

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION (WCO)
AND THE CITES SECRETARIAT

RECOGNIZING that offences against Customs laws, particularly smuggling of species included in the CITES Annexes, are prejudicial to the planet's natural heritage and to the economic interests of States,

RECOGNIZING also that international co-operation is essential to protect species of wild fauna and flora,

NOTING that the increase in illicit trafficking of species of fauna and flora included in the CITES Annexes necessitates that Customs authorities intensify their surveillance and control measures,

AWARE that the role of the Customs is vital in the fight against the illicit trade in species of animals and plants,

TAKING account of Conference Resolution 9.8 adopted at the Ninth Conference of the CITES Contracting Parties (Fort Lauderdale, November 1994),

HOLDING that increased co-operation between nature conservation authorities and Customs authorities will increase the effectiveness of Customs controls in the areas covered by the CITES Convention,

HOLDING also that such co-operation would be of benefit to all parties in legitimate trade,

THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION* AND THE CITES SECRETARIAT have agreed as follows:

1. In order to strengthen the co-operation between the two Organizations, the WCO Secretariat and the CITES Secretariat will send each other any general information of common interest;
2. The two Secretariats will invite each other as observers to meetings of common interest that they organize;
3. To combat the illicit traffic in species listed in the CITES Annexes, the two Secretariats will jointly draft and implement, each in its own field of competence, measures to improve co-operation and information exchange between Customs Authorities and CITES management bodies, particularly for the purpose of detecting consignments likely to contain protected species whose trade is regulated;
4. The CITES Secretariat will provide the WCO Secretariat with information to help Customs services better understand the importance of issues related to the trade in fauna and flora and the procedures applicable to that type of trade;

* World Customs Organization (WCO) is the working name of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC).

5. The WCO Secretariat will provide the CITES Secretariat with information to give nature conservation services a better understanding of Customs authorities' tasks and their problems;
6. The two Secretariats will jointly devise publications to raise the awareness of and inform the service responsible for combating the illicit trade in species of wild fauna and flora;
7. The two Secretariats will jointly devise training materials on combating the illicit trade in animals and plants;
8. Within the limits of their respective resources, the two Secretariats will organize joint training activities for Customs officers and other enforcement officers;
9. The two Secretariats will exchange training activity programs and, provided there is interest, will endeavour to ensure that Customs issues are tackled in CITES training, and that CITES issues are tackled in Customs training. Subject to the resources available, the Secretariats will do their utmost to ensure that trainers from one Secretariat participate in the training activities of the other;
10. The two Secretariats will make a feasibility study and will set up a joint database on CITES offences. The information contained therein will only be transmitted to other organizations or administrations with the consent of the Secretariat that provides the data, and subject to its own procedures.

Done at Brussels, on 4 July 1996.

I. Topkov
Secretary General
CITES

J.W. Shaver
Secretary General
World Customs Organization