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

Sixty-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 23 September 2016

Interpretation and implementation matters

Compliance and enforcement

Application of Article XIII

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Introduction

2. CITES entered into force in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) on 30 May 2004. In the past few years, Lao PDR has been subject to several parallel compliance processes under the Convention: the Review of Significant Trade [Resolution Conf. 8.12 (Rev. CoP13)], the National Legislation Project (NLP) [Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15)], the implementation of National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs) [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16)], and international measures in accordance with Article XIII.

3. These compliance processes address different aspects of the implementation of the Convention by Lao PDR, and follow the general guidance for CITES compliance procedures set out in Resolution Conf. 14.3. The measures outlined in Article XIII concern the effective implementation of the Convention by the Party, and provide a framework for addressing all compliance-related matters raised with Lao PDR through the other processes.

4. At the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65, Geneva, July 2014), the Secretariat reported orally on a letter exchange with the Lao PDR. At its 66th meeting (SC66, Geneva, January 2016), the Standing Committee recommended that the Secretariat conduct a technical mission to Lao PDR under Article XIII to determine whether the provisions of the Convention are being effectively implemented.

Article XIII process concerning Lao PDR

5. The Article XIII process is broad in scope, and principally used when several compliance issues affect simultaneously a Party, as is the case for Lao PDR. The compliance procedure was initiated after the Secretariat conducted two missions to the country in 2011 and 2013, to which the follow-up by the Party was considered insufficient.

6. On 23 June 2014, the Secretariat sent a comprehensive letter to the Management Authority of Lao PDR pursuant to Article XIII of the Convention. In light of the information received by the Secretariat during its missions in 2011 and 2013 and from other reliable sources, it appeared that the provisions of the Convention, notably Articles IV and VIII, were not effectively implemented by the Party (copies of the correspondence are available at the request of the Standing Committee). The concerns raised in the letter were grouped in three main themes:

   (a) *Trade in CITES-listed species* (illegal trade and trade that is legally unclear), particularly in rhinoceros and elephant specimens (rhino horns and elephant ivory), bears, Siamese rosewood and tigers;

(b) *Wildlife farming and potentially fraudulent claims of captive breeding for specimens of CITES Appendix-II species* (such as macaques, pythons, turtles and pangolins) that have been authorized for export from the Lao PDR, when the related captive-breeding operation either does not seem to exist in the country or appears to be producing larger quantities of specimens than seem technically feasible;

(c) *CITES compliance matters*, e.g. national legislation, reporting, permit issuance, trade controls and NIAPs.

7. In response to this letter, the Director General of the Department of Forest Resources Management (the CITES Management Authority) sent a letter dated 7 July 2014 providing explanations on the three concerns raised and requesting some assistance. The letter also mentioned institutional changes operated in the country, including the establishment on 18 May 2012 of its Department and the creation of the Lao Wildlife Enforcement Network (Lao-WEN).

8. Following up on queries from several importing countries about export permits issued by the CITES Management Authority of Lao PDR and on the basis of information obtained from its 2011 and 2013 missions to the country, the Secretariat had identified a potential compliance matter relative to the sourcing of CITES specimens authorized for export. The most recent trade suspensions as a result of the Review of Significant Trade can be found in Notification No. 2016/018 of 15 March 2016. It informs Parties that the Standing Committee recommended the suspension of trade with Lao PDR in seven different species:

- *Macaca fascicularis* (long-tailed macaque/monkey)
- *Ptyas mucosus* (Common rat snake)
- *Python reticulatus* (Regal Python)
- *Naja* Spp. (Cobra snakes)
- *Cuora galbinifrons* (turtle species)
- *Heosemys annandalii* (turtle species)
- *Dendrobium nobile* (orchid)

9. Lao PDR had failed to provide information on its implementation of the required species-specific recommendations. Over the years, Lao PDR has not responded to any letter sent by the Scientific Unit of the Secretariat in the context of the Review of Significant Trade.

Secretariat's mission to Lao PDR

10. From 4 to 8 July 2016, the CITES Secretariat conducted an official visit to the Lao PDR at the invitation of the Government. The Secretariat was joined by a representative of the regional office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Bangkok and supported by colleagues from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank offices based in Vientiane.

