

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

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

Administrative matters

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS INCLUDING HOST COUNTRY ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE SECRETARIAT

This information document has been prepared by Switzerland in relation to agenda item 9.1 on *Administrative matters including host country arrangements for the Secretariat.*\*

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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.*

## Administrative matters including host country arrangements for the Secretariat

### Enhanced support by Switzerland to the CITES Secretariat and the implementation of CITES

The Convention text does not stipulate the location of the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES Secretariat). In fact, it has been hosted by the Swiss Confederation since its establishment (in Morges, Lausanne and Châtelaine, Geneva).

It currently occupies premises in the International Environment House (IEH).

Since its inception, the CITES Secretariat has been able to count on the support of Switzerland for its operations, both in cash and in kind.

As part of the Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – and thus as a United Nations (UN) entity – the CITES Secretariat falls automatically under the headquarters agreement concluded by Switzerland with the UN. Accordingly, the CITES Secretariat administered by the UNEP is also covered by that same headquarters agreement.

The staff of the CITES Secretariat and their families enjoy all privileges and immunities granted by the Swiss government to the UN and its staff based in Switzerland, including freedom of action, inviolability, immunity of jurisdiction, tax privileges and preferential customs treatment. Delegates to the CITES conferences and experts on mission benefit from the same privileges and immunities as delegates and experts participating at other UN meetings. Switzerland is a party to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 24 April 1963.

Outside of the UN Headquarters in New York, Geneva is the organization's largest centre and is a location that facilitates and promotes coherence and synergies. UN environmental affairs are largely centred in Geneva. No other duty station employs as many staff in this domain. Moreover, the other major international organisations and institutions relevant to the work of CITES, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), are also based in Geneva. Geneva hosts the permanent missions of 174 UN Member States. This enables substantial savings on travel costs for the parties, as it facilitates missions in interacting directly with the CITES Secretariat on a regular basis and in providing support to their capital-based delegations, which would not be possible in other locations. In addition to being the seat of multinational companies and over 350 NGOs, Geneva offers networking opportunities which have resulted in many partnerships over time.

Switzerland has a long history of hosting international meetings. It strives to ensure that the participants in meetings staged by international organisations in Geneva are granted visas in an expeditious manner in accordance with the given Schengen regulations.

The Swiss government has provided rent-free office space for the CITES Secretariat and will continue to do so. State-of-the-art meeting facilities are provided at concessional terms by the host government.

Switzerland will not fail to provide all of the support necessary to the CITES Secretariat and is willing to support it financially, administratively and logistically. The Swiss offer comprises the following elements:

- A total sum of CHF 600,000 to the CITES Secretariat for the 2018 fiscal year<sup>1</sup>.
- A total sum of CHF 1,000,000 to the CITES Secretariat each year, effective from the 2019 fiscal year<sup>23</sup>.
- Continuous provision of adequate rent-free office space in the International Environment House in Geneva.
- Rent-free access to the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG) – specially built for hosting international conferences – for CITES meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> *The assessed contributions of Switzerland are not included in this sum.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Swiss Federal Council offers this enhanced support under the caveat that Parliament approves this additional apportioning of the Federal Budget.*

<sup>3</sup> *The assessed contributions of Switzerland are not included in this sum.*

Switzerland invites the Standing Committee to review this information. It is the view of Switzerland that it is in the best interests of the Contracting Parties to CITES, and all other stakeholders, that the members of the Standing Committee make an appraisal that the enhanced support of Switzerland satisfies entirely Resolution Conf. 17.2 entitled *Financing and the costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2017-2019*.