

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



Fifty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee
The Hague (Netherlands), 2 June 2007

SUMMARY RECORD

1. Opening remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman and Secretary-General welcomed the participants.

Strategic and administrative matters

2. Agenda

Germany, on behalf of the European Community and its Members States, asked to raise an issue regarding export quotas under agenda item 19. There being no other discussion, the agenda contained in document SC55 Doc. 2 (Rev. 1) was adopted.

3. Rules of Procedure

The current Rules of Procedure presented in the Annex to document SC55 Doc. 3 were noted.

4. Credentials

It was noted that the credentials for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties would be accepted also for the meeting of the Standing Committee.

5. Admission of observers

It was agreed that observers that had registered to attend the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14) were eligible to attend the current meeting.

6. Clearing House

One minute's silence was held as a sign of respect for Andrea Gaski, whose untimely death necessitated the election of a new representative to the Clearing House. The representative of the North American region proposed that the United States of America continue their representation and the United States proposed Mr Bruce Weissgold, who had considerable experience in this area. The Committee agreed and Mr Weissgold was elected.

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

UNEP submitted document SC55 Doc. 7, which was noted by the Committee.

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

8.1 Election of officers

The CITES Secretary-General recalled that, at the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC54, Geneva, October 2006), a selection panel comprising Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Ghana, the Netherlands and the Secretariat had been established. Several proposals had been received and, as a result of the panel's deliberations, Mr Greg Leach (Australia) had been proposed as Chairman of Committee I and Mr Chi Sun Cheung (China) as Chairman of Committee II. Ms Sonja Meintjes (South Africa) had been nominated as Chairman of the Credentials Committee.

The Chairman asked for proposals for two vice-chairmen of the meeting and asked for nominations from the regions of North America and of Central and South American and the Caribbean. North America proposed Mr Marshall Jones (United States). Chile said they would also provide a candidate.

The Committee agreed that these nominations would be forwarded to CoP14 for confirmation.

8.2 Other matters

The representative of the Next Host Country (the Netherlands) welcomed the delegates and observers to the Hague.

Madagascar made a declaration concerning their perceived problems with the preparations for CoP14 in regard to sponsorship for developing countries. The Secretary-General drew the Committee's attention to document CoP14 Inf. 27 that explained how the Sponsored Delegates Project had operated for CoP14.

9. Cooperation with the World Trade Organization

The Chairman introduced document SC55 Doc. 9 outlining the current status of negotiations between CITES and the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding the application from CITES for observer status on WTO committees. The Committee accepted the recommendations contained in the document.

During the discussion, interventions were made by the representative of Europe (Germany), and by the United States and WTO.

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

10. Elephants

10.1 Control of trade in African elephant ivory

The Secretariat introduced document SC55 Doc. 10.1 (Rev. 1), reporting on the progress with assessing Japan's ivory trade controls and pointing out that some information provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regarding Japan's ivory trade controls was misleading and inaccurate. The Secretariat stated that Japan's situation was satisfactory, as it had been at the time of SC54, and noted the impracticability of a database or a system that would allow to trace ivory products back to an original tusk in range States, which some Parties and NGOs asserted as necessary.

Japan provided updated and detailed information on its control of internal ivory trade.

The Committee noted the document.

The Secretariat announced that China had requested to be considered as a 'trading partner'. The representative of Oceania noted that the issue had not been on the agenda and there had been no opportunity for Parties to confer. Following a vote, the request was rejected, with six votes in favour, and six against. Further discussion on the item was deferred to SC57.

China explained the sort of activities it had undertaken to become an ivory trading partner, in agreement with the decision taken at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Santiago, 2002), in particular to enhance ivory trade control and enforcement. It also expressed regret that the Secretariat had not been able to produce a report on its ivory-related mission to China in time for the present meeting.

During the discussion, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia), Asia (China and Japan), Europe (Germany), Oceania (Australia) and Israel, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, the International Fund for Animal Welfare and Japan Wildlife Conservation Society.

10.2 MIKE baseline information

The Secretariat introduced document SC55 Doc. 10.2 (Rev. 1), noting that MIKE data were complete for 51 sites in Africa and 18 sites in Asia, and drawing attention to the report of the MIKE-ETIS subgroup in document CoP14 Doc. 10.3. It believed the baseline data had now met the definition adopted by the Committee. There was no consensus on the acceptance of the baseline information as meeting the definition adopted by the Committee. Therefore, this was put to a vote and was accepted, with 11 votes in favour, and 2 against.