11. During its mission, the Secretariat met with the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, the Vice-minister and several Directors General, including the Director General of the Department of Forest Resources Management who is responsible for CITES and the members of the CITES Management, Scientific and Enforcement Authorities, the Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI), border police, customs, prosecutors, judges, the Interpol National Central Bureau and representatives from the Ministries of Trade and Foreign Affairs.

12. The Secretariat met with various other interlocutors, including representatives of the private sector, visited the airport, a checkpoint at the border between Lao PDR and Thailand, several wildlife farms as well as a market in Vientiane. It also met and discussed with members of local and international non-governmental organizations.

13. For the preparation of its mission, the Secretariat interacted with representatives of the "Wildlife Working Group 15.7", an informal development partners group created on the occasion of World Wildlife Day 2016, and involving a mixed group of 28 embassies and international organizations sharing information on wildlife and timber trafficking. The European Union, the United States of America (as Co-chairs of the Wildlife Working Group 15.7) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provided important technical support before and during the mission. Representatives from other countries that maintain close relations with Lao PDR were also approached, but were unable to provide support to the mission.

14. The Secretariat expresses its deepest appreciation to the Government of the Lao PDR, and in particular the CITES Management Authority, for the indispensable support it provided in planning and coordinating the visit, and its openness and generous hospitality. The Secretariat would also like to express its gratitude to the members of the Wildlife Working Group 15.7, representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The mission was for the Secretariat a very useful opportunity to work through issues raised in Article XIII correspondence.

Lao PDR wildlife legislation and institutions

15. During the first two days of the mission, the Secretariat met Government institutions, cooperation agencies and stakeholders in separate meetings to understand how CITES is implemented at the national and provincial levels. Particular attention was paid to CITES legislation and the CITES Management, Scientific and Enforcement Authorities.

16. There is apparently no specific legislation for implementing CITES. However, these appear to be the main general legislative texts relevant to the implementation of CITES in Lao PDR:

    a. Wildlife and Aquatic Law (No. 07/NA dated 24 December 2007);

    b. Forestry Law (No. 06/NA dated 24 December 2007);

    c. Environmental Protection Law (No. 02-99/NA dated 3 April 1999);

    d. Law on Investment Promotion (No. 02/NA dated 8 July 2009);

    e. Penal Law (No. 12/NA dated 9 November 2005); notably articles 141 to 143 and chapter 8;

    f. Decree on Protected Areas No 134/G, dated 13 May 2015;

    g. Prime Minister Order No. 15/PM on “Strengthening Strictness of Timber Harvest Management and Inspection, Timber Transport and Business”, dated 13 May 2016;

    h. Regulation on the Management of National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCAs) Wildlife and Aquatic Animals No. 0360/AF.2003, dated 8 December 2003; and

    i. Guidelines adopted by the Department of Forest Resource Management on the Management of Wildlife and Aquatic Animal Farms. It is unclear what is the legal force and status of the Guidelines in the hierarchy of national norms.

17. In Article 10, the Wildlife and Aquatic Law divides species in three categories: prohibition, management and common or general category. The list of species is not up-to-date and there is a plan to revise the law in 2017. The Wildlife and Aquatic Law establishes different types of uses, namely for public benefit, household or family purposes, customary purposes and business. Conditions appear to be very permissive and the difference between types of uses is not sufficiently clarified, for instance between domesticated animals and those bred in captivity. The law also appears to allocate different responsibilities to government, ministries and provincial authorities for the registration and operation of businesses on wildlife and aquatic resources, which may create confusion about the division of labour. Wildlife farms operate under great legal uncertainty. While the trade in certain specimens, such as ivory, is prohibited, their possession appears to be allowed.

18. Article 10 of the Law on Investment Promotion (No. 02/NA dated 8 July 2009) defines two types of economic zones in Lao PDR: Special Economic Zones and Specific Economic Zones. There are two Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the country: the Savan-Seno Zone SEZ located in central Laos’ Savannakhet Province – a central point of the East-West Economic Corridor; and the Golden Triangle SEZ located in the sub-Mekong region close to the country’s borders with Myanmar, Thailand, and China. The rest of the economic regions are designated as Specific Economic Zones, with most of them located near the capital city of Vientiane. Considering that trade in wildlife occurs within these economic zones and that some wildlife farms may benefit from a special regime, the adoption of clear guidelines regarding the operation of Special Free Economic Zones in relation to the farming, consumption and trade of CITES-listed species, as well as clear guidance on how to proceed in cases of alleged illicit trafficking occurring in those zones, is recommended.

