

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

Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Santiago (Chile), 3-15 November 2002

Strategic and administrative matters

Cooperation with other organizations

COOPERATION AND SYNERGY WITH THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

1. This document has been submitted by Ecuador.
2. The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles entered into force on 2 May 2001.
3. The Inter-American Convention is the only international treaty whose objective "is to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and of the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Parties."
4. At the present time, nine countries have signed and ratified that convention, three countries have signed it, and all those 12 countries are Parties to CITES. The member States to the Inter-American Convention are Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, the United States of America and Venezuela, while the signatories are Belize, Nicaragua and Uruguay.
5. Venezuela is the depositary country.
6. In addition to the support received from countries in the region, the Inter-American Convention has the support of several organizations, including fisheries organizations such as the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA) and conservation organizations such as the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), the Central American Network for Sea Turtles and many more. It has had the continuous support of persons from several countries in the region in several disciplines (attorneys, academicians, biologists, conservationists, etc.), organizations and sectors.
7. The measures provided for in the Inter-American Convention aim not only at the conservation needs of marine turtles but also at the protection of habitat, reduction of fishing impact, environmental education, research, community participation and multi-sectorial representation, among others.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat agrees that the entry into force of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles is a notable achievement and welcomes further efforts to enhance the conservation status of marine turtle habitat and to promote the recovery of marine turtle populations. The Secretariat agrees that cooperation with this convention should be sought, when it would help achieve common objectives.

- B. However, the Secretariat does not believe that there is a need for a resolution to explore or establish cooperation with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, nor with any similar multilateral agreement, unless there is a compelling reason to establish a formal procedure concerning the regulation of trade in a CITES-listed species. It is not evident that there is a compelling reason in this instance, because of the Appendix-I status of all species of marine turtles. Furthermore, the Secretariat is already in a position to seek collaboration with other bodies or agreements as circumstances require, and agreements with such entities rarely need to be formalized through an instrument such as a Memorandum of Understanding. It may therefore be more advisable to seek cooperation with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles in the same manner in which the Secretariat collaborates with numerous other entities.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Cooperation and synergy with the Inter-American Convention
for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles entered into effect on 2 May 2001;

RECOGNIZING that the following countries, all Parties to CITES, have signed and ratified the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, the United States of America and Venezuela and that the following countries have signed the Inter-American Convention but have not yet ratified it: Belize, Nicaragua and Uruguay;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the objective of the Inter-American Convention is "to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and of the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Parties";

NOTING that "the area of application of this Convention (the Convention Area) comprises the land territory in the Americas of each of the Parties, as well as the maritime areas of the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, with respect to which each of the Parties exercises sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction over living marine resources in accordance with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea";

ALSO NOTING that the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Convention was held on 5-8 August 2002 in San José, Costa Rica;

RECOGNIZING that all living species of sea turtle are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);

NOTING that sea turtles are characterized by being highly migratory and, as such, that their conservation status depends on effective regional and international cooperation;

RECALLING that under the terms of Article XV, paragraph 2 (b) of the CITES Convention:

For marine species, the Secretariat shall, upon receiving the text of the proposed amendment, immediately communicate it to the Parties. It shall also consult inter-governmental bodies having a function in relation to those species especially with a view to obtaining scientific data these bodies may be able to provide and to ensuring coordination with any conservation measures enforced by such bodies. The Secretariat shall communicate the views expressed and data provided by these bodies and its own findings and recommendations to the Parties as soon as possible;

ALSO RECALLING Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and Decision 19/9c of the UNEP Governing Council that "Recognizes the importance of the Programme's role in promoting and supporting cooperation and coordination with and amongst environmental agreements and their secretariats" and "Requests the conferences of parties of the relevant conventions to encourage their respective convention secretariats to engage and continue to participate actively in the coordination process";

NOTING that the CITES Secretariat had convened two dialogue meetings among the range States of the hawksbill turtle in the Caribbean in response to a request from the Parties; the most recent in May 2002;

ENCOURAGED that Resolution Conf. 12.XX, adopted by this meeting, exhorted them to take steps to promote cooperation among States and territories within the Greater Caribbean Region, specifically through participation of the Inter-American Convention in future dialogue meetings;

RECALLING that Goal 5 of the CITES Strategic Vision (Strategic Vision through 2005), adopted by consensus by the Parties to CITES at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, is "to increase cooperation and conclude strategic alliances with international stakeholders";

RECOGNIZING that objectives 5.1 and 5.2 of the CITES Strategic Plan are respectively "to ensure an optimal working relationship with UNEP, as well as close coordination and synergy with CBD and **other relevant multilateral environmental agreements**" and "to ensure close cooperation and coordination with related conventions, agreements and associations";

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

CONGRATULATES the Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles for its entry into force;

REQUESTS the CITES Secretariat to study opportunities for cooperation and coordination between CITES and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles;

ALSO REQUESTS the CITES Secretariat to coordinate its activities with regard to sea turtles and their habitats in the western hemisphere, including future dialogue meetings among range States, with the Parties and Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles;

INVITES the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles to discuss at its next meeting measures to increase cooperation and synergy between the two conventions;

URGES Parties to both conventions to promote synergy to the extent appropriate in light of their domestic circumstances and to take measures to achieve coordination among the national authorities of each Convention in order to reduce unnecessary duplication of activities; and

REQUESTS the CITES Secretariat to transmit to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles this and other relevant Resolutions and Decisions adopted at the 12th meeting and at future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.