

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



Seventy-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee
Panama City (Panama), 13 November 2022

Interpretation and implementation matters

General compliance and enforcement

Compliance matters

Application of Article XIII: Reports of the Secretariat

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Introduction

2. Since SC67 (Johannesburg, September 2016), the application of Article XIII in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has been on the agenda of almost every meeting of the Standing Committee. The Committee has reviewed and assessed progress in the implementation of its recommendations and agreed on new or revised recommendations to the Party. At its 74th meeting (SC74, Lyon, March 2022), the Standing Committee agreed a specific set of recommendations addressed mainly to Lao PDR, largely repeating previous recommendations. In addition, the Committee agreed to recommend to all Parties to suspend trade in live elephants from Lao PDR until the Party is able to demonstrate that specimens to be traded with source code "C" comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev.) on *Specimens of animal species bred in captivity*.
3. At the 74th meeting, participants expressed divergent views on the progress made by Lao PDR, with some Members noting the progress to be an excellent indicator of the commitment of the Party to improve the situation. Others expressed concern about the lack of progress given significant donor funding and capacity-building activities over an extended period of time and noted that many recommendations had been repeatedly highlighted but remained unimplemented.
4. The Committee agreed to review progress made by Lao PDR at its 77th meeting and decide on appropriate compliance measures, including a recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes if progress is considered insufficient. The Committee also invited the Secretariat to submit any relevant progress to the present meeting. In response to this invitation, the Secretariat invited Lao PDR to submit a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations, which was received on 25 September 2022.
5. The Secretary-General undertook a mission to Lao PDR on 2-3 October 2022 to review progress on the implementation of the Article XIII recommendations and to meet with the main actors from the Government of Lao PDR and relevant partners. The Secretary-General met *inter alia* with the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and brought up the recommendations of the Standing Committee and the concerns with the slow progress, in particular with regard to the national legislation for the implementation of the Convention and the recommendations related to captive-breeding facilities. The meeting was good and constructive; the Minister reiterated the commitment to CITES and to the implementation of the Article XIII recommendations.

Technical assistance

6. The Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States of America (US FWS) has recently made funding available to the Secretariat for the support of compliance and enforcement of the Convention in selected Parties in Southeast Asia and Oceania, including Lao PDR. The new project to further progress ongoing work and carry out capacity-building activities is expected to be initiated before the end of the year. The CITES Secretariat has held two online meetings with representatives of the CITES Management Authority (MA) and the CITES Scientific Authority (SA) of Lao PDR to discuss support to strengthen the capacity of the authorities. The new project was also briefly discussed during the recent mission to Lao PDR. In addition, as further described below, other partners are providing support to Lao PDR on combatting illegal trade in wildlife and in wildlife management more generally, including the European Union, Germany, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Conservation Society (WCS) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), to mention a few. The project implemented by the CITES Secretariat and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on *Support to the implementation of the UN-REDD Initiative for Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong with a focus on trade in CITES-listed timber species* has specifically supported Lao PDR on the implementation of the first recommendation regarding non-detriment findings for *Dalbergia* spp. as described below.

Progress on the implementation of the recommendations agreed at SC74

7. The following information is a summary of progress made on the implementation of the recommendations primarily based on the progress report received from the CITES Management Authority of Lao PDR on 25 September 2022. The recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee at its 74th meeting are included in the Annex to the present document for ease of reference.

Regarding the management of exports of Dalbergia spp.

8. In the context of the FAO-CITES Secretariat project to support the implementation of the UN-REDD *Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region with a focus on CITES-listed tree species*¹, FAO signed an agreement with the Lao PDR National Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) to update the knowledge on the distribution of *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* in preparation for the formulation of a non-detriment finding for the species. The FAO-NAFRI agreement was designed in consultation with the Secretariat and tailored to address the ongoing recommendations to Lao PDR on *Dalbergia* spp. under the Article XIII compliance process.
9. At the time of writing, NAFRI has completed the update and mapping of the distribution of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in Central and Southern provinces of the country, as well as a draft verification report of the *status quo* of rosewood species of the genus *Dalbergia*.
10. Based on the preliminary findings of the study by NAFRI, and in line with the precautionary approach, Lao PDR has requested the Secretariat to publish a zero-export quota for wild (source code W), artificially propagated (source code A) and assisted production (source code Y) specimens of *Dalbergia* spp. for the years 2022 and 2023 on the CITES website. These quotas were published on the website on export permits of the CITES Secretariat on 11 October 2022.
11. As a next step, NAFRI is working on the analysis of the necessary legal procedures for the sustainable harvest of rosewood species and for the long-term rosewood conservation and sustainable management strategy.

