

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

Capacity-building

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT – OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, March 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.29 on *Capacity building* where, in paragraph b), the Secretariat is directed to:
  - b) *collaborate with the Animals and Plants Committees on relevant capacity-building activities, inter alia to improve and expand the Secretariat's training materials on the making of non-detriment findings, including those available through the CITES Virtual College.*
3. The Conference of the Parties also adopted Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16) on *Establishment of Committees*, where in Annex 2 the Animals and Plants Committees are now tasked to:
  - d) *cooperate with the Secretariat on the implementation of its programme of work to assist Scientific Authorities and provide scientific advice on training materials used in capacity building.*
4. Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties, in Resolution Conf. 16.7 on *Non-detriment findings*, directs the Secretariat:
  - a) *to maintain a prominent section for non-detriment findings on the CITES website and to update it regularly with information from the Animals and Plants Committees, Parties and other sources;*
  - b) *to implement a user-friendly mechanism on the CITES website that would allow Parties to easily submit relevant information to be considered for inclusion in the website;*
  - c) *to ensure that this information is accessible in the appropriate sections of the CITES Virtual College; and*
  - d) *to assist in identifying possible funding sources to help Parties implementing capacity-building activities related to the making of non-detriment findings.*
5. In addition, Decision 16.53 on *Non-detriment findings* contains elements that may be considered related or relevant to the above Resolutions and Decisions, where the Secretariat is directed to:

---

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

- a) *invite Parties to submit their experiences and the results from workshops, projects or publications related to the making of non-detriment findings for inclusion in the CITES website; and*
- b) *ensure this information is available in other formats (e.g. CD-ROM) where appropriate.*

6. The Secretariat supported a number of activities under other Decisions that have contributed to the implementation of Decision 16.29 b), including, but not limited to:

- Cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the development of model non-detriment findings (NDF) guidance for trade in queen conch (*Strombus giga*), a regional fisheries management and conservation plan for queen conch, and regional conversions factors (Decision 16.147) (see document AC28 Doc. 19);
- Development of NDF guidance for trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises (*Testudines* spp.) in accordance with Decision 16.109 (see document AC28 Doc. 15);
- Development of NDF guidance for trade in Appendix-II snake species (*Serpentes* spp.) pursuant to Decision 16.102, paragraph a) ii (see document AC28 Doc. 14.1);
- Development of sustainable management plans, data collection and NDF guidance, and provision of support to scientific research for various timber species through the program between CITES and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) implementing CITES listings of tropical tree species;
- Facilitation of information sharing on resources related to shark NDF guidelines and cooperation with regional fisheries management organizations and regional fishery bodies, within the framework of the project on marine species funded by the European Union (EU); and
- Organization of a regional workshop on management of wild and planted agarwood taxa, including identification of implementation support needs such as the making of NDFs (Assam (India), January 2015) [Decision 15.95 (Rev. CoP16)].

7. Additionally, pursuant to Decision 16.29 b), a section has been created in the CITES Virtual College to make available reference and training materials related to the making of NDFs (<https://cites.unia.es/cites/mod/resource/view.php?id=57#NDFs>). Part of the CITES Virtual College was translated into Chinese (November 2014). New content has been added to the NDF section from previous capacity-building activities, and materials submitted by Parties. Significant revisions of the self-paced courses and training materials are planned, but work has not yet started. A small amount of funding is currently available, which may allow for the revision of the online course on NDF and, possibly, other materials. The Secretariat is currently seeking the advice of the working group on capacity building to identify priority materials and lead persons for the review.

