

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



Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee  
Tbilisi (Georgia), 19-23 October 2015

Strategic matters

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM  
ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)  
(DECISION 16.15)<sup>1</sup>

1. This document has been prepared by Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico) as Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), in collaboration with the Secretariat.<sup>2</sup>
2. The present document provides an update on the implementation of the set of Decisions on IPBES since their adoption at the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), which read:

<b>Decisions 16.13 to 16.16 on IPBES</b>	
Also available at: <a href="http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/183">http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/183</a>	
<b>16.13</b>	<p><b><i>Directed to the Parties</i></b></p> <p>a) Parties should consider promoting actions to reinforce linkages between IPBES and CITES and to strengthen the science-policy interface at the national and international levels, including through the governing body of IPBES, as appropriate; and</p> <p>b) bearing in mind that IPBES consolidation remains in process, Parties are invited to provide inputs to the Secretariat in order to provide timely responses to IPBES in regard to CITES involvement.</p>
<b>16.14</b>	<p><b><i>Directed to the Standing Committee</i></b></p> <p>At its 64th meeting, the Standing Committee shall establish a Working Group on IPBES, including the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat, to assist its efforts to ensure that:</p> <p>a) there is a two-way relationship between CITES and IPBES in which CITES is a user or beneficiary of IPBES as well as a contributor to IPBES;</p> <p>b) communication between CITES and IPBES for the conveyance of government requests is effective;</p> <p>c) the development of the work programme for IPBES takes into account the needs of national scientific and management authorities to foster the use of applied science for the implementation of CITES, including the making of non-detriment and legal acquisition findings, and related trade decisions; and</p> <p>d) CITES requests and input to intersessional and regular work undertaken by IPBES are</p>

<sup>1</sup> This agenda item is addressed to the Animals and Plants Committees.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

	<p>provided in accordance with relevant timelines, particularly the deadline of 5 May 2013 for requests to and suggestions for the initial IPBES work programme.</p> <p>The intersessional working group shall report to the Standing Committee at its 65th and 66th meetings.</p> <p>Any inputs to IPBES developed by the intersessional working group shall, with the endorsement of the Chair of the Standing Committee after consultation with the Committee, be conveyed to IPBES by the Secretariat on behalf of the Standing Committee.</p> <p>The Standing Committee shall consider at its 66th meeting the need for drafting a resolution which specifically recognizes the relationship between CITES and IPBES.</p> <p>The Standing Committee shall report at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the results of this work.</p>
<b>16.15</b>	<p><b><i>Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees</i></b></p> <p>The Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assist the Standing Committee with the implementation of Decision 16.14;</li> <li>subject to external funds, participate as observers in the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) and thereby reinforce linkages between the MEP and the CITES scientific committees; and</li> <li>report regularly to the Standing Committee on their activities under paragraph a) above.</li> </ol>
<b>16.16</b>	<p><b><i>Directed to the Secretariat</i></b></p> <p>The Secretariat shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>under the policy guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, and in cooperation with the Standing Committee's intersessional Working Group on IPBES, established pursuant to Decision 16.14, continue to track and contribute to the intersessional and regular work of IPBES bodies;</li> <li>subject to external funds, participate as an observer in the governing body of IPBES and thereby reinforce linkages between that body and the governing bodies of CITES;</li> <li>explore with other biodiversity-related conventions possible means for facilitating cooperation between the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) and the IPBES Secretariat, once the latter is established;</li> <li>Seek external funding to support attendance at IPBES meetings by the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees and the Secretariat; and</li> <li>Report regularly to the Standing Committee, as well as at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, on the results of this work.</li> </ol>

