

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

Interpretation and implementation matters

General compliance and enforcement

Compliance matters

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 66th meeting (SC66, Geneva, January 2016), the Standing Committee considered the effective implementation of the Convention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in accordance with Article XIII of the Convention, based on document [SC66 Doc. 28](#), prepared by the Secretariat, and further information provided by the DRC.
3. The Standing Committee adopted the recommendations set out in the summary record of the meeting (see document [SC66 SR](#)) concerning quota management and issuance of export permits; management of exports of African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*); illegal trade; trade in Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*); and collaboration amongst national CITES authorities.
4. At its 67th meeting (SC67, Johannesburg, September 2016), the Standing Committee considered the compliance matter based on a report by the Secretariat ([SC67 Doc. 12.2.1](#)) and a document by the DRC ([SC67 Doc. 12.2.2](#)). The Standing Committee took note of the reports, acknowledged the commitment and the initial progress demonstrated and requested the DRC to step up its efforts to fully implement the recommendations (see summary record [SC67 SR](#)). The present document reports on the steps taken by the DRC since September 2016 towards the effective implementation of the Standing Committee's recommendations. It addresses the five issues by theme, including areas of concern that have arisen subsequently, such as the apparent emergence of illegal trade in pangolin scales and the continued illegal trade in ivory. Finally, the document reports on the outcomes of a meeting between the CITES Management Authority of the DRC and the CITES Secretariat on 2 October 2017 in Geneva.

Quota management and issuance of export permits

5. At SC66, regarding quota management and issuance of export permits, the Standing Committee recommended that:
 - a) *Subject to the availability of external funds, the DRC establish an efficient information system to:*
 - i) *verify the legal origin of specimens in trade;*
 - ii) *control and monitor quotas to ensure they are not exceeded;*
 - iii) *issue CITES electronic permits and annual reports;*

- iv) *ensure that export permits and re-export certificates be endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp, by an inspecting official, such as customs, in the export endorsement block of the document; and*
 - v) *prepare annual reports that contain information on trade that have effectively occurred.*
- b) *DRC amend CITES implementing legislation to prevent specimens that have been obtained in contravention of national law to be legalized. Notably, the options provided in Articles 27 and 29 of the 'Arrêté ministériel No. 056 CAB/AFF-ECNPF/01/00 of 28 March 2000' that legalize the practice of modifying and renewing the CITES permits should be abolished.*
 - c) *DRC be strongly encouraged to only issue export permits shortly before the time of intended export.*
 - d) *Export permits and re-export certificates only be endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp, by an inspecting official, such as customs, in the export endorsement block of the document.*
 - e) *Notifications to the Parties No. 2013/051 and No. 2014/017 be considered as no longer valid.*
6. Regarding **paragraph a)**, it is the understanding of the Secretariat that no information system has been established yet. The DRC has explained that it has undertaken a major restructuring of its CITES Management Authority and moved the authority from one institution to another (see further below). Once the restructuring is fully operational, the DRC should be in a position to address this recommendation. With respect to **paragraph b)** of the recommendation, the DRC reported at SC67 that annual export quotas were established and monitored to ensure that no quota is exceeded. The DRC further reported that the practice of issuing and subsequently cancelling export permits had been terminated by the Management Authority in practice and in its legislation. This has been confirmed by Article 18 of Ministerial Order n°021/CAB/MIN/EDD/AAN/WF/05/2017 (August 2017). The Ministerial Order also makes it clear that any economic operator who has been granted a national export quota needs to use it in the year for which it was granted. Unused quotas will be cancelled by the end of the year (Article 17).
 7. Regarding **paragraphs c) and d)** as well as other aspects of this recommendation, the DRC has confirmed that it is committed, through its new Management Authority, to implement the recommendations aimed at improving past practices and to ensure full compliance of the DRC with the Convention (see further below).
 8. In preparing this document, the CITES Secretariat analysed export permits sent by the DRC, and DRC permits that importing Parties had requested the Secretariat to verify. The analysis was based on: a) copies of permits sent by the DRC to the Secretariat; b) requests from importing Parties to verify the authenticity of permits issued by the DRC; and c) an analysis of the data contained in the CITES annual reports of the DRC and importing Parties, as contained in the CITES trade database.
 9. A total of 276 copies of exports permits from the DRC were received by the Secretariat between 23 February 2016 and 27 September 2017. Of these, 190 involved trade in Afromosia, and 12 in African grey parrots. Importing Parties requested the Secretariat to verify 93 of these 276 permits while 183 permits were not submitted to the Secretariat for verification. This may be because the recommendation to verify export permits from the DRC with the Secretariat only concerns trade in African greys parrots and Afromosia. It may also be because the trade transaction did not take place. The difference between the permits issued and permits verified does not allow to ascertain the volumes of authorized export that effectively occurred during this period. The Secretariat's analysis is therefore based on 93 verified permits. The actual use of the 183 other export permits that the DRC issued can be examined when annual trade reports become available, and comparative tabulations, showing reported exports and reported imports for a given year, can be analysed.
 10. The Secretariat noted a number of recurrent errors regarding the use by issuing CITES authorities in the DRC of official names of importing Parties: several of the 276 export permits received mentioned as importing country "Hong Kong", "Dubai" and "Vientiane". The official names are respectively: "Hong Kong SAR" (HK), "United Arab Emirates" (AE) and "Lao People's Democratic Republic" (LA). The Secretariat also noted that 15 export permits inappropriately indicated "Taiwan" as an importing country.
 11. In addition to exports of African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) and Afromosia (*Pericopsis elata*), the permits submitted to the Secretariat also concerned trade in several species of pangolins (*Manis* spp.).

