

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



Fifty-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-6 October 2006

Strategic and administrative matters

Arrangements for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

SELECTION OF NOMINEES FOR CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. Rule 14, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties states:

The Conference of the Parties shall elect a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen of the Conference to preside over plenary sessions of the meeting. It shall also elect a Chairman for each of the Committees I and II and the Credentials Committee. Candidates for these offices shall be nominated by the Standing Committee after appropriate consultations with, inter alia, if applicable, the Host Government. The Standing Committee shall satisfy themselves that the candidates are, prima facie, capable of impartially expediting the business of the Conference. As Presiding Officers have no vote there is no other qualification required for nomination.

3. In order to expedite the selection of appropriate nominees for the chairmanship of Committees I and II and the Credentials Committee, it has long been a tradition for the Chairman of the Standing Committee to consult one or more members of the Committee from each region, as well as the Secretary-General, to seek suggestions and to make discreet enquiries about the probable support for the names that have been suggested.
4. This approach has made it possible to compile a list of likely nominees well in advance of a meeting of the Conference of the Parties, so that those who are chosen have time to prepare themselves adequately for the onerous task of presiding over one of the Committees of the Conference. The preparation of the selected nominees for chairmanship of Committees I and II usually involves a visit to the Secretariat for two days of intensive discussions about the subjects to be covered and the procedures for conducting the business of the meeting.
5. At the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee (SC51, Bangkok, October 2004), some concern was expressed that the consultations about possible nominees for chairmanship of committees at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004) had not been sufficiently transparent. Balancing this concern, a need was expressed for discretion in discussing the names of possible nominees in order to avoid any embarrassment of those who were not selected.
6. At that meeting, the Standing Committee decided that, before the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14), it would prepare a document indicating a clear procedure (with criteria if necessary) for the selection of nominees for future meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Considerations

7. At SC51, the question was raised as to whether criteria should be established for the selection of the final nominees for chairmanship of the committees. In the opinion of the Secretariat, this is not necessary. Rather, those who are reviewing the nominees should be left to use their experience, prudence and sound judgement, while keeping in mind the following basic principles.
 - a) There is only one strict requirement for nomination, as stated in the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties quoted above, namely that the person to be nominated must be, on first impressions, "capable of impartially expediting the business of the Conference". It is therefore clear that nominees should be impartial and have experience of chairing large, culturally-diverse meetings conducted in more than one language.
 - b) There are also certain other possible characteristics that would give candidates an advantage, including:
 - i) a thorough knowledge of CITES and how it works and experience with one or more aspects of the implementation of CITES;
 - ii) for Committee I, familiarity with biological terminology and with discussions of scientific matters (considering that this Committee deals with matters of a primarily biological nature); and
 - iii) proficiency in more than one working language of CITES (preferably including English, since this is used as the working language by the majority of Parties).
 - c) It has been a tradition to try to find chairmen from different regions of the world so that, as far as possible, the chairmen of the Conference and the committees at each meeting are all from different regions.

Recommendations

8. The Standing Committee should establish at the present meeting, and then at least one year in advance of each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a selection panel for Chairmen of CoP sessional committees, comprising:
 - a) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee as *ex officio* members;
 - b) two additional members of the Standing Committee to be chosen by the Standing Committee in advance of each meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
 - c) the Secretary-General as an *ex officio* member.
9. Unless the selection panel decides otherwise, the Chairman of the Standing Committee should serve as its Chairman.
10. On behalf of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat should send a Notification to the Parties to announce that, in preparation for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties:
 - a) a selection panel for Chairmen of CoP14 sessional committees has been established (including the names and contact details of the members);
 - b) the members of the Panel will be actively seeking proposals for nominees for the committees; and
 - c) Parties should make their proposals to the Panel through the Secretary-General not later than 30 November 2006.

11. The members of the selection panel should communicate with each other to share the names of nominees that they have received, and any information about them. They should be guided by the general principles expressed in paragraph 7 above.
12. The selection panel should consult with their short-listed nominees to ensure their willingness to serve and their availability and complete the selection of their nominees for chairmanship of CoP14 Committee I, Committee II and the Credentials Committee by 31 January 2007.
13. The Secretary-General should then inform the members of the Standing Committee of the selected nominees. He should inform the nominees themselves of their selection and arrange the usual briefings for the Chairmen-elect of Committees I and II.
14. At its 55th meeting, which will take place immediately before CoP14, the Standing Committee should formally confirm the nominations from the selection panel.