

# STRATEGIC VISION THROUGH 2005



Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species  
of Wild Fauna and Flora



## Purpose

To ensure that no species of wild fauna or flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to improve the working of the Convention so that international trade in wild fauna and flora is increasingly and consistently conducted at sustainable levels. Where uncertainty remains as to whether trade is sustainable, the precautionary principle will prevail as the ultimate safeguard. However, a successful outcome of the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be a reduction in the need to bring the precautionary principle into play. The Strategic Plan confirms the recognition by the Parties that sustainable trade in wild fauna and flora can make a major contribution to securing the broader and not incompatible objectives of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. It also recognizes that the Convention must continue to ensure that proper trade mechanisms are put in place. These depend upon the availability of and access to reliable scientific data and to information generated by effective monitoring systems to counter over-exploitation. But information by itself is not enough and such trade mechanisms also require strong national capacity backed by good cooperation at national, regional and global levels.

In order to achieve this purpose, seven goals have been identified as the key components of the Strategic Plan. It is important to realize that the successful achievement of Goal 7, allied to Goal 5, will greatly enhance the achievement of Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4. Securing a strong financial basis must therefore be given a major effort, without overlooking the importance of the other goals.



Snow leopard



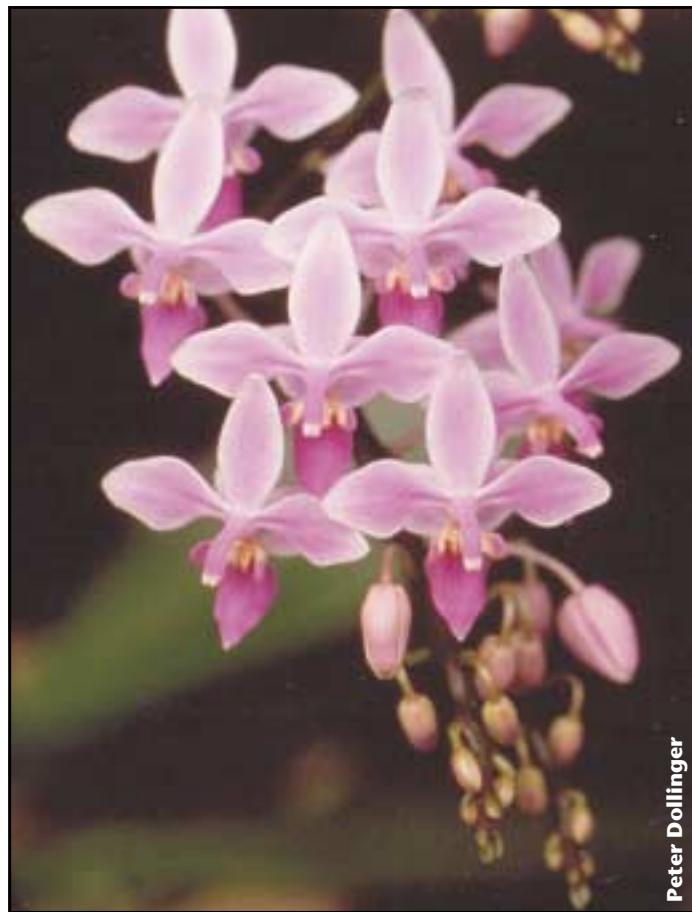


## Introduction

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed on 3 March 1973. The Convention resulted from an expression of concern by the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, concerning the rate at which the world's wild fauna and flora were being threatened by unregulated international trade. Drafts of what became the Washington Convention or CITES were sent to governments by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1967, 1969 and 1971. The final draft, after review by governments, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others, was discussed at a Plenipotentiary Conference in Washington, DC, United States of America. At its conclusion, 21 of the 80 countries represented at the Conference signed the Convention. The Convention entered into force, after ratification by 10 countries, on 1 July 1975.