8. The Secretariat has also contributed to other capacity-building activities in support of Scientific Authorities. Among the Secretariat's participation in the implementation of various Resolutions and Decisions, some of the key achievements since its last report at the joint session of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (Veracruz, May 2014; document [AC27/PC21 Doc. 9.1](#)) include:

- Provision of capacity-building training for the Scientific Authorities of Brazil and neighbouring countries (Iperó (Brazil), June 2015);
- Support to the International University of Andalusia Master's course on *Management, Access and Conservation of Species in Trade: the International Framework*, where a number of individuals from the Scientific Authorities of developing country Parties were sponsored. Three Secretariat staff participated in the course as lecturers in May and June 2014. Secretariat staff also acted as the thesis director for three students, two of which were from Management and Scientific Authorities of developing countries [see Decision 16.29 f)].
- Pursuant to Resolution Conf. 16.7 as well as Decision 16.53, the Secretariat started overhauling the NDF page<sup>2</sup> of the CITES website to develop an "NDF portal" and an interactive database for Parties to submit and share information and experiences on NDFs. The portal will also provide comprehensive

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/ndf/index.php>

and updated information related to NDFs, such as relevant Resolutions and Decisions, training materials, and events. The working group on capacity-building is reviewing the contents available through the portal and is providing inputs on information that can be added.

9. With regard to Decision 16.29 b) and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16), the Animals and Plants Committees established an intersessional working group on capacity-building at their last joint session (Veracruz, May 2014). The progress of the working group is presented in document AC28 Doc. 7.2, *Report of the joint working group on capacity-building (Decision 16.29)*. The Secretariat thanks the co-chairs and the members of the working group for their contribution so far, and seeks their continued guidance and advice.
10. The working group, in the development of its workplan, agreed that initial tasks should focus largely on improving and expanding the Secretariat's NDF-related capacity-building materials. It also considered whether its guidance should cover a broader area of work to include scientific workshops undertaken by the Secretariat, or even the Secretariat's capacity building activities relating to enforcement, for example. The Animals and Plants Committees may wish to consider the scope of the work under Decision 16.29 b) that the Working Group is mandated to undertake.
11. Some members of the working group also noted that its mandate may overlap with work under the intersessional working group on the review of identification and guidance materials (see document AC28 Doc. 10), and suggested that the two working groups cooperate with each other. The Animals and Plants Committees may also wish to consider how the two working groups may best communicate and collaborate, so as to align their work.
12. Many of the above-mentioned activities have been made possible through the "EU-CITES CoP16 Decisions project," for which the Secretariat is grateful to the European Union for its continued support. The Secretariat notes the need to identify additional funding and in-kind support for the development of new targeted capacity-building activities which could include:
  - a) the continued updating and revision of existing training materials in the CITES Virtual College in compliance with Decision 16.29, including monitoring of uptake and success rate, and adaptations as necessary;
  - b) a review and gap analysis of available capacity-building materials for Scientific Authorities [Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16)] and guidance on making NDFs (Resolution Conf. 16.7) with the aim to update materials as necessary, address deficiencies and develop new materials and guidance as needed;
  - c) promoting and adapting the NDF portal in response to feedback, needs and inputs provided by Parties and stakeholders (Resolution Conf. 16.7) and
  - d) assisting Parties in implementing capacity-building activities related to the making of NDFs (Resolution Conf. 16.7).

#### Recommendations

13. Taking into consideration the results of the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee, the Plants Committee may wish to consider:
  - a) a review of activities listed in paragraph 6 above to better harmonize the work under other Decisions that have contributed to the implementation of Decision 16.29 b); make the products mutually supportive; avoid duplication of work; and, where appropriate, examine how to better coordinate similar activities under different Decisions. In this regard, the Committees may also wish to review the effectiveness of Decisions 16.29 and 16.53 on the basis of the expanded mandate of Resolutions Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16) and Conf. 16.7;
  - b) the scope of work under Decision 16.29 b) in relation to the mandate of the working group on capacity-building;
  - c) how best the working group on capacity building and the working group on the review of identification and guidance materials may communicate, collaborate, and align their work with each other; and

- d) the suggestions for new targeted capacity-building activities, including the funding thereof, outlined in paragraph 12.