

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

Forty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12-15 March 2002

Strategic and administrative matters

Implementation of the Strategic and Action Plans

REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

Background

1. At the 45th meeting, the Standing Committee agreed to establish a Working Group to:
 - develop a Work Plan for the Standing Committee to aid it in its implementation of the Convention's Strategic and Action Plans,
 - make recommendations to the Standing Committee concerning updates of the Action Plan and
 - help prioritize the items in the Secretariat's Work Plan (presented at that meeting).

The members of the Working Group were Australia, China, Ecuador, France, Italy, St Lucia, South Africa (convenor), Tunisia, the United States of America, and the Chairs of the Animals and Plants Committees.

2. At the request of the convenor, the Secretariat organized a meeting of the Working Group in Geneva, from 13-15 February 2002. Since the convenor, South Africa was unable to attend the meeting, the United States of America was elected to chair this meeting. The Working Group continued to conduct its work by correspondence subsequent to the meeting in Geneva.

3. The Working Group discussed and addressed the tasks assigned. A summary of the discussions and recommendations follow.

Task A: Develop a Work Plan for the Standing Committee to aid it in its implementation of the Convention's Strategic and Action Plans

The Working Group developed a Work Plan for the following action points assigned to the Standing Committee for action: 1.4.1, 1.10.1, 1.10.2, 2.4.5, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.3.6, 7.5.2, and 7.5.3. The proposed Work Plan is attached for consideration by the Standing Committee.

Recommendations: The Working Group recommends the adoption of the Work Plan. In addition, the Working Group recommends that the Standing Committee consider a new proposed action point under 2.4.2 when the Strategic Plan is next updated. This action point would assign the Standing Committee responsibility to take into account information from, and the potential contribution of, innovative technologies and relevant research, as appropriate, in considering specific implementation decisions and issues.

Task B: Make recommendations to the Standing Committee concerning updates in the Action Plan.

The Working Group reviewed the Action Plan for the Strategic Plan. Proposed changes are found in the attached document. The recommended changes are shown in redline and strike out. The Working Group acknowledged that since work plans to implement the Strategic Plan have only recently been developed and are being finalized, it is premature to make significant changes to the Action Plan at this time. For this reason, the Working Group focused primarily on identifying who the responsible entities should be to help achieve each action point.

In almost all instances where a change is recommended, the Working Group assigned responsibility for action points to additional entities such as the Parties, Standing Committee, Animals Committee, Plants Committee, Conference of the Parties, or Secretariat. The rationale for recommending this change is that responsibility for action points should be shared by all entities directly involved in the activity and that can make a contribution to the accomplishment of a goal.

Under Objective 1.2 - To strengthen the administrative, management and scientific capacity of Parties by improving the coordination between Management and Scientific Authorities and other national agencies responsible for wild animals and plants – the Working Group recommends the addition of an action point to encourage Parties to improve coordination between CITES Authorities at the national level. The Working Group acknowledged that coordination at this level is fundamental to effective CITES implementation and should be recognized as an action point. The recommended action point is: Improve coordination at the national level between CITES Authorities involved in the management of wild fauna and flora. Action by the Scientific and Management Authorities.

Under Objective 1.4 – To facilitate development and use of appropriate technologies and information management systems that enhance and expedite the collection, submission and exchange of accurate information – the Working Group recommends that action point 1.4.5 be revised as follows to acknowledge that although Parties may need information related to non-CITES species, priority focus should be on the CITES appendices in developing, collating, and enhancing databases, particularly if resources are limited. The recommended action point is: Develop, collate, and enhance databases that include information related to species in trade, CITES Decisions and procedures, with a focus on CITES Appendices.

Under Objectives 1.8.2, 3.1, and 4.5, the Working Group recommends that these action points reference national, regional, and/or international efforts in order to promote cooperation at multiple levels in the establishment of effective programmes for species conservation and management.

During the discussion of the Action Plan, the Working Group raised concerns about the practical implementation of action points 1.8.2, 2.4.2, 2.4.4, 4.1.6, and 7.5.2. These concerns are included as footnotes in the Action Plan under the respective action point.

