

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



Sixty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 27 November - 1 December 2017

Strategic matters

COOPERATION WITH OTHER BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decision on *Cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions*:

***Decision 17.56 directed to the Standing Committee***

*The Standing Committee shall, with support of the Secretariat, explore options consistent with the CITES Strategic Vision to strengthen cooperation, collaboration and synergies at all relevant levels between CITES and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, its Aichi Targets and a possible follow-up framework, as appropriate, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. This should involve the members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, and, as appropriate, engagement with other relevant organisations and processes, including processes under the Rio Conventions. The Standing Committee shall report on the implementation of this Decision at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Actions and developments since CoP17

3. Since its report to CoP17 in documents CoP17 Doc. 14.1 and CoP17 Doc. 14.5, the Secretariat has undertaken a number of activities in order to cooperate, collaborate and work in synergy with other biodiversity-related conventions. The Secretariat can also update the Committee on other activities related to CITES and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, its Aichi Targets and a possible follow-up framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals which are referenced in Decision 17.56.
4. On 16 December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a [resolution on sustainable fisheries](#), which noted the decision of CoP17 to include additional shark and ray in Appendix II the ongoing work of the CITES Secretariat with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on capacity-building in relation to these listings. The Resolution also encouraged States to cooperate in establishing non-detriment findings for shared stocks of marine species listed in the Appendices consistent with the concepts and non-binding guiding principles contained in Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*.
5. The Secretariat, along with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre, contributed to a World Wide Fund for Nature report [Not for sale: Halting the illegal trade of CITES species from world heritage sites](#) which described a range of options to further enhance synergies between CITES and the World Heritage Convention. The CITES Secretary-General provided a foreword for the report.

6. The Secretary-General made statements on [World Wildlife Day](#) (3 March 2017), [World Environment Day](#) (5 June 2017) and [World Oceans Day](#) (8 June 2017) which made reference to working with other side-events.
7. The Secretariat was present at the UN Oceans Conference (New York, USA, 5-9 June 2017), organizing a side-event on *Supporting recovery of fisheries through cooperation on threatened species and implementation of trade measures* and participating in two others.
8. The Swiss Government invited the Secretariat to participate in a Workshop on International Environmental Governance (Glion, Switzerland 20-22 June 2017), which considered the future international environmental governance, the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Environment Assembly and how to ensure coherent delivery on the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
9. In response to an invitation from the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Committee, initially sent to South Africa as Chair of CoP17, Canada as Chair of the Standing Committee sent [a submission](#) from CITES to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, USA, 10-19 July 2017). The submission highlighted the Convention's contribution towards the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular its role in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.
10. The Secretariat participated in the 23rd meeting of the Senior Officials of the United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG) on 18-20 September 2017. The EMG decided to revitalise its work on biodiversity by organizing a 'nexus dialogue' on biodiversity among UN bodies in 2018 with a view to preparing a UN system contribution to the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
11. In response to requests from the Secretariats of the Conventions involved, the Secretariat provided inputs to the International Whaling Commission's review of its governance systems and processes and to UNESCO's study of comparative mapping of forms and models for use of advisory services for the World Heritage Centre.
12. On another technical matter, the Secretariat is currently working closely with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which has generously agreed to share the use of 'Kronos', its meeting registration system and adapt it for use in CITES meetings. This will allow a smoother meeting registration experience for delegates and an enhanced efficiency in participant data management for the Secretariat. The two Convention Secretariats will continue to work closely and contribute to the improvement and expansion of Kronos' functions.
13. The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) had a brief audio/video-conference on 25 January 2017 to bid farewell to the outgoing Executive Secretary of CBD, Bráulio Dias. The 12th ordinary meeting of the BLG will be held in Rome, Italy on 28 September and the Secretariat will report orally on its outcome at the present meeting.
14. The CITES Secretariat continues to act as co-chair of the Multilateral Environment Agreement Information and Knowledge Management initiative (MEA IKM). The other co-chair is UNEP. The MEA IKM initiative now serves 43 global and regional multilateral environmental agreements. It provides a platform for joint technical activities related to metadata standards, legal ontology, common data vocabularies, and online learning systems. It has also become a forum for the knowledge management and documentation officers from a wide range of MEAs to exchange information and experience on issues of common interest. The work of the initiative can be found at [www.informea.org](http://www.informea.org).
15. On the basis of the [CITES-CMS Joint Work Programme 2015-2020](#) and with the support of the CMS/CITES Joint Programme Officer, generously funded by Germany, the Secretariat has been cooperating with the secretariats of CMS and sister bodies on a number of issues related to the implementation of Decisions adopted at CoP17 as follows:
  - a) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) on the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*) (Decisions 17.299 to 17.301);
  - b) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia in preparing

