

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



Informal discussion of the Standing Committee
13.00-15.00 (Geneva time) 12 January 2021

AIDE-MEMOIRE

1. Short summary from the Secretariat on general activities

The Secretary-General gave an overview of how the Secretariat has been coping with telecommuting and summarized the general activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019). Routine work has continued and a number of studies and projects emanating from CoP18 are moving forward. The Secretariat has been supporting the intersessional working groups of the Standing Committee (SC) and the Secretary-General briefly summarized the status of their work. A detailed summary of the status of the SC working groups can be found in Annex 1 to this aide-mémoire.

There were no interventions.

2. Debrief of the ongoing work of the Finance and Budget Subcommittee (FBSC)

Martin Krebs of Switzerland, as Acting Chair of the Finance and Budget Subcommittee (FBSC), reported on the online meeting of the FBSC held on 15 October 2020 and the conclusions of that meeting and recommendations agreed for presentation to the Standing Committee. The FBSC recommendations were for the Standing Committee to:

- a) take note of the financial report for 2020 as at 30 September for the Core Trust Fund (CTL) and projected savings for the year 2020; and
- b) approve the transfer of resources in the amount of USD 280,700 from 2020 related to AC, PC and SC meetings for possible organization of these meetings during 2021, on a one-time exceptional basis, from the expected 2020 savings under the meeting related components.

These recommendations are currently being considered by the Standing Committee under an intersessional decision-making procedure. If no objections are raised by 24 January, they will be adopted.

Israel requested an update from the Secretariat on the Decisions taken at CoP18 that are pending funding to be fully implemented. The Secretary-General drew the Committee's attention to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/072 of 7 December 2020 on *Status of funding for the implementation of valid Decisions after CoP18* and noted that it will be updated shortly.

3. Summary of the work being undertaken by the Animals and Plants Committees

The Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees updated the Standing Committee on the intersessional activities undertaken by their committees, including a summary of the online briefings they held on 27 November 2020 and 23 November 2020 respectively. They summarized their respective roadmaps for intersessional work 2020–2021. The Committees have established formal working groups and informal discussion groups, noting that the informal discussion groups aim at gathering scientific information to help the Committees' decision-making. Parties and other stakeholders will be kept abreast of the latest developments on the webpages dedicated to the intersessional work of the Animals Committee and of the Plants Committee on the CITES website. The Chairs noted that, for those issues where they need to report to the Standing Committee, they will only be able to do so for a September 2021 Standing Committee meeting.

Israel asked for further information about the informal discussion groups, highlighting the need for these groups and their work to be transparent. Both AC and PC Chairs reasserted their commitment to fully transparent decision-making processes in compliance with the Committees' Rules of Procedure. They agreed that

transparency was paramount. These informal discussion groups bring together stakeholders with a relevant expertise to exchange views and initiate discussions.

4. Information regarding possible future recommendations to be submitted for future decision by the Committee under Rule 20 of the SC Rules of procedure

- **Recommendation to exceptionally allow Guinea to authorize the export of a pre-Convention stock of *Pterocarpus erinaceus***

The Secretary-General summarized the substance of a recommendation for an intersessional decision of the Standing Committee, the procedure for which was launched shortly before the online discussion. As outlined in Notification to the Parties No. 2021/004 of 12 January 2021, the Secretariat recommended that the Standing Committee exceptionally allow Guinea to authorize the export and import of the stock of pre-Convention specimens of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* with a maximum volume of 14,000 m³, while maintaining all other recommendations related to the application of Article XIII in Guinea, including the suspension of all commercial transactions for specimens of CITES-listed species.

Morocco, on behalf of the African region, welcomed the launch of the intersessional decision-making procedure and supported the recommendation of the Secretariat due to the deterioration of the timber stockpile, the cost of securing these stocks and the uncertainty around the date of the next meeting of the Standing Committee. Belgium inquired about the role of the European Union (EU) in the implementation of the proposed recommendation. The Secretary-General clarified that the EU delegation in Guinea will supervise and monitor the export of the timber stockpile.

