found in Annex 2 of this Resolution;
4. DECIDES that:
  - a) the Conference of the Parties shall elect the Members of the committees established by this Resolution as set out in the annexes to this Resolution;
  - b) the terms of reference for all committees established by the Conference of the Parties shall be included in the annexes to this Resolution;

- c) the committees established by the Conference of the Parties shall adopt their own Rules of Procedure, which shall be aligned with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties as far as is practicable;
- d) any Party shall be entitled to be represented at meetings of the committees as an observer;
- e) the committees established by the Conference of the Parties may establish working groups with specific terms of reference as required to address specific problems. These working groups shall normally have a defined life span which shall not exceed the period until the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, at which time they may be re-established if necessary. Working groups shall report to the committee which established them and are advised to use the *Guidelines for improving species specific reporting requests by CITES working groups* and the *Template for species based reporting* as adopted and amended from time to time by the Standing Committee and distributed by the Secretariat, as appropriate. The Secretariat shall maintain and publish on the CITES website a list of active intersessional working groups, established by each committee, including Chairs and members of such groups;
- f) in addition to the Finance and Budget Subcommittee of the Standing Committee, committees established by the Conference of the Parties may establish subcommittees composed of committee Members and Parties, with specific terms of reference. Unless otherwise established by a resolution or decision of the Conference of the Parties, these subcommittees shall have a defined lifespan, which shall not exceed the period until the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, at which time they may be re-established if necessary; and
- g) when attending events or meetings outside those called for by the Conference of the Parties, Members and alternate Members of committees established by the Conference of the Parties do not represent the relevant committee or any CITES body unless specific instructions to do so have been provided by the relevant committee Chair or by the Conference of the Parties;

***Regarding financial arrangements***

5. RESOLVES that:

- a) the operational budget (CTL) of the Convention adopted by the Conference of the Parties should include the financial resources needed to support meetings of committees and associated eligible travel expenses;
- b) committee Members should make every effort to pay their own travel expenses;
- c) the Secretariat shall make provision for the payment of travel expenses, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the United Nations, of eligible committee Members from developing countries to attend meetings of their respective committees, and also for the payment of expenses for other travel undertaken by the committee Chairs at the request of the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee; and
- d) the Secretariat should seek extra-budgetary funding to ensure that eligible Members of the committees can attend and participate in the committees' work during meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and to support the holding of regional meetings, including, where possible, in association with regional seminars or other related meetings organized by the Secretariat;

***Regarding support of the Secretariat***

6. FURTHER RESOLVES that in addition to the functions conferred upon it by the Convention, the Secretariat shall provide services to the committees within the resolutions, decisions, and the costed programme of work adopted by the Conference of the Parties;

***Regarding regional sessions at meetings of the Conference of the Parties***

7. AGREES that:

- a) regional sessions should be held at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties; such sessions should have an official character and should have an agenda;

- b) the Chair of each regional session should be the representative of a regional Member of the Standing Committee;
- c) each region has specific tasks to fulfil, as follows:
  - i) selection, as appropriate, of Parties as Members and alternate Members of the Standing Committee, and experts as Members and alternate Members of the Animals and Plants Committees;
  - ii) the regions with more than one Member on a committee should review at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties the way the representation should be exercised; and
  - iii) other tasks depending to a large extent on the agenda of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

***Regarding conflict of Interest in committees where the membership consists of individuals***

8. AGREES that a “conflict of interest” refers to any current financial interest which could significantly impair an individual’s impartiality, objectivity or independence in carrying out his or her duties as a Member of a committee. A candidate’s employment by itself does not automatically constitute a conflict of interest. For committees where individuals are elected as Members, such as the Animals Committee and Plants Committee, the following procedures apply:
- a) Parties proposing candidates as Members or alternate Members are to request that, together with their names and *curricula vitae*, each candidate provides a Declaration of Interest which should be circulated to the Parties of the region concerned before the meeting of the Conference by the Parties at which the Members will be elected. In that declaration in the standard disclosure form agreed by the Standing Committee, the candidate should disclose any current financial interest that might call into question his or her impartiality, objectivity or independence in carrying out his or her duties as a Member or alternate Member of the committee;
  - b) Following an election, the declaration of interest and the *curriculum vitae* of each Member and alternate Member shall be made available by the Secretariat to the Chair and the Members of the committee concerned, and to the Chair of the Standing Committee; and
  - c) Each Member and acting Member shall, at the beginning of each meeting of the committee using the standard disclosure form agreed by the Standing Committee, declare whether they have any financial interests that he or she considers call into question his or her impartiality, objectivity or independence regarding any subject on the agenda for that meeting of the committee. A conflict of interest may also be identified by any credible source and brought to the attention of the Chair of the committee through the Secretariat. If a Member has such a financial interest, he or she may take part in discussions but not in the decision-making regarding the agenda item in question. If the Member is the subject of the potential conflict of interest, he or she shall not chair the meeting or sub-meeting for the agenda item in question; and