Management of exports of African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*)

12. At SC66, regarding the management of exports of *Psittacus erithacus* (African grey parrot), the Standing Committee recommended that:
- a) *all Parties suspend commercial trade in specimens of the species Psittacus erithacus from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) forthwith, except for an export in 2016 of 1,600 specimens already collected and ready for export, but subject to confirmation of authenticity of export permits by the Secretariat, until it:*
 - i) *develops a scientifically-based field survey to establish the population status of the species in the country;*
 - ii) *develops a National Management Plan for the species and commences implementation of the Plan; and*
 - iii) *provides a copy of the survey and Management Plan to the Secretariat;*
 - b) *a quota be established by DRC, in consultation with the CITES Secretariat, provided the steps referred to above are first completed.*
13. The recommendation to suspend commercial trade in specimens of *Psittacus erithacus* from the DRC was communicated in [Notification to the Parties No. 2016/021](#) of 16 March 2016.
14. At SC67, the Standing Committee discussed the implementation of these recommendations by the DRC.¹ The Standing Committee took note of the reports of the DRC contained in documents [SC67 Doc. 12.2.2](#) and [SC67 Doc. 20](#), informing of its remedial actions; acknowledged the commitment and initial progress demonstrated; and requested the DRC to step up its efforts to fully implement the Standing Committee's recommendations. More specifically, the Standing Committee requested the DRC, *inter alia*, to complete the field study on *Psittacus erithacus* by 30 April 2017, and submit it to the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee, together with a National Management Plan, including a proposed quota, subject to any decision of the Conference of the Parties in relation to *Psittacus erithacus*. The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to report to its 69th meeting on progress made by the DRC in implementing the Standing Committee's recommendations.
15. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties decided to transfer *Psittacus erithacus* from Appendix II to Appendix I, entering into effect on 2 January 2017. The DRC, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) entered reservations regarding this transfer. On 26 September 2017, the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties n°2017/063](#) to clarify the consequences of these reservations. The Notification states that in accordance with Article XV, paragraph 3, of the Convention, the DRC, Saudi Arabia and the UAE shall be treated as States not a Party to the Convention with respect to trade in African grey parrots. In paragraph 1 of [Resolution Conf. 4.25](#) (Rev. CoP14) on *Reservations*, the Conference of Parties recommends that Parties making such reservations consider the species as if it was included in Appendix II of the Convention. The Notification further recalled the recommendation of the Standing Committee to all Parties to suspend commercial trade in specimens of African grey parrots from the DRC and noted that the recommendation would remain in effect until further notice.
16. At the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017), the Secretariat presented document [AC29 Doc. 30](#), reminding the Committee that commercial trade in *Psittacus erithacus* from the DRC was suspended, and noting that the DRC had not submitted a National Management Plan for the species or a field survey, as had been recommended by the Standing Committee. Regarding the possible effect of the inclusion of the species in Appendix I at CoP17 and the subsequent entering of reservations by three Parties on the status of Standing Committee's recommendations, the Secretariat advised that this was a matter for the Standing Committee to determine. The Animals Committee noted document AC29 Doc. 30. It further noted concerns about illegal trade in *Psittacus erithacus* and agreed to refer the issue of the recommendation to suspend commercial trade in *Psittacus erithacus* from the DRC to the Standing Committee for its consideration. The Animals Committee further agreed that experimental export quotas for *Psittacus erithacus* should not be part of scientific surveys of the species in the DRC.

