**75th WAZA Annual Conference**

**Keynote Presentation**

**CITES and WAZA: the role of zoos and aquariums in keeping wildlife trade legal and sustainable**

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*Distinguished colleagues,*

Good morning to you all.

We are most grateful to WAZA for having invited the CITES Secretariat to its 75th virtual annual conference.

For nearly ten years now, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2011, the CITES Secretariat and WAZA have kept strong ties of collaboration in support of the implementation of the Convention and common conservation objectives.

During this period, WAZA has had a committed and beneficial involvement in many CITES meetings, workshops, decision-making processes and communications efforts, and published in 2015 its ambitious new conservation strategy.

Zoos and aquariums occupy a particularly interesting space within the global wildlife trade that is under the regulation of CITES.

Please allow to remind everyone of the purpose and scope of the Convention, before I discuss the role that WAZA partners can have in bolstering the implementation of CITES, and, therefore, in supporting global conservation and sustainable use of wildlife and biodiversity.

***What is CITES?***

CITES stands for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. It is a multilateral environmental agreement signed in 1973, which entered into force in 1975.

CITES currently has 183 Parties – 182 UN member-States and the European Union – a near universal adoption.

The aim of the Convention is to ensure that international trade in specimens of CITES-listed species of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

CITES is both a trade-related and a conservation-related convention. It uses trade-related measures to achieve its prime conservation objective, which is to ensure that wildlife, both animals and plants, is not unsustainably exploited through international trade.

The Convention now regulates commercial and non-commercial international trade in over 38,000 species of animals and plants, including their parts and derivatives, to which it accords varying degrees of protection.

**What kind of trade is covered by CITES?**

The Convention is relevant to a wide range of operations, businesses and entire economic sectors that rely on, or trade in CITES-regulated species.

Examples include housing, agriculture and sustenance industries, with regulations on several fish species or wild meat; it also covers furniture, with provisions for the use of timber from valuable, rare trees such as mahogany or rosewood; you also have the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries, which use many medicinal plants; the fashion and clothing industry (reptile and mammal skins, furs, fibres from wild animals,…); the horticultural sector, with live cacti and orchids; not to mention various sectors based on leisure and tourism, which heavily rely on wildlife.

The list goes on and, of course, it also involves zoos and aquariums, which exhibit, transport and trade in a wide range of CITES-listed species.

**How does CITES work?**

By trade, we mean all imports, exports, re-exports and introductions form the sea. Each signatory State, or Party, is tasked with implementing these differing controls by adopting specific legislation, including penalties for breaches of key provisions, and appointing national CITES Management Authorities, which are advised by nationally appointed Scientific Authorities.

Species are placed in three different Appendices, with different controls over trade depending on the Appendix. All kinds of taxa are present in the Appendices: the range from the most familiar animals that the public flocks to see at your zoos and aquariums, to the least known plant, amphibian, reptile or marine species.

Appendix I of the Convention includes species that are threatened with extinction. This Appendix includes some 700 species of fauna and some 400 species of flora.

Appendix II includes species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for which trade must be controlled to avoid threats to their survival.

Appendix II also includes a large number of so-called “look-alike” species. These are species that are very similar to other species for which conservation is a major concern, and which non-expert enforcement officials and border control personnel cannot be expected to tell apart from their endangered peers.

Appendix II includes roughly 32,000 plants, 500 mammals, 1,200 birds, 800 reptiles, 170 amphibians, 100 fish and 2,200 invertebrates.

Finally, Appendix III is home to some 200 species for which a single country is asking other Parties to help with its protection.

For species in Appendix I, commercial international trade in wild-taken specimens is generally prohibited. This includes commercial trade in, for example, elephant ivory, rhino horn, great apes, marine turtles, tigers or pangolin specimens and derivative products.

By contrast, trade in species in Appendix II and Appendix III is permitted, but subject to regulations to ensure it is legal and traceable. In the case of Appendix-II species, an additional important requirement relates to the sustainability of trade.

Generally speaking, trade is permitted for most species in the CITES Appendices. Appendix I represents some 3% of all CITES-listed species. The remaining 97% of species are listed in Appendices II and III. They can be traded commercially subject to regulations.

The Convention sets out three requirements for anyone who engages in trade of species listed in Appendices I or II:

* Making a legal acquisition finding to certify that the specimens have been taken in accordance with national law;
* Making a non-detriment finding. This is a science-based biological sustainability finding that takes account of the role of the species in the in its ecosystem; and
* Issue the appropriate permit/certificate– being the formal authorization and the basis for subsequent controls along the trade chain - and report the trade transaction to the CITES Secretariat on an annual basis.

***CITES – a dynamic Convention***

Since CITES entered into force in 1975, the world has changed vastly. A growing global human population has only meant an increase in the trade in, and use and consumption of wildlife and biodiversity-related resources. The pressure on the earth’s ecosystems has grown immensely, and the need to carefully and wisely use wild plants and animals to avoid conservation risks is probably now greater than ever.

Therefore, CITES remains as relevant today as it was 45 years go.

