

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



Fifty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee
Doha (Qatar), 12 March 2010

Strategic and administrative matters

SUMMARY RECORDS OF MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
AND OTHER COMMITTEES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In accordance with Rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee, a concise executive summary of the decisions of the Committee at each meeting is prepared by the Secretariat for endorsement during the meeting. The executive summary of the last day of each meeting is sent by email to the members for endorsement after the meeting. The same rule applies to meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees (Rule 29 of their Rules of Procedure).
3. Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee requires the Secretariat to prepare a more complete summary record of each meeting within 40 days, to be sent to the Parties represented, who then have 20 days to comment. The Secretariat must then prepare a final summary. The rules of the Animals and Plants Committees contain the same provisions (Rule 30 of their Rules of Procedure).
4. The preparation of the final summary record of each meeting by the Secretariat is a time-consuming process, especially when the Secretariat receives long comments on the draft, which may then need to be discussed with the submitting Parties and others concerned. This means that it is also an expensive process.
5. The Secretariat would like to explore the possibility of finding a quicker and less expensive way of providing the summary records of the meetings of the Standing Committee as well as the other permanent committees, taking advantage of modern technology.
6. In this connection, at the 57th and 58th meetings of the Standing Committee (Geneva: SC57, July 2008; SC58, July 2009), a digital audio recording was made of each meeting session. As an experiment, two different recordings were made of each session. The first contained the original intervention of each speaker. The second was in English only, so that it included original interventions made in English and, for interventions in other languages, the recording was from the English interpretation booth.
7. The recordings from SC57 were placed on the Standing Committee forum section of the CITES website, which is accessible only to current members of the Committee.
8. After SC58, the Secretariat sought the agreement of the Standing Committee to make the recordings of that meeting openly available on the CITES website. As some members of the Committee objected, the recordings of that meeting too were placed on the Standing Committee forum only.
9. The Secretariat has organized for an audio recording of the sessions of SC59 and seeks the agreement of the Standing Committee that these may be placed on the CITES website as soon as possible after the meeting. This is in the interest of transparency, because it means that all interventions can be heard by anyone who is interested, as well as in the interest of efficiency, because it means that the record of the meeting is available much more quickly than any written record could be.

10. An audio digital recording of the proceedings of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties has also been arranged.
11. The Secretariat expresses the hope that, if the full audio recordings of the Standing Committee are available on the CITES website for everyone, then the Committee could in future consider the possibility of accepting such recordings as the full summary record of the meeting. Clearly, there would need to be a recording of each working language, as well as the original interventions. The only written record of each meeting would in that case be the executive summaries that are produced during the meeting. If the same were agreed for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, there would be a significant reduction in the budget required for the preparation of the written proceedings.

Recommendation

12. For the time being, however, the Secretariat requests only the agreement of the Standing Committee that the audio digital recordings of its sessions may be made openly available on the CITES website.