

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

CONSERVATION OF AND CONTROL OF TRADE IN TIBETAN ANTELOPE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat. It is also intended to serve as the report of the Standing Committee, as required under DIRECTS c) in Resolution Conf. 11.8.

Background

2. Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Conservation of and control of trade in Tibetan antelope) contains a number of recommendations encouraging action by the Parties to increase efforts to conserve populations of Tibetan antelopes and combat illegal trade in specimens of this species.
3. The Resolution directs the Secretariat to report at the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee on the implementation of the Resolution and directs the Standing Committee to report to the Conference of the Parties at its 12th meeting.

Action by the Secretariat

4. The Secretariat submitted reports to the Standing Committee at its 45th and 46th meetings (documents SC45 Doc. 21 and SC46 Doc. 15). In these reports, the Secretariat described important enforcement actions that had taken place, public awareness campaigns that had been conducted by Parties and non-governmental organizations, forensic science developments relating to the identification of Tibetan antelope wool, and efforts to halt the manufacturing of shawls from the wool of the species. It also described the technical assistance it had provided to range and consumer States.
5. The Secretariat wrote to the Tibetan antelope range States, China and India, offering to provide assistance, should it be desired, to formulate a conservation strategy for the Tibetan antelope. No requests for assistance have been received by the Secretariat.
6. The Secretariat offered to undertake an enforcement-needs assessment mission to China to examine anti-poaching issues and to provide advice regarding combating the smuggling of wool. The Standing Committee at its 46th meeting endorsed this offer and the Committee encouraged interested Parties and other organizations to provide funding to enable this work to be carried out. No such funding has been provided at the time of writing (May 2002). The Secretariat remains, however, willing to provide such technical assistance.
7. In Notification to the Parties No. 2002/026 of 9 April 2002, the Secretariat distributed information regarding an identification kit for Tibetan antelope wool, which had been prepared by the Metropolitan Police Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with assistance from non-governmental organizations, the CITES Management Authority of the United Kingdom and the CITES Secretariat. The Secretariat congratulates the Metropolitan Police Service for taking this initiative. It also

notes that the Forensic Science Service of the United Kingdom has developed a DNA examination method for Tibetan antelope wool, details of which are provided in the Police kit.

Other information

8. The Secretariat is aware that important enforcement actions, prosecutions and seizures of processed and raw Tibetan antelope wool have taken place in India, Italy and the United States of America during 2002.
9. The Secretariat understands that, despite an order by its High Court, the State of Jammu and Kashmir in India has yet to halt the manufacture of products from Tibetan antelope wool. The Secretariat has supported actions by the Central Government of India and non-governmental organizations to encourage Jammu and Kashmir to enforce existing legislation prohibiting the manufacture and sale of Tibetan antelope wool.
10. The Secretariat is not aware of any Party that has adopted a registration system for stocks of Tibetan antelope parts and raw materials, as recommended in paragraph d) under RECOMMENDS.
11. At its 46th meeting, the Standing Committee agreed that the Secretariat should, in future, work with relevant Parties and organizations to identify: specific difficulties of implementation of the Convention relating to specific species; specific countries or regions where implementation is poor or there are significant levels of illicit trade; specific examples of good practice or innovations that other Parties can learn from or that can be adapted for better implementation of CITES; and specific proposals for action. The Secretariat would, thereafter, bring such matters to the attention of the Standing Committee or the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat does not believe that there are any specific issues regarding Tibetan antelope that the Conference of the Parties requires to address.

Recommendations

12. The Secretariat believes that many Parties and relevant organizations are working actively to implement Resolution Conf. 11.8. However, it believes the Resolution contains several issues that are of a general nature and that it is inappropriate for the Parties to be asked to address these on a species-specific basis. Consequently, it makes the following recommendations regarding the text of the Resolution.
13. The Secretariat recommends that the Resolution be amended by the deletion of the words "legislation and" and "in order to demonstrably reduce the illegal trade in Tibetan antelope products by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties" from paragraph a) under RECOMMENDS. It does so because all Parties are obliged to enact legislation to implement the Convention. Verification of such legislation is already dealt with under the Secretariat's National Legislation Project and it is superfluous to call for legislation to control trade in one specific species, especially since this species is listed in Appendix I of the Convention and, thus, cannot be imported for primarily commercial purposes. It is unrealistic to establish deadlines by which a reduction in illegal trade should be achieved and, in any case, no data exist against which a demonstrable reduction could be measured.
14. The Secretariat recommends the deletion of paragraphs b) and c) from the DIRECTS section of the Resolution, since they are no longer relevant.
15. It recommends that the following wording be added to paragraph a) under URGES, after the word "wool": "and, in particular, that the State of Jammu and Kashmir in India halts the processing of such wool and the manufacture of shahtoosh products;" The Secretariat suggests that by adopting this wording the Conference of the Parties may thus support the Government of India and the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir in their efforts to achieve this end.

16. The Secretariat recommends the deletion of paragraph c) under URGES, since such cooperation has already been called for with regard to the general enforcement of the Convention and should not be restricted to species-specific issues.