

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Strategic matters

Cooperation with other organizations

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 58th meeting (Geneva, July 2009), the Standing Committee agreed “to explore the possibility of organizing with the [World Trade Organisation (WTO)] an informal discussion on issues of mutual interest” in the margins of the present meeting. At the time of writing (June 2011), several Parties were considering hosting a reception during the present meeting. The Secretariat will work with the Parties concerned to see whether the government representatives to WTO could be invited.

Cooperation activities

3. In September 2010, the Secretary-General met with the Director General of WTO to discuss opportunities for enhancing cooperation between the two organizations [e.g. the CITES Secretariat’s participation in a panel on ‘Multilateral agreements and the WTO’ organized during the WTO Public Forum 2010 (Geneva, 16 September 2010)].
4. The Secretariat participated in the November 2010 meeting of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment and made a brief intervention, referring to the September meeting between the heads of WTO and CITES and the possibility of organizing a joint regional trade and environment workshop, as requested by the *Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo* (CCAD), see document WTO/CTE/17. During the same month, the CITES Secretariat assisted the WTO Secretariat in updating the WTO Matrix of Trade-Related Measures in Multilateral Environmental Agreements to reflect Resolutions and Decisions adopted at the 14th (The Hague, 2007) and 15th (Doha, 2010) meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.
5. The Secretariat participated in the second meeting of the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species (LG/IAS), which was hosted by WTO in February 2011. Later the same week, the CITES and WTO Secretariats participated in a meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, as live bait and live food.
6. During the LG/IAS meeting, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) of WTO advised that it was planning to organize a global seminar on international trade and invasive alien species in March or June 2012. A background note outlining the rationale, objectives and format of the event as well as the next steps for its preparation, will be discussed at the next meeting of the SDTF Working Group on 27 June 2011.
7. The CITES and WTO Secretariats have discussed the request from the CCAD mentioned in paragraph 4 above. The WTO Secretariat is organizing a regional workshop for trade and environment in the Latin American region (Mexico, 27-29 September 2011) and has invited the Secretariat and CCAD to send representatives to the workshop. The Secretariat has asked whether CITES authorities from the region might also be able to attend, if the necessary funds were identified, and is awaiting a response from the WTO Secretariat.

Requests for observer status

8. On 7 March 2011, requests for *ad hoc* observer status for CITES in the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade were sent to the chairs of the respective committees by the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Chair of the Standing Committee. These requests were then placed on the agendas of the two committees for consideration during their March 2011 meetings.
9. In April 2011, the Secretariat was advised by the WTO Secretariat that some Members of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures had requested more time to consider the Convention's application and that the application would again be on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the SPS Committee from 29 to 30 June 2011. The Secretariat was further advised that it would be helpful if CITES Parties' delegates to WTO actively supported the Convention's request for observer status.
10. Additional requests for *ad hoc* observer status for CITES in the WTO Committee on Trade and Development, Committee on Regional Trade Agreements and General Council will be sent after they are discussed and finalized with the Chair of the Standing Committee.

Cooperation with the International Trade Centre

11. The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of WTO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development that serves as the focal point within the United Nations system for trade-related technical assistance. In May 2011, the Secretariat met with the Director of the Division of Market Development and other officials from ITC to discuss a proposed joint project for undertaking trade surveys of certain sectors of CITES trade. During the meeting, it was also agreed that the two organizations would develop a memorandum of understanding on practical cooperation related to international trade.

Recommendation

12. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to take note of the information provided above and recommends that the Committee consider how countries which are party to the Convention and members of WTO might actively support the Convention's requests for observer status in various WTO committees.