

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

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

SUMMARY RECORD

1. Opening remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman gave a speech of welcome, thanking the Committee for the honour to Chile by its selection as Chairman. He noted the large volume of work to be done at the present meeting and looked forward to working with the Committee and observers to address the many important issues. Speeches of welcome were also given by the Secretary-General and the representative of UNEP.

Strategic and administrative matters

2. Agenda

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 2 (Rev. 3). It was agreed that the issue of improving the procedure for the selection of the Chairmen of Committees I and II for meetings of the Conference of the Parties would be discussed at the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee. It was agreed that, under agenda item 25 (Review of Significant Trade), the Secretariat should report on progress with regard to the country-oriented review of Madagascar. It was also agreed that, under agenda item 39 (Any other business), the Decisions of the Conference of the Parties regarding *Saiga tatarica* should be discussed. With regard to the items that had in the past been discussed in closed session, it was agreed that the Committee would decide on the need for a closed session when it reached them on the agenda.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (Japan), Europe (Germany) and Oceania (Australia).

3. Rules of Procedure

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 3. During the discussion, some participants noted that the rules of the permanent committees of CITES should be similar, others suggesting that the Animals and Plants Committees should have the flexibility to adopt rules that are different when necessary. Regarding Rule 16, the inconsistency with Resolution Conf. 13.1 was noted. Regarding Rule 21, participants expressed the need to be sure that Parties that could be affected by decisions of the Committee were informed in advance of the meeting. Regarding Rule 29, the view was expressed that there was a need for some flexibility to introduce documents for discussion during meetings. Regarding Rule 27, it was suggested that the Executive Summary of the final session of a Committee meeting should be sent to the members by email, as is done with the Plants Committee.

The Committee adopted the proposed amendments as presented in document SC53 Doc. 3 to Rules 1, 6.2, 7, 8, 13, 28 and 33. It also agreed to the following amendments:

- a) In Rule 5, "the meeting" should be replaced by "meetings";
- b) In Rule 6.1, in the first sentence, the words ", after consultation with members of the Standing Committee and the Secretariat," should be deleted;
- c) In Rule 9, the amendments proposed in the document, the words "English, French or Spanish" should be replaced by "one of the working languages";

- d) In Rule 12, "During" should be replaced by "Following";
- e) Rule 16 should be deleted;
- f) In Rule 20, the second proposed amendment should be accepted but not the deadline of 75 days, and as a consequence the proposed amendment to Rule 19 is not necessary;
- g) In Rule 21, the final sentence should read, "The documents shall also be provided to all Parties that may be directly affected by any discussion of the documents and to all Parties that request them."
- h) Rule 27 should be amended to read "A concise executive summary of the decisions of the Committee shall be prepared by the Secretary for endorsement by the Committee before the closure of the meeting. However, the executive summary of the last day of each meeting shall be sent by email to the members for endorsement after the meeting."
- i) Rule 29 should be amended to read:
 - 1. *The working languages of the meetings of the Committee shall be English, French and Spanish and no working document may be discussed at a meeting unless it has been made available in accordance with Rules 20 and 21 in these languages.*
 - 2. *Documents arising out of the discussion of the foregoing may be discussed provided that copies have been circulated no later than during the session preceding the session at which they are to be discussed.*

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Zambia), Asia (Japan), Europe (Germany), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the observers from Mexico, David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, Humane Society of the United States of America and Species Survival Network.

4. Credentials

It was noted that credentials had been presented for all of the representatives of the 60 Parties represented at the meeting. Credentials had been received for all of the observers from organizations, whose details would be included in the list of participants.

5. Admission of observers

The Committee noted document SC53 Doc. 5, introduced by the Secretariat.

6. Strategic Vision

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 6. The observer from Israel offered to withdraw document SC53 Doc. 11.5 from consideration if the concerns it raised could be adequately taken into account under the present agenda item. During the discussion, the main points made were the following: terms of reference were needed for the Strategic Plan Working Group; it should not be too big; there was a need to provide for input from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Several participants suggested that there should be one representative of each region in the Group. Some others suggested that larger regions should have more representatives, but this was not agreed.

A small drafting group was convened during the meeting, chaired by the delegate from Ghana, who introduced document SC53 Doc. 6.1, which contained draft terms of reference for the Strategic Plan Working Group.

The Committee established a Strategic Plan Working Group. It agreed that the regional representatives in the Committee should send to the Secretariat the name of the selected member of

the Strategic Plan Working Group for their region. It also designated Ghana as the Chairman of this Working Group and Canada as the Vice-Chairman.

The Committee agreed to the proposals contained in document SC53 Doc. 6.1, with the following amendments:

- the following words will be appended to the final paragraph: “and take into account the relevant Decisions and Resolutions adopted at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on improved cooperation and synergy between CITES and CBD”; and
- the paragraph proposed by the representative of Asia (Japan) at the seventh session will be added to the terms of reference, i.e. “Reflect views and opinions of Convention Parties in its work of drafting the new Strategic Vision in order to guarantee fairness and transparency.”

The Committee noted that, following the meeting, the Secretariat would produce a document indicating what had been agreed, with any necessary editorial changes.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Ghana and Zambia), Asia (China and Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany and Iceland), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the observers from Israel, IUCN, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Humane Society International, TRAFFIC and WWF.

7. Relationship with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

7.1 Report of UNEP

The representative of UNEP introduced document SC53 Doc. 7.1. During the discussions, participants commented on the lack of financial information in the report, particularly relating to the 13 per cent that is paid to UNEP. One delegation expressed the view that the wildlife trade policy review referred to in the document should be country-driven. The Committee noted the report.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (Japan), Europe (Iceland), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), and the observer from Israel.

7.2 Memorandum of Agreement between the Executive Director of UNEP and the Standing Committee

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 7.2 (Rev. 2).

In a later session, the representative of Oceania (Australia) introduced document SC53 Doc. 7.2.1 containing proposed amendments to the draft Memorandum of Agreement in Annex 3 of document SC53 Doc. 7.2 (Rev. 2). During the discussion, participants stressed the need for UNEP to consult with the Standing Committee before taking actions that affect CITES, and in particular the Secretariat and the budget.

The Committee agreed to the proposed amendments with the following modifications:

- a) in paragraph 6, the second sentence should read: “The Secretary-General shall recommend the best candidate for the effective conduct of the business of the Secretariat, whilst taking account of the principle of geographical representation and the diversity of Parties to the Convention.”; and
- b) in paragraph 7, the proposed additional sentence should read: “For senior posts, the Secretary-General shall consult with the Standing Committee.”

With these amendments, the Standing Committee agreed in principle to the draft Memorandum of Agreement in Annex 3 of document SC53 Doc. 7.2 (Rev. 2). The Committee instructed the

Secretariat to place a copy of the amended draft on the CITES website. It decided that the amended draft would be open for comments until 15 August 2005, after which, if there were no substantive objections from Parties, the draft would be considered as adopted by the Standing Committee.

During discussion of the agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), the observer from Argentina and the representative of UNEP.

7.3 Proposal of the Executive Director to change the administrative arrangements for the Secretariat

This agenda item, was introduced by the Secretariat. It was noted that, in view of the particular situation of CITES as compared to other Geneva-based offices, no administrative change for CITES was being proposed by the Executive Director of UNEP. No action was therefore currently required by the Standing Committee. However the Committee would be kept informed of the further development of the Geneva administrative service centre and of future options for CITES to be wholly or partly serviced by that centre.

During discussion of this agenda item, an intervention was made by the representative of Oceania (Australia).

8. Synergy between CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 8 (Rev. 1). Divergent views were expressed, some speakers welcomed the increased focus on synergy and interaction with CBD but others were concerned that this may deflect CITES from its core tasks and that some of the subjects for suggested synergy, such as the ecosystem approach and access and benefit sharing, were still under discussion within CBD itself. The Chairman drew attention to the clear instruction from the Conference of the Parties set out in Decisions 13.2 and 13.3. The Committee established a working group, chaired by the representative of Africa (Ghana), to bring together and summarize the comments made on the working document.

Later in the meeting the chairman of the working group introduced the report of their work, contained in document SC53 Doc. 8.1. The Committee adopted the document with the deletion of the words 'protected areas' in the second line of paragraph d) and the addition of the word 'international' before the word 'trade' in the first and second bullet points of paragraph d).

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Ghana), Europe (Germany), North America (Canada), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government (Switzerland), the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the observers from Argentina, Luxembourg, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Humane Society International and WWF.

9. Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 9. It drew attention to the 'Draft CITES/CMS List of Joint Activities 2005-2007' in the Annex, which was intended to serve as a work programme for implementing the cooperative Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the CITES and CMS Secretariats in 2002. It pointed out that the Standing Committee had earlier requested an opportunity to comment on the draft work programme before it was finalized by the Secretariats.

The representative of the CMS Secretariat highlighted the complementary nature of both Conventions and the regular liaison between the Secretariats. It was announced that the CMS Secretariat would be participating in the workshop in Urumqi, China, scheduled to take place from 22 to 25 August 2005, where problems regarding saiga antelope and other species covered by both CITES and CMS would be discussed.

The Committee commented on the draft work programme contained in the Annex and agreed that its comments should be incorporated into a final version that would then be signed by the Secretariats

of CITES and CMS. Members expressed support for the draft work programme. In their specific comments, members suggested that joint work on the Houbara bustard and great apes should be emphasized in the 'indicative tasks' section, that the saiga antelope and the WSSD 2010 biodiversity target should be included in the 'activity' section and that the reference to the Vilm workshop should be replaced by a reference to the Biodiversity Liaison Group. With regard to increased synergy among biodiversity-related conventions, it was stated that this did not require them to adopt the same approach to biodiversity conservation. It was also suggested that CITES should not preempt action by CBD regarding access to and the sharing of benefits from genetic resources but that countries could exchange their national experiences on the issue.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Ghana), Asia (China), Europe (Germany), North America (Canada), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government, and the observer from Argentina.

10. Cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 10. It drew attention to the Annex containing the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CITES and FAO, which had been negotiated by Australia and Norway at the request of the Standing Committee at its 51st meeting (Bangkok, October 2004). The delegations of those Parties encouraged the Committee to adopt the draft MoU without changes in order to avoid reopening debate on the matter. It was explained that FAO's Sub-committee on Fish Trade was authorized to finalize any text that might be agreed by the Standing Committee.

The representative of one Committee member found the draft MoU to be well-balanced and urged the Committee to accept it. One Party observer suggested that there were inconsistencies between the English and Spanish versions of the text. After some discussion, the Committee suspended its discussions, so that the Chairman could undertake informal consultations in order to achieve consensus on the draft MoU.

The Chairman's consultations resulted in a new draft MoU, a consensus text, presented in document SC53 Doc. 10.1. The Chairman noted that it no longer contained a preamble. Representatives of several Committee members expressed support for the new draft and urged other members to accept it. One of them said that its position reflected a unified government position and that its representatives to FAO's Sub-committee on Fish Trade would be urged to resist trying to improve the document. Participants expressed thanks to the Chairman, the delegation of Australia and the delegation of Iceland for their efforts to progress the matter.

The Committee approved the draft text of a Memorandum of Understanding contained in document SC53 Doc. 10.1, to be forwarded to FAO for consideration. In taking its decision, the Committee considered the statements made by several Parties and agreed that they would be reflected in the summary record of the meeting.

Among these, the representative of Europe (Iceland) recognized the cooperative spirit of the delegation of Australia. He stated that no compromise text is perfect and that it could not accept replacing the word 'respect' with 'consider' or 'take into account' as the last two words did not reflect the notion of equal partners working together in an open and transparent manner. It expressed regret for inadvertently overlooking the possibility of involving other Parties in the consultations which led to development of the consensus text.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Zambia), Asia (Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany, Iceland), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), and by the observers from Mexico, Norway, FAO and Humane Society International.

The following statement was made by the delegate from Australia:

The delegation of Australia acknowledged that consideration of the FAO/CITES Memorandum of Understanding has been a difficult and challenging process. Australia further acknowledged the flexible and open approach of the delegation of Iceland during informal discussions held during

the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee. Australia recognizes that the final text is a negotiated document, which reflects appropriately the productive working relationship between FAO and CITES.

The following statement was made by the delegate from Japan:

Japan will not block consensus with respect to the text now under consideration, however, we would like the record of the meeting to clearly reflect our reservations and the reasons for them. Japan's position favours the text that came from the Bremen meeting of the FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade. That document represented a negotiated text where all parties compromised and in the end agreed – with the exception of one member. Mr Chairman, what we have now is a situation where the same Parties are being asked to agree to a document which deletes 11 paragraphs of carefully drafted, negotiated and agreed text to satisfy that same one member. Mr Chairman, we therefore express concern with the process. Mr Chairman, we understand that preambular paragraphs of this MoU may not be important to some, however, we believe that they are important because they were an attempt to clearly define the very different roles and responsibilities of FAO and CITES concerning fisheries management and international trade. Many members of FAO expressed strongly held views on this matter. So, this is important because it forms the basis of, or framework for, cooperation between the two organizations. Mr Chairman, for this reason, the document now under consideration may therefore not serve as a basis for the required consensus in FAO, and we are concerned that this will just go in another circle. We therefore believe that this Committee should be considering either the Bremen text or the text negotiated between the former Chairman of the this Committee and the FAO Assistant Director General for Fisheries. Thank you. With regard to the new proposal on paragraph 6, Japan has the same view as Iceland and Oceania to use the word 'respect' but not 'consider' or 'taking into account'.

The following statement was made by the observer from Mexico:

Mexico presented two amendment proposals for the current paragraphs 6 and 7, which are not reflected in document SC53 Doc. 10.1 and our delegation was not consulted when this text was negotiated. Mexico is still concerned by the fact that paragraph 6 of the English text states that the CITES Secretariat should respect the analyses of FAO, which is inconsistent with the Spanish text which states that the Secretariat should take them into account. Mexico proposes that the latter text be included in all versions. With regard to the second amendment proposal made by Mexico in relation to the current paragraph 7, Mexico, for the sake of consensus, could accept the text as it appears in document SC53 Doc. 10.1. We request that the Secretariat carefully review the translations in future in order to avoid such confusion.

11. Financial matters

The Standing Committee considered the recommendations of the Finance Subcommittee in document SC53 FS Sum. 1 and agreed to the following:

11.1 Report for 2004

The Standing Committee noted the report for 2004.

11.2 Estimated expenditures for 2005

The Standing Committee agreed to the transfer between budget lines. The representative of Oceania (Australia) wished to record their view that all temporarily vacant senior positions should be filled and not used to offset potential over-expenditures.

11.3 Cost-saving measures and staff-time allocations for the triennium 2006-2008

The Standing Committee noted the cost-saving measures agreed at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004) that have to be implemented in the triennium 2006-2008 in order to maintain the programme expenditures within the financial resources approved by the Parties.

11.4 Budget containment strategies

a) Collection of arrears

Participants expressed concern that non-payment of contributions by Parties would affect the financial liquidity of the Trust Fund. In relation to Parties with arrears the Standing Committee decided:

- i) to request that its regional representatives and the Secretary-General strengthen their efforts to consult with Parties currently in arrears, requesting payment of those arrears and, if appropriate, commitment to a payment plan; and
- ii) to consider at its 54th meeting appropriate action concerning Parties in arrears which have not submitted a payment plan by the end of 2005.

b) Consideration of official bids from Governments for relocation of the Secretariat to a lower-cost location

The Standing Committee was of the opinion that it had no mandate to invite official bids for relocation of the Secretariat. However interested Parties could submit offers to host the Secretariat for consideration at CoP14.

c) Negotiations of reduction in the 13 per cent Programme Support Costs

The Committee noted that the Chairman would hold talks with the UNEP representative and would keep it informed of the results.

11.5 Shifting the financial burden to the trade

The Standing Committee agreed that any potential work on new funding mechanisms should be undertaken by its Strategic Plan Working Group and should take into account document CoP13 Doc. 14 which dealt with the financing of the conservation of and sustainable international trade in species of wild fauna and flora.

One observer suggested that potential donor States and organizations consider providing funds to support MIKE or to sponsor a student from a developing country to participate in the Master's course related to CITES at the University of Cordoba.

During discussion of these agenda items, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), and by the observer from South Africa.

12. Review of the scientific committees

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 12. The Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees explained the rationale for the proposal made by their members, emphasizing the parallel review process by the Committees themselves and by an External Evaluation Working Group and the fact that the review should not require financial support. The Secretariat suggested that it could provide basic facts and figures for the Committees to use in their review.

The Committee agreed to the terms of reference for the review set out in paragraph 3 of the document and to the suggestions set out in paragraph 4. It also agreed that the External Evaluation Working Group would comprise the members of the Standing Committee plus the observer from the United Republic of Tanzania.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Zambia) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees, and the observers from Argentina and Mexico.