The Standing Committee will consider this proposal intersessionally in accordance with Rule 20 of its Rules of Procedure.

- **Recommendation to establish a new intersessional WG to consider what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade**

Canada, on behalf of the North American Region, explained the background to a draft proposal for an intersessional decision-making procedure, which would recommend that the Standing Committee establish an intersessional working group to consider what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade.

Indonesia raised concerns as to the scope of the proposed working group and questioned whether its terms of reference would stay within the CITES mandate, noting that other international organizations might be better placed to establish detailed sanitary conditions for trade. New Zealand and Peru both welcomed what they considered was a timely recommendation with Peru highlighting the work its region was already doing on zoonotic diseases. Canada, on behalf of the North American region, took note of the comments and suggestions made by Members.

The Standing Committee will consider this recommendation from the North American region intersessionally in accordance with Rule 20 of its Rules of Procedure.

There were no other recommendations raised by SC Members which might be submitted for future decision by the Committee under Rule 20 of the Rules of procedure.

5. Prospects for 2021 meetings of Standing Committee, Animals Committee and Plants Committee

AC & PC meetings

The Secretary-General outlined details of an offer received from France on 16 December 2020 to host a face-to-face meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees in 2021 and the options for alternative online arrangements. The AC and PC Chairs conveyed the views of their Members who agreed that a face-to-face meeting would be preferable, but that it may not be possible under current circumstances with a significant number of Members indicating that it is unlikely that they would be allowed to travel in the first half of 2021. The AC and PC Chairs informed the Committee that, while their Members would prefer a face-to-face meeting, many of them would not be able to travel for the first half of 2021. As a consequence, the Animals and Plants Committees are considering alternative options, including online meetings, with the possibility of more numerous smaller meetings on specific topics, to try to facilitate greater transparency and participation.

Congo expressed its support for the proposed way forward outlined by the Chair of the Plants Committee.

SC meetings

The Secretary-General outlined the room reservations that had been made for face-to-face meetings of the Standing Committee in 2021 and the options for alternative online arrangements. The Secretariat has made provisional bookings from 6 to 9 April 2021 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and from 20 to 24 September 2021 at the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) in Geneva. The SC Chair noted that, under the current circumstances, the only viable option for a face-to-face meeting would be in September 2021 and asked for the Members' views on the best way to progress SC's agenda until that September meeting. The SC Chair mentioned the idea of taking up some issues that had made good progress, be it as a result of the work of SC working groups or of the Secretariat, during an online meeting in order to lighten up the agenda of the September meeting. The Standing Committee Chair placed the onus on the need to ensure that all decisions taken by the Standing Committee should be seen as transparent and legitimate.

New Zealand supported the idea of prioritizing some agenda items for early decision in an online setting. Kuwait, on behalf of the Asian region, asked for different scenarios to share with its region, including a list of working groups that have made enough progress for their recommendations to be considered by the Standing Committee before September 2021.

The Standing Committee Chair took note of the Members' comments and explained that, based on this feedback, a way forward would be proposed to the Standing Committee.

CoP19

The Secretary-General also updated Members on recent news from the next host country on the prospects for the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) which is currently scheduled for March 2022 in Costa Rica. The Secretary General conveyed to the Members that Costa Rica was facing difficult times and had limited funding for the organization of the CoP. Costa Rica, as the Next Host Country, reasserted the country's commitment to the CoP, while acknowledging the difficult circumstances in a post-COVID world. Costa Rica announced that it would go over with the Secretariat all the detailed requirements for hosting a meeting of the CoP.

Closing remarks

The Chair of the Standing Committee thanked all Members for joining and the Secretariat for organizing this informal discussion.

Status of the Standing Committee's intersessional working groups

The membership and mandate of the working groups is available [here](#).