Recommendations: The Working Group recommends that the proposed changes and comments of the Working Group be considered. Although the Working Group has fulfilled the task of making recommendations to the Standing Committee concerning updates to the Action Plan and has presented its recommendations in this report, Decision 11.1, Annex 1, states: “Procedures should be developed for periodic review and evaluation of ongoing progress toward completion and revision of the Action Plan, for review of the status of the goal performance indicators, and to evaluate the subsequent achievement of the goals of the Strategic Plan. Between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, this responsibility should be assigned to the Standing Committee.” Based on Decision 11.1, Annex 1, we note that a more formalized process for periodic review and evaluation of progress and revision of the Action Plan needs to be established in the future to clarify who would undertake this responsibility, when this assignment should be undertaken, and how it is to be accomplished.

Because the Strategic Plan and Action Plan are dynamic documents requiring periodic review, evaluation of goal completion, and revision of goals and action points as circumstances change, the members of the Working Group recommend that a group or sub-committee, responsible to the Standing Committee, be assigned the task to: 1) more thoroughly review the action plan and identify

the changes that are necessary, 2) develop an evaluation tool or strategy using goal performance indicators to evaluate the achievement of the goals of the Strategic Plan, and 3) provide recommendations for changes to the Standing Committee.

Task C: Help prioritize the items in the Secretariat's Work Plan (presented at that meeting).

The Working Group reviewed the three documents constituting the Secretariat's work plan. These three documents outline Secretariat tasks and priorities based on, respectively, the elements of the Strategic Plan, CITES Decisions, and CITES Resolutions. Focusing on those items designated for external funding, the Working Group considered the priority assigned to tasks, the budget figures provided, and the clarity of the task outlined. The Working Group also looked for consistency on priorities and activities throughout the documents. The Working Group recognized the work involved in preparing these extensive documents and appreciated the assistance of the Secretariat in clarifying specific items and providing supplementary materials as the meeting progressed.

While the Working Group generally supports the majority of the high priority action points in the Work Plan and at this time identified only a limited number of changes on the substance or on priorities assigned by the Secretariat, additional work is needed to revise and update the Work Plan. Therefore, our recommendations follow.

Recommendations: The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat revise the Work Plan to reflect the priority tasks and changes discussed by the Working Group. The Working Group identified regional coordination, capacity building, and assistance as among the highest priorities for external funding and strongly supported the focus on establishing CITES implementing legislation in Member Countries.

The Working Group noted that while work with prosecutors and the judiciary is a high priority where legislation already exists, such work is not as appropriate before legislation is in place. In this regard, the Secretariat should clarify elements of the work program related to the judiciary, including information on whether specific efforts focus on particular regions or species. The Working Group recommends that a handbook on factors for sentencing in wildlife crimes (Action Point A3.5.4) be developed as a high priority so that Parties can initiate actions, as appropriate, to educate and work with the judiciary on CITES matters. The Working Group also recommends that the development of an implementation Manual for CITES Scientific Authorities be a high priority.

Many of the comments of the Working Group related to redundancies and inconsistencies in the work plan documents. By and large these seemed to result from the difficulty of cross-referencing across these large documents and from haste in document preparation. The majority of these discrepancies involved listing and characterization of workshops. The Working Group found a number of instances where the same workshop was referred to several times (and budgeted for several times), where it was difficult to determine the subject of a workshop, or where it was difficult to discern the difference between two workshops. Workshops should be clearly titled (e.g. "Legislative"); the budget for external funding should only be listed once; it should be clear whether a workshop is one-off, or part of an ongoing series of workshops; there should be clear cross-referencing to other relevant portions of the work plan. In addition, the Working Group encourages and supports the Secretariat's efforts to seize every opportunity to combine workshops with closely related subject matter, and to create synergies in the scheduling of regional meetings on different but related subjects to take advantage of pre-existing gatherings.

The group recommends that the Secretariat update the plan to reflect activities already completed, updated budget estimates, and activities for which external funding has now been received. The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat pay particular attention to clarifying the listing of workshops in redrafting the work plan documents. The Secretariat may also wish to consider how to address in the work plan the high priority of raising external funds for COP delegate travel relative to other priorities for external funding.