

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Administrative and financial matters

SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT

1. This document has been submitted by the European Union and Senegal.\*
2. It consists in a proposal for a Resolution on the "Sponsored Delegates Project", for adoption at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the CITES Convention.
3. The CITES Secretariat initiated in 1986 the "Sponsored Delegates Project (SDP)" to solicit financial assistance from governments and organizations for a fund that provides 'anonymous' assistance to enable developing countries to attend meetings of the CITES Conference of the Parties, free from inappropriate influence.
4. This programme has been successful in raising financial means to allow the participation of many delegates from developing countries to CITES Conferences of the Parties, as shown in the table below.

**Delegates from developing countries sponsored from 1986 to 2013**

CoP	Number of sponsored delegates	Number of Parties sponsored per CoP
CoP6 (Ottawa, 1987)	113	No data
CoP7 (Lausanne, 1989)	150	No data
CoP8 (Kyoto, 1992)	152	No data
CoP9 (Fort Lauderdale, 1994)	175	No data
CoP10 (Harare, 1997)	196	No data
CoP11 (Gigiri, 2000)	207	108
CoP12 (Santiago, 2002)	154	100
CoP13 (Bangkok, 2004)	149	97
CoP14 (The Hague, 2007)	181	114
CoP15 (Doha, 2010)	126	94
CoP16 (Bangkok, 2013)	162	87
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>1765/160</b>	<b>600/100</b>

5. The Sponsored Delegates Project for CITES CoP16 was able to raise over USD 600,000 through a number of contributions from governments and non-government actors. While this permitted to fund the

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\* *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.*

participation of a substantial number of delegates, this was below the fundraising target USD 1 million for the set by the CITES Secretariat for CoP16, which would have enabled the Secretariat to provide the same level of support to Parties as at previous meetings.

6. This programme has been developed as a self-initiative by the Secretariat and does not have a legal basis in a document agreed by CITES Parties. There is a need to consolidate this project through its formal establishment in the CITES framework, as well as to direct the Secretariat to administer it, to ensure that developing countries are fully made aware of the possibility to apply for the programme and to encourage donors to contribute to its financing.
7. At its 66th meeting, the Standing Committee *"recommended to Parties and other potential donors who are considering providing financial support to delegations from developing countries to attend CoP17, to do so through the Sponsored Delegates Project"*. This is particularly relevant as a number of governments and private actors have been providing funding outside the sponsored delegates project to finance travel and accommodation costs of representatives of developing countries during CITES CoP meetings. The absence of transparency on this type of direct financing has led to perceptions that it could lead to undue influence over the delegates to whom the funds were provided.
8. Building on the recommendations from the Standing Committee, the proposal for a Resolution on the "Sponsored Delegates Project" aims at emphasising the importance for donors to channel their funds through the sponsored delegates project and at urging those governments, international organisations or private bodies to declare to the CITES Secretariat the private funding that they grant directly outside this project to facilitate the participation of developing countries to the CoP. Delegates benefiting from these funds are also urged to declare them to the CITES Secretariat, which should then make this information public before each CoP meeting.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat considers that giving the Sponsored Delegates Project (SDP) formal recognition by the Parties would be a positive step. The document says that "[t]he absence of transparency on this type of direct financing has led to perceptions that it could lead to undue influence over the delegates to whom the funds were provided". It also creates a challenge to the Secretariat as it endeavours to ensure that the SDP provides funding to developing country Party delegates who would otherwise be unable to participate in CoP, because the Secretariat has no way of ascertaining if a delegate has, or could have, been funded by another source.
- B. In document CoP17 Doc. 4.1, the Secretariat recommends that Resolution Conf. 13.8 (Rev. CoP16) on the *Participation of observers at meetings of the Conference of the Parties* be repealed and that its final operative paragraph:

*"INSTRUCTS the Secretariat not to provide sponsorship through the Sponsored Delegates Project to any representative of a Party at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties who is also an observer for a non-governmental organization."*

be incorporated into the resolution proposed in the present document.

