

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



Fifty-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 14-18 July 2008

Strategic and administrative matters

REVIEW OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Decision 14.6 directs the Standing Committee, in cooperation with the scientific committees and the Secretariat, to:

develop a costed proposal to assess the costs, advantages and disadvantages of the provision of a chairman independent of regional duties and responsibilities, selected by the Conference of the Parties on a regional rotational basis.

3. This Decision arose from the Standing Committee's review of the scientific committees undertaken between CoP13 and CoP14. As the Secretariat observed at the 54th meeting of the Committee (Geneva, October 2006), the committees themselves have repeatedly observed the difficulty for their chairmen to chair the meetings and represent their region at the same time. Indeed the role of a chairman is quite different from that of a regional representative. Additionally, this situation has resulted in all the chairmen so far having long tenures and being drawn exclusively from developed countries. The chairmen of the scientific committees of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements are selected by their Conference of the Parties or another supervisory body, in some cases on a regional rotation basis, which may be a more equitable solution.
4. The chairmanship of the CITES scientific committees since their inception has been as follows:

CoP	Years	Animals Committee	Plants Committee
CoP6-CoP7	1987-1989	M. Shoemith (North America)	B. MacBryde (North America)
CoP7-CoP8	1989-1992	M. Shoemith (North America)	B. MacBryde (North America)
CoP8-CoP9	1992-1994	H. Jenkins (Oceania)	J. Armstrong (Oceania)
CoP9-CoP10	1994-1997	H. Jenkins (Oceania)	J. Armstrong (Oceania) / M. Clemente (Europe)
CoP10-CoP11	1997-2000	H. Jenkins (Oceania)	M. Clemente (Europe)
CoP11-CoP12	2000-2002	M. Hoogmoed (Europe)	M. Clemente (Europe)
CoP12-CoP13	2002-2004	T. Althaus (Europe)	M. Clemente (Europe)
CoP13-CoP14	2004-2006	T. Althaus (Europe)	M. Clemente (Europe)
CoP14-CoP15	2006-2010	T. Althaus (Europe)	M. Clemente (Europe)

5. If the Standing Committee were to propose that the scientific committees have an independent chairman in addition to the regional members, there may be cost implications not foreseen in Resolution Conf. 14.1 on Financing and the costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2009-2011. The Conference of the Parties has indicated in that Resolution that the CITES Trust Fund should not be used to cover travel costs and *per diem* of committee members and other

representatives from developed countries. The costs of an independent chairman would depend on the exact nature of any arrangements proposed by the Standing Committee, the country in which the chairman was based and the location of the scientific committee meetings. The Resolution would need amendment to take this into account.

6. The Secretariat offers the following observations in relation to the possibility of the scientific committees having chairmen independent of regional duties and responsibilities, selected by the Conference of the Parties on a regional rotational basis.

Advantages	Disadvantages
More equitable geographic distribution of the responsibility of chairmanship	Potential direct additional cost implications for the Trust Fund to pay for attendance at meetings. Additionally, chairmen from developed countries often have their time and/or expenses paid for by their host institution or government.
Better reflection of different regional and national perspectives in the application of science and infusion of fresh perspectives on a regular basis.	Although representing little change from the current situation, it should be noted that if each region is permitted to provide a chairman for one intersessional period, individual regions may have to wait 10 years or more for their 'turn' to arrive.
Chairmen would no longer be burdened with the combined workload and potential conflict of interest of chairing and representing their region at the same time.	Lack of continuity – the business of the Animals and Plants Committee meetings have become more complex and their operations rely considerably on precedent. A newly selected chairman needs time to become familiar with this.
The work of the committees may be given more visibility if their chairmen were selected by the Conference of the Parties rather than by the committees themselves.	Scientists on the committees may have a better understanding of the requirements for a good chairman than Conference of the Parties delegates.

7. The presence of the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants Committees at the present meeting would permit their views to be fully taken into account in the discussion of the implementation of this Decision. The Standing Committee is invited to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the provision of chairmen for the scientific committees who are independent of regional duties and responsibilities and are selected by the Conference of the Parties on a regional rotational basis, in order for the Secretariat to present cost estimates for any new arrangements at the 58th meeting of the Committee.