

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

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, in consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
2. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following decisions:

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.16 *The Secretariat shall initiate discussions with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on how cooperation between the two organizations related to forestry and non-timber forest products might be enhanced.*
- 14.17 *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 Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the CITES Secretariat.*
3. Actions undertaken by the Secretariat to implement these Decisions are summarized below. They reflect the broad range of issues in which CITES and FAO share an interest and on which they can be strongly complementary. FAO is a historical partner for CITES, dating back to the adoption of the Convention in 1973. It is therefore natural to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in light of growing concerns about the overexploitation of certain marine and forest resources. The Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the CITES Secretariat reflects the desire of their shared membership that the two organizations work together in close cooperation. It may not yet be a perfect union, as divergences in opinion have arisen, but the two organizations have achieved a great deal under their cooperative framework and are fully committed to its effective implementation.

Cooperation related to forestry and non-timber forest products:

4. The Secretariats of CITES and FAO met in Rome during March 2008 to discuss possible cooperation related to forestry and non-timber forest products.
5. The *Summary of the Secretariat's activities for tree species in 2008*, provided at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC57, Geneva, July 2008) contained a section on "Collaboration with FAO" (see document SC57 Inf. 7). In that section, the Secretariat reported as follows:

In accordance with Decisions 14.16 and 14.17, the CITES Secretariat has been liaising with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on opportunities for enhanced collaboration relating to forestry and non-timber products. Although the existing MoU between CITES and FAO was negotiated by the Fisheries Department, it could possibly be the framework for collaboration with FAO Forestry Department. However, it was agreed to enhance collaboration first and to consider the issue of a more specific formal base for the joint work at a later stage.

An immediate benefit of the collaboration with the FAO Forestry Department was the attendance by FAO at the 17th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC17, Geneva, April 2008). FAO has offered to assist the Plants Committee working group on tree annotations with definitions and trade data. Other areas of collaboration include participation and/or consultation on activities such as the workshop on the sustainable harvest of Prunus africana, State of the World Forest Genetic Resources, national forestry legislation and rural livelihoods.

6. The Secretariat and the representative of FAO based in Geneva meet periodically to discuss, together with colleagues from the timber section of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, common areas of work. In the future, CITES and FAO might consider potential cooperation under the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD).

Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the CITES Secretariat

7. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FAO and the CITES Secretariat was concluded in 2006 and the full text is available on the CITES website.

General information exchange and meetings

8. Both CITES and FAO are members of the Environment Management Group, a United Nations system-wide coordination body chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and supported by a secretariat provided by UNEP.
9. FAO and the CITES Secretariat are key partners in the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership directed by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and have participated in related meetings and electronic discussions. FAO has a focal point for biodiversity matters, with whom the Secretariat has discussed the potential for regular information exchange. The secretariats of both organizations participated in a UNEP Workshop on Knowledge Management and MEAs held in Switzerland during September 2009. More details are available in document CoP15 Doc. 21 on *National reports*.
10. The Secretariat attended the 11th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI/FT, Bremen, June 2008). Under the agenda item on "CITES issues with respect to international fish trade", the FAO Secretariat "reported that on most issues the work taking place under the MoU between FAO and the CITES Secretariat was progressing well with good cooperation between the two organizations." The CITES Secretariat made an oral intervention at the meeting about general cooperation between the two organizations, the scientific and technical evaluation of proposals to amend CITES Appendices I and II, issues related to introduction from the sea, capacity building related to commercially-exploited aquatic species, and future activities. The final report of the meeting, which is available on the FAO website (www.fao.org), contains the following summary points related to CITES:

The Sub-Committee congratulated the FAO ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel for the assessment of the listing proposals to amend the [CITES Appendices] for its excellent work. There was widespread support that proponents of listing proposals could attend the ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel meetings, at their own expense, to answer any questions that may arise. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the slow progress in the implementation of the [International Plan of Action] on sharks and urged countries and [Regional Fisheries Management Organizations] to increase their efforts in this regard where necessary.

11. Other matters addressed by COFI/FT were also of relevance to the work of the Convention, particularly:
 - a) the new agenda item on trade-related fisheries activities in FAO, which included FAO's work related to the World Customs Organization (WCO) and its proposal to improve classification within the Harmonized System (HS) as well as its cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO);
 - b) the status and important events concerning international trade in fishery products, including the usefulness of the value-chain approach in analysing the state of international trade;
 - c) efforts related to the harmonization of catch documentation schemes as well as the possible role for FAO to develop best practice guidelines for trade and catch documentation schemes, and for integrated traceability;

- d) progress on a binding instrument on port state measures;
 - e) a request that the FAO Secretariat assess the ways and means which will enable all concerned to be informed in a transparent manner about which schemes meet the requirements of FAO Guidelines on ecolabelling or certification in a credible manner¹; and
 - f) the adoption of technical guidelines for responsible fish trade.
12. In the margins of the meeting, the Secretariat informed the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service (FAO FIES) that Parties' annual reports of CITES trade were kept in a global, searchable database, accessible on the CITES website, maintained by UNEP-WCMC under contract with the Secretariat. The Secretariat also had useful discussions with other members of the FAO Secretariat, the secretariats of regional fishery bodies, FAO members and representatives of the fishing industry.
13. Representatives of the FAO Secretariat attended not only PC17 (as mentioned in paragraph 5 above) but also the 23rd and 24th meetings (Geneva, April 2008 and April 2009) of the Animals Committee as well as SC57 and the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, July 2009).
14. In February 2009, FAO FIES consulted the Secretariat on FAO's proposed inclusion of 'mammals of the suborder Pinnipedia' in the WCO's Harmonized System (HS) Code subheadings 0105.12, 0208.40 and 0210.92. The Secretariat advised that this would not make it any easier for CITES Parties to monitor trade in the existing or new species covered by those subheadings, but that it should not, however, create problems for such monitoring. The Secretariat suggested that most HS Code subheadings were already quite aggregated and only minimally useful in monitoring CITES trade. The Parties to the Convention had tried to obtain more species-specific subheadings but this had proven to be difficult. The Secretariat mentioned that some individual Parties used additional digits in their Customs coding to facilitate species-specific monitoring of CITES trade and that an effort had been made to gather information on the commodity codes used for sharks and stingrays (see Decisions 14.104 - 14.106 as well as document AC23 Doc. 15.1 and its addendum).
15. The Secretariat was generally supportive of FAO's efforts to propose revisions to the HS Code that would make it easier to track trade in individual fish species (or categories of fish species) and their products. It pointed out to FAO that the HS codes primarily assist Customs officers in flagging CITES specimens for possible attention upon export or import. If those codes were more species-specific, however, they might be an additional, useful source of wildlife trade statistics. FAO advised the Secretariat that the WCO Secretariat and national delegations attending meetings related to the HS Code were very cooperative regarding the addition of species useful for monitoring CITES trade, taking into account the limited number of available empty codes. It offered to work together with CITES on any amendments to the HS Code that might be proposed in future for CITES-listed species.

Capacity building

16. In accordance with Decisions 14.198 and 14.199 of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat contacted FAO before its workshop on the sustainable use and management of sea cucumbers (Ecuador, November 2007) to request that it include in its agenda the discussion paper on *Biological and trade status of sea cucumbers in the families Holothuriidae and Stichopodidae* (Annex 1 to document CoP14 Doc. 62) and relevant recommendations of the Animals Committee. In December 2008, FAO advised the Secretariat of the publication of Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 516 entitled *Sea cucumbers: A global review of fisheries and trade*. This technical paper was brought to the attention of the Animals Committee in document AC24 Doc. 16 and is available on the FAO website. FAO has informed the Secretariat that it is finalizing the technical guidelines on sustainable management of sea cucumber fisheries, which were also prepared during the November 2008 workshop. The guidelines are scheduled to be completed during the first quarter of 2010 before the present meeting. More details are available in document AC24 Doc. 16.

¹ This issue was subsequently discussed at the 28th session of the Committee on Fisheries (Rome, 2-6 March 2009) where it was agreed that: "Given that there were contrary views from Members on whether FAO should assess private ecolabelling schemes in relation to the criteria set out in the Guidelines, the FAO Legal Counsel advised the Committee that FAO, as an international organization, traditionally had been cautious about assessing private entities' compliance with guidelines. The FAO Secretariat will present a proposal at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade under which it could assess private ecolabelling schemes. The Secretariat will then seek guidance from the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade on how to proceed on this activity."

17. In April 2008, at the invitation of FAO, the CITES Secretariat participated in a meeting with sturgeon range States in the Caspian region to discuss technical assistance for improving the management of sturgeon resources. Under the program on "Capacity building for the recovery and management of the sturgeon fisheries of the Caspian Sea", an FAO Technical Workshop on Stock Assessment and TAC Methodologies was held in Rome during November 2008. CITES was represented at this meeting by Mr Radu Suciu, the alternate representative for Europe in the Animals Committee. The report of the Workshop was submitted at AC24 (see document AC24 Doc. 12.2) and the Animals Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop. During September 2009, the Secretariats of FAO and CITES jointly organized a technical workshop in Antalya, Turkey on combating illegal sturgeon fishing and trade in the Caspian Sea region. Representatives of fishery agencies, Customs and other law enforcement bodies from four of the five sturgeon range States in the Caspian region participated in the meeting as well as a representative of Interpol.
18. The CITES Secretariat was invited to participate in a regional workshop to develop collaborative strategies for improving queen conch management in the south-western Caribbean, including surveillance and enforcement (San Andrés, Colombia, July 2008) but was unable to attend due to a lack of funds. In addition to reviewing FAO's recently completed queen conch management manual, range States considered how to carry forward the work they did in the context of the CITES Review of Significant Trade. The workshop was aimed at enabling range States to strengthen their implementation of Article IV of the Convention and to achieve sustainable, legal trade in queen conch.
19. Decision 14.114 of the Conference of the Parties directed the Secretariat to liaise with FAO and regional fishery bodies to explore the organization of and seek external funding for a capacity-building workshop on the conservation and management of sharks. No external funds were identified for the workshop, but the Secretariat took part in the FAO *Technical Workshop on the Status, Limitations and Opportunities for Improving the Monitoring of Shark Fisheries and Trade*, which was held in Rome during November 2008. This workshop considered global and country-specific information on shark fisheries and trade, and its aim was to identify limitations and strategies for improving their monitoring. The workshop recommended actions to promote the implementation of the National Plans of Action - Sharks and to address specific problems affecting catch and trade monitoring, including lack of specificity in data, underestimated catch volumes and limitations in the Customs codes used in trade monitoring. The workshop report is contained in document AC24 Inf. 6 and additional details are available in document AC24 Doc. 14.4 and document CoP15 Doc. 53 on *Sharks and stingrays*.
20. An expert participated on behalf of FAO, and served as a Co-chair of the working group on fishes, in the International Expert Workshop on Non-detiment Findings (Cancun, November 2008) organized in accordance with Decisions 14.49 – 14.51 of the Conference of the Parties. More details are available in documents AC24 Doc. 9 and SC58 Doc. 41.
21. A representative of FAO participated in a regional workshop on South American freshwater stingrays (Geneva, April 2009) organized by the Secretariat under Decision 14.109. The results of the workshop were presented at AC24 and the Animals Committee formulated recommendations for consideration at the present meeting. More details are available in document AC24 Doc. 14.2 and document CoP15 Doc. 53 on *Sharks and stingrays*.
22. Pursuant to Decision 14.80 of the Conference of the Parties, and using external funds provided by the European Union, the Secretariat organized a workshop in Fiji during August 2009 to initiate regional cooperation on the management of sustainable fisheries for Tridacnidae. FAO was unable to send a representative to the workshop but it put the Secretariat in contact with the Secretariat of the South Pacific Community (SPC), which served as an excellent regional partner. The workshop took the form of a technical consultation between private and public stakeholders and specialists who are active in giant clam production and CITES implementation. The goal of the workshop was to examine the management of and fisheries for giant clams and identify national and regional initiatives that would ensure the long-term ecological, social and economic sustainability of this important resource for the region.
23. Representatives of the CITES and FAO Secretariats participated in a meeting on Red Coral Science, Management and Trade: Lessons from the Mediterranean (Naples, September 2009). Presentations made by the Secretariats and other participants are available at <http://dsa.uniparthenope.it/rccsmt09>.
24. FAO is finalizing the Fisheries Circular on Monitoring and management of the humphead wrasse, *Cheilinus undulatus*. The Circular, scheduled to be published in the first half of 2010, provides technical guidelines for monitoring and managing live reef fish fisheries, targeting the humphead wrasse.

CITES listing criteria and FAO's review of the amendment proposals

25. Activities and discussions related to CITES listing criteria and FAO's review of amendment proposals are described in document CoP15 Doc. 63 on *Criteria for the inclusion of species in the Appendices*.

Introduction from the sea

26. A representative of the FAO Legal Office is a member of the Standing Committee Working Group on Introduction from the Sea and participated in the Working Group meeting held from 14 to 16 September 2009 in Geneva (see document CoP15 Doc. 27 on *Introduction from the sea*). The substantive contributions made to the Working Group's activities by FAO, as well as Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (i.e. the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) and the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, have been much appreciated. FAO has concluded the substantive negotiations on a draft *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing* and its adoption is anticipated at the 36th session of the FAO Conference in November 2009.

Conclusions

27. The Secretariat will pursue the dialogue initiated with FAO under Decision 14.16 and will include UN-REDD as a potential area for collaboration, as mentioned in paragraph 6 above.
28. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the CITES Secretariat, the Secretariat expects to report on work completed under the MoU at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2013).

Recommendations

29. The Conference of the Parties is invited to note the information contained in the present document. Funds allocated under the Costed Programme of Work for 2009-2011 for related activities should be sufficient for implementation of the decisions, with the exception of limited travel funds being available for the Secretariat to attend FAO meetings of interest to the Convention. This latter point might be considered during discussions on document CoP15 Doc. 6 on *Financing and budgeting of the Secretariat and of meetings of the Conference of the Parties*.