

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
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Administrative and financial matters

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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP
ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER MATTERS

This document has been submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).*

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Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (the Convention), pursuant to the memorandum of understanding between the Standing Committee of the Convention and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concerning secretariat services to and support of the Convention. It has been prepared by UNEP and submitted to the Convention secretariat under item 7.2 of the provisional agenda (Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on administrative and other matters).
2. The report provides an update on the programmatic, administrative and financial management support provided by UNEP for the implementation of the relevant outcomes of the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention since the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee.

Programmatic support and other areas of cooperation

3. Pursuant to resolution 2/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP is setting the stage for a more coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and providing links to other global environmental goals and strategies through the medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and the programme of work for the bienniums 2018–2019 and 2020–2021. The ecosystem management and environmental governance subprogrammes are closely aligned with the priorities of the environmental issues of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other biodiversity-related conventions. Sustainable Development Goals 6, 13, 14, 15 and 17 are at the very heart of the work conducted by UNEP in such cross-cutting areas as poverty reduction, food, water and energy security, employment, gender equality and policy coherence.
4. As the custodian agency for 26 of the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNEP is working to ensure that countries are well equipped to track their progress through the open-access platform. UNEP is engaging with some 48 United Nations agencies on a system-wide framework on environmental strategies, with the aim of aligning those strategies with the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the long run, that process is designed to support the Convention in delivering on Sustainable Development Goal 15, target 7, on urgent action to end the poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both the demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.

I. Tackling illegal trade in wildlife

A. Progress pursuant to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/14 on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products

5. In response to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/14 on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, UNEP submitted a progress report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session. The report included a thorough assessment of best practice in local community involvement in wildlife management, drawing from diverse examples from around the world and presenting lessons learned from various approaches as a means of tackling the unsustainable use of and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products.¹
6. UNEP supported the meeting of the Working Group on Rural Communities of the Convention, which was established by the Standing Committee of the Convention at its sixty-ninth meeting, held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2017, with a mandate to recommend ways in which rural communities could be engaged in the decision-making of the Convention. The meeting, held in Nairobi on 26 and 27 February 2018, was attended by representatives of rural communities, delegations from parties to the Convention, and the secretariat. The Working Group submitted its recommendations for consideration at the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee.
7. On 27 and 28 March 2018, UNEP hosted an expert meeting in Nairobi on implementation of the East African Community's strategy to combat poaching, illegal trade and trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products. UNEP also continues to provide technical and financial support to the African Union Commission on the implementation of the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa.

¹ Available at http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22864/WLWL_Report_web.pdf.

8. Through its regional office in Panama, UNEP also organized the Mesoamerican Dialogue on the Conservation of Wild Fauna and Flora (El Diálogo Mesoamericano Sobre Conservación de Vida Silvestre) in Panama City on 3 and 4 May 2018, with the participation of stakeholders including representatives from ministries of the environment, public prosecutors' offices, and customs and judicial powers from Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. The Dialogue was organized in partnership with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development, with the support of the Network for Compliance with and Application of Wildlife Regulations in Central America and the Dominican Republic (ROAVIS) and with the collaboration of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme. The meeting took note of the alarming increase in illegal wildlife trade in the region, an issue that warranted the greatest attention, as it put pressure on endangered species and natural heritage, undermined legitimate trade and provided income for international criminal networks. It was noted that putting an end to the illegal wildlife trade required broad commitment across the board, from Governments to the private sector, as well as training and the dedication of all legal stakeholders to prevent and prosecute crimes. It is also vital to educate and motivate citizens, who as consumers are responsible for boosting demand for wildlife, to encourage public participation and facilitate access to information and to environmental justice, particularly for the most vulnerable populations.
9. Through the national legislation project and in cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention, UNEP is supporting the development of CITES implementing legislation in Lesotho. The provision of support to the Solomon Islands has been completed, while the provision of support to Somalia has not yet been completed.
10. An analysis of the legal challenges surrounding licit and illicit trade in terrestrial wildlife and forest products was published in December 2018. "Strengthening legal frameworks for licit and illicit trade in wildlife and forest products: Lessons from the natural resource management, trade regulation and criminal justice sectors"² is a tool for helping identified institutions working on or considering ways to better regulate licit and illicit trade in wildlife and forest products. The study, which is available in English and French, provides practical recommendations to assist Member States in identifying possible gaps or weaknesses in legal frameworks for natural resource management, trade regulation, and crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as key legislative components for those sectors, thereby providing national Governments with a tool for improving their legislation in those key areas.
11. UNEP has produced the first global report on environmental rule of law.³ The report reviews the critical role that institutions, including wildlife protection and management institutions, play in environmental rule of law and the key opportunities for building more effective institutions. It also identifies trends in the development of environmental rule of law and its fundamental elements, along with effective environmental legislation and institutions. Within the same context and in response to the request by the United Nations Environment Assembly to ascertain and document the current status of knowledge of crimes that have serious impacts on the environment, UNEP facilitated an expert process that identified and documented the current status of knowledge of such crimes. The report of that process⁴ highlights the magnitude of environmental crimes, including wildlife crimes; key trends in those crimes; and the national, regional and global responses thereto.

