

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

Strategic matters

## RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CITES BODIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Reference is made to document CoP17 Doc 4.1. containing the Report of the Secretariat on the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the Parties.

Introduction

3. At its 66th meeting (SC66, Geneva, January 2016), the Standing Committee considered the process to review the Rules of Procedure of CITES bodies, proposed by the Secretariat in document SC66 Doc. 5.2. As described in that document, the principal aim of this review process would be threefold: to ensure greater consistency across the Rules of Procedure of all CITES bodies; to ensure that the rules of the CoP apply *mutatis mutandis* to the CITES Committees; and to eliminate duplication and overlap between the Rules of Procedure and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16) on *Establishment of Committees*. Clear and consistent rules across the committees would facilitate the work of their Chairs. The review process would need to strike a balance between providing a clear framework for the logistics of the meetings and allowing for enough flexibility to accommodate the specificities of each Committee.
4. The Standing Committee members expressed their interest in following closely the review process, especially the revisions necessary following accession by a regional economic integration organization. They supported the review process and stated that it should focus on inconsistencies and omissions, on ensuring a balanced representation in the working groups and on simplifying the number of working groups, taking into account the fact that small delegations cannot participate in all working groups. Several Parties expressed caution about a possible transition to e-voting. Noting that the Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committees are different from those of the Conference of the Parties, the Chair of the Animals Committee informed the Standing Committee that both the Plants and Animals Committee would be requesting a mandate to review their terms of reference in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16).
5. The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to work in close cooperation with the Chairs of the Standing Animals and Plants Committees to draft a revised set of Rules of Procedure for the CITES bodies, to be circulated, as soon as possible, for wider input by the Parties.
6. Pursuant to the decision by the Standing Committee, the Secretariat worked closely with the Chairs of the CITES permanent committees and consulted widely on a revised set of Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the Parties and the Standing Committee. In view of the aim of the process to ensure greater consistency and to ensure that the rules of the CoP would apply to the CITES permanent committees, the Secretariat and the Chairs of these committees, agreed to focus first on the rules of the CoP and the Standing Committee. In document CoP17 Doc. 4.1., the Secretariat presents draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties. In the present document, the Secretariat reports on the work on the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee and suggests ways forward for the review of the Rules of Procedure of the Animals and Plants Committees.
7. A set of draft Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee was circulated to the Parties with Notification No. 2016/27 of 21 March 2016, inviting Parties to provide their input to the Secretariat by 11 April 2016.

Seven Parties commented on the draft. One of the comments put forward during these consultations included a proposal to ask the Secretariat to place and maintain on the website a list of active intersessional working groups, including Chairs and members of such working groups. The Secretariat intends to implement this suggestion as soon as is practical. A decision to that effect is included in Annex 1 to the present document.

8. As the aim is to align the rules of the permanent committees with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat proposes to await the discussion of the Conference regarding the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure at the present meeting before proposing revisions to the Rules of Procedure of the permanent committees.
9. As noted above, one of the objectives of this review is to eliminate duplication and overlap between the Rules of Procedure and Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16). Furthermore, some of the issues identified in document SC66 Doc. 5.2 relate to provisions of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP 16) and would need to be addressed in the context of a possible revision of that Resolution. Reference is made to the Report of the Chair of the Animals Committee to the Conference of the Parties, contained in document CoP17 Doc. 10.11, proposing a review of that and preparation of a draft revision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 18th meeting. The Secretariat suggests that these two review processes be fully coordinated.

#### Recommendations

10. The Secretariat recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to the present document.
11. The resource implications of the implementation of these draft decisions can be absorbed within the current financial and human resources of the Secretariat.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

**Rules of Procedure**

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

- 17.A The Standing Committee shall review its Rules of Procedure and align them with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties *mutatis mutandis*.
- 17.B Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP16) on *Establishment of committees* contains provisions that are relevant for the Rules of Procedure of the Committees. In reviewing the Rules of Procedure, the Standing Committee, with input from the Animals and Plants Committees, shall identify possible inconsistencies and make such suggestions as necessary to revise Resolution Conf. 11.1, for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

***Directed to the Animals and Plants Committee***

- 17.C Based on a proposal prepared by the Secretariat, the Animals and Plants Committees shall review their respective rules of procedure and align them as closely as possible with those adopted by the Conference of the Parties and by the Standing Committee.
- 17.D The Animals and Plants Committees shall also identify possible incoherence and inconsistencies and overlap between Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP 16) on *Establishment of committees* and their own rules of procedure and submit to the Standing Committee any required revisions to the Resolution for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

- 17.E The Secretariat shall assist the Standing Committee in undertaking the review referred to in Decision 17.B by preparing proposals for aligning the existing Rules of Procedure with the revised Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties in effect after its 17th meeting.
- 17.F In relation to Decision 17.C, the Secretariat shall also prepare draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Animals and Plants Committees for consideration and adoption by those Committees.
- 17.G The Secretariat shall maintain and publish on the CITES website a list of active intersessional working groups, established by the Standing Committee, the Animals and the Plants Committees, including Chairs and members of such groups.