

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



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

Interpretation and implementation matters

General compliance and enforcement

Enforcement

ENFORCEMENT MATTERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Compliance and enforcement*, in paragraph 20 b), the Conference of the Parties instructs the Secretariat to:
 - b) *submit a report on enforcement matters at each Standing Committee meeting and each regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
3. In Resolution Conf. 17.6 on *Prohibiting, preventing, detecting and countering corruption, which facilitates activities conducted in violation of the Convention*, in paragraph 13 a) and b), the Conference of the Parties requests the Secretariat:
 - a) *to continue to report credible allegations of corrupt practices, or the results of its own investigations that lead to credible suspicions of corruption, to the relevant national authorities and intergovernmental entities; and*
 - b) *to include relevant information on such instances, and the outcome of investigations, in its report on enforcement matters to each Standing Committee meeting and each regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties, together with details of any anti-corruption activities the Secretariat has undertaken, along with its activities in implementation of Article XIII of the Convention;*
4. In Resolution Conf. 17.6, paragraphs 14 and 15, the Conference of the Parties:
 14. *REQUESTS the Standing Committee to take note of instances of corruption affecting the implementation or enforcement of the Convention and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Parties concerned and to the Conference of the Parties on ways in which it may be combated more effectively, whilst also considering possible actions that the Committee itself might take under Resolution Conf. 14.3; and*
 15. *REQUESTS the Standing Committee with support from the Secretariat, to ensure close cooperation of CITES with UNCAC and UNTOC.*
5. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.83 to 17.85 on *Enforcement matters*, as follow:

Directed to the Secretariat

17.83 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding:*

- a) *request the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to develop guidelines that could be used to promote adequate integrity policies, and assist Parties to mitigate the risks of corruption in the trade chain as it relates to CITES-listed specimens;*
- b) *work with the World Bank and other ICWC partner organizations to mobilize the “Wildlife crime and anti-money laundering” training programme developed under the auspices of ICWC, to enhance capacity amongst law-enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges, to detect and investigate illegal transactions and suspicious activities associated with wildlife crime, and to effectively prosecute and adjudicate money-laundering cases associated with wildlife crime;*
- c) *in consultation with identified laboratories, and in collaboration with ICWC partner organizations and the ICWC Wildlife Forensics Advisory Group, compile an electronic directory of laboratories that conduct wildlife forensic testing, that meet the minimum quality assurance standards and that, subject to available resources, are able and willing to carry out wildlife forensic analyses upon request from other countries; and*
- d) *convene a Task Force on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species, consisting of representatives of Parties affected by illicit trafficking in such specimens, ICWC partner organizations, other intergovernmental organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regional enforcement networks, other Parties and experts. The Task Force should develop strategies to combat illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species, including measures to promote and further strengthen international cooperation.*

17.84 *The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of Decision 17.83 at the 69th and 70th meetings of the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.85 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *examine mechanisms to facilitate the efficient international movement of samples for forensic or enforcement purposes, for consideration by the 18th Conference of the Parties; and*
- b) *with support of the Secretariat, explore options to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between CITES and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, including through their respective programmes of work and Secretariats, and report at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

6. The present document provides information on activities conducted regarding the implementation of the Resolutions and Decisions outlined in paragraphs 2 to 5 above, and in addition to those described in other documents prepared for the present meeting, activities and developments on enforcement matters that have taken place since the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017).

Implementation of Decisions 17.83 paragraph a) and 17.84, and Resolution Conf. 17.6 paragraphs 13 and 14

7. The work led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) commissioned by the Secretariat for the implementation of Decision 17.83, paragraph a), is ongoing, and good progress has been made. An *Integrity Guide for Wildlife Management Agencies* is currently under development, and it is expected that an advanced draft will be ready before the present meeting. The Secretariat will provide a further oral update on this matter at the present meeting.