***Regarding exceptional circumstances***

9. DECIDES that:

- a) should a meeting of a Committee be postponed due to circumstances that are either global or at the location of the meeting preventing its organization, the postponed meeting should take place no later than six months after its original date. If no alternative location is found within two months of its original date, the meeting is to be organized fully online (possibly with an adapted agenda and working programme and ensuring an equitable timing for all regions);
- b) should exceptional circumstances prevent Committee Members from several regions from being present in person at a meeting and thereby affecting the quorum, the meeting of that Committee should be held in a hybrid format. The scientific committees’ Members who are unable to travel to the location of the meeting would be connected online. The Standing Committee Members who are unable to travel to the location of the meeting and who do not have a diplomatic representation available at the location of the meeting would be connected online; and



910. REPEALS Resolution Conf. 9.1 (Fort Lauderdale, 1994, as amended at Harare, 1997) – *Establishment of committees* and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP17) on *Establishment of committees*.

## **Annex 1 Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parties**

### ***Purpose***

1. As the senior committee of the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee plays an important role in steering the work and performance of the Convention in the periods between the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

### ***Functions***

2. The Standing Committee, in accordance with instructions from and authority delegated by the Conference of the Parties in its resolutions and decisions, shall:
  - a) undertake the tasks directed to it by the Conference of the Parties, including those related to the handling of general and specific compliance matters;
  - b) provide general policy and general operational direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention;
  - c) provide guidance and advice to the Secretariat on the preparation of agendas and other requirements of meetings, and on any other matters brought to its attention by the Secretariat in the exercise of its function;
  - d) oversee, on behalf of the Parties, the development and execution of the Secretariat's budget as derived from the Trust Fund and other sources, and all aspects of fund raising undertaken by the Secretariat in order to carry out specific functions authorized by the Conference of the Parties, and to oversee expenditures of such fund-raising activities;
  - e) implement and, as needed, review and revise the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Standing Committee and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme;
  - f) provide coordination and advice as required to the other committees established by this Resolution and provide direction to and coordination of its working groups and subcommittees;
  - g) carry out, between one meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next, such interim activities on behalf of the Conference of the Parties as may be necessary, including advising on emerging operational or policy issues identified by Parties or the Secretariat until direction on the matter is provided by the Conference of the Parties;
  - h) draft resolutions or decisions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties;
  - i) report to the Conference of the Parties on the activities it has carried out between meetings of the Conference;
  - j) act as the Bureau at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, until such time as the Bureau of the Conference of Parties for the specific meeting has been constituted; and
  - k) perform any other functions as may be entrusted to it by the Conference of the Parties.

### ***Membership***

3. The membership of the Standing Committee shall be elected by the Conference of the Parties and consist of:
  - a) regional Members that are Parties elected from each of the six major geographic regions consisting of Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, Europe, North America and Oceania, according to the following criteria:
    - i) one representative for regions with up to 15 Parties;
    - ii) two representatives for regions with 16 to 30 Parties;

- iii) three representatives for regions with 31 to 45 Parties; or
  - iv) four representatives for regions with more than 45 Parties;
- b) the Depositary Government; and
  - c) the previous host Party of a meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next host Party of a meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
4. Each regional Member shall also have an alternate regional Member that shall be entitled to represent the region as acting regional Member only in the absence at a meeting of the regional Member for which it is the alternate.
  5. When regions select their regional Members and alternate regional Members, the following is recommended:
    - a) for regions with one regional Member and one alternate regional Member, a rotation in the selection should be considered and, for regions with more than one regional Member and one alternate regional Member, the selection should try to achieve a balanced representation (geopolitical, cultural, ecological);
    - b) the regional candidatures should be officially submitted to the Secretariat by the Management Authority of the interested Parties, at least 120 days before a meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which they are proposed for election. These candidatures should be communicated to all the Parties of the region as soon as possible thereafter by the Secretariat;
    - c) if more candidatures are submitted than there are positions available for any region, a vote should take place in a session of the Parties of that region to be held during the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. To be selected, a candidate should obtain an absolute majority (i.e. more than half the votes) of votes from the duly accredited Parties within the region present at the session; and
    - d) the selection of regional Members and alternate regional Members should take place at the end of the term of office of their predecessors, in accordance with the above-mentioned procedure, through successive votes during a single process.
  6. The terms of office of the regional Members and their alternate regional Members shall commence at the close of the regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which they are elected and shall expire at the close of the second regular meeting thereafter. For regions with one regional Member and one alternate regional Member, the selection should occur at every second meeting. For regions with more than one regional Member and one alternate regional Member, to guarantee some continuity, not all Members and alternate Members should be changed at the same meeting.
  7. The Standing Committee will have a Chair and a Vice-Chair elected by, and from amongst the regional Members. The terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall commence at the supplementary meeting held immediately after the close of the regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which they are elected and should normally expire at the close of the second regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties thereafter.
  8. The membership of the Standing Committee shall be reviewed at every regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