² http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27282/Strengthening_legal_frameworks.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

³ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27279/Environmental_rule_of_law.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁴ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25713/knowledge_crime_envImpacts.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

12. In order to strengthen the operational capacity necessary to support a coherent response to the proposal in decision 2015/1 of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee for an integrated and holistic response to the rapid increase in poaching and the illicit trade in wildlife and forest products, in December 2016 UNEP, along with the seven other United Nations entities concerned, agreed to establish a task force, which was formally launched in New York on the occasion of World Wildlife Day on 3 March 2017 as the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products. UNEP formally chaired the task force until January 2019, while the United Nations Development Programme provided its secretariat. There has been collaboration in the organization of such events as the Africa-Asia-Pacific Symposium on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Wildlife Crime, held in Bangkok on 4 and 5 July 2017 and the Symposium on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central and West Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 11 and 12 September 2018. The task force has held regular coordination meetings and its members have collaborated in the development of a massive open online course on the illegal trade in wildlife, which will be launched on the margins of the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

13. Technical legal assistance has been provided to Angola, Eritrea, the Gambia, Lesotho and Somalia on their national CITES legislation, to Vietnam on its national wildlife legislation and to the Solomon Islands on its pending CITES regulations. Support has also been extended to Argentina and Paraguay in the legal review processes relating to the criminalization of wildlife offences.

14. UNEP has supported the preparation of a review of the effectiveness of policy, legal and communications interventions to address the illegal trade in wildlife. The review will be published in the *Annual Reviews* journal in late 2019.

B. African Elephant Fund and its contribution to the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan

15. The United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/14, on illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, among other actions, to continue to collaborate with the Convention and other partners of the international consortium on combating wildlife crime, and with other United Nations entities, to support member States in implementing their commitments, including by continuing to support the activities of the African Elephant Action Plan, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

16. The African elephant range States continue to implement the African Elephant Action Plan through projects approved by its steering committee and administered by the secretariat, which is hosted by UNEP.

17. Highlights of the projects implemented since the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention include the establishment of a canine department by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which has strengthened the management of the ivory stockpile in Uganda; a biodiversity education programme that has helped to mitigate conflicts between farmers and elephants in Ghana; a project estimating elephant dung counts and age structures at Shimba Hills in Kenya and in the Mau Forest and the Mount Elgon, Mount Kenya and Aberdares regions, which has generated knowledge about elephant populations in tropical forests in that country; and training and capacity-building for park rangers in Gabon, which has improved the surveillance of elephants in that country and reduced the incidence of poaching. Activities in Côte d'Ivoire include the training of 10 forest officers in monitoring geographic information systems to track elephants; the sensitization of the populations of eight villages to protect elephants; and the training and equipping of 80 farmers to mitigate conflicts with elephants and enhance farming activities, which has led to a reduction in conflict between humans and elephants and the restoration of elephant habitats in Côte d'Ivoire.

