

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



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

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 CITES Secretariat presented a document describing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of the Convention, including the permanent committees (see document CoP19 Doc. 24). Based on the recommendations of the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions:

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 Procedures 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.*

Guiding principles

- 3. To guide the reflection of the Committee on the risk-assessment approaches to determine the best course of action if intersessional work and meetings are affected by emerging operational issues and on the exceptional circumstances that would warrant the organization of their meetings online or in a hybrid format, the Secretariat proposes the following guiding principles:
 - a) In-person meetings are the default options for all meetings of the CITES permanent committees; these should be streamed live in the three languages of the Convention on the CITES YouTube channels, subject to external funding. While the Conference of the Parties decided not to include funding for the livestreaming of committee meetings in the core budget of the Convention, the Secretariat will endeavour to find the necessary funding for this activity.¹
 - b) Online or hybrid options would be considered only when quorum as defined in the Rules of Procedure of each Committee might not be reached. While maximum participation is always welcome and sought after, the presence or absence of observers, be it Parties or observer organizations, does not prevent Committees from holding their meetings and taking decisions, provided quorum has been reached. The two scientific committees are composed of individuals and not of Parties. While Parties that are Members of the Standing Committee can be represented by different representatives, e.g., from the capital or from the embassy or Permanent Mission, quorum at the scientific committees is based only on the presence of individual Members or their alternates. As such, a hybrid option seems more likely for the Animals and Plants Committees when exceptional circumstances arise that would make international travel impossible (or difficult) to attend in-person meetings.

Exceptional circumstances

- 4. The CITES community, like the rest of the world, has unfortunately encountered several exceptional situations that have prevented the organization of in-person meetings as originally scheduled. The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18) originally scheduled to take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, had to be rescheduled at a later date in Geneva, Switzerland, due to bombings in Colombo a few weeks

¹ *Respondents to the CITES Secretariat's survey to participants in the online meetings of AC31 and PC25 found the livestreaming of the meetings very useful and thought that future CITES meetings (whether face-to-face or online) should be livestreamed.*

before the meeting of the CoP was to take place in Sri Lanka. The meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees and of the Standing Committee were affected by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and in 2021.

5. Based on this experience, the Secretariat has identified two different sets of exceptional circumstances (scenarios) that could prevent the establishment of quorum in person:
 - a) Scenario A: 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; or
 - b) Scenario B: Circumstances that prevent representatives from several regions from being present in-person at the meeting – this would include *inter alia* geographically localized health crisis not affecting the location of the meeting but other regions of the world or disruptions to international travel (for instance cancellation of transatlantic flights due to the eruption of the volcano Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland in 2010).
6. Unless a Party offers to host a meeting of the committees, the meetings of the scientific committees and of the Standing Committee take place in Geneva at the *Centre International de Conférences de Genève* (CICG). The Secretariat secures preliminary dates with the CICG years in advance of the actual meeting (see Annex 1 for the tentative dates until 2027). If a Party offers to host a meeting, the reservations should be cancelled well ahead of the date of the planned meeting, as the CICG has introduced new requirements relating to reservations, increasing the financial risks to the Convention; however, cancelling early also increases the risks of unexpected events occurring after cancellation. The following cancellation fees apply:
 - between 18 months and 12 months prior to the date of the event: 10% of the hire charge;
 - between 12 months and 6 months prior to the date of the event: 25% of the hire charge;
 - Between 6 months and 3 months prior to the date of the event: 50% of the hire charge;
 - Less than 3 months prior to the date of the event: 100% of the hire charge.
7. The no-cost cancellation dates (18 months prior to the date of the meeting) for tentative future meetings are also included in Annex 1. The CICG reservations are however cancelled at no cost in case of force majeure when the Swiss Confederation requires lockdowns, which was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. Enquiries made during 2020 have shown that standard United Nations Special Events insurance and Malicious Acts insurance which apply to events held by the Secretariat are too limited in scope to be useful in the sorts of circumstances that occurred in relation to the planned CoP18 in Sri Lanka and the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. The Secretariat has prepared a risk matrix for convening CITES meetings in the table below. The table indicates several possible risk factors and proposes mitigation measures that could be put in place when the meeting venue is decided. The Secretariat uses the risk matrix in the table below in the planning of the meetings of CITES permanent committees (and the Conference of the Parties), noting that Geneva is the default venue for meetings of the Standing Committee and of the Animals and Plants Committees. The Secretariat only organizes meetings outside Geneva when a Party offers to host the meeting. In those cases, the Secretariat agrees with the host country on the timing of the meetings in order to minimize most of the environmental and political risks outlined below. However, regardless of the reasons causing the exceptional circumstances, the two scenarios remain as (A) when there are matters that arise that are global or make the location of the meeting unsuitable, and (B) when travel to the location of the meeting becomes difficult from several regions/places. Based on these two scenarios, the Secretariat is proposing possible options in paragraphs 9 through 13 below.