¹ See documents [SC67 Doc. 12.2.1](#) and [SC67 Doc. 12.2.2](#)

17. The Secretariat's analysis of export permits issued by the DRC for the year 2016 shows that 12 permits authorized the export of 1,600 African grey parrots, corresponding to the annual export quota for 2016, agreed by the Standing Committee at SC66. Some importing countries did not confirm the authenticity of the export permits with the Secretariat: importing countries requested the Secretariat to verify only 7 of these 12 export permits. In its 2016 annual report, the DRC reported the export of 1,600 *Psittacus erithacus*, including an export of 50 African grey parrots to Saudi Arabia. However, the Secretariat has not received an export permit from the DRC or Saudi Arabia that corresponds to this transaction.

Table 1: *Export of live specimens of Psittacus erithacus of wild origin from the DRC in 2016 and permits submitted to the Secretariat for verification*

Importing Party	Number of live specimens	Number of export permits	Number of export permits submitted to the Secretariat
Singapore	650	4	3
Thailand	250	2	0
Saudi Arabia	250	2	1
Hong Kong SAR	200	2	2
Kuwait	150	1	0
Lebanon	100	1	1
TOTAL	1600	12	7

18. The Secretariat has also analysed the data related to trade in *Psittacus erithacus* of wild origin from the DRC over the past ten years between the DRC and major importing Parties, contained the CITES trade database, to illustrate the need for a better system in the DRC to monitor the exports of *P. erithacus*. Table 2 below shows the evolution of the trade and the significant differences between quantities reported by exporting and importing Parties. Because several annual reports are still outstanding, it is not possible to compare levels of export reported by the DRC with those reported by importing countries for every year – ND indicates that no data is available in the trade database. However, it can be noted that whenever the data is available and a comparison is possible, there is recurrent difference between the quantity reported by the DRC and the one reported by the importing Party.

Table 2: *Evolution of trade between the DRC and major importing countries concerning live specimens of Psittacus erithacus of wild origin between January 2007 and December 2016*

Keys

Quantity reported by the DRC/Quantity reported by import country

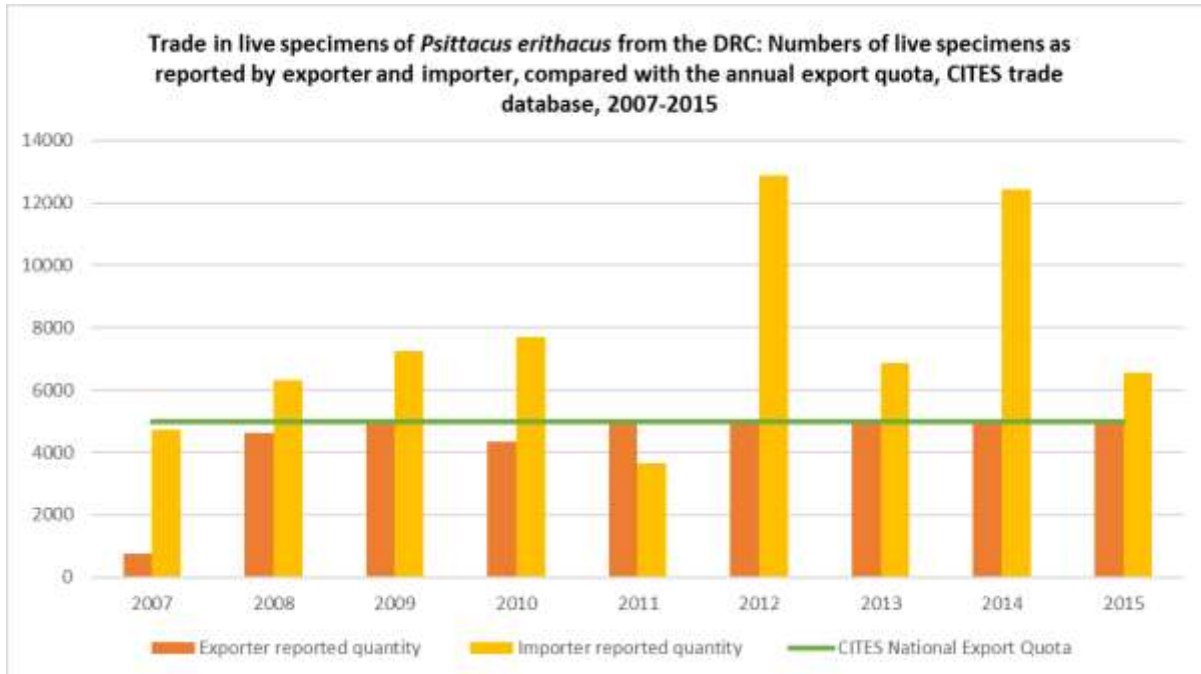
In bold: Discrepancy between the quantity reported by the DRC and the import country

