

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

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

CITES issues in the European region

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES REPORT ON ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE
39TH AND 41ST STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Regional meetings

Since the 39th Standing Committee meeting, members of the European Region have participated in two full Regional meetings. The first was hosted by the United Kingdom in London and was held on 2 March 1998 immediately before the 40th Standing Committee meeting. The second Regional meeting was hosted by the European Union (EU) and held in Brussels on 29 January 1999, before the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee.

Matters discussed at the meetings included:

- Key species, including elephants, tigers, bears and sturgeon;
- the National Legislation Project;
- Organisation and Procedures for future Conferences (including transparency of voting procedures and access for NGOs);
- the Strategic Plan for the Convention;
- possible species proposals for COP 11 with a European dimension;
- the extension of the Convention to new Parties including Eastern Europe and countries in the former Soviet Union;
- the exercise of regional representation and selection of representatives for the Standing Committee, and Animals and Plants Committees; and
- the relationship between CITES and UNEP, and other management issues.

Training

The UK hosted an EU Wildlife Enforcement Workshop in London on 1-2 March 1998. Attended by more than 170 delegates, the Workshop helped to establish and strengthen contacts between the organisations involved in wildlife law enforcement throughout the European Region as well as providing an opportunity for the sharing of expertise, experience and information. Delegates looked at the enforcement regimes in different European countries and heard presentations on the use of DNA technology and the management of information and

intelligence. Enforcement Officers gave presentations on case studies from different areas of the Region and the Workshop concluded with a special session on the trade in tiger trade.

Participation in SC Working Groups

At the request of the Secretariat, the UK participated in a meeting of the Strategic Plan Working Group, held in Geneva from 2-4 November 1998. The Group produced a draft framework for a strategic plan for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 41st meeting.

Other CITES business

In July 1998, in response to Notification 1998/19, the UK submitted a short informal paper to the CITES Secretariat on possible options to improve the organization and procedures for future Conferences. This set out a range of options for discussion and was developed in part from the consideration of these issues at the March Regional meeting. Subjects covered included: the development of guidance for Parties and Observers on the submission of documents and the roles of the various Conference institutions, etc.; mechanisms to convey material and messages during the Conference itself including an examination of electronic media; suggestions to improve participation in the Conference by Parties and Observers; and options for reducing the impact of secret ballots on Conference business. The Secretariat produced a paper for consideration at SC 41 developed from the comments received.

Tiger Missions

The programme of visits to range states and consumer countries by the Technical Mission led by the Secretariat was launched in London on 20 January 1999 when the Mission visited the UK for two days. The Technical Mission will precede visits by a high-level Mission to be led by the UK as Chair of the Standing Committee in accordance with the Committee's decision taken at its 40th Meeting.

Individual Party Initiatives (Belgium)

- Study of mortality of birds in transport

Between January and December 1996 mortality rates in imports of birds into Belgium were investigated. This report concerning CITES and Non-CITES species is available in English as are the reports made for 1994 and 1995.

Individual Party Initiatives (Czech Republic)

- The 10th Meeting of the Interpol Wildlife Crime Sub-group

This was held in Prague from 2-4 June 1998. Thirty-five delegates from 25 countries were present, including representatives from the General Secretariat of Interpol, the CITES Secretariat and the World Customs Organisation. The meeting was co-organised by the Czech Environment Inspectorate.

- A regional training seminar for customs officers dealing with CITES

This was organised by the World Customs Organisation, the French Customs Services, and the General Directorate of Customs of the Czech Republic in Jiloviste near Prague from 8-10 June

1998. It was attended by 16 participants from Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine, with 25 participants from the Czech Republic.

- The 3rd European Regional Meeting on CITES Plants Issues

This was held in Desna from 5-8 October 1998. The meeting was co-organised by the Agency for Nature and Landscape Conservation of the Czech Republic – the national CITES Scientific Authority. The meeting was attended by 46 delegates from 15 European countries, the European Commission, Mexico and the CITES Secretariat.

