



ANNEX 1



Photo: Victoria ZENTILLI

OPENING SPEECHES

Given at the opening ceremony of the joint meeting of the
Animals and Plants Committees (7-9 December 2000),
preceding the Plants Committee meeting



**Mrs Jamie Rapport Clark,
USFWS Director**

It is my pleasure to welcome the Animals and Plants Committees to their very first meeting in the United States. We at the Fish and Wildlife Service are delighted to host this gathering at our state-of-the-art National Conservation Training Center. The staff here has worked hard to prepare the center for your arrival. And the Service's International Affairs Program, particularly the Division of Scientific Authority, has worked equally as hard to make this event possible. Please join me in giving them a round of applause.

The National Conservation Training Center is a learning institution not only for those of us in the Fish and Wildlife Service, but also for the entire conservation community here in the U.S. Thanks to your presence, we are now proud to say that our training center also serves the international conservation community. At the Service, we consider this place our home. I hope that during your stay here, you will consider it yours as well.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the CITES treaty. During this first quarter century the convention has become the cornerstone of sustainable trade in plants and wildlife throughout the world. There are now 152 party-nations to CITES. Working together, we have accomplished much. CITES is now the largest international conservation treaty there is, and I believe it is the most effective one, as well. But there remains much more for us to do.

In the coming days, we have a great opportunity to move forward on many issues vital to sustainable trade and to the conservation of biodiversity. Your review of the CITES listing criteria — the first review since the criteria were established in 1994 — is a pivotal part of this effort. The effectiveness of CITES depends first and foremost on making sure we have the right species listed for the right reasons and that those decisions are based on the best available science.

There are other challenges to face, too. We must also find innovative ways to conserve species that are subject to international trade and to better judge whether and where action must be taken to save a species from extinction. Through the use of sound biological principles, we can all work together more effectively to preserve the diversity of life on Earth.

At the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we have a vested interest in your work. Our agency is the part of the U.S. government that strives to protect biodiversity. This is a job that is too big for any one agency — indeed, for any one nation — to take on by itself. After all, as we like to say, wildlife lives without borders. The fate of wide-ranging species lies not with any single nation but rather with many nations. We must work together and share the responsibility. That is what CITES is all about. For the past 25 years, we have met throughout the world to share vital information and to work for a common goal. In the days to come, the CITES family — from committee members, to government representatives, to representatives of non-governmental organizations — will work together once again, this time to make certain that the treaty meets the challenges of the new century. I wish you the best as you move forward and I look forward to seeing the results of your efforts here.



**Mr Rick Lemon,
Director, NCTC**

Thank you Susan. Director Clark, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished delegates and guests, on behalf of the staff here at the National Conservation Training Center, I would like to welcome you to our Center.

The National Conservation Training Center represents our government's commitment to ensuring that the men and women who have dedicated their careers and their lives to the conservation of natural resources, have the skills they need to succeed. We have been open for just three years and in that time over 35,000 professionals have gathered here to learn from one another. They come from all agencies and all levels of government. They come from environmental groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy. And they come from companies such as International Paper and Weyerhaeuser. They gather here for continuing education in the technical aspects of their profession. They gather here to learn management and leadership skills. And they gather here to discuss the policy and natural resource issues of the day and to learn the conflict resolution and consensus building skills they will need to address those challenges.

We are honored to welcome you to our Center as you continue your important work. We wish you a productive meeting and an enjoyable stay with us. If there is anything that we can do to assist you in any way while you are here, please do not hesitate to ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

As you walk through our halls and sit down for your meals you will see many photographs on our walls. These are our conservation ancestors and our heroes. Just as you have your heroes in your country. There are famous faces like Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. But mostly they were common people who had an uncommon passion for conservation.

Their presence inspires us and we honor their memory. More importantly they remind us that what we do today will also be judged by those that follow us - our children and grandchildren. They will judge us on the diversity of life we leave to them.

It is our time now. We have much to do and our time is short.

Good luck with your important efforts. I wish you much success.