- C. With this small addition, the Secretariat recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopts the draft Resolution in the Annex to the present document.
- D. In the past the Secretariat has often used extra-budgetary personnel (interns or secondees) to support the SDP and if the Project is given formal status, such additional resources may be needed in future. The Secretariat observes that some other multilateral environmental agreements have dedicated trust funds to support the participation of developing Party representatives at their meetings.

## DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

### SPONSORED DELEGATES PROJECT

STRESSING the importance that all CITES Parties are represented at the meetings of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to ensure that decisions are taken on the basis of deliberations involving all interested players;

ACKNOWLEDGING that developing countries are not always able to fund the participation of their delegates to CoP meetings;

WELCOMING the Secretariat initiative to put in place, before each CoP meeting, a Sponsored Delegates Project, aiming to obtain external funding from donors in order to finance the participation to CoP meetings of representatives from developing countries;

NOTING that, since it was first established for CoP6 in 1987, the Sponsored Delegates Project allowed the participation to CoP meetings of a large number of representatives of developing countries;

FURTHER NOTING that, while the Sponsored Delegates Project has been largely successful so far, a number of developing countries were not able to benefit from it, either due to a lack of information about it or due to insufficient funding being available to the Project to finance their participation;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Sponsored Delegates Project pools all contributions received into one fund, with all sponsors being acknowledged and the funds received by delegations not traced to any particular donor AND RECOGNISING that this manner of funding participation at the CoP by Parties and other donors can assist in avoiding the perception of inappropriate influence linked to other types of financial support and in ensuring that the Convention is seen to be operating in a fully open and transparent manner.

ALSO AWARE that the participation of delegates of some Parties to CoP meetings was funded by donors outside the Sponsored Delegates Project, and under conditions which are not as transparent as those governing this Project;

DESIRING, through its official endorsement by the CITES CoP, to institutionalise, strengthen and promote the Sponsored Delegates Project as developed by the Secretariat, so that it can benefit a maximum number of delegates from developing countries

### THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. DECIDES to establish the Sponsored Delegates Project;
2. AGREES that the aim of the Sponsored Delegates Project is to cover the cost of travel of delegates from developing countries to and from the venue of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the costs of accommodation, as well as a daily subsistence allowance for the duration of the meeting;
3. FURTHER AGREES that this support is to be provided for a maximum of two delegates from developing countries and that the number of countries to be supported will depend upon the funds raised;
4. ALSO AGREES that this Project is to be covered by external funding from donors;
5. CALLS on governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies to provide external funding to the Secretariat before each CoP for the Sponsored Delegates Project and ENCOURAGES them to use to the greatest extent possible the procedures set out in the project whenever they intend to support the participation of delegates of another Party to the CoP;
6. CALLS on the Secretariat and UNEP to waive the 13% programme support costs applied to contributions made to the Sponsored Delegates Project;

7. CALLS on the Secretariat to administer the Sponsored Delegates Project and to widely and proactively disseminate information about the Sponsored Delegates Project to all CITES Parties at least one year before the meeting of each CoP, with the aim to raise sufficient external funds amongst donors and inform developing countries about the existence of this project and the modalities to apply for it;
8. ENCOURAGES Parties from developing countries to contact the Secretariat sufficiently ahead of the CoP in case they wish to benefit from the Sponsored Delegates Project, as well as to make sure that they are represented at CoP meetings by the relevant experts, especially from their CITES scientific and management authorities;
9. URGES governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies which, instead of using the possibility to provide funds to the Sponsored Delegates Project, decide to fund the participation to CoP meetings of representatives from other Parties (for example by covering travel or accommodation costs), to inform the Secretariat about such funding before the relevant CoP meeting and CALLS upon the Secretariat to publish this information before the meeting;
10. Similarly, URGES Parties whose delegates did not obtain funding from the Sponsored Delegates Project, but benefited from funding from another government, international organisations, non-governmental organisations or private bodies for their participation to a CoP meeting to inform the Secretariat about such funding before the relevant CoP meeting and CALLS upon the Secretariat to publish this information before the meeting;
11. INVITES the Secretariat to report, at the beginning of each CoP meeting, on the results achieved by the Sponsored Delegates Project (amount of funding gathered, donors, beneficiaries...).