In the intervening 25 years, the number of countries that have acceded to the Convention has continued to increase. With more than 150 Parties, CITES is widely regarded as one of the most important legal international conservation instruments. During this period, the Conference of the Parties has shown itself to be capable of adapting to changing circumstances and, through the adoption of Resolutions, has demonstrated an ability to construct practical solutions to increasingly complex wildlife trade problems. For example, the Parties have adopted 'ranching' and other control techniques such as annual quotas for managing the harvesting of some Appendix-I-listed species at levels that do not threaten their conservation status. In 1994 the

With this Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention has mapped the Convention's direction as it enters the new millennium.



*Phalaenopsis equestris*





African elephant

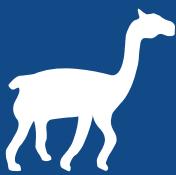
Conference of the Parties identified the information requirements necessary to extend the ranching concept for specific application to marine turtles.

More recently, proposals to amend the Appendices to the Convention have become increasingly complex and sensitive. As a result, at its eighth meeting (Kyoto, 1992), the Conference of the Parties initiated a process to review the 'Bern Criteria' that had been in place since 1976 and were proving to be too general and inadequate. This resulted in the adoption of new and more objective criteria that are scientifically based to guide amendments to Appendices I and II. In adopting the new criteria, the Parties recognized the increasing acceptance by the international community to apply the precautionary principle to the decision-making process. Accordingly, its application is embraced in considerations involving the transfer of species from Appendix I to Appendix II. When the new criteria were adopted in 1994, the Parties, as an expression of the need for a flexible approach to CITES implementation, agreed to incorporate a review process into the new criteria. This process has commenced and will strengthen the scientific basis of the decision-making process for amending the Appendices to the Convention.

The plan forms the basis for the Convention's participation in the wider international nature conservation arena as developed since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and includes issues such as:

- ❖ stewardship of natural resources and their use at sustainable levels;
- ❖ safeguarding of wildlife as integral to the global ecosystem on which all life depends;
- ❖ need for deeper understanding of the cultural and economic issues at play in producer and consumer countries; and
- ❖ wider involvement of civic society in the development of conservation policies and practices.

At its ninth meeting (Fort Lauderdale, 1994), the Conference of the Parties commissioned a review of the Convention's effectiveness. The principal purposes of the review were to evaluate the extent to which the Convention had achieved its objectives and the progress made since CITES came into being and, most importantly, to identify deficiencies and requirements necessary to strengthen the Convention and help plan for the future. At its 10th meeting (Harare, 1997), the Conference agreed to an Action Plan for implementing certain findings and recommendations of the review. A central finding was the need for a strategic plan.



## Strategic Plan

This Plan presents the Convention's Strategic Vision as it enters the new millennium. It clearly focuses on a limited number of priority goals and objectives deemed critical to meeting the Convention's purpose to ensure that no species of wild fauna or flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade. If actively pursued, this Plan will bring the Convention's purpose closer to reality by the year 2005.



Green tree python



## Goal 1

### Enhance the ability of each Party to implement the Convention

The effectiveness of the Convention depends on a coordinated process of implementation that guarantees, in the long term, the achievement by all Parties of the Convention's purpose and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan. The need for a coordinated process has grown as the Convention faces up to trade issues involving species that often fall beyond the direct reach of the Management and Scientific Authorities. It is also recognized that for trade to be carried out in a responsible manner and based on sustainable use, social and economic incentives are needed to bring local communities and local authorities into partnership with government under an appropriate legislative, policy and financial framework.

Enhanced ability at the national level therefore means improving the following:

- ❖ organizational capacity and cooperation;
- ❖ policy formulation;
- ❖ community, local authority and government partnerships;
- ❖ direct benefit and revenue derivation;
- ❖ availability of information on which decisions are based;
- ❖ national legislation and law enforcement capability; and
- ❖ better accessibility and understanding of the Convention's requirements.

These improvements, in turn, should enable a better management of wild animals and plants, and thus reduce the need to include species in the CITES Appendices. It is also important to consider the potential of regional coordination and collaboration for national capacity-building efforts. Finally, strong national and regional participation in the deliberations and implementation of the Convention can only be fully effective if the three working languages are given proper respect and equity.