- A workshop on CITES implementation in the European Union

This was organised jointly by the European Commission and the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic in Prague from 12-13th November 1998. The workshop was targeted on ten countries from Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus, which are candidates for European Union membership. More than 50 participants from those countries attended. The speakers were from the European Commission, the Czech Republic, Germany, TRAFFIC Europe, the United Kingdom and France.

Individual Party Initiatives (Germany)

- Sturgeon workshop, Cavilm 98

In November 1998 an international seminar on sturgeon conservation issues was held by the German Scientific Authority on the island of Vilm, Germany. 50 scientists, caviar traders and representatives of state authorities evaluated the actual situation of the sturgeon populations in the Volga-Caspian region. The reasons for the eminent decline could be determined: lacking or data, discrepancies in evaluation methods and missing co-ordination between the different countries concerning catch quotas. Also the release of fingerlings, without which some species would be already wiped out is not handled in a common and scientifically based manner. Lack of control and changing competencies also support poaching, over-fishing and illegal trade. The participants agreed, that scientifically based and harmonised management measures in the countries of origin are to be developed for the future, accompanied by import controls or even restrictions by the importing countries.

- Training programme on medicinal plants

To assist CITES Management Authorities in efficiently implementing the Convention, a training programme covering species used in medicines was prepared by the CITES Scientific Authority of Germany. The training material includes information on: (1) significant trade; (2) the most important sources of supply; (3) information on trade to Germany; (4) derivatives in trade and their processed forms; (5) harmonised customs codes; (6) pharmaceutical names; (7) data on the most important CITES-listed plant species used for medicines and as aromas, including name, country of origin and parts in use; (8) training exercises. The material is available in English and German. Because of differences in the pharmaceutical nomenclature used in German and English, the versions differ slightly. The English version is being translated into Chinese, Italian and Spanish.

The material on medicinal plants was first used during a training seminar organised by the Secretariat in Pucón (Chile) in October 1997. Since then, three workshops have been held in Germany as part of CITES training courses and for customs officers. Two additional workshops will be held in December 1998.

A reference collection of samples of CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plants and a checklist of CITES-listed species used in medicine with their vernacular, pharmaceutical and commercial names is also being prepared. At present, the reference collection consists of plant parts in different forms for about 20 CITES-listed species and for several hundred non-CITES species.

- German study on transport mortality

Between January and December 1996, mortality rates in imports of birds and reptiles into Germany were investigated, following Resolution Conf. 9.23. To be able to estimate the overall mortality rates of the animals before international transport, Tanzania was chosen as an example and important exporting country to gather information on the holding ground of middlemen and exporters and the conditions of trapping. The study is available in English.

Individual Party initiatives (Netherlands)

- Training seminar for Netherlands, Aruba and Netherlands Antilles

In December 1997 a training seminar was organised on Aruba with participants from the three parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Aruba, Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands. About 75 people attended the training, which included policy aspects of CITES, permit issues, scientific and enforcement matters. The CITES Secretariat and different institutions from the three parts of the Kingdom gave presentations. The training gave a new impulse to CITES implementation after Aruba joined CITES in 1995, and the Netherlands Antilles are also expecting to join CITES shortly.

- Contribution to an evaluation of tree species

After the first phase of the "Tree Species Evaluation", a study which had been carried out by WCMC in 1996, the Netherlands has supported the second phase of this project as well. The CITES listing criteria were applied to 58 tree species for the first time in Phase 1 of the project, and presented to the 7th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee. The Plants Committee invited the Netherlands to continue the process and in the second phase another 250 species were evaluated. The combined report has just been finished and forms a contribution to the evaluation of different tree species. The report will be presented to the Chairman of the Plants Committee fairly soon for further advice and discussion.

Individual Party initiatives (Spain)

- Masters degree course on Management, Conservation and Control of species involved in International trade.

This course was held during May, June and July 1998, and managed by Dr. Margarita Clemente, Chairwoman of the CITES Plants Committee. It was organised by the International University of Andalusia in co-operation with the Scientific and Management Authorities of Spain, the CITES Secretariat and Standing Committee, the *Unione Nazionale Industria Conciaria* of Italy, the Botanical Gardens and the University of Cordoba, the Barcelona Zoo, the C & M Foundation, and the International World Conservation Trust.

