

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-22 July 2011

Regional reports

EVALUATION OF THE PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REGIONAL REPORTS

1. This paper is submitted by Vincent Fleming, Regional Representative for Europe*.
2. At each meeting of the Animals Committee, a significant part of the agenda is devoted to regional reports provided by the relevant representatives on the Committee. This agenda item is derived from the requirement in Annex 2 [paragraph f) under 2nd RESOLVES] of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15), which states:

the members should submit a written report, covering the preceding period, to each meeting of the Committee.

3. This requirement is set in the context of a wider list of duties required of members of the Committee and their alternates [2nd RESOLVES in Annex 2 of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15)] as follows:

RESOLVES that the duties of members elected by the regions of the Animals and Plants Committees and their alternates are as follows:

- a) *each member should collaborate with his/her alternate regarding the work to be done between the meetings of the Committee;*
- b) *each member should maintain regular communication with the Parties in his/her region;*
- c) *when a region has more than one representative, the representatives should also agree which Parties each represents. Contact persons should be identified in those countries. Contact should also be established with non-Parties in the region;*
- d) *each member should increase the awareness of the role and function of the Committee, its mandate and the issues of concern to his/her region through mechanisms such as participation in seminars or in related meetings organized by the Secretariat and by other organizations at regional or sub-regional level;*
- e) *before the meetings of the Committee, the members should inform and consult the Parties in their regions about the agenda and in particular on matters specifically relevant to the countries of the region;*
- f) ***the members should submit a written report, covering the preceding period, to each meeting of the Committee;***

* *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.*

- g) *the members should inform the Parties in their regions of the results of each meeting of the Committee;*
 - h) *the members must inform the alternates well in advance if they will not attend a forthcoming Committee meeting; and*
 - i) *the members should provide to their successors all relevant information on the activities in the region.*
3. There is no guidance in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15) or elsewhere about the purpose or required content of these reports. Much of the material that Parties provide in their reports to AC is also duplicated in the regional reports to the Standing Committee and, subsequently, in the biennial reports that Parties are required by the Convention to submit.
 4. The context in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15) in which the reporting requirement is contained (namely the list above of duties of AC representatives) implies that the regional report is meant to be a report of the activities of representatives in their role. However, the content of regional reports varies widely with most reporting on a wide range of CITES activity being undertaken in their region along with the activities of the regional representative themselves. Moreover, the proportion of Parties providing information for the Regional Reports is generally low (Annex 1). With the exception of the 3 Parties in North America region, which achieve 100% contributions to their reports, only a minority of Parties in other regions respond to requests for contributions to the regional reports. Many regional representatives highlight in their reports the difficulty of getting responses from, or being able to contact, Parties in their region. However, in some cases, approaching a Party for information for these reports may be a useful way for the representative to make contact with the Parties in their region and to build regional coordination.
 5. The issue of the structure of regional reports has also recently been raised by the Standing Committee at their 59th meeting (March 2010; SC59 Doc. 23 <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/59/E59-23.pdf>). This issue was addressed in response to a suggestion at the 58th Standing Committee that the agenda item be removed. Standing Committee agreed to retain regional reports on their agenda but asked the Secretariat to produce a template for reports (attached as Annex 2). This template (from SC59 Doc. 23 above) was 'generally supported' at SC59 (<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/59/E59-SumRec.pdf>) and it was agreed to continue to look at ways of reducing the reporting burden on Parties. Concurrently, the Standing Committee also has a working group looking at special reporting requirements (see http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid15/14_37-38.shtml) and how these requirements might be incorporated into the biennial reports.
 6. The Chair of the Plants Committee also informed the author that this issue was discussed during the recent Plants Committee meeting (Geneva, 18-21 April 2011) and the need was recognised to find a standardised method for regional reports and that such a method might be used by the three Committees at the same time with the same deadline. For example, a template might be developed (including questions related to the Animals, Plants and Standing Committee issues) to be completed by Parties online once only during the year.
 7. The purpose of this paper is to stimulate the Animals Committee to consider what information it wants from regional reports and then to provide guidance to regional representatives to enable them to collate the information that is of most value to the Committee. Clearly, if regional representatives are going to spend time and effort in collating information for regional reports, the Committee should be clear about a) what information it wants, b) why it wants it and c) what it intends to do with the information once it is received. If the Committee has no immediate need for information, then we should question why we ask regional representatives and Parties to spend time collating the information especially if they subsequently provide the same information in reports to the Standing Committee and/or biennial reports. Discussion of what information the Animals Committee wishes to have reported to it might also then inform the work of the Standing Committee working group on special reporting.
 8. In most cases, regional reports are simply noted by the Committee, they are rarely subject to any debate yet they occupy a significant proportion of formal plenary time at the meeting (which is itself costly in time). The Committee might want to consider whether reports are formally presented or whether they are simply noted by the Committee unless a regional representative or observer wishes to raise an issue about the report.