13. Improving regional communication and representation

The Secretariat drew attention to the Committee's responsibilities under Decision 13.12. The Committee noted an oral progress report on this matter from the Chairman of the Animals Committee, speaking also on behalf of the Plants and Nomenclature Committees.

14. Dialogue meetings

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 14. A number of comments and suggestions were made by participants, focusing on the following issues: the need to provide some flexibility regarding chairmanship, so that a representative of a range State of the species concerned could chair the meeting if appropriate; whether discussions during dialogue meetings should be considered confidential; the need for dialogue meetings to be held as far as possible in advance of meetings of the Conference of the Parties; the need for range States to be consulted regarding invited experts; the rights of consumer States to participate in dialogue meetings.

The Secretariat was requested to prepare a revised version of the Annex to document SC53 Doc. 14, taking into account the comments made by participants, for consideration at a later session.

Later in the meeting, the Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 14.1. The Committee approved the draft terms of reference and rules of procedure for dialogue meetings presented in that document, with the following amendments to the draft rules of procedure:

- a) paragraph 5 should read as follows: "The Chairman of the Standing Committee shall serve as the Chairman of each CITES dialogue meeting. 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 or identify a Chairman who is acceptable to the range States."
- b) in paragraph 9: the words "concerning the discussions taking place, or that have taken place" should be replaced by concerning the statements made by other participants.
- c) paragraph 11 should be deleted and the following paragraphs renumbered.

The Committee agreed that, on the basis of this document, the Secretariat should prepare a draft resolution for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia), Asia (China and Malaysia), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), and the observer from the United States.

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

15. Introduction from the sea

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 15. It drew attention to ongoing efforts to identify sufficient funding for a workshop on introduction from the sea and the need for guidance from the Standing Committee on issues related to organization of the workshop. The Committee agreed to suspend its discussions on the matter until later in the meeting, so that members could consider the written recommendations that had been put forward by the clearing house in document SC53 Inf. 6.

A number of Committee members and observers expressed their interest in participating in the workshop. The Committee agreed that the workshop should be chaired by the Chairman of the Standing Committee and that the following participants should be invited to attend:

Africa:

Cameroon (Management Authority), Kenya (Scientific Authority), South Africa (fisheries);

Asia:

China (MA), Japan (fisheries), Malaysia (SA);

Central and South America and the Caribbean:

Argentina (MA), Chile (SA), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (fisheries);

Europe:

Germany, Iceland (fisheries), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

North America:

Canada (fisheries), Mexico (SA), United States (MA);

Oceania:

Australia, Fiji;

Intergovernmental organizations:

European Community, NEAFC, Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (upon invitation from the Chairman); and

Non-governmental organizations:

IWMC World Conservation Trust, Species Survival Network (upon invitation from the Chairman), TRAFFIC.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Decision 13.18, representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Customs Organization should be invited as well.

The Committee agreed that the workshop should generally be organized in accordance with the provisional agenda contained in document SC53 Inf. 6. It further agreed that point 5 on that provisional agenda, however, should be resolved before the workshop takes place and that the workshop should take account of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and flag State responsibility in its discussions.

In addition to other background documents identified for the workshop, it was suggested that the Secretariat obtain a copy of a recent Canadian paper written on Regional Fishery Management Organizations.

During discussions of the agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Zambia), Asia (China and Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany and Iceland), North America (Canada), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government, and the observers from Mexico, FAO, the European Community, IWMC World Conservation Trust, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC and the WWF.

16. Trade in Appendix-I species

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 16. One observer suggested an expansion of the proposed study, to consider the use of certificates of captive-breeding. Several other participants wished to raise questions or to propose amendments to the terms of reference in the Annex to the document. The Committee requested that comments be given to the Secretariat, which should prepare a revised version for discussion later in the meeting.

At a later session, the Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 16.1, containing revised terms of reference for the proposed study of trade in Appendix-I species, taking into account the comments received by the Secretariat, but suggested the exclusion of paragraph 6 as not relevant to the study.

The Committee agreed the terms of reference for the review of Appendix-I species presented in document SC53 Doc. 16.1, with the exception of paragraph 6.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Europe (Germany), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairman of the Animals Committee and the observers from Israel and Mexico.

17. Illegal trade in tigers

The observer from the United States, on behalf of the North American region, introduced document SC53 Doc. 17. The Secretariat described the outcomes of the recent meeting of the CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force, where concern had been expressed regarding continuing illicit trade in specimens of tiger but Task Force members had reported significant seizures. The Secretariat reported on the progress being made in the establishment by India of a specialized and centralized wildlife law enforcement unit. The Secretariat also reported on its interaction with a task force established by the Prime Minister of India, which is examining issues related to tiger conservation. India reported orally on its recent activities related to enforcement and a planned nationwide tiger survey.

The Committee noted oral reports from the Secretariat and from China and India in relation to recent activities regarding the combating of illicit trade in specimens of Asian big cat species, as well as a written document submitted by Nepal (SC53 Inf. 4). The Committee directed the Secretariat, in conjunction with the North American Wildlife Enforcement Group, to undertake an analysis of intelligence relating to this trade and to report on this subject at its 54th meeting. The Committee also agreed that all range States of Asian big cat species should submit reports relating to their work in combating illicit trade in specimens of Asian big cat species for review at its 54th meeting. Where relevant, such reports should include information describing how the Parties have implemented the recommendations made by the 1999 CITES Tiger Missions Technical Team.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (China) and North America (Canada), and the observers from the United Kingdom, David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, IFAW and WWF.

The following statement was made by the delegate from China:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

In response to the United States suggestion in SC53 Doc. 17, I would like to report to you the implementation of the Tiger Mission's recommendations and suggestions in relation to China as follows. I am heading the Enforcement and Training Division of CITES China. There are three persons in my division and one enforcement coordinator respectively at our 22 branch offices. This division was established in 2000 in response to the suggestions made by the 1998 Tiger Mission. Mr Chairman, it is my division who coordinates and assists the enforcement of CITES in a country with a population of 1.3 billion and 9.6 million square kilometres of land.

Several wildlife law enforcement meetings are convened annually for the purpose of sharing information, solving problems in existence and developing the enforcement strategy of CITES China and its branch offices. Up to 100 CITES enforcement workshops and training seminars have been organized for the wildlife law enforcement officers in the past five years. Hundreds and thousands of copies of CITES leaflets, CITES Posters, CITES Training Manuals, ETIS Training Manuals, MIKE Training Manuals, Wildlife Import and Export Management Manuals, Enforcement Guides on Wildlife Crime and Identification Manuals for Birds, Snakes and Frogs and Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises have been compiled and disseminated to the international passengers or wildlife law enforcement officers. Many organizations and Parties such as IFAW, WWF, TRAFFIC, CWCA, CITES Secretariat and USFWS are involved in some of the above events.

Mr Chairman, by the above education and training efforts, I think the implementation and enforcement of CITES has gone deep into the heart of our wildlife law enforcement officers. We have nearly 60,000 forest policemen involved in combating wildlife and forest crime and 7,000 Customs police involved in anti-smuggling. Both of them are specialized police and they are very important to the CITES enforcement in China. It is not a problem to cooperate and coordinate the forest police to enforce CITES because both CITES China and forest police organs are under the forestry department with the same supervisor. However, the Customs police is a little

different from the forest police because we are not in the same department. In order to coordinate and assist the Customs to fully play its role in CITES enforcement, CITES China and its 22 branch offices have paid high attention to the establishment of close linkage with the Customs by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. One MoU was signed by the CITES China and Customs China early this year and at least 20 MoUs have been signed or revised at provincial levels over the past five years. The MoU has clarified the responsibilities and obligations of both sides. The details of the MoUs are as follows.

The obligations and responsibilities of CITES China include:

- Designates contact points for the Customs;*
- Provides legal and technical supports to the Customs;*
- Issues alerts in relation to smuggling of wildlife to the Customs;*
- Provides training assistance to the Customs;*
- Assists the Customs to develop education programmes at ports;*
- Assists the Customs to inspect imported/exported wildlife;*
- Cooperates with Customs to carry out anti-smuggling operation;*
- Coordinates with Customs to investigate the case detected by other Parties;*
- Coordinates with Customs to collect seizure information requested by the CITES Secretariat or other Parties;*
- Assists Customs in identifying seized specimens;*
- Assists Customs in assessing the value of seized specimens;*
- Accepts, rescues and disposes of seized specimens.*

The obligations and responsibilities of Customs include:

- Pays high attention to the control of cross-border trade in wildlife*
- Handles wildlife cases in accordance with our regulations*
- Hands over seized wildlife to wildlife administration or CITES China*
- Provides details of wildlife cases to CITES China*
- Provides the actual import and export data to CITES China;*
- Provides CITES training to its staff.*

Mr Chairman, under the direction of the above MoUs, numerous tasks have been done and huge seizures have been made in China.

