CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA
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Fifty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6-10 July 2009

Administrative matters

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

The attached report has been submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme.

United Nations Environment Programme report to the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora at its fifty-eighth meeting

I. Introduction

1.   In accordance with paragraph 16 of the agreement between the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) of 20 June 1997, UNEP submits an annual report on its administration of and support to the CITES secretariat, including an update on the implementation of the agreement and the administration of the secretariat, for consideration at each meeting of the Standing Committee and meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

II. UNEP substantive support to CITES

A. Support for implementation of CITES

1. Technical and scientific support from the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

2.   UNEP continues to provide technical and scientific support to the CITES secretariat, principally via the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). This work is implemented under contracts with the CITES secretariat and other donors. UNEP-WCMC maintains the CITES Trade Database, which comprises data on trade in CITES-listed wildlife compiled from the information submitted by Parties in their annual reports. This unique resource is available online[1] and now contains over 9.3 million trade records. It is used regularly by the secretariat, national authorities, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to demonstrate trends and patterns of trade and to determine how well the Convention is being implemented. Advice is provided to the CITES secretariat on levels and trends in trade, scientific and technical matters (e.g., distribution of species and nomenclature), together with support on issues relating to reporting, information management and training.

3.   Regular outputs from the database (e.g., tabulations and analyses) are provided to the CITES technical committees, to national authorities and to organizations supporting CITES implementation. The database, accessible to CITES management authorities via the CITES Forum, is updated daily. Detailed trade reports are produced providing analyses of various aspects of the trade according to geographic regions and groups of species. With support from the European Union, a module has recently been developed for the near-real-time monitoring of the caviar trade.

4.   UNEP-WCMC maintains the CITES species database (some 25,000 species) and its online interface. This database of all CITES-listed species, which is updated in part with support from the European Union, includes information on scientific and common names, distribution (by country), previous and current Appendix listing, reservations by CITES Parties and quotas.

5.   UNEP-WCMC worked with the Secretariat to produce, on CD-ROM, a 2008 checklist of CITES species, together with annotated appendices and reservations, and ran side events on their use at the eighteenth meeting of the Plants Committee and twenty-fourth meeting of the Animals Committee.

6.   Building on a previous scoping study, UNEP-WCMC is developing an online content management system for the CITES Identification Manual in the style of Wiki software. This will include the existing some 4,000 static pages and will enable future sheets to be created online by any user authorized by the CITES secretariat. The sheets will be viewable by the public.

7.   UNEP-WCMC is developing an online database to manage the CITES significant trade review process. The database will allow progress to be monitored for each species or country identified for review through the 22 stages of the process. Relevant information will be linked to the appropriate stage, including, phase, level of concern identified, documentation, person responsible for the next step, deadlines and responses received. The system will also issue automatic deadline alerts to those persons

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1   http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/trade.shtml.

responsible for implementing specific actions. It will be integrated with the CITES Species database to facilitate the entry of species names and country distribution. The CITES secretariat will control access to the online database. Non-confidential information will be viewable by the public.

8. UNEP and UNEP-WCMC participate in meetings of the CITES scientific and standing committees, providing input on various agenda items. The latter is participating in various working groups, including those on: e-permitting; collaboration with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity; purpose codes; crocodilian specimens; and trade database users' forum.

9. UNEP-WCMC provides support to a range of CITES Parties in implementation. For example, it is developing the specifications for an online database for the CITES management authority of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The overall objective in building the database is to enable tourists to search online for wildlife souvenirs that may be encountered in the country that they intend to visit and provide information on any relevant legal controls and trade restrictions, prior to purchase.

10. UNEP-WCMC produced 18 posters for an exhibition on CITES for the Irish CITES scientific authority, which will be exhibited in the Knocksink Wood National Environmental Education Centre, Fota Wildlife Park and, potentially, Dublin Airport.

11. The CITES secretariat is the key indicator partner for the "Status of species in trade" element of the indicators of sustainable use for the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. UNEP-WCMC is working with the secretariat to develop and finalize this indicator. The final indicator will be published in the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook report, which is scheduled to be launched at the fourteenth meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, in May 2010.

2. Harmonization of national reporting

12. As part of a wider project on knowledge management between biodiversity-related agreements, UNEP, through its Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, and UNEP-WCMC have identified potential joint core reporting elements of biodiversity-related conventions and agreements, including CITES, and have been examining the suitability of the approach to national reporting that the human rights treaty system has been using, whereby Parties submit a single core report for all treaties and treaty-specific reports in addition to their national reports under the various individual treaties. This work builds on previous work with the biodiversity-related conventions on approaches to harmonizing national reporting. Those results were discussed at a workshop on knowledge management in support of improved agreement implementation held in Cambridge, United Kingdom, from 7 to 9 March 2008 and hosted by UNEP-WCMC, which brought together representatives of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related multilateral agreements, including CITES. As part of the outcome of the workshop, UNEP-WCMC was requested:

(a) To write a paper on preconditions for the harmonization of national reporting to help countries understand the rationale for and challenges to the harmonization of national reporting;

(b) To develop a concept paper on guidance for national information management.