9. Options for the provision of information are, perhaps, as follows:
- a) Option 1 – remove the requirement for regional reports. This would require an amendment to be proposed to Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15) and would also remove an opportunity for Parties to scrutinise the actions of their regional representatives.
 - b) Option 2 – reduce the requirement for regional reports to being a report only of the action taken by the regional representatives under their various duties. This would enable Parties to determine how effectively their representative is undertaking the list of duties and also enable the representative to highlight to the Committee and to Parties any difficulties they have encountered. There would not be any requirement for Parties to submit any information to the regional representative.
 - c) Option 3 – as for option 2, but with additional information provided derived from the draft template considered by the Standing Committee in the Annex to SC59 Doc.23 (attached here as Annex 2 and which could be amended to be relevant to the Animals Committee only). This would enable the representative to highlight major developments and issues of regional cooperation in their region relevant to tasks directed to the Animals Committee. A reporting template and guidance could be provided by the Animals Committee; Parties would be required to submit information if the reports were to be meaningful.
 - d) Option 4 – no change. Regional representatives continue to provide reports on a wide range of CITES-related topics as at present without any specific guidance from the Committee.
10. Option 2 seems to define the minimum requirements of a report based on the duties listed in Annex 2 of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP15) and, as such, would represent the least reporting burden on Committee members and Parties.

	Europe		N America		Asia		Africa		Oceania		S & C America	
	Parties	Responses	Parties	Responses	Parties	Responses	Parties	Responses	Parties	Responses	Parties	Responses
AC24	47	17 (36%)	3	3 (100%)	[34]	8 (23%)	[46]	4 (8%)	8	2 (25%)	31	5 (16%)
AC23	45	16 (35%)	3	3 (100%)	[33]	6 (18%)	[46]	3 (6%)	8	2 (25%)	31	4 (13%)
AC22	44	14 (32%)	3	3 (100%)	37	6 (16%)	50	5 (10%)	7	2 (28%)	31	14 (45%)
AC21	44	9 (20%)	3	3 (100%)	37	6 (16%)	50	3 (6%)	7	2 (28%)	30	15 (50%)
AC20	41	8 (19%)	3	3 (100%)	37	1 (3%)	50	0 (0%)	5	2 (40%)	-	-
AC19	41	13 (32%)	3	3 (100%)	?	9 (24%)	50	7 (14%)	5	4 (80%)	-	-

Table 1. Number and percentage of Parties in CITES regions providing information to regional reports submitted to the meetings of the CITES Animals Committee. (note that numbers of Parties in regions were taken from the Animals Committee regional reports and have not been checked against the number of Parties that had ratified the Convention in those regions at the particular time).

Draft template of reports of regional representatives to the Standing Committee

Introduction

A statement about the number of Parties in the region; new Parties; representatives in the Standing Committee.

Overview of major developments

The regional representatives' comments on the most important policy-related developments – if any – of which the Standing Committee should be aware in Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities and law-enforcement authorities of the region.

Activities of the regional representatives

Since regional representatives are supposed to maintain a permanent communication with the Parties of the region, and to discuss matters to be considered by the Standing Committee, they should summarize their activities in this regard. Participation of the representatives in CITES meetings and other relevant international meetings can be included.

Regional cooperation

Cooperative activities within the region should be reported, such as regional meetings, efforts to improve control of cross-border trade, and efforts to deal with excessive or illegal trade in specific species.

Meetings and workshops

A list can be provided of the main CITES-related meetings and workshops held within the region, whether national or international in nature.

Problems faced by the regional representatives

If regional representatives face particular problems in fulfilling their duties, it would be useful to describe these and also to propose solutions.