

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

Species-specific matters

GREAT APES (*HOMINIDAE SPP.*)

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.*
2. As required by Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP16) on *Conservation of and trade in great apes*, under "DIRECTS the Standing Committee" paragraph a), the Standing Committee reviewed this subject at its 65th and 66th meetings (SC65, Geneva, July 2014; SC66, Geneva, January 2016) (see documents [SC65 Doc. 37](#) and [SC66 Doc. 48.1](#)).

Implementation of Decision 16.67

3. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.67 on *Great apes (Hominidae spp.)* as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

16.67 *The Standing Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, and in consultation with interested Parties, GRASP, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Animals Committee and other bodies as appropriate, review Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP16), with a view to establishing an illegal trade reporting mechanism, and present a summary of its consultations and its recommendations at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

4. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed to extend the mandate of the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements, in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.67, to consider the possible establishment of an illegal-trade reporting mechanism for reporting on illegal trade in great apes. The working group considered this matter and, at SC66, recommended that reporting on illegal trade in great apes should be part of the new annual illegal-trade report, as presented in Annex 5 of document [SC66 Doc. 30.2](#).
5. The Standing Committee considered the recommendation made by the working group, and agreed that reporting on illegal trade in great apes should be included in the new annual illegal-trade report. The format for the annual illegal-trade report was adopted at the same meeting, and was made available to Parties as an Annex to Notification to the Parties [No. 2016/007](#), of 5 February 2016.

Implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP16) on *Conservation of and trade in great apes*

6. At SC65, the Secretariat reported to the Standing Committee, that it had attended a Great Apes Summit from 21 to 24 September 2013, hosted by the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and the Arcus Foundation, in Jackson Hole, United States of America. The

* *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.*

Secretariat reported that it was evident from discussions at that summit that there were significant and diverse pressures on great apes, with habitat loss and illegal domestic trade in bushmeat being singled out as the two most significant factors impacting on great ape populations. It was also reported that the illegal domestic bushmeat trade posed a significant enforcement challenge, in particular with regard to identification of the species concerned, and that research to improve methods for species-specific identification of bushmeat was urgently needed.

7. The Committee, at SC65, invited all Parties, in particular great apes range States, to review their implementation of [Resolution Conf. 13.11](#) on *Bushmeat*. Furthermore, it encouraged Parties and organizations with relevant expertise to conduct research to improve methods for species-specific identification of bushmeat.
8. To facilitate its reporting at SC66, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/042](#) of 30 July 2015, inviting great ape range States and other countries with relevant information to submit information on their implementation of [Resolution Conf. 13.4 \(Rev. CoP16\)](#) on *Conservation of and trade in great apes*, to the Secretariat. In the same Notification, Parties were also requested to provide information on any activities that might have been conducted on the review of their implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.11 on *Bushmeat*, in the context of great apes, and on any research that might have been conducted to improve methods for species-specific identification of bushmeat, in particular as it relates to great apes. In response to the Notification, the Secretariat received reports from Greece and the United States of America.
9. At SC66, the Secretariat summarized the replies it had received in response to Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/042](#). Greece reported that its Management Authority and enforcement authorities were well informed about CITES provisions and strictly enforced them, and that no import or re-export of great ape specimens had been recorded in the country during the previous three years. The United States informed the Secretariat that the US Fish and Wildlife Service had signed a five-year cooperative agreement with the Wildlife Conservation Society, to support conservation in the Conkouati Douli National Park, Republic of the Congo, which would focus on five main objectives as follows: control of illegal killing and park encroachment on land; control of illegal killing and by-catch in park waters; development of a better evidence base to adaptively manage park activities; improvement of community support of the park; and enhancement of management capacity to implement and oversee important park programmes. The cooperative agreement is intended to support the conservation of populations of chimpanzees, gorillas and large monkeys, as well as a number of other species in the park, and will address commercial bushmeat trade and other key threats to wildlife.

Illegal trade in great apes

10. At SC65, the Secretariat stated that, although there was some illegal international trade in great apes, data from official sources suggested that such illegal trade had remained limited.
11. At SC66, the Secretariat reiterated that, as part of the *Special report format on measures taken in 2013 to address illegal wildlife trade* (see Notification to the Parties [No. 2014/050](#) of 5 November 2014), Parties were invited to provide case-by-case seizure data on specimens of a limited number of CITES-listed species, including great apes. In cases where the Parties authorized the use of the information they provided in response to the Notification for the global study on wildlife crime, supported by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), the Secretariat forwarded these reports to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The Secretariat noted that some of the reports provided to UNODC included information on illegal trade in great apes, but that a compilation of this information provided by UNODC, suggested that illegal international trade in great ape specimens was still limited.
12. The Secretariat, at both SC65 and SC66, reported that information it had received about alleged illegal trade in great apes was routinely channelled to the relevant Parties, requesting the authorities to further investigate the allegations. Where appropriate, the Secretariat also engaged with INTERPOL to initiate investigations and follow-up.

