

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

Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 - 28 August 2019

Summary record of the first session for Committee II

18 August 2019: 09h00 - 12h00

Chair: C. Hoover (United States of America)

Secretariat: I. Higuero
S. Bengtsson
S.H. Flensburg
D. Morgan

Rapporteurs: A. Caromel
F. Davis
J. Robinson
R. Mackenzie

The Chair reported several changes to the working programme as a result of discussions in plenary. Agenda items 54.1 and 21.1 would be discussed together on Monday 19 August. Agenda item 75 would be discussed on Thursday 22 August, immediately following agenda item 71. Agenda item 81 would be scheduled on Monday 26 August as the first item of the day, followed by agenda item 89. The Chair indicated that agenda items 17 and 18 would be considered on Monday 19 August in the following order: item 17.1; items 17.2 and 18.3 together; item 17.3; item 18.2; and item 18.1.

Administrative and financial matters

4. Rules of Procedure

4.2 Review of the Rules of Procedure

The Chair of the Standing Committee introduced document CoP18 Doc 4.2, including draft decision 18.AA. Referring to the discussion on the establishment of the Credentials Committee that took place in the first session of the Plenary, the Secretariat noted that all regions were represented at meetings of the Credentials Committee at this meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It suggested that the Standing Committee be asked to review Rule 7(2)(a), amending draft decision 18.AA in document CoP18 Doc. 4.2 to refer to "Rule 7(2)(a) and Rule 25".

The Chair extended appreciation to Lebanon for giving up a seat on the Credentials Committee at this meeting, Egypt for participating in the Committee, and Guatemala for its willingness to act as an observer, noting that this reflected the spirit of compromise and cooperation in CITES.

Norway asked if draft decision 18.AA could be broadened to include other issues beyond rule 25 and rule 7(2)(a). Uganda, supported by Cameroon, Chile, Egypt, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania, suggested the wording in rule 7(2)(a) be amended from "not more than five" to not more than seven in order to ensure all regions were represented in the Credentials Committee. The Chair clarified that the Rules of Procedure had already been adopted for this meeting of the CoP and would not be subject to further review at the present meeting.

Canada, Mexico, Namibia, South Africa, the United States of America and Zimbabwe confirmed support for Decision 18.AA and supported the Secretariat's proposed amendment to include Rule 7(2)(a).

Draft decision 18.AA in paragraph 12 of document CoP18 Doc. 4.2, with the amendment proposed by the Secretariat to refer to "Rule 7(2)(a) and Rule 25", was accepted and it was agreed to delete Decision 17.1.

7. Administration, finance and budget of the Secretariat and of meetings of the Conference of the Parties

7.1 Administration of the Secretariat

The Secretariat introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.1, containing a summary of the host country arrangements, staffing situation of the Secretariat, and administrative changes within the United Nations Environment Programme. It noted that while the number of staff posts funded by the core Trust Fund had decreased, demands on the Secretariat were increasing in terms of the number of Parties to the Convention, organization of meetings of the scientific committees and Standing Committee, and the number of Resolutions and Decisions.

Document CoP18 Doc. 7.1 was noted.

7.2 Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on administrative and other matters

The representative of UNEP introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.2, highlighting activities in support of the Convention and expressing commitment to deepening collaboration with the Secretariat. Egypt suggested that future reports point out constraints as well as achievements. Guinea emphasized the need for technical and material support for implementation, and the United Republic of Tanzania asked that UNEP strengthen capacity-building relating to wildlife and forestry.

Document CoP18 Doc. 7.2 was noted.

7.3 Financial reports for 2016-2019

The Secretariat introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.3, noting that since the initial annexes to the document were posted, several Parties had paid their annual contributions and that updated information was available on the CITES website. The Secretariat expressed concern about the impact of delays in payment of contributions by Parties and recalled paragraph 17 of Resolution Conf. 17.2 on *Financing and the costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2017-2019* concerning timely payment of contributions.

The report of expenditures incurred was accepted, and the reports of implementation of the costed programmes of work for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (up to 30 June 2019) were approved.

7.4 Budget and work programme for 2020 to 2022

The Secretariat introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.4. It explained the three budget scenarios contained in the document: zero real growth; zero nominal growth; and incremental growth.

The Chair established a Budget Working Group, chaired by Norway, and also comprising Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, the European Union, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

7.5 Access to funding, including GEF funding

The Secretariat introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.5 and noted that the Council of the Global Environment Facility had formally approved the second phase of the Global Wildlife Programme in June 2019, amounting to a US\$82m grant towards curbing illegal wildlife trade and promoting wildlife-based economies in 13 projects in countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The United States of America proposed an amendment to paragraph a) of draft decision 18.BB in document CoP18 Doc. 7.5, replacing the words "enhance access to" with facilitate use of allocated".

