

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

Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Lausanne (Switzerland), 9 to 20 October 1989

Matters Related to the Standing Committee

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN

List of present Standing Committee members:

Chairman:	United States of America
Vice-Chairman:	Peru
Alternate Vice-Chairman:	Malawi
Other members:	Australia Canada (host of sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties) Federal Republic of Germany Nepal Switzerland (Depositary Government)

Mandate of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee was established at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Resolution Conf. 2.2). The revised mandate of the Standing Committee (Resolution Conf. 3.1) was further examined at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties where two Resolutions regarding the Standing Committee were adopted: Resolution Conf. 4.1 - reviewed the mandate, revised the membership and established voting procedures, and Resolution Conf. 4.2. - evolved a system for the payment of travel expenses to the members of the Standing Committee.

The mandate of the Standing Committee was revised at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties which granted or strengthened the Committee's authority to provide general policy and general operational direction to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention, and to oversee the development and execution of the Secretariat's budget and also all aspects of fundraising undertaken by the Secretariat. The Standing Committee was also authorized to provide co-ordination and advice as required to other Committees, and to working groups established by the Conference of the Parties.

Meetings of the Standing Committee

Aside from the brief meeting at the end of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee met twice after that meeting - the seventeenth meeting held in San José, 25-28 and 31 January 1988 and the eighteenth meeting held in Lausanne, 27 February to 3 March 1989, the Summary Reports of which were circulated by the Secretariat to all Parties. Important matters were discussed during these meetings, including financial matters, the aforementioned direction and oversight functions of the Standing Committee, review of the organization structure of the Secretariat, the location of the Secretariat, procedures for the Secretariat's alleged infraction report, the illegal trade in African elephant ivory especially as it pertains to Burundi and the United Arab Emirates, crocodile trade problems between Indonesia, Singapore and Japan, co-ordination of the organization and work of the Animals, Plants, Nomenclature and Identification Manual Committees and the African Elephant Working Group, and arrangements for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Review of the Organizational Structure of the Secretariat and other Matters

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties recommended that the Standing Committee review the organizational structure of the Secretariat to "ensure that its work is carried out efficiently, economically and effectively" and to consider more radical options such as "relocation, generating revenue from the Secretariat functions and seeking tenders or contracts from outside agencies for the discharge of some functions" (Resolution Conf. 6.2). The Standing Committee formed a working group composed of representatives of Canada (Chairman), Indonesia and the United Kingdom which presented an extensive report, "Report of the Working Group established by the Standing Committee to Review the Operations of the CITES Secretariat," to the Standing Committee at its eighteenth meeting. Major topics included: the role of the Secretariat; its structure, administration, finance, operations, and relocation; and meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The report was turned over to the Secretary General and to the Executive Director of UNEP for their consideration and implementation as appropriate. In the course of discussion of the report, the Secretary General was asked to prepare and submit to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration and approval a proposal for long-term goals and objectives of the Secretariat. Without such goals and objectives to guide the Secretariat, shorter term planning would be unfocused and could result in inefficient and/or counter-productive actions. In this regard it was agreed that the Secretariat, in consultation with UNEP, would develop some form of performance monitoring system.

The Standing Committee recommended that the Secretariat revise its presentation of the budget so it would be clearer and easier to grasp but would still distinguish between core, external and special funding. With a set of goals, objectives, and performance standards and a clearer budget presentation, the Standing Committee will be in a better position to carry out its general direction and oversight mandates. I consider the direction and oversight mandates of the Standing Committee of utmost importance to the efficient and effective functioning of the Secretariat and CITES itself.

The report of the working groups had high promise for the staff of the Secretariat which I second. I also noted the need for at least six-month employment contracts for the staff, which I hope can be extended to one year, with full UNEP benefits.

Location of the Secretariat

The Secretariat has been examining the possibilities of locating its offices in association with IUCN, currently headquartered in Gland, Switzerland, or the possibilities of an arrangement with the City of Lausanne, I will leave it to the Secretariat to report to this meeting on the details of its efforts in this regards. Undoubtly, the Secretariat needs to expand its floor space to meet current needs. Perhaps we need an interim solution and then a long-term solution which satisfies the mandate of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to consider more radical options to achieve economies including the possibilities of "relocation".

African Elephant Ivory

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties charged the Standing Committee to form and dispatch a Delegation to the Heads of State of Burundi and the United Arab Emirates to encourage them to eliminate the illegal ivory trade. While no delegation was formally created, actions of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat and interested Parties and persons have produced favorable results. Burundi has joined CITES and pledged full compliance with the CITES ivory trade controls. The Standing Committee agreed to supervised sale of very specific ivory stocks that have been confiscated by the Government of Burundi with the proceeds of sale to be devoted to specified conservation projects in Burundi.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates has indicated an interest in becoming a Party to CITES and has taken measures to close down the ivory trade within its borders.

The Standing Committee assisted in the establishment of the African Elephant Working Group and in the organization of its meetings held in Nairobi, Kenya (30 October to 1 November 1988) and in Gaborone, Botswana (4 to 8 July 1989). The Groups' mandate was to facilitate the implementation of the CITES ivory trade controls (Resolutions Conf. 5.12 and Conf. 6.12). At its first meeting in Nairobi, the Group discussed the Burundi situation, use of proceeds from the sale of confiscated ivory, the effectiveness of the ivory trade controls, elephant population trends, habitat preservation and a "Working Document for Elephant Conservation", a strategy produced by a consortium of governmental and non-governmental organizations to conserve the African elephant in the wild.

The second meeting of the African Elephant Working Group in Gaborone focused on the proposals for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to list the African elephant in Appendix I. No consensus was reached in this issue, but the Group agreed to a process that would continue the dialogue between the African countries concerned.

I recommended that the African Elephant Working Group's mandate be extended whether or not the African elephant is listed in Appendix I. Co-operative action amongst the range states is an essential element of any strategy to save the elephant from its dire circumstance.

Alternate Regional Representatives

The eighteenth meeting of the Standing Committee accepted the need to amend the Committee's mandate by establishing the position of an alternate regional member for the six major geographic regions. The main purpose of this proposal, which has been submitted by the United States of America, is to ensure that each region is represented at every Standing Committee meeting. It

should not normally result in any higher costs related to the functions of the Standing Committee. An alternate regional member would have authority to act as a regional representative only if a regional representative is unavailable to attend a Standing Committee meeting or any portion thereof.

Ralph Mogenweck
Chairman of the Standing Committee