Report on the status of great apes

13. At SC65, the Secretariat stated that great apes were threatened by several factors that operated at the local or national, rather than the international level. With regard to the threats posed by illegal trade, international organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization have limited ability to capture information on illegal domestic trade in great apes, and they do not record information on other

pressures or threats affecting the species. The Secretariat commented that there seemed insufficient information available about the scale and impact of various threats on great apes, while such information was important to develop targeted remedial responses. The Committee agreed to recommendation d) in document [SC65 Doc. 37](#), requesting the Secretariat, subject to external funding, to commission a report on the status of great apes for its 67th meeting, similar to the report on rhinoceroses from the African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission and TRAFFIC, submitted before each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*.

14. At SC66, the Secretariat reported to the Committee that it had not received external funding to commission a report on the status of great apes but, in support of the implementation of SC65 recommendation d) on *Great Apes*, it had discussed the issue with the IUCN Primate Specialist Group and the GRASP Secretariat, and agreed on a way forward to produce such a report for submission to the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee. The Secretariat reported that it would continue to work closely with the IUCN Primate Specialist Group, GRASP and others for this purpose.
15. Also at SC66, the Standing Committee asked the Secretariat to report on the status of great apes at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Repatriation of great apes

16. At SC65, the Secretariat reported to the Committee that three Sumatran orangutans (*Pongo abelii*) that had been illegally imported into Malaysia from Indonesia, were returned to Indonesia in October 2013. According to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks of Malaysia, the animals had been seized by Malaysian authorities in 2006, 2007 and 2009 after they were found to have been imported illegally. At SC66, the Secretariat further reported that the Management Authority of Kuwait had informed it that three juvenile orangutans from Indonesia had been confiscated by Customs authorities in Kuwait, in July 2015, and that one of these animals was dead upon arrival, whilst another was too young to be returned to Indonesia and that, at that time, it was being cared for at a rescue facility in Kuwait. The Secretariat was informed that the oldest of the three juvenile orangutans was successfully returned to Indonesia in October 2015. In addition, the Secretariat reported that Thailand had informed it that a repatriation of 14 confiscated orangutans to Indonesia, had been conducted in November 2015.

Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP)

17. In document [SC65 Doc. 37](#) (paragraphs 3 to 8 and 18 to 20) and document [SC66 Doc. 48.1](#) (paragraphs 16 to 18) prepared for SC65 and SC66, the Secretariat had informed the Committee about its cooperation with GRASP. The Secretariat had served as a member of the GRASP Executive Committee since the second GRASP Council Meeting (Paris, November 2012).

Recommendation

18. The Conference of the Parties is invited to note this document.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. Concerning illegal trade in great apes, the Secretariat notes that the first *World Wildlife Crime Report*, prepared by the UNODC with the support of ICCWC, was due to be launched at the 25th meeting of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in Vienna, Austria, in May 2016. The information on illegal trade in great apes that was provided by Parties (see paragraph 11 of the present document), has been taken into consideration in this report.
- B. Regarding the report on the status of great apes, the Secretariat has remained in contact with the IUCN Primate Specialist Group and the GRASP Secretariat following SC66. An outline of the report has been agreed, and includes: the current distribution of African and Asian great apes; the status of great ape populations; temporal trends in great ape populations; major threats to great apes; great ape conservation activities; and the categorization of the great ape range States in the CITES National Legislation Project.
- C. At the time of writing (late April 2016) work to compile the report was ongoing. However, the report will regrettably not be ready for the present meeting. Consequently, the Secretariat is not able to report on the status of great apes at the present meeting, as requested by the Standing Committee at SC66. The Secretariat continues to believe that the report will greatly assist Parties in their deliberations on matters relating to conservation and trade in great apes, and that it will help ensure that conservation measures are well targeted and address the main problems. It should be noted that the Secretariat has not received any external funding to commission the report. Current indications are that it should be possible to complete the report without such funding, but if needed, external funding to support this work will have to be identified.
- D. The Secretariat recommends that the Conference of the Parties consider the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.A The Secretariat shall collaborate with the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group, GRASP, and other experts, and subject to the availability of sufficient funding, finalize a report on the status of great apes and the relative impact of illegal trade and other pressures on their status, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Standing Committee

17. B The Standing Committee shall consider the report prepared in accordance with decision 17.A, and prepare recommendations for further action as may be needed, to be considered at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

- E. Decision 16.67 has been implemented, and the Secretariat recommends that it be deleted.