13. The preconditions paper was subsequently drafted and shared with secretariats involved in the workshop. A revised draft will be made available at the meeting of Biodiversity Liaison Group of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions. Regarding guidance for national information management, UNEP-WCMC is undertaking research to understand better the situation of Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions, including CITES, and the concept paper will be drafted at a later stage.

14. The work undertaken in the identification of potential joint core reporting elements of biodiversity-related conventions and agreements was used in a project in Pacific island countries by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts of the Government of Australia and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, which developed a consolidated reporting template for the biodiversity-related conventions, with support from UNEP. UNEP has also supported the development of, and participated in, a workshop on the harmonization of national reporting conducted by the Association of South-East Asian Nations Centre for Biodiversity, held in Hanoi from 15 to 17 April 2009.

3. **Knowledge management for biodiversity-related conventions: an information portal and online reporting facilities**

15.   As part of a wider project on knowledge management between biodiversity-related agreements, UNEP, through its Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, and UNEP-WCMC, in cooperation with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Ramsar Convention, the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and the Indian Ocean South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding, have created an internet portal[2] that enables access to key information on those agreements, including their articles; resolutions and decisions of their governing bodies; strategic planning documents; lists of Parties; and national focal point information.

16.   Under the same project, UNEP worked with the secretariats of the above-mentioned conventions and agreements to develop an online reporting tool, including for CITES biennial reports. The tool includes not only an option that enables Parties to produce their national report online but also a generator that allows for the simple creation of other online reporting tools or questionnaires.

4. **Issue-based modular approach to policy-making**

17.   The joint UNEP and International Union for Conservation of Nature project on issue-based modules for coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions, known as "Tematea", structures the multitude of commitments and obligations under regional and global biodiversity-related agreements in a logical, issue-based framework. There are currently six modules on priority issues for biodiversity with a seventh module on island biodiversity under preparation. The six modules are: inland waters, biodiversity and climate change, invasive alien species, protected areas, sustainable use of biodiversity and access and benefit sharing. For each of these issues, the global biodiversity-related agreements are screened (in particular CITES, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification) in addition to relevant regional biodiversity-related agreements. Although the module on sustainable use is most relevant to the implementation of CITES, relevant CITES decisions are to be found in each of the modules.

18.   The website, including the modules and the results of the national capacity-building exercises, can be found online,[3] where a downloadable version is also available for offline use.

5. **Strengthening the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services**

19.   Scientific knowledge on the links between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being has increased significantly since the completion of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in 2005. There is, however, a need to strengthen the science-policy interface to ensure that existing and emerging scientific knowledge is translated into specific policy action at the appropriate levels. In response to this need, UNEP has been facilitating discussions between Governments and relevant organizations to explore mechanisms to improve and to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. Such mechanisms include the possible establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which would provide a common source of objective, accurate, authoritative and understandable information from the natural and social sciences that could be used by the scientific and governing bodies of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements to take sound and coherent decisions, particularly where they respond to common or related issues being tackled under multiple agreements.

20.   To discuss these issues in detail, an initial intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on the proposed platform was convened in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from 10 to 12 November 2008. In accordance with UNEP Governing Council decision 25/10 (adopted in February 2009), the Executive Director will convene a second meeting from 5 to 9 October 2009 in Nairobi. In preparation for this second meeting, Governments and relevant organizations, including the secretariats and scientific bodies of biodiversity-related agreements, have been invited to participate in an open, electronic review process of the preliminary gap analysis on existing science-policy interfaces on biodiversity and ecosystem services (see document UNEP/GC.25/INF/30). The active participation of all relevant stakeholders in this review process is critical for ensuring that their views are fully reflected in background documents for the second meeting.

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2   http://www.informea.org.

3   http://www.tematea.org

21.   UNEP has appreciated the CITES secretariat's constructive participation in informal discussions held on the process and looks forward to its continued participation, including as a potential vehicle for coordinating input from CITES bodies. UNEP has also suggested to the CITES secretariat that it might be in a position to encourage participation by private sector parties active in CITES trade.

6.   Compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements

22.   UNEP provided financial assistance to the Task Force of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora to enable it to organize the ninth meeting of its Governing Council, held in October 2008 in Kampala. In addition, UNEP provided legal and technical assistance to the Task Force during the meeting. The Council adopted nine decisions on, among other things, the programme of work, budget and structure of the Task Force. The Parties requested UNEP to assist the Task Force to assess sustainable options related to financing mechanisms for the Lusaka Agreement and its Task Force, the structure of the Task Force and the deployment of its field officers.