18. The African Elephant Fund held the tenth meeting of its Steering Committee in Kasane, Botswana, from 1 to 3 March 2018 and an informal meeting of the Steering Committee in the margins of the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee of CITES in Sochi, Russian Federation, from 2 to 4 October 2018. During the latter meeting, the Steering Committee discussed the progress made by range States in implementing the African Elephant Action Plan and administrative matters linked to the disbursement of funds to projects approved in 2018. The eleventh meeting of the Steering Committee was held in Accra from 18 to 21 February 2019. The main agenda for the meeting was to revise and adopt new terms of reference, rules of procedure and guidelines for selecting and evaluating project proposals, and to develop a new resource mobilization strategy for the African Elephant Fund. The Steering Committee also reviewed and evaluated eight new project proposals submitted by range States and paved the way for reviewing and updating the African Elephant Action Plan.

C. Illegal trade in wildlife and forest products communication handbook

19. In response to CITES resolution Conf.17.4 on demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species, UNEP has built on the awareness raised and the momentum generated by the “Wild for Life” campaign to assist member States and other stakeholders in launching their own communication programmes to raise awareness and change behaviour at the local and national levels with regard to consumption of wildlife products from illegal trade. For that purpose, UNEP has developed a *Communication to Combat Wildlife Crime* toolkit, including a video and a handbook to assist national communication planners in developing communication activities designed to reduce demand for wildlife and forest products. The toolkit has undergone final peer review and will be available in open-source format on the UNEP portal by the eighteenth Conference of the Parties.

20. The effectiveness of the handbook was tested at an initial workshop held in Viet Nam in October 2017. The workshop was co-hosted by the CITES Management Authority in Viet Nam and the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The principal outcome of the workshop was the creation of a network of communication officers by the Government of Viet Nam. The CITES Management Authority in Viet Nam will host a follow-up meeting with all participants to formalize the network and agree on how best to proceed with the communication initiatives. In November 2017, UNEP conducted a similar pilot activity in Malawi (a country supplying wildlife products) with a view to scaling up the activity before regional workshops are held. One of the results of that workshop was a grant from the United Nations Development Programme to Malawi to undertake an innovative survey of knowledge, attitudes and practices that will yield a national “environmental consciousness score” that can help countries better develop their communication plans. Research results will be available by the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The above activities all form part of the efforts made by UNEP to support the implementation of CITES resolution Conf.10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on trade in elephant specimens, through public awareness campaigns.

D. Tackling illegal trade in wildlife through projects funded by the Global Environment Facility

21. UNEP, as a designated implementing agency, has been supporting the implementation of two projects funded by the Global Environment Facility at the regional level: strengthening law enforcement capabilities to combat wildlife crime for conservation and sustainable use of species in South Africa (targeting the rhinoceros), and engaging policymakers and the judiciary to address poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Africa (in Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia).

E. The Great Apes Survival Partnership

22. The sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention, held in Geneva from 7 to 11 July 2014, mandated the secretariat of the Convention, as suggested in document 37 of that meeting (SC65 Doc. 37), to collaborate with the Primate Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) and other experts to prepare 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. At that meeting, the CITES secretariat reported to the Standing Committee that it had, in support of the implementation of SC65 recommendation (d) on great apes, discussed the issue with the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group and the GRASP secretariat (CoP17 Doc. 61). GRASP and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group, in consultation with other experts, produced a report addressing the distribution and abundance trends for all great ape species and subspecies, as well as threats to their conservation. The in-session working group of the Animals Committee of the Convention reviewed the report and provided comments, feedback and recommendations. GRASP and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group subsequently revised the report and submitted the final version to the Standing Committee at its seventieth meeting. The Standing Committee welcomed the report and the recommendations made therein and mandated the CITES secretariat, in collaboration with GRASP and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group, to review resolution Conf. 13.4 on the conservation of and trade in great apes. GRASP and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group provided input on the proposed amendments.

23. The Apes Seizure Database developed by GRASP in collaboration with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is the first global database to gauge the scale and scope of poaching and illegal trade in great apes. The database is an online reporting system to assist national authorities, civil society and businesses to monitor and act on illegal trade in live animals, body parts and bush meat. The database was initially launched at the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention, where it received a positive response from participants and the media. It is now fully

operational and current efforts are directed primarily towards two areas: validation of data received by the Technical Advisory Group and development of a user manual for data providers and validators.

