

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

Meetings of the Conference of the Parties

IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY OF VOTING
DURING MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee (SC61, Geneva, August 2011), in document SC61 Doc. 11.3 on *Improving transparency of voting during meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the European Union and its Member States expressed the view that there had been insufficient transparency in the voting at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. They suggested that this had been caused by two factors: the inability for Parties to verify that their electronic votes had been correctly recorded immediately after a vote; and the frequent use of secret ballots.
3. The first of these issues was addressed by a decision to propose an amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties to ensure that, for electronic votes, the vote of each Party is displayed on a screen. In response to the second issue Committee agreed that “the Secretariat should conduct a study on the recent history of the use of secret ballots”.

Recent use of secret ballots

4. The Secretariat has therefore compiled a list of the votes that were taken by secret ballot at each of the last six meetings of the Conference of the Parties (CoP). The list is presented in Annex 1 to the present document and includes an indication of the species or subject concerned by the vote as well as the result.
5. With regard to the frequency of the use of the secret ballot, the table below shows the number of votes taken by secret ballot at each meeting from CoP10 to CoP15. It shows that the number of secret ballots was much higher at CoP15 than at CoP13 or CoP14, but was no higher than at the three preceding meetings.

Number of secret ballots at recent meetings of the Conference of the Parties
(excluding votes to select the Next Host Country)

CoP	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II	Total
10	2	15	1	18
11	3	8	2	13
12	4	12	1	17
13	1	4	0	5
14	3	0	0	3
15	3	10	0	13

6. It is notable that, of the 69 votes taken by secret ballot over the course of six meetings, 48 related to marine species or marine subjects (whales, turtles, sharks and other fish, and corals) and 17 related to the African elephant or ivory trade.

Rules relating to the use of the secret ballot

7. Since 1976, there have been three different approaches to the use of secret ballots in the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.
 - a) From CoP1 (Berne, 1976) to CoP5 (Buenos Aires, 1985) a vote would be taken by secret ballot if this was requested by any Party;
 - b) From CoP6 (Ottawa, 1987) to CoP8 (Kyoto, 1992) the rule was that a vote would be taken by secret ballot only if this was requested by a Party, supported by a second Party, and then supported by a simple majority; and
 - c) From CoP9 (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) to CoP15 (Doha, 2010) the rule was that a vote would be taken by secret ballot if this was requested by a Party and supported by 10 Parties. This rule remains in effect.
8. The Conference of the Parties to CITES and the Standing Committee have many times discussed the use of the secret ballot since 1994. A record of the discussions from 1994 to 2004 is presented in Annex 2 (Rev. 1) for information.

USE OF SECRET BALLOTS FROM COP10 TO COP15

Key: (A) = adopted, (R) = rejected

Meeting	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II
<p>CoP10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prop. 10.28: amendment to the annotation to the South African population of <i>Ceratotherium simum simum</i> (R) – Prop. 10.60: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Cuban population of <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> (R) – Time and venue of the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Com. 10.3: draft decision on Establishment of a Working Group on Marine Fish Species (R) – Prop. 10.19: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Eastern Pacific stock of <i>Eschrichtius robustus</i> (R) – Prop. 10.20: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Okhotsk Sea West Pacific stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 10.21, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Southern Hemisphere stocks of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 10.22 and addendum Prop. 10.22.1: transfer from Appendix I to II of North-east Atlantic and the North Atlantic central stocks of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 10.25, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Botswana (R) – Prop. 10.26, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Namibia (R) – Prop. 10.27, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Zimbabwe (R) – Prop. 10.60: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Cuban population of <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Doc. 10.34 (Rev.): draft resolution on the Relationship with the International Whaling Commission (R)

Meeting	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prop. 10.69: inclusion in Appendix II of all neotropical populations of <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> (R) – Document Com. 10.34: draft decision on Conditions for the Resumption of Trade in African Elephant Ivory from Populations Transferred to Appendix II at CoP10 (A) – Prop. 10.25, as amended by the first proposed amendment in document Com. 10.33: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Botswana (A) – Prop. 10.26, as amended by the second proposed amendment in document Com. 10.33: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Namibia (A) – Prop. 10.27, as amended by the third proposed amendment in document Com. 10.34: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> of Zimbabwe (A) – Document Com. 10.35: draft decision on Conditions for the Disposal of Ivory Stocks and Generating Resources for Conservation in Elephant Range States (A) 	
CoP11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prop. 11.18: transfer from Appendix I to II of the North-east Atlantic stock and the North Atlantic of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 11.41: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> inhabiting Cuban waters (R) – Prop. 11.49 as amended: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prop. 11.15: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Eastern North Pacific stock of <i>Eschrichtius robustus</i> (R) – Amendment to Prop. 11.16: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Southern Hemisphere stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 11.16: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Southern Hemisphere stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Doc. 11.15.1 (Rev. 1): draft resolution on the Relationship with the International Whaling Commission (R) – Com.11.17, as amended: draft resolution on Interpretation and implementation of Article III, paragraph 5, Article IV, paragraphs 6 and 7 and Article XIV, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6, relating to introduction from the sea (R)

