

This is a framework document only. It suggests a possible format and focus for the development of a draft Strategic Plan. It does not purport to be the draft plan. Each section is skeletal, at best, and would require further development if this is the direction that the Standing Committee wishes the Plan to take.

CITES

THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE¹

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK STRATEGIC PLAN 2000-2005

Introduction

CITES was signed on 3 March 1973 and came into force in 1975. Drafts of what became the Washington Convention or CITES were sent to governments by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1967, 1969 and 1971. The final draft, after review by governments, GATT (General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade), FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) and others was discussed at a plenipotentiary meeting in Washington, D.C., United States of America. Eighty States were present at that meeting. On 3 March, 1973, 21 states signed the Convention. These were Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Viet Nam, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela. The first ten countries to ratify the Convention were Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Uruguay. CITES came into force on 1 July 1975.

Since then, the Convention has shown itself to be capable of adapting to changing circumstances and, through Conference Resolutions, evolving practical solutions to complex wildlife trade problems – for example, the development of techniques for managing the harvesting of some species at levels which do not threaten their conservation status.

¹*The official name of the treaty is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*

In 1994, at its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties commissioned a review of the Convention's effectiveness in order to evaluate progress made since CITES came into being and to plan for the future. At its 10th meeting, the Conference agreed an Action Plan for taking forward certain of the findings of the review. A central finding is the need for a Strategic Plan to map the Convention's direction as it enters the new millennium. In particular, the Plan should steer the Convention's participation in the wider international conservation arena, developed in the post-Rio period, including:

- the stewardship of natural resources and their utilization at sustainable levels;
- the safeguarding of wildlife as integral to the global ecosystem on which all life depends;
- the need for deeper understanding of the cultural and economic issues at play in range States and consumer countries; and
- wider involvement of civic society in the development of conservation policy and practice.

Mission

To ensure that no species of wild fauna or flora becomes threatened with extinction or subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade.

Vision

The Strategic Plan places the Convention at the centre of global wildlife conservation by:

- strengthening its contribution to delivering the objectives agreed by the Earth Summit in 1992 and endorsed by UNGASS in 1997;
- securing its position as a legitimate and necessary conservation instrument in relation to wider international trade agreements;
- extending its global reach and deepening understanding of its function and objectives; and
- strengthening its scientific and information base and the capacity of its members and institutions.

Summary of Goals and Objectives

An executive summary of goals and objectives will be developed when the draft Strategic Plan is in final form.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(not in order of priority)

GOAL 1

TO PROGRESS TOWARD MEMBERSHIP BY ALL COUNTRIES ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE.

In order for the Convention to achieve its mission as many States as possible should be contracting Parties. Membership has grown steadily with XXX contracting Parties at the time of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. However, a number of States engaged in international wildlife trade have not become contracting Parties. A special effort will be made to encourage these States to join. Although the Convention has grown a lot in recent years, the objective of increasing membership in the Convention to 170 States by 2005 is attainable.

NOTE: The Standing Committee may wish to be more specific in highlighting gaps in membership.

Objective 1.1

To secure at least 170 contracting Parties to the Convention by 2005.

Objective 1.2

To pursue inclusion of eligible regional economic organizations.

GOAL 2

TO INCREASE AND ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF EACH CONTRACTING PARTY TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION.

The effectiveness of the Convention depends on a co-ordinated process of implementation that guarantees, in the long term, the achievement of the Convention's mission and the objectives of this Plan, by all contracting Parties. Individual countries should strengthen those institutions involved in this process in order to ensure not only their long-term stability but also their administrative and scientific capacity. Enhanced capacity at the national level

means the improvement of policy formulation and decision making as well as the development of cost-effective management and scientific programmes.

Objective 2.1

To assist in the development of national legislation and to encourage adoption and implementation of legal instruments that regulate wildlife trade.

Objective 2.2

To strengthen the administrative capacity of Parties by improving co-ordination among Management and Scientific Authorities and law enforcement agencies.

Objective 2.3

To develop an effective information strategy for the Convention, including improved access to and management of relevant data-bases.

Objective 2.4

To encourage funding for national implementation.

GOAL 3

TO ENSURE THAT INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE IS CONDUCTED AT SUSTAINABLE LEVELS.

Recognizing that sustainable harvest and wild life trade contributes to sustainable development and that it is good for species diversity, the Convention should ensure that proper trade mechanisms are put in place. All of this depends upon the availability of access to reliable scientific data and information generated by effective monitoring systems to counter over-exploitation. This goal places the responsibility for monitoring levels of trade upon each contracting Party to the Convention with great scope in assistance to be given by other Parties.