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

9. Under scenario A, the reservation of the meeting venue would most likely be cancelled at no cost for the Secretariat due to force majeure circumstances, as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Postponement of the meeting to a later date would be the preferred option in order to organize an in-person meeting. The postponed meeting would either take place in the original location because conditions improved or would take place in an alternate location, if the necessary funds can be identified to do so. This was the option chosen for CoP18 that was organized at a later date in Geneva with funding from *inter alia* Switzerland and the European Union. When the exceptional circumstances preventing quorum outlined above persist, the meeting would then be organized online. This was the option chosen for the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee, the 25th meeting of the Plants Committee and the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.
10. Under scenario B, exceptional circumstances can arise days, if not hours, before the meeting and the only viable mitigation measures for the Animals and Plants Committees would be ensuring that quorum is reached by connecting online the Members/acting Members who are not able to travel to the meeting. For the scientific committees, the Secretariat proposes the organization of a hybrid meeting allowing Members who cannot travel to the meeting to connect remotely to participate in the meeting. The hybrid option would only be offered when both the Member and their alternate of several regions are unable to travel to the location of the meeting due to exceptional circumstances, external to the individual concerned and therefore quorum cannot be reached. Financial reasons are not considered as exceptional circumstances. The Secretariat notes that provisions have been made in the core budget for travel of AC, PC and SC Members (see [Annex 2](#) to Resolution Conf. 19.1 on *Financing and the costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2023-2025*) from developing countries.
11. Under scenario B, the Secretariat recalls that the Standing Committee, is composed of Parties, and not of individuals. If the meeting is held in Geneva or another city with wide diplomatic representation on-site, the Secretariat assumes that representatives from either the Party Member or the Party alternate could travel to the meeting or, alternatively, be represented by officials from the Permanent Mission or Embassy. As an example, despite a travel ban preventing representatives from one Party to travel to Lyon, France, for the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee in 2022, the Member was represented by officials of its embassy. As outlined in the guiding principle 2 above, the Secretariat considers that hybrid participation is less likely to be needed in the case of the Standing Committee. However, if a quorum is not possible for a meeting of the Standing Committee in the case of scenario B, exceptionally a hybrid meeting may need to be considered connecting the Members/alternates needed for quorum.

Timeline for decision-making

12. The Secretariat proposes that, should a meeting of a Committee be postponed under scenario A, 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 by the Conference of the Parties. The 2020-2022 intersessional period has shown that it is difficult for the Committees to deliver on their mandate with only one intersessional meeting. With that target date of the organization of a meeting within six months of its original date, the Secretariat proposes that, if an alternate location or date is not identified within two months after the original date, preparations should be made to organize the meeting online within the six months target date.
13. To summarize, under scenario A with the impossibility to hold meetings at the meeting's location, postponement and possible relocation would be the preferred option. If no viable in-person option is identified within 2 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. Under scenario B that affects quorum, the preferred solution would be a hybrid option for the Animals and Plants Committees, but unlikely to be needed for the Standing Committee. The scientific committees' Members who are unable to travel to the location of the meeting would be connected online. Observers unable to travel to the meeting would be able to follow the live streaming of the meeting.

Scenario	AC/PC	SC
A (circumstances at the location)	Postpone meeting for a maximum of six months. If no alternative location is found within two months, the meeting to be organized fully online (possibly with an adapted agenda and working programme).	
B (circumstances in several regions)	Hybrid option for Members/acting Members only to ensure quorum	Hybrid option to be considered only in exceptional circumstances

How to conduct online and hybrid meetings – application of the Rules of Procedure

14. Based on its experience with SC73, AC31 and PC25 and the feedback collected via the Secretariat's survey to participants in AC31 and PC25, online meetings would be organized based on the following modalities:
- 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.
 - The plenary would break for two to three weeks in order to organize, hold and conclude the work of possible in-session working groups.
15. 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 Procedures 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 amending the *Guidance* in order to allow the interventions 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.”

Additional considerations: expanding online intersessional work

16. 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 is a challenge to implement the Decisions 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
Total²	126	196	352	357	367

17. 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 Procedures of the committees and the establishment of intersessional working groups (SC: 17 working groups; AC and PC: 6 each) that addressed prioritized and complex matters through electronic means.
18. 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

² 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.

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 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 the Committee. For any other issues, the existing intersessional decision-making process would remain unchanged.

19. 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.

Additional considerations: Exploring the option of participation for Parties directly concerned by an agenda item

20. 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.³ 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. However, decision-making by the Committees should not be delayed due to technical problems preventing affected Parties to make online statements.

21. 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 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.*

³ See Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *CITES compliance procedures*

22. As a second 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 second 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 all 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.
23. 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;*

Recommendations of the Plants and Animals Committees

24. The Plants and Animals Committees, at their 26th meeting and at their 32nd meeting, respectively, considered the above guiding principles, risk matrix and scenarios and 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 14 above reflects the scientific committees' request to ensure that the timing of any online or hybrid meeting be equitable for all regions.

25. 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. ;

Recommendations

26. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) consider the guiding principles outlined in paragraph 3 and the exceptional circumstances described in paragraph 5 and suggest other possible guiding principles or exceptional circumstances;
- b) request the Secretariat to continue using the risk matrix for convening CITES meetings contained in the present document;
- c) agree to use the *Guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee in an online or hybrid meeting* 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 described in paragraphs 21, 23 and 25 of the present document and as collated in Annex 3 to the present document; and
- e) consider the proposal for a intersessional decision-making procedure for the organization of intersessional work as outlined in paragraphs 18 and 19, 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 78th meeting.

CITES COMMITTEE AND COP MEETINGS
TENTATIVE DATES FOR 2024-2027

No-cost cancellation date is 18 months before the meeting.

2024:

8-19 July: AC33 and PC27 (cancellation deadline: 8 January 2023)

2025

3-8 February: SC78 (cancellation deadline: 3 August 2023)

CoP Dates and venue TBD

2026:

13-23 July: AC34 and PC28 (cancellation deadline: 13 January 2025)

2-6 November: SC81 (cancellation deadline: 2 May 2025)

2027:

28 June to 9 July: AC35 and PC29 (cancellation deadline: 28 December 2025)

TBC SC82

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.

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 Procedures. 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*

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, 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.

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)⁴ on the *Periodic Review of species included in Appendices I and II*, Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP18)⁵ on the *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species* and Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19)⁶ 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)⁷ 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;

⁴ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

⁵ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

⁶ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 18th and 19th meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

⁷ 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;
 - hi) 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.