7.   Assessing wildlife trade policies

23.   In 2006, UNEP launched a two-year project focused on enhancing the capacities of developing countries to assess, design and implement effective national wildlife trade policies. The project was undertaken in partnership with the CITES secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development under the auspices of the Capacity-Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, with funding provided by the European Union and the Geneva International Academic Network. At the core of the project was the implementation of pilot projects in four developing countries (Madagascar, Nicaragua, Uganda and Viet Nam). Representatives from the four pilot countries presented the project outcomes at a side event during the twenty-third meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (Geneva, April 2008). Drawing on lessons learned from these country projects, a toolkit for conducting wildlife trade policy assessment methodologies was developed. As a follow-up to these country projects, Kuwait organized a regional workshop for Arabic-speaking countries on wildlife trade policies in March 2009. The workshop, which included approximately 50 participants from 19 Arabic-speaking countries, was supported by UNEP, the CITES secretariat, League of Arab States and the International Islamic Organization for Education, Science and Culture. Participants called for, among other things, support from UNEP and the other partners to carry out regional and subregional wildlife trade policy reviews.

8.   Use of economic instruments

24.   UNEP, in close consultation with the CITES secretariat, has been active in promoting and examining the use of economic instruments in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions. In April 2009, UNEP published a user-friendly training resource manual on the use of economic instruments for environmental and natural resource management.4 The aim of this manual is to assist in environmental decision-making and capacity-building, particularly at the national and regional levels.

9.   Great Apes Survival Partnership

25.   The Great Apes Survival Partnership[5] continues to collaborate closely with CITES and other multilateral environmental agreements. It has successfully helped to raise funds for a transboundary great ape cooperation programme that showcases the benefits that great ape conservation can bring to peace and stability. An interesting component of this work is an endeavour to link elephant and chimpanzee surveys and monitoring to reduce costs and share data – the Partnership and the CITES programme on monitoring the illegal killing of elephants jointly submitted a proposal to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States of America, which has recently been approved.

26.   At the African elephants range States meeting held in February 2009 in Nairobi, the Partnership was requested to outline the challenges of running a type II partnership and how it could be applied to a global partnership for elephants. Elephants' role as keystone species, which helps to attract carbon finance and other payments for ecosystem services such as water for the enhancement and sustainable management of their habitat, was highlighted by the Partnership.

27.   The Partnership, together with the Convention on Migratory Species and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums declared 2009 the Year of the Gorilla.[6] The underlying goal of is to support the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats. Besides featuring scientific information, educating and raising awareness, the campaign provides the scope to raise funds

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4   http://www.unep.ch/etb/publications/EI%20manual%202009/Training%20Resource%20Manual.pdf

5   http://www.unep.org/grasp/

6   http://www.yog2009.org/

for conservation projects and aims to attract significant public and political support for great ape conservation. A number of field activities in the field with partners and members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums are under way.

28.   The Partnership and Ramsar documentary film entitled "Petit Loango Wetland; Oil and Gorillas?" on Petit Loango National Park in Gabon, where gorillas and other wildlife are threatened by mineral exploration, was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2009 ROSCAR wildlife film award at the Durban Wild Talk Africa Film Festival. A preview of the film is available on the Partnership website.

10.   Collaboration between the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES secretariats

29.   During the first half of 2008, the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES secretariats worked on finalizing a new joint programme of work, which was adopted by the CITES Standing Committee in July 2008 and by the Convention Standing Committee at its thirty-fourth meeting, on 30 November 2008. Among the proposed activities, progress has been made towards the compilation of a concordance list of species in the appendices of the two conventions. Discussions on the harmonization of nomenclature and taxonomy referencing are continuing. In this regard, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted new taxonomic references for terrestrial animals that correspond to those used by CITES.

30.   Close cooperation is being developed with regard to the conservation of African elephants. A meeting on West African elephant conservation took place in June 2008 to discuss the implementation of the West African Elephant Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant focal points of the CITES programme on monitoring the illegal killing of elephants during meeting for the African region. The first meeting of the signatories to the West African Elephant Memorandum of Understanding took place alongside a meeting on the programme on monitoring the illegal killing of elephants, held in Accra between 30 March and 3 April 2009, during which a joint meeting was conducted. At this joint meeting, attended by representatives from all 13 West African countries concerned, 12 transboundary joint projects were identified and are now at fund-raising stage.[7] These projects, developed through cooperation between the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES, have already demonstrated the significant role of elephant conservation actions in maintaining and reinforcing good relationships between neighbouring countries by promoting the sustainable management of elephant habitats, which should be of immediate benefit to the local human population living alongside them.

III.   United Nations Office at Nairobi administrative and financial management support to CITES

A.   CITES administrative issues

31.   UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi continue to work closely with the CITES secretariat by providing support and guidance on administrative and financial issues.

B.   Funding provided to CITES from 13 per cent programme support cost

32.   During 2008–2009, the posts of three administrative staff directly assigned to the CITES secretariat were funded from programme support costs. In addition, 50 per cent of the salary of the information network officer was funded from programme support costs.

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7   http://www.cms.int/species/elephants/Mou_MIKE_1_docs.htm