

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



Sixty-second meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 23-27 July 2012

Administrative matters

Relationship with the United Nations Environment Programme

DECISIONS OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 61st meeting (SC61, Geneva, August 2011), the Standing Committee adopted the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CITES Standing Committee and the Executive Director of UNEP, as amended by the Committee. It authorized the Chair of the Standing Committee to sign it on behalf of the Committee and to transmit it to the Executive Director of UNEP.
3. The Chair of the Standing Committee signed the MoU immediately following the conclusion of SC61 on 19 August 2011 and the Secretariat then transmitted it to the Executive Director of UNEP. The Executive Director signed the MoU without alteration on 1 September 2011, which is the date upon which it came into effect.
4. A copy of the MoU and of the delegation of authority from the Executive Director to the Secretary-General have been posted on the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/coop.php#mou>.
5. The Committee also directed the Secretariat to prepare a report for its 62nd meeting to inform it of any decisions taken by the UNEP Governing Council at its 12th Special Session, in February 2012, concerning paragraph 18 of UNEP Decision 26/9 (*Proposed biennial programme of work and budget for 2012-2013*), noting that this report would not include any recommendations.
6. The Secretary-General attended part of the UNEP Governing Council's 12th Special Session, where it adopted a decision concerning paragraph 18 of UNEP Decision 26/9, namely Decision SS.XII/1 on *Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions*. In this Decision, the Governing Council:
 1. *Notes the progress made and action taken by the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9,*
 2. *Requests the Executive Director to provide, at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, a report on the full implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9 with a view to examining how to strengthen further the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements;*
 3. *Emphasizes the need to consult further with the relevant multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, the United Nations Board of Auditors, the Office of Legal Affairs and all relevant bodies and to include their input and comments, including information on the legal bases of accountability issues and the financial and administrative arrangements, in the report referred to in paragraph 1 above.*

7. The Governing Council also adopted decision SS.XII/3 on *International environmental governance*, which includes the following operative paragraphs:

The Governing Council ...

1. *Recognizes the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions, without prejudice to their specific objectives and recognizing their respective mandates, and encourages the conferences of the parties to those conventions to strengthen efforts further in that regard, taking into account relevant experiences;*
 2. *Invites the Executive Director to undertake, as appropriate, further activities to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties, and to enhance cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;*
 3. *Requests the Executive Director to explore the opportunities for further synergies in the administrative functions of the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and to provide advice on such opportunities to the governing bodies of those multilateral environmental agreements;*
8. At the time of preparing this report, there had been no formal communication from UNEP regarding the implementation of either of the above-mentioned decisions, the full text of which can be found on the UNEP website at: http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-xii/docs/Decisions_summary_advance.pdf. On their own initiative, the Secretariats of CITES and the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions have been collaborating in some areas of mutual interest, such as sharing video conferencing and webinar facilities, and have been sharing experiences in other areas, such as the use of computer-assisted translation tools and conducting paperless meetings.
9. The Secretary-General was invited to participate in the UNEP 12th Special Session Ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development, moderated by H.E. Mr Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, Norway. The Panel comprised: H.E. Mr Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment, Peru; H.E. Mr Henri Djombo, Minister of Environment, Republic of Congo; and H.E. Ms Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Switzerland. The Secretary-General's intervention on synergies can be found on the CITES website at: http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2012/20120221_UNEP-GMEF.php.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that the Standing Committee note this report.