

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



Sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 7-11 July 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and traceability

PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF TIMBER SHIPMENTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. The Standing Committee last discussed this matter at its 62nd meeting (SC62, Geneva, July 2012), on the basis of document SC62 Doc. 36 submitted by the United States of America¹.
3. The Committee agreed at SC62 “that the United States, on behalf of the Working Group on Physical Inspection of Timber Shipments, would prepare a discussion document for the approval of the Chair of the Standing Committee and subsequent submission at [the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013)]”. The Committee further agreed that “the discussion document [for CoP16] would include a draft decision”.
4. Following its consideration of document CoP16 Doc. 42 (Rev. 1)², the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.58 which reads:

By the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat shall:

- a) *obtain information and materials from those Parties that have reported that they have developed tools and procedures for the identification and measurement of CITES-listed tree species, and the physical inspection of timber shipments;*
 - b) *publish the information on the CITES website so that it can be accessed by CITES plant inspection and enforcement authorities; and*
 - c) *incorporate this information into its capacity-building activities related to timber trade.*
5. At the time of writing (May 2014), due to limited human resources and competing work priorities, the Secretariat had only begun to address the implementation of Decision 16.58. In particular, the Secretariat was in the process of locating and reviewing the questionnaires submitted to the Working Group on Physical Inspection of Timber Shipments by Cameroon, China, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) between 2009 and 2012.
 6. External funds provided by the European Union are available for the implementation of Decision 16.58, and the Secretariat has been considering whether to hire a consultant to assist it in gathering of available information and materials from the above-mentioned Parties and ITTO, as well as other Parties and relevant organizations.

¹ <http://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/62/E62-36.pdf>

² <http://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-42.pdf>

7. Recent intelligence reports showing the volumes of and routes for illegal trade in CITES-listed timber species (see document CoP16 Doc. 48.1), and a corresponding increase in enforcement effort, illustrate the importance of identifying existing (and future) tools and procedures for the physical inspection of timber shipments and making them accessible to CITES plant inspection and enforcement authorities.

Recommendation

8. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee take note of this report, and the Secretariat's oral report at the present meeting, and consider the matter again at its 66th meeting (SC66, Geneva, August 2015).