Regarding national legislation for the implementation of CITES

12. At SC71 (Geneva, August 2019), the Standing Committee requested that a draft decree be submitted to the Secretariat for comments no later than 31 December 2019. The draft decree was submitted to the Secretariat by this deadline and Lao PDR reported to SC74 (Lyon, March 2022) that the adoption and entry into force of the draft decree was imminent and expected to happen in March 2022. For the present meeting, Lao PDR reported that the *draft Decree on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has undergone another round of reviews to consider comments and recommendations received from the Prime Minister's Office. On 22 September 2022, the Department of Forestry organized a*

¹ An overview of the FAO-CITES Secretariat project to support the implementation of the UN-REDD Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region is available in an information document to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

consultation workshop in Vientiane Province with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Department of Forest Inspection and WCS to review the draft Decree based on the received comments and to also ensure that the updated version has addressed initial recommendations from the CITES Secretariat. The consultation will be resumed in Vientiane Capital on 29 September 2022.

13. During the mission of the Secretary-General to Lao PDR on 3 October, the Minister confirmed the commitment to adopt the decree before the present meeting and Lao PDR has taken steps in this regard by resubmitting the draft decree to the Secretariat for comments.
14. The revision of the Wildlife and Aquatic Law (WAL) is also underway with three consultations held in June-July 2022 (Northern, Central and Southern Lao) with a total of 248 political representatives and technical officers. Lao PDR has recently decided that the revised law should be submitted to the National Assembly in 2023 rather than in 2022 as originally envisaged to allow for sufficient time to revise the draft law.

Regarding CITES Authorities

15. Lao PDR reported the participation of the CITES MA and SA in one workshop regarding agarwood, organized by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) in Malaysia in June 2022 within the context of the CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP). The CITES MA has also organized one capacity-building workshop on CITES and relevant laws and regulations in the Champasak Province.

Regarding enforcement

16. With respect to enforcement, Lao PDR reported on the activities undertaken to implement the four recommendations of the Standing Committee [recommendations e) – h)]. From January – September 2022, multi-agency meetings and workshops were organized with the aim of improving the coordination of activities and cooperation among relevant agencies under the Lao Wildlife Enforcement Network (Lao-WEN).
 - a) The Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) signed an agreement on the coordinating mechanism for criminal case prosecution for offenders violating the Law on Forestry and the Law on Wildlife and Aquatic on 5 April 2022.
 - b) The Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) and the Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (the Environmental Police, DCNEC) signed an agreement on 11 March 2022 on the hand-over of the transnational organized wildlife and forest crime mandate to the DOFI as lead agency and to improve coordination on investigations between the Department and the Environmental police.
 - c) The Lao-WEN Standard Operating Procedure (SoP), approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry under Decision No. 1223/MAF on 10 September 2021, provides guidance on cooperation between Lao-WEN agencies in relation to wildlife and forest crimes. On 23-24 February 2022, under the support of the LENS2 project funded by the World Bank, DOFI organized a workshop on the Lao-WEN SOP in Vang Vieng. The Department of Forest Inspection will be organizing in October 2022 a follow-up workshop with relevant agencies under Lao-WEN to work on implementing the Standard Operating Procedure and to improve cooperation.
17. Lao PDR has also continued implementation of capacity-building activities in relation to enforcement in coordination and with support of developmental partners:
 - a) Training on wildlife rescues was organized by DOFI and the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife for forest inspection officers from DOFI and from Vientiane Province in its rescue center on 27-28 January 2022.
 - b) Officers from Lao-WEN agencies participated in a training on investigation of wildlife crime organized by UNODC in Vientiane on 17-18 February 2022. A workshop on investigation techniques was organized for DOFI and Provincial Offices of Forest Inspection (POFI) and Lao WEN on 7-11 March 2022.
 - c) UNODC organized a training-of-trainers workshop on addressing wildlife crime in Vientiane on 14-18 March 2022.