It should be emphasized that my division is becoming the national central database of wildlife seizures. It is provided by a notification, which was issued jointly by the national forestry, police and Customs administration in 2004, that any wildlife seizure of international nature should be reported to the CITES China for recording, analysing and dissemination. We have collected data on hundreds of wildlife seizures and submitted almost all of them to the CITES Secretariat, the ETIS Database or other Parties. Some will also be submitted to Interpol by our NCB this year.

As my enforcement colleagues here have known, my division is also acting as a focal point for the international wildlife law enforcement community. We led the Chinese delegation at all of the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group meetings and will host the 18th meeting in 2006. We nominated some officials from the national forest police and Customs police to attend the CoPs of CITES, the meetings of CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force, the Wildlife Training Seminar for Tiger Range States, the Workshop on CITES Implementation and Enforcement in Mekong sub-region and the Workshop on CITES Enforcement in South Asia. Many alerts based on seizure information from the CITES Secretariat and other Parties have been issued to the wildlife law enforcement agencies and some follow-up investigations are also made by the Chinese Customs subsequently. Some risk assessment reports made from our seizure information have been produced and disseminated to the relevant enforcement agencies. After this meeting, I will devote myself to hosting the Silk Road CITES Enforcement Seminar and then coordinate the relevant government agencies to study the control of illicit trade in big cat skins.

Mr Chairman, what I have introduced is only a part of our work. I believe CITES China and its 22 branch offices have played the role of the specialized enforcement units and have successfully coordinated and assisted the other Chinese wildlife law enforcement agencies to concentrate their efforts upon the illicit taking of and trading in CITES-listed species.

From 1999 to 2004, China's Customs police totally detected 277 wildlife-related smuggling cases, arrested 415 suspects and seized more than 20,000 live specimens. Only in 2004, China's forest police investigated 966 wildlife cases in total, dealt with 1,381 suspects and confiscated more than 30,000 specimens of endangered species. Since 1999, 51 big-cat-related cases have been detected in China while 1 live snow leopard, 80 tiger skins, 744 leopard skins, 19 snow leopard skins, 1 clouded leopard skin, 31 tiger skeletons, 6 leopard skeletons, 1 snow leopard skeleton, 334.6 kilograms of tiger/leopard bones and some costumes made from big cat skins have been confiscated. More than 99 offenders have been punished, some were sentenced to death or life imprisonment, some were sentenced to fixed years' imprisonment, others are fined.

Mr Chairman, it is no doubt that China has seized the largest number of illegal big cat specimens in the world.

A nationwide tiger conservation project with a budget of millions of CNY is being carried out by the State Forestry Administration. Hundreds of reserves are newly established and some of them may be inhabited by tigers. The captive population of tigers has increased to 3,000 in China. Several captive bred South China tigers were sent to South Africa for survival training in the wild. They are expected to be released into the wild to restore the tiger population in China. All of our pre-Convention stocks of tiger bone and new stocks of captive bred tiger bone are still well controlled by the Government. Some of the seized big cat skins have been donated to the forensic laboratories, museums, institutes and universities for research or education. The remaining skins are kept well by the forestry departments or the relevant wildlife law enforcement agencies.

Mr Chairman, China will continue to protect its wild tigers, to implement its internal trade on trade in wild tiger parts and derivatives, and to combat the illicit trade in tiger parts and derivatives.

At the meeting of the CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force, we learnt that Tibet, in China, is one of the markets for big-cat skins. After the meeting, we specially organized a Workshop on Control of Trade in Big Cat Skins in Tibet, where much information was exchanged and lots of issues were discussed.

At this stage, we are evaluating the administrative and enforcement measures we should take. We believe the most pressing work is to take all the means to publicize the tiger crisis, the threat to the survival of big cat posed by the traditional Tibetan garment and the provisions of CITES and our domestic laws. Once we have done so, we will strictly enforce the proposed administrative measures in an effort to stop the illicit trade in and possession of big cat skin and the products thereof in Tibet and its neighbouring provinces.

Mr Chairman, I strongly believe that the illicit trade in big cat skins in Tibet and its neighbouring provinces could be controlled soon.

Finally, I want to say that we recognize the efforts being made in India and Nepal and we are confident that the relevant cooperation among India, Nepal and China will be further strengthened.

Thank you very much for your attention.

18. Conservation of and trade in great apes

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 18. The discussion that ensued was very much in favour of the involvement of CITES, especially with regard to combating illegal trade. There was a consensus that a technical mission and Great Ape Enforcement Task Force were appropriate ways for CITES to contribute to the conservation of great apes.

The Committee noted an oral report by the Secretariat regarding illicit cross-border movement of specimens of CITES-listed species by UN peace-keeping forces and agreed that the Chairman of the Committee should write to the President of the UN Security Council on this subject. The Committee

noted the document and oral reports from the Chairman of the Animals Committee and the Chairman of the Animals Committee's Working Group on Great Apes. It also took note of the recommendations reported by the representative of Africa (Kenya) as Chairman of that Working Group [to be found in document AC21 WG7 Doc. 1 (Rev. 1)]. The Committee instructed the Secretariat to liaise with the GRASP Secretariat with a view to conducting a technical mission to Southeast Asia regarding illicit trade in orang-utans. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should investigate ways in which a CITES Great Ape Enforcement Task Force could be established.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Kenya), Europe (Germany), North America (United States), Oceania (Australia) and the Previous Host Country (Thailand), by the Chairman of the Animals Committee and by the observers from IUCN, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation and Species Survival Network.

19. Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 19 drawing attention to previous Standing Committee discussions on this matter, the links between Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) and Decisions 13.23 to 13.25 and the need to secure funding to achieve the objectives of the Decisions. Participants stressed that poaching and illegal trade were still a threat to rhinoceroses.

The Committee agreed to request the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups to review the question of indicators in document Doc. SC.42.10.5 and to request TRAFFIC to analyse the data on rhinoceros horn stockpile volumes, seizures, poaching and other information. The Committee also agreed to re-discuss the matter at its 54th meeting on the basis of their results and called on Parties to support these organizations financially in undertaking these tasks.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representative of Europe (Germany) and the observer from TRAFFIC.

20. African elephant

20.1 Control of trade in African elephant ivory

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 20.1. Considerable discussion ensued on this topic, with interventions noting the considerable progress made by China in controlling internal trade in ivory but also stressing the significant levels of illicit trade that continue. Considerable disappointment was expressed over the small number of African elephant range States that had reported on implementation of the Action plan and the Secretariat was asked to report in detail on this subject in future. The importance of markets outside range States was also emphasized and the Secretariat was encouraged to monitor these markets closely. The work by Ethiopia was commented on repeatedly and was regarded as an excellent example to other African elephant range States.

The Committee, as well as noting the document, also noted that many African elephant range States had yet to submit progress reports and that illicit trade in ivory continued to occur at significant levels. It agreed with the recommendation that it was too early to take a decision at the present meeting regarding the possibility of China becoming an importing country for legal ivory. Nevertheless, the Committee congratulated China for its efforts to date. The Secretariat was instructed to continue to monitor closely illicit trade in ivory involving China and other markets around the world, including countries in Africa that are not elephant range States and to report on this subject at the 54th meeting of the Committee. The Secretariat was instructed to report in detail at the 54th meeting of the Committee upon implementation of the action plan. The Committee welcomed the offer by the observer from South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to assist relevant range States, especially Angola, Lesotho and Mozambique. The Committee congratulated the Government of Ethiopia on its efforts to combat illicit trade.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representative of Africa (Cameroon, Kenya and Zambia), Asia (China and Japan), Oceania (Australia), Europe (Germany) and the Previous Host Country (Thailand), the observers from Botswana,

Namibia, South Africa, the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Humane Society International, IFAW, IWMC World Conservation Trust and WWF.

The delegate from China made the following statement.

You would note that in the Mission Report under heading "Conclusion and recommendation", two paragraphs (namely, paragraphs 48 and 49) have mentioned the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. With due respect, I must say that the statement that there was conflict or imbalance between mainland China and HKSAR which could lead to illicit trade has not been correctly made.