8. Organized crime groups continue to target heavily a number of CITES-listed species because of their high monetary value. This makes the officers responsible for regulating trade in specimens of these species and enforcing the Convention potentially vulnerable to corruption. As highlighted in Resolution Conf. 17.6, failure

to prohibit, prevent, and counter corruption which relates to the implementation or enforcement of CITES greatly undermines the effectiveness of the Convention. It is essential that Parties make every effort to fully implement the provisions of Resolution Conf. 17.6. As was also emphasized in document [SC69 Doc. 31.1](#), it remains essential that Parties step up efforts to ensure that measures are in place to prevent, identify and address corruption. A number of incidents that occurred since SC69 again highlights this need. A recent report of the Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement (EAGLE) Network,¹ shared with the Secretariat, states that regarding operations that were carried out within the EAGLE Network, in “at least in 7 of the cases, corruption was so flagrant that it was exposed on the day of operation”. While incidents such as these are unfortunate, it is also encouraging to note that positive action is being taken where alleged corrupt activities are detected, or where offenders attempt to corrupt officials through bribing. In November 2017 the Directorate of Wildlife and Hunting Resources, the CITES Management Authority (MA) in the Ivory Coast, informed the Secretariat about an incident where two offenders attempted to bribe MA officials to issue CITES export permits for the export of three live Appendix I listed West African manatees (*Trichechus senegalensis*). This was done after efforts to illegally export two of the animals with a fraudulent permit from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) failed. The MA reported the matter to the police for further investigation, and the suspects were subsequently arrested. The Lusaka Agreement Task Force ([LATE](#)), in July 2018, informed the Secretariat that, during an initiative concerning transnational investigations, and acting on information about suspected fraudulent permits communicated to LATE by the Secretariat, it worked with authorities in the DRC to initiate investigations into the suspected fraudulent permits. The Secretariat was informed that these investigations resulted in the arrest of a staff member from the CITES MA in the DRC, and that the matter is under investigation. Other examples include a state-sanctioned investigation into alleged ivory and rhinoceros horn trafficking in Zimbabwe,² and the attempted bribery charge filed against a company chief executive officer in Thailand.³

Implementation of Decisions 17.83, paragraph b) and 17.84

9. At CoP17, ICCWC launched its [Wildlife crime and anti-money-laundering \(AML\) training programme](#), designed to help investigators, prosecutors and others in the criminal justice system overcome the investigative, legal and procedural challenges related to wildlife crime and money laundering cases. At SC69, the Secretariat reported that the training programme was successfully piloted in Kenya, in June 2017, and since then, a further training led by the World Bank was conducted in the United Republic of Tanzania, in November 2017. This training in the United Republic of Tanzania was customized to the local context, and included a case simulation based upon an actual ivory smuggling case. The training required participants *inter alia* to conduct a financial investigation through a multidisciplinary team, make inquiries to determine suspect profiles, perform net worth analysis, perform a network analysis, connect financial transactions, and determine which assets may be restrained for future forfeiture.
10. Information on actual cases provided by officers trained again highlighted that wildlife trafficking often generates significant profits for the organized crime groups involved, and demonstrated that the laundering of money derived from wildlife trafficking through the financial sector has a corrosive effect on economic and governance systems. Reduction of such crimes and enabling the authorities to better detect the illicit financial flows generated by wildlife crime is therefore important to strengthen financial integrity and support economic growth. Building capacity to use anti-money laundering tools is expected to strengthen institutional capacity and interagency cooperation, and to shift the focus of law enforcement from the lowest level of the trafficking chain, the poachers, to those managing and organizing the activities behind these trafficking operations.
11. Based on course evaluations and observations from the two pilot deliveries, the training programme is being further developed and refined. It is anticipated that future training will likely take a multi-regional approach to connect practitioners from source, transit and destination countries. Implementation of the ICCWC AML training programme is included among the activities in the ICCWC Strategic Programme 2016-2020,⁴ and the Secretariat will continue to work closely with the World Bank and other ICCWC partners to mobilize the resources for the programme.

¹ <http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/data/files/eagle-network-1-semester-2018-report.pdf>

² <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/03/21/grace-sucked-into-ivory-scam>

³ <http://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/attempted-bribery-charge-filed-italian-thai-ceo-204362>