19. Concerning the institutional architecture to implement CITES, the Department of Forest Resources Management at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) is the designated

Management Authority. The General Director of that Department, Mr. Vongdeuane Vongsiharath, chaired the three meetings held with government institutions and stakeholders. The Deputy Director, Dr. Inthavy Akkharath, organized the field visits and coordinated the logistics and agenda for the mission with the Secretariat.

20. The CITES Scientific Authority is hosted in the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) at the Ministry of Sciences and Technology. It appears that the person who was in charge for many years, Dr. Sundara, was promoted and his replacement has not yet been appointed. Nobody from the IEBR attended the first day of meetings. Later during the mission, a representative of the IEBR explained that six persons are working in their laboratory but they do not have appropriate equipment nor the sufficient training to identify traded CITES-listed species. The Scientific Authority appears to be the weakest institutional link and did not seem to take a very active part in the day-to-day implementation of CITES.

21. The Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is the lead agency for wildlife related inspections and the investigation of suspected violations of the Forestry Law (No. 06/NA dated 24 December 2007), the Wildlife and Aquatic Law (No. 07/NA dated 24 December 2007) and other subsidiary legislation. DOFI is chairing a Law Enforcement Technical Advisors Group (LETAG) to combat illegal trafficking in Lao PDR. DOFI is also the focal point for ASEAN-WEN and is empowered to conduct forestry and wildlife control operations, investigate allegations of illegal trade, make arrests and initiate prosecutions, collaborate with other agencies, as well as the private sector and civil society.

22. The head of the CITES Management Authority explained that an inter-agency agreement has been in place since 2009 between the army, police, customs, forestry officers, prosecutors and the import/export department of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, concluded by the Ministries of Public Security (MOPS), the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (MAF), among others, to coordinate the implementation of CITES-related activities.

23. Due to the nature of their respective functions, there is a need for close collaboration between the CITES Management Authority and DOFI. It was understood that DOFI is responsible for inspections both within the country and at border locations. They have reported bilateral agreements with the equivalent institution of Viet Nam, and with two provinces in Thailand. However, DOFI informed the Secretariat that a comparable agreement with China does not yet exist.

24. Lao-WEN was initially established by an agreement between all concerned sectors in 2011 and revised in 2013. In 2012, it included the anti-corruption agency, the State Inspection and Anti-Corruption Authority (SIAA). The office of the Lao-WEN is located at DOFI, with no police officers yet. There is a proposal to create a Lao-WEN taskforce in the future. A new office should also be created in the future to host Lao-WEN.

Main findings of the Secretariat's mission

25. Based on previous missions to Lao PDR and the ongoing compliance processes, the concerns raised by the Secretariat during the mission were grouped in three main themes mentioned in paragraph 6:

Trade in CITES-listed species

26. Reliable information made available to the Secretariat suggests that rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory and other wildlife specimens are smuggled through the Lao PDR to other countries in Asia, and that the country is targeted by organized crime groups as a transit point. According to the information received during the visit from various interlocutors, specimens of tigers, bears and Siamese rosewood are allegedly imported, exported and re-exported in violation of the Convention. The Secretariat has raised this issue in its previous correspondence and during the mission.

27. Law enforcement authorities stated that no arrests or prosecutions related to illegal trade in rhino horn, elephant ivory and other wildlife specimens have occurred in the country since 2012. Authorities expressed concern about the fact that countries of origin and other transit countries with modern technology and better intelligence were not able to stop this trafficking, and called for shared responsibility and increased cooperation to assist Lao PDR in tackling illegal trade in wildlife.

Wildlife farming and potentially fraudulent claims of captive breeding for specimens of CITES Appendix-II species

28. The Management Authority explained during the mission that an important difference exists in the country between domesticating animals and breeding them in captivity. There were very few facilities for captive breeding 15 years ago. The tradition from past centuries was to domesticate wildlife, such as elephants, wild pigs, bears, birds, etc.