Meeting	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prop. 11.17: transfer from Appendix I to II of the Okhotsk Sea - West Pacific stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 11.18: transfer from Appendix I to II of the North-east Atlantic stock and the North Atlantic Central stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – Prop. 11.41: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> inhabiting Cuban waters (R) – Prop. 11.48: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Carchadoron carcharias</i> (R) – Prop. 11.49: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> (R) 	
CoP12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP12 Prop. 3, as amended: transfer from Appendix II to I of <i>Tursiops truncatus ponticus</i> (A) – CoP12 Prop. 4: transfer from Appendix I to II of northern hemisphere populations (except specified populations) of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – CoP12 Prop. 35: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Rhincodon typus</i> (A) – CoP12 Prop. 36: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> (A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP12 Prop. 4: transfer from Appendix I to II of northern hemisphere populations (except specified populations) of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – CoP12 Prop. 5: transfer from Appendix I to II of the western North Pacific population of <i>Balaenoptera edeni</i> (R) – CoP12 Prop. 6, as amended: amendment of the annotation to <i>Loxodonta africana</i> population of Botswana (A) – CoP12 Prop. 7, as amended: amendment of the annotation to <i>Loxodonta africana</i> population of Namibia (A) – CoP12 Prop. 8, as amended: amendment of the annotation to <i>Loxodonta africana</i> population of South Africa (A) – CoP12 Prop. 10, as amended: amendment of the annotation to <i>Loxodonta africana</i> population of Zimbabwe (A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Doc. 12.61, as amended: Establishment of a working group to analyse relevant aspects of the application of CITES to marine species (R)

Meeting	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP12 Prop. 9, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of Zambia of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (R) – CoP12 Prop. 35: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Rhincodon typus</i> (R) – CoP12 Prop. 36: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> (R) – CoP12 Doc. 41.2 addendum, as amended: draft resolution on Role of CITES in the implementation of the IPOA-Sharks (A) – CoP12 Prop. 50: inclusion in Appendix II of the neotropical populations of <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> (A) – CoP12 Prop. 38: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Cheilinus undulatus</i> (R) 	
CoP13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP13 Prop. 7, as amended: amendment of the annotation regarding the Namibian population of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP13 Prop. 3: transfer of <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> from Appendix II to Appendix I (A) – CoP13 Doc. 12.2: draft resolution on CITES listing of whale stocks and the International Whaling Commission, as amended (R) – CoP13 Prop. 4: transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II of the Okhotsk Sea – West Pacific stock, the north-east Atlantic stock and the north Atlantic central stock of <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (R) – CoP13 Prop. 32: inclusion of <i>Carcharodon carcharias</i> in Appendix II, as amended (A) 	none
CoP14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Re-opening of the debate on CoP14 Prop. 16, inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Squalus acanthias</i> (A) – CoP14 Prop. 16: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Squalus acanthias</i> (R) – CoP14 Prop. 21, as amended: inclusion 	none	none

Meeting	Plenary	Committee I	Committee II
	in Appendix II of <i>Corallium</i> spp. (R)		
CoP15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoP15 Prop. 5: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of Zambia of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 15, as amended: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Sphyrna lewini</i>, <i>S. mokarran</i> and <i>S. zygaena</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 17: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Lamna nasus</i> (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amendment of proposal CoP15 Prop. 19: inclusion in Appendix I of <i>Thunnus thynnus</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 19: inclusion in Appendix I of <i>Thunnus thynnus</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 21: inclusion in Appendix II of all species of the family Corallidae – Division of CoP15 Prop. 4: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of the United Republic of Tanzania of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (A) – CoP15 Prop. 4: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of the United Republic of Tanzania of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (R) (both parts rejected) – CoP15 Prop. 5, as amended: transfer from Appendix I to II of the population of Zambia of <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 15, as amended: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Sphyrna lewini</i>, <i>S. mokarran</i> and <i>S. zygaena</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 16, as amended: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Carcharinus longimanus</i> (R) – CoP15 Prop. 17: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Lamna nasus</i> (A) – CoP15 Prop. 18: inclusion in Appendix II of <i>Squalus acanthias</i> (R) 	none