II. Support for strengthening cooperation, coordination and synergies between the Convention and other biodiversity-related conventions

24. In United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/17, on enhancing the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, the Assembly recognized the benefits to be gained by implementing the biodiversity-related conventions in a synergistic and coherent manner. The resolution requested the Executive Director to undertake further efforts to enhance synergies. UNEP is primarily implementing the resolution through a project entitled “Environmental Treaties Programme – realizing synergies for biodiversity”, which has been developed in close consultation with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention.

25. Programme cooperation with the biodiversity-related conventions, Governments and other stakeholders, including by active participation of the Convention secretariat in Steering Committee meetings, resulted in the submission of an input paper by UNEP entitled “Response of UN Environment and UNEP-WCMC to Notification 2018-063 from the Executive Secretary inviting views on the preparation, scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”.⁵ The input paper highlighted the steps needed to create a coherent approach to integrating biodiversity action to produce significant transformational changes across a variety of sectors of the economy and society in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. The Programme produced tools to enhance synergies for biodiversity, including three compendiums of guidance: the first on achieving synergies at the national level; the second on capturing, managing and using data and information; and the third on global key data and information sources⁶ to support the road map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level (Convention on Biological Diversity decision XIII/24) under the supervision of the informal advisory group on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.

27. The 2020 Biodiversity Strategic Planning Timeline Tool was developed to provide updates to major global biodiversity-related meetings and has attracted a wide range of users and stakeholders, who have used it to support synergies programmes and for policy planning.⁷

28. At the national level, the biodiversity synergies programme supported the development of gender mainstreaming roadmaps for the national biodiversity strategy and action plans of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar, including gender considerations, responsive targets, actions and indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, and institutional arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

29. UNEP held a communications coordination meeting for public information officers in the margins of the meeting of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in Dubai on October 19–21 2018. The meeting was devoted to sharing communications plans for 2019 and coordination needs, and it included a briefing on podcasting and biodiversity, environmental rights and environmental defenders. How to better amplify biodiversity messages and communication through an operational media monitoring tool was also discussed. A media monitoring tool was made available to the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements to manage media coverage of biodiversity-related events subsequent to conferences of the parties and major report launches. Access to the tool came with training in its use.

30. UNEP also held five media briefings with local and international media in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, and in Doha and Nairobi, to make clear to the media the connection between biodiversity and environmental rights. Each of those briefings engaged the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, through its content and some of the briefings through the participation of an expert, to ensure that the connection between biodiversity and environmental rights was both clear and solidly grounded in science.

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/Post2020/postsbi/unesp2.pdf>.

⁶ <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources-and-data/biodiversitysynergies>.

⁷ <https://post2020.unep-wcmc.org/>.

III. Technical and scientific support from the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre

31. Since the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, all new listings and nomenclature changes resulting from the adoption of the 49 proposals for amendment of the appendices and the adoption of new Convention standard references, as per resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP17), have been incorporated into Species+ (speciesplus.net), a centralized portal for access to key information on species of global concern, and the online Checklist of CITES Species (checklist.cites.org).

32. UNEP-WCMC maintains and continually updates Species+ and the Checklist of CITES Species. The two online platforms were developed by UNEP-WCMC in conjunction with the Convention secretariat and other partners, and provide parties with information related to key species required for the implementation of the Convention. Species+ contains taxonomic, listing and distribution information on all species listed in the Convention appendices; it also provides details on quotas and trade restrictions and includes a document search facility for a selection of Convention documents (primarily relating to listing proposals and the Review of Significant Trade). The database underpinning the CITES Checklist is linked with Species+ and, as designated by CITES Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP17), serves as the official checklist of species under the Convention. Since its launch in 2013, Species+ has had over 1,130,000 visits from approximately 615,000 users, and the Checklist of CITES Species has had over 720,000 visits from over 460,000 users. Both sites have global coverage, with users from over 200 countries and territories.

