

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

Species specific matters

Maintenance of the Appendices

Listing of marine species

ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE  
FAO PANEL OF EXPERTS FOR PROPOSALS ON MARINE FISH SPECIES AND  
EVALUATION OF THE CONSERVATION BENEFITS OF MARINE FISH SPECIES  
LISTED AT CITES COP16 AND COP17

This document has been submitted by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.\*

**I – INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2006 by the Assistant Director General of the Fisheries Department of the FAO and the CITES Secretary General, respecting proposals on marine fish species, was established for “ensuring co-ordination with any conservation measures enforced by such bodies”. (Art XV of the CITES Convention, Paragraph 2. sub-paragraph (b))
- 1.2 At the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties, CoP17, it became evident that the guidance and/or advice provided by the FAO Panel of Experts were, in several cases, ignored or disregarded by CITES Parties.
- 1.3 At the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade of the Committee on Fisheries of the FAO (COFI/FT) held in Busan, Republic of Korea from 4 to 8 September 2017, the document presented by the FAO “recognized the challenge of funding an effective Panel of Experts process”, emphasizing the short period of time allowed for gathering experts from various regions of the world to ascertain that valid information, guidance and advice be provided to the Parties.
- 1.4 “... the fifth Expert Panel held in June 2016, brought together 25 specialists on fisheries science, management and trade, plus specialists on individual species or species groupings, ... from over fourteen countries across five continents were carefully selected through a formal process, required for such UN expert meetings, which follow UN modalities requiring FAO to approach Member States for clearance of Panel participants prior to invitations being sent out. ... Illegal trade specialist from TRAFFIC and both Co-chairs of the IUCN sharks specialist group were invited ... to attend as Expert Panel members. Lastly, two observers from the CITES Secretariat participated...” (Extract from FAO report to CoP17)
- 1.5 Unfortunately, several Parties ignored and/or disregarded the outcome of the Panel of Experts and took their decisions long before the findings of the Panel of Experts were known. Furthermore, this situation deprived

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\* 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.

Parties – who, in good faith, awaited the outcome of the FAO Panel of Experts prior to taking their own decisions – or the possibility of casting a valid vote.

- 1.5 Furthermore, at CoP 16 and CoP 17, there were several instances in which the CITES Secretariat's recommendations contradicted the views and findings expressed by the FAO Panel of Experts on proposals to list marine fish species on the Appendices.
- 1.6 Establishing the Panel of Experts is a very costly and complicated procedure, for very little practical impact in CITES decision-making process.

**Therefore, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines:**

- 2.1 Urges the Standing Committee to request the CITES Secretariat:
  - a) to undertake an analysis of the relevance of the FAO Panel of Experts in the CITES decision-making process for the listing of the Marine Fish Species in its Appendices;
  - b) to undertake, in conjunction with the FAO, a full evaluation of the conservation effectiveness of the Marine Fish Species listed in the Appendices at CoP 16 and CoP17; and
  - c) to report on its findings at CITES SC70.
- 2.2 Requests the CITES Secretariat that this item be placed on the agenda of the Standing Committee meeting SC69 (Geneva 27 November to 01 December 2017)