- d) The OSPP Research and Training Institute organized a training workshop with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) on wildlife crime prosecution and cooperation for prosecutors and judges from the southern provinces 5-7 April 2022, and for prosecutors from the northern provinces on 26-28 April 2022. The same Institute organized a training workshop with WCS on strengthening wildlife case handling and cooperation for prosecutors, judges, forest inspection officers, police, and national park management officers from Houaphan, Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang, and Bolikhamxay provinces on 5-7 July 2022.
- e) Law enforcement training on wildlife crime was organized by World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) in Vang Vieng on 9-12 May 2022.
- f) The Institute of Legal Support and Technical Assistance also conducted a series of trainings to strengthen investigations and prosecution among relevant officers from the Lao Customs Department, and from Forest Inspection, Police, and Prosecutors in 2022.
18. With regard to investigations and prosecutions involving organized or transboundary illegal trade activities, Lao PDR reported three new cases of alleged violations of the Wildlife and Aquatic Law and the Penal Code. Two of these were in the current reporting period and concerned i) *Bos gaurus* (Appendix I) in the Nam Et - Phou Loey National Park in Houaphan Province (North-East) in August 2022 and ii) bears in Luang Namtha Province (North) in July 2022. The cases have been submitted to the public prosecutors.
19. The following six cases of violation of the national Wildlife and Aquatic Law have been decided in court over the past years as follows:

Offender	Species involved	Specimens involved	Location and date of court ruling	Penalty
Chinese national, 50 years old	Elephant, rhino, tiger	Ornaments of elephant ivory, teeth and bones; ornaments of bear teeth and claws; Ornaments of tiger teeth and claws; ornaments of rhino horn.	Luang Prabang, 18 March 2021	6 months imprisonment Fine of LAK 5,000,000 (app. USD 300)
Lao national, 35 years old	Elephant, deer	Ivory tusks, deer horn	Savannakhet, 2 September 2021	2 years imprisonment Fine of LAK 3,000,000 (app. USD 185)
Two Chinese nationals, 56 and 30 years old	Elephant, tiger, rhino, pangolin	Ornaments of ivory (20kg), elephant tail (0,05 kg), rhino horn (0.5 kg), tiger teeth and claws (0.14 kg), pangolin scales (0.28 kg), sambar deer horn (3.1 kg) (Note: sambar is not CITES-listed)	Luang Prabang, 18 March 2021 and 9 April 2021	6 months imprisonment Fine of LAK 23,000,000 (app. USD 1,425)
Lao national, 29 years old	Elephant	95 pieces of ivory ornaments (1,3 kg)	Luang Prabang, 10 March 2020	6 months imprisonment Fine of LAK 3,000,000 (app. USD 185)
Two Chinese nationals, 48 and 47 years old	Elephant	Ivory parts (16,235 kg)	Luang Prabang, 10 March 2021	6 months imprisonment Fine of LAK 3,000,000 (app. USD 185)
Lao national, 32 years old	Elephant	Ivory parts (2,7 kg)	Luang Prabang, 22 June 2021	6 months imprisonment Fine of LAK 3,000,000 (app. USD 185)

20. With regard to the recommendation on working with law enforcement agencies from neighboring countries, Lao PDR reported on four activities since January 2022:

- a) On 2-3 June 2022, the Supreme Court of Lao PDR and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests co-hosted a regional conference on Justice for Wildlife in Luang Prabang. Over 100 judges from courts across Lao PDR, officers from Lao PDR Forest Inspection as well as delegations from Cambodia and Viet Nam took part in the conference to share experience and strengthen their coordination.
 - b) Also in June 2022, representatives of the Department of Forestry traveled to Malaysia to meet with the Department of Wildlife National Parks and its National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory to hand-over the tiger samples for DNA analysis. The results of the analysis of the samples will help finalize the audit of the tiger farms and thus contribute to the implementation of recommendation j).
 - c) On 14-15 September 2022, representatives from the provincial wildlife enforcement networks of Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay participated in a cooperation meeting with officers from Chiang Rai provincial enforcement network in Thailand to increase cooperation between the provinces of the two countries. This was a follow-up to a similar cooperation meeting between the two networks, hosted by Lao PDR in Bokeo Province.
 - d) Also on 14-15 September 2022, representatives from the environmental police (DCNEC), the forest inspection and the CITES MA participated in a cross-border training workshop hosted and organized by the Viet Nam Environmental Police in Quang Binh, Viet Nam, to update each other on trends in cross-border trafficking between the two countries and to share case information on trafficking.
21. The implementation of the recommendations of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Toolkit of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) is ongoing and further activities are under discussion between DoFI and UNODC. The revision of the Wildlife and Aquatic Law, which was also a recommendation of the Toolkit, is underway as mentioned above.

