

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

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

SAIGA ANTELOPE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. The saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) was included in Appendix II on 16 February 1995. The species was listed under CITES primarily because of population declines resulting from commercial harvest for meat and horns (saiga horn is used in traditional Chinese medicine).
3. Range States of the species are Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The species is extinct in China. The numbers and the range of the saiga antelope have declined considerably in recent decades and its unfavourable conservation status is of great concern in many parts of its current range. To improve the protection of the saiga antelope and its habitat within each range State, there is an urgent need for regional cooperation for its conservation, restoration and sustainable use, including international trade. These actions are of conservation urgency if the species is to recover and avoid inclusion in CITES Appendix I.
4. At the 16th meeting of the Animals Committee (Shepherdstown, December 2000), the status of the saiga antelope was evaluated against the criteria in Resolution Conf. 9.24. The Animals Committee agreed that the species is properly listed in Appendix II and it should remain the focus of monitoring and the Review of Significant Trade. If population trends continue downward as a result of over-harvest, the saiga may warrant consideration for transfer to Appendix I.
5. CITES Parties included the saiga antelope in the Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species, which resulted in the recommendation at the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC45, Paris, June 2001) that trade in the saiga antelope, including parts and derivatives thereof, from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation be suspended. Both countries had already voluntarily suspended legal exports.
6. To address this matter further, an international workshop on saiga conservation was convened in May 2002 in Elista, Russian Federation. The workshop achieved excellent cooperation among the five range States. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among four of the range States was drafted, as was an Action Plan concerning conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the saiga antelope.
7. At the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP12, Santiago, 2002), the United States of America informed CITES Parties of the favourable outcome of the May 2002 workshop and presented a draft conservation action plan (see document CoP12 Inf. 39). Many activities are listed in this Action Plan, some of which are relevant to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), some to CITES and some to domestic management.

8. At the 19th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC19, Geneva, August 2003) the United States submitted document AC19 Doc. 8.6 entitled 'Conservation of *Saiga tatarica*'. That document included the aforementioned draft Action Plan and MoU, which the Committee discussed in great detail.
9. At the 50th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC50, Geneva, March 2004), the CITES Secretariat provided an oral update on progress regarding *Saiga tatarica*. However, the Standing Committee did not take any specific action.
10. At the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP13, Bangkok, 2004), Ireland, on behalf of the Member States of the European Community, submitted document CoP13 Doc. 32 on 'Conservation of *Saiga tatarica*'. The Conference of the Parties reviewed the draft decisions in the Annex to that document and adopted them as Decisions 13.27 to 13.35, which were to be implemented prior to the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP14, The Hague, 2007).
11. At the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC53, Geneva, June-July 2005), an informal meeting of interested governments and organizations was convened. The main objectives of that meeting were to exchange information on the different saiga-related activities that were planned or being undertaken, to discuss relevant decisions on the saiga antelope and to review possibilities for joint actions to be undertaken in 2005-2007 [see document: SC53 Inf. 8 (Rev. 1)].
12. At the 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC54, Geneva, October 2006), the Secretariat submitted document SC54 Doc. 29, in which it reported on progress in the implementation of Decisions 13.29 to 13.33 on *Saiga tatarica* following SC53. The Committee requested Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Singapore to report to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decision 13.27. It urged the Russian Federation to sign the CMS 'Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Saiga Antelope' as soon as possible. It encouraged all range States of *Saiga tatarica* and relevant Parties to fully implement the medium-term international work programme adopted at the First Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum. It also agreed to change its recommendation to Parties not to accept imports of specimens of *Saiga tatarica* from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, in order to allow the export from these two range States of live specimens from breeding facilities for conservation purposes.
13. At the 55th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC55, The Hague, June 2007), the Secretariat outlined the information contained in document CoP14 Doc. 56. It noted that excellent progress had been made in implementing the nine Decisions on this subject arising from CoP13. The Committee noted the report.
14. At CoP14, the Secretariat introduced document CoP14 Doc. 56 and recommended that the *Medium-Term International Work Programme* and the draft decisions it contained be adopted. The Conference expressed overall support and adopted the following decisions on saiga antelope:

Directed to all range States of the Saiga antelope (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and to China as a former range State

- 14.91 *All range States of Saiga tatarica should fully implement the measures directed to them that are contained in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011), developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica)' and its Saiga Action Plan.*
- 14.92 *The Russian Federation should, as soon as possible, sign the MoU concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica) and implement its Saiga Action Plan.*
- 14.93 *All range States of Saiga tatarica should provide information on the measures and activities they undertook to implement the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011) in their biennial reports for the periods 2007-2008 and 2009-2010.*

Directed to States that are important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives

- 14.94 *Important consumer and trading States of saiga parts and derivatives are encouraged to collaborate among each other in managing and controlling trade in saiga antelope, and should take into consideration the recommendations formulated in Trade in saiga antelope horns and other parts: an overview of recent global trade trends and conservation aspects with a focus on market demand in Southeast Asia (Annex 6 to document CoP14 Doc. 56), particularly those relating to:*
- a) *the development of coherent policies and procedures for the disposal of confiscated saiga parts and derivatives;*
 - b) *the registration and marking of saiga parts and derivatives that are kept in government or private ownership, regular monitoring of such stockpiles, and the adoption of a labeling system for products containing saiga specimens;*
 - c) *the reduction of the overall consumption of saiga parts and derivatives in close cooperation with medicine manufacturers and communities using traditional Asian medicine, e.g. by restricting the varieties of patent medicines that are allowed to contain saiga horn, researching and promoting appropriate substitutes for the saiga horn, and confining the prescription of medicines containing saiga horn to the most essential treatments; and*
 - d) *the improvement of trade controls on China's borders with Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Mongolia by providing training and promoting the exchange of enforcement-related information amongst relevant authorities, and controls of trade to and from saiga-trading countries.*
- 14.95 *Important consumer and trading States of saiga parts and derivatives should provide information on their implementation of Decision 14.94 in their biennial reports for the periods 2007-2008 and 2009-2010.*

Directed to Parties and others

- 14.96 *Donor Parties, aid agencies, businesses using and producing saiga products, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to assist all range States and consumer countries in any way possible with the conservation of the saiga antelope, particularly by focusing funding, resources and expertise on the measures specified in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011), developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica tatarica) and its Saiga Action Plan.*

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.97 *The Secretariat shall:*
- a) *cooperate with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals on issues pertaining to the saiga antelope, including:*
 - i) *the implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga antelope (2007-2011);*
 - ii) *the organization of the second meeting of the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica tatarica), scheduled to take place in 2008;*
 - iii) *facilitating collaboration between the range States of the saiga antelope and major consumer Parties; and*

iv) *securing support for implementing the Medium-Term International Work Programme inter alia by exploring possibilities to establish an enabling mechanism to use funds from the traditional Asian medicine industry for in situ conservation of the saiga antelope; and*

b) *report on the implementation of Decisions 14.91 to 14.97, including a written summary of the information contained in biennial reports from relevant Parties, for consideration at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and recommend appropriate actions.*

15. At its 23rd meeting (AC23, Geneva, April 2008), the Animals Committee decided not to retain *Saiga tatarica* in the Review of Significant Trade and asked the Secretariat to correspond with China in order to clarify specific questions (permit category, size of stocks, origin of stocks) and to report at AC24. After reviewing the information from China, the Animals Committee decided this was an implementation issue that was no longer the matter for the Animals Committee and should therefore be brought to the attention of the Standing Committee.

Actions by range States of the saiga antelope

Regarding Decision 14.91

16. The *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011)* is designed to take account of the highest priorities for activities, thereby allowing range States, organizations and other stakeholders to focus their efforts and resources on the most immediate conservation impact. The programme forms the basis for targeted fundraising and helps guide Parties, aid agencies, businesses using and producing saiga products, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in their efforts to support the conservation of the saiga antelope. It is expected that the range States will report on progress on the implementation of the *Medium-Term International Work Programme* in their 2007-2008 and subsequent biennial reports.

Regarding Decision 14.92

17. Under the auspices of CMS, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)' came into effect on 24 September 2006. On 25 June 2009, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the CMS, the Russian Federation enhanced its support for the conservation of the Saiga antelope by signing the MoU.

