

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

Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Second session: 4 October 2004: 14h06-17h05

Chairman: M. Brasher (United Kingdom)

Secretariat: W. Wijnstekers
J. Barzdo
M. Jankowska
D. Morgan
M. Schmidt

UNEP: S. Kurdjukov

Rapporteurs: H. Corrigan
M. Jenkins
R. Mackenzie
A. Stattersfield

Strategic and administrative matters

8. Financing and budgeting of the Secretariat and of meetings of the Conference of the Parties

8.3 Budget for 2006-2008

The Chairman announced that the members of the open-ended working group, to be chaired by the Chairman of the Standing Committee, would include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Comoros, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, IWMC-World Conservation Trust, TRAFFIC and WWF.

11. Review of permanent committees

11.1 Review of the scientific committees

The delegation of Australia introduced document CoP13 Doc. 11.1 and drew attention to revised draft terms of reference provided in document CoP13 Inf. 48.

The Chairman of the Animals Committee disagreed with the proposal to conduct a review of the scientific committees and commented that there had been overwhelming support at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP12) for the retention of the current structure and membership of permanent committees. This view was echoed by the Chairman of the Plants Committee. She suggested that what was needed was the development of indicators of achievement for all those concerned with implementation of the objectives set out in the Strategic Vision and Action Plan. The delegations of Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, India, Japan, Kenya and Mexico and the observers from Humane Society International and IWMC-World Conservation Trust expressed their continuing support for the work of the Committees. The delegations of Argentina, Cuba, Kenya, India, Mexico, and Saint Lucia all noted that the subject had been discussed extensively at CoP12 but did not oppose a general review of the committees. The botanist of the Nomenclature Committee and the delegation of the United States stressed the overriding need to ensure that scientific input into CITES processes remained of high quality.

The delegation of Australia reaffirmed their strong support of the work of the Animals and Plants Committees and stated that it had never been their intention to raise the issue of amalgamation of the committees, but rather to improve governance in the provision of good scientific advice to the Convention.

The Netherlands, on behalf of the Member States of the European Community, suggested that the proponents of documents CoP13 Doc. 11.1, Doc. 11.2 and Doc. 11.3 meet to produce a merged proposal regarding review of the scientific committees and stated that the European Community would be happy to assist. After some further discussion, the Chairman proposed establishing a drafting group, emphasizing that any document produced by the group would be discussed in Committee II. His proposal was accepted by the Committee.

11.2 Improving regional communication and representation

The Chairman of the Plants Committee introduced document CoP13 Doc. 11.2 on behalf of the Animals and Plants Committees. She indicated that regional representatives were often hampered in the fulfilment of their committee functions as a result of insufficient support from their Governments or institutions. She drew the attention of participants to the draft resolution and decisions in Annexes 1 and 2 of the document.

In response to a suggestion by the delegation of the Netherlands, supported by the delegation of the United States, the Chairman of Committee II indicated that certain issues might be referred to the drafting group established under agenda item 11.1 for further discussion.

Considering first the draft resolution in Annex 1 containing proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), the delegation of Argentina, supported by the delegation of Mexico, supported the proposed amendment of paragraph (e), emphasizing the scientific committees' need for flexibility. The Secretariat expressed the view that the procedural activities of the scientific committees did not differ significantly from those of the Standing Committee, and considered that it would be preferable to retain the original wording of the paragraph. The delegations of Australia, Ghana and New Zealand concurred. The Chairman of the Plants Committee pointed out that in the Spanish version of the draft resolution there was no substantive amendment to paragraph (e), and suggested that it remain unchanged. This was accepted.

The delegation of Chile, supported by the delegation of Uganda, sought clarification of the scope of the proposed amendment to paragraph (a), regarding regional representation in the Animals and Plants Committees. The Chairman of the Plants Committee responded that the proposed amendments in paragraphs (a) and (b) were both designed to ensure that institutions that employed candidates for the committees were aware of and supported their nominations. The delegation of Australia stated that while they supported such guidelines in principle, their region could find it difficult to meet fully the requirements proposed. They did not wish to see guidelines that might deter developing countries and countries with economies in transition from putting forward suitable candidates for the Committees. The Chairman of the Plants Committee explained that the proposed amendment was not aimed in any way at limiting participation. The Chairman of Committee II confirmed that the drafting group did not need to consider further paragraphs (a) and (b) of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12).

The proposed amendments to paragraph (g) and Annex 2 of the Resolution were remitted to the drafting group for further consideration. Regarding proposed amendments to Annex 2, the Secretariat stated that authorizing the Animals and Plants Committees to discuss and manage their budgets, as proposed, was problematic since responsibility for managing the Trust Fund rested with the Secretary-General who was accountable to the Conference of the Parties. Moreover, while the Secretary-General was authorized to delegate certain responsibilities to other bodies under contract, the Animals and Plants Committees were not bodies that could be contracted.

Regarding the first draft decision contained in Annex 2 to document CoP13 Doc. 11.2, the delegations of Australia and Ghana questioned the proposed role of the committees in assessing the appropriateness or expertise of duly appointed committee members. The Chairman of the Plants Committee explained that the purpose of the proposal was to assist members by assessing their capacity in terms of support received from their Governments and institutions. The Chairman of Committee II indicated that the drafting group would be asked to consider this proposed amendment with a view to clarifying it, as appropriate.

Regarding the second draft decision in Annex 2 to document CoP13 Doc. 11.2, the Chairman of the Plants Committee indicated that the proposal addressed a problem faced by the committees in replacing members or alternates in the intersessional period. The Secretary-General agreed with the delegation of Australia that the regional members of the Standing Committee had a role to play in the replacement of members of the Animals Committee and Plants Committee who were not able to continue. He explained that, under Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), it was the Conference of the Parties that established the committees. The Standing Committee was the competent body to carry out intersessional activities on behalf of the Conference of the Parties as necessary, and so the nominations of a region could be reported to the Standing Committee in the intersessional period.

The Chairman indicated that outstanding issues in Annex 2 to document CoP13 Doc. 11.2 would be considered in the drafting group. The Chairman also noted that the recommendations regarding regional representation outlined in the report of the Chairman of the Plants Committee (in the Annex to document CoP13 Doc. 9.2.1) would be referred to the drafting group established to review the scientific committees.

11.3 Standard nomenclature and the operation of the Nomenclature Committee

Referring to document CoP13 Doc. 11.3 (Rev. 1), the delegation of Mexico outlined some concerns and possible solutions relating to the operation of the Nomenclature Committee and the standard nomenclatures used. The Chairman suggested that the drafting group established under agenda item 11.1 could discuss these.

In response to requests for clarification from the delegations of Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States, the Chairman confirmed that only issues relating to the establishment and functioning of the Nomenclature Committee [contained in document CoP13 Doc. 11.3 (Rev. 1), Annex 2] would be referred to the drafting group.

The delegation of Canada asked that the drafting group estimate the financial costs of any decisions that might be taken in relation to the proposals in Annex 2.

The botanist of the Nomenclature Committee noted that Germany had nominated Dr Ute Grimm from Germany as a possible candidate for the vacant zoologist position on the Nomenclature Committee, and suggested that other Parties might wish to put forward nominees.

The Chairman confirmed that the drafting group established under agenda item 11.1 would comprise the Chairmen of the Animals and Plants and Committees, the botanist of the Nomenclature Committee, Australia, Mexico and the Netherlands.

The session closed at 17h05.