

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

ASIAN BIG CATS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions in relation to Asian big cats:

***Directed to Parties***

- 14.65 *Asian big cat range States shall strengthen their efforts to implement Resolution Conf. 12.5 and, for tiger range States, report on progress at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, and subsequent meetings of the Standing Committee, and at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15), with a review for CoP15 identifying gaps and additional measures needed.*
- 14.66 *All Parties, especially those evaluating their domestic tiger trade control policies, shall take into consideration the view of the Parties as expressed in Resolution Conf. 12.5.*
- 14.67 *Asian big cat range States shall improve international cooperation in conservation and trade control through continual dialogue, and when convened, tiger range States are invited to participate in the tiger trade enforcement workshop and the conservation strategy workshop.*
- 14.68 *Parties are strongly encouraged to develop or improve implementation of regional enforcement networks.*
- 14.69 *Parties with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale shall implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers; tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts and derivatives.*

***Directed to the Secretariat***

- 14.70 *Contingent upon availability of external funding, the Secretariat shall: convene a tiger trade enforcement meeting within 12 months of the end of CoP14; and cooperate in the development of a conservation strategy workshop, to be facilitated by IUCN – The World Conservation Union and the Global Tiger Forum (building on recent scientific work, including the 2006 Tiger Conservation Landscape Assessment) and other relevant organizations.*

14.71 *The CITES Secretariat, in consultation with Parties that have or seek to have specialized wildlife crime units, shall provide technical assistance and assist with the identification of additional opportunities for technical and financial support.*

14.72 *The CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force shall, in conjunction with the CITES Enforcement Expert Group and in consultation with tiger range States, establish a mechanism to regularly monitor and evaluate the scale and nature of illegal trade in Asian big cats.*

Decisions 14.66, 14.68, 14.71 and 14.72

3. The Secretariat commented upon these Decisions in document SC57 Doc. 31.1 and has nothing further to say.

Decision 14.65

4. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2008/003 on 28 January 2008, reminding tiger range States of the need to submit reports for consideration by the Standing Committee. Five range States submitted reports for consideration at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57, Geneva, July 2008). No additional reports have been received since.

Decision 14.69

5. At SC57, the Secretariat suggested that the Committee determine how implementation of this Decision should be assessed, since the Conference of the Parties did not allocate at CoP14 a monitoring role to either the Secretariat or any of the CITES committees. The Committee discussed this subject and agreed that it would welcome reports, at the present meeting, from relevant Parties on implementation of the Decision. The Secretariat indicated that it believed that this was a complex and potentially sensitive issue. It requested assistance in determining the wording of a Notification calling for such reports. The Committee established a working group consisting of China, India, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), the United States of America, IUCN, Species Management Specialists and WWF/TRAFFIC (on behalf of the International Tiger Coalition) to help the Secretariat in drafting a Notification.
6. The working group subsequently decided that it did not wish to elect a chair but requested the Secretariat to facilitate and coordinate its work. The working group met briefly on the sidelines of SC57 and conducted its subsequent work electronically.
7. The working group exchanged messages over a period of four months but was unable to reach a consensus on wording for a Notification. Consequently, the Secretariat decided to determine, for itself, the wording and issued Notification No. 2008/059 on 8 October 2008. At the time of writing (April 2008) only one response had been received (from China) and it is attached to this document as an Annex (in English only, the language in which it was provided).

Decision 14.70

8. At SC57, the Secretariat reported that it had been working with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service with a view to convening a law enforcement intelligence training course for tiger range States. However, it has not proved convenient for the Service to conduct such training at this time. The Secretariat has, consequently, provisionally agreed for such training to be delivered with the assistance of the Interpol General Secretariat. It is expected that a training event will take place in a tiger range State before the end of 2009.
9. The Secretariat has been working closely with the Global Tiger Forum and IUCN to convene a workshop to develop a tiger conservation strategy. Following SC57, the three organizations began liaising with officials of the World Bank, which has taken a lead in supporting a 'Global Tiger Initiative'. Discussions took place to determine whether the aims of Decision 14.70 could effectively be combined with a meeting that may be held as part of the Global Tiger Initiative process. It appears that it can and it is hoped that such a workshop will be held in October 2009. The Government of

Nepal, which currently chairs THE Global Tiger Forum, has offered to act as the host country for the workshop.

10. The Secretary-General of CITES met with the President of the World Bank in February 2009, to discuss opportunities for the two organizations to collaborate on wildlife trade and conservation issues. The President of the Bank requested technical law enforcement advice from the CITES Secretariat and this has been supplied.
11. The Secretariat hopes that an official of the World Bank will attend the present meeting, to brief the Committee on the Global Tiger Initiative. The Secretariat believes it should cooperate with the Initiative and seeks a mandate from the Standing Committee to do so. The Committee may also wish to consider how best the CITES community, and especially tiger range States, can collaborate with the Initiative.

#### Enforcement-related matters

12. At SC57, the Committee encouraged the Secretariat to seek opportunities to engage with Customs and police officials, at the highest levels, to promote a higher priority for combating illegal trade in Asian big cats.
13. When the Secretariat addressed the General Assembly of Interpol in October 2008, it gave particular emphasis to tigers in its speech. It used the Inspection Tiger Brigades of the far east Russian Federation as an example of good law enforcement practice. This seemed particularly relevant, as the Assembly was meeting in Saint Petersburg, the Russian Federation.
14. Illegal trade in Asian big cats, especially tigers, was also emphasized by the Secretariat when it participated, in November 2008, in a meeting of the World Customs Organization's Regional Contact Points for Asia-Pacific, which was held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.