

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

Species trade and conservation

Elephants

DECISION-MAKING MECHANISM FOR AUTHORIZING IVORY TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.55 on *Decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory*, as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) *with the assistance of the Secretariat, propose for approval at the latest at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) a decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory under the auspices of the Conference of the Parties;*
 - b) *at its 64th meeting, establish a working group, composed of the Chair of the Standing Committee, specified key Party stakeholders and the Secretariat, to implement the instruction in paragraph a) of the present Decision. The working group shall work intersessionally and take into consideration relevant documents submitted at previous meetings of the Standing Committee and the findings and comments in document CoP16 Doc. 36, and consult additional experts or stakeholders, if considered necessary. The Standing Committee shall consider the findings and recommendations of the working group at its 65th meeting, decide on further actions as required, and agree on a final proposal at its 66th meeting for submission at CoP17; and*
 - c) *conduct its work on the development of a decision making mechanism in consultation with all African and Asian elephant range States and, to the extent possible, in both French and English.*
3. At its 64th meeting (SC64, Bangkok, March 2013), the Standing Committee agreed on the following membership for the Working Group on a Decision-Making Mechanism (DMM Working Group) for a process of trade in ivory, as called for in Decision 16.55: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Congo, India, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, the Chair of the Standing Committee (Norway) and the Secretariat.

Intersessional work

4. In October 2013, the Secretariat reported to the DMM Working Group that the European Commission (EC) had generously provided USD 15,000 in support of the implementation of Decision 16.55. In agreement with the EC, these funds can be used to: (i) consolidate and synthesise any relevant documents, findings and comments that had previously been provided in the context of discussions on a decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory, as provided in paragraph b) of Decision 16.55; and (ii) facilitate,

to the extent possible, translations of documents in French and English, as provided in paragraph c) of the same Decision.

5. Since CoP16, the Secretariat has discussed the tasks of the DMM Working Group with several of its members in the margins of a number of international meetings, e.g. the third meeting of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (Ouagadougou, September 2013); the 12th African Wildlife Consultative Forum (Livingston, November 2013); the African Elephant Summit (Gaborone, December 2013); and the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC27, Veracruz, May 2014).
6. With regard to the organization and general focus of the work of the DMM Working Group, several members have made suggestions on various aspects of its structure and activities, including on:
 - a) the chairmanship of the DMM Working Group;
 - b) the tasks ahead and the desired outputs;
 - c) the *modus operandi* of the DMM Working Group; and
 - d) timetables and deliverables.
7. Concerning the chairmanship of the DMM Working Group, there seems support among most members that Norway should take on this responsibility. There has, however, been no clarity or consensus among the members of the DMM Working Group on other issues and the best way forward. The Secretariat will provide an oral update at the present meeting on any further progress with the implementation of Decision 16.55.
8. The Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has expressed interest in collaborating with the CITES Secretariat to develop a background document, along the lines of what is envisaged in paragraph b) of Decision 16.55, to facilitate the considerations of the DMM Working Group. The Secretariat is in consultation with the UNEP Secretariat regarding the preparation of such a document, and stands ready to assist the Standing Committee and its DMM Working Group, once agreement is reached on how to progress.

Recommendations

9. The Secretariat recommends that the members of the DMM Working Group that are represented at the present meeting convene to discuss the implementation of Decision 16.55, and report their recommendations to the Standing Committee so that it may decide on further actions as required.
10. The Standing Committee is invited to note this document.