29. The authorities informed that there were two categories of captive-breeding facilities: private zoos (only one in the country); and wildlife farms. Starting in 2000, several captive-breeding facilities were established. After 2010, more farms were established, some of them unofficially or not in accordance with the law (i.e. with licences issued by local authorities licences, and not by the Ministry). A similar situation occurred with plantations and gardens cultivating orchids for export.

30. Several species kept in these facilities have been included in the Review of Significant Trade (RST). The RST, in Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13), identifies Appendix-II listed species for which range States may allow non-detrimental levels of export, and formulates time-bound and species-specific recommendations to range States to improve its implementation of Article IV and ensure sustainable levels of export. Concerns about the implementation of the Convention by Lao PDR in this regard have been raised a number of times since 2006. The Authorities explained that it was very difficult for them to undertake the scientific studies necessary for the making of robust non-detriment findings due to the lack of resources and the absence of an institution funded to do this work. The Ministry of Science and Technology does not currently have the capacity to conduct this type of research.

CITES compliance matters, e.g. national legislation, reporting, permit issuance, trade controls and NIAPs

31. The Secretariat recognizes the efforts made by the Government of Lao PDR to address compliance issues raised in the Secretariat's correspondence. Lao PDR has demonstrated commitment at the highest possible level. The government has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with South Africa that is ready for signature, hopefully in the margins of the High-Ministerial segment prior to the CoP17, to collaborate on wildlife issues of common interest. The Management Authority has submitted the NIAP progress reports requested by the Secretariat.

32. Existing laws contain significant loopholes, e.g. possession of specimens, creation of wildlife farms, harvesting of timber in certain areas, division of competence at the national and provincial levels, free economic zones operating under opaque regimes, etc.

33. Many challenges remain regarding the legal conditions for the establishment of wildlife farms, monitoring and controlling these facilities, the scientific basis for making non-detriment findings, the legal acquisition findings to verify the origin of the parental stocks and all specimens in trade, the effective implementation of the myriad of plans adopted and the effective enforcement of the laws of the State for the protection of fauna and flora.

34. One critical pending issue is the verification of the legal origin of the parental stocks in wildlife farms. The Secretariat saw very little evidence of any control system put in place to monitor wildlife farms. However, it learned during its mission that the provinces play an important role in the authorization and control of wildlife farms.

<u>Secretariat's compliance assessment</u>

35. In light of the information received, the Secretariat is concerned that some CITES species included in Appendix I or II are adversely affected by illegal, unsustainable or untraceable trade and that the provisions of the Convention are not being effectively implemented in Lao PDR. This report shows uneven progress by Lao PDR in its implementation of the recommendations of the Secretariat to address three main areas: (a) Trade in CITES-listed species; (b) Wildlife farming and potentially fraudulent claims of captive breeding for specimens of CITES Appendix-II species; and (c) CITES compliance matters, e.g. national legislation, reporting, permit issuance, trade controls and NIAPs.

36. The Secretariat has identified the following key factors undermining compliance:

    a) <u>Lack of robust scientific institutions</u>: The most critical and urgent need appears to be the establishment of a robust Scientific Authority and the allocation of resources to support its work. There is an urgent need to conduct population surveys for the preparation of non-detriment findings, the identification of specimens in trade, monitoring of wildlife farms, etc. The Ministry of Science

and Technology has neither the samples, nor the equipment, nor the training to carry out their most elementary tasks, starting by the identification of seized specimens.

b) Grey areas, ambiguous or inadequate laws: Existing laws contain significant loopholes, including on the verification of the legal origin of the parental stocks for wildlife farms and trade in specimens of species that are not native from Lao PDR. Enforcement efforts will remain unsatisfactory since insufficient legislation prevents effective enforcement and prosecution of violations. Legal clarity is a prerequisite for effective enforcement.

c) Law enforcement without conviction: The Government focused its efforts to curb wildlife crime on strengthening the enforcement capacity of the country. An important amount of financial and technical resources is going into enforcement-related activities. However, despite a reported increase in the number of incidents and investigations, these cases have not yet resulted in arrests, prosecutions and convictions. Three possible factors may explain these low prosecution and conviction rates. First, the focus is on 'administrative enforcement' by authorities that are not originally created to enforce criminal laws. Second. laws are vague, ambiguous or inadequate to tackle the problem. The third factor is the lack of sound science. Without knowing the status and characteristics of wild populations, it is very difficult to inspect farms, identify species and have a baseline to measure the impact of enforcement activities on conservation. Additionally, illegal trade in wildlife does not seem to be condemned culturally by society, which explains a certain level of tolerance that may be associated with instances of corruption.