#### ***Duties of the regional Members of the Standing Committee***

9. All committee Members shall endeavour to participate in meetings of the Standing Committee.
10. Regional Members shall maintain a fluid and permanent communication with the Chair, alternate regional Members, Parties of their region and the Secretariat. Before the meetings of the Standing Committee, the regional Members should communicate with the alternate regional Members and Parties of their region regarding the items on the meeting agenda and request their opinions, preferably on matters specifically relevant to the countries or the region. Regional Members should also inform the alternate regional Members and Parties in their region of the results of the meetings.

11. Regional meetings should take place between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, including one specifically to deal with proposals to be submitted to the Conference at its next meeting. The regional Members of the Standing Committee should convene these meetings, subject to the availability of funding.
12. The regional Members, assisted by the alternate regional Members, should establish the agenda of the regional sessions that take place during meetings of the Conference of the Parties. This agenda should consider selection of Members for committees established by the Conference of the Parties, as well as discussion of the main items on the agenda of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in particular those of special interest to the region concerned. The regional Members and alternate regional Members should report in detail on their activities, initiatives and achievements at these regional sessions.
13. During meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, a regional Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party. In exceptional circumstances, when an observer Party directly affected by compliance procedures cannot ensure in-person participation, ~~its remote participation could be considered~~ the observer Party can request the Secretariat to arrange for their remote participation when the agenda item is discussed as an opportunity to present additional information and answer questions from the Committee. However, decision-making by the Committee should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties from making online statements.

### **Meeting Procedures**

134. Subject to confirmation of the necessary financial provisions by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee shall normally hold two regular meetings between regular meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The duration of regular meetings of the Standing Committee should be five days. The Standing Committee shall also hold supplementary meetings immediately before and immediately after meetings of the Conference of the Parties, primarily for the purposes of making arrangements for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties and for organizing its own work, respectively.
145. Only the regional Members or acting regional Members shall have the right to vote except in the case of a tie vote, when the Depositary Government shall have the right to vote to break the tie.
156. Meetings of the Standing Committee will be open to observers, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure. Parties not Members of the Standing Committee shall be entitled to be represented at meetings of the Standing Committee, including at any closed session, by observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote. The Chairs of any other committee established by the Conference of the Parties shall be invited on a regular basis to the meetings of the Standing Committee and may participate in meetings of the Standing Committee as observers without the right to vote. Other observers without the right to vote may also be admitted to participate in meetings of the Standing Committee.
167. If an extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties is held between two regular meetings, the host Party of that meeting shall participate in the work of the Standing Committee on matters related to the organization of the meeting.

### **Financial support**

178. The Conference of the Parties determines the budget of the Secretariat, including the financial resources provided to support meetings of the Standing Committee and associated eligible travel expenses. One person representing each regional Member from a developing country is eligible to seek payment of travel expenses to attend each regular meeting of the Standing Committee.

## Annex 2 Terms of Reference of the Animals and Plants Committees of the Conference of the Parties

### Purpose

1. As the scientific advisory committees of the Conference of the Parties, the Animals and Plants Committees play an important role in providing scientific and technical expertise and advice for the implementation of a broad range of decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties. This is evidenced in the adoption of Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP19)<sup>3</sup> on the *Periodic Review of species included in Appendices I and II*, Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP18)<sup>4</sup> on the *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species* and Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19)<sup>5</sup> on *Standard nomenclature*, for example. Further, Parties have recognized the importance of making available the best technical and scientific advice regarding CITES-listed species from different sources, origins and production systems, as well as the importance of assisting Parties in making non-detriment findings, and supporting their Scientific Authorities in accordance with Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*. Parties have additionally recognized that nomenclature used in the Appendices or for proposals for listing new species in the Appendices will be most useful to the Parties if standardized through adoption of standard nomenclatural references, which also facilitates identification and tracking of specimens of CITES-listed species in trade and harmonises cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements.

