

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



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

Strategic matters

Cooperation with other organizations

COOPERATION WITH THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. CITES and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been collaborating closely since 1997. For instance, CITES participated in the development of guidelines leading to an International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-SHARKS) and FAO actively participated in the review of the criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II, particularly regarding the definition of 'decline' for commercially exploited aquatic species [see footnotes to Annex 5 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP13)].
3. Since then, the good working relationship between CITES and FAO has extended to other issues, such as fisheries and the definition of 'introduction from the sea'.
4. Recognizing the importance of this relationship, at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Santiago, 2002), the Standing Committee was directed to work with FAO in the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CITES Secretariat and FAO, to establish a more formal framework for cooperation. The Chairman of the Standing Committee played a key role in facilitating the process.
5. After almost three years of negotiations, the Standing Committee approved a draft text of an MoU between FAO and the CITES Secretariat at its 53rd meeting (Geneva, June-July 2005). As directed by the Committee, the Secretariat forwarded the draft text to FAO for consideration. The Sub-Committee on Fish Trade of the Committee on Fisheries of FAO (COFI:FT) discussed and adopted the draft MoU approved by the CITES Standing Committee without amendments at its 10th session (Santiago de Compostela, 30 May to 2 June 2006).
6. The MoU was signed by FAO's Assistant Director-General for Fisheries on 29 September 2006 and countersigned by the Secretary-General of the CITES Secretariat on 3 October 2006 during the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee. The full text of the MoU is available on the CITES website.
7. Under the MoU, FAO and the CITES Secretariat will work together to ensure adequate consultations in the scientific and technical evaluation of proposals for including, transferring or deleting commercially exploited aquatic species in the CITES Appendices. They should also cooperate in addressing technical and legal issues involved with the listing of such species and the implementation of those listings. The MoU remains silent on other areas of existing collaboration between FAO and the CITES Secretariat such as international trade in timber species included in the Appendices and non-timber forest products. Cooperation in these fields is therefore more on an *ad hoc* basis.

8. The Secretariat believes that there is a need for further strengthening the cooperation with FAO in other areas such as forestry and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and recommends that discussions be initiated with the FAO Secretariat on how such cooperation might be formalized. Cooperation might, *inter alia*, address the development of practical principles, operational guidance and associated instruments for the sustainable use of timber species and NTFPs listed in the Appendices.

Cooperation related to the management of specific aquatic species (including scientific advice, technical guidance and capacity building)

9. From 26 to 30 March 2007, an FAO *ad hoc* Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II will be convened to review proposals for consideration at the present meeting of the Conference of the Parties to include certain commercially-exploited aquatic species. At the invitation of FAO, the CITES Secretariat will be participating as an observer in this Panel meeting.
10. FAO representatives have regularly attended meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and meetings of the Standing and Animals Committees, as well as relevant workshops. Likewise, the CITES Secretariat has participated in some FAO meetings, including COFI and COFI:FT.
11. Good examples of commercially-exploited aquatic species that have been the subject of cooperation between CITES and FAO regarding management and monitoring include the queen conch, sturgeons, sharks, the humphead wrasse, sea cucumbers and giant clams. Some of these taxa are subject to separate agenda items at the present meeting. A description of the concrete activities and practical assistance provided to the Parties in the context of this cooperation is summarized below.

Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)

12. At its 17th meeting (Hanoi, July-August 2001), the Animals Committee decided to re-introduce queen conch into the Review of Significant Trade. FAO and regional Caribbean fishery bodies provided excellent support throughout this second review, conducted mainly from 2003 to 2005.
13. FAO attended a workshop organized by the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council, from 11 to 12 June 2003 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. During the meeting, the range States, the CITES Secretariat and FAO experts discussed a draft report prepared by TRAFFIC Europe. FAO provided additional information, and formulated a number of recommendations, many of which were subsequently adopted by the Animals Committee at its 19th meeting (Geneva, August 2003) and sent to a total of 16 range States.
14. In December 2005, the Secretariat convened a technical workshop (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2005) to evaluate the implementation by the 16 range States of recommendations formulated by the Animals Committee. FAO reviewed materials submitted by the countries, analysed compliance and provided technical comments to each country and the CITES Secretariat.
15. FAO and regional Caribbean fishery bodies were recognized to be very supportive of these initiatives and provided targeted assistance. In 2006, FAO published a 'Manual for the monitoring and management of queen conch', encompassing all aspects of the implementation of Article IV of the Convention and the making of non-detriment findings. The manual also incorporates know-how and data that were acquired by range States during the Review. FAO furthermore plans to organize several training workshops in the Caribbean region to help range States make better use of the Manual, thereby improving the implementation of CITES for trade in the queen conch.

Sturgeons

16. FAO helped to analyse information provided by countries of the Black, Azov and Caspian Sea regions in the implementation of recommendations made under Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) on Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish. FAO also provided advice concerning the activities of regional fishery bodies and the management of shared sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea.