⁴ <https://cites.org/eng/prog/icwc.php/Strategy>

Implementation of Decisions 17.83, paragraph c) and 17.84

12. Work is ongoing on the development of an electronic directory of laboratories that conduct wildlife forensic testing, meet the minimum quality assurance standards, and are able and willing to carry out wildlife forensic analyses upon request from other countries, subject to available resources. This work led by UNODC in collaboration with the Secretariat builds upon the global review of forensic laboratory capacity commissioned by the Secretariat in cooperation with UNODC, available as Annex 4 to document CoP17 Doc. 25.
13. As part of this project, a survey is being developed to identify current laboratory capacity, and to invite laboratories to consider offering international forensic casework analysis services. Criteria for the inclusion of laboratories in the directory is under development. The criteria will be made available publicly to enable any laboratory that may not be included in the initial electronic directory to determine if it meets the specified criteria, and if so, to request inclusion, should it be desired.
14. The directory is to be hosted and maintained by the Secretariat, and should be updated over time. This will facilitate an ongoing source of relevant information for the law enforcement community, and the opportunity to accurately measure the development of global forensic capacity. The Secretariat will provide a further update on this work, in its report on *Enforcement matters* to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Sri Lanka, 2019).
15. The Secretariat is also pleased to inform Parties that it has developed a webpage on *Wildlife Forensics*,⁵ available on the CITES website. To encourage the use of forensic applications to the fullest extent possible to combat illegal trade in wildlife, the Secretariat will consolidate information relevant to this topic on this webpage, and make any information that may come to its attention available on it, as appropriate.

Implementation of Decisions 17.83, paragraph d), and 17.84

16. The convening of the Task Force on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species, called for in Decision 17.83, paragraph d), is subject to the availability of funding. Although funding has been secured for this purpose under the ICCWC Strategic Programme 2016-2020, as reported in document SC70 Doc. 30.2, delays have been experienced due to technical and administrative procedures currently underway for the disbursement of funds between ICCWC partners, and the negotiation of the agreements with donors. The Secretariat will make every effort to convene the Task Force as a matter of priority, as soon as the required funding becomes available, and will provide a further update on this in its report on *Enforcement matters* to CoP18.
17. In March and April 2018, the Secretariat participated in regional INTERPOL forestry crime meetings, in Bangkok, Thailand, and in Buenos Aires, Argentina. These two regional events resulted from the strategic advice provided by the recently established *INTERPOL Working Group on Forestry Crime*, in order to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement operations targeting organized criminal networks engaged in illegal logging and illegal international trade in timber. The meetings brought together representatives from intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and law enforcement officials from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and Viet Nam, in Thailand; and from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain and the United States of America, in Argentina. Outcomes from the two regional meetings include country level priorities and approaches to address forestry crime; strengthened awareness regarding CITES provisions among law enforcement officers; the establishment of a contact network to strengthen communication and cooperation between law enforcement officers in different countries, in particular at the regional level; and the planning of regional law enforcement operations in the Asian-Pacific region, and in the Central American, South American and Caribbean regions. The Secretariat believes that the regional forestry crime meetings organized by INTERPOL provides an excellent platform to support countries in their efforts to fight illegal trade in CITES listed tree species, in particular by strengthening enforcement cooperation at the regional level.
18. At the time of writing, arrangements are in place for the Secretariat to participate in the *Global Forestry Crime Conference* to be hosted by INTERPOL in Lyon, France, from 4 to 6 September 2018. This meeting will provide a unique opportunity to build upon the work conducted to date, and to further identify key forestry crime related matters affecting Parties, and opportunities to address them.

⁵ https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/imp/Wildlife_forensics

19. A development worth noting is a pledge of up to 15 million Euros by the Norwegian Government, for the launch of a collaborative initiative entitled *Law enforcement assistance programme to reduce tropical deforestation* (Programme LEAP), through a partnership between INTERPOL, UNODC and the RHIPTO-Norwegian Center for Global Analyses, to combat illegal deforestation.⁶ Programme LEAP will support different law enforcement agencies in their joint efforts to crack down on illegal deforestation and associated crimes, including by strengthening capacity and building national task forces to support frontline enforcement, investigation and prosecution.
20. In developing the agenda for the Task Force on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species, to be convened in accordance with Decision 17.83, paragraph d), the Secretariat will take into consideration the activities and initiatives mentioned above, as well as the outcomes and developments regarding those reported upon in paragraphs 17 and 18 in document SC69 Doc. 31.1 on *Enforcement matters* to facilitate complementarity and synergies, where possible and as appropriate.

Implementation of Decision 17.85, paragraph a)

21. At SC69, Decision 17.85, paragraph a), on efficient international movement of samples for forensic or enforcement purposes, was discussed under the agenda item on *Simplified procedures for permits and certificates*. The Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on simplified procedures for permits and certificates,⁷ and the working group is mandated to consider this matter. Reporting on Decision 17.85, paragraph a), will as a result, be addressed in the report and recommendations prepared by the working group on simplified procedures for the present meeting.

