

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



Sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-15 January 2016

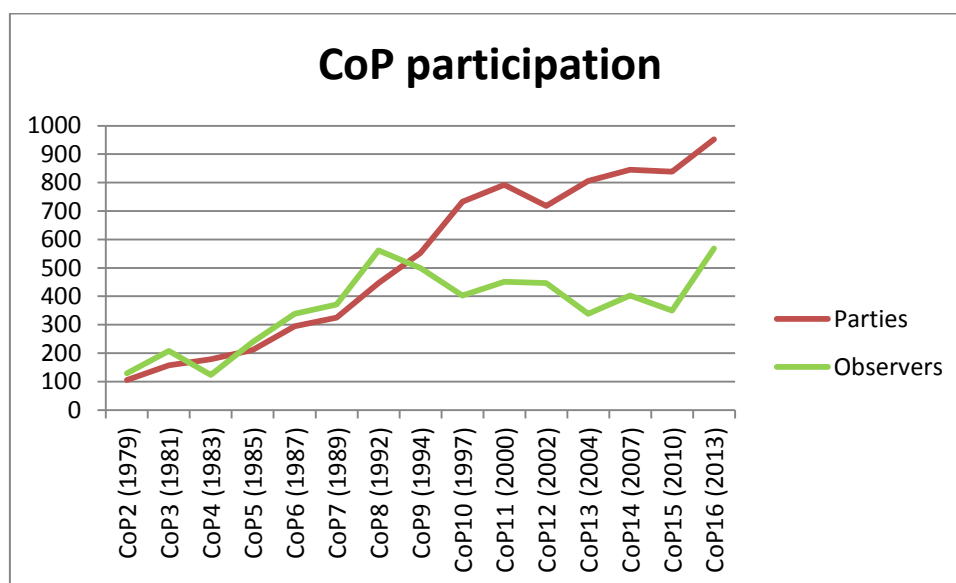
Administrative and financial matters

Procedural matters

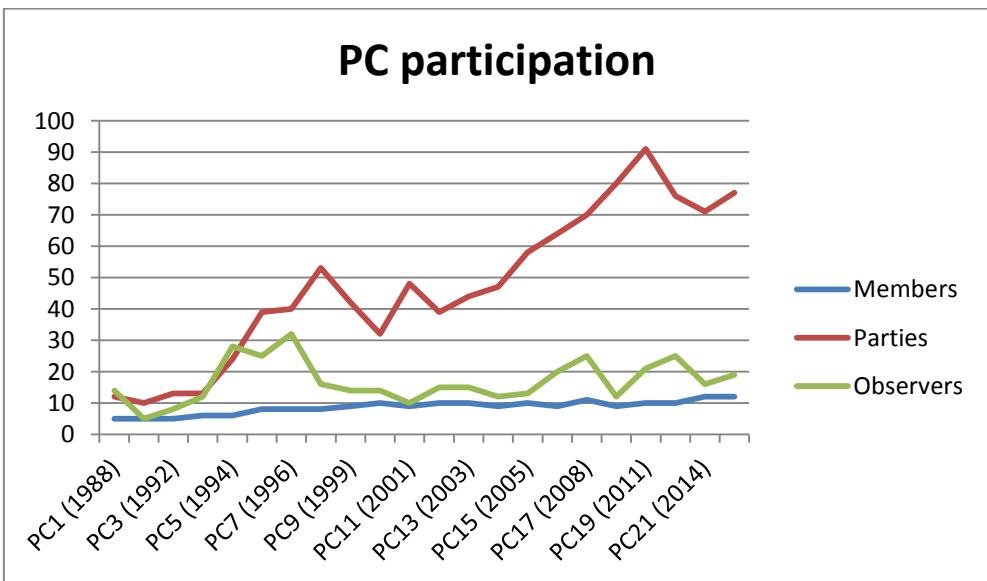
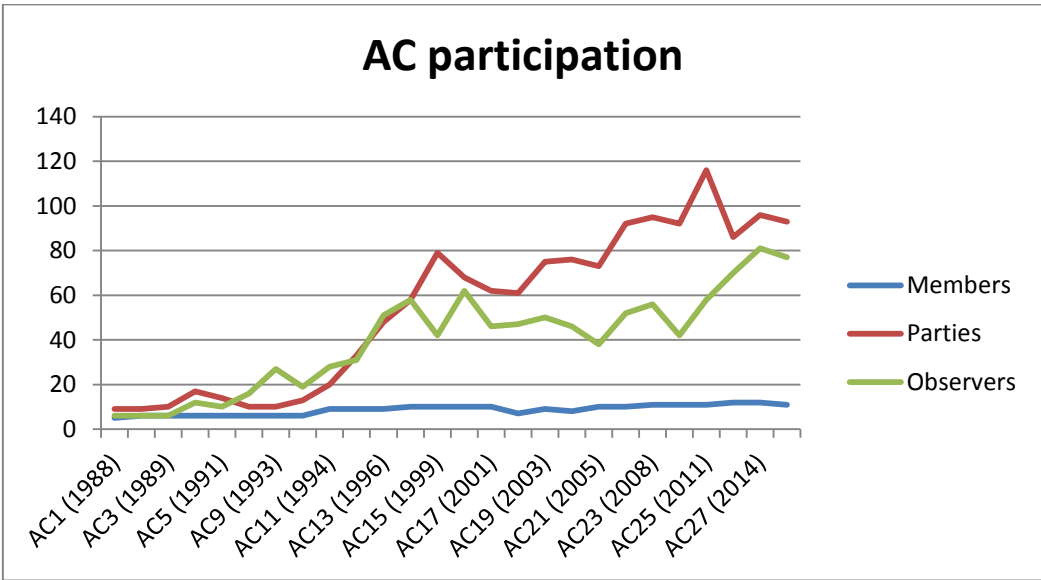
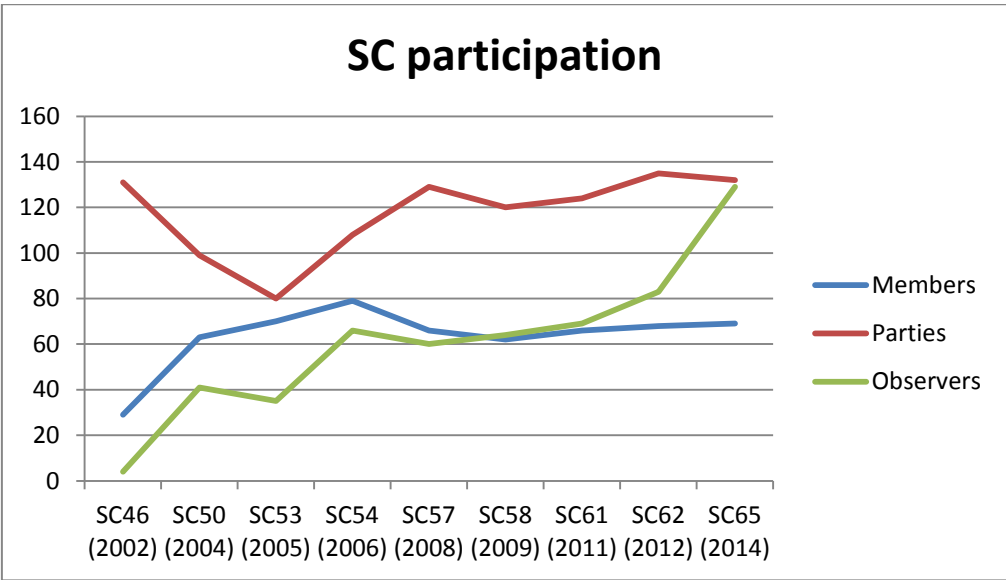
Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee

PROPOSED PROCESS TO REVIEW THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF CITES BODIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Article XII, paragraph 2 of the Convention lists the functions of the CITES Secretariat. In particular, the Secretariat is required to arrange for and service meetings of the Parties, to undertake scientific and technical studies authorized by the Conference of the Parties, to study the reports and any further information submitted by Parties, to prepare annual reports to the Parties, to make recommendations for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and to perform any other function as may be entrusted to it by the Parties.
3. As the Secretariat to the Convention, one of its core tasks is to service the meetings of its Governing Bodies. To establish a set of common expectations and facilitate the work of the Parties, the Secretariat proposes to undertake a review of the Rules of Procedure (RoPs) of the CITES bodies, namely the Conference of the Parties (CoP), the Standing Committee (SC), the Animals Committee (AC) and the Plants Committee (PC).
4. Participation in the CoP and its subsidiary bodies has shown a virtually continuous increase over recent years.



