

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



Joint sessions of the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee and
the 23rd meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 22 July 2017

Species specific matters

Maintenance of the Appendices

ANNOTATIONS

1. This document has been submitted by Canada, on behalf of Namibia and Canada as joint leads for the Standing Committee on the issue of Annotations.*

Background

2. At the 17th meeting, (CoP17; Johannesburg, 2016) the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.162 which directs the Standing Committee to re-establish the working group on annotations, in close collaboration with the Animals and Plants Committees.
3. At its 68th meeting (Johannesburg, 2016), the Standing Committee agreed that Canada and Namibia would lead on the issue of Annotations. The Standing Committee agreed that any interested Party or observer could reach out to each lead at any time to express their interest in participating in this working group when it was formed during the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69).
4. After discussion with the Chair of the Standing Committee in February 2017 and consultation between Canada and Namibia, it was agreed that there would be benefit in engaging members of the previous Standing Committee Annotations Working Group in advance of SC69, in order to initiate discussions relating to the working group terms of reference contained in Decision 16.162 (Rev. CoP17), directed to the Standing Committee, in cooperation with the Animals Committee and the Plants Committees.
5. The Parties and observers who have expressed interest in participating in the working group on annotations to be established at SC69 to date are: Australia, Canada, China, France, EU, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, American Herbal Products Association, Center for International Environmental Law, Entente Internationale des Luthiers et des Archetiers, Humane Society International, International Fragrance Association (IFRA), World Conservation Trust (IWMC), League of American Orchestras and Pearle (Live Performance Europe).

Terms of Reference

6. Parties and observers began consultations by email on the terms of reference identified in Decision 16.162 (Rev. CoP17), which are:

* *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.*

- a) *to further consider procedures for crafting annotations and develop recommendations for improving them;*
 - b) *to evaluate and address issues related to the drafting, interpretation and implementation of annotations, and assist Parties in drafting future annotations, drawing on appropriate expertise from within and outside its membership;*
 - c) *to conduct any relevant additional work on evaluating the existing annotations for plant taxa listed in Appendices II and III, with an emphasis on ensuring that such annotations are clear as to the types of specimens to be covered by a listing, can be readily implemented, and focus on those parts and derivatives primarily exported from the range States and those commodities that dominate the trade in and demand for the wild resource;*
 - d) *based on the results of the timber trade study directed to the Secretariat in Decision 15.35 (Rev. CoP16), to review the existing annotations for tree species and, if appropriate, draft amendments to those annotations and prepare clear definitions for the terms used in the annotations in order to facilitate their use and understanding by CITES authorities, enforcement officers, exporters and importers;*
 - e) *in close collaboration with ongoing efforts in the Plants Committee, to continue reviewing the appropriateness and practical implementation of the annotation(s) of the agarwood-producing taxa (*Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp.), taking into consideration the previous work done by the range and consumer States of these species;*
 - f) *to review outstanding implementation challenges resulting from the listings of *Aniba rosaeodora* and *Bulnesia sarmientoi* in the Appendices, particularly concerning trade in extracts, and propose appropriate solutions;*
 - g) *to draft definitions of terms included in annotations, in cases where the terms are not easily understood or where there has been difficulty in implementing the listing as a result of confusion about what commodities are covered, and submit them to the Standing Committee for adoption by the Conference of the Parties and subsequent inclusion in the Interpretation section of the Appendices;*
 - h) *to conduct any work related to annotations directed to it by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing, Animals or Plants Committee; and*
 - i) *to prepare reports on progress made in addressing the issues tasked to it and submit them for consideration at the 69th and 70th meetings of the Standing Committee.*
7. Parties and observers agreed that the identification by the Standing Committee of basic principles for the working group will be an important first step for guiding its actions. It was also accepted that there are general issues concerning annotations that may require, initially, crafting of specific and improved guidance for the Parties concerning consistency of language and format, and identification of deficiencies and of possible means to simplify annotations and ensure effective and efficient implementation.

Animals and plants related annotations

8. In order to examine specific annotations it may be useful to consider dividing some activities of the annotations working group between issues related to plant annotations and those related to animal annotations, understanding that the annotations for the two taxonomic groups differ and require specific actions and approaches

Regional representation and observers from the timber industry

9. Parties and observers also noted concerns raised by the Secretariat in advance of CoP17 regarding a lack of regional diversity in the working group, and that several of the initial priorities the working group would have to address with respect to annotations for timber species were particularly relevant to Asia and Central and South America and the Caribbean. In April 2017, the Chair of the CITES Plants Committee confirmed that ten members or alternate members of the Plants Committee had expressed interest in participating in the Annotations Working Group in order to improve the regional composition and balance of the current membership, and of the Standing Committee Annotations Working Group to be constituted at SC69. The Plants Committee members or alternate members are: From Africa: Ali Mahamane (Niger), Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo (Gabon) and Beatrice Khayota (Kenya); from Asia: Byoung-Yoon Lee (Republic of Korea)

and Joeni Setijo Rahajo (Indonesia); from Central and South America and the Caribbean: Vera Rauber Coradin; from Europe: Paulo José Da Luz Carmo (Portugal) and Ursula Moser (Switzerland); from North America: Isabel Camarena Osorno (Mexico) and from Oceania: Greg Leach (Australia). Inclusion of observers from the timber industry would likewise increase balance in working group discussions.

11. Parties and Observers interested in participating in the Annotations Working Group will continue exchanges and discussion relevant to the terms of reference for the Annotations Working Group identified in Decision 16.162 and will present their initial deliberations to the Standing Committee at its next meeting.

Recommendations

12. The Animals and Plants Committees are invited to take note of this interim report and to offer any comments and guidance regarding the Terms of Reference contained in 16.162 (Rev. CoP17) and listed in paragraph 6 of the present report.