The Convention has continued to evolve and adapt to changing conditions and trends in the global wildlife trade and use.

This has been visible at every gathering of the Conference of the Parties – the supreme decision-making organ of the Convention. At each of its meetings, the Conference of the Parties to CITES considers problems of implementation of the Convention and its effectiveness.

The results of its deliberations are recorded either in long-term Resolutions or in short-term Decisions. After CoP18 in 2019, 101 Resolutions are in effect. They provide guidance or the modus operandi for a broad range of issues, from long-term compliance mechanisms and taxon-specific action planning to the Strategic vision of the Convention and practical rules for controlling trade (such as issuing permits and marking specimens in trade). In 2019, the IPBES global assessment made clear the severity, scope and urgency of the planetary crisis of biodiversity loss.

That same year, the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties saw signatory States pass sweeping regulations and measures to conserve wildlife species from across the world.

These ranged from regulating trade in so-called ‘charismatic’ species like giraffes, to extending similar protections to less known but equally valuable species of sea-cucumbers, neotropical cedars, rosewoods, lizards, newts and spiders.

CITES is known to be a ‘Convention with teeth’. It has strong compliance procedures agreed upon by Parties, which ensures that it’s in essence fairly simple and straightforward conditions for authorizing international trade are well implemented and respected.

This includes the ability for its Standing Committee to take measures when witnessing unsustainable levels of trade, failures by Parties to submit annual reports or effectively control trade, or inadequate legislation. This considerably enhances compliance with CITES-requirements and regulations, and improves its effectiveness.

***CITES and sustainable development***

Parties to CITES have recognized that legal, sustainable and traceable trade can be beneficial both to conservation efforts and to the well-being and livelihoods of communities – especially those who live closest to nature.

Given its scale and scope, it is difficult to put a single figure on the value of the overall trade in CITES-listed species. However, we do know this figure runs in the billions of USD per year, and that it serves as the basis for millions of jobs and that it underpins the livelihoods of rural and indigenous communities on all continents.

For example, take the recent Appendix-II listing of 3 species of teatfish, or sea cucumbers.

These marine species might not be as widely known as your typical big cat or savannah-faring mammal. Nonetheless, they are the cornerstone of a sizeable and lucrative fishing industry in the Indo-Pacific region which is thought up to three million small scale fishers.

In many ways, these sea cucumbers are a reminder of the continued relevance of the Convention, at the intersection of trade, conservation and sustainable development: the teatfishes’ commercial value had led to unsustainable harvesting, which made strong regulations for their international use necessary.

Such regulation, however, may need to consider the effects this could have on the employment and incomes of millions. This is a difficult balancing act. However, it is an imperative one if we are to conserve valuable species and continue using them without threatening them or neglecting the needs of those who rely on them.

***CITES and illegal trade in wildlife***

As mentioned earlier, CITES regulates international trade in wild species listed in its Appendices. And, though the Convention is primarily tasked with overseeing *legal* trade, this work also involves addressing illegal trade and wildlife crime. Parties are tasked with, and committed to enforcing the CITES rules, and prosecuting and penalizing infringements.

However – and unfortunately – this has not stopped illegal traders and international organized criminal groups from engaging in the trafficking of these species.

In its recent World Wildlife Crime report, released in July 2020, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reminded everyone that wildlife crime, including illegal trade, remains a constant threat to species and ecosystems everywhere.

Among its findings, the World Wildlife Crime Report stated that pangolins – all eight species of which are in CITES Appendix I – are the most trafficked mammal in the world.

UNODC also noted the emergence of new illegal markets, like the trafficking of European glass eels, as well as the continued prevalence of listed timber species among global seizures, notably rosewood seizures.

Despite these alarming trends, the report brought some undeniably good news: figures showed a decline in poaching numbers for both elephants and rhinos, underscoring the effectiveness of enforcement efforts in range States.

The Convention as a whole, through Parties and the Secretariat, is committed to combatting all forms of wildlife crime. That same World Wildlife Crime Report drew heavily from data gathered by CITES Parties, as part of a requirement by the Convention that they compile bi-annual reports on illegal trade.

The Secretariat is also a member of the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime – or ICCWC. This is a coalition of law enforcement agencies that provides enforcement agencies with capacity-building and information-sharing tools to bolster their responses to wildlife crime.

***CITES and animal welfare and animal rights***

The issues of animal welfare and animal rights can generate a lot of the media attention, especially when they are about charismatic CITES species.

I am sure that zoos and aquariums are very familiar with this, and we are well aware that this is an area of great relevance to WAZA, as shown through to adoption of an animal welfare strategy in 2015.

This was for example illustrated by the global media attention surrounding the keeping of tigers and big cats in the United States, and the ongoing campaigns against, for example, live animal trade; trophy hunting; or the use of skins and other wild animal products.

But this is one area where national, rather than international law, sets the rules. Therefore, animal welfare or animal rights provisions vary considerably from one State to another.

The animal welfare provisions under CITES are narrow, specific and targeted.