Implementation of Decision 17.85, paragraph b) and Resolution Conf. 17.6, paragraph 15

22. In addition to the information provided in document SC69 Doc. 31.1 on *Enforcement matters*, the Secretariat at SC69 orally reported that it jointly with UNODC hosted an event at the seventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), in Vienna, Austria, in November 2017.⁸ Both the former Secretary-General of CITES and the Executive Director of UNODC participated in this event to encourage UNCAC Parties to further step up efforts to tackle corruption associated with illicit wildlife trade. A [statement](#) of the former Secretary-General of CITES was read in Plenary at the Conference.
23. At SC69, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to continue to explore opportunities to progress the implementation of Decision 17.85, paragraph b),⁹ and the Secretariat has in the current reporting period continued to work closely with UNODC in this regard. Funding was made available through ICCWC to support the participation of experts at a side event, led by UNODC on behalf of ICCWC, hosted in the margins of the 27th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in Vienna, Austria, on 14 May 2018. The Governments of France and the United Kingdom, together with the UNODC Corruption and Economic Crime Branch and the UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, co-hosted the event. The event provided a platform to develop a better understanding about how corruption linked to wildlife crime manifests itself, and how it could be addressed. The Secretariat also collaborated closely with UNODC regarding an event on fighting corruption to stop wildlife crime, co-sponsored by the Permanent missions of Gabon, Germany and the United Kingdom, in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly debate to mark the 15th anniversary of the UNCAC, in New York, United States of America, on 23 May 2018. Funding was also made available through ICCWC to support the participation of experts at this event, and the Executive Director of UNODC in his remarks at this event placed strong emphasis on the need to tackle wildlife crime by taking action against associated corruption. The Executive Director of UNODC also highlighted the adoption of Resolution Conf. 17.6 at CoP17, and that addressing corruption is a core part of both the ICCWC Strategic Programme for 2016-2020, and UNODC's Global Programme to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime.¹⁰

⁶ <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2018/N2018-062>

⁷ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/sum/E-SC69-SR.pdf>

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https://www.cites.org/eng/news/sq/CITES_SG_Addressing_Corruption_Linked_Wildlife_Forest_Fisheries_Crime_UNCAC_side_event_0611_2017

⁹ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/sum/E-SC69-SR.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/speeches/2018/uncac15-wildlife.html>

24. The Secretariat believes that Decision 17.85, paragraph b), has been achieved, and in its reporting to CoP18. the Standing Committee may wish to suggest that this matter be further pursued in accordance with Resolution Conf. 17.6, paragraph 15.

Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa

25. At CoP17, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.97 to 17.100 on *Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa*, of which Decisions 17.97, paragraph a), and 17.98, state as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

17.97 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding,*

- a) *in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with the support of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and relevant stakeholders, commission a threat assessment report on illegal wildlife trade in West and Central Africa, to identify and collate information regarding trade routes, techniques and trends relating to wildlife trafficking in the two sub-regions, including recommendations on priority measures necessary to address and significantly reduce wildlife crime in the two sub-regions;*

...

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.98 *The Standing Committee shall review findings and recommendations emanating from the implementation of Decision 17.97 and make recommendations for further action to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

26. The Secretariat worked closely with UNODC to develop the terms of reference for this work, and at the time of writing, the work is ongoing. The threat assessment, led by UNODC, is implemented as an activity under the ICCWC Strategic Programme 2016-2020, through funding made available to ICCWC by the European Union, Monaco and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Secretariat would like to thank these donors for the generous funding provided, which enabled the Secretariat to commission the threat assessment.
27. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the Secretariat and UNODC, the threat assessment will, regrettably not be ready for review by the Committee at the present meeting. The threat assessment is expected to be completed by 30 November 2018, and the Committee may wish to request the Secretariat to review on its behalf the findings and recommendations emanating from the threat assessment, and to prepare recommendations for consideration at CoP18.

Illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives

28. Resolution Conf. 10.8 (Rev. CoP14) on *Conservation of trade in bears* urges all Parties, particularly bear range and consuming countries, to continue to take action to reduce the illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives.
29. The Secretariat believes that an increasing number of recent media and other reports about illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives suggests that this illegal trade might be escalating and is reason for concern. Recent examples include the seizure of, among other wildlife specimens, 468 bear paws in December 2017,¹¹ and a further 870 bear paws in January 2018,¹² in Russia. The seizure of bear gall bladders and teeth, among other wildlife specimens, in China in April 2018,¹³ and the dismantling of a black bear gallbladder-trafficking network reportedly responsible for killing more than 100 black bears over a period of three years, in Canada, in July 2018.¹⁴ A report from the non-governmental organization, TRAFFIC, released in November 2017, suggest that bear specimens are among the four most widely illegally traded species in

