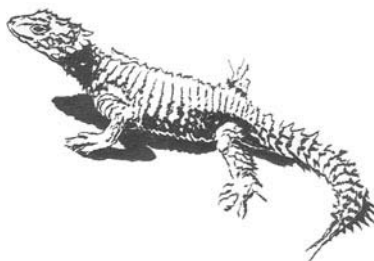


CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Regional reports

IMPROVING REGIONAL COMMUNICATION AND THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 13th meeting (Geneva, August 2003), the Plants Committee established a working group to assess ways to improve regional communication and representation by the members of the Plants Committee. The Chairman of the working group gave a brief presentation of this initiative at the 19th meeting of the Animals Committee (Geneva, August 2004), and has prepared a document for the 14th meeting of the Plants Committee (see the annex to this document). The findings and recommendations of the working group also appear relevant to the operation of the Animals Committee and its members, who may wish to take them into consideration. It is expected that the Chairman of the Plants Committee will attend the 20th meeting of the Animals Committee and may be able to provide further comments.

IMPROVING REGIONAL COMMUNICATION AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

1. This document has been prepared by the Chairman of the Brainstorming Group of the Plants Committee on CITES regional communication.

Regional communication

2. The Conference of the Parties (CoP) forms the ruling body of CITES. Committees are appointed to facilitate the work of the CoP and to carry out work in between meetings of the CoP, committees are appointed (see Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) on the Establishment of Committees). The regional representatives in the committees (Parties in the case of the Standing Committee; persons in the case of the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committees) should maintain a regular communication with the Parties in the region they represent and with the Secretariat.
3. Regular regional communication is essential to the effective operation of the Plants Committee and other committees, in order for it to fulfil its tasks of providing advice and guidance to the CoP and other CITES bodies.
4. A lack of regular regional communication could for instance result in recommendations of the Plants Committee that are not fully supported by the Parties of the region, which may cause complications and delays in decision-making by the CoP. At its 13th meeting (PC13; Geneva, August 2003), the Plants Committee expressed concern over the lack of communication between the regional representatives and the Parties in their region and formed a brainstorming group to develop ideas to improve communication. Several ideas were presented at PC13 (see Annex). Some suggestions were further discussed at a regional European plants meeting (Perugia, November 2003).
5. The Brainstorming Group was requested to continue its work intersessionally and its Chairman was requested to prepare the present document for the 14th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC14) to assist the Plants Committee in tackling the problems encountered.
6. The principal complaints of regional representatives (in and outside meetings) are:
 - a) The lack of time and means to communicate;
 - b) The lack of responses from within the region;
 - c) Not to know exactly what to do and when.
7. The brainstorming group has identified potential solutions to these problems but the practicality and feasibility of these proposals need to be verified. The experience of regional representatives is necessary to decide on a way forward.

Time and means

8. A regional representative should be able and willing to spend a certain amount of time on PC matters, and his or her employer (e.g. an institute) must allow him or her to allocate time for these tasks. If necessary, the relevant government should compensate the employer for an agreed amount of time.
9. A minimum of four hours per week is required.
10. A regional representative should have facilities to work and communicate adequately (including computer, e-mail, telephone) and these should be provided by the employer or the government.

11. Under *Regarding regional representation in the Animals and Plants Committees* of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), it is recommended in paragraph A. a) that:

The proposals for candidates as representatives should be supported by the relevant governments in order to ensure as far as possible that they will obtain the necessary means to undertake their activities;

12. The most radical option would be to delete "as far as possible" in the Resolution and make it a requirement. The Plants Committee needs to consider whether this may be acceptable for the CoP and how this would impact upon the probability of finding candidates from developing countries.

13. The option of external funding could be explored to facilitate the involvement of a qualified candidate from a country that does not have the necessary resources. The role NGOs may play in sharing their facilities and resources for this purpose could be explored.

14. A regional representative could also ask the Plants Committee, and eventually the Secretariat upon request by the Chairman, for assistance in resolving specific problems.

15. Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) further recommends under paragraph A. c) that:

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 curriculum vitae;

16. An alternative would be to develop a standard format for the *curriculum vitae* of candidates, in which clear commitments from the person, the institute and the government would be included to ensure that the candidate can fulfil his tasks adequately.

17. Another or additional approach could be to develop a manual for regional representation with specific sections for the representative, the Parties (the institute, the Management and Scientific Authorities, the government), the Plants Committee and the Secretariat, explaining *inter alia* what means and facilities are required and who should provide these.

Lack of response

18. It is the task of the regional representatives to initiate communication with Parties of the region. Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) already provides some general guidance in that respect. This could be worked out in more detail in the manual referred to in paragraph 17 above. The Plants Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, could also develop an annual schedule for regional representatives, specifying what communication actions are required and when.

19. Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) requires that such contact persons be identified in all of the countries in the region. This requirement needs to be implemented with a deadline for registration of the contact person(s). This may require a specific decision of the Parties. The contact-person, preferably in the Scientific Authority, should be relatively free to communicate. He or she should be allowed to give a provisional or less formal answer, without asking approval of his or her supervisors or the Management Authority. He or she should also provide the regional representatives with relevant information on his or her own initiative.

20. The solution to this problem is more likely to be found by starting the implementation of some recommendations and providing information and training rather than by changing the text of the Resolution.

21. A better understanding of the role and tasks of the regional representatives by Parties would probably increase their response rate. An explanatory brochure, Notification to the Parties or the manual referred to above could facilitate this.

22. The regional representative could set an 'increased communication fortnight', two or three times a year, when all Parties and representatives of a region participate in exchanging information.

What to do and when

23. Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12) describes several duties of the regional representative. The brainstorming group suggested some additional tasks. These should be set out and further detailed in the manual referred to above. The Plants Committee could add an annual schedule for representatives, specifying what communication actions are required and when.
24. The experience of regional representatives and the Secretariat will be required to produce a manual.

Summary

25. Parties should provide the means for their regional representatives to fulfil their tasks:

- a) This should be a recommendation or a requirement stated in the Resolution;
- b) Only individuals that meet all requirements should be able to be candidate; or
- c) Guidance should be provided in a manual.

Parties should inform the Secretariat of these provisions in 2005.

26. Parties must assign a contact person to respond to regional communications, and inform the Secretariat of their details in 2004. The Secretariat shall compile a register of contact persons (for PC) and publish this on the CITES website.
27. The PC, assisted by the Secretariat, should produce a manual to guide regional representatives in 2004.