

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



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

Strategic matters

LANGUAGE STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.38 and 19.39 on the *Language strategy for the Convention* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

19.38 *The Secretariat shall, subject to extrabudgetary contributions:*

- a) *provide for the translation of all valid Resolutions and Decisions into the three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) drawing on available informal and official translations; and*
- b) *arrange for the translation of the CITES website into these additional languages.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.39 *The Standing Committee shall, at its 77th meeting, consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention in order to provide interpretation in all six languages at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, with emphasis on the interpretation at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, subject to extrabudgetary contributions.*

Implementation of Decision 19.38

3. Thanks to the financial and in-kind support from China and Switzerland, the Secretariat made the CITES website available in all six United Nations languages in early 2024, including all valid Resolutions and Decisions in Chinese, which have been published on the CITES website in May 2024.
4. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is working on the publication on the CITES website of all valid Resolutions in Arabic and Russian, with support from Kuwait and the Russian Federation that have volunteered to check the quality of the Arabic and Russian translations, respectively. By February 2025, all valid Resolutions should be available in all six UN languages on the CITES website.
5. The Secretariat notes that, since the Resolutions were translated by several translators for Arabic and Russian, CITES terminology may need to be made consistent across all Resolutions in the future. The Secretariat is preparing the [CITES glossary](#) in all six UN languages to ensure that CITES terminology, such as for example non-detriment findings, legal acquisition findings or introduction from the sea, is translated consistently throughout all Resolutions. However, some inconsistencies may still exist. The Secretariat encourages Parties to review the Resolutions and to bring any terminology issues to the attention of the Secretariat. The Secretariat further notes that it has not translated in Arabic and Russian the CoP19 Decisions because of limited funding and because these Decisions will be revised, renewed or deleted at CoP20.

6. Looking to the future, the Secretariat proposes the renewal and revision of Decision 19.38 directing the Secretariat to translate, subject to extrabudgetary resources, all new Resolutions and the revisions to valid Resolutions, as well as CoP20 Decisions, in Arabic, Chinese and Russian (see the Annex to the present document). The Secretariat estimates the cost of these translations to be between USD 30,000 and USD 45,000 depending on the number of words to be translated and depending on whether China would be willing and able to provide the Chinese translation.

Implementation of Decision 19.39

7. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 19.39 to ensure that the Standing Committee will consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention. The Secretariat notes that it has not received any pledge to finance the interpretation of the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties into Arabic, Chinese and Russian. As a reminder, in its document to CoP19 (see document [CoP19 Doc. 8](#)), the Secretariat had estimated the cost of providing interpretation into Arabic, Chinese and Russian at CoP meetings at USD 205,900. The Secretariat encourages Parties in a position to do so as well as other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for the interpretation into Arabic, Chinese and Russian of the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
8. The Secretariat notes that this amount does not cover the travel and per diem for the Arabic, Chinese and Russian interpreters that would need to be covered by the host country. The Secretariat further notes that it would need to receive funding at least six months prior to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties in order to ensure the timely recruitment of the interpreters, i.e. by 24 May 2025.
9. The Secretariat recognizes that interpretation into all six United Nations languages would benefit the Convention, facilitate its implementation and allow more experts to be involved in the meetings of the CoP and therefore proposes the renewal of Decision 19.39.

Recommendations

10. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the Secretariat's update on the implementation of Decisions 19.38 and 19.39;
 - b) encourage Parties to bring to the attention of the Secretariat any issues linked to the harmonization of CITES terminology in the Resolutions; and
 - c) agree to submit to the Conference of the Parties the revision of Decisions 19.38 and 19.39 as presented in the Annex to the present document.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON LANGUAGE STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION
(new text is underlined; deleted text is in ~~strike through~~)

Directed to the Secretariat

19.38 (Rev. CoP20) *The Secretariat shall, subject to extrabudgetary contributions,*

- a) ~~provide for the translation of all~~ new and revised valid Resolutions and Decisions into the three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) drawing on available informal and official translations; ~~and~~*
- b) ~~arrange for the translation of the CITES website into these additional languages.~~*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.39 (Rev. CoP20) *The Standing Committee shall, ~~at its 77th meeting,~~ consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention in order to provide interpretation in all six languages at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, with emphasis on the interpretation at the 21st ~~20th~~ meeting of the Conference of the Parties, subject to extrabudgetary contributions.*