

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

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON RANCHING OPERATIONS IN MADAGASCAR

*This document has been prepared by the Working Group on Ranching Operations in Madagascar, on the basis of two meetings held in the margins of the 65<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee and in relation to agenda item 25.*

Participants

France (Chair), Germany, Japan, Madagascar, United States of America, IUCN and the CITES Secretariat.

Development of the two meetings

1. Participants considered the information included in the documents made available to them, i.e. the reports of Madagascar and of the Secretariat (respectively SC65 Doc. 25.1 and SC65 Doc. 25.2), a written input dated 20 June 2014 from the IUCN SSC Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) in response to a request from the Chair of the Working Group during an informal WG meeting held in the margins of the AC27, as well as additional information reported orally by the representatives of Madagascar, and by the Secretariat and the representative of the CSG in relation to their recent missions to Madagascar.
2. Madagascar reported notably that they developed their activities to complete the Standing Committee Recommendations according to the 4 following areas of work: population surveys of wild *Crocodylus niloticus*, establishment of an inter-Ministerial Commission on the management of Nile crocodiles in Madagascar, a restructuring of the entire value chain for the Nile crocodile, and the drafting of a National Decree and related Ministerial Arrêtés (Orders).
3. In addition, Madagascar informed the Working Group that the National Decree had been adopted by the Council of Ministers on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 and that this text would enter into force within the next few weeks once it had been translated into Malagasy, numbered and signed. At the same time, the draft related Ministerial Orders will be revised to include the number of the Decree, include a clause causing them to enter into force without publication in the official National Register, and will enter into force upon signature. The representatives of Madagascar anticipated that the whole process for these documents to officially enter into force will be completed by the end of August 2014.
4. The CSG reported that the Executive Committee of the CSG considered the situation in Madagascar on the occasion of their biennial Working Meeting held in Louisiana from 25-30 May 2014. The CSG commended Madagascar on the efforts it had made to address the priority actions and considered that Madagascar had completed the outstanding actions identified at SC63. The CSG expressed its concern regarding Madagascar's implementation of the various improvements to its management regime but, overall, on the basis of their review, the CSG supported a recommendation to the Standing Committee to withdraw the trade suspension.
5. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that it had concluded, after its analysis of Madagascar's actions against the recommendations adopted at SC60, that Madagascar had either fully implemented the recommendations or would have done so once the Decree and Arrêtés were adopted and had entered into

force (see document SC65 Doc. 25.2). Accordingly, the Secretariat considered that this matter is now concluded and that the recommended trade suspension could be withdrawn. If the recommended trade suspension were lifted, Madagascar would be reporting relevant information under its legally-binding reporting requirements under Article VIII of the Convention and a special reporting requirement related to ranching. Were any potential compliance concerns to arise in the future, they could be brought to the attention of the Standing Committee if Madagascar and the Secretariat were unable to resolve them.

5. On the basis of the CSG's input, the Working Group considered whether the possible resumption of the trade should be conditional upon some additional actions being implemented, notably in terms of reporting on Madagascar's implementation of its current National Strategy & Management Plan for the Nile crocodile (which will expire at the end of 2015) and a future Strategy and associated Action Plan which is currently under development. The Secretariat noted that it was already necessary for Madagascar to report under Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on ranching, the annual report and implementation report requirements and the specific reporting of illegal activities anticipated by a decision of CoP16. These reporting requirements seemed appropriate and sufficient to follow closely the situation in Madagascar relating to the Nile crocodile.

#### Outcome

7. Following discussion, the members of the WG agreed to recommend that the Standing Committee withdraw the trade suspension at the present meeting, on the condition that this withdrawal becomes effective only when the following has happened:
  - a) the Decree and Ministerial Orders have entered into force,
  - b) Madagascar has communicated the Decree and Orders to the Secretariat,
  - c) the Secretariat has informed the Standing Committee that it is satisfied that the official texts that have entered into force in Madagascar correspond to the documents that it assessed in the review exercise it carried out for its report (SC65 Doc. 25.2) or, at least, that these documents allow for a full implementation of the Standing Committee Recommendations, and
  - d) the Secretariat issues a Notification to the Parties informing them that the Standing Committee had withdrawn its recommendation to suspend trade in Nile crocodiles from Madagascar.
8. In addition, Madagascar agreed to consider the other issues raised by the CSG in its invited input and stated it would carry out the following actions once the recommended trade suspension had been withdrawn:
  - a) submit a zero quota to the Secretariat for wild skins (source W) as it does not intend to export any wild skins (source W) in 2014 or in the future;
  - b) adopt a zero quota for ranched specimens (source R) for the years 2014 and 2015;
  - c) carry out an inventory of live captive-bred animals (source C) at the ranches and set annual export quotas for captive-bred skins and products (source C), based on the results of the inventory and the production potential of the farms;
  - d) evaluate the skin stockpiles at the ranches; and
  - e) determine, in consultation with the Secretariat, how to dispose of those skin stockpiles on the international market in 2014 (and 2015, if necessary), taking into consideration whether they were legally acquired or not.