33. The CITES Trade Database (trade.cites.org) is managed by UNEP-WCMC on behalf of the CITES secretariat and contains over 20 million records of international trade in wildlife. The data held in the database are the official trade statistics submitted by parties in their annual report to CITES. Since March 2014, over 118,000 outputs have been downloaded from the CITES Trade Database public site. In close collaboration with the secretariat, UNEP-WCMC has developed a proposal to increase the accessibility of data held in the CITES Trade Database by releasing a shipment output with anonymized permit numbers to preserve links between import and export shipments while avoiding concerns relating to the release of confidential permit numbers. The document was discussed at the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee and the Standing Committee agreed to the release of an output of that nature. Since then, UNEP-WCMC has worked in collaboration with the secretariat to produce the output, with the first release now available from the CITES Trade Database at trade.cites.org.

34. UNEP-WCMC has also been working to analyse the full CITES trade dataset using more systematic analytical approaches befitting a dataset of that size. With support from UNEP, it has produced two papers: one analysing the relationship between legal trade and illegal trade (still in review), and a second providing a comprehensive analysis of 40 years of CITES data, which was published in the journal *Biological Conservation* and presented to parties to the Convention as an information document at the joint session of the thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee and the twenty-fourth meeting of the Plants Committee, held in Geneva on 20 and 21 July 2018.⁸

35. Data in Species+, the Checklist of CITES Species and the CITES Trade Database are publicly available. In addition, UNEP-WCMC maintains an application programming interface designed to support the integration of the Convention Checklist and Species+ with national information systems. The interface, developed in collaboration with Belgium, France and Switzerland, provides a mechanism enabling national databases to link to and easily extract data from Species+ (including species names, Convention appendices and distributions) and download them onto national platforms, with a view to assisting parties with the implementation of the Convention, thereby reducing duplication of data maintenance work and improving data quality and consistency of species information.⁹ As of February 2019, the interface had 350 active users from 95 countries.¹⁰

⁸ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac30-pc24/Inf/E-AC30-Inf-04-PC24-Inf-04.pdf>.

⁹ See <http://api.speciesplus.net/>.

¹⁰ Parties are encouraged to contact UNEP-WCMC for further information about the application programming interface (species@unep-wcmc.org).

36. In support of the implementation of the Convention and on behalf of the CITES secretariat, UNEP-WCMC produced several documents to inform discussion at meetings of the scientific committees relating to the Review of Significant Trade and in support of the nomenclature specialists from the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee. Those reports were discussed by the Animals Committee at its twenty-ninth meeting, held in Geneva from 18 to 22 July 2017, and by the Plants Committee at its twenty-third meeting, held in Geneva on 22 and 24–27 July 2017, and at the joint session of the thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee and the twenty-fourth meeting of the Plants Committee.

37. Under the Review of Significant Trade process, UNEP-WCMC produced detailed reviews of 25 animal and 11 plant species/country combinations selected for review following the sixteenth Conference of the Parties,¹¹ 19 animal and 8 plant species/country combinations selected for review following the seventeenth Conference of the Parties,¹² and an evaluation of the country-wide Review of Significant Trade process¹³ under decision 17.111. In addition, the Centre produced a summary of taxonomic changes and nomenclature of CITES-listed animal species to inform nomenclature discussions at the thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee¹⁴ and an information document¹⁵ for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Plants Committee, including a response to decision 17.315 on feedback on the CITES Cactaceae Checklist and a summary of *Dalbergia* names, synonyms and distribution information included in Species+.

38. Furthermore, as part of the Review of Significant Trade process, UNEP-WCMC produced updates on 33 taxon/country combinations that have been subject to suspensions related to the Review of Significant Trade for longer than two years, which were discussed at the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee.¹⁶

39. In preparation for the forthcoming eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, UNEP-WCMC has collaborated with the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, with support from the secretariat and the European Commission, to produce a checklist of Appendix I CITES-listed orchids, which will be presented for adoption at the meeting.

40. In partnership with the secretariat, UNEP-WCMC held a workshop to discuss the selection criteria for Resolution 17.7 on “Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity”. During the two-day workshop, a method for selecting species was developed, refined and tested. An output was subsequently presented to the twenty-ninth meeting of the Animals Committee for the Committee to select a number of species for in-depth review.¹⁷

41. The secretariat of the Convention has sought advice from UNEP-WCMC on levels and trends in trade, and on scientific and technical matters, such as the distribution of species and nomenclature, together with support on issues relating to reporting, information management, capacity-building and training. Such outputs have included presentations on trade for specific regions or countries, including France, Nigeria and Central Asian countries, and trade analyses to inform discussions at the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee, including in relation to big cats, saiga and legal trade in elephants. UNEP-WCMC has also provided support on decision 17.186 by assisting the secretariat in organizing and participating in an international technical workshop on eels.

