

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

CITES and people

CITES GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK

1. This document has been prepared by Bahrain, Denmark, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, the United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in consultation with the Secretariat.*

Background

2. At its 77th meeting, the CITES Standing Committee supported Singapore's efforts in establishing the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN) in implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.5. (Rev. CoP18). As indicated in the [SC77 Summary Record](#), the Standing Committee:
 - a) supported Singapore's efforts in establishing the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN);
 - b) invited interested Parties to join Singapore's effort in the establishment of the CGYN;
 - c) encouraged Parties and observers to nominate youth affiliated with their organization to attend the CITES Youth Leadership Programme in the first half of 2024 and Global Youth Summit from 2025 onwards; and
 - d) requested the Secretariat to support the efforts of Singapore and relevant Parties on the establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network.
3. To implement the recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee, Singapore requested the Secretariat issue [Notification to Parties No. 2024/035](#) to call for collaborating Parties for the establishment of the CGYN, youth nominations for the CITES Youth Leadership Programme 2024, and travel support to build their knowledge on CITES-related issues; develop leadership skills; and forge cross-cultural bonds and partnerships. As founding members, they would co-create the network's vision, mission, and terms of reference and execute the planned activities for one year.
4. The CITES Youth Leadership Programme (CYLP) hosted by Singapore from 22 to 25 April 2024 saw the attendance of 41 youths nominated by CITES Parties (i.e., Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities, and enforcement authorities) and observer organizations, representing 31 countries¹ from all six CITES regions. During the programme, these founding members collectively envisioned future initiatives under the CGYN and collaboratively drafted the network's vision and mission which is included in **Annex 1** of the

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

¹ *The 31 countries represented at the CYLP are: Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, India, Japan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, Philippines, Rwanda, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zambia, and Zimbabwe*

present document. The event was organized by local youths with support from the National Parks Board (NParks) of Singapore, the CITES Secretariat, Mandai Nature, Temasek Foundation, and other donors via the Garden City Fund – an NParks charity and registered Institute of a Public Character (IPC). Generous financial support from the Government of Switzerland supported the participation of the youth delegates, made possible with the administrative support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Malaysia. For more information, please refer to the [CITES-NParks Joint Press Release](#) and the [Post-Event Report](#) prepared by the CGYN.

5. Founding members of the CGYN will organize the inaugural CITES Global Youth Summit from 27 to 31 May 2025. Hosted in Singapore, this summit aims to:
 - a) empower young leaders with the knowledge, skills, and networks on CITES necessary to address wildlife trade challenges;
 - b) foster collaboration among young professionals from diverse backgrounds and learn from experts on emerging issues and understanding various topics discussed at CITES; and
 - c) develop practical solutions to wildlife trade challenges, encourage participants to share their success stories, discuss regional action plans, identify regional leaders, and contribute to addressing illegal wildlife trade.
6. Parties and observers are encouraged to nominate youths affiliated with their organization to attend the Youth Summit through the online form at <https://tinyurl.com/citesyouth2025>. Registration closes on 22 February 2025. More details are available in the [Notification to Parties No. 2024/115](#) and its Annex.
7. Building on the successful CITES Youth Leadership Programme (CYLP) organized in April 2024, the CGYN aims to serve as an important mechanism for global youth engagement efforts relating to CITES and sustainable wildlife trade. To this effect, the CGYN seeks to amplify the youth voices on CITES matters through appropriate processes, with due consideration for inclusivity, gender and geographic balance. The outcome of the Youth Summit and other significant milestones achieved by the CGYN will be reported at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20).
8. In light of these positive developments on youth engagement, Singapore, together with co-proponents of this document, intend to propose amendments to [Resolution Conf. 17.5 \(Rev. CoP18\)](#) on *Youth Engagement* at the next Conference of Parties, in line with inputs from the members of the CGYN and their nominating entities, the Secretariat, and the Standing Committee. An early draft of the proposed amendments is included in **Annex 2** of the present document, for consideration.

