

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

UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WEST AFRICA STRATEGY
FOR COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME (WASCWC)

1. This document has been submitted by Nigeria and Senegal in relation to agenda item 34.*

Background

2. In March 2016, representatives of Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and Gabon adopted the *Dakar Declaration on the Development of Subregional Wildlife Enforcement Collaboration*¹, which identified the threat posed by wildlife crime and the need to develop a collaborative regional response.
3. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17) adopted the following decisions on Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa:

Decision 17.97: Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding,

- a) *in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with the support of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and relevant stakeholders, commission a threat assessment report on illegal wildlife trade in West and Central Africa, to identify and collate information regarding trade routes, techniques and trends relating to wildlife trafficking in the two subregions, including recommendations on priority measures necessary to address and significantly reduce wildlife crime in the two subregions;*
- b) *produce the report in the working languages of CITES and make it available to Parties; and*
- c) *assist Parties, upon request, with the implementation of the recommendations and priority measures identified in the threat assessment report.*

Decision 17.98 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall review findings and recommendations emanating from the implementation of Decision 17.97 and make recommendations for further action to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Decision 17.99 Directed to Parties

Parties are urged to support the activities to be conducted in compliance with Decision 17.97 through the provision of information on legal and illegal trade, as may be requested.

* *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 <https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/Dakar-declaration-English-French.pdf>

Decision 17.100 Directed to Parties

Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial or technical assistance to ensure the effective implementation of the priority enforcement recommendations identified in the threat assessment report commissioned in accordance with the provisions of Decision 17.97.

4. On 2-4 July 2018, representatives from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member States attended a workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, and adopted the *Strategic Areas of Intervention and Priority Recommendations to Develop a Counter Wildlife Trafficking Response in West Africa*². This document confirmed the 6 priority areas and 47 strategic priority recommendations that the ECOWAS member State representatives identified as necessary for countering wildlife crime in the West Africa sub region, thereby providing subregional guidance for the implementation of CITES Decisions 17.97 to 17.100.
5. In the course of this meeting, ECOWAS member States also adopted the *Abuja Recommendations on the Development of a Coordinated Counter Wildlife Trafficking Response in West Africa*³ encouraging high-level decision-makers to support the development and adoption of a West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (WASCWC), the establishment of a West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime (WANCWC or WAN), and the creation of sustainable funding mechanisms ensuring that the Strategy can be sustainably implemented in the long term. A West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime Steering Committee, comprising representatives of Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Niger, Gambia, Liberia and Guinea Bissau was appointed to coordinate future work on behalf of the subregion in this regard.
6. At the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, Niger, Senegal and Nigeria, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member States, undertook a consultation process with all CITES Parties and other interested stakeholders, to seek input with regard to the development of the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime and its associated implementation and funding mechanisms. This consultation was in the form of a Questionnaire⁴.

Update on WASCWC Development

7. Responses to the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime Questionnaire were submitted by the US, Japan, and Thailand. The Steering Committee on behalf of the ECOWAS member States thanks these Parties for their important support and contribution.
8. The first meeting of West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime Steering Committee took place in Abuja, Nigeria from 25 to 27 March 2019, which brought together members countries of the Steering Committee responsible for drafting the WASCWC comprising Senegal, Nigeria, Niger, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo (excused), representatives of ECOWAS and the Abidjan Convention.
9. The WASCWC Steering Committee developed an outline structure for the WASCWC and agreed on the Strategic Framework, including vision, scope and objectives. Also agreed were the Strategic Areas of Intervention, the prioritization of key activities, and the overarching Implementation Mechanisms.
10. Work is currently underway by the Steering Committee to finalize a draft WASCWC, and associated funding and implementation mechanisms, which will be completed by October 2019. An update on the adoption of the WASCWC and its implementation and funding mechanisms will be presented to all Parties at the 73rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee.
11. All interested Parties, Donors and Stakeholders are invited to :
 - i) attend the side event which will be co-hosted by the ECOWAS Commission and the **CITES** Management Authorities of Nigeria and Senegal as co-chairs of the WASCWC Steering Committee (scheduled on 21 August 2019 between 7 and 9 pm in **Room Hall 3 (1300)**)
 - ii) approach members of the WASCWC Steering Committee and ECOWAS representatives at any time during the course of CoP18 to:

² <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/Inf/E-SC70-Inf-02.pdf>

³ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/Inf/E-SC70-Inf-03.pdf>

⁴ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/E-SC70-30-04.pdf>

- discuss the development of the WASCWC and associated funding and implementation mechanisms;
- make recommendations on finding sustainable sources of financial support for the development and implementation of the *West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime*, the *West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime*, and their associated funding mechanisms as regional actions directed towards curbing illegal wildlife trade.