42. In support of the Convention and in relation to decision 17.65, UNEP-WCMC received funding from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to work with the secretariat to develop the CITES Trade Monitoring Tool. The Tool provides the secretariat with an automated mechanism for checking trade records in the CITES Trade Database to identify cases of potential non-compliance with the Convention, its resolutions and any decision made by the CITES governing bodies. Such cases include commercial trade in wild-sourced Appendix I species, trade in taxa that are subject to a CITES trade

¹¹ See AC29 Doc. 13.2 Annex 1, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/29/E-AC29-13-02-A1.pdf>, and PC23 Doc. 15.2 Annex, 1 available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/pc/23/E-PC23-15-02-A1.pdf>.

¹² See AC30 doc. 12.2 Annex 2 (Rev. 1), available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/AC/30/E-AC30-12-02-A2-Rev1.pdf>; and PC24 doc. 13.2, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/pc/24/E-PC24-13-02-A2.pdf>.

¹³ See annex to document AC30 doc. 12.3/PC24 doc. 13.3, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac30-pc24/E-AC30-12-03-PC24-13-03.pdf>.

¹⁴ See AC30 Doc. 32 Annex 2, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-32-A2.pdf>.

¹⁵ See PC24 Inf. 15, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/PC/24/Inf/E-PC24-Inf-15.pdf>.

¹⁶ See SC70 Doc. 29.2 Annex 2, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/E-SC70-29-02-A2.pdf>.

¹⁷ See AC29 Doc. 14.1 Annex, available at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/29/E-AC29-14-01.pdf>.

suspension or trade levels in a particular taxon exceeding mandatory quotas approved by the Conference of the Parties.

43. UNEP-WCMC also provides ongoing support to the European Union and its Member States through the production of in-depth species assessments and an annual analysis of European Union wildlife trade. The most recent European Union trade analysis focused on 2017 European Union annual reports to the Convention and was published in February 2019.

44. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, UNEP-WCMC is in the process of producing a comprehensive overview of international trade in commercially exploited CITES-listed marine taxa. The overview includes the CITES trade data reporting process for parties, an analysis of the quantities and trends of those taxa in trade, and recommendations for improved monitoring and understanding of the reporting and trade in CITES-listed marine taxa.

45. Since the last Conference of the Parties, UNEP-WCMC has provided support to a number of parties to enhance the management of wildlife trade. In collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation, it produced an analysis of the wildlife trade in the Amazonian region.¹⁸ With funding from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, it produced a detailed analysis of the quantity and value of CITES-listed taxa imported into and exported from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.¹⁹ It is anticipated that that report will set the baseline against which future patterns of trade to and from the United Kingdom can be assessed. UNEP-WCMC has also produced in-depth reviews for a number of taxa in international trade from the Central American region and will be presenting the findings at a workshop in Guatemala organized by the Wildlife Conservation Society to help build capacity in the region for the making of non-detriment findings. UNEP-WCMC also assisted in facilitating a workshop hosted by Spain on non-detriment findings for hunting trophies and supported a workshop on non-detriment findings for reptiles and amphibians in Colombia.

IV. InforMEA Initiative

46. The InforMEA Initiative (the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements), which is facilitated by UNEP and co-chaired by the Secretary-General of the Convention, covers some 20 global multilateral environmental agreements. The Initiative seeks to assist parties in implementing their obligations under the various agreements through interoperable information systems based on standards, interoperability and open-source technology. The secretariat of the Convention participates actively in the work of the Initiative.

47. Content concerning the Convention can be accessed through the biodiversity section of InforMEA and within the InforMEA learning tool. The free InforMEA e-learning platform has catered for more than 18,000 learners from 190 countries, to whom over 7,000 certificates of completion have been issued. Most recently, the Convention secretariat has inspired the work of the Initiative in testing semi-auto indexing and enhancing the related thesaurus.

