

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Lima (Peru), 3-8 July 2006

Regional communication

MANUAL FOR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

1. This document has been prepared by Carlos Ibero (Alternate AC Representative for Europe and Chairman of the joint email working group for the Manual for regional representatives), assisted by the Secretariat. The Chairman of the Plants Committee has reviewed the Annex.
2. Decision 13.13, directed to the scientific committees, states the following:

The Plants and Animals Committees shall form a joint email working group comprising two representatives of each Committee and an appointed chairman to develop a manual for regional representatives in 2005 that explains the roles and duties of the representatives, provides practical advice on how to accomplish the mandate, is applicable under different cultural conditions, and contains information for the Management and Scientific Authorities of Parties to explain the role and duties of regional representatives, and the relevant obligations by Parties towards regional representatives. External funding is to be sought for printing of the manual.
3. At their 21st and 15th meetings (AC21 and PC15, Geneva, May 2005) the Animals and Plants Committees established a joint in-session working group to look at this issue. The joint in-session working group presented a progress report [document PC15/AC21 WG3 Doc. 1 (Rev. 1)]. The progress report included proposals on the content and format of the manual as well as a recommendation that the membership of the joint email working group required under Decision 13.13 should be as follows: C. Ibero (Alternate AC Representative for Europe) (Chairman), D. Rivera (PC Representative for Central and South America and the Caribbean), B. Khayota (PC Representative for Africa), M. Pourkazemi (AC Representative for Asia) and M. Jolon Morales (AC Representative for Central and South America and the Caribbean). The progress report was adopted by the Animals and Plants Committees.
4. The Animals and Plants Committees are reminded that under the terms of Decision 13.13 the manual was supposed to be developed in 2005.
5. The text prepared by the joint email working group on the Manual for Regional Representatives is contained in the Annex to this document, in accordance with the provisions of Document PC15/AC21 WG3 Doc. 1 (Rev. 1).
6. The working group recommends that the Animals and Plants Committees adopt the Manual submitted in the Annex, upon completion of the list of links and sources of information, accommodating any changes that may be considered appropriate during the meeting.

7. Regarding the format of the Manual: the first text should constitute the main part of the printed version, and it is also proposed as the basis for the PowerPoint version, to be produced when the Committees approve the text and decide how to create it.

Manual for regional representatives

TEXT PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION BY THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS COMMITTEES

The basics of CITES

What is this manual?

It is intended as a practical tool for regional representatives on the CITES technical committees.

Regional representatives? Technical Committees? CITES?

Let us begin at the beginning.

- **CITES:** Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<http://www.cites.org/eng/index.shtml>
- **Endangered species covered by CITES:** animals: > 5,200 species; plants: > 28,400 species
<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/species.shtml>
- **International trade:** Many species are, or may become, endangered by international trade. Listing them on the CITES Appendices aims to avoid this threat to their survival.

How CITES works

To date, 169 countries (Parties) have joined the Convention.
<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/index.shtml> (map, etc.)

Each country appoints its own CITES Authorities <http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/links.shtml>:

- **Management Authorities** control trade by means of documentation and other instruments.
- **Scientific Authorities** are responsible for the scientific aspects of international trade, which must be sustainable over the long term and not endanger species survival.

Are there other 'governing bodies' in CITES? Yes: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/org.shtml>

- The Conference of the Parties
- The Standing Committee <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/index.shtml>
- The technical committees
- The CITES Secretariat

The Conference of the Parties: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/index.shtml>

This is the general assembly of all the signatory States to CITES (known as 'Parties'), making major decisions at meetings held every two to three years.

The Standing Committee: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/index.shtml>

Ensures that the decisions made by the Conference of the Parties are carried out between meetings.

The CITES Secretariat: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/sec/index.shtml>

Provides assistance to all stakeholders (Parties and other governing bodies) for understanding and implementing the Convention and decisions made by the Conference of the Parties.

The technical committees

These committees were specifically established to take charge of the scientific aspects of international trade regulated by the Convention:

- Plants Committee <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/index.shtml>
- Animals Committee <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/index.shtml>
- Nomenclature Committee <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/NC/index.shtml>

Who belongs to these committees?

The Committees are made up of regional representatives: 10 on the Plants Committee and 10 on the Animals Committee. (There are no regional representatives on the Nomenclature Committee, which has only two members: one for plants and the other for animals). These are the regular committee members.

Each regular member has an alternate. Thus, there are also 10 alternate members of the Plants and Animals Committees.

Regional representatives and CITES Regions

CITES divides the world in six regions:

- **Africa:** 52 Parties, 2 representatives
- **Asia:** 32 Parties, 2 representatives
- **Central and South America and the Caribbean:** 31 Parties, 2 representatives
- **Europe:** 44 Parties, 2 representatives
- **North America:** 3 Parties, 1 representative
- **Oceania:** 7 Parties, 1 representative
- **Total:** 169 Parties, 10 representatives on the Plants Committee and 10 on the Animals Committee

Who can be a representative?

