

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Great apes (Hominidae spp.)

REVISION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 13.4 (REV COP16)
ON CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN GREAT APES

1. This document has been submitted by Uganda and Kenya.¹
2. The illegal trade in great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans) has been recognized as a threat to great ape survival since the 1990s. The UNEP *Stolen Apes* report², released at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in March 2013, Bangkok, Thailand, reports on several cases of organized great ape trafficking from Africa and Asia to countries in the Middle East and Asia. The report estimated that, a minimum 3,000 great apes were lost from the wild annually in activities involving the hunting, capture and transport of trafficked live great apes.
3. Various Parties, including GRASP³, have found examples of organized great ape trafficking beginning in the 1990s that are still continuing today, in spite of CITES having taken measures aimed at stopping the illicit activity. It is clear that additional measures need to be implemented to control the continuing illicit practices that involve the capture of wild great apes, their illegal transport to third countries, the use of these great apes in breeding facilities for commercial purposes, and the exploitation of the great apes as pets, in trained performances in unaccredited/unregistered, commercial zoos and safari parks, and as photography props for fee-paying tourists.
4. After examination of the methods used to illegally trade great apes and of the circumstances of their subsequent captivity in the import countries, it is evident that elements of Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev COP16) *Conservation of and trade in great apes* need to be reviewed and strengthened in order to clarify certain terms and close gaps that allow continued illegal trade and commercial use of the specimens after illegal importation.

Recommendations

5. The CITES Standing Committee is requested to establish a working group on illegal trade in great apes to examine deficiencies in Res. Conf. 13.4 (Rev CoP16) and propose wording to enable more effective enforcement of existing national laws and CITES regulations.

¹ The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

² *Stolen Apes: The Illicit Trade in Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Bonobos and Orangutans. A Rapid Response Assessment. United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal. <http://www.grida.no/publications/rr/apes/>*

³ See https://web.facebook.com/graspunep/videos/10153732274783993/?video_source=pages_finch_trailer

6. It is recommended that, any working group established pursuant to paragraph 5 above be directed to report to the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting with a draft revision to Res. Conf. 13.4 (Rev CoP16).
7. It is further recommended that the draft be reviewed at the 67th Standing Committee meeting. The objective is to submit a draft revision that has been reviewed by the Standing Committee to the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Johannesburg in September/October 2016.