

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

Rural communities

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.\*
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.28 to 17.30 and 17.57, directed to the Standing Committee, as follows:

**Decision 17.28**

*The Standing Committee shall establish an intersessional working group to consider how to effectively engage rural communities in the CITES processes and to present its findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee, for consideration at its 70th meeting.*

**Decision 17.29**

*In establishing the intersessional working group, which shall be comprised of Parties and representatives of rural communities, the Chair of the Standing Committee shall strive to achieve regional balance of Parties, with the number of members of rural communities not exceeding the number of Party delegates.*

**Decision 17.30**

*The Standing Committee shall make recommendation on the engagement of rural communities in the CITES processes to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

**Decision 17.57**

*The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *examine the terminology used in different Resolutions and Decisions when referring to "rural", "indigenous" or "local" communities, and*
- b) *make recommendations to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the need for harmonizing them across them.*

3. On 10 August 2017, at the request of the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2017/057](#) encouraging Parties to engage with representatives of rural communities within their country, draw their attention to Decisions 17.28 – 17.30 and invite their participation in the Standing

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\* *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.*

Committee's intersessional working group on rural communities and communicate that interest to the 69th meeting of the Committee (SC69, Geneva, November-December 2017). In response to the Notification, Austria, China and Japan expressed their interest in the work of an intersessional working group foreseen in Decisions 17.28 – 17.30.

4. At SC69, Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on rural communities with a mandate to:
  - a) consider how to effectively engage rural communities in the CITES processes;
  - b) review the need to harmonize the terminology used in different Resolutions and Decisions when referring to "rural", "indigenous" or "local" communities; and
  - c) present its findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee, for consideration at its 70th meeting.
5. The membership of the intersessional working group on rural communities was agreed as follows: Namibia, (Chair), Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand (or an alternate representative for Oceania), Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, United States of America, and Zimbabwe.
6. The Standing Committee requested the Chair of the intersessional working group on rural communities to take into account regional balance, the responses to Notification to the Parties 2017/057 and advice of Parties in identifying the representatives of rural communities to be invited to be members of the working group.
7. The Standing Committee noted the need for a face-face meeting of the working group, invited donors to provide funding, and noted the offer of the United Nations Environment Programme to support this meeting of the working group.
8. The rural community representatives on the working group were the following:

Xhauhwatubi Development Trust, Botswana Inuit Tapiirit Kanatami, Canada, – Asociación de Conservacionistas del caimán agua en la Bahía de Cispata, Colombia ASOCAIMAN, Colombia, ANAPAC – Alliance Nationale d'Appui et de promotion des Aires du Patrimoine, Autochtone et Communautaire en République Démocratique du Congo, IMEXT International, Democratic Republic of Congo, KRAPAVIS – Krishi Avam Parishitiki Vikas Sansthan, India Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Kenya, #Khaodi //Haos Conservancy, Namibia, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations, Namibia, FECOFUN - Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal, Nepal, Comunidade do Monte Vecinal en Man Comun de Froxán, Spain, Hunting and Conservation Alliance of Tajikistan, Tajikistan, Consortium of WMAs Authorised Associations, United Republic of Tanzania Zambian CBNRM FORUM, Zambia, CAMPFIRE Programme, Zimbabwe, Chiefs' Council, Zimbabwe.
9. The working group met, hosted and supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, at the United Nations Complex, in Gigiri, Kenya, 26-27 February 2018. The report of the meeting and the recommendations of the working group to the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70, Sochi, October 2018) can be found in [document SC70 Doc. 15](#).
10. The intersessional working group reported that, while it had achieved broad consensus in recognising that the views of rural communities on CITES matters that impact their lives was important, no consensus had been achieved regarding the mechanism for this. Namibia, as working group Chair, asked for the working group's mandate to be extended in order to consider the different options described in the document. The two major options described by the intersessional working group on which there were a divergence of views were: a permanent CITES advisory body and ensuring participation of rural communities in all CITES meetings.
11. At SC70, Committee Members and Parties agreed that engagement with, and representation of, indigenous and rural communities in decision making was important. There was, however, disagreement regarding whether this could be best addressed through one of the options provided in the document, or through national governments themselves. Parties thus expressed differing views on whether the working group should continue or discontinue its work. Some Parties believed that consultation with rural communities was

the responsibility of the Parties arguing that the working group's mandate should not be extended. They questioned why rural communities had been singled out from other communities who may also have a stake in CITES matters, and noted that the terms "local", "rural" and "indigenous" were not always interchangeable. Some Parties also noted the logistical difficulty of individually engaging with the high numbers of communities that may be affected by CITES listings of species with large ranges. Parties also highlighted the extra costs and administrative burdens of the options suggested in document SC70 Doc. 15. Some Parties also noted that new proposed measures could cause confusion or duplication with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP17) on *CITES and livelihoods*.

12. One Party suggested that rural communities could be better engaged by being given credited Observer status, similar to existing procedure in other multilateral environmental agreements, whereas another Party questioned the message that would be sent to rural communities should the working group be discontinued.
13. After further discussion in an in-session working group, SC70 noted the report of the intersessional working group on rural communities established by the Standing Committee as instructed in Decision 17.28 and in particular the lack of consensus on the recommendations. The Standing Committee noted that the present meeting may consider whether to extend the mandate of the working group on how to engage rural communities in CITES processes and report to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

#### Recommendations

14. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:
  - a) take note of the present document as well as document SC70 Doc. 15; and
  - b) consider whether the Standing Committee should be directed to continue the work on how to engage rural communities in CITES processes and report to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

#### COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

- A. As it expressed at CoP17 in its comments on document CoP17 Doc. 13, the Secretariat advises the Parties that, in its view, the impact of CITES could be improved by greater participation from rural communities.
- B. The Secretariat noted that the Standing Committee at SC70 was ambivalent about the way forward with respect to the implementation of Decision 17.28 to 17.30 and their possible continuation. The Secretariat notes the similarities between the sentiments expressed in document CoP17 Doc. 13 and the report of the Standing Committee's intersessional working group and Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP17) on *CITES and livelihoods*. Consequently, the Secretariat proposes the following changes to Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP17) in order to address the issues involved:

Insert a new sub-paragraph 3. a) i) and ii) [and consequent re-numbering of the existing sub-paragraphs]

- i) taking account of the impact of the measures proposed on rural communities that may be affected by them, when preparing and submitting proposals to amend the Appendices, draft resolutions, draft decisions, and other documents for consideration at meetings of the Conference of Parties and when reviewing such documents submitted by other Parties;
  - ii) including representatives of rural communities that may be affected by the proposed measures in official national delegations to meetings of the Conference of the Parties.
- C. If this suggestion is adopted, the Secretariat recommends that Decisions 17.28 to 17.30 be deleted.
- D. Regarding Decision 17.57, on the examination of the terminology used in different Resolutions and Decisions when referring to "rural", "indigenous" or "local" communities, and the possible need to harmonize them, the Standing Committee did not identify a pressing need to draw any conclusion on this matter and therefore the Secretariat suggests that Decision 17.57 be deleted.

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 proposed revision of Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP17) recommended by the Secretariat may have an impact on the sponsored delegates project, but is not expected to have other direct financial costs or workload implications for the Secretariat or Committees.