Hong Kong has made it very clear on different occasions that the ivory currently in Hong Kong's local market are stockpiles which could not be re-exported upon the commercial ivory trade ban in 1989. These stockpiles were legally imported into Hong Kong before the species was uplisted to Appendix I. Some of them were verified with the CITES Secretariat before their import. While commercial re-export of ivory is now not allowed under CITES, there is no justification to deprive the owners of their right to dispose of this legal stock locally. The stock is under licence and is subject to strict control. Anyone who possesses ivory, whether it be raw or worked, required a licence if it is for commercial purposes irrespective of the quantity that is involved. Transfer of this licensed stock of ivory is only allowed between licensed holders with the quantity that is transferred deducted from the stock of the previous owner before it is added to the stock of the new owner. If the new owner does not have a licence of his own, he has to apply for one before he can legally acquire the ivory. The system requires all commercial ivory holders to have a licence under their names and the stock is under surprise inspections from time to time. Any irregularity is subject to investigation and prosecution. No commercial trade including possession or control of ivory is allowed except under and in accordance with a licence. As for import and re-export, they must also be conducted under a licence. In practice, no licence is to be issued for commercial import or re-export of ivory including 'tourist' items. A Hong Kong citizen visiting mainland China cannot bring back to Hong Kong a 'tourist' ivory item. Similarly, it is illegal for a mainland citizen visiting Hong Kong to take out of Hong Kong to the mainland a 'tourist' ivory item. The control regimes of Hong Kong SAR and the mainland are basically similar. It is therefore incorrect to make such a statement that "there is now some conflict or imbalance between the two policies and, if nothing else, this risks causing confusion among the residents of the two territories that could inadvertently lead to illicit trade.". Without any evidence to substantiate the statement, it is unsafe and inappropriate for the team to make such a 'conclusion'. It should be noted that while Hong Kong has no intention to ban the local sale of the existing legal ivory stock, it is committed to curb the illegal trade in ivory as shown in the different seizures that have been made. Close contacts are also maintained between the Management Authorities of HKSAR and mainland China on various CITES issues, including that on legislation, enforcement, and education and publicity. The cooperation will be further strengthened in the future.

Mr Chairman, under "One Country, Two Systems", mainland China and Hong Kong SAR maintain separate Customs control territories and enforce CITES under their own legislation. The provisions are stipulated under the Basic Law which is the 'constitution' of the Special Administrative Region. The system is well known to people on both sides. The conclusion that 'there is potential for confusion' was therefore incorrectly drawn. By the same token, I could not see why the fact that mainland China has the desire to become an importing country for legal stocks of ivory but not Hong Kong SAR could lead to a conclusion of 'imbalance'. The 'one-off' sale ivory will not be allowed for any subsequent re-export anyway. As said, import, re-export and possession of ivory are controlled in both territories. It is difficult to understand how this would result in opportunities for conflicts, imbalance or confusion. If it is because of different legislations on each side, then the same opportunities for conflicts, imbalance or confusion should be seen in all international trade among Parties.

Mr Chairman, the strict control of 'domestic' trade between mainland China and Hong Kong SAR is unique among CITES and Hong Kong would anticipate appreciation rather than unwanted misunderstanding. It is unfortunate that Hong Kong SAR has not been included in the mission or the Mission Team will have made a completely different conclusion regarding Hong Kong. Regrettably, under such circumstances, Hong Kong did not have the chance to comment on the relevant parts before the report was finalized.

Mr Chairman, on behalf of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China strongly requests that the two paragraphs of the Report related to Hong Kong SAR be amended for the reasons stated above. If an amendment were not made, China would request to put on record that "The conclusion and recommendation given by the Mission Team in its Report regarding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have not been correctly made. The Mission Team has not visited Hong Kong SAR before reaching such a conclusion and recommendation, nor Hong Kong SAR has been requested to comment on the Report under the circumstances before it was finalized. China strongly requested that those parts on Hong Kong SAR as mentioned in paragraphs 48 and 49 of the Report be deleted".

20.2 Report of the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup

It was agreed that the members of the Subgroup would now be: Cameroon, China, Germany, Kenya, Malaysia and Zambia. The Chairman introduced document SC53 Doc. 20.2 pointing out that it was presented by himself as the Chairman of the Standing Committee rather than by Chile. He stressed that the document was self-explanatory.

The Committee noted the report of the MIKE and ETIS subgroup, agreed to the clarification in the definition of baseline information set out in paragraph 6 of the report and congratulated Kenya on its appointment as Chairman of the subgroup.

There were no interventions.

20.3 Short-term funding of MIKE

The Secretary-General introduced document SC53 Doc. 20.3, noting that, since it was written, further pledges of money had been received which reduced the amount of the loan required. In response to questions, he confirmed that the proposed action was in line with United Nations rules and regulations and that, because the money would be drawn from the end of year surplus, no other activities would have to be curtailed if the loan were agreed. Some delegations urged the Committee to support the MIKE programme in full and called on other Parties to contribute to the work through external funding. Others were concerned that the proposed action would set an undesirable precedent and compromise the financial security of the Convention, particularly if the loan resulted in the operating cash reserve falling below the USD 700,000 threshold. The Secretary-General stressed that whilst there was no guarantee that the loan could be repaid, every effort would be made to do this. The Director of the CITES/MIKE Central Coordination Unit explained the process of the application for further funding from the European Community. The matter was the subject of prolonged discussion in several sessions during the course of the meeting. The representative of North America introduced document SC53 Doc. 20.3.1 to resolve the matter. After a short debate, the Chairman put the first paragraph of the proposal in this document to the vote. There were two votes in favour, 10 against and one abstention. The Committee then made further amendments to the text in document SC53 Doc. 20.3.1.

The Committee noted the additional funding pledges for MIKE implementation of USD 19,522 (Japan), EUR 40,000 (the Netherlands), USD 10,000 (South Africa), GBP 50,000 (the United Kingdom) and USD 10,000 (International Elephant Foundation).

It authorized the Secretary-General to advance from the CITES Trust Fund, only if necessary, funds to support the MIKE Programme up to a maximum of USD 199,000 while

the Secretariat secures external funding. Every effort will be made to reimburse the CITES Trust Fund in full prior to the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC54).

The Standing Committee directed the Secretary-General to report on this matter at SC54 and at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and asked him, in coordination with the Director of MIKE, to report at SC54 on MIKE's budgetary and administrative arrangements.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya), Asia (Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Oceania (Australia), Europe (Czech Republic), North America (Canada) and the Next Host Country (Netherlands), and the observers from Botswana, Israel, Singapore, South Africa and Humane Society International.

21. Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 21. It also provided an oral report on the discussions in the CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force meeting relating to the Tibetan antelope. In particular, the Secretariat emphasized that projects to conduct commercial captive-breeding of this species outside China would not be possible, since imports could not be allowed for primarily commercial purposes. The representative of Asia (China) indicated that recent population surveys indicated a welcome increase in numbers of Tibetan antelopes, although poaching continued.

The Committee noted the Secretariat's report and oral reports by the representative of Asia (China) and the observer from India.

22. Trade in falcons for falconry

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 22.

The Committee noted the Secretariat's report. It welcomed the offer from the United Arab Emirates to host a CITES Falcon Enforcement Task Force meeting and the offer of technical support from Canada. It also noted the wishes of Canada, Hungary and the United Kingdom to be members of the Task Force.

During discussion of this agenda item, an intervention was made by the representative of Europe (Czech Republic).

23. Illegal trade in ramin

The Secretariat introduced this agenda item and the representative of Asia (Malaysia) gave an oral progress report on the Tri-National Task Force on Ramin. The Committee noted the report and asked for copies to be made available to the participants in the present meeting. It also congratulated Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for their efforts. The Committee requested that China, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States report on this issue at future meetings.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (China and Malaysia), Europe (Germany) and Oceania (Australia), and the observers from Indonesia, the United States, the Environmental Investigation Agency and Telapak Indonesia.

24. Export quotas

24.1 Management of annual export quotas

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 24.1. The representative of Africa (Cameroon), as Chairman of the Export Quota Working Group, reported on its recent meetings. The Committee instructed the Export Quota Working Group to take note of its terms of reference specified in Decision 13.66 and noted the oral report of the Chairman of the Working Group on the progress so far and the schedule for completion of its work.

There were no additional interventions.

24.2 Zero export quotas

The observer from Mexico introduced document SC53 Doc. 24.2, suggesting the need for a clear understanding of what is meant by a zero quota. One speaker raised the question of whether this issue could be referred to the Export Quota Working Group, one noted that zero export quotas go beyond the requirements of CITES, another suggested the need for clarity in annotations in the Appendices. There was no agreement that guidelines were needed regarding the use or meaning of zero export quotas.

