

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

Trade control and marking

Use of taxonomic serial numbers

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 15.67 to 15.69 on the *Use of taxonomic serial numbers*. Decision 15.68 is directed to the Standing Committee as follows:

*The Standing Committee shall, at its 61st meeting (SC61), establish a working group, in consultation with the nomenclature experts of the Animals and Plants Committees and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, to:*

- a) *investigate the usefulness and feasibility of incorporating taxonomic serial numbers as an element of CITES data sets;*
  - b) *report its findings at SC62; and*
  - c) *if necessary, prepare a draft resolution for submission and consideration at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
3. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre has communicated to the Secretariat its interest in participating in the working group under Decision 15.68.
  4. A Taxonomic Serial Number (TSN) is a unique, stable and persistent numeric identifier assigned to a scientific name by the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS). ITIS is a partnership of government agencies from Canada, Mexico and the United States of America (ITIS-North America<sup>1</sup>), organizations involved in issues related to taxonomy and taxonomist.
  5. The use of TSNs as an element in CITES data sets has been discussed at several CITES meetings<sup>2</sup>. It has also generated discussion in research literature<sup>3</sup>. However, consensus has so far not been reached by Parties or by the scientific community regarding the potential benefits of assigning TSNs to scientific names of CITES-listed species.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxaget?p\\_ifx=plgt](http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxaget?p_ifx=plgt)

<sup>2</sup> See documents SC54 Doc. 43.5, AC23 Inf. 2, PC17 Inf. 9 and CoP15 Doc. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Gerson, H. [et al.]. Monitoring international wildlife trade with coded species data. *Conservation Biology*, v. 22(1): 4–7, Fragoso, G. and Ferriss, S. (2008). Monitoring international wildlife trade with coded species data: Response to Gerson et al. *Conservation Biology*, v.22(6): 16-48-1650, Gerson, H. [et al.]. (2008). Use of the Taxonomic Serial Number (TSN) as a required data element in international wildlife trade: Response to Fragoso and Ferriss. *Conservation Biology*, v.22(6): 1651–1654. (Monitoring international wildlife trade with coded species data by Fragoso et al. was also issued as document AC23 Inf. 2).

## Recommendations

6. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to establish the working group in accordance with Decision 15.68.
7. The Working Group on Use of Taxonomic Serial Numbers should work in collaboration with the Working Group on the Use of Information Technologies and Electronic Systems to review the impact that TSNs may have on the development of CITES electronic permitting systems.