

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

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Twenty-sixth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 5 – 9 June 2023

Administrative and financial matters

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat and is provided for information.
2. The Rules of Procedure of the Plants Committee as amended at the 24th meeting (Geneva, July 2018) are annexed to the present document.

## Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Plants Committee

(adopted at AC30, Geneva, July 2018)

### Representation and attendance

#### Rule 1

1. Each Member of the Committee shall be entitled to represent his/her region at meetings of the Committee. The botanical nomenclature specialist appointed by the Conference of the Parties shall also be entitled to participate in meetings of the Committee as a non-voting *ex-officio* Member.
2. If a Member is not present at a meeting or session, his/her Alternate shall be entitled to represent the region as the Acting Member.
3. Only Members and Acting Members chosen by the regions (regional Members) shall have the right to vote.
4. Alternate Members not replacing a Member shall be entitled to be present at meetings of the Committee as observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote.

#### Rule 2

Parties shall be entitled to be represented at meetings of the Committee by observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote. Such Parties shall submit the names of these observers to the Secretariat at least seven days before the meeting through the national Management Authority.

#### Rule 3

The United Nations, its Specialized Agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not a Party to the Convention may also be represented at meetings by observers who shall have the right to participate but not to vote, and shall submit the names of these observers to the Secretariat at least 30 days before the meeting.

#### Rule 4

1. Any body or agency technically qualified in protection, conservation or management of wild fauna and flora which is either:
  - a) an intergovernmental or a national governmental agency or body; or
  - b) an international or national non-governmental agency or body, including a private sector entityand which has informed the Secretariat of the Convention of its desire to be represented at the meeting by observers shall be permitted to be so represented in the meeting of the Committee. Once admitted, these observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote. However, the right of any such observers to participate may be withdrawn at any time if so agreed by the Members present.
2. Bodies and agencies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Rule desiring to be represented at the meeting by observers shall submit the names of these observers to the Secretariat of the Convention at least 30 days before the meeting, and provide:
  - a) evidence of the approval of the State in which it is located in the case of a national non-governmental body or agency; or
  - b) evidence that it has a legal persona and an international character, and a relevant remit and programme of activities in the case of an international non-governmental body or agency, unless it has already been registered by the Secretariat.
3. The Secretariat shall forward each request received and relevant information to the Chair for approval.

## **Officers and the Secretariat**

### Rule 5

1. Immediately following each regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Members of the Committee present shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair from among the Committee. In the absence of a quorum of the Members or their Alternates, the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be conducted by the communication procedure contained in Rule 19, in which case the duties of the Chair shall be discharged by the previous Chair or Vice-Chair *ad interim*.
2. The Chair shall preside at meetings of the Committee, approve the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat and maintain liaison with other CITES committees between meetings of the Committee. He/she shall represent the Committee as required within the limits of the Committee's mandate, and shall carry out such other functions as may be entrusted to him/her by the Committee.
3. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in his/her functions, and shall act on his/her behalf at meetings in the absence of the Chair.

### Rule 6

The Secretariat of the Convention shall service and act as secretary for meetings of the Committee. However, in the event of a closed session, the meeting shall provide for its own rapporteur, if needed.

## **Arrangement of the meeting**

### Rule 7

1. Subject to guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, meetings of the Committee shall be called at the request of the Chair or of a simple majority of the Members.
2. The time and place of meetings shall be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Secretariat and in accordance with any instructions provided by the Conference of the Parties.
3. Notice of meetings shall normally be given by the Secretariat at least 75 days in advance of the meeting. In case of emergency meetings, notice should be given at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.

### Rule 8

1. Regional Members and Acting Members shall be seated by the region they represent. The Nomenclature expert and the Alternate Members shall be seated with the other Members of the Committee.
2. Behind the Members, Acting and Alternate Members and the Nomenclature expert, shall be seated delegations of Parties, as a general rule in accordance with the alphabetical order of the English language names of the Parties they represent. Seating limitations may require that no more than four delegates of any Party be present at plenary sessions.
3. Observers shall be seated in one or more designated areas within the meeting room. Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any Observer body or agency be present at plenary sessions.

