

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



Fifty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6-10 July 2009

Strategic 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 the 13th and 14th meetings of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004 and The Hague, 2007). As the Secretariat observed at the 54th meeting of the Committee (Geneva, October 2006), the committees themselves have repeatedly observed the difficulty for their chairs to chair the meetings and represent their region at the same time. Indeed the role of a chair is quite different from that of a regional representative. Additionally, this situation has resulted in all the chairs so far having long tenures and being drawn exclusively from developed countries. The chairs 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 – see the Annex to document SC54 Doc. 13.1.
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. Shoesmith (North America)	B. MacBryde (North America)
CoP7-CoP8	1989-1992	M. Shoesmith (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 chair 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 chair would depend on the exact nature of any arrangements proposed by the Standing Committee, the country in which the chair 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 chairs independent of regional duties and responsibilities, and 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, chairs 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 chair for one intersessional period, individual regions may have to wait 10 years or more for their 'turn' to arrive.
Chairs 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 chair needs time to become familiar with this.
The work of the committees may be given more visibility if their chairs 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 chair than Conference of the Parties delegates.

7. At its 57th meeting (SC57, Geneva, July 2008), the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare estimated costings for the following possible arrangements for the chairmanship of the Animals and Plants Committees:
- a) A chair elected from amongst the members to be permanently replaced by his/her alternate, who would then represent the region;
 - b) A chair, in addition to the regular members, selected by the Conference of the Parties; and
 - c) Financial support to the chair to cover time spent working on committee business as well as costs related to participation in meetings.
8. Should the Standing Committee choose option a) or b) above, then the maximum additional cost to the Trust Fund is estimated as follows:
- a) Chairs drawn from a developed country: no extra cost.
 - b) Chairs not drawn from a developed country: USD 24,000.

This estimate assumes that between each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the chairs of each Committee participate at two meetings of their Committee and two meetings of the Standing Committee held in Geneva. This reflects the current frequency and normal location for the committee meetings established in Resolution Conf. 14.1. With respect to the support under paragraph 7. c) above, the costed programme of work for the CITES Secretariat for 2009-2011 agreed by the Committee at SC57 (see document SC57 Doc. 13.3, Annex 1) already includes an externally-funded budget of USD 90,000 per year to cover time spent by the Animals and Plants Committee

chairs working on committee business as well as costs related to participation in meetings. The Finance and Budget Subcommittee ranked this as a high priority but, to date, no funds have been raised for this purpose.

9. In cooperation with the scientific committees, the Standing Committee is invited to decide whether to propose at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15):
 - a) Either option 7. a) or 7. b), with the possible extra costs detailed in paragraph 8; and
 - b) That the chairmanship of the Animals and Plants Committees be on a regional rotation basis in future.

The Secretariat will prepare any necessary draft amendments to Resolutions for the Committee to present at CoP15.