

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



Twenty-fourth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva, (Switzerland), 20-24 April 2009

Regional reports

OCEANIA

1. This document has been submitted by the regional representative for Oceania (Mr Rod Hay, New Zealand)*.

General information

2. AC Membership: At CoP14 (The Hague, 2007) the region confirmed that Mr Hay would continue his current term as regional representative, with Mr John Aruga (Papua New Guinea) continuing as alternate representative. This term continues until CoP15.
3. Number of Parties in the region: The eight Members in the Region are Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
4. The following 10 countries in Oceania are not Parties to the Convention: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu. The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing in free association with New Zealand, and Tokelau is a self-administering dependency of New Zealand. While New Zealand assumes some responsibility for foreign affairs for these countries this does not render them party to CITES under New Zealand law. In contrast, the French overseas territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, and the Australian, United States and United Kingdom Territories in the region do come under the CITES umbrella through the membership of their parent states.

Communication with Parties in the region since the 23rd meeting of the Animals Committee [AC23 (Geneva, April 2008)]

5. Following the AC23, Mr Hay circulated the draft report of the meeting to the Parties in the region for their information and also circulated a report of the meeting focusing on matters of greatest relevance to the region.
7. Mr Hay circulated the agenda of AC24 to all Management and Scientific Authorities across the region and received briefings on some key issues from Australia and New Zealand with some input on some key issues from other interested groups and NGOs.

* *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.*

8. As regional representative on the Standing Committee, Australia has also continued to communicate on a range of matters relevant to the Animals Committee. Active communication by the Standing Committee representative has assisted the AC representation.
9. There has also been communication with other institutions and NGOs and with the regional representative on the Plants Committee on matters of common interest since AC23.
10. A regional Capacity Building Workshop is scheduled for 22-27 March 2009 in Brisbane. While the focus for this workshop is enforcement, it provides the opportunity for information exchange on scientific issues. A regional CITES meeting is also scheduled in conjunction with the workshop. A summary of relevant outcomes of these meetings will be provided to the AC.

Follow-up on agenda items since AC23

11. The regional representative chaired the AC23 Working Group on Sharks. The intersessional work has been co-ordinated mainly by Parties, with regular communication amongst Working Group members.
12. Following up the Agenda Item considering the Selection of the Solomon Islands population of *Tursiops aduncus* for inclusion in the Review of Significant Trade, the regional representative has communicated with the IUCN organisers of the Apia Cetacean Assessment Workshop and representatives of the Solomon Islands Management Authority, attended the Non-Detriment Workshop in Mexico in November 2008, where the Solomon Islands population of the species was considered as a case study, and drafted document AC24 Doc. 7.6 on the subject for the present meeting.
13. The regional representative co-chaired the Bird Working Group at the Non-Detriment Workshop in Mexico in November 2008.

Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

14. Oceania covers a vast area of mostly tropical regions dominated by the marine environment. Trade risks to wild fauna and flora must be seen in the context of the usual range of environmental threats, including habitat loss, invasive species, domestic over-exploitation and global climate change. Coral bleaching has had a dramatic effect on the reefs in some parts of the region (e.g. in Fiji). Marine resources form a key part of the local economy. Therefore trade issues concerning them are of critical and growing interest to the countries of the region. The relationship between trade and other pressures needs to be kept in mind, but CITES has an important potential role in sustainable use and protection of species in the marine environment of the region.
15. Capacity remains a critical issue for the Parties and non-Parties. There is clear evidence of this issue in the inability of Parties to provide comprehensive feedback even on issues of key importance to them. CITES is normally but a small part of the wide range of environment and conservation responsibilities of a very small number of officials in all small island
16. Scientific expertise is often difficult to obtain when needed, hence the value of building regional networks of expertise which can fulfil some of the technical requirements of CITES, notably those of Scientific Authorities.
17. In general, awareness and activity in support of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are advancing significantly across the region, with increasing locally and externally funded activities.

Activities conducted in the framework of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP14)

18. No specific activities since AC22.

Capacity-building activities

19. The capacity-building workshop scheduled for Brisbane in March 2009 continues this valuable series of gatherings.

20. Work is still needed on the development of a regional directory of technical experts, to complement that already developed by the Plants Committee.

Agenda Items of particular relevance to the Oceanian region

22. The following items are of particular interest to the eight Parties of Oceania:

- a) Review of the use of Source Code R, with specific reference to Tridacnidae giant clams.
- b) Significant trade review
- c) Solomon Islands Dolphins
- d) Conservation and Management of Sharks
- e) Sustainable use and management of sea cucumber fisheries.

Work to be done by the next meeting of the Animals Committee

24. Prepare a Directory of Experts as prepared for the Plants Committee.