### Rule 9

1. English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the meetings of the Committee. No working document may be discussed at a meeting unless it has been made available in accordance with Rule 10 in these languages.
2. Documents arising out of the discussion of the foregoing may be discussed provided that copies have been circulated no later than during the session preceding the session at which they are to be discussed.
3. Interventions made in any of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other two in plenary sessions of the Committee. Interpretation shall normally not be provided in sessions of working groups, unless resources have explicitly been allocated for this by the Conference of the Parties.

## **Documents**

### Rule 10

1. Working documents to be considered at a meeting shall be provided to the Secretariat in one of the working languages and shall normally be provided at least 60 days before the meeting where they are to be discussed, and should not be longer than 12 pages.
2. At least 45 days before each meeting of the Committee, the Secretariat shall to the extent possible place on its website:
  - a) all documents submitted by any Member or Party or submitted by an observer at the request of the Chair in the language in which they have been received; and
  - b) documents prepared by the Secretariat.
3. At least 14 days before each meeting of the Committee, the Secretariat shall, to the extent possible, place on its website in the three working languages all documents mentioned in the present Rule.

### Rule 11

1. Information documents on the protection, conservation or management of wild fauna and flora may be submitted for information purposes only. These will not be translated and cannot be discussed at the meeting. However, such documents may be referred to, if they relate to the existing agenda items, but not discussed. Information documents may be submitted by:
  - a) a Member, an Alternate Member, a Party or any observer representing a State not Party to the Convention or an intergovernmental organization;
  - b) any observer representing any other organization; and
  - c) the Secretariat.
2. No approval is required for the distribution of such materials. However, they shall clearly identify who is presenting them.
3. Information documents from Members, Parties, States not Party to the Convention and observers referred to in paragraph 1 of this Rule may, on request, be made available by the Secretariat. Any paper copies shall be made available in sufficient numbers for distribution. Information documents presented by Members, Parties and by the Secretariat relating to specific items on the agenda shall be numbered by the Secretariat and included in its list of official documents.
4. The CITES logo may not be used on information materials and other material unless explicitly authorized by the CITES Secretariat.
5. Any Member or Party may complain to the Secretariat if an information document that has been distributed is considered offensive.

## **Declaration of conflict of interest**

### Rule 12

Each Member shall, at the beginning of each meeting of the Committee, declare any financial interests that he or she considers calls 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 Committee through the Secretariat. If a Member has such an interest, he or she may take part in discussions at the discretion of the Chair, 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.

## **Rules of order and debate**

### Rule 13

A quorum for a meeting shall consist of six regional Members or Acting Members from at least four regions. No session shall be take place in the absence of a quorum.

### Rule 14

1. The right to speak shall extend to all Members and Acting Members and to observers who have been admitted to the meeting in accordance with Rules 1, 2, 3 or 4, as well as to the Secretariat.
2. The Chair shall, as a general rule, call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak and shall give precedence to the Members and Acting Members of the Committee. Amongst observers, precedence shall be given to representatives of Parties, non-Party States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, in this order. However, the Chair may depart from this general rule and call on speakers in the order that he/she judges appropriate to ensure the timely progress of the debate.
3. Participants shall speak only if called upon by the Chair, who may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
4. A speaker shall not be interrupted except on a point of order which can be made only by Members, Acting and Alternate Members and Parties. He/she may, however, with the permission of the Chair, give way during his/her intervention to allow any other participant to request elucidation on a particular point. Only Members and Acting Members shall have the right to make a point of order to call for a vote.
5. The Chair of another committee or a working group may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusion arrived at by that committee or working group.
6. The Committee may, on a proposal by the Chair or by a Member, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times the Members, Alternate Members or observers may speak on any question. When the debate is subject to such limits, and a speaker has spoken for his/her allotted time, the Chair shall call him/her to order without delay.
7. During the course of a debate the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. He/she may, however, accord the right of reply to any participant if an intervention delivered after he/she has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

### Rule 15

1. The Committee shall as far as possible take decisions by consensus. Whenever the Committee fails to reach consensus, the Chair, or Members or Acting Members from at least two regions may propose that the adoption of the decision be put to a vote.
2. In the case of a vote, the decision of the Committee shall be taken by a simple majority of the Members and Acting Members casting an affirmative or negative vote. In the case of a tie, the motion shall be considered as rejected.

