

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

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

**SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT**

*This document has been prepared by the Working Group on snake trade and conservation on the basis of document SC62 Doc. 48 on Snake trade and conservation management.*

Recommendations

The working group recommends that the Standing Committee instructs the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties "Illegal trade in snakes in Asia" using any relevant information provided by the Parties and relevant organizations at the Guangzhou workshop, as well as any other information available and deemed appropriate before the end of the year.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

16.AA The CITES Secretariat shall, in consultation with the Standing Committee, where appropriate:

- a) subject to external funding, hire independent consultants in liaison with local scientists, and local research and academic institutions to:
  - i) undertake a study of production systems for Asian snakes listed in CITES Appendix II and the use of source codes, and develop guidance to assist Parties in monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems, including information to assess their biological feasibility and, where possible, economic viability (i.e. whether it is financially viable for commercial facilities to produce and export specimens as permitted by national authorities);
  - ii) compile information and develop guidance that can assist Parties in the making of non-detriment findings and the establishment of export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade by undertaking relevant research, consulting with relevant experts, examining suitable examples and case-studies, and building on the results of the International Expert Workshop on CITES Non-Detriment Findings (Cancún, 2008) and recommendations on the making of non-detriment findings from the Conference of the Parties;
  - iii) undertake a study of one or more high-value snake species in the pet trade (e.g. unique colour or morphological forms or range-restricted endemics) to determine the impacts on wild populations of legal and illegal harvest for international trade and to provide information required for making non-detriment findings for trade in these species, and propose actions to enforce the Convention as it relates to trade in those species; and
  - iv) undertake a study on methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes in trade, including parts and derivatives, ensuring that the work is carried out in line with recommendations of the Standing Committee concerning source codes;

- b) issue a Notification to the Parties encouraging Parties to engage with interested institutions to investigate the possibility of forensic identification of CITES-listed snakes, and their parts and derivatives in trade, and requesting Parties to inform the Secretariat about the results of such engagement;
- c) inform Parties of the results of the International Trade Centre (ITC) study on trade in python snakes in Asia, the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, when these become available, and other relevant studies and information;
- d) present the outcomes of the activities mentioned in paragraphs a) and b) above, together with its recommendations, to the Animals Committee for review at its 27th or, as appropriate, 28th meeting, and make the final results available on the CITES website following review and approval by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.CC;
- e) issue a Notification to the Parties, requesting Asian Parties to report on their implementation of Decision 16.DD to the Secretariat, and submit a compilation of this information and its recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting; and
- f) subject to external funding, conduct one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES and other relevant authorities and stakeholders of range States of Asian snake species in international trade on:
  - i) the use of guidance for monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems, as agreed by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.CC;
  - ii) the use of guidance for making non-detriment findings and establishing export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade; and
  - iii) report on the results of these activities to the Standing Committee prior to CoP17.

***Directed to the Animals Committee***

16.BB The Animals Committee shall:

- a) review the results of the activities indicated in Decision 16.AA, paragraphs a) to c), as well as the results of the ITC study and other relevant studies on trade in python snakes in Asia and UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, when available, and, based on these studies and reports, develop guidance and recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee;
- b) examine the study undertaken by the UNCTAD Biotrade initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing in Decision 16.AA, paragraph c), and/or any other relevant available information concerning:
  - i) existing marking and tracing systems and, where relevant, accompanying certification schemes of all kinds, but not necessarily limited to those currently in use for trade in wild species, which could provide best-practices that might be applicable to snakes;
  - ii) a traceability system to confirm the legal origin of snake skins; and
  - iii) the economic feasibility of current traceability technologies for such a traceability system;
- c) advise the Standing Committee on the feasibility of implementing such a traceability system for snakes; and
- d) report on the status of this work at the regular meetings of the Standing Committee after CoP16.

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

16.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the reports and recommendations from the Animals Committee and the Secretariat provided in accordance with Decisions 16.AA and 16.BB and, as appropriate, the results of the ITC study on trade in python snakes in Asia, the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, and any other relevant available information;
- b) examine the study undertaken by UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, and any other relevant available information concerning:
  - i) the socioeconomic implications of such a traceability system; and
  - ii) the potential costs of the system at all levels along the supply chain from producers to consumers;
- c) make recommendations to the Parties, the Animals Committee and the Secretariat as appropriate; and
- d) report on the implementation of Decisions 16.AA to 16.CC at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with recommendations for consideration by the Parties, as deemed appropriate.

**Directed to the Parties**

16.DD Parties should take steps to eliminate the large quantity of unreported and unpermitted trade in live specimens, and their parts and derivatives from CITES-listed snake species by:

- a) ensuring that CITES permits and certificates are properly issued for trade in such CITES specimens;
- b) including information on trade in these specimens in their CITES annual reports;
- c) ensuring that their annual reports are following the most recent version of the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* in compliance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP14);
- d) examining their enforcement efforts regarding trade in these specimens to ensure that adequate steps are taken to deter and detect illegal and unreported trade;
- e) undertaking education and outreach efforts directed towards snake farms, buyers and sellers of live snakes, parts and derivatives, product manufacturers, shippers, brokers and staff from government agencies involved in controlling and monitoring this trade to better ensure that live snakes, parts and derivatives are traded in compliance with national laws and CITES provisions; and
- f) in the case of Parties of the Asian region, reporting on their efforts in all of these areas to the Secretariat in time for its reporting for the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee, in compliance with Decision 16.AA, paragraph d).

**Directed to ICCWC and ASEAN-WEN**

16.EE The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) are encouraged to take note of the concerns about the illegal and unreported trade in snakes and their parts and derivatives, and take these into account when developing work programmes and, if funding is available, undertaking relevant activities.