¹¹ <https://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/468-paws-from-at-least-117-illegally-slain-brown-bears-seized-en-route-to-china/>

¹² <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-china-bear-paws-tiger-endangered-animal-parts-smuggling/29004512.html>

¹³ <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/china-seizes-156-mammoth-tusks-in-huge-ivory-haul-10544294>

¹⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/black-bear-poaching-ring-1.4754071>

the border area between Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand.¹⁵ A recent paper entitled *Trade in bears in Lao PDR with observations from market surveys and seizure data* provides further information on Lao PDR as a place of origin, transit and destination for illegally-sourced live bears, their parts and derivatives.¹⁶

30. Although information available regarding the seizures and enforcement examples highlighted above shows that good law enforcement action is being taken to address this illegal trade, Parties, particularly bear range and consuming countries, are encouraged to review their implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.8 (Rev. CoP14), and to take action to pursue the full and effective implementation of the Resolution, where needed. Parties are also encouraged to continuously review poaching and trafficking trends, to ensure that the measures they implement to prevent and combat illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives remain effective, and are quickly adapted to respond to new emerging trends.

Tools and resources

31. The Secretariat is pleased to inform Parties that, in addition to the new webpage on *Wildlife Forensics* (see paragraph 15 above), it has also developed a new webpage on *Enforcement*.¹⁷ The web page is available on the CITES website, and the Secretariat will, as appropriate, consolidate information relevant to enforcement matters on this webpage, including information on tools and resources, relevant Resolutions and Decisions, meeting documents, Notifications to the Parties, and others. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is working to finalize the development of new webpages on cybercrime and cheetahs, and will report in more details on this in the relevant documents prepared for the present meeting.
32. The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of Parties to the *Customs-Police Cooperation Handbook*, jointly developed by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO), and launched in early 2018. The handbook places emphasis on the need for customs and police to work together to disrupt transnational criminal activity, and aims to foster increased cooperation between the two types of agencies at the national level. It offers professional insight on how to strengthen this collaboration. The handbook is available on the new enforcement webpage, and Parties are encouraged to promote the use of the handbook amongst their national customs and police authorities.

Closed user groups on the WCO CENcomm platform

33. The Secretariat, at the request of Parties and in collaboration with the WCO, created a number of closed user groups on the WCO CENcomm platform. The latest of these being the *Cheetah Closed User Group* communicated to Parties through Notification to the Parties No. 2018/046 of 7 May 2018, and the *Closed User Group for the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force*, as reported upon in paragraph 11 in document SC69 Doc. 64.
34. The WCO CENcomm platform provides a secure global communication tool for cooperation and information exchange, and plays an important role in facilitating national and international communication and cooperation among authorities. To date however, the closed user groups established at the request of Parties have not attracted significant use, and they seem to become dormant shortly after being established. Parties are encouraged to, where the creation of closed user groups were requested, communicate the establishment of such closed user groups to their relevant national authorities, and to encourage its use.
35. Due to the fact that the *Closed User Group for National Rhinoceros Focal Points and Relevant National Competent Authorities* as reported upon by the Secretariat in paragraph 31 of document CoP17 Doc. 68, as well as the *Project Rosewood Closed User Group*, have been dormant for some time now, they have been discontinued.

Final remarks

36. The global collective effort across governments, the UN, international and national organizations, the private sector, local communities and others, to combat trafficking in wildlife, continues. As reported in document SC70 Doc. 30.2, the Consortium continues to deliver an increasing number of well-targeted activities to strengthen responses to wildlife crime. The significant new funding available for the implementation of the

¹⁵ <http://www.traffic.org/home/2017/11/1/golden-triangle-under-spotlight-as-illegal-wildlife-trade-hu.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989418300854>

¹⁷ <https://cites.org/eng/prog/imp/enf/introduction>

ICCWC Strategic Programme 2016-2020¹⁸ enables the Consortium to significantly scale up the level of support that it can provide to Parties. Activities under the Global Environment Facility funded *Global Wildlife Program*,¹⁹ bringing together 19 countries from across Africa and Asia in a coordinated approach to combat wildlife crime continues. On 3 March 2018, World Wildlife Day was celebrated for the fifth time, under the theme *Big Cats: Predators under threat*,²⁰ as reported upon in more detail in document SC70 Doc. 23. Also in March 2018, a *Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online* was launched, with the aim to reduce the illegal online trade in wildlife by 80 percent by 2020.²¹ In April 2018, the Travel and Tourism Declaration on Illegal Trade in Wildlife, entitled *The Buenos Aires Declaration*,²² was adopted. In May 2018, Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development together with the British Embassy in Viet Nam announced the *One-year review of progress on proposed actions*²³ of the *Hanoi Statement on Illegal Wildlife Trade*.²⁴ The report, compiled from contributions by 25 countries and international organizations, highlights the significant work implemented since the Hanoi Conference. In the United Kingdom, preparations are ongoing for the 2018 *London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference*, to be held from 11 to 12 October 2018,²⁵ a week after SC70.