The Committee thanked Mexico for its useful analysis of the use of zero quotas in CITES. It decided that no action was required on the basis of the information presented but interested Parties should send their comments on this issue directly to Mexico so that it could decide whether to raise this matter at a future meeting.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany and Iceland), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government, and the observers from Mexico, Humane Society International and IWMC World Conservation Trust.

25. Review of Significant Trade

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 25, re-emphasizing the purpose of the Review of Significant Trade which is to improve the application of Article IV of the Convention as it applies to legal trade in specimens of Appendix-II species. The Secretariat observed that over time, there had been a tendency to over-complicate the process at all stages, resulting in a reduced understanding and participation by Parties affected. The Secretariat stated that it would take steps, in conjunction with the Animals and Plants Committees, to redress this balance.

Flora

The Secretariat explained that paragraphs 4 and 5 on Cycads were presented for information only.

Regarding *Pericopsis elata*, participants observed that some affected Parties had replied to Secretariat requests for information whilst others had not, although this may have been the result of communication difficulties which could be overcome by using registered postal delivery.

The Committee noted the part of the report on flora and adopted the recommendations made by the Secretariat in relation to plant species in Annex 1 of the document. The Committee congratulated the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the work carried out following the recommendations of the Plants Committee. It directed the Secretariat to issue a recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of *Pericopsis elata* with the Central African Republic and Congo if they failed to respond before the end of 2005.

Interventions were made by the representatives of Europe (Germany), Oceania (Australia), the Chairman of the Plants Committee and the observers from Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Fauna

The Secretariat stressed that, with respect to *Moschus* spp., three recommendations formulated by the Animals Committee had not been acted upon, and seven others had only partially been implemented. The information showed however that China was committed to improve the conservation of *Moschus* spp. and to increase the control of trade in musk and medicines containing natural musk. The Secretariat added that China recently decided to prohibit the production of new medicines containing natural musk, had now initiated a labelling system for patented medicines containing raw musk, and had added items concerning *Moschus* spp. to the agenda of a regional CITES enforcement seminar to be held in August 2005. The observer from China confirmed the

Secretariat's observations, and stated that the country would try to implement the recommendations proposed by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat provided an update of the Review of Significant Trade in *Strombus gigas*, which concerned 16 range States in the Caribbean region. It clarified that since the time of writing of document SC53 Doc. 25, Honduras and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had submitted comprehensive information. The Secretariat expressed its concern about the lack of responses from the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, and encouraged the regional representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean to engage with the countries to ensure adequate reporting to the Secretariat. In consultation with the Chairman of the Animals Committee, it would determine whether the recommended actions had been adequately implemented by the range States when the main compliance deadline expires in September 2005. Therefore, the Secretariat did not request any action to be taken by the Standing Committee at present. Referring to document SC53 Inf. 7, the observer from Honduras gave a summary of the information that had recently been given to the Secretariat.

The Committee noted the part of the report on fauna and adopted the recommendations made by the Secretariat in relation to *Moschus* spp. in China in Annex 1 to that document, with the following amendment to paragraph f): "~~Fully consider the possibility to convene~~ Consider convening a workshop...".

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (China) and Oceania (Australia), and the observers from Honduras and the United States.

Implementation of the Paris agreement concerning sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea.

In response to a question, the Secretariat confirmed that the Committee's recommendations under the Review of Significant Trade for sturgeon stocks in the Amur River, Azov Sea and Black Sea made at SC45 (Paris, June 2001) were time limited. They had been discussed at SC46 (Geneva, March 2002) after the deadline had expired and as the Committee had made no further recommendations, the Secretariat believed that the matter was closed.

Concerning the 'Paris Agreement' recommendations made to Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan in relation to *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, *A. nudiiventris*, *A. stellatus* and *Huso huso*, the Secretariat observed that legal export quotas in these species had fallen by 66% since the Committee's intervention, with a decline of over 90% in the case of *Huso huso*. With respect to the outstanding recommendation relating to activities dependent on external agencies, the Parties concerned had now availed themselves of substantial support from these sources. In addition, the provisions of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) were in many ways stricter than the Paris Agreement recommendations and had overtaken the latter. Participants sought more information about the implementation of these recommendations in general. Several referred to substantial ongoing illegal trade and called for an *ad hoc* CITES enforcement task force in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP13). The Secretariat replied that many problems would be solved by proper implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) and that there were limited resources for enforcement task forces.

The Committee agreed to a suggestion from the representative of Europe (Germany) that the enforcement questions could be addressed by the European Union Enforcement Group. The Committee did not agree to the recommendation of the Secretariat in paragraph 18 of the document and requested further information to be presented to it on this subject.

Interventions were made by the representative of Europe (Germany), the Chairman of the Animals Committee and the observers from Bulgaria, IWMC World Conservation Trust and WWF.

Madagascar

The Secretariat gave an update of the country-wide Review of Significant Trade in Madagascar. It noted that it would be useful for the Standing Committee to be kept regularly informed about the status of the implementation of the CITES Action Plan in Madagascar that had been developed in the context of this review, for instance by asking the Secretariat to include this item in its future Review

of Significant Trade reports to the Standing Committee. The Committee was informed that information documents pertaining to the implementation of the country-wide Review of Significant Trade submitted by the Management Authority of Madagascar at the PC15/AC21 meetings in May 2005 were available on the CITES website.

The Committee noted the oral report of the Secretariat on the country-wide Review of Significant Trade in Madagascar.

An intervention was made by the Chairman of the Animals Committee.

Cacatua sulphurea and *Ptyas mucosus* from Indonesia

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 25 Addendum concerning trade suspensions for *Cacatua sulphurea* and *Ptyas mucosus* from Indonesia that the Standing Committee had recommended in 1993 in the context of the implementation of the Review of Significant Trade. It outlined the information that Indonesia had submitted regarding these two species, referring to document SC53 Inf. 3 on *P. mucosus* management, and which led the Secretariat to conclude, in consultation with the Chairman of the Animals Committee, that the recommendations for trade suspensions should be withdrawn. Participants appreciated the efforts that Indonesia had taken to lift the trade suspensions, but there was concern about the late submission of the documentation which prevented the representatives from consulting their respective regions and about the level of export of *P. mucosus* that would be allowed if trade were to resume.

The Committee adopted the recommendations made by the Secretariat concerning *Cacatua sulphurea* in Indonesia.

Indonesia expressed its intention to establish a voluntary export quota for *Ptyas mucosus* of 100,000 skins in 2006, and this was noted by the Committee. The Committee adopted the recommendations made by the Secretariat concerning *P. mucosus* in Indonesia but specified that this adoption should not set a precedent for taking decisions on the basis of documents submitted late.

The Secretariat informed the Standing Committee that it had initiated a project to review systematically all recommendations to suspend imports of specimens of Appendix-II species that have been in place for longer than two years. It would keep the Committee informed about progress and, as appropriate, propose measures to address the situation in compliance with paragraph v) of Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13).

Interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Kenya), Asia (China), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany), North America (Canada) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairman of the Animals Committee and the observers from Indonesia, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation and Pro Wildlife.

26. Electronic permitting

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 26 and encouraged Parties with experience in electronic permitting to share their experiences. Later in the meeting it was announced that a Working Group on Electronic Permitting had been formed comprising Chile, Italy (Chairman), Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Committee noted the report of the Secretariat.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Europe (Germany), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government, and the observer from Argentina.

27. Personal and household effects

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 27. It briefly described the Resolutions on personal and household effects that had been adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th (CoP12, Santiago, 2002) and 13th meetings (Bangkok, 2004). Discussions in those meetings had pointed up the need to identify firstly criteria for considering specimens of Appendix-II species which may need to have quantitative limits set to be exempted from the Convention's permitting requirements and secondly options, other than a list that was steadily growing longer, for reflecting the results of the

evaluation process. The Secretariat drew the Committee's attention to the working group on personal effects that had worked quite successfully during CoP12 and suggested that some of the same members might wish to participate in a new working group on the subject.

A number of Committee members and observers supported the formation of a new working group and expressed interest in participating in it. Some also mentioned their concerns about the handling of personal and household effects to date under the Convention, relevant Resolutions and diverse national legislation.

The Committee established a Working Group on Personal and Household Effects to assist it with the implementation of Decision 13.71. The working group comprised Australia, Chile, China, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Zimbabwe and Species Survival Network, and would carry out its work electronically and intersessionally.