Regarding the monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade

22. It would appear that Lao PDR has made limited progress on the recommendations related to wildlife farms. With regard to the effective dissemination and implementation of its Decision 0188/MAF, no activities have been reported.
23. On the finalization of the audit of tigers kept in captivity, Lao PDR reported that *in June 2022, the Department of Forestry handed over the 263 tiger tissue samples, 42 tiger DNA samples, and 7 tiger whisker samples, collected during the audit of the tiger facilities, to the National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory of the Malaysia Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) for DNA extraction and analysis. The samples are currently being processed, with the assistance and support of the Malaysia DWNP with results of the analysis to be provided to the Department of Forestry as soon as completed. The results will hopefully provide information to the management of captive facilities for tigers in Lao PDR, and enforcement in relation to illegalities. The hand-over process was made possible with the support from the Malaysia DWNP, Thai Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, TRACE Forensics Network and WCS.*
24. With regard to the recommended advisory committee or mechanism, Lao PDR reported that this has not been established and that discussions and recommendations on the committee are still on-going. This includes waiting for the results of the DNA analysis that can help inform on management and enforcement plans relating to the tiger captive facilities. In her meeting with the CITES MA of Malaysia on 7 October 2022, the Secretary-General raised the concern that Lao PDR expressed about the delay in receiving the DNA test results. The Malaysia MA said they would take action in this regard. Lao PDR also reported that they are in discussion with UNODC and UNEP under the project SAFE in order to address disease risks and threats from captive facilities. Activities under the project SAFE may also include establishment of a mechanism for the review of management and enforcement in relation to captive facilities, that can assist in the implementation of the recommendation.
25. On the trade in live Asian elephants, the Standing Committee had recommended that all Parties suspend trade in live Asian elephants from Lao PDR until the Party is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Secretariat that specimens to be traded with source code C comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens set out in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev.). The Committee had also recommended that Lao PDR take substantive steps to better manage captive Asian elephant populations *inter alia* by strengthening its system of registration and marking of Asian elephants held in captivity. In response to these two recommendations, Lao PDR reported that, in August 2022, the Department of Forestry (DoF) had initiated activities to monitor and assess elephants held in captivity and nominated government officers to collect the

numbers of domestic elephants in all districts of the Xayyabouly Province (West – border to Thailand) that have exported to foreign countries.

26. On public awareness raising, DoF and DoFI (CITES enforcement focal point) have continued to work with relevant development partners to continue outreach campaign. This has included the installation of two new billboards in Oudumxay and Bokeo warning about the prohibition of trade in prohibited wildlife. A One Health campaign under EU funding on the risks of trade and consumption of wildlife is underway as well. A new wildlife crime reporting hotline has been established supported by the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife and there has been continued engagement with media. A social media campaign is expected to be launched in the next months as well as a series of public service videos – both produced with the support of the “Protection and Sustainable Use of Forest Ecosystems and Biodiversity” project funded by Germany.