Scarlet ibis



## Objective 1.1

To assist in the development of appropriate domestic legislation and policies that encourage the adoption and implementation of social and economic incentives allied to legal instruments that:

- ❖ promote and regulate sustainable management of wild fauna and flora;
- ❖ promote and regulate responsible trade in wild fauna and flora; and
- ❖ promote the effective enforcement of the Convention.

## Objective 1.2

To strengthen the administrative, management and scientific capacity of Parties by improving the coordination between Management and Scientific Authorities and other national agencies responsible for wild animals and plants.

## Objective 1.3

To strengthen the enforcement capacity of the Parties and to improve coordination among Management Authorities and other agencies (e.g. police, Customs and veterinary and phytosanitary services).

## Objective 1.4

To facilitate development and use of appropriate technologies and information management systems that enhance and expedite the collection, submission and exchange of accurate information.

## Objective 1.5

To encourage organizations capable of supporting the Convention to assist the Secretariat and Parties in building national information management capacities through training and other activities, and to facilitate improved access to and management of databases.

## Objective 1.6

To ensure that all Parties have at least one designated Scientific Authority with experts in wild fauna and flora.

## Objective 1.7

To improve the coordination between CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, and increase the effectiveness of the latter.

## Objective 1.8

To encourage Parties to develop and implement effective management programmes for the conservation and recovery of species, so that the species will no longer satisfy the criteria for inclusion in the Appendices.

## Objective 1.9

To encourage the proper funding of CITES implementation and enforcement by Parties, and the adoption of national mechanisms that have resource users make a greater contribution to such funding.

## Objective 1.10

To use fully the potential of regional coordination and collaboration in capacity-building efforts.

## Objective 1.11

To review and simplify, where possible, existing measures, procedures, mechanisms, and recommendations for the implementation of the Convention.

## Objective 1.12

To ensure equity of the three working languages.



## Goal 2

### Strengthen the scientific basis of the decision-making processes

The work associated with effective implementation of the Convention entails not only the efficient conduct of business at meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its Committees, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the day-to-day implementation activities of Parties. While other factors may come into play in these arenas, they do not override the need for sound, scientifically-based decisions in all areas of the Convention's application and at all levels of its implementation. Increasingly, the Conference of the Parties is required to address and resolve difficult, complex scientific, trade and management issues involving species that are economically important resources. It is vital to ensure that the Convention's Appendices correctly reflect the conservation and management needs of species, and that decisions regarding these Appendices are grounded in sound scientific information. This view was reaffirmed at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) with the adoption of new criteria for amending Appendices I and II. In this regard, sound scientific activities and practical follow-up action to enhance the conservation and recovery of taxa included in the Appendices are vital elements if the Convention is to be implemented effectively. Within the context of the requirement for non-detriment findings, the Convention is grounded in sound biological principles.

Continued strengthening of the treaty's scientific basis is critical to the continued success of the Convention and its relevance as a major international instrument to ensure that wild animals and plants subject to international trade are used at levels that are sustainable by the wild populations. Vital to this goal is an enhancement of the ability of Scientific Authorities to make the necessary scientific findings and fulfil their other scientific obligations under the Convention.

#### Objective 2.1

To ensure that the Convention's Appendices correctly reflect the conservation and management needs of species.

#### Objective 2.2

To ensure that decisions to amend the Convention's Appendices are founded on sound and relevant scientific information and meet agreed biological and trade criteria for such amendments.

#### Objective 2.3

To improve the scientific basis on which Scientific Authorities make non-detriment findings.

#### Objective 2.4

To develop innovative technologies and encourage relevant research, including research into CITES implementation and enforcement, and to pursue these objectives, where appropriate, at the regional level.



## Goal 3

### Contribute to the reduction and ultimate elimination of illegal trade in wild fauna and flora

The illegal trade in wild animals and plants is a major factor in the depletion of the world's natural resources in exchange for commercial gain. It undermines the conservation efforts of developing countries, affects the income of rural populations and has driven several species to the brink of extinction.

All countries, whether they are consumers or producers of wild animals and plants, share responsibility to reduce and eventually eliminate illegal trade in wildlife. Successful achievement of this responsibility entails coordination and cooperation at all levels – local, national, regional and global. Experience has shown that CITES enforcement would greatly benefit from a higher degree of coordination among the authorities and enforcement agencies within party States. Heightened local awareness of and involvement in wildlife protection activities can further national efforts in combating illegal trade. Also, heightened awareness of and understanding by the judiciary of their potential role in deterring illegal activities relating to wild fauna and flora would further strengthen a Party's effort to stem illegal trade. Enforcement of the Convention is primarily a matter of national competence, but bilateral, regional and global cooperation is elementary in combating illegal international trade effectively. As for a number of other CITES goals, the need for regional cooperation to combat wildlife crime is clearly essential. CITES implementation and enforcement depends to a large degree on efficient border and trade controls. Consequently, the involvement of WCO and ICPO-Interpol in enforcement questions is critical.

#### Objective 3.1

To promote a high degree of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between national and international law enforcement agencies.

#### Objective 3.2

To stimulate and participate in bilateral, regional and global efforts to combat illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.

#### Objective 3.3

To encourage mutual technical assistance, including the exchange of information, in enforcement matters.

#### Objective 3.4

To develop appropriate management strategies and incentives for promoting a change from illegal to legal use of wild fauna and flora.

#### Objective 3.5

To promote awareness of CITES issues and a greater understanding by the judiciary of the social and economic significance of conservation threats posed by illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.



## Goal 4

### Promote greater understanding of the Convention

To ensure better implementation of CITES, public support and participation must be enhanced through continuous educational processes that not only raise the profile of the Convention but also recognize its beneficial contribution to conservation through sustainable trade management. Involvement of local communities, NGOs, relevant trade associations, the scientific community, media and the general public is essential to heighten an understanding of the Convention. Efforts are necessary at the regional, national and international levels to provide and disseminate accurate information about the aims and functioning of the Convention in order to heighten awareness and improve its implementation. Special attention also needs to be given to public understanding of issues relating to plants.

#### Objective 4.1

To strengthen communication and collaboration with national and international NGOs.



Cycad

#### Objective 4.2

To strengthen alliances with relevant local communities, consumer groups and traders.

#### Objective 4.3

To promote greater awareness among and cooperation with the scientific community.

#### Objective 4.4

To produce and disseminate informative materials to a broad public at local, national and regional levels.

#### Objective 4.5

To improve communication and collaboration with the media.

#### Objective 4.6

To strengthen knowledge, promote awareness and facilitate enforcement of flora issues in CITES.



## Goal 5

### Increase cooperation and conclude strategic alliances with international stakeholders

The Convention states that the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) shall provide a Secretariat. Therefore, the maintenance of an optimal working relationship with UNEP is critical to the proper administration of the Convention. Additionally, the Governing Council of UNEP, at its 20th session (Nairobi, 1999), noted the importance of promoting interlinkages among multilateral environmental conventions and international processes in an effort to achieve a better focus on international policy-making. It calls upon Parties to give due consideration to ways and means to strengthen coherent interlinkages among relevant conventions. Numerous linkages also exist between the aims of CITES and those of other multilateral environmental agreements. Specifically, the missions of CBD and CITES are closely related, thus necessitating a high degree of cooperation and synergy. Cooperation and coordination with species management conventions and agreements are equally important. A number of international organizations such as IUCN and UNEP-WCMC have a wealth of scientific and technical information at their disposal and continue to increase this knowledge through research programmes as well as the updating and maintenance of extensive databases. Again, close cooperation with these organizations is essential for an efficient distribution of responsibilities.

Finally, as CITES achieves its conservation objectives mainly through trade measures, it is important to ensure the continuing recognition and acceptance of CITES measures by WTO, and to ensure the mutual supportiveness of the decision-making processes between these bodies.

#### Objective 5.1

To ensure an optimal working relationship with UNEP, as well as close coordination and synergy with CBD and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

#### Objective 5.2

To ensure close cooperation and coordination with related conventions, agreements and associations.

#### Objective 5.3

To ensure greater coordination of scientific and technical programmes and, where appropriate, more efficient distribution of responsibilities with relevant technical partners such as IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, TRAFFIC and others.

#### Objective 5.4

To ensure continuing recognition and acceptance of CITES measures by WTO and to ensure the mutual supportiveness of the decision-making processes between these bodies.



# Goal 6

## Progress toward full global membership

In order for the Convention to achieve its mission, as many countries as possible that are engaged in trade in wild animals and plants should become Parties. Although membership has grown steadily to more than 150 Parties, there are still countries that have not yet become party to CITES.

The 1983 Gaborone amendment to Article XXI of the Convention envisions accession to the Convention of regional economic integration organizations to which Parties have transferred competence in areas of CITES implementation. To bring such organizations within the Convention, acceptance of the amendment should progress.

### Objective 6.1

To secure at least 20 more Parties to the Convention by 2005 with a special focus on range countries of species subject to significant trade and important consumer countries of wild plants and animals, as well as countries located in regions with relatively low representation.

### Objective 6.2

To encourage acceptance of the 1983 Amendment to Article XXI of the Convention and the subsequent accession by eligible regional economic integration organizations.



*Aloe dichotoma*





## Goal 7

### Provide the Convention with an improved and secure financial and administrative basis

Successful implementation and enforcement of the Convention requires an appropriate level of funding as well as efficient fiscal management and a strong and professional Convention Secretariat. In addition to the need for adequate support at the national level, there is continuing financial need to meet the requirements of operational effectiveness of the Convention and to provide a platform for international coordination and cooperation. Present funding barely covers the Convention's primary expenditures. Programme expenditure on capacity building, scientific research and other projects in support of the aims of the Convention largely depend on voluntary contributions by donors. This financial support is welcome but, if CITES is to continue to play a major role in species conservation, a more stable flow of financial resources is required.

#### Objective 7.1

To resolve the problem of late and inadequate contributions to the CITES Trust Fund.

#### Objective 7.2

To ensure that the decisions of the Conference of the Parties take full account of financial implications for the CITES Trust Fund.

#### Objective 7.3

To secure additional funding for actions under the Convention.

#### Objective 7.4

To encourage additional voluntary contributions and to seek new ways of securing financial assistance from the donor community.

#### Objective 7.5

To increase the level of realistic planning and forecasting, and to improve financial and implementation reporting.



Addra gazelle





## Delivering the Strategic Plan through the Action Plan

This Strategic Plan presents a cogent overview of the specific aims of the Convention through 2005. It outlines seven specific goals to meet the Convention's mission, and identifies specific objectives to be achieved to meet those goals. This broad framework is designed to provide a unified focus to the Parties in their implementation of the Convention, and as guidance to the Conference of the Parties, its committees and the Secretariat.

The Strategic Plan also serves as an effective outreach and educational tool to provide a context for the Convention to others. It should be recognized that in order for the strategic planning to contribute successfully to the achievement of the Convention objectives, that process must be able to respond to an ever-changing world. The Strategic Plan is not a static document. Therefore, the Parties

must continue to evaluate progress toward these goals and modify the Strategic Plan over time.

Measurable performance indicators should be established for each of the seven major goals to help identify progress toward their successful implementation.

While the Strategic Plan presents an effective framework to focus the Convention through 2005, delivery of that framework requires detailed actions by the Parties, the Secretariat and the three Permanent Committees at meetings of the Conference of the Parties. In order to focus these actions and coordinate their implementation, an Action Plan has been prepared. The Action Plan consists of a matrix of action items by responsible entities to indicate what must be done and by whom to help achieve each objective.

As action points are successfully completed, progress toward achievement of the objective must be evaluated and the Action Plan modified accordingly, with the addition or deletion of action points as required.

Procedures should be developed for periodic review and evaluation of ongoing progress toward completion and revision of the Action Plan, for review of the status of the goal performance indicators, and to evaluate the subsequent achievement of the goals of the Strategic Plan. Between meetings of the Conference of the Parties, this responsibility should be assigned to the Standing Committee.



*Agave victoriae-reginae*





## Acronyms and abbreviations

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| CITES         | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| FAO           | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations                         |
| GATT          | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  |
| IATA          | International Air Transport Association   |
| ICPO-Interpol | International Criminal Police Organization                                      |
| IUCN          | The World Conservation Union  |
| MEA           | Multilateral Environmental Agreements   |
| UNEP          | United Nations Environment Programme  |
| UNEP-WCMC     | UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre                                       |
| WCO           | World Customs Organization  |
| WTO           | World Trade Organization  |



*Dendrobium fleischeri*



## The basics

CITES regulates international trade in specimens of species of wild fauna and flora, i.e. export, re-export and import of live and dead animals and plants and of parts and derivatives thereof, based on a system of permits and certificates that may be issued if certain conditions are met and that have to be presented before consignments of specimens are allowed to leave or enter a country.

Each Party must designate one or more Management Authorities responsible for issuing these permits and certificates, subject to the advice of one or more Scientific Authorities designated for that purpose.

The animal and plant species subject to different degrees of regulation are listed in three Appendices:

Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction, for which trade must be subject to particularly strict regulation, and only authorized in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix II species are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but may become so unless trade is strictly regulated. Appendix II further contains so-called look-alike species, which are controlled because of their similarity in appearance to the other regulated species, thereby facilitating a more effective control thereof.

Appendix III contains species that are subject to regulation within the jurisdiction of a Party and for which the cooperation of other Parties is needed to prevent or restrict their exploitation.

Conditions for the issue of permits and certificates involve questions with regard to whether or not trade as such, or a certain type of trade in a species, will be detrimental to its survival, the legal acquisition of specimens, the preparation for shipment of live specimens and, for Appendix-I species, whether the importer has suitable facilities to house and care for live specimens. Imports of Appendix-I specimens cannot take place if they are to be used for primarily commercial purposes.

The Convention provides for several conditioned exemptions from its provisions. They concern transit and transshipment, specimens acquired before the Convention became applicable to them, certain specimens that are personal or household effects, captive bred animals and artificially propagated plants, the exchange of specimens in the collection of scientists and scientific institutions and captive bred or pre-Convention specimens held by travelling exhibitions.

The monitoring of trade is an essential tool for achieving the aims of the Convention. Scientific Authorities must monitor export permits granted for Appendix-II species as well as the actual export thereof and advise their Management Authorities of suitable measures to limit the issue of export permits whenever they determine that the export should be limited in order to maintain a species throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs and well above the level at which it might become eligible for inclusion in Appendix I.

A second important monitoring system is based on the trade records to be kept by all Parties and to be reported to the Secretariat on an annual basis. The annual reports of all Parties together should provide statistical information on the total volume of world trade in CITES species, which is an invaluable element for the assessment of their conservation status. These reports further reflect the performance of Parties regarding CITES implementation when all reported exports and re-exports are compared with all reported imports.

The fact that a number of countries are not party to the Convention is regrettable but unavoidable. The Convention tries to cope with this problem by providing that Parties shall require documentation from non-Parties that substantially conforms to the requirements for CITES permits and certificates.

The Convention provides for a Secretariat and a Conference of the Parties, which play a major role in the functioning of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties has established a number of permanent committees, which play an important role in between its biennial meetings: The Standing Committee, the Animals Committee, the Plants Committee and the Nomenclature Committee.

The remaining provisions establish procedures for amending the Convention and its Appendices, address enforcement measures to be taken by the Parties, the Convention's effects on domestic legislation and on other international conventions, the resolution of disputes, ratification, accession and denunciation and allow for the entry of reservations.

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