48. The secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements have contributed to the enhancement of the InforMEA section on internationally agreed goals, demonstrating their collective contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements in the field of biodiversity are supporting the development of the Data Reporting Tool, which will allow those reporting data to biodiversity-related conventions to access a joint collaborative working space to store and manage documentation in preparation for national reports. Thanks to the contributions made by the Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements, users can search 10,000 governing body decisions, 5,000 national reports and 500 implementation plans, in addition to details of events, news, ratification particulars and information on national focal points.

49. During the most recent annual meeting of the Steering Committee of the Initiative, held in Montreux, Switzerland in June 2018, representatives of the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements agreed that the goals section of InforMEA would be enhanced to highlight and help to communicate the collective contribution made by the multilateral environmental agreements towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The learning section will accordingly be enhanced and cooperation with academic institutions globally intensified.

¹⁸ Wildlife Trade in the Amazon Countries: https://www.unep-wcmc.org/system/comfy/cms/files/files/000/001/463/original/Wildlife_trade_in_Amazon_countries.pdf.

¹⁹ See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/Report_626_v3_WEB.pdf.

50. At the same meeting, the Steering Committee considered further partnerships and outreach opportunities with global and regional networks, including sharing a common knowledge base with global judicial networks and supporting capacity-building opportunities in the countries covered by the programme on Capacity-building for Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, including through the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans online forum. The Committee also agreed on the next steps for the Data Reporting Tool.

51. New members and observers have been welcomed to the InforMEA Initiative, including the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (as host of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The International Monetary Fund, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment joined as observers.

V. Communication activities and World Wildlife Day 2018

52. In its sustained campaign to strengthen international efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife, UNEP launched the United Nations “Wild for Life” campaign (*#WildforLife*) at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, with the aim of raising awareness and reducing demand for illegal wildlife products. The Wild for Life initiative was launched in all six United Nations official languages, as well as Vietnamese and Portuguese. The initiative is aimed at promoting collaboration, policy implementation and grassroots participation to raise awareness in communities in both source and destination countries of the war on poaching.

53. The 16 endangered species for which the campaign raises awareness are the lion, jaguar, snow leopard, tiger, rhino, vaquita, sawfish, sun bear, Tibetan antelope, hyacinth macaw, elephant, helmeted hornbill, orangutan, pangolin, sea turtle and rosewood. Several species in the campaign have received greater protection under the Convention, including pangolins, rosewood and helmeted hornbills.

54. The campaign has so far reached more than 1.5 billion people around the world and engaged 10 million in a deeper level of involvement through morphs, pledges and social media interaction. In addition to being named one of Weibo’s top 10 most influential campaigns in China in 2016, in 2017 the campaign was awarded a prestigious Webby Digital Arts and Sciences award for best green website and Accolades Awards in 2018 for contemporary issues/awareness-raising and in 2019 for a humanitarian award. In addition to producing the *Communication to Combat Wildlife Crime* toolkit mentioned earlier in this report, the campaign has contributed to advances in advocacy and legislation, including a full ban on commercial ivory in China in 2017 and the recent passing of the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Bill 2017, popularly known as “the Hong Kong Ivory Ban Bill”, which will take effect over the coming three years in Hong Kong SAR.

55. In compliance with CITES resolution Conf. 17.1 and General Assembly resolution 68/205 on World Wildlife Day, UNEP celebrated World Wildlife Day on 3 March 2018, primarily through the Wild for Life campaign, with a focus on “Big Cats”. The Big Cats Team Challenge, launched on World Wildlife Day 2018, generated thousands of pledges for action and 3.5 million social media interactions, 3 million of which were in China, where the Challenge was the number 1 trending topic. The winner, Team Snow Leopard, led by Dia Mirza, received a cash contribution for the Snow Leopard Trust. The other three celebrity teams, led by Aidan Gallagher, Ellie Goulding and Michelle Yeoh, received runner-up prizes. In China, six celebrities participated, with accompanying exhibitions in Beijing and Shenzhen airports.

