

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

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Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1 - 5 October 2018

Strategic matters

FOLLOW-UP OF THE YOUTH FORUM FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE AND  
SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAMME:  
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), adopted Decisions 17.26 and 17.27 on *Youth engagement*, as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**17.26    *The Secretariat shall:***

- a) *review the reports of the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth Conservation Programme and evaluate the recommendations put forward; and*
- b) *provide a report to the Standing Committee at its 69th meeting that addresses the feasibility of implementing these recommendations and provides recommendations on how CITES Parties can increase youth engagement.*

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

**17.27    *The Standing Committee shall consider the report submitted by the Secretariat and its recommendations, and make any recommendations it deems appropriate to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.***

3. The Standing Committee, at its 69th meeting (Geneva, November 2017), requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to encourage Parties to inform the Secretariat of progress made to implement Resolution Conf. 17.5 on *Youth engagement* so that the Standing Committee can report to the Conference of the Parties at its 18th meeting (CoP18) in accordance with Decision 17.27.
4. The Secretariat sent out Notification to the Parties No. 2018/047 on 7 May 2018, requesting all Parties to communicate progress made to implement Resolution Conf. 17.5, to the Secretariat, including efforts made or plans to inform and engage the youth in the preparation of and participation in CoP18.
5. The Secretariat received reports on youth engagement from China, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2018/047. Summaries of these reports can be found in Annex 1.
6. The Secretariat appreciates the efforts made by the above Parties in providing the information. The range and depth of youth engagement activities as reported by these countries are commendable and can inspire other Parties in preparing and implementing their plans to engage and empower youth in wildlife conservation including in the CITES processes.

7. The Standing Committee also adopted a recommendation at its 69th meeting which encourages South Africa to integrate CITES in its Youth Conservation Programme and update the Secretariat on progress made in this regard, as well as on the implementation of the Programme. No report has been received from South Africa at the time of writing of this report.

#### Efforts made by the Secretariat to promote youth engagement

8. The Secretariat sees World Wildlife Day as one of the best opportunities to raise awareness and engage with the youth around the world in wildlife conservation. The Secretariat invited a representative of Youth for Wildlife Conservation to speak as a panellist at the high-level event at the UN Headquarters in New York on 2 March 2018 to celebrate World Wildlife Day 2018 under the theme “Big Cats: predators under threat”. Students from a local school in the New York area also invited participated in the event.
9. The Secretariat reached out to over 30 country offices of Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots network and encouraged them to celebrate World Wildlife Day and use it an opportunity to raise awareness of wildlife conservation among the youth. Messages from Roots & Shoots and Youth for Wildlife Conservation were published on the official website of World Wildlife Day. The Secretariat also helped a middle school student from Vermont, in the United States, produce a short video to raise awareness of big cats conservation, and shared the video on social media. The video has been viewed 110,000 times on Twitter.
10. The Secretariat has been in contact with the office of UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to seek the support of the youth envoy in further mobilizing youth across the world to celebrate the World Wildlife Day. The Secretariat is also exploring the possibility for the youth envoy to attend CoP18 in Sri Lanka including the various youth events that have been planned by international and local organizations. The current youth envoy is a national of Sri Lanka.
11. The Secretariat continues to work closely with youth conservation organizations, such as Youth for Wildlife Conservation and One More Generation, to promote youth engagement. The Secretariat provided assistance to them particularly by facilitating communication with national CITES Authorities.
12. The Secretariat continues to offer internship opportunities to young women and men from around the world to work at the Secretariat. There are currently 4 interns working at the Secretariat.
13. The Secretariat regularly gives presentations on CITES to groups of students from various countries that visit the International Environment House in Geneva which hosts the Secretariat. Such events are usually organized by the [Geneva Environment Network](#)<sup>1</sup>, a cooperative partnership of over 75 environment and sustainable development organizations based in the Geneva area.
14. The Secretariat uses the World Wildlife Day channels on social media to celebrate International Youth Day (12 August) which coincides with World Elephant Day and uses it as an opportunity to promote youth engagement and to raise awareness of wildlife conservation among the youth.