DISCUSSIONS IN THE STANDING COMMITTEE AND THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
ON THE USE OF THE SECRET BALLOT, AS RECORDED IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETINGS

SC31, March 1994

5. Preparation of the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (continuation):

d) Provisional Rules of Procedure

The observer from Zimbabwe introduced document Doc. SC. 31.4.8. He pointed out that the problem it aimed to address was that, when a delegation proposed that a vote be taken by secret ballot, an open vote was needed to approve this proposal. Delegations sometimes find themselves under pressure to vote a certain way; unfortunately there is a suspicion that if they support a secret ballot they intend to vote a different way.

Understanding the difficulties, the representative of Oceania supported the observer from Zimbabwe.

The representative of the Next Host Country recalled that this subject had been discussed before the eighth meeting of the Conference, and the pressures against voting in favour of secret ballots had been perceived. There were two main issues. First was the question of to whom a delegation was accountable. If the delegation is accountable to the government, in principle it should not need to vote in secret. Secondly, secret ballots are very time-consuming and slow down the progress of the meeting. They should therefore be resorted to only exceptionally. The representative of the Next Host Country added that this was a sensitive issue and that she could not here agree to any change in the rules.

The Secretariat, noting that the Rules of Procedure had to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties, asked whether the Committee could agree to submit the provisional Rules of Procedure with Rule 15, paragraph 3, amended as suggested by the observer from Zimbabwe. The Secretariat said that at the meeting of the Conference in Argentina secret ballots could be taken at the request of any delegation, and a number of votes were taken by secret ballot that need not have been. That is why the rules were changed for the next meeting. It was agreed at the sixth meeting of the Conference that at least one-half of the Parties should be in favour of a secret ballot. Under the change suggested by Zimbabwe, the Chairman had the right not to accept a second secret ballot on the same issue, so the problems that had arisen in Argentina were unlikely to arise again.

The observer from Israel expressed a preference for maintaining the current text of Rule 15. However, the representatives of the Depositary Government and the Previous Host Country and the observers from Namibia and South Africa supported the suggestion of Zimbabwe. The Committee then agreed that the document to go to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties should contain the amended text of Rule 15, paragraph 3. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to draw the attention of the Parties to this change when sending out the provisional Rules of Procedure.

The observer from Panama drew attention to a discrepancy between the rules in English and those in French and Spanish, the first referring to officers and host countries in plural and the last two using the singular. The Secretariat noted that no vote should be taken if there were no objection to a single candidate, but a delegation could ask for a vote to express opposition. The Secretariat undertook to ensure that the text in the three languages was consistent.

CoP9, November 1994

From summary record Plen. 9.2 (Rev.)

III Adoption of the Rules of Procedure)

The Chairman of the Standing Committee opened the session and commented that document Doc. 9.3 contained the new Rules of Procedure to be considered for adoption. Before their adoption, the Rules of the previous meeting, contained in document Doc. 8.3, would apply.

The Secretariat pointed out that there were only two ways in which the newly proposed Rules of Procedure differed from those adopted at the last meeting. Both changes were in Rule 15, paragraph 3. The first change affected the election of officers or prospective host countries by secret ballot "when there is more than one candidate". The second changed section stated, "The Presiding officer may either refuse a request for a secret ballot or ask whether it is seconded. If the request is seconded by five Representatives the vote shall be by secret ballot." Secret ballots had been used in previous meetings although they were difficult to implement. The Standing Committee had therefore been requested to formulate a proposal for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Standing Committee at its 31st meeting had approved the text proposed in document Doc. 9.3.

The Chairman requested, under Rule 25, that news media representatives in the plenary session not make any recording until authorized to do so.

The delegation of Japan offered their suggestions, based on their experiences during the last meeting of the Conference. In particular they suggested that the discussions be based on the fundamental policy of "harmony between conservation and utilization of wildlife", which enables sustainable use, that scientific data should be considered as the primary basis for making sound decisions, and that there was a need to promote mutual understanding and respect between producer and consumer countries. They voiced no objection to the Rules of Procedure as proposed.

The delegation of the United States of America, supported by the delegations of Australia, Austria and Israel, did not agree that the proposal would make the procedures for voting by secret ballot any easier, and commented that each delegation was accountable to its own country, therefore there was no need to vote in secret. The delegation of the United States of America stated that any votes made by them would be made public.