"ND": Data not available

	Turkey	Singapore	Pakistan	Serbia	Thailand	South Africa	Hong Kong SAR	China
2007		300/1825	50/ND	100/1350	100/100	ND/1450		
2008		250/1800	500/ND	1200/3170		751/1201		
2009		ND/1510	200/ND	2100/ND		ND/5450		
2010	100/ND	100/1400		200/200	250/550	1600/5350	200/ND	
2011		ND/2800	100/ND			3600/441	ND/300	
2012	ND/320	ND/3600			ND/1770	5000/5500	ND/1700	
2013		1100/1699			ND/1400	2400/2400	ND/1170	
2014	700/6600	1300/1697	200/ND		200/ND	1200/1200	600/150	400/ND
2015	ND/500	2200/1800			ND/1750		1100/1100	800/1400
2016		650/ND			250/ND		200/ND	

19. Finally, the Secretariat has compared the export of live specimens of *Psittacus erithacus* of wild origin from the DRC as reported by the DRC with numbers reported by the importing Parties, and the annual export quota in the period 2007-2015. The explanation for the significant discrepancies in particular in 2012 and 2014 could be the practice of cancelling and reissuing permits that has since been abolished by the DRC, although a further in-depth analysis that is beyond the scope of this document would be required to clarify the reasons.

Figure 1



20. The Secretariat would like to recall [Decisions 17.253-258](#) related to *P. erithacus* adopted by CoP17 aimed at improving the conservation and sustainable management of the species by the range States with the support of relevant partners, including the CITES Secretariat.

Illegal trade

21. At SC66 and SC67, the Standing Committee requested the DRC to investigate, prosecute and judge perpetrators involved in the illegal trade in African grey parrots and other CITES-listed species, and submit detailed information on the concrete results of its enforcement activities to the Secretariat. The DRC authorities orally reported on progress with the implementation of this recommendation during their visit to the CITES Secretariat in September 2017, particularly concerning seizures of African grey parrots.

*a) Illegal trade in *Psittacus erithacus* (African grey parrot)*

22. In 2017, the Secretariat received information from different sources regarding multiple shipments of African grey parrots leaving Kisangani (DRC) with destination Kinshasa (DRC). According to this information, over 12,000 grey parrots were shipped by air freight from Kisangani to Kinshasa in 2016, and 8,000 in the first six months of 2017. Although this is a domestic issue, the collection and transport of this quantity of parrots from the interior of the DRC to the capital from where they are normally exported, may be cause for concern.
23. On 15 February 2017, the Secretariat was informed by a reliable source that some 90 African grey parrots had arrived in Amman, Jordan, with falsified DRC export permits. The shipment was released without the permit having been submitted to the Secretariat for verification.
24. The Secretariat is concerned about the continued existence of Facebook profiles of operators believed to illegally trade in African grey parrots, which had been brought to the attention of the DRC at SC67. To date, a Facebook profile continues to offer for sale grey parrots (see publication dated 30 August 2017 at <https://www.facebook.com/sami.rehman.125>). However, the Facebook page Kally Birds International no longer seems to exist as such.

25. The Secretariat was informed by several interlocutors of alleged illegal shipments of wild African grey parrots and so-called 'Timneh parrots' (*Psittacus erithacus timneh*, the subspecies occurring in West Africa) sent from Kinshasa to Pakistan by air freight between January 2016 and June 2017. The Secretariat has informed the concerned Management Authorities.

b) *Illegal trade in Manis spp. (Pangolins)*

26. The analysis of permits from the DRC included also some fraudulent permits involving pangolin specimens. Since February 2016, the Secretariat has been asked by importing Parties to verify nine permits. The Secretariat was unable to confirm the authenticity of seven of them. Two permits were issued in 2017 and they were both validated. The Secretariat is concerned by the number of fraudulent permits for specimens of *Manis* spp. claimed to originate in the DRC (see Table 3).