#### Discussion

15. The reports submitted by the Parties illustrate a wide range of forms of youth engagement initiatives, from integration in school education programmes, broad conservation awareness-building activities to training, apprenticeship, employment and involvement in the decision-making process, including participation in CITES meetings and the opportunity to comment on draft documents for consideration at the Conference of the Parties to CITES.
16. In terms of the level and scope of youth engagement and empowerment, the efforts made by the United Arab Emirates stand out. This is demonstrated by the facts that a 22-year-old youth was appointed as the Minister of State for Youth Affairs in 2016, the Youth Empowerment Strategy was initiated in 2015, over 70% of the staff handling biodiversity and CITES related issues are from the youth age group, and youth delegates have been assigned as head of delegation of the UAE to CITES meetings in the recent years.
17. There is so far not a clear definition of “youth” in CITES, particularly the age range. In fact, different organization within the UN system use different definitions<sup>2</sup>. The age range used by the UN Secretariat, i.e.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.environmenthouse.ch/>

<sup>2</sup> [Definition of youth](#)

from 15 to 24, seems most appropriate for the purpose of CITES. This should be best reflected in Resolution Conf. 17.5 on *Youth Engagement* to avoid confusion.

Recommendations

18. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to:

- a) take note of the present document and commend the Parties that have reported on progress made in youth engagement and empowerment;
- b) consider the attached draft revision of Resolution Conf. 17.5 on *Youth Engagement* and submit it for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Summary of reports from Parties on youth engagement in response to  
Notification to the Parties No. 2018/047**

Country	Main activities
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Regular awareness raising activities for wildlife conservation are carried out for the youth every year. Forty-five schools have been named “model schools” to promote education on “ecological civilization” as called for by the central government of China and nine textbooks have been published to enhance education on environmental and nature conservation and sustainable development.</li> <li>2) The youth have always played an active role in the celebration of World Wildlife Day and the Bird-loving Week every year across China. WWD2017 was celebrated across the country under the theme “Listen to young voices”.</li> <li>3) In China, the youth represent a major force in wildlife conservation on the frontline, including in governmental and non-governmental bodies such as wildlife rescue centres and China Wildlife Conservation Association.</li> <li>4) More and more youth delegates are participating in the work of CITES and attending CITES-related events, including the work on CITES and rural communities and the training workshop on the application of new CITES guidance on trade in captive-bred animals. This trend will continue.</li> </ul>
Philippines	<p>The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through its relevant bureau, regional and field offices and in collaboration with partners from academia and non-governmental organizations, has organized various wildlife conservation-related activities that involved the participation of the youth, which are summarized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) National Wildlife Quiz Bee       <p>This is a knowledge-based competition and learning event which aims to: encourage target students to give attention to current developments in wildlife, both nationally and internationally; raise awareness and appreciation of the richness, importance, status and conservation of the Philippine wildlife among the students, their advisers and the public in general; and, encourage the youth to be active in pursuing their role as environment and wildlife conservation stewards. Since 2016, the Biodiversity Management Bureau in partnership with the United States Department of Interior, International Technical Assistance (USDOI- ITAP) and USAID-Protect Wildlife Project have already conducted three national wildlife quiz bee contest, the latest of which was held on 2 March 2018, with the participation of thirty Grade 9 students from public schools within the National Capital Region, Region 3 and CALABARZON.</p> </li> <li>2) Palawan Youth Forum on Crocodile Conservation:       <p>The one-day forum was organized on World Wildlife Day 2017 by the Crocodylus Porosus Philippines, Incorporated (CPPI) in coordination with the DENR-Provincial Environment Natural Resources Office in Palawan. CPPI is an active and strong partner of the Philippine government in the conservation of crocodilian species and in promoting the sustainable use of Indo-Pacific Crocodile or Saltwater Crocodile. The forum served as a venue for the student leaders in Palawan to discuss the ongoing major threats to crocodiles – from habitat conversion, over-exploitation to illicit wildlife trafficking.</p> </li> <li>3) Youth Biocamp       <p>A two-day learning event designed for children and youth aimed to expose the participants to biodiversity conservation, and make them aware of their role in conserving biodiversity. It was conducted last 3-4 March 2018 at Ninoy Aquino Parks</p> </li> </ul>