The Secretary-General suggested that the working group consider whether an extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties, back-to-back with CoP14, should be held to amend and clarify Article VII, paragraph 3, of the Convention. A non-governmental organization suggested that the working group could address tourist specimens and education in its discussions. One Committee member proposed that the Secretariat issue a Notification requesting Parties to provide information on their legislation related to personal and household effects, as it was thought that this could assist the working group in its efforts.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Kenya and Zambia), Asia (China), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany), Oceania (Australia) and the Depositary Government, and the observers from the United States, Humane Society International and Species Survival Network.

28. Economic incentives

The Secretariat presented document SC53 Doc. 28 and noted that no responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2005/022 had yet been received. It reported on the progress made since the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties and a representative from UNEP completed the presentation by describing a project proposal that was likely to be financed by UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force (CBTF) and Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN) aimed at enhancing national capacities to assess national wildlife trade policies in support of CITES.

The delegate from Germany, speaking on behalf of the member States of the European Community commended the progress on the issue and promised to send examples on the use of economic incentives within the European Union. The representative of the Depositary Government suggested that a consumer country be included in the review. One delegation stressed the need for countries to exchange information on existing experiences and suggested the preparation of an overview of the status of negotiations related to this issue in other fora. Another delegation felt that the Secretariat had other priorities and regretted that this work had obtained a significant level of external funding.

In response to comments regarding the mandate and available financial resources for future work in the area of wildlife trade policies and economic incentives, the Secretariat drew the Committee's attention to Decisions 13.74 to 13.77. It stressed the country-driven nature of the proposed project and explained that it would be carried out for the benefit of recipient countries at their request and in accordance with their own policies and priorities. The Secretary-General stated that the Secretariat had to follow closely developments in other fora that are important and relevant to the Convention. He clarified that the funds identified for the described project could not have been used for other CITES activities, as had been suggested.

The Committee noted the report and postponed further discussion on this issue until its 54th meeting, in view of the additional information and experience that still needed to be gathered. It directed the Secretariat to prepare a document for SC54 that would include responses to the Notification and an overview of the status of negotiations related to this issue in other fora.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Europe (Germany), Oceania (Australia), Asia (Japan) and the Depository Government, and the observers from Argentina and David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation.

29. Relationship between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation

The Secretariat presented document SC53 Doc. 29 highlighting the importance of creating cooperative links with CBD, particularly on the access and benefit-sharing aspect, and stressing that this work requires a multi-disciplinary approach, involving conservation and species management science, socio-economic considerations, policy and regulatory measures.

The Secretariat also suggested that work done at the national level on the *ex situ/in situ* relationship be integrated into the Secretariat's activities on economic incentives. Efforts could be made to explore innovative mechanisms for certain wildlife products such as the protection of geographical indications under the World Intellectual Property Organization treaties. The chairman of the Animals Committee stressed the need for clear terms of reference if Parties wanted the technical committees to play a role and noted that discussions on this issue in the Animals Committee had evolved from a purely scientific debate to a more political and economic debate.

The delegation of Mexico drew the Committee's attention to Resolution 13.9 and stressed the need to collect case studies of *ex situ* production operations for Appendix-I species that support *in situ* conservation programmes. In this connection, they suggested that UNEP-WCMC prepare a report showing which species are most bred in *ex situ* production operations. One delegation did not support the species approach suggested by Mexico and mentioned the strategies and guidelines on best practices prepared by WAZA and the botanical gardens network, as well as the importance of voluntary approaches between range countries and captive-breeding operations in non-range countries. It was noted that the expected outcomes of this process were unclear and that the Standing Committee's clearing house should look at this issue in the context of other priorities.

The Committee instructed its clearing house to submit recommendations at SC54 to fulfil Decision 13.78 and directed the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties requesting information on how Parties were implementing Resolution Conf. 13.9.

During discussion of this item, interventions were made by the representative of Europe (Germany), the Chairman of the Animals Committee and the observers from Mexico, the United States and WWF.

30. Guidelines for compliance with the Convention

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 30 and gave the Committee a short update on other compliance-related activities that it had undertaken during 2005. These included the continued tracking of compliance-related developments in other MEAs and sharing of practical experience with their secretariats as well as participation in several UNEP regional workshops on compliance with and enforcement of MEAs and a Geneva Environment Network roundtable on compliance with MEAs.

The Chairman of the Working Group on Compliance provided an oral report of the Working Group's deliberations undertaken on the margins of the present meeting. Specifically, he explained that the open-ended Working Group had met several times before, between and after SC53 sessions and that it had used as the basis of its discussions the draft text annexed to document SC53 Doc. 30. Since the distribution of that document, however, members of the Group had submitted comments and proposed changes to the text which were not entirely convergent. The Working Group's discussions, therefore, also focused on a new and shorter version of the draft guidelines which the Chairman had produced in an attempt to make the text clearer. Although useful, it did not always facilitate the editing of draft provisions to reflect the Group's conclusions.

The Chairman described the Working Group's progress regarding paragraph 7 of document SC53 Doc. 30. With respect to a 'descriptive' versus a 'prescriptive' text, the Working Group had settled for an almost pure description of the CITES compliance mechanisms. When finished, the guidelines should be able to serve as a short 'user's manual'. On the issue of support and capacity-building versus sanctions or 'punitive measures', some work remained to be done. Given the progress made

on the first issue, however, the Chairman did not anticipate any insurmountable hurdles. During its discussions, the Working Group had arrived at a clearer understanding of the role of the Conference of the Parties in compliance matters. It found that the Standing Committee remained the principal body dealing with individual compliance matters. The Conference of the Parties primarily provided general guidance on compliance but could also consider individual cases, as it was free to decide its own agenda. The matter of confidentiality in dealing with individual cases still needed some work. The issue of a separate compliance committee had not been raised by any member of the Working Group during its series of meetings, and the current draft did not provide for one.

The Chairman noted that the Working Group had overcome several hurdles and was left with about one-third of its work unfinished. Given the momentum of the Group, he considered it realistic for the Group to complete the rest of its work by electronic mail, well in time for it to submit an agreed draft for consideration by the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

The Chairman stated that representatives from the following delegations had participated in the Working Group: Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (for the European Union), the United States, the United Republic of Tanzania and the European Community. He mentioned that most of the meetings had been open to non-governmental organizations as well. He thanked all of the participants for their constructive, and even enthusiastic, participation and valuable contributions. On behalf of the Group, he also thanked the Secretariat for its support and advice.

One Committee member expressed appreciation for the progress made by the Working Group and stated that its success was largely due to the Chairman's skilful and good-humoured guidance. Another member and observer Party suggested that the Working Group should place emphasis on the facilitation of compliance and look for ways to provide capacity building and support to developing countries as a necessary balance to any 'punitive measures'.

The Committee noted the WG Chairman's report and the comments made on the report during its discussions.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Ghana) and Oceania (Australia), and the observers from Norway and Argentina.

31. National laws for implementation of the Convention

The Committee decided to discuss this agenda item in a closed session which the observers from the European Community were invited to attend.

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 31. It drew the Committee's attention to the Annex to that document, which had been prepared in English only and distributed during the meeting. This Annex contained a revised legislative status chart showing the progress that had been made by Parties and dependent territories as of 22 June 2005. The Secretariat also provided an additional oral update of the progress more recently reported by the Bahamas, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, China (Macao Special Administrative Region), Ghana, Iceland, India, Morocco, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United Republic of Tanzania. It mentioned corrections were needed to reflect in the Annex that Kuwait had provided draft legislation to the Secretariat and that legislation was close to enactment but not yet finally enacted in Qatar. Parties were encouraged to contact the Secretariat directly regarding any questions about or corrections to their legislative status.

Overall, the Secretariat noted that a great deal of legislative progress had been achieved and was continuing to be achieved. There were now over 70 Parties and dependent territories with legislation in Category 1. Some Committee members and observer Parties provided details on the legislative developments in their countries. Appreciation was also expressed for legislative assistance that had been provided or was now being planned by the Secretariat.

The Committee agreed to the following:

Regarding Parties with a deadline of 31 March 2003

- a) review at its 54th meeting the legislative progress of Mozambique and South Africa; and
- b) review the legislative progress of Cameroon provided that enacted legislation is received by the Secretariat by 1 August 2005. It instructed the Secretariat to issue a Notification recommending a suspension of commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with Cameroon in the event that no enacted legislation is received by this deadline.