Recommendations

9. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) support the efforts of Singapore and participating Parties in the development of the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN);
 - b) encourage Parties and observers to support the efforts and to nominate youths affiliated with their organization to attend the CITES Global Youth Summit in May 2025;
 - c) request the Secretariat to continue to provide advice and assist the development of the CITES Global Youth Network; and
 - d) review and provide feedback on the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18) on *Youth engagement* in **Annex 2** of the present document.

CITES GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK VISION AND MISSION

NB: More information can be found in the [Post-Event Report](#) prepared by the CGYN.

Vision

The CGYN envisions a world where empowered youth from diverse backgrounds lead the way for legal and sustainable wildlife trade, while remaining committed to biodiversity conservation.

Mission

CGYN aims to empower youth by building knowledge and developing capacity to influence policy while collaborating with experts and communities to raise awareness and educate through diverse channels; encouraging the use of innovative solutions.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
RESOLUTION CONF. 17.5 (REV. COP18) ON *YOUTH ENGAGEMENT*

NB: Proposed new text is underlined and proposed deletions are indicated by a ~~strike through~~.

NOTING that the ~~United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth~~ CITES Global Youth Network accepts member nominations up to 30 years of age without prejudice to other definitions by the United Nations and its Member States;

ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth ~~will one day be in decision-making positions~~ represent future decision-makers and that CITES Parties have a responsibility to must engage, educate and empower young these people now to equip them to be stronger leaders in the future;

RECOGNIZING that by welcoming today's youth into species conservation and wildlife trade conversations, our decision makers will add ~~a rich diversity~~ enrich the dialogue with a diverse array of ideas and solutions;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth have come of age in a generation very different than those before it, including great technological advancement, and that the skills held by younger colleagues can be valuable tools to ensure that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable;

WELCOMING ~~the designation of youth engagement as the theme of World Wildlife Day 2017 initiatives undertaken in line with this Resolution, at the national, regional and global level; and~~

FURTHER WELCOMING efforts in the establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN), which aims to build a platform for youths to be equipped with the capacity to understand and manage the intricacies of sustainable wildlife trade; and

FURTHER NOTING that the engagement and empowerment of the youth is high on the agenda of the United Nations and that this objective is being achieved through the youth programmes of various UN system organizations as well as the dedicated UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. INVITES Parties, the Secretariat and observer organizations to acknowledge the CITES Global Youth Network serves as an important mechanism for global youth engagement efforts relating to CITES and sustainable wildlife trade;
2. ENCOURAGES Parties to explore opportunities to engage today's youth in CITES and other wildlife conservation issues, for example through internship or mentoring programmes, and where practical extend these opportunities internationally to youths from different Parties in coordination with the CITES Global Youth Network;
3. INVITES Parties and observer organizations to include youth delegates on official delegations, and provide learning opportunities at CITES meetings, and participate in activities of the CITES Global Youth Network and any other youth-focused side events, when practical;
4. INVITES Parties and the Secretariat to collaborate, when practical, with the CITES Global Youth Network, to facilitate the creation of regional and/or national youth networks of engaged participants/members to implement/achieve the vision of the global network at these levels;
5. ENCOURAGES the Secretariat to liaise with the CoP host country to facilitate the donation of a space within the CoP venue for networking of youth delegates and for youth-focused side events organized by the CITES Global Youth Network, Parties and observer organizations, when possible;
46. INVITES the Secretariat to collaborate with relevant UN organizations and conventions as well as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth engagement initiatives;

57. ENCOURAGES Parties to use the annual World Wildlife Day as an opportunity to incentivise wildlife conservation awareness among younger generations and to provide platforms for them to engage with one another on conservation and sustainable use issues; and
68. ENCOURAGES Parties to establish long term youth engagement and empowerment strategies to ensure the participation of youth in wildlife conservation issues and CITES decision-making processes.