During the discussion, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, Kenya and Zambia), Europe (Germany) and Oceania (Australia), and by Japan.

11. Saiga antelope

The Secretariat outlined the information contained in document CoP14 Doc. 56. It noted that excellent progress had been made in implementing the nine connected Decisions on this subject arising from CoP13 and warmly thanked all the participants involved. The Committee noted the report.

12. Bigleaf mahogany

The Secretariat introduced document SC55 Doc. 12 outlining the current situation regarding the population of this species in Peru. The document contained six specific measures which, should the Committee agree to them, Peru could consider for urgent adoption.

Peru provided further information concerning the measures they had taken, including reducing their export quota in previous years (2005 to 2007), doubling the number of checks and assessments made by authorities, strengthening management plans and prohibiting the export of seized timber.

The Committee considered the recommendations contained in paragraph 57 of document SC55 Doc. 12 and agreed to the following:

- a) Regarding the 2007 export quota, and based on the results of a working group consisting of Peru, the United States of America, the Chairman of the Plants Committee, a representative of the European Union, representatives of AIDSESP, Natural Resources Defense Council and WWF, and the Secretariat:
 - i) Further to the new methodology established by the Government of Peru to set its national export quota, the Standing Committee agrees to a net quota volume of 4,983 m³ of verified and approved mahogany. It also authorizes Peru to increase its 2007 export quota, as the latter verifies and approves additional volumes of mahogany, pending approval by the CITES

- Secretariat. This increase possibility only applies to 2007 and may not be repeated in future years.
- ii) Starting in 2008, Peru will, as a standing practice, not establish export quotas based on leftovers from harvesting and exports of previous years.
- b) Regarding the Strategic Action Plan for Mahogany:
- i) The Standing Committee urges the Government of Peru to ratify at the highest political level the Strategic Action Plan for Mahogany and identify the financial resources needed to implement it. Peru should develop mechanisms of participation, particularly of native communities, for finalizing and implementing the Strategic Action Plan.
 - ii) The Standing Committee welcomes the commitment made by Peru to strengthen the application of its national policy of zero tolerance against illegal logging.
- c) Regarding further actions:
- i) Peru should work in partnership with local communities, private sector and NGOs to promote complementary tools to strengthen the regulatory controls and verification mechanisms established under national CITES-related legislation, including voluntary certification of areas authorized for harvesting mahogany.
 - ii) Peru should re-establish the multi-sectoral commission against illegal logging (known under its Spanish acronym CMLTI). CMLTI should assess the magnitude, the underlying causes, the modalities, the regions and organizations involved in illegal logging and related trade activities, as well as the impact of those activities on the non-contacted indigenous people. In coordination with COATCI, OSINFOR and the competent enforcement authorities, it should recommend the appropriate remedies, including the establishment of a marking system (e.g. use of barcodes) to record and track timber movements throughout the chain of custody and the reinforcement of control points with sufficient police staff and appropriate infrastructure (e.g. communication equipment, barriers, etc.).
 - iii) Peru should encourage companies to use innovative wood tracking technologies and to implement best practices to ensure that illegally sourced, harvested or traded wood does not enter their supply chains.
- d) Regarding actions by third parties:
- i) The Standing Committee takes note of the ongoing capacity building efforts implemented through the ITTO, and urges importing countries and the relevant international organizations to fully support the efforts made by Peru to implement these recommendations.
 - ii) The Standing Committee requests that the Secretariat continue supervising the progress made by Peru in implementing the Strategic Plan of Action and report on this at its forthcoming meetings.

During the discussion of this item, interventions were made by Asia (Japan), Europe (Germany), Mexico, Norway, the United States, AIDSESP, Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Peruvian Development Organization, TRAFFIC and WWF.

Concluding items

19. Any other business

Agenda items 13-18 were deferred to SC56.

20. Determination of time and venue of the 56th and 57th meetings

The Committee agreed that its 56th meeting would take place on 15 June 2007 at The Hague, the Netherlands, immediately following CoP14.

21. Closing remarks

The Chairman and Secretary-General thanked all the participants in the meeting for their contributions, and thanked the Secretariat and the interpreters for their support.