Name	Chair	Comment
Annotations	Canada	Progressing well and has identified a list of priority issues to be addressed; expected that the WG will be able to present recommendations on those issues to next meeting of the SC.
Capacity-building	New Zealand	Results of the questionnaire sent in 2020 (Notification to the Parties No. 2020/027) was summarized for consideration by AC/PC (AC31 Doc. 10/PC25 Doc. 11). While waiting for the AC/PC's advice, the WG is progressing with other discussions (providing guidance to the Secretariat to refine and consolidate the areas of capacity-building efforts (Decision 18.42); review of Resolution Conf. 3.4 on <i>Technical cooperation</i> with the view to incorporating capacity-building needs [Decision 18.43 a)]; and gathering initial thoughts on models, tools and guiding documents [Decision 18.43 c)]. The WG's completion of work depends on the AC/PC, but will require a full intersessional period (and may roll over to the next period)
Captive-bred and ranched specimens	Spain	A first draft of outputs against 2 mandates is available. Ready for the next meeting of the SC?
Electronic systems and information technologies	Switzerland	Following the CITES-World Customs Organization international workshop on modern customs procedures for improved control of trade in CITES-listed species (held online on 7-9 December 2020), the WG met online to consider the elements for recommendation to the SC. The WG will meet again in January or February 2020 to review the draft documents prepared by the Secretariat and prepare the recommendations to the SC. The work should be completed by the 2nd quarter of 2020.
Engagement with indigenous peoples and local and rural communities	Kenya	The Chair of the WG is still to initiate the work of this WG.
Guidance on ivory stockpiles	European Union	Making progress. Should be able to report to the next meeting of the SC
Livelihoods	Peru	The Chair of the WG is still to initiate the work of this WG.
Purpose-of-transaction codes	Australia	Active and progressing well on definitions, amendments and other complex aspects of the ToRs. They are expected to conclude their work on time for the next SC meeting
Review of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on <i>Compliance and enforcement</i>	United States of America	The Chair of the WG has not yet sent the first substantive message to the WG Members.
Rules of Procedure	Canada	Making good progress on all aspects of the mandate and should be able to complete its work before next meeting of SC.

Name	Chair	Comment
Specimens produced through biotechnology	China	The WG has identified potential types and cases of parts or derivatives produced through biotechnology and will focus on providing advice on guidance on those. The WG will also consider information provided in responses to the Notification to the Parties No. 2020/062.
Strategic Vision	Georgia	Appears to have been quiet since April 2020.

Participant list

Member	
AFRICA	
Congo	Jean Bosco Nganongo Joseph Moubouilou
Ethiopia	ABSENT
Namibia	Fillemon Iifo Wilma Moller Josefina Shapi
Morocco	Hayat Mesbah
ASIA	
China	WAN Ziming ZENG Yan PING Xiaoge WU Zhongze WEN Zhanqiang SU Rui HE Tuo TIAN Shan LIU Yan
Kuwait	Shereefa Al-Salem Makiya.Al-Baghli
Indonesia	Sunan Rustam Adilah Ciannas Firdaus Agung Sri Ratnaningsih Awidya Santikajaya
CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	
Bahamas	ABSENT
Honduras	José Julián Suazo Cervantes
Peru	Doris Mercedes Rodriguez Guzmán Miriam Cerdán Quiliano Jessica Gálvez-Durand Besnard Javier Buleje Jaime Antonio de la Torre Obregón
EUROPE	
Poland	Karol Wolnicki Wojciech Piwowarski
Israel	Simon Nemtsov William Clark Shira Yashphe Yatir Shamir
Belgium	Anne Vanden Bloock Elke Malfait
Russian Federation	ABSENT
NORTH AMERICA	
Canada	Carolina Caceres Cecilia Lougheed
OCEANIA	
New Zealand	Sarah Bagnall
DEPOSITARY GOVERNMENT	
Switzerland	Mathias Lörtscher Martin Krebs
NEXT HOST COUNTRY	
Costa Rica	Carlos Mario Orrego Vásquez