d) Lack of information systems: The Secretariat has raised this issue with Lao PDR during the mission and reiterated that the CITES permit and certificate system is designed to ensure the legality, sustainability and traceability of trade in specimens of CITES species. It was noted that the absence of information systems makes it difficult, if not impossible, to properly regulate and monitor trade in CITES-listed species. The Secretariat suggested transitioning towards an electronic management and permitting system connected with customs and police databases to increase the level of information sharing. One of the most commons claims during the mission from the representatives of Interpol and the police was the lack of information to investigate presumed perpetrators.

e) Weak institutional arrangements: The Secretariat found it positive that the authorities recognize that weak institutional arrangements are a problem. However, staff responsible for CITES implementation in Lao PDR appear to be continuously rotating. In fact, the Secretariat understands that the staff responsible for CITES during the mission is no longer in charge because the Management Authority has been moved from MoNRE back to MAF. These changes result in institutional instability, legal uncertainty and weak governance. The Secretariat observed that Directors responsible for signing and issuing CITES documents are appointed for short periods of time and then moved to other divisions or Ministries.

f) Poor communication and integration of various initiatives: The Secretariat noticed that Lao PDR is deploying great efforts in a certain number of critical areas. This is however not taken up by international media or reports prepared by different organizations. The authorities are probably failing to communicate on these efforts to the main stakeholders and to the international community. Furthermore, many of these efforts are happening in isolation and need to be better articulated. For instance, the development and implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP), the National Tiger Action Plan 2010-2020, the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBSAP), ASEAN-WEN, and LAO-WEN could be better integrated. There is also an urgent need to develop outreach campaigns to inform nationals, traders, visitors and consumers from neighbouring countries about the existence of these plans and the laws of the State for the protection of fauna and flora.

g) Special Economic Zones: There is an urgent need for the adoption of clear guidelines regarding the operation of Special Free Economic Zones in relation to farming, consumption and trade in CITES-listed species, as well as clear guidance on how to proceed in cases of alleged illicit trafficking occurring in these zones. No standard procedure seems to be in place to act upon such information. Outreach campaigns mentioned above should target these zones.

h) Neighbouring countries: The Secretariat noted that the conservation of and trade in CITES-listed species are issues that affect not only Lao PDR. Illegal trade in wildlife, e.g. ivory, rhino horn, tiger parts and derivatives, timber, etc., heavily involves other neighbouring States that appear to be drivers and primary destinations for trade in specimens that are farmed in or in transit through Lao PDR. Lao nationals are not the main consumers of wildlife products because it is not part of their tradition or prices are very high. It is important for neighbouring countries to cooperate with Lao

PDR to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention and achieve compliance at a regional level.

37. In acknowledging the progress made, the Secretariat would recommend that Lao PDR and its partners focus on implementing what is already planned in the NIAP, the NBSAP, the National Tiger Action Plan 2010-2020, Lao-WEN, etc. The Secretariat would also recommend that Lao PDR address in the existing plans the factors outlined in the present document. It is urgent to move into a full implementation phase instead of developing new plans.

38. Finally, the Secretariat would like to express its sincere thanks for the engagement and bilateral support provided to Lao PDR by the embassies of the European Union, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the offices of the World Bank, UNDP and UNODC based in Vientiane and Bangkok. There seems to be no shortage of international cooperation and the question is how to best connect various initiatives and optimize the financial and technical support that can be made available to a country rich in natural resources.

Recommendations

39. In light of the above, the Standing Committee may wish to assist Lao PDR in bridging the gaps and closing the loopholes by adopting a series of recommendations. The Standing Committee may wish to recommend that:

    1. *Regarding management of exports of* Dalbergia cochinchinensis

    Parties

    a) suspend commercial trade in specimens of the species *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* (except finished products, including carvings and furniture) from Lao PDR until that Party:

        i) makes scientifically based non-detriment findings for trade in the species in the country to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the Chair of the Plants Committee;

        ii) develops a National Management Plan for the species and commences its implementation; and

        iii) provides a copy of the National Management Plan to the Secretariat.