In principle, anyone associated with CITES can, although representatives are usually members of Scientific Authorities or people who work with them.

Individuals (not countries) are elected, chiefly on the merits of their *curriculum vitae* or professional experience.

How does one become a regional representative?

Upon election by the Conference of the Parties, with the support of the person's region.

How does the election process go?

All candidates should be presented well in advance, backed by the CITES Authorities in their countries.

At a regional meeting, the region nominates its representatives – regular members and alternates – from among the candidates. Final ratification and formal election of the regional representatives on both Committees is up to the Conference of the Parties.

The Animals and Plants Committees: http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/AC_PC.shtml

These committees of experts were established at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Ottawa, 1987) to fill gaps in biological and other specialized knowledge regarding species of animals and plants that are (or might become) subject to CITES trade controls. Their role is to provide technical support to decision-making about these species. These two Committees have similar terms of reference, detailed in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13), Annex 2:

<http://www.cites.org/eng/res/11/11-01R13.shtml>

What are their duties?

- undertaking periodic reviews of species, in order to ensure appropriate categorization in the CITES Appendices;
- advising when certain species are subject to unsustainable trade and recommending remedial action (through a process known as the 'Review of Significant Trade');
- drafting resolutions on animal and plant matters for consideration by the Conference of the Parties; and
- performing other functions entrusted to them by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee. http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/AC_PC.shtml

Other functions of the Committees

One of the tasks of the Animals and Plants Committees is the preparation of regional directories for each of the six CITES regions. These directories list the zoologists and botanists who are experts in CITES-listed species in each Party. The regional directories of plant experts are posted on the Secretariat's website: http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/AC_PC.shtml

When do the Committees meet?

The Animals and Plants Committees meet twice between meetings of the Conference of the Parties. They report to the Conference of the Parties at its meetings and, if so requested, provide advice to the Standing Committee between such meetings. The CITES Secretariat offers further information on these meetings at:

- Animals Committee: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/index.shtml>
- Plants Committee: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/index.shtml>

Are all committee members equal?

All Committee members are equal except the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who are elected by the regional members of the committees.

Who are the current regional representatives?

The CITES Secretariat website shows the updated list of the regular and alternate members of both Committees, with their contact details.

- Animals Committee: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/member.shtml>
- Plants Committee: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/member.shtml>

Functions and obligations of scientific committee members

The functions and obligations of the scientific committee members, as well as many aspects regarding the operational and working methods of these committees are detailed in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13). <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/11/11-01R13.shtml>

Any regional representative or candidate for the post should be familiar with this Resolution.

In Annex 2 of this Resolution, the Conference of the Parties:

RESOLVES that the duties of members 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;**

A representative is often overburdened with work. The alternate can provide essential aid so that, between the two of them, they can properly fulfil the duties of representation for which they were elected.

- b) each member should maintain regular communication with the Parties in his/her region;**

The representative needs to know what countries are in his/her region.

<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/index.shtml>

Each country should appoint contact persons for the scientific committees and inform the Secretariat.

The representative can thus establish contact with them and maintain regular communication.

- 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;**

Four of the six CITES regions have two representatives each (plus the two alternates), because there are many countries in the region.

In these cases, it is better to 'divide up' the countries, so that the workload does not become overwhelming and representation stressful. The alternate representatives can help maintain fluid communication among countries.

This communication should also include non-Parties to CITES, since there will inevitably be trade with these countries.

- 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;**

Representatives should take advantage of every occasion to inform countries of their representational activities, and the opportunities this gives them to improve and facilitate their work in CITES.

The Secretariat often organizes seminars and meetings that can be conducive to on-site regional coordination. Representatives should be on the alert for these opportunities and periodically ask the Secretariat.

CITES authorities in each country often also work with other conventions or are in charge of other international obligations. Such activities may provide good occasions for coordinating various issues, including CITES ones.

- 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;*

<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/index.shtml>

and

<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/index.shtml>

Committee meetings are key times for regional coordination and representation. Representatives should face these meetings with special interest and a specific working programme to optimize their representational capacity at the meeting.

They should address their countries early to report on the agenda for the meeting and request opinions and suggestions.

When representatives come to meetings prepared with opinions agreed by consensus or at least discussed with the countries, the meetings are more effective and the implementation of the Convention in the region is strengthened.

- f) *the members should submit a written report, covering the preceding period, to each meeting of the Committee;*

Regional reports to the Committees are symptomatic of the health of CITES scientific aspects in each region. They are indicative of the ability of the scientists concerned to take on the work entrusted to them by the Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee.

Representatives should make an effort to gather the relevant information from their countries on the work assigned to the Committees, and prepare reports showing this activity.

