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

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CITES

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

National reports

Special reporting requirements

NOTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS HELD IN THE MARGINS OF SC62

These notes have been prepared by the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements on the basis of meetings that it held on Monday 23 July 2012 and Thursday 26 July 2012, in the margins of the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC62), and in relation to agenda item 24.2 of SC62.

Present:

23/7/12: Canada, China, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Chair), UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Species Survival Network (SSN) and the CITES Secretariat.

26/7/12: Kenya, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Chair), United States of America, UNEP-WCMC, SSN and the CITES Secretariat.

Apologies:

23/7/12: Switzerland.

26/7/12: Canada and Germany.

23 July 2012

Welcome and introductions

The group briefly introduced themselves and their interests in the Working Group. Germany and the Environmental Investigation Agency had joined the group as new members, and China was represented by the Chair of the Personal and Household Effects Working Group to make links between the two Working Groups.

Review of recommendations in document SC62 Doc. 24.2

A number of points in document SC62 Doc. 24.2 were discussed briefly:

–   For the Annual Report Guidelines, it was noted that the recommendation to adopt the guidelines at this Standing Committee is perhaps a little prescriptive, as there would be benefit if Parties and others have the chance to comment on the draft guidelines before they are finalized.

–   Codes for data within the Annual Report need to be distinct, so care would be needed in the consolidation of proposals to amend the Annual Report – e.g. the proposal for a code to denote an 'introduction from the sea'.

–   A discussion of whether special reporting requirements should be time-bound [subparagraph 15. f)] considered that a six-year timescale may be too short – it might help to have a decision-specific period (agreed when a decision to have a report is made) to indicate the length of time that should pass before retiring the reporting requirement. Parties present were in agreement that there was benefit in making special reporting requirements (but not legal requirements) time-bound in order to keep reporting current and make sure the burden of reporting does not increase. The NGOs present were concerned that making special reporting requirements time-bound could be seen as endorsing 'sunset clauses'.

–   The issue of quality assurance of data for the Strategic Vision indicators was raised – for data from biennial reports, the Group agreed that it should be the responsibility of Parties to make sure their reports are accurate.

–   A discussion on reporting illegal trade clarified that the biennial or annual report formats should only deal with information which would be in the public domain, not confidential information which would be shared by other, confidential, routes between enforcement officers. It was agreed that any management of illegal trade information submitted via the annual report needed more consideration so that its status, and distinction from legal trade, is clear. One possibility might be parallel databases of legal and illegal trade, but caution was expressed to avoid creating parallel systems to those that already exist at the World Customs Organization and ICPO-INTERPOL. Clarity also needs to be provided on how the data on illegal trade collected under CITES reports would be used – to make sure that it is focused and proportionate.

–   The aim and purpose of making linkages with e-permitting was clarified; the intent is that real-time information would support the detection of illegal trade – for example fraudulent permits.

Proposed draft Biennial Report

Unfortunately as some of the members of the Group were new, they had not received the papers for the meeting, which included a proposal for a new Biennial Report format based around the Strategic Vision (as amended in document SC62 Doc. 13). The United Kingdom explained that this was intended to start implementing the recommendations within the report of the Working Group to SC62 (document SC62 Doc. 24.2), by making a much stronger linkage between the questions in the biennial report format and the Strategic Vision Indicators.

The working group stopped discussions at this point as Plenary for Standing Committee was due to start again, but agreed that if a room could be found that the meeting should re-convene on Thursday.

Thursday 26 July 2012

The Working Group reconvened on 26 July, with the United States joining the group. The proposed draft reporting format was provided in hard-copy to aid discussions.

Looking Forward to CoP16

The Working Group agreed it would be helpful to have a physical meeting in early to mid-September if possible, and agreed that members would investigate if they could find resources to travel to attend a meeting in London or Geneva. The Chair suggested that a couple of days in the week commencing 10 September seemed a good choice to allow time to document discussions in advance of the deadline for CoP16 papers (October 4th).

<u>Proposed draft Biennial Report</u>

The Working Group agreed that restructuring the biennial reporting format in the structure of the Strategic Vision (as amended by SC62 Doc. 13) would help to focus the reporting format and to make it clearer to Parties why the information is being collected. The Working Group reviewed part of the document (see below), but did not have time to discuss all of it. The Working Group agreed that decreasing the number of questions in the biennial report is helpful, and that making them easy to answer – e.g. by providing tick-boxes is helpful.

Specific items discussed:

– With respect to the suggestion in the introduction to the document about production of guidance it was clarified that this was intended to be a small clarification for each question on what was being sought, to try to improve the consistency of information provided by Parties. If an online system is created, this might be able to be implemented as a drop-down box or pop-up when a question is answered.

– On question D5Q3 (indicator 1.2.1), the Working Group suggested the question should focus on the number of *applications denied*, rather than *documents refused* – as this would relate to information held by Management Authorities rather than creating a burden for Parties in collecting information from regional authorities.

– On question D5Q6 (indicator 1.2.1), the Working Group considered that there might be value in asking for the number of cases that a refusal has occurred for a particular reason, or to rank their importance. Concern was also expressed about the easy availability of data from Parties systems.

– The Working Group considered that more thought was needed to work out where to bring in questions which might arise out of special reporting requirements within the spreadsheet of reporting requirements (document SC62 Doc. 24.2, Annex 1).

– On question C10 (indicator 1.7.3), the Working Group considered more thought was needed on how to lay out the question to take account of distinctions between live and dead specimens. Similar consideration might be needed for question C4 under the same indicator.

The Working Group agreed to provide comments on the proposed format to the United Kingdom **by the end of August** so they could be collated for the meeting in September.