	<p>and Wildlife Center and attended by high school students, aged 13-18 years old from various schools in Metro Manila. Activities included a lecture on biodiversity conservation, environmental games, skits or role playing, a nature walk, wildlife watching, and a close encounter with selected species of wild animals.</p> <p>4) Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU) Student Conservation Leader Summit</p> <p>The Summit aimed to train young conservation leaders from various high schools in Davao Region as “Key Board Warriors” of a social-media based conservation campaigns for the Philippine Eagle and Davao wildlife diversity. It was organized by the ADDU and the Philippine Eagle Foundation on 10 March 2018.</p> <p>5) Dalaw-Turo</p> <p>Dalaw-turo is a non-traditional, non-formal, and participatory approach to raise public awareness on biodiversity conservation. It makes use of various forms of media such as lectures, films and environmental games. Dalaw-Turo is regularly conducted by the DENR Regional Offices in various schools nationwide from primary schools to senior high schools. For this year, the DENR Regional Field Office had conducted Dalaw-Turo in 28 schools in 16 provinces in the country. Youth also panted trees in forest and mangrove areas.</p>
Thailand	<p>The Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)</p> <p>1) DNP has provided training opportunity to 91 youth representatives from educational facilities around the country at the Wildlife Conservation Bureau and its Regional Departments such as the Wildlife Breeding Centre and the Wildlife Research Station. This is done to improve knowledge and understanding on the implementation of wildlife conservation by the DNP.</p> <p>2) Hosted a forest conservation youth camp in commemoration of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn 60th birthday at Queen Sirikit Park, Bangkok. The goal of the camp was to instill a sense of duty in 560 youths between the age of 6 - 12 to better appreciate natural resources and environments and participate in the conservation of forest and wildlife resources.</p> <p>3) Hosted a forest conservation youth camp in commemoration of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn 60th birthday at the Nature and Wildlife Education Center in 21 locations. The goal of the camp was to instil a sense of duty in 15,120 Elementary 4 and 5 students so that they can better appreciate nature and the environment and participate in the conservation of forest and wildlife resources.</p> <p>4) Hosted a youth camp on wildlife and environmental conservation at the Nature and Wildlife Education Center in 20 locations. The goal of the camp was to teach the youth and students to understand and acknowledge the importance and benefits of wildlife and environment conservation to the 630 participants.</p> <p>DNP CITES Wildlife Checkpoints</p> <p>1) Hosted activities and exhibitions for improving knowledge on CITES to students, faculties, and educational facilities in Sa Kaeo Province.</p> <p>2) Demonstrated to the youth the performance of Tha Li Wildlife Checkpoint and the roles of young students in upholding CITES and wildlife conservation of Thailand and hosted a study activity and lecture for the youth on an operation overview of various department and Kra Seng Customs House in examining the imports and exports between Thai-Laos borders in Sa Kaeo Province.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Raised awareness among the youth against the illegal trade of ivory and instil wildlife conservation values in students near the borders during National Children's Day and National Forest Conservation Day.</li> <li>4) Participated in the National Children's Day events by hosting an exhibition to promote the campaign against illegal wildlife trades, specifically elephant ivory. Distributed brochures, and souvenirs to children and other participants.</li> <li>5) Promoted CITES implementation and wildlife conservation in Thailand to the youth in several provinces including in conjunction with the Protection and Honoring of the Monarchy Project.</li> <li>6) Presented "CITES implementation and wildlife conservation in Thailand" to the youth.</li> <li>7) Presented information on elephant ivory trades and wildlife enforcement in tourist locations to the youth.</li> <li>8) Hosted an exhibition to raise awareness of international trade in wildlife, CITES rules, and national laws on wildlife and elephant and wildlife conservation among youth and the general public during National Wildlife Protection Day 2017.</li> </ul> <p><b>Department of Fisheries</b></p> <p>Hosted a fisheries fair to exhibit marine species, various displays, and activities to promote the conservation and distribution of information on marine species listed in the CITES Appendices for youth and the general public.</p>
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The UAE Government attaches great importance to the role of youth and their empowerment in order to enable them to shoulder responsibilities, innovate and contribute to the welfare of the UAE's community. Achievement of UAE Vision 2021 and Centennial 2071 which guide the country's path for sustainable development requires the skills, energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the country's young people. To emphasize this, the UAE made several steps to ensure that the voice of the youth is heard and their views are shared.</li> <li>2) This is most notably demonstrated by the fact that a youth was appointed the Minister of Youth as part of the government restructuring in February 2016. Minister Shamma bint Sohail Faris Al Mazrui, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, was only 22 years old at the time of her appointment.</li> <li>3) In March 2015, the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development and General Authority for Sports initiated the Youth Empowerment Strategy (YES) to enable the Government and young Emiratis to work together to help deliver Vision 2021. The strategy aims to strengthen cooperation, collaboration and communication between all youth development stakeholders, monitor youth empowerment progress using key performance indicators and accountability measures and provide an integrated and common vision and framework for young Emiratis based on opportunities, needs and priorities.</li> <li>4) The involvement of youth in issues related to biodiversity and conservation, including the implementation of CITES, is set as a priority in the UAE. At the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCAE), over 70% of the staff handling biodiversity and CITES related issues are from the youth age group. Furthermore, a significant number of UAE youth works in issues related to conservation which involves field studies and carrying out scientific surveys. This is apparent through the work of local competent authorities such as Environment agency Abu Dhabi (UAE CITES Scientific Authority), Dubai Municipality, and the Environment and Protected Areas Authority – Sharjah.</li> <li>5) Youth networks have been created to inform and influence conservation decisions. For example, MoCCAE established its Youth Council which consists of youth members who work with different sectors to build the capacity and raise the awareness of other UAE</li> </ul>