### Rule 16

At the request of the Chair or of any Member or Acting Member, the Committee shall decide by a vote whether the discussion of any particular subject shall be held in closed session; any such vote shall be decided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Rule 15. Parties represented at the meeting by observers shall be entitled to be represented at closed sessions.

## **Working groups**

### Rule 17

1. The Committee may establish such in-session and intersessional working groups as may be necessary for the Committee to carry out its functions. Intersessional working groups shall normally work electronically unless the Committee or the Conference of the Parties have determined otherwise. For each working group,

the Committee shall define the terms of reference, in accordance with relevant Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties and shall determine the composition of the working group, striving to achieve regional balance. The membership of each working group shall be limited to the Members and Parties and to those observer bodies and agencies with expertise on the matter invited by the Chair to join the working group. The Chair shall aim to ensure a fair and balanced representation of Members, Parties and observer bodies and agencies; the number of observer bodies and agencies should normally not exceed the number of Members and Parties.

2. Intersessional working groups should normally conclude their work at the last regular meeting of the Committee preceding a meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Any Member or observer wishing to join or withdraw from an intersessional working group should make the request in writing to the Chair of the Committee through the Secretariat. Unless appointed by the Chair of the Committee, each working group shall elect its own officers, whenever possible from among the Members and Alternate Members of the Committee.
3. Subject to resource constraints, the Secretariat shall provide support and guidance to intersessional working groups.
4. Insofar as they are applicable, these Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of working groups.

### **Executive summary and summary record**

#### Rule 18

1. A concise executive summary of the decisions of the Committee shall be prepared by the Secretariat for endorsement by the Committee before the closure of the meeting. However, the executive summary of the last day of each meeting shall be sent by email to the Members and Acting Members for endorsement after the meeting. The decisions of the Committee shall come into effect upon endorsement of the executive summary in which they are contained.
2. A consolidated summary record of each meeting shall be prepared in the three working languages by the Secretariat and made available on the CITES website within 40 days. This shall be presented in the order of the agenda and comprise three parts for each agenda item: a short statement indicating the main points of the discussion; the text indicating the decision that was made, as it appears in the executive summary; and the text of any statement provided by any Member, Acting Members, Alternate Member or the observer from any Party that was read into the record during the meeting. The participants in the debate shall be also included at the end of each topic. The Secretariat shall take into account the comments received within 20 days of the circulation and – upon approval of the Chair of the Committee – the Secretariat shall make the final summary record available on the website of the Convention.
3. The Secretariat shall make and keep a sound recording of the audio of all plenary sessions of the Committee, and shall make the recordings available to any Party upon request.

### **Procedure for intersessional decision-making**

#### Rule 19

1. Where the urgency of the matter requires a decision to be made between regular meetings of the Committee, a Member or the Secretariat may submit a recommendation to the Chair for a decision by email procedure or using any other electronic procedure which has been agreed by the Committee. With the approval of the Chair, the Secretariat shall communicate any such recommendation to the Members, who shall comment within 40 days of the communication of the recommendation; any comments received by the Secretariat within this time limit shall also be so communicated to the Members.
2. Members may object to a recommendation within 25 days of the date when the results of the consultation on the recommendation were communicated to the Members. If no objection is received by the Secretariat within the deadline, the proposal shall be considered as adopted, and notice of the adoption shall be given to all Members and Parties.
3. If any regional Member objects to a proposal within the applicable time limit, the proposal shall be put to a vote by email or using any electronic procedure which has been agreed to by the Committee. The

recommendation shall be considered as decided if supported by a simple majority of the regional Members casting an affirmative or negative vote within 14 days of the notification of the vote provided that votes are received from at least six regional Members from at least four regions. If insufficient votes are received or no majority is achieved, the recommendation shall be referred to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **Final Provisions**

### Rule 20

In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure currently in effect for meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

### Rule 21

These Rules shall come into force on adoption by the Committee, and shall remain valid for each of its meetings unless amended by decision of the Committee.