Table 3: DRC export permits for trade in pangolins (2016-2017)

Importing Party	Quantity (specimens) Species	Validity	Comments
Laos	500 kg (scales) <i>M. gigantea</i>	not validated	Seized by Thai authorities. Falsified permit
Laos	1,200 kg (scales) <i>M. gigantea</i>	not validated	Seized by Thai authorities. Falsified permit
China	700 kg (scales) <i>M. tripusculus</i>	not validated	Falsified - original permit for <i>Chamaeleo dilepsis</i>
China	650 kg (scales) <i>M. tripusculus</i>	not validated	Falsified - original permit for <i>Chamaeleo gracilis</i>
China	650 kg (scales) <i>M. tripusculus</i>	not validated	Falsified permit: initially granted for <i>Trioceros ellioti</i>
Hong Kong	950 kg <i>Manis</i> spp.	not validated	Request of the Management Authority of Hong Kong SAR. Falsified permit
Hong Kong	1,000 kg <i>M. tripusculus</i>	not validated	Request of the Management Authority of Hong Kong. Falsified permit
China	2,000 kg Scales <i>Manis tripusculus</i>	Confirmed	-
China	3,000 kg Scales <i>Manis tripusculus</i> ²	Confirmed	-

27. In January 2017, the Secretariat was informed via the Africa-Twix Platform that 31 bags of pangolin scales had been seized in the Eastern Province at Kisangani in the DRC. The seizure had been carried out by customs officers at the port of Dokolo in a boat bound for Kinshasa.

28. The Secretariat has also received information about alleged illegal shipments of grey parrots combined with illegal trade of pangolins scales. From January to June 2017, a total of nine shipments of parrots were reported to include packages of scales of African pangolins. According to the information received, a widespread and significant uptake in pangolin poaching has occurred during 2017, with an unprecedented increase in the number of seizures.

29. Following the decision at CoP17 to include *Manis* spp. in Appendix I, the Secretariat invited the Management Authority of the DRC in June 2017 to provide information on any existing pre-convention stocks of pangolin scales in the DRC. The Management Authority communicated a preliminary estimation of a stock of approximately 13 to 14 tons of dried pangolins scales in the country. On 22 September 2017, the Secretariat asked the Management Authority of the DRC for updates on this matter, and a report is expected for the present meeting with consolidated figures that include stocks seized by national authorities.

c) *Illegal trade in elephant ivory*

30. A report by [TRAFFIC, published online](#) on 30 August 2017, stated that Kinshasa's ivory market appeared to be still flourishing despite an increase in enforcement activity. This report indicated that between 2015 and 2016, enforcement efforts resulted in the seizure of 590.8 kg of ivory, and the arrest of approximately 50 alleged smugglers and illegal traders. At the international level, findings showed that "between 2015 and 2016, seizures that identified the DRC as part of the commercial chain involved 3,745 kg of ivory. The

² The Secretariat notes that the DRC export permits are for the species *Manis tripusculus* (sic) that does not exist and should in fact be issued for *Manis tricuspis*.

seizures in question involved 14 cases in Angola, Hong Kong SAR, Kenya, Malaysia, Belgium, China, Ethiopia, France and Thailand. Although Kinshasa is not a major centre for domestic ivory consumption, the city appears to serve as a conduit for the export of ivory to major consumption centres elsewhere, especially those in Asian countries”.

31. The DRC is a Party that is “importance to watch” in the National Ivory Action Plan process (see document SC69 Doc. 29.3).

Trade in Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*)

32. At SC66, the Standing Committee adopted the following recommendations concerning trade in *Pericopsis elata* from DRC:

