

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 23 May – 3 June 2019

Strategic matters

Cooperation with organizations and multilateral environmental agreements

COOPERATION BETWEEN CITES AND THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

1. This document has been submitted by Norway.*

Background

2. The sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, Thailand, 2013) adopted Resolution Conf. 16.4, entitled *Cooperation of CITES with other biodiversity-related Conventions*. The preamble to this Resolution commended the cooperation that was already ongoing through *inter alia* the Biodiversity Liaison Group, in which the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) and the World Heritage Convention (WHC) are represented.
3. Prior to the adoption of Resolution Conf. 16.4, there were pre-existing Resolutions on cooperation with two of the above-mentioned Conventions, namely Resolution Conf. 10.4 (Rev. CoP14), *Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity*, and Resolution Conf. 13.3, *Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)*. The latter noted the Memorandum of Understanding adopted by CITES and CMS in 2002. CoP16 also adopted Resolution Conf. 16.5, *Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (GSPC)*.
4. In recent years the World Heritage Convention has become increasingly concerned at the growing problem of illegal and/ or unsustainable off-take of CITES-listed species, including CITES Appendix I species and species assessed by IUCN as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered species, such as elephants, rhinos and tigers.
5. There are 1,073 sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List¹, of which 241 are either natural or mixed natural/cultural sites. There are 193 States Parties to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, only 12 of which are not CITES Parties². 16 of the 206 World Heritage natural sites are on the World Heritage List of Sites in Danger; many of those sites are threatened by illegal killing or illegal harvest, and associated trafficking.
6. Over 60 per cent of natural and mixed natural/cultural World Heritage sites were inscribed under World Heritage selection criterion (x), the criterion which calls for selection of sites that contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. For

* *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.*

¹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/>

² *Andorra, Cook Islands, North Korea, Haiti, Holy See, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Palestine, Timor Leste, and Turkmenistan.*

example, it has been estimated that World Heritage sites could contain almost a third of the world's remaining 3,890 wild tigers, and the Okavango Delta World Heritage site in Botswana is a crucial habitat for the elephants in northern Botswana, which constitute 31 per cent of all African elephants.

7. Despite this, poaching and illegal harvest occur in over a quarter of all natural and mixed World Heritage sites³. Poaching of CITES Appendix I and IUCN threatened or endangered species, such as elephants, rhinos and tigers, has been reported in at least 43 World Heritage sites, and illegal logging of CITES-listed plant species, such as rosewood and ebony, has been reported in 26 properties. Illegal fishing has been recorded in 18 out of the 39 coastal natural sites. Overall, illegal offtake from World Heritage natural and mixed Sites is a significant problem across the globe, and occurs in around 50 per cent of African, Asian and Latin American properties.
8. Illegal offtake/killing of species in World Heritage sites also degrades vital social, economic and environmental benefits, and threatens the lives of local communities and rangers/ecoguards. It has been estimated that up to 93 per cent of natural World Heritage sites support recreation and tourism, 91 per cent provide jobs and 66 per cent of properties are important for water quantity and/or quality. Many of these benefits are dependent on the presence of healthy populations of CITES-listed species in the World Heritage sites; the above mentioned Okavango Delta in Botswana, Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex in Thailand, Chitwan National Park in Nepal and the Islands and protected Areas of the Upper Gulf of California in Mexico being several examples.
9. Clearly there are strong synergies between the goals of the World Heritage Convention and those of CITES. World Heritage Sites collectively contain a high proportion of the global populations of many threatened CITES-listed species, including many on Appendix I, and the degradation of those sites would, therefore, have a serious impact on the conservation status of those species. And illegal or unsustainable off-take of such species, to meet demand in international trade, is a key threat in many of these sites. Consequently, there is an urgent need for both Conventions to work together, as CITES already does with a number of other multilateral environmental agreements.
10. In recognition of this, at its 37th meeting (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2013) the UNESCO World Heritage Committee adopted Decision WHC/13 COM/7. Paragraph 6 of this Decision welcomed the measures taken by the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES to help address this poaching crisis, and requested the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to strengthen cooperation with the CITES Secretariat in order to assist States Parties to implement these measures. At the 38th meeting (Doha, Qatar 2014), it was reported that the World Heritage Centre had continued its dialogue with CITES on strengthening cooperation. In order to raise awareness on the poaching problem, the Director General of UNESCO together with the Secretary General of CITES published in July 2013 an Op-ed in *Jeunes Afrique* on "Wildlife Crime is robbing the future of Africa" (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1063>). The Director General also published a statement in March 2014 at the occasion of the first edition of World Wildlife Day.
11. At its 41st meeting (Krakow, Poland, 2017), the UNESCO World Heritage Committee adopted Decision 41 COM 7. Paragraph 35 of that Decision reiterated concern about the continued impacts of poaching and illegal logging on World Heritage properties, driven primarily by the illegal trade of wildlife species and their products, and requested the World Heritage Centre and IUCN (which has a formal advisory mandate to the Convention) to take action to strengthen the collaboration between CITES and the World Heritage Convention. Paragraph 36 appealed to all Member States of UNESCO to cooperate in the fight against the illegal trade in wildlife, including through the implementation of CITES, and with the full engagement of transit and destination countries.
12. Building on the excellent collaboration to date, there are a number of ways in which cooperation between CITES and the World Heritage Convention can be enhanced, in order to contribute to achievement of the aims of both treaties. These include the following:
 - a) The CITES Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre could develop a Memorandum of Understanding, analogous to that agreed between CITES and CMS, with if considered appropriate an associated joint programme of work, as well as oversight by the CITES Standing Committee (as per the MoU between CITES and CMS);