Note: These numbers do not include accredited media (over 400 at CoP16) or day visitors (estimated at 500 a day at CoP16).



This has changed their character and modus operandi. In view of this and other factors, it is timely to review the Rules of Procedure of the CITES governing bodies to ensure the continuous smooth running of these bodies,

5. The principal aim of this review process would be threefold: to ensure greater consistency across the Rules of Procedure of all CITES bodies; to ensure that the rules of the CoP apply *mutatis mutandis* to the CITES Committees; and to eliminate duplication and overlap between the RoPs and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16). Clear and consistent rules across the Committees would facilitate the work of their Chair. The review process would need to strike a balance between providing a clear framework for the logistics of the meetings and allowing for enough flexibility to accommodate the specificities of each Committee.
6. This review process would occur in close cooperation with the Animals and Plants Committees which, at their 28th and 22nd meeting respectively, have “agreed to seek a mandate at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to review the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committees contained in Resolution 11.1 (Rev. CoP16) on *Establishment of Committees*.”
7. The review process would primarily address inconsistencies and omissions in the current Rules of Procedure and would propose changes where these are necessary. The Secretariat has so far identified several inconsistencies and omissions. These include, but are not limited to:

- a) Membership of the Committees:

There is currently no clear rule for replacing a Committee member in the middle of his or her term. Furthermore, for the Animals and Plants Committees, alternates cannot under the current RoPs replace interchangeably either representatives of their region.

- b) Observers (non-State actors)

The categorization of observers permitted to attend meetings of the CITES governing bodies is not consistent throughout the Rules of Procedure. Considering the ever greater interest of non-State actors in participating in CITES meetings (see graphs in paragraph 4 above), the revised Rules of Procedure would clarify their participation in the meetings and ensure consistency across the Committees, specifically on their right to speak; their ability to submit official documents (both working documents and information documents); and their participation in working groups.

- c) Working groups

The current Rules of Procedure provide very little guidance on the establishment, composition, working modalities and mandates of Committee working groups, even though these have played an increasing role in the functioning of the governing bodies, particularly the SC, AC and PC. At present, the Standing Committee currently has 31 intersessional working groups, sub-committees, sub-groups, contact groups, consultative groups and advisory groups, working on a variety of key issues for the Convention. The Secretariat has observed that Parties have found it challenging to engage with all these groups simultaneously. It is also important to avoid any overlap between AC, PC and SC working groups on similar topics or species and to clarify the support role expected from the Secretariat.

- d) Document management

Considering the increased volume of documents submitted to the Secretariat for the regular meetings of the Committees and the CoP, the Secretariat would like to make greater use of the new technologies available and move to a papersmart system where all documents would be uploaded on the CITES website and not distributed in hard copy unless specifically requested by members of the Committees or by Parties at the CoP. A more streamlined and transparent process for the submission, distribution and translation of documents prior to the regular meetings could also be put in place.

- e) Postal procedure

With the pace of decision-making showing continued increase over time, the RoPs should include a provision for the possibility of e-voting and the rules associated with it.

- f) Adjustments to reflect the fact that a regional economic integration organization has now become a Party to the Convention (see paragraphs 2 to 6 of Article XXI of the Convention)

8. The review process would consist the Committees and their chairs working closely with the Secretariat in order to propose a draft full set of revised Rules of Procedure to the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting. Changes to the Rules of Procedure of the CoP, if any, would focus on the issues presented above in paragraph 7 and would complement the proposed changes to the CoP Rules of Procedure outlined in document SC66 Doc. 12.4.

Recommendation

9. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:
 - a) note the present document;
 - b) provide any comments on aspects of the Rules of Procedure which may need review; and
 - c) request the Secretariat to work in close collaboration with the Chairs of the Animals, Plants and Standing Committees to draft a revised set of Rules of Procedure for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting.