

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

Summary record of the third session of Committee II

06 June 2007: 09h05-12h15

Chairman: C.S. Cheung (China)

Secretariat: J. Barzdo
J. Sellar
J.C. Vasquez
M. Yeater

Rapporteurs: J. Boddens Hosang
P. De Angelis
J. Hepp
R. Mackenzie

Strategic matters

14. CITES and livelihoods

Brazil, Liberia, Suriname, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam supported document CoP14 Doc. 14 and the draft decisions in its Annex. Senegal noted the importance of exploring the positive side of livelihoods and CITES, in particular the need to develop methods for CITES to benefit both conservation and livelihoods. Fauna & Flora International (FFI), IWMC World Conservation Trust, Wildlife Trust of India and WWF, also on behalf of TRAFFIC, supported the principles of the document, and noted the timeliness of considering this matter within the context of socio-economic development.

Australia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Honduras, South Africa, the United States of America, Zimbabwe and Born Free Foundation echoed the concerns raised in the previous session by Germany and Mexico, remarking that the strength of CITES lay in scientifically-based decision-making regarding species listings, and that livelihood considerations should not affect listing decisions but could be addressed as part of the implementation process. Jamaica reiterated that the use of the guidelines addressing livelihoods should remain voluntary. Canada suggested seeking external funding to conduct case studies.

The United States recalled evidence that some Parties appeared to be disregarding scientific advice regarding listing of species if local livelihood interests were at stake. FFI did not agree that the livelihood issue would undermine CITES or that livelihood interests would prevail over scientific advice.

India acknowledged the importance of livelihoods for local communities yet felt that other multilateral environment agreements were better placed to address the issue and that CITES should focus on its core mandate of species conservation.

Humane Society International, the International Environmental Law Project and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) expressed some concerns about the implications of the document and stated that CITES should focus on enforcement of and compliance with the Convention. IFAW called for the document to be withdrawn.

The Chairman requested South Africa to convene a working group, the members to be chosen from among those who intervened, to revise the document and report back to the Committee.

15. National wildlife trade policy reviews

The Secretariat introduced document CoP14 Doc. 15, highlighted the four draft decisions in Annex 1 and drew attention also to document CoP14 Inf. 17.

Germany, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, endorsed the rationale behind this effort, encouraging other Parties to participate in and support the continuation of this work until CoP15. They, along with the United States, raised concerns regarding the reporting of wildlife trade policy issues in biennial reports, explaining that Parties may differ in their views as to the scope of such reporting, and recommended reporting on a case-by-case basis. Argentina agreed and suggested deleting the second draft decision directed to the Parties.

Madagascar, Uganda and Viet Nam, pilot countries in the national wildlife trade policy review project, supported the reviews as an opportunity to assess policies and enhance CITES implementation through integrated policy decisions. Chile, China, Colombia, India, Kenya, Malaysia and FFI were supportive of the process, but stressed that it should remain voluntary. Malaysia proposed an amendment to the first draft decision to make explicit the voluntary nature of the reviews. Switzerland emphasized that the reviews were Party-driven and could respond to the particular priorities of the country undertaking the review. Madagascar confirmed that its participation in the pilot review had been entirely voluntary.

The United States supported the CoP13 Decisions and welcomed the document. However, and in agreement with Argentina, they noted that the draft decisions to expand the scope of the work would have significant budgetary implications and they did not support such an expansion. Argentina suggested deleting the list of specific issues to be considered by the Secretariat in conducting reviews in paragraph (a) of the fourth draft decision. Kenya suggested that the reviews should be reoriented to focus on implementation and enforcement rather than on promoting trade, a view with which the Species Survival Network agreed. Honduras pointed out the importance of the assessment of technical tools. Togo pointed to the importance of close collaboration on trade policy reviews between importing and exporting countries, with Indonesia also emphasizing the role of importing countries.

Mauritius welcomed the idea of capacity-building assistance through the provision of expertise and funding. Liberia also stressed the need for urgent assistance to help them in developing appropriate CITES legislation. China suggested retaining paragraph d) of Decision 13.74 regarding external financial resources for reviews.

