

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

Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Buenos Aires (Argentina), 22 April to 3 May 1985

Matters Related to the Standing Committee

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN

List of present Standing Committee Members

India:	Chairman
Kenya:	Vice-Chairman
Canada:	Alternate Vice-Chairman
Switzerland:	Permanent Member - Depository Government
Botswana:	Host of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Argentina:	Host of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Costa Rica	
France	
Papua New Guinea.	

Scope of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee was established by a Resolution of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Conf. 2.2) and at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (New Delhi, 1981) its mandate was revised under Resolution Conf. 3.1.

At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted two further Resolutions concerning the Standing Committee: Conf. 4.1 - reviewing the mandate, revising the membership and establishing voting procedures, and Conf. 4.2 - establishing a mechanism for the payment of travel expenses for Standing Committee members.

Meetings of the Standing Committee

After the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties at Gaborone, the Standing Committee met once in 1983 (3-4 November) and once in 1984 (3-5 July). Summary reports of these meetings were distributed by the Secretariat to all the Parties with, respectively, Notification No. 296 dated 18 May 1984 and Notification No. 325 dated 19 November 1984.

During these two meetings, the Standing Committee attended to several important matters, including financial issues, arrangements for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the relationship UNEP-IUCN-CITES and the work programme of the Secretariat, as well as a variety of other issues.

Relationship UNEP-IUCN-CITES

At its November 1983 meeting, the Standing Committee received a report from the Secretariat which raised the question whether or not the arrangements between UNEP and IUCN for the Secretariat were still appropriate, bearing in mind the increases in size and complexity of CITES and UNEP's imminent withdrawal from involvement in the provision of funds for the Secretariat.

In the light of the information presented by the Secretariat and subsequent discussion of details, the Standing Committee agreed that a new arrangement was necessary, but that a working group should be established to study the problem and make firm recommendations. The working group, under the Chairmanship of the Kenyan representative, prepared a recommendatory document along the lines it had discussed.

This document was presented to the Standing Committee at its July 1984 meeting, after previous drafts had been circulated to, and commented on by, the interested parties. The ensuing discussion examined the problem in great depth and detail and, as a result the Standing Committee recommended to the Executive Director of UNEP that the Secretary General should be directly responsible for financial matters, under the supervision of the Executive Director of UNEP, that the Secretariat should find new and independent office accommodation outside the World Conservation Centre (but as near to it as practical) and that the staff of the Secretariat should become UNEP employees. The Executive Director of UNEP responded positively to these recommendations, and a copy of his letter on this subject was distributed to all the Parties with Notification No. 305 dated 28 August 1984.

The final outcome of this issue was that on 1 November 1984 the Secretariat moved into new offices in Lausanne (Switzerland) and all the staff employed at that date became employees of UNEP.

The technical, scientific and legal links with IUCN remain as strong as ever and may, by the time this report is presented, have been formalized in a memorandum of understanding between UNEP and IUCN.

Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

At the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the representative of Colombia made a provisional offer on behalf of his country to host the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Unfortunately, this provisional offer was withdrawn and, following the Secretariat's appeal to the Parties, the Standing Committee, at its November 1983 meeting, discussed the other possible venues. However, it was agreed that more information was required and that the final decision would be made (by correspondence) by 31 December 1983.

During December 1983, the Secretariat sent telex messages to all members of the Standing Committee advising them of the final possibilities for the meeting and as a result, the Committee decided to accept Argentina's offer to host the fifth meeting.

In accordance with its responsibilities, the Standing Committee, at its July 1984 meeting, discussed the arrangements for the fifth meeting. As a result of these deliberations, the provisional Agenda and Working Programme have been drawn up, letters of invitation were distributed by the Secretariat, and several amendments to the Rules of Procedure have been suggested.

At its July 1984 meeting, the Standing Committee was honoured by the participation of the Argentine Ambassador to Switzerland who described the progress made in preparations for the meeting. The Standing Committee wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Government of Argentina for agreeing to host the meeting and for the excellent work done by its Organizing Committee in making all the arrangements for the success of the meeting.

Financing of the Secretariat

In accordance with item ii) of its mandate detailed in Resolution Conf. 3.1, the Standing Committee has continued to oversee the execution of the Secretariat's budget. At both the November 1983 meeting and the July 1984 meeting, the Committee received reports on this subject from the Secretariat. The Standing Committee continues to be concerned at the lack of financial contributions from some Parties, the delay in payment from others, and at the fact that the financial amendment still has not yet entered into force.

The Secretariat and its Operations

Throughout the period between the fourth and fifth meetings of the Conference of the Parties the members of the Standing Committee have worked very closely with the Secretariat both individually and as a group. This has been a period in which the Secretariat has had to carry out difficult tasks and to make major adjustments in work as well as location. The Secretary General and his colleagues have faced these challenges undaunted as well as helped in working out solutions with dedication, diligence and remarkable fortitude. Despite its small size, the Secretariat has shown admirable energy and ingenuity in carrying out its burdensome tasks. On behalf of all the Parties, the Standing Committee offers its appreciation and sincere thanks to each and every member of the Secretariat staff.