	<p>youth on issues related to environment, including biodiversity and CITES implementation.</p> <p>6) The Youth Council to date has carried out three “youth circles” which have brought together youth to discuss issues related to conservation, climate change and the impact of migration on biodiversity. The Youth Circles initiative is managed by the Emirates Youth Council and was launched by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai to inspire youth-centric dialogue across a variety of issues to engage youth in shaping innovative solutions for global challenges. Youth Circles exist as forums to enable youth to express their opinions on societal issues and policy matters, and to catalyze community impact and youth leadership.</p> <p>7) MoCCaE has also carried out two awareness campaigns with the main focus on the implementation of CITES and raising the awareness of the public on issues related to the conservation of endangered species. The campaigns targeted over 4,000 people from the general public including youth and students. These campaigns were organized by more than 35 members of MoCCaE youth council.</p> <p>8) In line with the Youth Empowerment Strategy, the UAE delegation to CITES since 2014 has continued to include youth delegates. The youth delegates to CITES meetings are involved in the negotiations of important issues under CITES, as well as participating in working groups, and presenting in side events. Furthermore, the youth delegates have been assigned as head of delegation of the UAE to CITES meeting in the recent years.</p>
United Kingdom	<p>1) The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) offers apprenticeships for youth in the 18 to 25 age group for a two-year term. They have the opportunity to learn about nature conservation in the UK and internationally. An apprentice helped prepare for the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in November 2017 and one is currently working on CITES EU Exit issues.</p> <p>2) A member of the UK delegation to the SC69 was aged 24, and two of the five person International Species Conservation team (responsible for the UK’s input to CITES) are under 26.</p> <p>3) Officials from the International Species Conservation Team at Defra are working with representatives of Youth 4 Wildlife Conservation (Y4WC). Y4WC’s mission is to support and empower youths to become the future conservation leaders the world needs. Defra officials will be working with Y4WC to involve them in the forthcoming global Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London in October 2018 and to discuss preparations for CoP18.</p>
United States of America	<p>1) The U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service (USFWS) has a long history of engaging the next generation to help us achieve our conservation mission, through outdoor recreation, educational opportunities, volunteer service, and work and training opportunities.</p> <p>2) In the lead up to CITES CoP17, USFWS supported the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife, which brought together 34 young leaders from 25 countries to learn, share and connect with conservationists from around the world. Participants of the Youth Forum worked with country delegates to draft the resolution and decisions adopted at CITES CoP17, perfectly illustrating how an informed and engaged youth population can affect international policy.</p> <p>3) Big cats film show case: In honour of World Wildlife Day 2018 which was celebrated under the theme of "Big Cats: Predators Under Threat", the U.S. Department of State partnered with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival to allow all US embassies, consulates and American Spaces the opportunity to screen five award-winning films about big cat species. Through these films, youth and public audiences around the world learned about the importance of big cat species, how populations are declining due to</p>