Regarding Decision 14.93

18. The information on the measures and activities of the range States to implement the *Medium-Term International Work Programme* is to be provided in their biennial reports for the periods 2007-2008 and 2009-2010. At the time of preparation of the present document (September 2009), the biennial reports for the period 2007-2008 had not yet been submitted.

Regarding Decision 14.94

19. In collaboration with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Secretariat identified China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and Singapore as the most important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives. Information on the status of stockpiles of horn of *Saiga tatarica* and controls of legal and illegal trade in parts and derivatives thereof was summarized in Annex 2 to document CoP14 Doc. 56. It is expected that the required information on the implementation of this Decision will be included in the 2007-2008 biennial reports from the relevant Parties.

Regarding Decision 14.95

20. At the time of writing, the biennial reports for the period 2007-2008 had not yet been submitted. However, the Secretariat has examined the existing biennial reports from the range States for the periods 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. In its 2005-2006 biennial report, China reported two cases of illegal trade in saiga antelope, where 231 and 164 horns were confiscated because of violation of criminal law. In its response to specific questions from the Animals Committee, China responded that great attention was paid to the protection of stocks and to trade controls. China imported a large quantity of saiga horns before the

Convention entered into force in the 1960s and 1970s. The exact volume of current stocks of saiga horns is a complicated issue in China, especially because in recent years, many companies that stocked the horns have been transformed or ceased to exist. In order to improve the management of stocks, the management agencies have issued notifications asking the companies to report the size and source of stocks and to record and keep them in a standardized way. China also reported that the use of horns is very restricted and that it had introduced a labelling system for medicine made from saiga horns.

Activities undertaken by the Secretariat

Regarding Decision 14.97

21. The CITES Secretariat maintained close contact with the CMS Secretariat throughout the period between the 14th and 15th meetings of the Conference of the Parties and offered its cooperation on the themes identified in Decision 14.97 a), but in fact CMS has been able to undertake little activity during the period. It is now expected that the second meeting of the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)', envisaged to take place in 2008 in Decision 14.97 a) ii) is now likely to be held in early 2010. The Secretariat will report orally at the present meeting on developments which occur after 14 October 2009.
22. Regarding the implementation of paragraph b) of Decision 14.97, the Secretariat examined the available biennial reports from the range States for the periods 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. The only specific information on the saiga antelope was provided by China (see paragraph 20 above). Decisions 14.91 to 14.97 came into effect 90 days after CoP14, in September 2007. The deadline for submission of biennial reports by Parties for the period 2007-2008 is 31 October 2009. At the time of writing, the Secretariat had received no biennial reports from the range States covering the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2008. Therefore, the Secretariat is unable to submit a written summary of the information referred to in Decisions 14.91 to 14.97.

Conclusion

23. As shown in this document, the information on implementation of Decisions 14.91 to 14.97 was not available to the Secretariat at the time of preparation of the present document. It is therefore difficult to assess the actions that saiga antelope range States and major consumer States have undertaken following CoP14 to improve the conservation status of this species. It is nevertheless expected that the range States will report on their activities and progress in the implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme in their 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 biennial reports.
24. Saiga horn remains in high demand in Asian communities as an important ingredient for the production of traditional Asian medicines. The response from China shows that it has learnt from experiences regulating trade in other species that are of commercial value owing to their role in Asian medicine and that have been subject to high poaching levels and illegal trade, such as musk deer or bears. It is noteworthy in this regard that China has improved management of its stocks and is now extending its registration and management regime for musk from *Moschus* spp. to saiga parts and derivatives.
25. The CMS and CITES Secretariats have been working closely with the range States of the saiga antelope to support the implementation of the MoU. The Secretariat believes that this cooperation will benefit from the appointment of the intended CITES-CMS Cooperation Officer.

Recommendations

26. The Secretariat is of the opinion that CITES should continue to collaborate with CMS, saiga antelope range States and major consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives in implementing actions that will promote the conservation and restoration of saiga antelopes, and ensure that trade in specimens of the species is non-detrimental and legal. This can principally be achieved by supporting the full implementation of the measures contained in the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011)*.
27. Given the importance of supervising the consumption of and trade in saiga parts and derivatives to secure the conservation and sustainable use of this species, the Secretariat is of the opinion that it would be appropriate for CITES to monitor progress regarding the implementation of the five-year work programme through specific reporting in the biennial reports of the Parties concerned, continued liaison with CMS, and reporting at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

28. The Secretariat again encourages the saiga antelope range States and the Parties most concerned by the trade in saiga parts and derivatives to assess the measures proposed in the draft decisions in the Annex to this document, to ensure that they address the conservation needs of saiga antelopes effectively.
29. Since the activities of the range States are linked to the implementation of the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011)* and because the deadline for submission of 2007-2008 biennial reports (31 October 2009) is after the deadline for submission of documents for CoP15 (14 October 2009), the Secretariat proposes that the Parties extend Decisions 14.91 to 14.97. It further proposes that the Parties encourage saiga horn consuming industries to contribute to *in situ* conservation activities aimed at restoring wild populations.
30. The Secretariat proposes that the Parties adopt the draft decisions in the Annex to this document concerning the conservation of and trade in the saiga antelope.

DRAFT REVISED DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

NB: Text to be deleted is ~~crossed out~~. New proposed text is underlined.

Directed to the range States of the Saiga antelope (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and to China as a former range State

14.91 All range States of *Saiga tatarica* should fully implement the measures directed to them that are contained in the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011)*, developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)' and its *Saiga Action Plan*.

~~14.92 The Russian Federation should, as soon as possible, sign the MoU concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*) and implement its *Saiga Action Plan*.~~

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Directed to States that are important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives

14.94 Important consumer and trading States of saiga parts and derivatives are encouraged to collaborate (Rev. CoP15) in managing and controlling trade in saiga antelope, and should take into consideration the recommendations formulated in *Trade in saiga antelope horns and other parts: an overview of recent global trade trends and conservation aspects with a focus on market demand in Southeast Asia* (Annex 6 to document CoP14 Doc. 56), particularly those relating to:

- a) the development of coherent policies and procedures for the disposal of confiscated saiga parts and derivatives;
- b) the registration and marking of saiga parts and derivatives that are kept in government or private ownership, regular monitoring of such stockpiles, and the adoption of a labelling system for products containing saiga specimens;
- c) the reduction of the overall consumption of saiga parts and derivatives in close cooperation with medicine manufacturers and communities using traditional Asian medicine, e.g. by restricting the varieties of patent medicines that are allowed to contain saiga horn, researching and promoting appropriate substitutes for the saiga horn, and confining the prescription of medicines containing saiga horn to the most essential treatments; ~~and~~
- ~~d) the improvement of trade controls on China's borders with Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Mongolia by providing training and promoting the exchange of enforcement-related information amongst relevant authorities, and controls of trade to and from saiga trading countries.~~

14.95 Important consumer and trading States of saiga parts and derivatives should provide information on (Rev. CoP15) their implementation of Decision 14.95 (Rev. CoP15) in their biennial reports for the periods ~~2007-2008 and 2009-2010~~.

Directed to Parties and others

14.96 Donor Parties, aid agencies, businesses using and producing saiga products, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to assist all range States and consumer countries in any way possible with the conservation of the saiga antelope, particularly by focusing funding, resources and expertise on the measures specified in the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the saiga antelope (2007-2011)*, developed in support of the Memorandum of

Understanding concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)' and its *Saiga Action Plan*.

Directed to the Secretariat

14.97 The Secretariat shall:

(Rev.
CoP15)

- a) cooperate with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals on issues pertaining to the saiga antelope, including:
 - i) the implementation of the *Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga antelope (2007-2011)*;
 - ii) the organization of the second meeting of the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning 'Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*)', scheduled to take place in ~~2008~~2010;
 - iii) facilitating collaboration between the range States of the saiga antelope and major consumer Parties; and
 - iv) securing support for implementing the Medium-Term International Work Programme *inter alia* by exploring possibilities to establish an enabling mechanism to use funds from the traditional Asian medicine industry for *in situ* conservation of the saiga antelope; and
- b) report on the implementation of Decisions 14.91 to 14.97 (Rev. CoP15), including a written summary of the information contained in biennial reports from relevant Parties, for consideration at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and recommend appropriate actions.