

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

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Forty-first meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 8-12 February 1999

CITES issues in Asia

1. A working meeting of national governmental institutions responsible for wildlife trade control, together with representatives of Customs authorities, was held in Vladivostok from 15 to 20 June 1998. Representatives of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, WWF, TRAFFIC and other NGOs participated in the meeting. An official of the Secretariat of CITES also attended. Information on the trade control systems in each country was exchanged and trade control measures in the Far East were discussed.
2. In the first week of April 1998, a working meeting of China and Vietnam took place, on the control of wildlife trade between the two countries. Management Authorities, Customs and Police attended the meeting.
3. At the Asian regional meeting during the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Indonesia was elected as an alternate representative of Asia to the Standing Committee. On the last day of the meeting, the Parties accepted the offer of Indonesia to host the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Consequently, Indonesia was a member of the Standing Committee as the next host country. Indonesia therefore agreed to relinquish its position as the alternate representative of Asia, thus leaving a vacancy. Japan and Saudi Arabia consulted and agreed that a new alternate representative, to replace Indonesia, should be elected by a postal vote among Parties in the region, and a vote was conducted. Meanwhile, Indonesia resigned as the next host country because of its critical economic situation. Japan and Saudi Arabia therefore asked Indonesia whether it wished to retain its position of alternate representative, as it had been elected at the 10th meeting of the Conference. Indonesia declined and therefore Thailand, which had obtained the greatest number of votes, was chosen as the new alternate to Saudi Arabia in the Standing Committee.
4. A meeting on sturgeons was held from 19 to 23 January 1998 in Moscow. At this meeting many issues concerning the inclusion of sturgeons in Appendix II were discussed among range-State Parties, consumers, international organizations and traders. China, Iran, Japan and Turkey were all represented at the meeting. Iran and China made presentations on the status of sturgeons in the Caspian Sea and on an action plan, respectively.
5. The Standing Committee submitted decisions on the National Legislation Project to a postal voting procedure. This related to proposed recommendations to suspend trade from several countries considered not to have adequate legislation. Japan and Saudi Arabia asked Indonesia, which was one of the Parties concerned, to explain the present situation regarding its national legislation and enquired about the views of Parties in the region and obtained comments from several countries. Taking them into consideration, Japan and Saudi Arabia finalized their position for the Asian region.

6. As part of ongoing programmes under a nature conservation protocol between China and the United States of America, one CITES training programme, focusing on wildlife inspection, was jointly organized by the CITES Management Authorities of China and the United States of America in September 1998 in Dalian, China.
7. In the western part of Asia, perhaps the most important development since the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee was the organization of a Regional Workshop on CITES Implementation in the Arabian region. This meeting was organized by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) in Cairo, Egypt, from 15 to 19 November. The following Parties attended this meeting: Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Additionally, representatives of Kuwait, Oman and Syria, together with representatives of several international and regional organizations were present. Although such a meeting was long awaited by Arab States Parties to the Convention, the workshop was much welcomed by Parties as a reflection of the re-establishment of the Capacity Building Unit in the Secretariat. The efforts exerted by Mr Mario Hernandez, Head of the Capacity Building Unit and other members of CITES Secretariat, to bring this meeting to achieve its goals successfully were greatly appreciated.
8. Several regional biodiversity and species-oriented meetings were organized in the region with some relevance to CITES or to species listed in the appendices.
9. Additionally, a number of consultative activities took place between Parties in the region on issues related to the Convention, such as the selection of the new Secretary General, election of the alternate representative to Saudi Arabia, and postal voting in relation to a suspension of trade with Parties considered not to have adequate national legislation. Several communications were made from Saudi Arabia to all Parties in the region, Japan and the Secretariat, stressing the importance and the urgency of convening an Asian regional meeting before the end of 1998. This call was supported fully by all Parties in the region but unfortunately it was not possible to organize the meeting before 1999. It is very much hoped that this meeting takes place in the first half of 1999.
10. Since there are several new Parties in the region, certain needs have been expressed on several occasions, particularly in regard to comments from the Secretariat on permits and certificates issued by such Parties, for further workshops and training exercises and for a visit of representatives of the Secretariat to new Parties.