UNEP stressed the role of national wildlife trade policy reviews in promoting informed and integrated policy development and implementation, and highlighted other relevant UNEP activities. FFI and TRAFFIC emphasized that these reviews would provide the opportunity to make wildlife trade regulations more effective.

The Secretariat suggested a number of amendments to the draft decision to reflect the comments made in the Committee. After some discussion of these suggestions, during which some additional proposals were made, it was agreed that the Secretariat would consult with Argentina, China, Germany and the United States to prepare a revised text of the draft decisions to be discussed at a later session of the Committee.

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

60. Sturgeons and paddlefish

60.1 Report of the Secretariat

The Secretariat introduced document CoP14 Doc. 60.1 and asked that Parties submit permit information directly to UNEP-WCMC for inclusion in their pilot caviar trade database. The Islamic Republic of Iran acknowledged the support of the Secretariat, the Member States of the European Community and the IUCN Sturgeon Specialist Group for their roles in recent workshops. Germany, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, urged Parties to submit information for inclusion in the database and indicated that they would propose an amendment to Decision 13.44. They also expressed the view that the database need only contain information from permits for caviar and not all sturgeon products, and they proposed that the Secretariat report on the project at the 57th and 58th meetings of the Standing Committee.

China commented that the information currently available in the database is limited not because Parties are hesitant to submit information but because major caviar-exporting Parties have had zero export quotas for the last two years.

60.2 Amendment of Resolution Conf 12.7 (Rev. CoP13)

The Chairman proposed to discuss documents CoP14 Doc. 60.2.1 and 60.2.2 together.

60.2.1 Proposal of the Standing Committee's Working Group on Sturgeons

and

60.2.2 Proposal of the Russian Federation

The Islamic Republic of Iran introduced document CoP14. Doc. 60.2.1 and thanked members of the Standing Committee Working Group on Sturgeons. They believed it was necessary to address various aspects of this document and document CoP14 Doc. 60.2.2 in a working group.

The Russian Federation introduced document CoP14 Doc. 60.2.

Germany, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, agreed with the need for a working group and the need to revise Resolution Conf. 12.7.

TRAFFIC, speaking also on behalf of WWF, raised concerns related to the new elements that they considered would weaken Resolution Conf. 12.7, and stressed the need for an independent and transparent process for the determination of export quotas.

The Chairman noted consensus on the need to establish a working group to address agenda item 60, and suggested that it comprise the existing members of the Standing Committee Working Group on Sturgeons. He clarified that the working group would discuss all issues related to documents CoP14 Doc. 60.2.1 and 60.2.2. He appointed Germany as the Chairman. Ukraine requested that, as a range State, they also be included in the working group, and this was accepted.

Compliance and enforcement issues

23. Guidelines for compliance with the Convention

Norway, as Chairman of the Standing Committee Working Group on Compliance, introduced document CoP14 Doc. 23, noting that there remained nine bracketed passages in the draft guidelines in the Annex to the document, and proposed that the Working Group reconvene in the margins of CoP14 to finalize a draft text. Argentina, echoed by Brazil, expressed reservations regarding the document, stressing that the aim should be to assist Parties by providing guidelines, and that guidelines could not have as an end the promotion of compliance. They noted that the text of the Convention did not provide for the taking of sanctions. In response to questions from China and Brazil, the Chairman of the Working Group indicated a preference for his group to focus on the bracketed text, in order to complete the work, but acknowledged the right of Parties to comment on any aspect of the draft.

The David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, International Environmental Law Project and TRAFFIC wished to participate in the Working Group discussions. The Chairman said that he would put the question of NGO participation to the Working Group when it convened.

Exemptions and special trade provisions

45. Personal and household effects

China introduced document CoP14 Doc. 45, and highlighted the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 13.7 in Annex 1 to the document and the draft decision in Annex 2. The Chairman indicated that a working group would be established to consider these proposals.

Germany, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, welcomed efforts towards a uniform personal and household effects exemption and in general supported the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 13.7. However, they endorsed the comments by the Secretariat in paragraph C of the document. They also emphasized that a precautionary approach should be maintained as trade in personal and household effects could form a substantial part of trade.

Indonesia observed that it would have difficulty accepting elements of the proposals which ran counter to their national legislation.

The session was closed at 12h15.