## Background

- The Working Group referred to in Decision 16.14 was established at the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC64, Bangkok, 2013), with Mexico (Mr. Hesiquio Benítez) as Chair and with the following composition: a) representatives from Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Ireland, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America; b) the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the Secretariat; and c) representatives from the European Commission, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International.
- The Working Group has focused on promoting and following closely the adoption and development of the "Thematic assessment on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and strengthening capacities and tools", which during the second meeting of the IPBES Plenary (IPBES-2, 9 to 14 December 2013; Antalya, Turkey) was incorporated in the Platform's Programme of Work (2014-2018) under task force 3(b)(i) (Thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration) as deliverable 3(b)(iii).
- Progress in the implementation of Decisions 16.13 to 16.16 since their adoption at CoP16 (2013) up until July 2014 is summarized in the following working documents of joint sessions of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (AC27/PC21, 2-3 May 2014, Veracruz,) and of the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65, 7-11 July 2014, Geneva):
  - AC27/PC21 Doc. 8.1, available at: <http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/E-AC27-PC21-08-01.pdf>; and,

- b) SC65 Doc. 16.5, available at:  
[http://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-16-05\\_0.pdf](http://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-16-05_0.pdf)
6. Among the main outcomes regarding the “sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity (SUB) assessment” from the above mentioned meetings, the following stand out:
- a) The joint AC27/PC21 meeting (Veracruz, May 2014) developed recommendations to guide the nomination of experts by CITES on the development of IPBES deliverable 3(b)(iii) (see para. 9, Annex to document SC65 Doc. 8.1 ); and
- b) On the basis of the AC27/PC21 outcomes, SC65 agreed that the Secretariat should issue a Notification inviting Parties to nominate experts to the assessment as soon as the IPBES Secretariat issued an invitation for said nominations.

#### Updates under the IPBES processes since SC65 (July 2014)

7. 3rd Plenary of the IPBES (12-17 January, 2015; Bonn, Germany): Decisions on the IPBES work programme for 2014-2018 contained in the meeting report for IPBES-3 (see document IPBES/3/18 at <http://www.ipbes.net/plenary/ipbes-3.html#one>) show that the thematic assessment on sustainable use (see part IV, para 4) will start this year with a rapid scoping process. As reflected in a visual graphic that will be posted on the IPBES website, the assessment will be done as a self-standing global, thematic assessment but the issue will also be picked up in the regional/subregional assessments and the global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Before this decision, there was some concern that the sustainable use assessment (which was part of the work programme agreed at IPBES-2) might not be addressed or might be folded into regional assessments as proposed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel/Bureau for reasons of limited human and financial resources. In view of good support for an 'independent' sustainable use assessment from a number of States and the Secretariat, however, a self-standing assessment was maintained.
8. On 5 February 2015, the IPBES Chair issued a call for nominations, for (1) a set of regional and subregional assessments, (2) a thematic assessment of land degradation and (3) the scoping of a global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services. There was no marked reference to the thematic assessment on sustainable use, so neither the Secretariat nor the SC Working Group realized that this was a call for nominations for that assessment. After the nomination deadline of 5 April 2015 had passed, the SC Working Group learned that the call also stated that the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), in consultation with the Bureau, had recommended that: “Scoping for the assessments on invasive alien species” (Deliverable 3bii) and on “sustainable use of biodiversity” (Deliverable 3biii)] be performed by experts also involved in the regional and subregional assessments (Deliverable 2b). Governments and organizations making nominations for regional and subregional assessments should therefore ensure that these nominations include experts on invasive alien species, and on sustainable use of biodiversity (see: [http://www.ipbes.net/images/documents/press/20150205\\_Letter\\_from\\_IPBES\\_Chair\\_Nomination.pdf](http://www.ipbes.net/images/documents/press/20150205_Letter_from_IPBES_Chair_Nomination.pdf)).
9. Following consultations between the Chair of the SC Working Group and the CITES Secretariat, it was decided that the Secretariat should contact the IPBES Secretariat for information on the outcomes of the call for nominations and how the Convention might be able to contribute to scoping of the assessment on sustainable use of biodiversity.
10. There are now 124 member States of IPBES and the current composition of the MEP can be found at <http://www.ipbes.net/index.php/about-ipbes/current-mep-members>.
11. The 4th meeting of the MEP was held in Bonn, Germany in July 2014, during the same week as SC65, so none of the Chairs or Vice-chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees were able to attend even though external funds for such attendance has been provided by the European Union. The Secretariat therefore asked the Chair of the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) whether he would be able to advise whether any issues of particular relevance to CITES were considered. Following the MEP4, the Ramsar STRP Chair provided the Secretariat with a summary of key points relevant to CITES. He noted in particular that there was discussion about coordinating the thematic and regional assessments and that a proposal to this effect would be developed. The thematic assessments would be done as separate end products but would be issued at the same time as the regional assessments. He also noted that CITES was mentioned quite positively in connection with its preparations for the sustainable use assessment.