a study on the illegal trade in marine turtles [Decision 17.222 on Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and other marine turtles (Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae)];

- c) Cooperation with the CMS Secretariat regarding the implementation of the Decision on the African lion (*Panthera leo*) (Decision 17.241) for which the two Secretariats reached out jointly for cooperation with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, the IUCN SOS Initiative and other organisations addressing lion conservation; and
  - d) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope in the context of the implementation of Decision 17.272 on Saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.).
16. The CMS and CITES Secretariats also closely collaborate on sharks and rays, Central Asian species, eels and on elephants. Together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the two Secretariats are finalizing a project funded by the European Union for Southern, Eastern and the Horn of Africa. In this project, CITES would be leading on strengthening of wildlife law enforcement capacity and cross-border collaboration in selected transboundary ecosystems, while CMS would lead on promoting the establishment and/or strengthening of trans-frontier conservation areas.
  17. The two Secretariats reached out jointly to Germany and other possible donors to promote enhanced collaboration and Germany indicated that it would provide further funding for a joint CMS/CITES Programme Officer post starting in January 2019 (the existing post will come to an end in 2018). The Secretariat would like to thank Germany for its generous support for the CITES/CMS Programme Officer post, both currently and in the future. Further details on the new post will be discussed over coming months.
  18. The Secretariat is contributing to and will attend the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in October 2017, where a number of resolutions and decisions have been submitted calling upon further collaboration between the two Conventions.
  19. The co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Permanent Missions in New York on Tackling Illicit Wildlife Trafficking has led the development of a new UN General Assembly Resolution to update the 2015 Resolution on Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife. The CITES Secretary-General addressed the issue of a possible updated Resolution on two occasions, namely at a [side event](#) hosted by the United Kingdom, CITES and the Wildlife Conservation Society at UN Headquarters on World Wildlife Day 2017, and at a [High Level Event on Illegal Wildlife Trade](#) hosted by Gabon, Germany and the Wildlife Conservation Society on 6 June 2017 at UN Plaza, New York.
  20. Subsequently, on 11 September 2017, the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on [Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife](#) which emphasizes the need for effective international cooperation *inter alia* among relevant multilateral environmental agreements to counter illicit trafficking in wildlife. The resolution contains nine references to CITES, including four references to CoP17 and recognizes the Convention as the primary legal framework for regulating international trade in species of wild animals and plants as well as combating illicit trafficking in wildlife. The Resolution also recognizes the important work of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) which is chaired by the Secretariat.
  21. Regarding the process for the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, the Secretariat has received, as many CITES Parties will have, [a letter of invitation](#) to comment on this process and in particular on a note on [Approaches for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#). The Secretariat has expressed its willingness to cooperate, noting the linkage between this exercise and the preparation of CITES' own Strategic Vision for the period post-2020, which is addressed in another document at the present meeting.
  22. In this regard, the Secretariat has been invited by CBD to participate in the Bogis-Bossey Dialogue for Biodiversity on 12-14 November 2017. The Secretariat will participate in this dialogue and will report orally on its outcomes at the present meeting.

## Recommendation

23. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) note the information reported in this document; and
- b) offer inputs on how the CITES Secretariat could best contribute towards a possible follow-up framework to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.