VI. Technical support for strengthening national legislation under the national legislation project

56. UNEP and the Convention continued to collaborate with a view to strengthening national legislation and ensuring that the Convention was effectively implemented by parties. Particular attention was given to countries identified as requiring priority under the national legislation project.

57. Support to the Solomon Islands has resulted in the drafting of wildlife protection and management (management authority) regulations and wildlife protection and management (fees, permits and certificates) regulations under the Wildlife Protection and Management Act 2017. Consultations with Lesotho were completed in October 2018. A small-scale funding agreement was concluded in November 2018 and activities for reviewing legislation were initiated in December 2018. A draft law is expected by the end of June 2019. Support for the incorporation of CITES implementation into national legislation in Somalia has not yet been completed.

58. Addressing illegal trade in wildlife through better understanding of existing subregional, regional and international commitments and of the legal reforms that may be required in Central and West Africa was at the core of discussions by over 50 participants at the Symposium on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central, West and Southern Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 11 and 12 September 2018. The Symposium was organized by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products, which is chaired by UNEP. In addition to creating a platform for cross-border and regional dialogue, the Symposium supported improved national dialogue between authorities dealing with natural resource management and wildlife trade and those dealing with adjudication and prosecution of wildlife crimes.²⁰

Administrative and financial management support provided to the Convention secretariat by UNEP

1. Delegation of authority

59. Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2019/2 established a new delegation of authority framework to take effect from 1 January 2019, with a transitional period until 31 March 2019 to allow smooth implementation. The objective of the new framework is to transfer centrally held authority closer to the point of service delivery. UNEP is therefore revising its delegation of authority to executive heads of Convention secretariats in order to harmonize it with the new framework.

2. Standardized guidelines and procedures for financial matters

60. UNEP continues to prepare new and enhance existing standardized guidelines and procedures for financial and administrative matters in order to continuously improve internal processes with a view to making them more efficient, streamlined and transparent. With the finalization and distribution, on 29 March 2018, of the suite of secretariat services provided to multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP has fully implemented resolution 2/18 on "Relationships between the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat", adopted by the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in May 2016.

3. United Nations system-wide enterprise resource planning system (Umoja)

61. The United Nations Secretariat has deployed Umoja Extension 2, which is an addition to the Organization's enterprise resource planning system. It consists of several key changes that have been released in stages. It should be noted that the release dates are not full product releases. The Umoja team is using a release-develop-release approach for each module. The releases began in 2018 and to date include the first phases of modules for fundraising; strategic management; portfolio and project management; budget planning; and implementing partners. UNEP will continue to work with the Convention secretariat to achieve a successful implementation of the extension of the Umoja system. UNEP continues to organize knowledge-sharing sessions to build the capacity of its staff to optimize their use of the system and provide support to resolve technical issues and, where necessary, escalate problems to the United Nations Secretariat for resolution.

4. Support provided to the Convention from programme support resources

62. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and the procedures set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/286, programme support costs at a standard rate of 13 per cent are charged to all extrabudgetary resources²¹ to recover the incremental costs incurred when supporting activities are financed by such resources. The programme support resources available in any given year are based on the income generated for that purpose in the previous year. In line with UNEP rules on the management of programme support resources, an agreed portion of the income generated by the multilateral environmental agreements is allocated²² to the Convention and the balance contributes to a pool that funds central administrative functions and any unforeseen financial liabilities.

²⁰ See the portal at <https://cites.org/legislation>.

²¹ For UNEP, the term "extrabudgetary resources" refers to trust funds as distinct from core budgetary resources, namely the Environment Fund.

²² As in previous years, the following three administrative posts directly assigned to the Convention secretariat have been funded from programme support costs: Administrative and Financial Management Officer (P-4), Administrative Assistant (GS-6) and Finance Assistant (GS-6).

63. UNEP closely monitors its programme support resources, the fund balance of which has reduced in the past few years as a result of increasing requests from donors to waive or reduce the programme support rate payable. With a view to reversing this trend, on 26 April 2018, the Executive Director issued a memorandum to all Heads of Offices requesting them to reconsider their requests for waivers, review their cost structures and closely monitor utilization of their programme resources.

64. All Convention trust funds continue to be administered by the Executive Director and have been extended to 31 December 2019.