**Prof. Dr Margarita Clemente Muñoz,
Chairman of the Plants Committee and representative of Europe**

- ◆ Ms. Director of the US Fish & Wildlife Service
- ◆ Mr. Director of the National Conservation Training Center
- ◆ Mr. Wilem Wijnsteker, CITES Secretary General
- ◆ Dr. Marinus Hoogmoed, Chairman of the Animals Committee
- ◆ Colleagues, Representatives of the Animals and Plants Committees
- ◆ Ladies and Gentlemen, Observers from Party Countries, Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations
- ◆ Staff of the CITES Secretariat
- ◆ Ladies and Gentlemen attending this opening ceremony:

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to address you all on behalf of the Plants Committee at this inaugural ceremony of the second Joint Committee meeting as well as the separate meetings to be held afterwards, and to welcome you.

In the first place, please allow me to express our deepest gratitude to the host country and to the CITES Authorities of the United States of America for their kind and extremely generous invitation to hold our meetings in this idyllic and incomparable setting.

I would like to thank the Director of the NCTC for offering us this marvellous hospitality and the opportunity to come together in a place that is so conducive to peace and deep thought.

Of course I could not fail to mention all those people who have been working frenetically and tirelessly to provide us with this placid, friendly atmosphere surrounding us. Special thanks go to Ken Stansell, Sue Lieberman, and to their respective teams.

Deep appreciation is also due to the CITES Secretariat and its entire staff for their inestimable aid before, during and after our meetings.

Dear friends, it is hard not to reiterate these expressions of gratitude, but I shall try not to repeat the words of my colleague, Dr. Hoogmoed.

I would like to point out that our young Plants Committee is happy to share experiences with the Animals Committee, partly learning and partly teaching what we have inside, after our shorter, though no less fruitful career in CITES.

Plants, the Plants Committee, are those younger brothers and sisters who, precisely due to this circumstance, have been obliged to grow quickly. Our early maturity aroused the enthusiastic interest of the COP, as you will remember from the last conference.

Please allow me now to return for a moment to my European origins and to the cradle of our civilization, Ancient Greece, to explain how I see our role, that of Dr. Hoogmoed and my own, as this meeting unfolds.

Our role should be mayeutic, from the Greek *maieutikós*, which has to do with the process of giving birth: the art of causing something to be born. It is related to obstetrics and gynaecology. Please do not think I have lost my mind, as I will now explain what I mean to say.



This term designates the positive part of the method applied by Socrates, the great Ancient Greek philosopher whose ultimate purpose was to discover truth.

Socrates was a man of profound ethics and austerity. He never made concessions to illegitimate interests, and always started by assuming his own ignorance: "All I know is that I know nothing," was his famous motto.

Socrates is considered to have prepared minds intellectually in an admirable way. This is proven by the number and quality of his disciples, such as Plato, Euclid, Xenophon and Aristotle, who in turn was Theophrastus' master. Theophrastus was the father of Botany for Europeans.

By recognizing one's own ignorance and applying the method known as "mystic," he managed to give birth to ideas. His intention was to use this technique, which we may call "the obstetrics of the intellect" to achieve the progress of rational thought.

Socrates had an intuition for this art, and practiced this technique to lead his partners in discussion to discover the truth and think for themselves. He was known as a deliverer of ideas; the creator of a method of reflection that would induce his listeners to find clear definitions of basic concepts, ethical approaches to problems, and critical analyses of their own beliefs.

The Socratic method was the cherished dream of philosophers such as Cato the Elder and Rousseau or of writers such as Swift, Shakespeare or Bergson.

I believe that in spite of the tremendous distance in time, and especially far below the intellectual level of Socrates and his disciples, we Chairs of this Joint Committee are going to have to try, from our humble positions, to be "deliverers of ideas".

Because of his existential attitude, Socrates was accused of being impious, of corrupting youth, of going against Athenian Democracy and of denying the existence of the gods.... He ended up with a death sentence, which he elegantly served by drinking a glass of hemlock, a potently lethal umbelliferous plant. I hope, dear Marinus, that we do not fall victims to the same fate!

I would like to end my talk with some verses from Leaves of Grass, by the great American poet Walt Whitman, which could well summarize the spirit of our encounter:

*You shall no longer take things at second or third hand,
nor look through the eyes of the dead,
nor feed on the spectres in books,
you shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
you shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.*

Thank you very much for your attention.