Objective 3.1

To increase the effectiveness of the Scientific Authorities of the Parties in development of non-detriment findings.

Objective 3.2

To enhance the development and exchange of scientific data at the national and regional levels.

Objective 3.2

To encourage contracting Parties to develop and implement effective management plans for the recovery of species included in the appendices.

GOAL 4

TO STRENGTHEN THE CONVENTION'S OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH THE PROCUREMENT OF A SECURE FINANCIAL BASE.

Present funding barely covers the Convention's primary expenditures. Programme expenditure on capacity building, scientific research and other projects in support of the purposes of CITES depends upon voluntary contributions by donors. This financial support is welcome, but the major contribution made by CITES to global species conservation demands the support of a more stable funding mechanism.

Objective 4.1

To resolve the problems arising from late and inadequate payments to the CITES Trust Fund.

Objective 4.2

To determine the financial implications to the CITES Trust Fund of Conference decisions.

Objective 4.3

To seek new funding mechanisms to advance the Convention's priorities, such as funding from GEF and World Bank.

GOAL 5

TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONVENTION THROUGH STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

There are clear linkages between the mission of CITES and those of a number of other multilateral environment agreements (MEAs). Since the missions of CBD and CITES are clearly inter-linked, the Secretariats of the two Conventions have signed a Memorandum of Co-operation (MOC) to promote institutional co-operation, exchange of information and experience, co-ordination of programmes and work, and joint conservation action. Importantly, the MOC prescribes that the two Secretariats will develop working relations with the executive bodies of multilateral agreements on trade and intellectual property rights in order to facilitate the integration, into working plans of those bodies, of measures aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity in general and wildlife in particular.

The Convention needs to monitor its 'CITES Action Plan' continually to ensure better co-operation and synergy with the CBD, with other MEAs and with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Convention will intensify its international co-operation activities and will develop further the co-ordination of activities with other global and regional conventions engaged in the sustainable use of biotic resources.

Note: While the working group considers this an important goal, its development will depend on the outcome of current discussions in the UN General Assembly on recommendations pertaining to the relationship between the environmental conventions. However, the Convention needs to secure formal recognition that it has uniquely effective legal instruments that directly support sustainable development.

GOAL 6

TO PROMOTE THE VALIDITY AND NECESSITY OF THE CONVENTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT FORUM.

CITES achieves its conservation objectives by trade-related measures but those regulatory mechanisms, implemented on environmental grounds, do not constitute disguised restrictions for economic benefit. Neither do they amount to discrimination against individual countries within the meaning of the WTO. However, questions continue to be asked as to whether CITES, and other environmental conventions that employ trade measures, are compatible with the WTO. The Convention needs to address this issue proactively and assertively. In addition, as most WTO members are also CITES Parties there is an even greater need for an alignment of policies at the national level between government departments responsible for trade and environment matters. There is a clear and essential role for the Convention to facilitate this process.

Note: The working group believes that the Standing Committee needs to provide guidance on this issue. However, there needs to be concerted action by the Convention at the international level and that there should be close liaison, at the national level, between the agencies responsible for policy on trade and environment.

GOAL 7

TO STRENGTHEN THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES.

The Convention, within the context of the need for non-detriment findings, is grounded in sound biological principles. The work of the Convention is not just about meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its Committees, but about the day-to-day implementation of the Convention by the Parties. While other factors may come into play, they do not override the need for sound science-based decisions. In 1994 at its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties reaffirmed this view by adopting new criteria for amending Appendices I and II. Continued strengthening of the treaty's scientific basis is critical to the continuous success of the Convention.

Objective 7.1

To ensure that decisions to amend Appendices I and II are founded on scientifically sound and relevant, biological and trade criteria, and information.

Objective 7.2

To continue to encourage new research relevant to species conservation.

GOAL 8

TO TAKE ACTION TO COUNTER THE THREATS POSED BY WILDLIFE CRIME TO THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY.

Wildlife crime depletes the world's natural resources for unscrupulous economic gain. It undermines countries' efforts to conserve and manage their wild populations of animals and plants, affects the income of rural communities, and has driven some species to the verge of extinction. Considerable effort has been made to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife, but enforcement agencies face many competing priorities. The Convention has led the way in the fight against environmental crime. However, CITES, through its contracting Parties, its institutions and possibly in concert with other conventions, needs to redouble efforts and expand its enforcement networks. Compliance and enforcement remain central to the Convention's effectiveness

Objective 8.1

To foster greater collaboration between national and international law enforcement agencies.

Objective 8.2

To promote effective regional networks.

Objective 8.3

To explore with other relevant trade-related conventions, co-operative approaches for combatting environmental crime.