37. A month-long law enforcement operation code-named *Operation Thunderstorm*²⁶ took place from 1 to 31 May 2018. This Operation, initiated by the *INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group*, was supported by ICCWC and coordinated by INTERPOL and the WCO. The Operation targeted criminals and global networks behind wildlife crime, and involved police, customs, border, wildlife, forestry and environment agencies from 92 countries and territories. *Operation Thunderstorm* resulted in 1,974 seizures, including tonnes of timber, over 1.3 tonnes of elephant ivory, 8 tonnes of pangolins scales, 4,000 birds and 27,000 reptiles. It enabled enforcement authorities to identify 1,400 suspects and triggered investigations, arrests, and prosecutions worldwide.²⁷ In July 2018, authorities in the United Kingdom executed warrants during follow-up work in relation to seizures made during *Operation Thunderstorm*.²⁸ As ongoing investigations resulting from the operation unfold in different countries, further arrests and prosecutions are foreseen. The information gathered during the operation will also be analysed by INTERPOL, and as appropriate, channelled to relevant authorities and used in ongoing and planned activities of ICCWC.
38. The above represent only a few of the initiatives and activities that are ongoing, or were initiated, conducted, implemented or achieved since SC69. It serves to reflect the continued global determination to put an end to the significant detrimental economic, social and environmental impacts of wildlife crime. This momentum is critical and it remains essential, in light of the high levels of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife, that it continues to persist.

Recommendations

39. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:
- recommend to CoP18 that that Decision 17.85, paragraph b), has been implemented and can be deleted, and that strengthening cooperation and collaboration between CITES, UNCAC and UNTOC, be further pursued in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 17.6, paragraph 15;
 - request the Secretariat to, on behalf of the Standing Committee, review the findings and recommendations emanating from the threat assessment commissioned in accordance with Decision 17.97, paragraph a), and to, as anticipated by Decision 17.98, prepare recommendations for consideration at CoP18;

¹⁸ https://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/Fight_against_wildlife_crime_gets_a_USD20_million_boost_29112017

¹⁹ <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GWPBrochureWEB.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.wildlifeday.org/content/messages>

²¹ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/03/wildlife-watch-tech-companies-online-wildlife-crime-coalition/>

²² <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/summits/buenos-aires-2018/wttc-buenos-aires-declaration-with-signatures.pdf>

²³ <http://iwthanoi.vn/announcement-publishing-one-year-review-progress-proposed-actions-hanoi-statement-illegal-wildlife-trade/>

²⁴ [http://iwthanoi.vn/wp-content/themes/cites/template/statement/Hanoi%20Statement%20on%20Illegal%20Wildlife%20Trade%20\(English\).pdf](http://iwthanoi.vn/wp-content/themes/cites/template/statement/Hanoi%20Statement%20on%20Illegal%20Wildlife%20Trade%20(English).pdf)

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/london-conference-on-the-illegal-wildlife-trade-2018/about>

²⁶ https://cites.org/eng/news/month-long-trans-continental-operation-hit-wildlife-criminals-hard_20062018

²⁷ <https://youtu.be/ldqIpEW5nFk>

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/ukwildlifecrime/status/1019903347350962178>

- c) encourage all Parties, particularly bear range and consuming countries, to review their implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.8 (Rev. CoP14) on *Conservation of and trade in bears*, to ensure the effective implementation of the Resolution, and to continuously review poaching and trafficking trends, to ensure that the measures implemented to prevent and combat illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives, remain effective and are quickly adapted to respond to any new emerging trends;
- d) note the *Customs-Police Cooperation Handbook* jointly developed by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, and encourage Parties to promote the use of the handbook amongst their national customs and police authorities; and
- e) encourage Parties to, where the creation of closed user groups was requested, communicate the establishment of such closed user groups to their relevant national authorities, and to encourage their use.