	<p>poaching and wildlife trafficking, and how conservation efforts are helping to protect and save these magnificent species.</p> <p>4) Zoohackathon: In 2016, the U.S. Department of State and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums launched the Zoohackathon to address the global threat of wildlife trafficking. The Zoohackathon is a global competition that brings together coders, technologists, university students, members of local communities, and wildlife enthusiasts to develop new and innovative technology solutions that can help fight wildlife trafficking. Last year, the global prize winning team, which consisted of university students and engineers, produced an image-recognition tool that fine-tunes camera sensors in wildlife parks and conservation areas and helps show images with far greater accuracy and detail. 2018 marks the third Zoohackathon and the U.S. Department of State and its partners are working to grow and expand the programme.</p> <p>5) MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins): In collaboration with the Zoological Society of London, the USFWS launched MENTOR-POP in 2016. Based in Yaounde, Cameroon, this 18-month programme developed a transdisciplinary team of nine early career Central African and Asian conservation practitioners to champion the conservation of pangolins in Central Africa. All four pangolin species found in Central Africa are threatened by poaching and trafficking for the commercial bushmeat market and to meet the international demand for their scales and meat, as well as by habitat loss. The MENTOR-POP Fellows implemented projects on field assessment, law enforcement, and demand reduction during their Fellowship. Collaborating with governments, non-governmental organizations, universities, and local communities, the Fellows gained valuable insights into threats to pangolins while also expanding their professional networks to prepare for careers beyond the program.</p> <p>6) World Wildlife Day Photo Competition: World Wildlife Day 2017 was celebrated under the theme of "Listen to Young Voices". In the United States, government agencies and conservation NGOs engaged on social media using #youth4wildlife, #YoungVoices, #WWD2017, and through several other initiatives. USFWS supported the "Through young eyes" photo competition, led by the CITES Secretariat by promoting the competition and soliciting for entries, serving on the judging panel, offering travel support for the winner, and participating in the award presentation at UN Headquarters.</p> <p>7) Youth engagement in the Arctic: The Arctic Youth Ambassadors Programme, established by the USFWS and U.S. Department of State in partnership with non-profit partner Alaska Geographic, brings together diverse youth from across Alaska to serve as ambassadors for their communities and country in building awareness at home and abroad about life in the Arctic, including with respect to Arctic wildlife and the role it plays in indigenous life. In Fall 2017, a new cohort of Youth Ambassadors was recruited to work with the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group, which is being chaired by the United States as Finland assumes leadership of the Arctic Council.</p> <p>8) As part of the Arctic Council's Arctic Biodiversity Congress 2018 and in connection with the upcoming Arctic Council Arctic Environment Ministerial, the Governments of Finland and the United States, in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), will be holding an Arctic Youth Summit from October 5-12, 2018 in Norvajarvi, Finland. This initiative will create a network of youth engaged and interested in Arctic biodiversity, provide experience and insight into how biodiversity issues are addressed in the Arctic, and empower young people to engage in conservation and promote Arctic biodiversity in their own home countries. The Summit will be able to facilitate 50 participants, approximately 35 youth and 15 educators.</p> <p>9) With regards to CITES CoP18 preparations, the United States, as it has done for previous Conference of the Parties, will post information about U.S. priorities and positions on social media and online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Medium, to engage diverse audiences, including youth. The US government will also consider inclusion of a youth delegate on the United States delegation.</p>
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DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18)

Youth engagement

(new text is underlined; deleted text appears in strikeout)

~~WELCOMING the efforts of the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth and Conservation Programme to engage young people and serve as examples of ways to integrate youth in wildlife conservation, including CITES matters;~~

NOTING that the United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth without prejudice to other definitions by Member States;

~~ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth will one day be in decision-making positions and that government bodies and organizations responsible for wildlife conservation making decisions on the conservation of wild animals and plants, including CITES processes, must engage these people now to equip them to be stronger leaders in the future;~~

~~RECOGNIZING that by welcoming today's youth into species conservation and wildlife trade conversations, our decision makers will add a rich diversity of ideas and solutions;~~

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth have come of age in a generation very different than those before it, including great technological advancement, and that the skills held by younger colleagues can be valuable tools to ensure that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable;

WELCOMING the designation of youth engagement as the theme of World Wildlife Day 2017; and

FURTHER NOTING that the engagement and empowerment of the youth is high on the agenda of the United Nations and that this objective is being achieved through the youth programmes of various UN system organizations as well as the dedicated UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. ENCOURAGES Parties to explore opportunities to engage today's youth in CITES and other wildlife conservation issues, for example through internship or mentoring programmes;
2. INVITES Parties and the CITES Secretariat to work with universities, youth groups, and other relevant associations and organizations, to create educated and engaged youth networks that can inform and influence conservation decisions;
3. INVITES Parties and observer organizations to include youth delegates on official delegations and provide learning opportunities at CITES meetings;
4. INVITES the Secretariat to collaborate with relevant UN organizations and conventions as well as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth on youth engagement initiatives;
5. ENCOURAGES Parties to use World Wildlife Day as an opportunity to incentivise wildlife conservation among younger generations and to provide platforms for them to engage with one another on conservation issues; and
6. ENCOURAGES Parties to establish long term youth engagement and empowerment strategies to ensure the participation of the youth in wildlife conservation issues and CITES decision-making processes.