Observations and conclusions by the Secretariat

27. The Secretariat has reported on progress primarily based on the information submitted by Lao PDR and the information collected during the Secretary-General's mission from 2-3 October. The fact that Lao PDR responded to the Secretariat's invitation to provide a progress report without a request from the Committee to do so, is positive and an indication of its continued commitment. Lao PDR arranged for the Secretary-General to meet the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry responsible for the implementation of CITES, which is also an important indication of the commitment of the Government of Lao PDR to CITES.
28. However, the Secretariat continues to be concerned by the delays in the implementation of some of the key recommendations, in particular on the adoption of adequate legislation for the implementation of the Convention and the management of the captive-breeding facilities. The Secretariat further notes that given the significant support and assistance provided by the international community in recent years, more significant progress on the compliance and enforcement of CITES in Lao PDR should have been achieved to date. This is particularly the case with regard to the adoption of the decree on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora that was imminent in the beginning of 2022 but has still not been finalized and issued. The present legislation (Wildlife and Aquatic Law) is insufficient to regulate international trade in CITES-listed species and the new Decree as well as the revised wildlife and aquatic law are crucial in regulating trade and ensuring compliance with the Convention.
29. With respect to enforcement, Lao PDR has reported only two seizures since the beginning of the year (see paragraph 18 above). No seizures of specimens of Asian elephants (ivory), rhino, tiger or black bear have been reported and no cases seem to have been forwarded to the Office of the Public Prosecutor. This could be an indication of a reduction in law enforcement efforts in the country and, if that is the case, it is of concern. Furthermore, all the reported court cases were concluded in previous years (2020 and 2021) whereas none have been reported for 2022 (see paragraph 19 and table above). Based on the meetings held with the authorities of Lao PDR and development partners in Vientiane on 3 October, it seems that there might be more seizures than the two reported by Lao PDR and that investigations are ongoing in order to prepare the cases for handling over to prosecution.
30. On the management and monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade, it is positive that the audit of the existing tiger farms is finally going to be completed with the DNA testing and results. However, the Secretariat recalls that in the PM Order 2018/05, the Prime Minister ordered that the establishment of prohibited wildlife farms (Appendix 1) for business purpose should be stopped and that existing farms should be transformed into safari parks or zoos for conservation, tourism and scientific purposes only. The recommended advisory committee or mechanism that was supposed to have assisted with this conversion has yet to be established. It would seem that limited efforts have been made by Lao PDR to implement PM Order 5, Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP18) or Decisions 14.69 and 17.226 in this area. Lao PDR has responded to a questionnaire of the Secretariat in the context of the implementation of Decisions 18.102 and has confirmed that a mission from the Secretariat to visit selected tiger farms in Lao PDR will be welcomed (see document SC75 Doc. 9). At the time of writing, this is expected to take place in January 2023.
31. With respect to the recommendations regarding trade in live elephants, the Secretariat welcomes the initiative of making an inventory of all captive elephants in one province of Lao PDR on the border with Thailand. At present, it would appear that such an initiative should be broadened to other provinces, notably bordering China once borders are opened. Eventually, a register of captive-bred elephants should cover the entire country.
32. On the positive side, the work of the Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) to assist in the preparation of the non-detriment finding for *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* with the support of FAO and the Secretariat is beginning to show results. The zero-export quota for specimens of wild source, artificial

propagation and assisted production for 2022 and 2023 that Lao PDR has asked the Secretariat to publish as a precautionary measure is a reflection of this progress. The Standing Committee could consider lifting the recommendation to suspend trade for *Dalbergia* spp. based on the zero-export quota put in place by Lao PDR for the years 2022 and 2023. However, as the NDF has not been completed and Lao PDR may still consider adopting procedures to allow the sustainable harvest of rosewood, the Standing Committee may wish to maintain the recommendation to suspend trade until the NDF has been completed to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.

33. It is also positive to note that the Secretariat received a revised draft of the decree on the implementation of CITES less than a week after the mission to Lao PDR in early October. Finally, it is positive to note that bilateral and multilateral development partners continue to be available to assist Lao PDR in improving implementation and compliance with CITES; this seems critical for progress in the country. The Secretariat would like to thank all donors and organizations for this support while reiterating paragraph o) of the recommendations agreed by the Standing Committee.

Recommendations

34. The Secretariat recalls that the Standing Committee has agreed to review progress made by Lao PDR at its 77th meeting and decide upon appropriate compliance measures, including a recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes if progress is considered insufficient.
35. In the light of this, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee
 - a) take note of this progress report;
 - b) reiterate the recommendations made at its 74th meeting; and
 - c) urge Lao PDR to finalize and issue the decree in line with the comments made by the Secretariat without delay.
36. The Secretariat further recommends that the Standing Committee reiterate that it will consider a recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes at its 77th meeting if progress on the implementation of the recommendations is considered insufficient.
37. The 77th meeting of the Standing Committee is provisionally scheduled for November 2023. The Secretariat therefore recommends that Lao PDR be requested to submit a report by 31 July 2023 rather than by 28 February 2023 on progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee from September 2022 to June 2023 in order for the Secretariat to report on progress and presents its recommendations to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee.

