

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

NATIONAL REPORTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements.

Preparation and submission of national reports

2. The latest *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports* are contained in the Annex to Notification to the Parties No. 2011/019 of 17 February 2011. Information regarding further development of the *Guidelines* is contained in document SC61 Doc. 25 on *Review of the guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports*.
3. Activities related to e-permitting are addressed in the report by the Chair of the Working Group on Information Technologies and Electronic Systems contained in document SC61 Doc. 33. A pilot activity, involving direct electronic submission of trade data for inclusion in the CITES trade database, is under discussion among a number of interested Parties, the Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC. This ongoing work should help to reduce the reporting burden on CITES Parties.

Late or non-submission of annual reports

4. Under Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP14) on *National reports*, the Conference of the Parties instructs the Standing Committee to:

determine, on the basis of reports presented by the Secretariat, which Parties have failed, for three consecutive years and without having provided adequate justification, to provide the annual reports required under Article VIII, paragraph 7 (a), of the Convention within the deadline (or any extended deadline) provided in the present Resolution;

5. In the same Resolution, the Conference recommends that Parties:

not authorize trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with any Party that the Standing Committee has determined has failed, for three consecutive years and without having provided adequate justification, to provide the annual reports required under Article VIII, paragraph 7 (a), of the Convention within the deadline (or any extended deadline) provided in the present Resolution;

6. Following receipt of Mauritania's annual reports for the years 2002 - 2009, the Standing Committee's recommendation to suspend trade with Mauritania for its failure to submit annual reports was withdrawn (see Notification to the Parties No. 2010/003 of 19 March 2010). Somalia is the only Party currently subject to a recommendation to suspend trade for its failure to submit annual reports (see Notification to the Parties No. 2006/074 of 14 December 2006).
7. At its 60th meeting (Doha, March 2010), the Standing Committee determined that Cape Verde, the Comoros and Samoa had failed to provide annual reports for three consecutive years and agreed that the Secretariat should issue a Notification recommending that Parties not authorize any trade in specimens of

CITES-listed species with those three Parties until they had provided the required number of reports. Following additional discussions with the Secretariat, Cape Verde and the Comoros later submitted their missing reports.

8. Samoa advised the Secretariat that it had been reporting trade information through the regional reports of Oceania to the Standing Committee. The regional representative for Oceania and the Secretariat thereafter reviewed with Samoa the standard reporting process, and Samoa undertook to align its future reports with that process.
9. As of June 2011, the Secretariat's records show that eight countries have failed, without providing adequate justification, to provide annual reports for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009. The Secretariat is now contacting those countries to obtain the missing reports.
10. The deadline for submission of annual reports for 2009 was 31 October 2010, but the Secretariat's records show that around 45 countries still had not submitted their annual report for 2009 at the time of writing (June 2011). Timely submission of annual reports enables the CITES trade database to better serve Parties and CITES committees. The timeliness of trade data submission should improve with the direct submission of trade data mentioned in paragraph 3 above. In the meantime, the regional representatives to the Standing Committee could encourage Parties in their respective regions to submit their missing annual reports.
11. The challenge of comprehensive and timely reporting is not peculiar to CITES and has been an issue in other conventions or organizations as well. Some of these conventions or organizations, however, have provided specific financial support for the preparation of national reports. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has secured USD 25,000 to 50,000 of direct access funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support eligible countries with the preparation of their next CBD national report. This shows how a financial mechanism like the GEF could help CITES Parties in implementing the Convention.

Analysis and use of national reports

12. With financial assistance provided by the United States of America, the Secretariat contracted UNEP-WCMC to assist it with the development of a new analytical tool for CITES Parties, known as the Trade Data Dashboards. The Dashboards are accessible through the CITES website and allow users to obtain various 'pictures' of CITES trade, which are derived from the annual report data submitted by CITES Parties. The Secretariat is now exploring with UNEP-WCMC the possibility for Parties to derive 'pictures' of their trade directly from the CITES global trade database, without having to go through the dashboards vehicle.
13. With additional financial assistance provided by the United States, the Secretariat also contracted UNEP-WCMC to prepare an analysis of Parties' biennial reports on their implementation of CITES for 2005-2006 and 2007-2008, together with an analysis of charging regimes implemented by CITES Parties. An interim report of this analysis was provided to the Parties in document CoP15 Inf. 43 and a final report of the analysis is available as information document SC61 Inf. 5 at the present meeting (English only).

Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements

14. At its 15th meeting (CoP15, Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.37 (Rev. CoP15) and Decision 14.38 (Rev. CoP15) on National reports as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

14.37 *The Standing Committee, with the assistance of its Working Group on Special Reporting (Rev. Requirements and the Secretariat, shall:*
CoP15)

- a) *continue its review of the recommendations to Parties to provide special reports under the Convention, assess whether they have been or might be effectively incorporated into the annual and biennial reports, and consider how the biennial report format might be revised to facilitate such incorporation;*

- b) *revise the standard biennial report format to gather information from Parties on incentive measures for implementation of the Convention, conservation measures for Appendix-I listed species and case studies on user fees;*
- c) *by its 61st meeting (SC61), follow up on how the reporting required in the indicators for the CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013 would be undertaken and, by SC62, begin applying the indicators; and*
- d) *report at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on its conclusions and recommendations.*

Directed to the Secretariat

14.38 The Secretariat shall:
(Rev.

- CoP15) a) *continue to collaborate with the secretariats of other conventions, UNEP and other bodies in order to facilitate the harmonization of knowledge management and reporting;*
- b) *identify additional ways to reduce the reporting burden on Parties, inter alia, in the context of Party-led initiatives, its ongoing review of the Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of the Parties, its support to the Standing Committee on electronic permitting and its work with partners to compile and analyse CITES-related reports; and*
- c) *report at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the results of this work.*

15. The Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements, together with one of his colleagues from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the Scientific Authority of the United Kingdom, met with the Secretariat via video conference on 22 September 2010 to review the steps involved in the implementation of Decision 14.37 (Rev. CoP15).
16. The Chair and the Secretariat, together with UNEP-WCMC, thereafter consulted via email in February 2011 about previous efforts by Parties to compile lists of special reporting requirements and methods for updating those lists before they were submitted to the Working Group for review. JNCC has subsequently been working to document the scope of the requirements to aid discussions by the Group.
17. The Working Group should soon be able to review, by electronic means, an updated list of special reporting requirements. The Group may also meet in the margins of the present meeting to make further progress on the implementation of Decision 14.37 (Rev. CoP15).
18. It was envisaged under Decision 14.37 (Rev. CoP15) that the Working Group would provide at this meeting possible guidance for CITES Parties on how to undertake the reporting required in the indicators for the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2013*. Subsequent developments, however, suggest that such work should be undertaken after the present meeting. Specifically, the Standing Committee will be considering at this meeting whether to extend the current Strategic Vision until 2016. In addition, the Committee will be looking at whether and how the Strategic Vision should be adjusted to reflect the post-2010 indicators adopted at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CBD (Nagoya, October 2010). The Standing Committee's decisions on both of these matters will have implications for the development of guidance on reporting under the *CITES Strategic Vision* indicators.

Harmonization of knowledge management and reporting

19. The CITES Secretariat participates in the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (MEA IKM Initiative) which aims to harmonize data standards among MEAs to facilitate the development of targeted knowledge-management tools and systems. The CITES Secretariat co-chairs the initiative with the United Nations Environment Programme, which has provided support and seed funding.
20. The first product of the MEA IKM Initiative is a Web-based portal, called InforMEA¹, which harvests and aggregates data from different MEAs. These data have been tagged with a controlled vocabulary to

¹ <http://www.informea.org>

facilitate the searching and retrieving of information. It becomes possible, for instance, to search and retrieve all CITES and other MEA decisions related to sustainable use.

21. InforMEA was launched at the second MEA Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) meeting, which was held in Glion, Switzerland, from 14 to 16 June 2011.

Reduction of the reporting burden

22. At CoP15, the Conference of the Parties adopted amended versions of three Decisions relating to reporting on trade in artificially propagated plants, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

14.39 *The Secretariat shall, subject to available funding, in consultation with the UNEP World Conservation (Rev. Monitoring Centre: CoP15)*

- a) *conduct a survey of reporting practices of Parties relating to trade in artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II, e.g. regarding the degree of completeness and detail;*
- b) *identify cases where the compilation of trade data pertaining to artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II has contributed to a significant extent to the detection of illegal trade or to any other analysis related to the conservation of wild flora;*
- c) *taking into consideration the results of paragraphs a) and b) above, analyse the Convention text and Resolutions in order to identify binding and non-binding elements of reporting, with special emphasis on artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II. The Secretariat shall list options for streamlining such reporting; and*
- d) *report on its findings to the Plants Committee prior to its 20th meeting.*

Directed to the Plants Committee

14.40 *The Plants Committee shall, after considering the report of the Secretariat: (Rev. CoP15)*

- a) *determine whether there are any taxa of Appendix-II plants artificially propagated for which detailed reporting is less valuable; and*
- b) *report its findings to the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

14.41 *The Standing Committee shall: (Rev. CoP15)*

- a) *taking into consideration the findings of the Plants Committee, determine whether it is possible to streamline the reporting of trade in artificially propagated Appendix-II plants; and*
- b) *report on its findings at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and submit draft wording to amend Resolutions concerned, where appropriate.*

23. The Secretariat intends to initiate the study required in Decision 14.39 (Rev. CoP15) shortly after the present meeting, so that a report will be available for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee (March 2012).

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that the Standing Committee, pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP14) and on the basis of updated information provided at this meeting, determine whether any Parties have failed to provide annual reports for three consecutive years and without having provided adequate justification. If so determined, the Secretariat will issue a Notification recommending that Parties not authorize any trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with these Parties until they have provided the requisite number of reports.

25. It is further recommended that the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements meet in the margins of this meeting and report to the Standing Committee on the results of its discussions.