The eight draft decisions with the amendments by the Secretariat presented in Annex 2, and with the further amendment proposed by the United States to decision 18.BB, were accepted, and it was agreed to delete Decisions 17.10 to 17.16.

7.6 Sponsored delegates project

The Secretariat introduced document CoP18 Doc. 7.6 and drew attention to information document CoP18 Inf. 67, which provided additional information on the status of the contributions to the Sponsored Delegates Project (SDP) and funds received by delegates to attend CoP18 outside the SDP.

The European Union and the United States of America both expressed support for the Sponsored Delegates Project and the draft decision.

The draft decision presented in Annex 1 to document CoP18 Doc. 7.6 was accepted and it was agreed to delete Decision 17.17.

8. Draft resolution on language strategy for the Convention

Iraq introduced document CoP18 Doc. 8, which proposed a draft resolution calling on Parties to develop strategies that explore the inclusion of the Arabic language as one of the languages to the Convention.

Kuwait thanked Iraq for their efforts in developing the draft resolution and supported by Egypt, Bahrain, China, Israel, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe, proposed that a working group be established to further refine the document and identify an action plan for introducing the language, emphasizing that its inclusion as a language to the Convention would allow for more effective participation and improve implementation.

The European Union, Georgia, Colombia, Japan, and the United States of America recognised the importance of including additional languages to the Convention, but expressed concerns regarding the financial implications, the increased burden on the CITES Secretariat, and Party capacity for dealing with permits in Arabic. The United States supported by Monaco and Norway also supported the establishment of an intersessional working group. The Russian Federation suggested that Parties consider the inclusion of all three remaining United Nations languages as languages to the Convention. IWMC World Conservation Trust suggested that a change in the working languages of the Convention may require an amendment of the treaty.

The Chair established a working group co-chaired by Georgia and Kuwait, and also comprising China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The working group shall develop draft decisions directed to the Standing Committee and the Secretariat based on document CoP18 Doc. 8, including the comments of the Secretariat, and the interventions made during the discussion, in order to further explore this issue and its implications between this meeting and the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Strategic matters

10. CITES Strategic Vision post-2020

Canada, as Chair of the Standing Committee, summarized document CoP18 Doc. 10 and its annexes, describing the process undertaken by the intersessional working group to review the Strategic Vision and highlighting that there had been insufficient time to propose new or revised indicators and that this process would be undertaken after the present meeting. Canada invited the Parties to adopt the CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030 as outlined in Annex 1 to document CoP18 Doc. 10, with the following amendment to the seventh paragraph under Strategic Goals:

“Finally, Goal 5 aims to ~~the~~ use of existing or new partnerships”.

Egypt, Japan, New Zealand and Norway supported the adoption of the draft decisions as amended by the Secretariat, with Japan also supporting the deletion of Decisions 17.18 and 17.19.

Mexico generally supported the draft decisions and the majority of the text of the Strategic Vision but felt that some clarifications were still needed. Brazil highlighted the need for indicators that allow for the Parties to

measure progress and suggested an amendment to Objective 1.5. Colombia wished to include the term 'rural communities' in paragraph D of the Secretariat's comments, and Indonesia suggested retaining 'local' as well as 'rural' communities.

The European Union, the United States of America and Norway cautioned against re-opening discussions on the language of the document, emphasizing the painstaking work already undertaken to reach this level of agreement. While there might be aspects to be refined, they supported the adoption of the draft Strategic Vision as amended by the Secretariat, seeing the opportunity to provide improvements through the work on indicators.

FAO, supported by Japan and China, proposed the first paragraph of the preamble of the Strategic Vision, be amended as follows:

"REITERATING the aim of the Convention to promote international cooperation for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora"

The representative from the Convention on Biological Diversity drew attention to the participatory process organized by the CBD regarding the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and summarized the engagement of CITES in this process to date.

The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) suggested the revision of the Strategic Vision presented an opportunity to add recognition of the latest Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the preamble.

The draft decisions in paragraph 15 b) of document CoP18 Doc. 10, as amended by the Secretariat in paragraph F of its comments, were accepted. It was agreed to delete Decision 17.18, 17.19, 17.20 and 17.21.

The Chair asked Canada to prepare an in-session document on the draft Strategic Vision in Annex 1 of document CoP18 Doc. 10 incorporating comments made during the present session by Brazil, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Secretariat's comments made in the document, to be reviewed at a later session of Committee II.

The meeting was adjourned at 11h57.