

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

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31st meeting of the Animals Committee, online 31 May 1, 4, 21 and 22 June, and  
25th meeting of the Plants Committee, online, 2-4, 21 and 23 June 2021

GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
IN AN ONLINE MEETING

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat in relation to agenda item 3 of AC31 and item 3 of PC25.

## **Guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Animals and the Plants Committees in an online meeting**

*The Rules of procedure (RoP) of the two scientific committees, as adopted at their meetings in July 2018, are set out in the Annex to document AC31 Doc. 3 and PC25 Doc. 3, respectively. The 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 meeting. As the RoPs of the two committees are identical, the information document is intended to serve both committees.*

*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. The 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and the 25th meeting of the Plants Committee will be held on certain dates from 31 May – 24 June 2021 on the KUDO platform with simultaneous interpretation in the three languages. Technical issues are addressed in the instructions on the use of the platform which have been made available to the participants.*

*This document provides guidance to the Chair and the participants on how to apply those provisions of the RoP where guidance for the online setting 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 will be entitled to participate in the online meeting with a maximum of four connections per Party. A Party may include more observers on their delegation, but they will have to share the four 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.

### **Officers and the Secretariat (Rules 5-6)**

The Chair will preside the online meeting from their remote location. The Vice-Chair will assist the Chair from their remote location as well. 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 KUDO platform.

### **Arrangement of the meeting (Rules 7-9)**

Notice of the meetings of the two Committees has been done in accordance with Rule 7.

Rule 8 on seating arrangements will not apply in an online setting. The screen of the meeting will at all times show the Chair, a representative of the CITES Secretariat and the person who has been given the floor by the Chair of the Committee.

Important: Members logging on to the meeting platform must indicate their first name and last name. Other participants logging on to the meeting platform, must indicate first the 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 9 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 10-11)**

Working documents for the meetings consist of the documents prepared in accordance with Rule 11 in time for the meetings of the two committees in 2020, which were postponed, as well as addenda with updated or additional information prepared for the online meetings in 2021.

Rule 11 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.

## **Declaration of conflict of interest (Rule 12)**

Each Member and acting Member of the two committees must declare any financial interests that he or she considers calls into question his or her impartiality, objectivity or independence regarding any subject on the agenda for that meeting of the Committee. The declaration must be made on the standard form, agreed by the Standing Committee and provided by the Secretariat to the Members and acting Members. The form must be submitted by email to the Secretariat before 31 May 2021.

## **Rules of order and debate (Rules 13-16)**

Rule 13 on quorum shall mean that at least six Members or Acting Members from at least four regions are connected to the session. 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 20 of the RoP allows the Chair to apply the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in matters not covered by the RoPs of the Animals and Plants Committees; 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 8 above will be able to signify their desire to speak using the "Request to Speak" button on the KUDO 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.

A Member or a Party wishing to make a point of order will be able to do so by using the "Point of Order" button on the KUDO Platform. This will allow the Chair to take up the point of order immediately.

The Chairs of the Committees have proposed to limit the time to be allowed to each speaker, indicated to be maximum 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 Committees 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 Members/Acting Members from at least two regions may call for a vote. In case of a vote, regional 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 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.

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 session.

### **Working groups (WGs) (Rule 17)**

The Committees 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 Committees without interpretation in a manner determined by the chair of the WG. 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 18)**

The executive summary of the decisions of the Committee will be prepared by the Secretariat for endorsement by the Committee. A consolidated summary of the sessions of the Committees in the first week will be produced and posted during the break for adoption during the sessions in the fourth week. A consolidated executive summary of the sessions in the fourth week will be circulated for approval as soon as possible after the meeting to the Members/acting Members of the Committees for endorsement. The decisions shall come into effect as soon as the consolidated executive summary has been endorsed by the Committees.

The summary record will be prepared based on paragraph 2 of Rule 18 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. Reference is made to Rule 4 of the RoP of the Animals and Plants Committees 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.

### **Procedure for intersessional decision-making (Rule 19) and Final Provisions (Rules 20-21)**

No further interpretation of these provisions is required for the meeting in an online setting.