17. In 2007, FAO is planning to fund a regional Technical Cooperation Project with Caspian littoral States. The project title will be "Assistance in Technical Capacity Building in the Regional Management of Sturgeon Stocks of the Caspian Sea and Management Practices at the National Level". It is planned that this two years project will provide significant institutional support to working groups of the Commission on Aquatic Bio-resources of the Caspian Sea. The Secretariat has begun discussion with FAO to see how this project can support CITES implementation in the region.

Sharks

18. In response to the increased concern about expanding catches and their potential negative impacts on shark populations, FAO COFI developed in 1998 an plan of action for conservation and management of Sharks, the IPOA-SHARKS. The voluntary IPOA-SHARKS calls upon States to adopt a national plan of action for conservation and management of shark stocks (shark plan) if their vessels conduct targeted fisheries for sharks or if their vessels regularly take sharks as by-catches (non-directed fisheries). The CITES Animals Committee participated in the development of the IPOA-SHARKS.
19. Resolution Conf. 12.6 on Conservation and management of sharks and Decision 13.42 directly relate to FAO's work on the management and conservation of sharks through the development and implementation of the IPOA-SHARKS. An FAO representative participated in the Intersessional Shark Working Group of the Animals Committee (AC22, Lima, July 2006) and gave an overview of the Expert Consultation on IPOA-SHARKS held in Rome in December 2005, which helped to identify how countries have responded to the IPOA-SHARKS and to advise FAO on matters relevant to its implementation. The Animals Committee analysed progress with the implementation of IPOA-Sharks, and formulated recommendations to bring about improvements (See document CoP14 Doc. 59.1).

Sea cucumbers

20. FAO organized a workshop in China in October 2003 to discuss "Advances in sea cucumber aquaculture and management (ASCAM)". The workshop established that there was a need to look into CITES mechanisms in order to identify adequate responses to the intense fishing effort directed to many sea cucumber species all over the world, the ever increasing market pressure for harvesting specimens of these species and recent technological developments in fishery management, aquaculture and stock enhancement techniques.
21. Pursuant to Decision 12.61, the CITES Secretariat organized a workshop on the Conservation of Sea Cucumbers in the families Holothuriidae and Stichopodidae in Kuala Lumpur, in March 2004, with the participation of an FAO representative. FAO provided assistance in the review of biological, fishery and trade information for commercially important sea cucumber species. The aim of the workshop was to identify possible national, regional and international conservation mechanisms to ensure that the harvest of and trade in these species is sustainable. Recommendations from the FAO workshop were discussed at the meeting.
22. Decision 13.48 directs the Animals Committee to review the proceedings of both meetings and prepare a discussion paper for the present meeting that provide scientific guidance on the actions needed to secure the conservation of sea cucumbers. At AC22, the Animals Committee discussed and merged the findings and recommendations of both workshops. The final document arising from the discussion of the Animals Committee and the proposed measures to be taken are contained in document CoP14 Doc. 62.

Other species

23. FAO also provided advice and guidance on the Review of Significant Trade in other CITES-listed aquatic species, such as giant claims (*Tridacnidae*). In a Western Pacific workshop held in Hong Kong, in June 2006, FAO provided information regarding trade in and management of the humphead wrasse and the making of Non-Detriment Findings.
24. Management Authorities are encouraged to work with FAO regional and national focal points to benefit from the expertise and support they offer for management and monitoring of commercially-exploited aquatic species

Legal and technical issues

25. Two representatives of FAO with expertise in fishery law participated in the CITES workshop on Introduction from the sea issues that was held in Geneva from 30 November to 2 December 2005. FAO also reviewed and provided comments on the draft workshop report. A representative of FAO's Fishery Resources Division subsequently participated in the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, October 2006), where the Committee considered the final workshop report and related recommendations for action to be taken at this meeting (see document SC54 Doc. 19). As indicated in the draft decision contained in document CoP14 Doc. 33, it is expected that FAO will contribute to future discussions on legal and technical issues related to introductions from the sea. It may also be able assist CITES in obtaining the participation of regional fishery bodies in future discussions on introduction from the sea.

Recommendations

26. The Secretariat recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopt the draft decisions contained in the Annex.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 14.xx The Standing Committee shall create a 'Fishery Working Group' to address practical issues related to the implementation of the Convention for species of fish and marine invertebrates listed in the Appendices.
- 14.xx The Standing Committee shall present a report at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the progress made by the Working Group.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.xx The Secretariat shall initiate discussions with FAO on how cooperation between the two organizations, related to forestry and non-timber forest products might be enhanced and formalized.
- 14.xx The Secretariat shall report at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on those discussions and on the progress made in implementing the MoU between FAO and the CITES Secretariat.