- a) *The Standing Committee agreed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has until 31 October 2016 to export the stocks of Pericopsis elata (Afrormosia) corresponding to 19000m3 (round wood equivalent) harvested in 2014 and 2015.*
- b) *As an exception to paragraphs 20 and 21 of Resolution Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP 15), the export of these stocks is exceptionally authorized under the 2015 export quota (31905m3 round wood equivalent). No retroactive increase in this quota nor any transitional quota is authorized.*
- c) *Parties should not accept any CITES export permit or certificate for Pericopsis elata (Afrormosia) issued by the Democratic Republic of the Congo unless its authenticity has been confirmed by the Secretariat.*
- d) *Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo should implement the measures presented in their NDF report (document PC22 Doc. 12.1 and Annex). In particular, the Standing Committee encouraged the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop and make use of the database mentioned in the NDF report, which would allow for the monitoring and management of volumes of Pericopsis elata harvested and exported by the country, and the systematic conversion of volumes of processed products into round wood equivalent volumes, based on an appropriate conversion rate. The recommendation above refers to the information system that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is encouraged to build in order to increase transparency of the operations.*
- e) *The Standing Committee requested the Democratic Republic of the Congo to report on its progress to SC67.*

33. At SC67, the DRC introduced document [SC67 Doc. 20](#), highlighting that it believed it had provided a satisfactory response to the recommendations adopted at SC66. The DRC noted that it was working in close collaboration with the European Union and the CITES Secretariat on the management of export quotas and the completion of forest inventories. The European Union (EU) noted that supplementary information was needed on the implementation of the SC66 recommendations, especially on the systematic conversion of the volumes of processed products into round wood volume. The EU further noted that the DRC had made efforts to establish non-detriment findings based on independently verified forest inventories.

34. The Standing Committee noted the DRC’s report, and requested the DRC to submit by 30 April 2017 its report on the systematic conversion of the volumes of processed products into round wood volume. The Standing Committee further requested the DRC to intensify its efforts to develop an information system to efficiently manage permits, export quotas and conversion rates for *Pericopsis elata*. At the time of writing, the report on the systematic conversion of the volumes of processed products into round wood volume had not been submitted to the Secretariat.

35. The Secretariat notes that the Standing Committee’s recommendation to verify the authenticity of export permits of *Pericopsis elata* issued by the DRC does not seem to have been adhered to by all importing Parties. Of 190 export permits received from the DRC from 22 February 2016 to 27 September 2017, the Secretariat has been asked to verify the authenticity of 74 export permits (see table 4).

Table 4: Number of export permits for *Pericopsis elata* received from the DRC vs. number of permit requests for verification received from importing Parties

Destination of export permits for <i>Afrormosia</i> issues by the DRC in 2016-2017	Submitted by the DRC to the Secretariat	Asked by importing Parties to verify	Number of permits not submitted for verification
Belgium	48	32	16
China*	32	24	8
Czech Republic	1	1	0
Egypt	1	0	1
France	3	2	1
India	10	0	10
Italy	7	0	7
Japan	7	0	7
Kuwait	2	0	2
Malaysia	1	0	1
Pakistan	9	0	9
Portugal	8	5	3
Republic of Korea	4	0	4
South Africa	1	0	1
Spain	4	3	1
Thailand	1	0	1
Turkey	7	0	7
United Arab Emirates	4	0	4
United States of America	1	0	1
Vietnam	19	7	12
Total	190	74	116

*The Secretariat received 20 permits from DRC indicating "Taiwan" as the country of import, for which no requests for verification have been received by the Secretariat from the competent authorities.

36. The Secretariat would like to emphasize the importance of the recommendation of the Standing Committee regarding the verification of every export permit for *Pericopsis elata* issued by the DRC to allow proper monitoring of the compliance levels and a better analysis of the ongoing authorized trade in this species.

Collaboration amongst national authorities

37. At SC67, the DRC reported that collaboration between the Scientific Authority, Management Authority and other relevant agencies had improved, and that a national CITES Committee was to be established, formalised in a forthcoming decree to be signed by the Prime Minister. The Ministerial Order n°021/CAB/MIN/EDD/AAN/WF/05/2017 creates the National CITES Committee to foster inter-agency collaboration and better implementation of the Convention in the DRC.
38. The new national CITES Committee includes representatives from 35 different institutions and ministries, including the Office of the President, foreign affairs, transport, home affairs, justice, finance, environment and sustainable development, customs, police, private sector representatives and the national CITES authorities.
39. It is expected that the Committee will meet once every semester in ordinary session, and anytime needed in extraordinary session, convened by the Environment and Sustainable Development Minister. The aim of the national Committee is to maintain the inter-agency collaboration on the implementation of CITES in the DRC and to define and establish practical means to improve the collaboration and consultation between the Management Authority, Scientific Authorities and other concerned actors to control and fight against illegal trafficking. The Committee will approve and modify the National Ivory Action Plan prepared by its focal point, the Management Authority. This Committee has also been given the role of mediator in case of conflicts between CITES authorities, state institutions and private operators. The Committee will also discuss CITES scientific questions, approve annual export quotas, and validate the non-detriment findings (NDF) and species management plans prepared by the Scientific Authorities.