SC74 summary record

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN LAO PDR

The Committee agreed the following recommendations:

Regarding management of exports of Dalbergia spp.

- a) Parties shall continue to suspend commercial trade in specimens of the genus *Dalbergia* spp., including finished products, such as carvings and furniture from Lao PDR, until Lao PDR makes scientifically based non-detriment findings for trade in the relevant species, including *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*, to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.

Regarding national legislation for the implementation of CITES

Lao PDR shall:

- b) enact and effectively implement the CITES Decree and ensure that it is widely disseminated among all relevant authorities and stakeholders; and
- c) finalize the ongoing revision of the Wildlife and Aquatic Law to ensure that the gaps in the CITES Decree are fully addressed.

Regarding CITES Authorities

- d) Lao PDR shall continue to address the need for strengthening capacity and training of staff of the CITES authorities, in particular the CITES Scientific Authority, and ensure smooth collaboration between all relevant CITES authorities, with the support of the CITES Secretariat.

Regarding law enforcement

Lao PDR shall

- e) continue to progress the implementation of its National Wildlife Crime Response Strategy Plan to tackle illegal trade in wildlife as adopted by Decision MAF No. 1559 (2018);
- f) continue to investigate and prosecute cases involving organized or transboundary illegal trade activities, such as those identified by various international partners; and provide to the Secretariat the results of any investigations conducted by competent national authorities, including on arrests, and the results of any legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators, in the illegal trade report format;
- g) continue to work with the law enforcement agencies from China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, including the context of the Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other relevant networks to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices with the objective of improving the mechanisms for justice and police cooperation on the issues of trade and transiting of illegal acquired wildlife and illegal wildlife tourism; and
- h) implement the recommendations of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Toolkit of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) with the assistance of ICWC and other partners and conduct a follow-up ICWC indicator framework for wildlife and forest crime within 24 months to monitor performance over time and to identify any changes needed in the response.

Regarding monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade

Lao PDR shall

- i) disseminate and effectively implement Ministerial Decision No. 0188/MAF, dated 8 February 2019 on the *Establishment and Management of zoos, wildlife farms, centers for rehabilitation and breeding of wildlife and wild flora farms*;
- j) finalize the full audit of the tigers kept in captivity, combined with a marking scheme and genetic analysis of the animals to establish their origin in collaboration with relevant international organizations to comply with paragraph 1 h) of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species* and Decision 14.69, and taking into account the provisions of Decision 17.226; and
- k) establish an appropriate advisory committee or mechanism with involvement of the CITES Secretariat and other relevant organizations and partners to provide advice on the transformation of commercial tiger farms.

Regarding trade in live Asian elephants

- l) Parties shall suspend all trade in live specimens of Asian elephants from Lao PDR until Lao PDR is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Secretariat that specimens to be traded with source code C comply with the definition of captive-bred specimens set out in [Resolution Conf. 10.16 \(Rev.\) on Specimens of animal species bred in captivity](#);
- m) Lao PDR shall take substantive steps to implement Decision 18.226, in particular by developing strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations, by ensuring that trade is conducted in compliance with Article III for Asian elephants of wild origin and by strengthening its system for registration and marking of Asian elephants held in captivity in Lao PDR.

Regarding awareness raising

- n) Lao PDR should continue to implement outreach campaigns targeted to raise awareness among nationals, traders, visitors and consumers from neighbouring countries about the laws and regulations of the State for the protection of fauna and flora.

Regarding capacity-building and technical assistance

- o) Parties, the CITES Secretariat, international non-governmental organizations and development partners shall make efforts to respond to the requests for capacity-building and technical support expressed by Lao PDR to implement the action plan and aim to coordinate their support to maximize effectiveness and minimize overlap.

The Committee requested Lao PDR to submit a report to the Secretariat by 28 February 2023 on activities undertaken in the period January – December 2022 to implement the recommendations a) to m) in order for the Secretariat to convey this report and its comments and recommendations to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee.

The Committee agreed to review progress made by Lao PDR at its 77th meeting and decide on appropriate compliance measures, including a recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes if progress is considered insufficient.

The Committee invited the Secretariat to submit any relevant progress to the 75th meeting of the Standing Committee.