The delegation of the United Kingdom, supported by the delegations of Argentina, Liechtenstein, Namibia, the Sudan and Zimbabwe, agreed with the principal of openness, but also agreed with the proposed change, except for the proposal to allow the Presiding Officer the sole responsibility for refusing a secret ballot vote. The delegation of the United Kingdom recommended that, in place of allowing the decision for a secret ballot to be determined by the Presiding Officer, a minimum of ten delegations should be required to second the request. ...

From summary record Plen. 9.3 (Rev.)

III Adoption of the Rules of Procedure (cont.)

The Chairman reported that the Bureau had recommended adoption of document Doc. 9.3, with replacement of the second and third sentences in Rule 15, paragraph 3, with The Presiding Officer shall ask whether the request is seconded. If it is seconded by ten Representatives the vote shall be by secret ballot., as proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

The delegation of Colombia suggested that voting by secret ballot should be the norm. However, the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago stated that the majority of Parties in their region supported the amendment proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom. The delegation of Senegal on behalf of the African region also supported the amendment, and the delegation of the United States of America withdrew their proposal to retain the Rules of Procedure from the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties after obtaining clarification from the Chairman that the Bureau clearly expected that secret ballots would be used only in exceptional circumstances. Following further expressions of support for the general principle of voting by secret ballot by the delegations of Singapore and Argentina, document Doc. 9.3 was adopted with the revision proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

The delegations of Australia, the United States of America and Zimbabwe stated that their votes would always be made public. The delegation of Ecuador reiterated their opposition to any secret ballot.

SC42, September – October 1999

6. Future meetings of the Conference of the Parties

a) Preparations for CoP11 (UNEP, Gigiri)

....

With regard to Part VI, Rule 25, the regional representative of Europe (United Kingdom) suggested that the working group should pay serious attention to reducing the number of secret ballots. However, the regional representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Argentina) felt that this was something that should be discussed at CoP11.

CoP11, April 2000

From summary record Plen. 11.2

1. Rules of Procedure

...

The delegation of Israel considered that extensive use of secret ballots diminished the accountability of Parties to their constituents and expressed the hope that Rule 25 of the provisional Rules of Procedure would be addressed by the Standing Committee between now and the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. He urged the Standing Committee to use the Rules of Procedure of the UN General Assembly as a guide. The delegation of Japan considered that as there were many sensitive issues to be discussed during the meeting, the option to use secret ballots should be maintained. They then proposed that Rule 12, paragraph 2, of the provisional Rules of Procedure be amended to exclude observers as a general rule from sessions of committees and working groups other than Committees I and II and the Budget Committee.

The delegation of Kenya endorsed the comments made by the delegation of the United States of America regarding Rule 29, but asked for clarification regarding Rule 23, paragraph 5, which was provided by the Secretariat. The delegation of Kenya agreed with earlier remarks made by the delegation of Japan regarding secret ballots. They also expressed their concern regarding the influence exerted, not only by non-governmental organizations but also by Parties.

CoP12, November 2002

In document CoP12 Doc. 1.2, Chile proposed an amendment to Rule 25 as follows:

2. *The following changes are proposed by Chile to the draft Rules of Procedure (provisional) that will be submitted at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP12) by the Standing Committee:*

...

b) Rule 25 – Methods of voting

2. *All votes in respect of the election of officers or of prospective host countries shall be by secret ballot when there is more than one candidate and, although it shall not normally be used, any Representative may request a secret ballot for other matters. The Presiding Officer shall ask whether the request is seconded. If it is seconded by ten Representatives the vote shall be by secret ballot. If the request for a secret ballot is seconded, an immediate vote shall be taken to determine whether a secret ballot should be held. The vote on the motion for a secret ballot does not have to be by secret or roll-call ballot. The vote shall be decided by one third of the Representatives present and with a right to vote.*

Explanation: There is wide recognition of the importance of United Nations treaties and agreements, which operate under open and transparent systems, permitting public access to information, and that Governments are accountable to the public they serve. The use of a secret ballot obstructs these factors.