12. The 5th meeting of the MEP was held in Bonn in April 2015. Once again, none of the Chairs or Vice-chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees were able to attend, noting that attendance could be supported by external funds provided by the European Union. The Chairs therefore asked Dr. Moustafa Fouda (Alternate Regional Representative for Africa on the Animals Committee and MEP member from Africa) to advise them whether any issues of particular relevance to CITES were considered.
13. Expert group discussions under a UNEP project on biodiversity synergies have suggested that the Chairs of Scientific Advisory Bodies (CSAB) could be used more effectively to strengthen cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions in relation to IPBES.
14. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, the Chair of IPBES sent a letter to IPBES member states and observers inviting interested experts, practitioners, decision makers and knowledge holders to register for participation in an e-conference organized by IPBES to review and further develop the initial scoping for: a) the thematic assessment on invasive alien species and their control (Deliverable 3bii); and, b) the thematic assessment on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and strengthening capacities and tools (Deliverable 3biii; SUB assessment). The letter is available at: <http://us8.campaign-archive2.com/?u=5da0fed71c7e4399fb28ab549&id=a238cea7c3>
15. Through Notification to the Parties No. 2015/051, CITES Parties were encouraged to participate in the e-conference, and in particular in the discussions related to the SUB assessment since it responds to a request submitted to IPBES by CITES. The e-conference was held through three sessions during the period from 7-25 September 2015; where some members from the Plants and Animals Committee participated on behalf of CITES to attempt to make sure the resulting draft scoping document reflects the original idea of the SUB assessment as initially posed by CITES.
16. At the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee AC28, the Chair of SC's Working Group on IPBES (Mr. Benitez) presented document AC28 Doc 6.1, which recommended the AC to:
  - Take note of the progress on the implementation of IPBES related Decisions, and encourage Parties to follow the upcoming nominations of experts in particular those related to the Sustainable Use Assessment.
  - In keeping with Decision 16.15, provide additional information, if any, on the activities of the AC Chair in assisting the Standing Committee with the implementation of Decision 16.14; and
  - Consider whether and how the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies (CSAB), when serving as observers to the MEP, should coordinate more closely with each other.

Additionally, the Chair of SC working group on IPBES highlighted that CITES progress regarding non-detriment findings (NDF) should represent the core of the Convention's contribution to IPBES SUB assessment.

The Animals Committee took note of document AC28 Doc. 6.1 and its recommendations. Furthermore, the alternate representative for Europe (Mr. Vincent Fleming) encouraged the AC to participate in the e-conference.

17. On behalf of CITES, members of the Animals and Plants Committee participated in the e-conference. The draft scoping document for the SUB assessment resulting from the e-conference will be submitted for consideration of the 6th meeting of IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (9-11 October, 2015, Bonn), where Ms. Carolina Cáceres (Chair of the Animals Committee) will participate as an observer to CITES.

#### Recommendations to the Plants Committee

18. Taking into consideration the results of the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee, as well as the progress of the SUB assessment within IPBES processes (e-conference and 6th meeting of the MEP), make recommendations to further guide the work of the Standing Committee's working group on IPBES, in venue of the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (January, 2016) noting that this issue will be addressed by the next IPBES plenary in February 2016.