Meeting between the CITES Secretariat and the new CITES Management Authority of the DRC

40. In preparing for the present meeting, the Director of the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) and the head of the new CITES Management Authority of the DRC visited the CITES Secretariat on 2 October 2017, accompanied by the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development and the Ambassador of the DRC in Geneva. Issues addressed at the meeting included the CITES reform in the DRC, the new design of CITES permits and certificates, the management of export quotas, the trade in African grey parrots, and capacity-building and training needs in the DRC.
41. Regarding CITES reforms, the DRC recalled that the management and responsibility for CITES in the DRC had recently been reorganized. Ministerial Order n°021/CAB/MIN/EDD/AAN/WF/05/2017, issued by the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development on 31 August 2017, designated ICCN as the new Management Authority, replacing the Directorate for Nature Conservation of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development. The Scientific Authority had been shifted to eight institutes (four on fauna and four on flora). The Secretariat received the names and sample signatures of the two persons authorized to sign CITES permits and certificates as of 7 September 2017.
42. Regarding issuance of export permits, the CITES Management Authority expressed its intention to create more secure permits and a more secure procedure for issuing permits and limiting risks of irregularities. They further requested the Secretariat to print new CITES permits before they would authorize any trade.
43. On the management of export quotas, the Management Authority agreed to send to the Secretariat scanned versions of each export permit to facilitate the verification of authenticity and the monitoring of exports from the DRC. The Management Authority explained that quotas for *Pericopsis elata* were delivered regularly and that each concession establishes its own inventory. With respect to the conversion rate used by CONTREFOR, the Management Authority noted that it would encourage other concessions to use the same rate or to prepare a study to justify a different conversion rate. Finally, the DRC mentioned that an application for a project under the CITES tree species program was under consideration which was welcomed by the Secretariat.
44. Regarding trade in African grey parrots, the Management Authority confirmed its intention to follow the recommendation in Resolution Conf. 4.25 (Rev. CoP14) and consider the species as if it was included in Appendix II of the Convention. The Management Authority also declared that a moratorium on exports of *Psittacus erithacus* was in place for the time being. It noted that paragraph 3 of the Notification to the Parties No.2017/063, containing a recommendation to all Parties to suspend trade in *Psittacus erithacus*, should not apply to those Parties that had made a reservation with regard to that species following its inclusion in Appendix I at CoP17. The Secretariat invited the DRC to raise the issue at the present meeting.
45. The DRC confirmed its intention to undertake a scientifically based field study concerning the population of *Psittacus erithacus* and to develop a National Management Plan to provide the basis for the making of a robust non-detriment finding for *Psittacus erithacus*. The field-study had been initiated, and was coordinated by a researcher at the University of Kisangani. It was to be finalized early in 2018.
46. Regarding illegal trade, the Management Authority noted that it had brought several illegal operators to justice, and that it wanted to enhance the control of legal operators as well. The Management Authority also announced that a task force to combat poaching of elephants and illegal trade in ivory had been established. This task force was expected to present a progress report on the implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan to the present meeting of the Standing Committee.
47. The Management Authority highlighted the need for technical assistance and capacity-building, and requested training on the functioning of CITES and the issuing of permits for the new staff. The Secretariat responded that it was ready to provide technical assistance to the CITES authorities in the DRC, within available resources and ideally via the Compliance Assistance Programme.
48. The Secretariat recalled the importance of ensuring that the annual reports only contain information on trade that effectively occurred as indicated in [Notification to the Parties No. 2017/006](#), providing the guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports. This Notification and its guidelines was provided to the Management Authority during the meeting. By reporting on effective trade rather than on export permits issued, the gap between trade reported by exporting and importing Parties will be reduced and the data will provide a more accurate picture of the trade occurred.