### Functions

2. The Animals and Plants Committee shall, in accordance with instructions from and authority delegated by the Conference of the Parties in its resolutions and decisions:
  - a) provide scientific advice and guidance to the Conference of the Parties, the other committees, the Secretariat and Parties on matters relevant to international trade in animal and plant species included in the Appendices;
  - b) undertake the tasks which are directed to them by the Conference of the Parties through relevant resolutions or decisions including:
    - i) review the biological, trade and other relevant information on Appendix-II species, subject to significant levels of trade in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP18) on *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species*;
    - ii) conduct periodic reviews of species included in Appendix I and II in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP19) on *Periodic Reviews of species included in Appendix I and II*;
    - iii) identify and address nomenclatural issues in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on *Standard nomenclature*; and
    - iv) for the Animals Committee review biological, trade and other relevant information regarding animal species subject to significant levels of trade using source codes C, D, F or R in accordance with Resolution Conf. 17.7 (Rev. CoP19)<sup>6</sup> on *Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity*;
  - c) upon request by Parties or the Secretariat, provide advice on the making of non-detriment findings in the context of Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*, and on the management of quotas in the context of Resolution Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP15) on *Management of nationally established export quotas*;
  - d) provide scientific advice on identification issues, and on training and other capacity-building materials, tools and guides to promote their accuracy and availability;

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<sup>3</sup> Corrected by the Secretariat following the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

<sup>4</sup> Corrected by the Secretariat following the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

<sup>5</sup> Corrected by the Secretariat following the 18th and 19th meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

<sup>6</sup> Corrected by the Secretariat following the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

- e) upon request by Parties, provide advice related to scientific, technical and nomenclatural aspects of proposals to amend the Appendices;
  - f) upon request by Parties, provide technical, scientific and nomenclatural advice to Parties concerning the management of trade in specimens of CITES-listed species from different sources, origins and production systems, including captive breeding and artificial propagation;
  - g) draft resolutions or decisions on scientific matters related to animals or plants, for consideration by the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties, with a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding;
  - h) during meetings of the Committee, if so requested by the Management or Scientific Authority of a Party of its region not present at the meeting, the Member may read a short statement presenting concise information on their behalf when a specific agenda item directly affects the absent Party; In exceptional circumstances, when an observer Party directly affected by compliance procedures cannot ensure in-person participation, ~~its remote participation could be considered~~ the observer Party can request the Secretariat to arrange for their remote participation when the agenda item is discussed as an opportunity to present additional information and answer questions from the Committee. However, decision-making by the Committee should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties from making online statements.
  - h<sub>i</sub>) perform any other functions that may be entrusted to them by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee; and
  - ij) report to the Conference of the Parties and, if so requested, to the Standing Committee, on the activities they have carried out or supervised between meetings of the Conference.
3. In giving instructions to the Animals and Plants Committees, the Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee agree to pay due attention to whether the nature of the work is within their mandate as set out in paragraph 2, and whether the committees have the resources, time and expertise to undertake such work.
  4. When making requests in the context of paragraph 2 c), e) and f) above, Parties should be mindful of the limited resources of the committees.

### **Membership**

5. The membership of the Animals and Plants Committee shall be elected by the Conference of the Parties and consist of:
  - a) one person selected by each of the major geographic regions consisting of North America and Oceania based on candidates nominated by Parties from these regions;
  - b) two persons selected by each of the major geographic regions consisting of Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, and Europe based on candidates nominated by Parties from these regions; and
  - c) a specialist on zoological nomenclature (Animals Committee) and a specialist on botanical nomenclature (Plants Committee) selected by their respective Committees based on candidates nominated by Parties, and who are *ex-officio* and non-voting.
6. One person shall also be selected and elected as an alternate Member for each of the Members listed in paragraph 5 above to serve as an acting Member at meetings only in the absence of the Member for whom he/she is the alternate.
7. The membership of the Committees shall be reviewed at every regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The terms of office of the Members shall commence at the close of the regular meeting at which they are elected and shall expire at the close of the second regular meeting thereafter.
8. A Chair and a Vice-Chair shall be elected by the Committee from amongst the regional Members and shall normally serve until the close of the second regular meeting after being elected. In the absence of the Chair at a meeting, the Vice-Chair shall be acting as the Chair.