The course was held in Baeza (Jaen) with the participation of 57 teachers from 12 different countries, the CITES Secretariat and the European Commission. The 25 students, from the CITES Scientific and Management authorities and NGOs of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Spain, Equatorial Guinea, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela, have received 400 hours of training on all the management and scientific matters needed for the application and enforcement of the Convention. Some of the

practices were imparted in the Customs offices of Algeciras, the Botanical Garden of Cordoba, the Zoos of Barcelona and Jerez, and some National Parks and Natural Areas.

Individual Party initiatives (United Kingdom)

During 1998 the UK has made additional financial contributions to further the work of the Convention. It helped to fund the third dialogue meeting of African Elephant range states held in Arusha in October 1998; have offered to finance the first year of the new Elephant Trade Information System, developed by TRAFFIC in the light of the decisions of the 10th Conference; and have offered up to £60,000 to finance the disposal of Government held stocks of ivory under the terms of Conference decision 10.2. These build on our continued support for the West African office of IUCN's African Elephant Specialist Group and the Lusaka Agreement.

Since the Harare Conference, we have also supported the work of IUCN's African Rhino Co-ordinator; the conservation of the tigers by providing matching funding for projects identified by 21st Century Tiger; supported TRAFFIC's Symposium on Traditional Medicines in Hong Kong; funded research to review the use of marine species in traditional medicines and financed work by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, into the effectiveness of trade controls on artificially propagated plant material. In all this brought additional UK support for the Convention to more than £350,000.

We have continued with our successful CITES "Check it Out" campaign, distributing more than half a million leaflets to the travelling public and securing prime advertising sites at the major UK airports. This year the literature campaign has been backed up by radio advertising. We have also worked with the CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC East Asia to produce a poster in the three CITES languages and Chinese for distribution to all Parties to assist in raising awareness of the plight of the tiger and the continued threat it faces from illegal trade. In addition we are working on a special guide to CITES procedures for traditional medicine practitioners and retailers based in the UK.

Enforcement

UK Enforcement Agencies have continued to devote substantial resources to the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime during the period.

- Work continues on the ongoing "Operation Charm" aimed at tackling the illegal sale of traditional medicines containing endangered species derivatives. In February 1997 the Metropolitan Police working with the Wildlife Protection Society of India searched a shop in central London and seized 138 shahtoosh shawls, valued at £353,000.
- On 11 March 1998, Metropolitan Police Officers seized 65 specimens from a taxidermy shop in north London. They included a tiger, tiger cub, green turtle, grey wolf and leopard.
- In June 1998, UK Customs detained over 100 CITES listed birds including Lear's macaws, Palm cockatoos, Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Greater Sulphur Crested Cockatoos and Galahs as part of an on-going investigation.

In July 1997 the UK produced two further publications in the Wildlife Crime series; a Directory of Forensic Expertise and Using DNA Forensic Evidence for use by UK police forces. Together they provide detailed information and advice about the steps which need to be taken if police officers and others plan to use DNA evidence as part of an investigation. A kit with everything a veterinary surgeon needs to take a blood sample from a bird of prey, has also been made available.

A restructured UK Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) was launched in June 1998. This is a national steering committee of Government Departments, including the CITES Management Authority and statutory enforcement agencies working with NGO and trade representatives. The Partnership's objectives are: to consider strategic wildlife law enforcement issues; to support the national networks of Police Wildlife Liaison Officers and HM Customs and Excise CITES officers; to facilitate the exchange of information, expertise and specialist knowledge in this area of law enforcement; to increase awareness of wildlife law enforcement issues and to promote and encourage scientific research into DNA technology and other forensic techniques. The new PAW comprises an annual Seminar of partners, a Steering Group of enforcement bodies and Government Departments, Working Groups - taking forward the day-to-day work of the Partnership - and a Secretariat.