The regional reports are on the agenda of Committee meetings, where the representatives present them.

- g) *the members should inform the Parties in their regions of the results of each meeting of the Committee;*

Informing countries is a key part of regional coordination and representation. At Committee meetings, decisions are made and working responsibilities are adopted, which are important for the countries involved.

Representatives must inform them of the results of these meetings and coordinate collective efforts on work affecting all or part of the region.

- h) *the members must inform the alternates well in advance if they will not attend a forthcoming Committee meeting; and*

Alternate representatives' working capabilities are rarely used to the full. Delegating responsibilities and tasks when the regular member cannot handle them ensures effective performance of the representational work. This is very important when it comes to attending Committee meetings.

- i) *the members should provide to their successors all relevant information on the activities in the region;*

When a member's tasks come to an end, he or she is often succeeded by the former alternate, who is supposedly aware of many aspects of regional representation, but this is not always the case.

The outgoing regional representative should facilitate the transition for the incoming member by providing as much relevant information as possible, and by making any practical recommendations that may arise out of his or her experience in the post.

What other matters may be of interest to regional representatives?

Again, Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13) gives general orientation.
<http://www.cites.org/eng/res/11/11-01R13.shtml>

In addition to the aforementioned activities, the Animals and Plants Committees perform functions where regional coordination and representation are especially important.

Some of these are ongoing over time, and others are not.

Ongoing functions include:

- review of species significantly affected by trade; and
- periodic review of species included in the CITES Appendices.

In the first case, it is of utmost importance that the range States of the species under review know what is involved in the process. They must be aware of the commitments it entails and the consequences it may have on trade and management of the species in the countries concerned.

Regional representatives can play an essential role in achieving a better understanding of this process, while coordinating between the countries and the Secretariat.

Support and needs (especially for new members)

What does a regional representative need to do the job?

A will of iron, persuasiveness, and insistence!

But above all... *support*.

Support... from whom?

Mainly from the representative's own country: from his or her employers, CITES authorities in general, from the institutions bearing this responsibility. In short, from the people who presented the member for election and backed his or her candidacy.

(But also from colleagues and institutions in other countries.)

Specific needs of a regional representative

Regional representation is just another task, of all those that must be carried out in the context of CITES or in other professional fields, so the basic needs are the same as for any other work activity.

What is necessary?

Time: Representatives will have to set aside part of the time they normally spend at work for tasks related to regional coordination and representation. Between 10 and 20 % will most likely suffice to do a good job, but there is a necessary minimum.

Materials: Some tools required for coordination work, especially for communications, are not always at hand: a fax and minimum availability of an Internet connection. (This is not the representative's responsibility.)

Possible travel: Regional coordination and representation will require occasional travel to keep contact 'alive' with those represented. It will also be necessary to attend meetings, seminars, etc., of relevance for the region.

Financial support: All of the above requires financial support, the lack of which can result in greatly reduced representational work. It is essential for representatives' countries to realize this fact.

Who is responsible for all this?

Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13) recommends 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.

What representatives are most expected to contribute is their will, working capacity and dedication to the job. Everything else, as outlined above, is the responsibility of the country that presented and backed its candidate.

If these elements are missing, the representative will not be able to perform his or her duties properly. It is essential for countries, especially those with emerging economies that, as producers, are often the most important countries in CITES trade, to assume the responsibility of decisively supporting their regional representatives.

Sources of information

What else might help regional representatives to perform their duties?

Chiefly information.

Where is this information and how can it be accessed?

At the moment, the CITES Secretariat is certainly the main source of basic information for regional representatives and countries.

The CITES Secretariat website (<http://www.cites.org>) provides a large part of the necessary information in the three working languages of the Convention:

- in English: <http://www.cites.org>
- in French: <http://www.cites.org/fra/index.shtml>
- in Spanish: <http://www.cites.org/esp/index.shtml>

This website is organized in a clear way and is very user-friendly, so it is highly advisable to use it for exploring the operations of the Convention. Furthermore, it contains a wealth of information and links to other interesting sources.

The homepage even has a *Useful links* section!! This section offers references to:

- Other environmental conventions
- CITES Authorities
- United Nations organizations
- Other relevant sites

The latter references include:

- UNEP-WCMC – <http://www.unep-wcmc.org>: Among many other things, databases on CITES species and, above all, trade data handling with free access to information on trade in CITES species (CITES Trade Database)
- TRAFFIC – <http://www.traffic.org>

- CITES Identification Guide (CITES Management Authority of Canada) – http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/enforce/species_e.cfm in English and French
- ICPO-Interpol – The International Criminal Police Organization – <http://www.interpol.int> in Arabic, French, Spanish and English
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union – <http://www.iucn.org>
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – <http://www.biodiv.org/default.shtml>

And many more... (**List to be completed during the meeting**)