

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

Strategic Matters

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

1. This document has been submitted by the Government of Thailand<sup>1</sup>, and prepared in consultation with the CITES Secretariat.

Background

2. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was adopted on 3 March, 1973, in Washington D.C. at a plenipotentiary conference hosted by the Government of the United States of America, following recommendation 99 of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.
3. Of the six global biodiversity-related conventions, which comprise the Biodiversity Liaison Group (CBD, CITES, CMS, ITPGR, Ramsar and WHC), CITES was the earliest to enter into force (1 July 1975) and the first multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) to be administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
4. The 3 March 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the adoption of CITES.
5. Paragraph 203 of the 'The future we want', the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 2012), commonly known as Rio+20, recognizes the continued importance of CITES in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife:

*We recognize the important role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development, promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, should contribute to tangible benefits for local people, and ensures that no species entering into international trade is threatened with extinction. We recognize the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations. We further stress the importance of basing the listing of species on agreed criteria<sup>2</sup>.*

6. Hundreds of millions of people depend on wildlife for their livelihoods and survival, most particularly in local and indigenous communities. In this regard, CITES aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants is legal, sustainable and traceable and does not threaten their survival.

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<sup>1</sup> The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012, Annex - from A/66/L.56 The future we want. (A/CONF.216/16): <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/814UNCSD%20REPORT%20final%20revs.pdf>

7. Through the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), an initiative of the CITES Secretariat, Interpol, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, the World Customs Organization and the World Bank launched in November 2010, at the Global Tiger Summit in Saint Petersburg, CITES and international organizations have enhanced their cooperation to more effectively combat the illicit trafficking of wildlife.
8. CITES makes a significant contribution towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>3</sup>.

#### United Nations Observances

9. United Nations Observances<sup>4</sup> contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the United Nations Charter and promote awareness of and action on important political, social, cultural, humanitarian or human rights issues. They provide a useful means for the promotion of international and national action and stimulate interest in United Nations activities and programmes<sup>5</sup>
10. Currently, there are a number of United Nations observances related to the environment, including the International Day for Biological Diversity (*A/RES/55/201*), but none are focused specifically on wildlife.
11. Establishing a World Wildlife Day would help to provide a useful means for the promotion of international and national action with regard to the need to conserve and use sustainably wildlife and stimulate interest in CITES, UNEP, ICWC and other relevant biodiversity MEAs and programmes, including by:
  - highlighting the importance of wildlife with regards to the outcome document of Rio+20, the Millennium Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the CITES Strategic Vision;
  - emphasising the need to achieve universal membership of CITES and the full implementation of its objectives and those of other wildlife-related conventions, organizations and processes;
  - reaffirming the importance of raising communication, education and public awareness on wildlife related issues; and
  - stressing the need to build on the momentum achieved through the outcome document from Rio+20 and its recognition of the importance of CITES and the celebration of the International Decade of Biodiversity 2011-2020.
12. The 3rd of March is not currently occupied by any other United Nations Observances<sup>6</sup>

#### Recommendation

The Government of Thailand recommends the adoption of a resolution that:

- DECLARES 3 March, the date of adoption of CITES, of each year as World Wildlife Day.
- INVITES the United Nations General Assembly to consider declaring 3 March, the date of adoption of CITES, of each year as World Wildlife Day.
- INVITES Parties, the CITES Secretariat, UNEP and international organisations and non-governmental organisations with an interest in wildlife to facilitate cooperation and information exchange in support of 3 March as World Wildlife Day.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110909\\_SG\\_IISD\\_art.php](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110909_SG_IISD_art.php)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>

## COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. While some countries have established their own national days to celebrate wildlife, there is no day upon which the international community has collectively agreed to promote international and national action with regard to the need to conserve wildlife and ensure that it is used sustainably, and to stimulate the sort of international interest that is highlighted in paragraph 11 of the present document. The Secretariat agrees with the background information presented in the present document, as well as the information on UN Observances.
- B. The Secretariat supports the recommendation in the present document.
- C. The Secretariat considers that the draft resolution would benefit from the inclusion of some preambular paragraphs, and suggests the following:

RECALLING the Plenipotentiary Conference, known as the 'World Wildlife Conference', hosted by the United States of America from 12 February to 2 March 1973, in Washington D.C., to conclude an International Convention on Trade in Certain Species of Wildlife in fulfilment of the recommendation contained in Resolution 99.3 of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, June, 1972,

FURTHER RECALLING that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora was signed in Washington D.C. on 3 March 1973.