Regarding Parties with a deadline of 31 December 2003

- a) review at its 54th meeting the legislative progress of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia; and
- b) review the legislative progress of Belize, the Comoros, Kazakhstan and Pakistan provided that a revised CITES Legislation Plan or draft or enacted legislation is received by the Secretariat by 1 August 2005. It instructed the Secretariat to issue a Notification recommending a suspension of commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with those four countries in the event that no revised CITES Legislation Plan or draft or enacted legislation is received by this deadline.

Regarding Parties and dependent territories with a deadline of 30 June 2004

- a) review at its 54th meeting the legislative progress of Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Dominica, Georgia, Latvia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Saint Helena and Dependencies, Saudi Arabia and Swaziland; and
- b) review the legislative progress of Belarus and Uzbekistan provided that a revised CITES Legislation Plan or draft or enacted legislation is received by the Secretariat by 1 August 2005. It instructed the Secretariat to issue a Notification recommending a suspension of commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with those two countries in the event that no revised CITES Legislation Plan or draft or enacted legislation is received by this deadline.

Regarding Nigeria and Paraguay

review at its 54th meeting the legislative progress of Nigeria and Paraguay.

Regarding Parties and dependent territories with a deadline of 30 September 2006

- a) review at its 54th meeting the legislative progress of Albania, Aruba, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey, Bermuda, Bhutan, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)¹, French Polynesia, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Macao, Mayotte, Montserrat, the Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, Palau, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Wallis and Fortuna Islands; and
- b) that the Secretariat, in the event that no CITES Legislation Plan or draft or enacted legislation was received by 1 August 2005, shall issue a formal caution to Azerbaijan and Croatia:
 - i) warning them that they are in non-compliance with Decision 13.81; and

¹ *A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas).*

- ii) requesting that a CITES Legislation Plan be submitted to the Secretariat as a matter of urgency informing the Secretariat on the progress to date and on the steps required to meet the 30 September 2006 deadline for the enactment of adequate legislation, as required in Decision 13.81.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon and Kenya), Asia (Malaysia) and Europe (Iceland), and by the observer from Botswana.

32. Enforcement matters

The Committee decided to discuss this agenda item in a closed session which the observers from the European Community were invited to attend. The representative of Interpol was also invited to attend.

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 32. The Secretariat reported on its recent activities with the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group and the United Nations Crime Congress. The Secretariat, and others, noted the considerable demands place upon the Secretariat with regard to enforcement issues and encouraged the secondment of suitable personnel to assist.

The Committee instructed the Secretary-General to write to the CITES Management Authority of Cambodia to remind it of Cambodia's obligations under the Convention in relation to illicit trade, particularly in response to the illicit trade in orang-utans referred to in that document, and to report at its 54th meeting. The Committee adopted the recommendations in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the document. The Committee noted the oral report of the observer from Saudi Arabia regarding its recent enforcement efforts and asked for a written version to be submitted to the Secretariat. The Committee noted the invitation to the Secretariat to visit Saudi Arabia to examine implementation of the Convention. It noted the oral report of the Secretariat relating to the intention by Interpol to recruit an officer to work full time on wildlife law enforcement matters, the donation by the Interpol Secretary-General of USD 85,000 to assist wildlife law enforcement in Africa, and the selection of the Kenya Wildlife Service as the first recipient of the Interpol/IFAW Ecomessage award.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon and Ghana).

33. National reports

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 33 and advised that an updated table of annual report submissions was available on the CITES website. It explained that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saudi Arabia had submitted missing reports to the Secretariat and that Iceland was in the process of compiling its missing reports.

After noting that the new biennial report format would be circulated by Notification very soon, the Secretariat mentioned that UNEP-WCMC was working on the development of software that could produce web-based and Word versions of the form. These could then be 'pre-filled' requiring Parties only to update the information that had changed during a particular reporting period.

The Committee determined that Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Iceland and Venezuela had failed, for three consecutive years and without having provided adequate justification, to provide annual reports for the period 2001-2003. It instructed the Secretariat to issue a Notification recommending that Parties not authorize trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with those four countries unless they submitted their reports to the Secretariat by 1 August 2005. The Committee noted that Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Somalia remained subject to a recommendation to suspend trade.

No interventions were made on this agenda item.

34. Reservations

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 34. There was broad support for its recommended action. However, some participants felt that Parties that had made reservations should not be asked to consider why they had made them.

The Committee endorsed the actions proposed in paragraph 5. b) of the document. It noted the view of the representative of Asia (Japan) that the current practice should continue (i.e. reservations should be considered as valid until withdrawn even if the species concerned is transferred to a different Appendix). The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should write on behalf of the Standing Committee to all Parties that have entered reservations, to request them to review their reservations in order to determine whether they could now be withdrawn. The Secretariat should copy its letters to the regional representatives in the Standing Committee.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Ghana and Zambia), Asia (China and Japan), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile), Europe (Germany and Iceland) and Oceania (Australia), and the observers from Argentina and Humane Society International.

35. Identification Manual

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 35 and gave an update on the progress with the preparation of identification sheets. The Committee noted the report.

36. Master's course on management of, access to and conservation of species in trade

The Secretariat presented document SC53 Doc. 36 and the Chairman of the Plants Committee, on behalf of the University of Cordoba, provided an update on students' applications for financial support for participation in the course. She also informed about 10 scholarships being offered [five to Spanish speakers (two from Peru and one each from Honduras, Mexico and Ecuador)] and five for English speakers (Viet Nam, Antigua and Barbuda, Suriname, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania). Having received 90 applications this time and identified 14 people with very good curricula (Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Nicaragua and Zambia), she encouraged donors to provide funding for these students. The cost of one scholarship is EUR 3,500. The Committee noted the report, commended Spain for organizing this course and expressed its gratitude to the Chairman of the Plants Committee for her involvement in its development. It invited donor Parties and organizations to donate funds in support of the Master's course.

South Africa offered USD 5,000 to sponsor a student and invited Parties with extra funds to support students of the Master's course. It argued that sponsoring a person already engaged in CITES matters not only capacitated that person but also the agency in which he/she worked, which would in turn lead to a better implementation of the Convention.

37. Annotations in the Appendices

The Secretariat introduced document SC53 Doc. 37. In the ensuing discussion, there was support for the proposed action of the Secretariat but particular attention was drawn to the work being done by the Plants Committee and the need to ensure that the work of the Secretariat and the Plants Committee were coordinated.

The Committee noted that the Secretariat would conduct its proposed work in coordination with the Chairman of the Plants Committee Working Group on Annotations of Plants Listed in Appendices II and III, in order to avoid any duplication.

During discussion of this agenda item, interventions were made by the representatives of Europe (Germany) and Oceania (Australia), the Chairman of the Plants Committee and the observers from Argentina, the United States, Humane Society International and IWMC World Conservation Trust.

Reports

38. Reports of regional representatives

38.1 Africa

The Committee noted the document and the oral reports presented by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia).

38.2 Asia

The Committee noted the document and the oral reports presented by the representatives of Asia (China, Japan and Malaysia).

38.3 Central and South America and the Caribbean

The Committee noted the document and the oral reports presented by the representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Chile, Nicaragua and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). At the request of the observer from Honduras, it also noted that the Secretariat had been asked to speed up the process of considering the case of Honduras in relation to the Review of Significant Trade regarding *Strombus gigas*.

38.4 Europe

The Committee noted the document and the oral reports presented by the representatives of Europe (Czech Republic, Germany and Iceland). It also noted the statement by the observer from Argentina regarding the reference in the document to the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) and that a dispute exists regarding sovereignty over this territory.

38.5 North America

The Committee noted the document and the oral report from the representative of North America (Canada).

38.6 Oceania

The Committee noted the oral report from the representative of Oceania (Australia) and that a document had been submitted and would be made available on the CITES website.

Concluding items

39. Any other business

Referring to document SC53 Inf. 8 (Rev. 1), the representative of Europe (Germany) briefed the Committee on the outcome of an informal meeting on *Saiga tatarica* that had taken place in the margins of the present meeting. The Committee noted this oral report.

40. Determination of the time and venue of the next meeting

It was noted that there were two possibilities for the next meeting, either the week of 2 October 2006 or the week of 27 November 2006, subject to the availability of the conference centre. The Chairman undertook to inform the members as soon as the decision was made.

41. Closing remarks

Participants congratulated the Chairman on the progress made at this meeting and expressed appreciation of his chairmanship. The Secretary-General presented to the Chairman a gold CITES pin. The Chairman thanked all of the participants for their cooperation and their work. He also thanked the Secretariat and the interpreters.