³ *Not for Sale: Halting the illegal trade of CITES species from World Heritage Sites, a report by Dalberg, commissioned by WWF (2017).*

- b) Parties' Management and Scientific Authorities could be urged to cooperate with their respective World Heritage Focal Points;
 - c) Government, multilateral, and private donors could be encouraged to invest in projects that benefit the objectives of both Conventions;
 - d) Countries that have natural or mixed sites whose integrity is threatened by illegal offtake and trafficking could be encouraged reach out to other range, transit and consumer countries⁴.
13. The first of these is best facilitated by the adoption of a CoP Decision, while the others are more appropriate to incorporate in a Resolution analogous to Resolution Conf. 13.3 and Resolution Conf. 16.4, as noted above, on those mentioned above on cooperation with CMS and the GSPC respectively.

Recommendation

14. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft Resolution and draft Decision set out in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively to this document.

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

- A. As outlined by the proponents in the present document, the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage Centre enjoy good cooperation over the World Heritage Convention and related issues, both bilaterally and through the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions of which they are both members. Consequently, the Secretariat broadly recommends that Conference of the Parties considers favorably the proposals in the present document.
- B. Concerning the draft resolution in Annex 1, the Secretariat makes several recommendations:
- that the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions be addressed with its full title and a reference;
 - that to "the CITES Secretariat" be changed to "the Secretariat" in line with other Resolutions;
 - that paragraph 2 be deleted as it refers to a short-term action and is addressed in the proposed draft decisions in Annex 2 to the present document; and finally
 - in order to broaden the cooperation envisaged, the Secretariat recommends that the term "projects" in paragraph 4 be replaced by the term "activities"
- C. Concerning the draft decisions in Annex 2, the Secretariat notes that memoranda of understanding between secretariats (as opposed to those with, for instance, the Standing Committee) are not normally subject to endorsement by the Standing Committee and that the Secretariat has signed and successfully implemented many such memoranda without consulting the Committee. The Secretariat therefore recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopts draft decision 18.AA, but not draft decisions 18.BB or 18.CC.

⁴ 11. The Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex in Thailand represents a practical example of this last approach. In response to the illegal logging of Siamese rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*) Thailand has instituted a series of dialogue meetings for range and consumer countries of that species.

DRAFT RESOLUTION CONF. 18.XX

Cooperation and synergy with the World Heritage Convention

RECALLING Resolution Conf. 16.4, on cooperation of CITES with other biodiversity-related Conventions;

AWARE that Natural and Mixed World Heritage Sites host a high proportion of the global populations of many CITES-listed species;

NOTING that illegal offtake of CITES-listed species from many World Heritage sites is further endangering these species, and is one of the reasons why many such sites have been designated as World Heritage in Danger;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing cooperation between CITES and the World Heritage Convention via the Biodiversity Liaison Group;

RECOGNIZING Paragraphs 35 and 36 of Decision 41 COM 7 of the World Heritage Committee, which encourages cooperation between CITES and the World Heritage Convention; and

RECOGNIZING how the joint programme of work between CITES and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is contributing to the conservation of many species of mutual concern, and thus provides a model for cooperation between CITES and other Conventions at a practical level;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. URGES the CITES Secretariat and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to engage in closer cooperation on sites and species of mutual concern;
2. DIRECTS the CITES Secretariat, with the guidance of the Standing Committee, to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre;
3. URGES the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities of those Parties that are also Party to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention to cooperate with their respective World Heritage Focal Points;
4. ENCOURAGES donors to support projects that benefit the objectives of both CITES and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention; and
5. URGES Parties with World Heritage natural or mixed sites within their territory, whose integrity is threatened by poaching of CITES-listed species and associated illegal trade to reach out to other range, transit and consumer countries as part of their efforts to address the issue.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON COOPERATION AND SYNERGY WITH
THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

18.AA ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall enter into dialogue with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre with a view to agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding and if considered appropriate a joint programme of work.

18.BB ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall submit a draft Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to the Standing Committee for approval, prior to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.

18.CC ***Directed to the Standing Committee***

The Standing Committee shall consider the draft Memorandum of Understanding transmitted by the CITES Secretariat on cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and if it is agreed shall report accordingly to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The authors of this document propose the following tentative budget and source of funding.