

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



Fourteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Windhoek (Namibia), 16-20 February 2004

Technical proposals from the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

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 *curricula 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.

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Thirteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12-15 August 2003

FIRST BRAINSTORMING ENCOUNTER ON CITES REGIONAL COMMUNICATION

Date: Wednesday 13 August, 2003
Venue: Arabesque, President Wilson Hotel, 47 Quai Wilson, Geneva
Time: 7 p.m. – 12 p.m.

Brains:

Chris Schürmann	NetherlandsChair
Robert Bolješič	SloveniaScribe
Anna Práger	Hungary
Tom de Meulenaar	Secretariat
Hesiquio Benitez Diaz	Mexico
Teng Koon Yong	Malaysia
Elly Hamunyela	Namibia
Baoguo Zhai	China
Boris S.P. Kwan	China (HK)

1. Subject

Improve communication between Parties in a region both with each other and with their regional representative(s) in order to optimise their functioning in the Committee(s).

The group agreed on the subject.

2. Rules

The Chair explained the rules of brainstorming (see annex). The group agreed on a freewheeling brainstorm, which started spontaneously during dinner. Ideas were recorded by the scribe.

3. Ideas

Ideas are divided in several groups depending on whom they are directed to:

Directed to Parties

- a) Invite regional representatives (Reps) to meetings of sub-regional groups such as meetings of the SRG (Scientific Review Group) of the EU, of trilateral agreements, of NAFTA, of CCAD-Mesoamerica;
- b) Parties should have a better understanding of the tasks and roles of their representatives and provide adequate information to their Reps;

- c) A "Dummy Manual" both for Reps and for Parties (a simple guide to inform the Parties on their rights and duties i.e. how they can communicate with each other and make advantage of their regional representative) is necessary;
- d) Parties and Reps should make better use of the Permanent Representations in Geneva (in some countries the information received via diplomatic channels is taken more seriously);
- e) Certain fixed and obligatory communication periods (1-2 weeks 2 times a year) should be agreed for Parties to exchange information with their regional representatives (this means that all Parties and Reps should participate);
- f) Parties should inform their Rep about relevant meetings and activities in their country (trainings, publications, etc.);
- g) Parties should share relevant experience (problems and solutions) with each other, so they do not have to reinvent the wheel;
- h) Parties could provide information on needs (projects, etc.);
- i) CITES, Parties and the Secretariat, should give the regional representatives a higher profile (e.g. by publishing their name and picture on CITES Website). It is of particular importance that their function is recognised within their own country, in their own field (university, institute) and by their employers;
- j) Parties should widely advertise vacancies for Reps in their scientific community, in order to obtain more candidates to choose from;
- k) Include the national directory of experts on the CITES Website (like the Cordoba website);
- l) The reports of Parties to the Reps should include progress report and "things to do".

Directed to Regional Representatives (Reps)

- a) Reps should have the necessary communication facilities in order to be able to communicate with their region effectively (preferably e-mail);
- b) Reps should be able to dedicate a certain amount of time for communication and representation of the region;
- c) "Let the alternatives do their jobs" (could be a particularly useful approach in big regions where they could focus more on sub-regions). Alternatives should preferably be as active as Reps and should also provide support to Reps;
- d) Reps should form informal regional subgroups. These should preferably be not larger than 9 countries, in order to be manageable;
- e) Regular communication between the Reps within a region is needed;
- f) Reps should promote contacts between regions;
- g) Reps should use less formal ways to update Parties on what is happening in the region;
- h) Better communication between the Reps of the PC, AC and SC, within a region is necessary. By better communication between Reps of different CITES bodies double work could be avoided;
- i) Reps should forward the information on the activities in their region to the Secretariat right away;
- j) The candidate for Rep status should provide a written statement (beside or within his/her c.v.) by his/her employer that he/she will work part time for CITES (the % of time is to be determined by Parties). Possibilities of time and other compensations should be explored;
- k) Reps should report on their own perspective of the meetings of the Committee (beside the official report by the Secretariat) shortly after the meeting and distribute the report to the Parties in the region for comments;
- l) Parties have to be indicated with their names in the regional report. The more countries are mentioned in the report, the more likely the rest of the countries will contribute, too (the sheep over the dam effect);
- m) Reps should update the directories in certain time intervals.

Directed to the Committee

- a) Minimum requirements for the c.v. should be developed by the relevant committee. The requirements for Regional representatives in this regard should include scientific qualifications, communication-, language- and management skills.
- b) The relevant committee should produce a programme and list of tasks for the Reps.

Directed to the Secretariat

- a) An e-mail group access for regional communication should be provided by the Secretariat;
- b) The Secretariat should place the followings on the CITES Website:

- i) information on regional activities,
 - ii) information on Intersessional Working Groups, containing the members, actions taken, and the level of progress,
 - iii) pictures and c.v.'s of Reps and
 - iv) links on the CITES Website from Reps to Focal Points of their regions;
- c) The Secretariat should seek the assistance of the Permanent Representatives of the various countries in terms of notification and request for reports.

Other ideas

- a) The Regions (or sub regions) should meet daily during the sessions of the Committee.
- b) Socialising meetings should be encouraged by Reps and Parties;
- c) Regional reports should be moved from the beginning of the session of the Committee to the end of the agenda;
- d) Involve NGO's to encourage the communication between the Parties in the region. Reps and Parties should take more advantage of the facilities and the resources of NGO's in their regions. Reps should take initiative in this regard.
- e) The brainstorming approach could be used as a tool in CITES meetings when progress is failing;
- f) Brainstorming groups should preferably consist of an uneven number no more than 9 people (lucky number);
- g) Communication should not be punished, but rewarded;
- h) Every Party should have at least one Person for Open Communication (POC) with complete freedom to communicate uninhibited with other Parties and other POCs;
- i) Communication could be awarded with symbolic awards (CITES miles).

15th August, 2003

Annex: Basic rules of brainstorming

GENERATING IDEAS: BRAINSTORMING

What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming is an idea-generating technique pioneered by Alex Osborn, an advertising executive. A group of people throw out their ideas as they think of them, so that each has the opportunity to build on the ideas of others.

The discipline of brainstorming is maintained by four basic rules. However, the informality of the process generates an atmosphere of freedom. These rules are:

- a) **No Evaluation or comments about other's ideas**
- b) **Encourage Wild Ideas.**
- c) **Hitchhike--build on the Ideas of Others.**
- d) **Strive for Quantity.**

How to Brainstorm

The group leader presents the problem for which ideas are sought. The wording should encourage specific, tangible ideas, not abstract ideas or opinions. The leader makes sure that the members understand the problem, the objective of the brainstorming session, and the process to be followed.

There are three methods of brainstorming.

In general, freewheeling brainstorm

Group members call out their ideas spontaneously.
The scribe records the ideas as they are suggested.

In round-robin brainstorming

The leader or scribe asks each member, in turn, for an idea.
Members may pass on any round.
The session continues until all members have passed during the round.
Ideas are recorded as in free wheeling, or brain-writing

The slip method

This method differs markedly from the other two approaches. The leader asks members to write down their ideas on small slips of paper or index cards.
The ideas are then collected, organized and presented to the group.

Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. Regardless of the approach used, the output of the brainstorming session must be reviewed and evaluated.

The leader or scribe should first refer to each item on the list and make sure its meaning is clear. Then, try to combine any items with the same meaning. Finally, the group can use any one of a number of means - straight voting or dot voting, where each member is given a certain number of small sticky dots to put up next to their choices on the scribed list, are most common.

Source: "The University Challenge: Problem Solving Process", Xerox Corporation 1992.