    2. *Regarding national legislation:*

    Lao PDR

    a) develop CITES implementing legislation in accordance with the guidance provided under the National Legislation Project and Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15), and amend relevant provisions of existing national laws mentioned in the present report to include all CITES-listed species and verify that specimens were not obtained in contravention of national law;

    b) strengthen the criminal legal framework in relation to illegal trade in wildlife, notably, by amending the Penal Code to increase penalties for serious wildlife-related offences, especially when they are perpetrated through organized groups, transnationally and repetitively;

    c) promulgate a new Prime Minister Order on Strengthening Controls for Wildlife Harvesting, Farming, Management, Transport, Possession and Trade; and

    d) develop and enact legislative guidelines for wildlife farming. Guidelines should, *inter alia*, clearly define the meaning and scope of farming for scientific research. Potential loopholes should be closed taking into consideration all possible ambiguities and inconsistencies in the application of national laws and Article VII paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Convention, Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev.), Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) and Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP16) as it relates to the use of source codes R, F, D, A and C.

    3. *Regarding CITES Scientific Authorities, population surveys and non-detriment findings*

Lao PDR

a) designate and appoint one or more new CITES Scientific Authorities with appropriate competency and autonomy, and sufficient modern resources;

b) undertake science-based analysis to develop indices drawn from harvested animals or field surveys that can be used to provide evidence of whether a population is increasing, decreasing or stable and whether an average size animal in the population is increasing, decreasing or stable for the following species:

- *Macaca fascicularis* (long-tailed macaque/monkey)
- *Ptyas mucosus* (Common rat snake)
- *Python reticulatus* (Regal Python)
- *Naja* Spp. (Cobra snakes)
- *Cuora galbinifrons* (turtle species)
- *Heosemys annandalii* (turtle species)
- *Dendrobium nobile* (orchid)

c) develop National Management Plans for these species, taking into account the recommendations made under the Review of Significant Trade; and

d) provide the results of the surveys and Management Plans to the Secretariat for comments, review, and processing in compliance with Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13).

4. Regarding compliance and law enforcement

Lao PDR

a) focus on the effective implementation of the existing relevant plans, in particular NIAP, NBSAP, and the National Tiger Action Plan 2010-2020;

b) strengthen the enforcement capacity of the members of Lao-WEN, notably the environmental police, customs, the Department of Forest Inspections, prosecutors and judges, to investigate mid-high profile cases that involve organized and transboundary activities;

c) encourage members of Lao-WEN to adopt result-oriented law enforcement qualitative indicators (e.g. profile of offenders, convictions, use of advanced investigative techniques);

d) encourage collaboration between law enforcement agencies from Thailand, Singapore, Viet Nam, and China to tackle the issues of transiting of wildlife and wildlife tourism; and

e) provide to the Secretariat the results of any investigations conducted by competent national authorities to determine the origin of specimens in trade, the identities of individuals involved in smuggling, and the results of any legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators.

5. Regarding information systems

Lao PDR

a) subject to the availability of external funds, establish an efficient information system to:

i) share information expeditiously between agencies responsible for wildlife science, management, monitoring, enforcement, prosecution and sentencing;

ii) issue CITES electronic permits and annual reports that are interconnected with customs, e.g. future Single Windows Systems (Asycuda); and

iii) submit CITES annual trade reports based on effective trade data (and not data in permits issues).

6. Regarding monitoring of wildlife farms and related trade

Lao PDR

a) verify the legal origin of parental stocks and specimens in trade;

b) register, control and monitor authorized farms to ensure that only authorized trade occurs; and

c) ensure that export permits and re-export certificates are endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp, by an inspecting official, such as customs, in the export endorsement block of the document.

7. Public awareness and outreach campaigns

Lao PDR

a) develop outreach campaigns in Lao and Mandarin to raise awareness among nationals, traders, visitors and consumers from neighbouring countries about the laws and regulations of the State for the protection of fauna and flora. Campaigns should focus on international airports, main ports, markets and special free economic zones.

40. The Standing Committee may wish to recommend that Lao PDR report on progress on the implementation of recommendations 1 through 6 by 1 July 2017, in order for the Secretariat to convey this report and its comments at the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee.