

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN EGYPT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Following ongoing concerns regarding illegal trade involving Egypt, especially with regard to great apes and ivory, Egypt invited the Secretariat at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (The Hague, 2007) to conduct an assessment mission to examine implementation of the Convention. That mission was conducted in November 2007 and the Secretariat's report was made available to the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting (SC57, Geneva, July 2008, see document SC57 Doc. 20). The Committee endorsed the recommendations it contained.
3. At SC58 (Geneva, July 2009), Egypt and the Secretariat reported on progress with the implementation of the recommendations mentioned above (see document SC58 Doc. 23) and the Standing Committee requested Egypt to report at the present meeting on its implementation of the recommendations contained in the Annex to document SC57 Doc. 20. It also directed the Secretariat to monitor progress and provide support to Egypt.
4. Consequently, the Secretariat conducted a second mission to Egypt in February 2010, focussing particularly on apes. The present document summarizes the findings of the Secretariat.
5. The Secretariat found that Egypt had made great progress in implementing the Convention. In particular:
 - a) All operations keeping apes and other wild animals must operate under a one-year renewable licence. Renewal of this licence requires the implementation of any recommendation the Management Authority may make to those operations during verification visits.
 - b) The ownership of all apes previously kept by private individuals and imported into the country illegally has now been transferred to the Egyptian Government.
 - c) The apes have been tagged with a microchip and registered by the Management Authority. Furthermore, at the time of writing (February 2010), the Management Authority was expecting the results of DNA analysis to complete this register. These results will allow it to verify the origin of any offspring held by the operations.
 - d) The Secretariat visited all operations keeping apes to verify their microchip tagging. The reader used to scan the microchips required direct contact with the animals, which meant that scanning was not always possible, particularly where the apes were held in open enclosures. Nevertheless, the Secretariat was able to verify the tagging of the majority of apes and is satisfied that the tagging and registration have been carried out comprehensively. The Secretariat simply recommends to the Management Authority of Egypt that it acquire a long-range scanner to facilitate the identification of apes. This seems all the more important as Egypt plans to microchip all Appendix-I specimens held in captivity on its territory.
 - e) In its report contained in the Annex to document SC57 Doc. 20, the Secretariat had recommended that "no illegal-origin Appendix-I animals in a rescue centre or private collection should engage in any form of public performance or direct interaction with the public." The Secretariat found that some apes were still on public display at Giza Zoo, which is a public zoo, and in one private operation it visited. As

the Egyptian Government does not operate any non-public rescue centre that could house confiscated apes, it has no other option but to keep them at Giza Zoo.

However, the Secretariat recommended to the Management Authority of Egypt that the apes kept on display at the private zoo be removed from the areas to which visitors have access.

6. The Secretariat believes that Egypt has made significant efforts to implement the recommendations of the Standing Committee. It also believes that the Management Authority of Egypt has developed all the necessary tools to monitor and keep trade in Appendix-I specimens under control, and it congratulates it for its work. This is very commendable given that the Egyptian CITES Authorities seem to have very limited resources. The Secretariat therefore urges the Government of Egypt to provide all the necessary financial support to its Management Authority to allow it to implement the Convention successfully (increasing the very low price of the entrance ticket to Giza Zoo or the fee for issuing CITES documents to a level similar to other countries in the region might be options worth exploring in this regard). In conclusion, the Secretariat sees no reason to reopen this issue unless new and reliable information showing resumption in illegal trade or in violations of the Convention were to emerge.