9. The Chair should be replaced in his/her role of regional Member by his/her alternate. In the absence at a meeting of the alternate in question, the Chair shall serve also as regional Member for his/her region on an *ad hoc* basis.
10. Regarding nomination of candidates, the following guidelines should be implemented:
  - a) Parties proposing candidates as Members or alternate Members should confirm, at the time of nomination, that the candidate will be supported and that they will obtain the necessary means to undertake their activities;
  - b) the names of the proposed candidates, and their *curricula vitae*, should be officially submitted to the Secretariat at least 120 days before the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which the representatives will be elected. These candidatures should be communicated to all the Parties of the region concerned as soon as possible thereafter by the Secretariat. In case of the nomenclature specialists, the names and their *curricula vitae* of the proposed candidates shall be circulated to the relevant committee;
  - c) ideally the candidates should be associated with a Scientific Authority, have adequate knowledge of CITES and receive sufficient institutional support to carry out their duties. This information should also be included in the *curricula vitae*; and
  - d) proposed candidates should be persons; a Party should not be accepted as a proposed candidate even if it plans to identify a person at a later time.
11. Regarding the timing of replacement of regional Members and alternate Members, the procedure should be the same as that described above for the Standing Committee and:
  - a) as alternate Members are alternates of specified Members, they should be elected at the same time as the Members;
  - b) if a region wishes to re-elect a Member or alternate Member, there is nothing to prevent it from doing so; and
  - c) in the event that no nominations have been received before the deadline the incumbent shall remain, if so willing and able, as a representative until a replacement is elected.
12. In the event of a vacancy arising amongst the Members or alternate Members of a committee between regular meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the following procedure shall apply:
  - a) the Secretariat shall notify the vacancy to the committee concerned, the Chair of the Standing Committee and the regional Member(s) of the Standing Committee from the region concerned (which may be all regions in the case of a nomenclature specialist);
  - b) the Secretariat shall immediately issue a Notification to the Parties calling for nominations from Parties in the region or regions concerned for a person to fill the vacancy on an interim basis;
  - c) the Secretariat shall provide the names and *curricula vitae* of the candidates received to the Chair of the Standing Committee and to the Standing Committee's Regional Member(s) from the region concerned or, in the case of a vacancy for a nomenclature specialist, to the committee concerned. They will decide on the person to fill the vacancy on an interim basis until the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
  - d) until a decision is reached in the case of a vacancy of a Member, the provisions of paragraph 6 above apply; and
  - e) At the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the vacancy shall be filled in accordance with paragraph 5 of the present Annex. Nothing shall prevent the person appointed on an interim basis from being later proposed to fill the position.

#### ***Duties of the Members of the Animals and Plants Committees***

13. The duties of the Members elected to the Animals and Plants Committees and their alternates are as follows:

- a) each Member should, to the best of his/her abilities, act as impartially as possible and endeavour to base his/her judgements and opinions upon an objective, scientific assessment of the available evidence;
  - b) each Member should collaborate with his/her alternate regarding the work to be done between the meetings of the committee;
  - c) each Member should maintain regular communication with the Parties in his/her region;
  - d) when a region has more than one representative, the representatives should also agree which Parties each represents. Contact should also be established with non-Parties in the region;
  - e) each Member should increase the awareness of the role and function of the committee, its mandate and the issues of concern to his/her region through mechanisms such as participation in seminars or in related meetings organized by the Secretariat and by other organizations at regional or sub-regional level;
  - f) before the meetings of the committee, the Members should inform and consult the Parties in their regions about the agenda and in particular on matters specifically relevant to the countries of the region;
  - g) the Members should submit a written report, covering the preceding period, to each meeting of the committee;
  - h) the Members should inform the Parties in their regions of the results of each meeting of the committee in particular on matters specifically relevant to the countries of the region;
  - i) the Members must inform the alternates well in advance if they will not attend a forthcoming committee meeting; and
  - j) the Members should provide to their successors all relevant information on the activities in the region.
14. The zoological and botanical nomenclature specialists of the Animals and Plants Committees shall coordinate, monitor and analyse the input needed from specialists in fulfilling their responsibilities as assigned by the Parties.

### ***Meeting Procedures***

15. When back-to-back meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees include a joint session, the duration of the separate committee meetings should be four days, but when not back-to-back, the length of each meeting should be five days, unless the Chair and the Secretariat consider that a shorter meeting may be sufficient.

### ***Financial Support***

16. The Conference of the Parties determines the budget of the Secretariat, including the financial resources provided to support meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees and associated eligible travel expenses. Each Member from a developing country and the nomenclature specialists are eligible to seek payment of travel expenses to attend each regular meeting of the Animals or Plants Committee.
17. Parties and regions are urged to utilize or develop long-term sustainable funding mechanisms to support their representatives in the Committees, including the nomenclature specialists.