3. *Under the Rules of Procedure adopted before the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a request for use of a secret ballot was decided by a simple majority of the Representatives present and with a right to vote. That vote could not be by secret or roll-call ballot. Except for the election of officers or prospective host countries, secret ballots were used on very few occasions.*
4. *At CoP9, the Rules of Procedure were changed in order to facilitate the holding of secret ballots. Under the new Rules, which are being discussed at CoP12, a secret ballot can be used when one Representative requests a secret ballot and is seconded by ten Representatives. That means that eleven Representative can impose a vote by secret ballot. The use of a secret ballot has proliferated under these new Rules. In comparison, if the former Rules of simple majority were currently in practice, a secret ballot would require the request of one Representative and seconding by 79 Representatives. Obviously, fewer secret ballots would be held if the Conference of the Parties re-adopted the language used before CoP9. In light of all these considerations, it is proposed that an affirmative vote of one third of the Representatives present in the room be necessary for holding a secret ballot at CoP12.*

The summary record of the second plenary session (CoP12 Plen. 2) records the following discussion of this proposal:

The delegations of Australia and the United States of America supported the Chilean proposal to amend Rule 25. The delegations of Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Guinea, Namibia and South Africa opposed the proposal, regarding secret ballots as a way of preventing undue pressure on Parties during meetings. The delegation of China also opposed the Chilean proposal and drew attention to the right of Representatives to explain their votes as a means of ensuring transparency. The delegation of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union (EU), saw some merit in the proposed amendment. In response to a suggestion from that delegation, the following decision was agreed:

The Conference of the Parties requests the Standing Committee to examine the general issue of secret ballots and in particular the question of whether secret ballots should be retained in the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and, if so, under what conditions. The Committee should clarify the way in which the issue of secret ballots has been formulated in the Rules of Procedure as well as establish, to the extent possible, whether and when secret ballots have been used under other biodiversity-related Conventions and global, multilateral environmental agreements, reporting at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

SC49, April 2003

25. Any other business

...

b) Secret ballots at meetings of the Conference of the Parties

The representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Ecuador) felt that there was a need for further guidance on the rules relating to voting at meetings of the Conference of the Parties. He also stated that during the counting of votes in a secret ballot there should be a representative of the Parties present to monitor the Secretariat. The Secretary-General noted that Ecuador had suggested the same thing at a Bureau meeting during CoP12 and that the Bureau had rejected the idea and had full confidence in the Secretariat to do its job.

The Standing Committee agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a document for consideration at its 50th meeting in response to Decision 12.100, looking at the history of the way in which secret ballots were dealt with in the Rules of Procedure of meetings of the Conference of the Parties and how they have been used in practice, and at the relevant rules and practice of other multilateral environmental agreements.

Interventions were also made by the representatives of Asia (China) and North America (United States) and by the observer from Israel.

SC50, March 2004

8. Arrangements for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

8.4 Rules of Procedure

...

Regarding the suggested change to Rule 25.2, some participants agreed that a motion to vote by secret ballot should take precedence over a motion for a roll-call vote but others disagreed, believing that secret ballots undermined the principle of transparency and accountability. Some expressed concern that the suggested change to the Rule would lead to a greater number of votes by secret ballot.

...

9. Use of secret ballots

The Secretariat introduced document SC50 Doc. 9. One representative expressed the view that it would like to have seen a more thorough analysis. Some participants expressed the view that the use of secret ballots undermined the principles of transparency and accountability and preferred that the Conference of the Parties revert to the rules that applied before the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. One delegation stated that secret ballots should be used for choosing the next host country and for election of officers and not for anything else. Many Parties supported the necessity of secret ballots and the recommendation of the Secretariat to maintain the current rules.

The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a document for CoP13 indicating that the Standing Committee had considered this issue and did not wish to propose any amendment to the Rules of Procedure relating to secret ballots.

During discussion of this item, interventions were made by the representatives of Africa (Cameroon, South Africa, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania), Europe (the Czech Republic, Germany and Norway), Asia (China), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Nicaragua and Saint Lucia), North America and Oceania, and the observers from Egypt and Japan.

SC51, October 2004

6. Arrangements for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

6.2 Secret ballots

Some delegations expressed concern about the use of secret ballots in meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Other delegations said that it was important to be able to call for a vote by secret ballot.

The Committee agreed with the Secretariat that there was no need to propose a change to the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in relation to secret ballots.

During the discussion, interventions were made by the representatives of Asia (China), North America (United States) and Oceania (Australia).

CoP13, October 2004

From summary record CoP13 Plen. 2 (Rev. 1)

1. Rules of Procedure

1.1 Use of secret ballots

Referring to document CoP13 Doc. 1.1, the Secretariat announced that the Standing Committee had decided not to propose any amendment to the Rules of Procedure for secret ballots. The delegation of the Netherlands, on behalf of the Member States of the European Community, and the delegation of the United States of America regretted the decision on the grounds that it was not in the interests of transparency.