The Secretariat's assessment of progress

49. In view of the Secretariat, the DRC has taken important steps towards a more effective implementation of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee, including significant institutional reform. The Secretariat commends the Government of the DRC for the efforts deployed and the level of commitment exhibited by the new Management Authority.
50. Many challenges remain regarding the management of trade and the development of the scientific basis and capacity for the making of non-detriment findings. There is an urgent need to support and build the capacity of the new Management and Scientific Authorities, including on the management of the CITES permit system and advice concerning the establishment of quotas, monitoring practices, adaptive management, the conduct of population surveys, the identification of specimens and species in trade, etc. These are important pending issues that should be addressed to make further progress on the range of compliance issues identified by the Standing Committee. The DRC is also facing significant challenges with respect to the effective enforcement of CITES. Support from the CITES Secretariat and ICCWC partners may be available to DRC, upon request, to assist the country in addressing these challenges.

Recommendations

51. The Secretariat proposes that the Standing Committee update and replace its recommendations adopted at SC66 and SC67 with the following. The Standing Committee recommends that:

Regarding quota management and issuance of export permits

- a) the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) establish an efficient information system, preferably an electronic system resources permitting, to:
- i) facilitate the issuance of permits and certificates and the verification of the legal acquisition of specimens in trade (legal acquisition finding), while making the manipulation of DRC CITES permits and certificates after issuance more difficult;
 - ii) keep up-to-date records of exporters, which should facilitate controls, communications, collaboration;
 - iii) facilitate liaison and integration with other permitting/certification systems relating to the harvest of and trade in CITES-listed resources, e.g. timber concession authorizations, phytosanitary/veterinary documentation, or customs declarations;
 - iv) control and monitor annual export quotas to ensure they are not exceeded;
 - v) ensure that export permits and re-export certificates be endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp, by an inspecting official, such as customs, in the export endorsement block of the document; and
 - vi) prepare annual reports that contain information on trade that have effectively occurred, and follow the guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual report of the [Notification to the Parties No.2017/006](#) and its annex, paying special attention to name correctly the country of import (box 3a in the Standard CITES form); and
- b) the DRC provide scanned copies of all permits and certificates issued to authorize trade in CITES-listed species to the Secretariat until further notice.

*Regarding the management of trade in *Psittacus erithacus**

- c) a non-Party to the Convention for *Psittacus erithacus*, in accordance with Resolution Conf.4.25 (Rev. CoP14), treat the species as if it were included in Appendix II for all purposes, including documentation and control, and suspend the issuance of export permits for commercial and non-commercial trade in specimens of *Psittacus erithacus* of wild origin until it is in a position to make scientifically based non-detriment findings for trade in the species;
- d) the DRC take steps to implement CoP Decision 17.256 on *African grey parrots* (*Psittacus erithacus*), and

- e) the DRC not establish experimental export quotas as part of scientific surveys of the species in the country.

Regarding illegal trade:

- f) the DRC take urgent steps to progress the implementation of its NIAP, and report on progress to the Secretariat according to the agreed deadlines;
- g) the DRC investigate and prosecute criminal cases involving organized or transboundary activities relating to illegal trade in CITES-listed wildlife;
- h) the DRC provide to the Secretariat the results of any investigations conducted by competent national authorities to determine the origin of specimens in illegal trade, including African grey parrots, pangolin scales, elephant ivory, etc., as well as the identities of individuals involved in, *inter alia*, falsifying CITES documents, or illegally trading and smuggling CITES specimens, and the results of any legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators; and
- i) the DRC work with the law enforcement agencies from China, Pakistan, Singapore and Turkey to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices with the objective of improving the mechanisms for justice and police cooperation on the issues of trade and transiting of illegal or unreported trade in specimens of CITES-listed species.

Regarding trade in Pericopsis elata

- j) the DRC take urgent steps to implement the measures presented in its NDF report (document PC22 Doc. 12.1 and Annex), particularly:
 - i) the development and use of a database to monitor the volumes of *Pericopsis elata* harvested and exported by the DRC; and
 - ii) the systematic conversion of volumes of processed products into round wood equivalent volumes, based on an appropriate conversion rate.

52. As long as the database mentioned in paragraph 51 j) is not operational, the Standing Committee recommends that importing Parties not accept any CITES export permit or certificate for *Pericopsis elata* issued by the DRC unless its authenticity has been confirmed by the Secretariat.
53. The Standing Committee may wish to revisit its recommendation to suspend commercial trade in specimens of *P. erithacus* in view of the inclusion of the species in Appendix I.
54. The Standing Committee may wish to request that the DRC report on progress to the Secretariat on the implementation of recommendations directed to it in paragraph 51 by 1 July 2018, in order for the Secretariat to convey this report and its comments at the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee.