

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

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Fifty-third meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 27 June-1 July 2005

Strategic and administrative matters

DIALOGUE MEETINGS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 49th meeting (Geneva, April 2003), the Standing Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a document for consideration at the 50th meeting (Geneva, March 2004) detailing the terms of reference for the organization and conduct of dialogue meetings, including *inter alia* the timing, the selection of participants and the selection of the Chairman.
3. At the 50th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat provided (in document SC50 Doc. 13) the 'Proposed rules of procedure for future African elephant range State dialogues', which had been agreed at the fifth dialogue meeting of African elephant range States (Santiago, October 2002) and presented at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Santiago, 2002) in Annex 6 to document CoP12 Doc. 20.1. At the same Committee meeting, the Secretariat provided a revised version of these proposed rules (SC50 Doc. 13 Addendum), adapted so that they did not refer to elephants and so could be applied in relation to other species. Following discussion of this document, the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the draft terms of reference for dialogue meetings, for consideration at its 53rd meeting, taking into account the comments made at the meeting.
4. The Secretariat has therefore prepared draft guidelines on CITES dialogue meetings, including information on how such meetings may be called for, how they should be organized and how they should be conducted. These guidelines are presented in the Annex to the present document.
5. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee adopt the draft guidelines presented in the Annex, with any amendments that it considers necessary. It also recommends that the Standing Committee agree that the Secretariat should present the guidelines adopted by the Committee in the form of a draft resolution for adoption at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

## CITES DIALOGUE MEETINGS

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### What are CITES dialogue meetings?

Dialogue meetings are consultative meetings between range States of a certain species or group of species, with the aim of seeking consensus in relation to a proposal that has been submitted to amend the CITES Appendices when there are strong divisions between those States.

These meetings provide the opportunity for the representatives of States to express their concerns, to share information, to exchange views frankly and freely, without the pressures that exist on delegations during meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and to seek ways forward. The results of a dialogue meeting may therefore include, amongst other things, agreement on a position regarding a proposal submitted for amendment of the Appendices or a draft decision or draft resolution for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

An important benefit of dialogue meetings is that they help to reduce the pressure of time that is felt during the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. They do this by bringing together the Parties that are primarily responsible for the conservation of a species (or group of species) subject to a proposal, and that therefore have the greatest interest in its protection, thus helping to ensure that the main problems and possible solutions are identified before the proposal is presented to the Conference of the Parties.

#### Who may call a CITES dialogue meeting?

A dialogue meeting may be called for either by the Conference of the Parties or by the Standing Committee.

If, following the discussion of a proposal to amend the Appendices, the Conference of the Parties believes that there is a significant division between range States of the species, it may instruct the Secretariat that, if it receives a further amendment proposal relating to the same species, it should organize a dialogue meeting of the range States. In this case, the Conference of the Parties should preferably allocate funds for such a meeting. Otherwise, the holding of such a meeting will be subject to the availability of external funding.

If a Party intends to submit a proposal to amend the Appendices and, as a result of seeking the comments of the other range States, becomes aware that there is a significant division between them, it may ask the Standing Committee to instruct the Secretariat to organize a dialogue meeting, subject to the availability of external funding.

When the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee calls a CITES dialogue meeting for a species, they should consider whether it is necessary for the range States of related species to be invited as observers.

#### Organization of dialogue meetings

CITES dialogue meetings are convened and organized by the CITES Secretariat on behalf of the Parties.

When the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee has instructed the Secretariat to organize a dialogue meeting, it will seek a host country for the meeting from among the range States, and if there is more than one offer, select a host country in consultation with the Chairman of the Standing Committee and, where applicable, the relevant regional representatives in the Committee. The host country is usually expected to cover the cost of rental of the meeting rooms and refreshments for the participants and to work with the Secretariat in the organization of the meeting.

The Secretariat will seek sufficient funds to cover the attendance of at least one representative of each Party range State of the species concerned coming from developing countries or countries with economies in transition.

Dialogue meetings should, as far as possible, take place well in advance of meetings of the Conference of the Parties so that the outcomes may be used by the Parties when considering their positions in preparation for such meetings. However, sometimes, for reasons of financial constraints, it is necessary to hold a dialogue meeting immediately before a meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In such cases, the Host Country of the meeting of the Conference is not expected to serve as the host for the dialogue meeting.

The Secretariat is responsible for inviting the range States to send representatives to a dialogue meeting.

The provisional agenda for each dialogue meeting should be prepared at least 60 days in advance by the Chairman of the Standing Committee with the assistance of the Secretariat, following consultation with the range States of the species concerned. The Secretariat is responsible for distributing the provisional agenda to all range States at least 45 days before the meeting.

## RULES OF PROCEDURE OF DIALOGUE MEETINGS

### Representation

1. Each Party that is a range State of an extant population of the species (or group of species) to be discussed shall be entitled to be represented at a dialogue meeting by a representative and an alternate representative, who shall be government officials designated to attend by the Management Authority of the Party that they represent.
2. Other Parties and organizations (including donors) may be represented by observers only if their attendance is approved by the representatives of the range States.
3. The CITES Secretariat shall participate in dialogue meetings in order to advise the Parties and to serve as Secretary and organizer of the meeting.
4. The Secretariat may invite technical experts to attend a meeting as resource persons.

### Chairman

5. The Chairman of the Standing Committee shall serve as the Chairman of each CITES dialogue meetings. If he/she is unable to serve, he/she should appoint the Vice-Chairman or Alternate Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee to serve in his/her place.

### Vice-Chairmen

6. Two Vice-Chairmen for each meeting shall be elected from among the participants.

### Decisions

7. All decisions of dialogue meetings shall be made by the representatives of the range States. In the absence of a representative, the alternate representative shall for all purposes serve in his/her place.
8. Decisions shall as far as possible be made by consensus. Where this is not possible, decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the range States represented and casting an affirmative or negative vote.

### Communications

9. No record is kept of the discussions that take place at dialogue meetings and they should be considered as private. Consequently, participants should not communicate with the media or with organizations that are not participating, or have not participated, in a dialogue meeting concerning the discussions taking place, or that have taken place.

10. A communiqué from each meeting shall be drafted by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, and shall be presented for agreement. Such communiqué, if agreed, shall serve as the official record of the outcome of the meeting, and shall be made available in the three working languages of the Convention. Communiqués shall be formally presented at the following meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.
11. Participants may also agree to provide a media briefing at the end of each dialogue meeting, reflecting the outcome.

Final provisions

12. These Rules of Procedure have been established by the Standing Committee, which may amend them at any time.
13. In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee that are currently in effect shall apply as far as practicable.