They are limited to the international transport of live animals, and they are aimed at minimizing the risk of injury, damage to heath, or cruel treatment. In very specific circumstances, there are guidelines aimed at ensuring the [suitability](https://cites.org/eng/res/11/11-20.php) of places destined to receive live animals, including rescue centres, in the case of the disposal of confiscated live specimens.

Guidance on meeting these CITES obligations have been provided by the Parties in some instances, as was the case with the guidelines on the [transport of live specimens](https://cites.org/eng/res/10/10-21R16.php).

CITES is perhaps the first global legal instrument to have addressed transport-related animal welfare. More and broader animal health and welfare issues are considered by the [World Organization for Animal Health](http://www.oie.int/); and several other conventions have adopted certain resolutions that relate to aspects of animal welfare.

There is currently no global treaty governing either animal welfare or animal rights, although WAZA, through its Animal Welfare Strategy, is setting some standards in this regard.

It is perhaps partly for this reason that CITES has been used as a forum for the expression of a wide range of differing and passionate views on the use of and trade in wild animals. These views range dramatically from a “use it or lose it” approach, to staunch animal rights stances opposing *any* use or trade.

CITES has become a global forum where experts and advocacy groups from a wide range of perspectives: conservation and sustainable use, traders, wildlife-user communities, development, animal welfare add rights, and more. All of these views and groups come together through CITES to discuss and contribute to making decisions on international trade in and use of wildlife. This is a great strength of the Convention.

***CITES and zoos and aquariums***

There are over 21 million recorded trade transactions in the [CITES trade data base](http://cites-dashboards.unep-wcmc.org/).

Tens of thousands of these are transactions involving zoos and aquariums, meaning that such institutions play a significant role in the context of the Convention.

Zoos and aquariums keep, breed and participate in the cross-border movement of CITES listed species. Therefore, they find themselves in an ideal position to support CITES Parties to implement the Convention and to inform its general direction.

The following provides an overview of trade in CITES-listed animals for zoological purposes - purpose code ‘Z’ - and for circuses or travelling exhibitions - purpose code ‘Q’ – between 2009 and 2018.

Data includes all direct exports in live animals reported in numbers, for all sources other than source ‘I’ (seized or confiscated), as reported by exporters (unless specified otherwise). The analysis was produced by UNEP-WCMC on the basis of data extracted from the CITES Trade Database.

In numbers of live animals, 0.06 per cent (roughly 31 thousand, seven hundred out of ~52.3 million) were traded for zoological purposes, while 0.01% were traded for circuses or travelling exhibitions – see figure 1.

In transactions of live animals, 0.8 per cent (roughly 9 thousand two hundred out of 1.2 million) were for zoological purposes, while 0.2 per cent were for circuses or travelling exhibitions. Zoological purposes were the third most common purpose for transactions of live animals.



1.17 million transactions

**Figure 1: Transactions of live animals, by purpose, 2009-2018 (i.17 million transactions)**

The number of live animals traded for **zoological purposes** appears to have peaked in 2012 according to exporters, whereas importer-reported data indicates a general decline since 2010 - see figure 2.

**Figure 2: Trade in live animals (number) for zoological purposes 2009-2018**

The number of live animals traded for circuses or travelling exhibitions appears to have generally declined over time since 2009 (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Trade in live animals (number) for circuses or travelling exhibitions 2009-2018**

The top five taxa traded live for zoological purposes, circuses and travelling exhibitions for 2009-2018 are shown in the following two figures. We can note that there are differences between those reported by the exporting Party and the importing Party. This is often due to exporters reporting the trade as commercial (source code T) and the importers reporting the same transaction as source code Z.

Figure 4 indicates that the main taxa traded as live animals by number for zoological purposes as reported by the exporter were the following:

* *Necrophrynoides asperginis,*
* *Panthera leo,*
* *Phoenicopterus ruber,*
* *Lemur catta*
* and *Panthera tigris*

Meanwhile, the main taxa as reported by the importer were:

* *Ornithoptera priamus,*
* *Troides Helena*
* *Ornithoptera* spp.
* *Mauremys reevesii*
* and *Myiopsitta monachus.*

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**Figure 4: Main taxa of live animals trade for zoological purposes 2009-2018, as reported by exporters (left) and importers (right)**

Figure 5 indicates that the main taxa traded as live animals by number for circuses and travelling exhibitions as reported by the exporter were:

* *Panthera tigris,*
* *Ursus arctos*
* *Panthera leo,*
* *Macaca nemestrina*
* and *Python bivittatus*

As for the main taxa reported by importers, these were:

* *Iguana iguana,*
* *Panthera tigris,*
* *Panthera leo,*
* *Ursus arctos*
* and *Python regius.*

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**Figure 5: Main taxa of live animals trade for circuses and travelling exhibitions 2009-2018, as reported by exporters (left) and importers (right)**

Figure six provides an overview of sources of live animals traded for zoological purposes, circuses and travelling exhibitions in 2009-2018. It shows that some 17 per cent of the animals traded by zoos came from the wild, and the remainder mostly from captive breeding. 91 per cent of the animals traded for circuses and travelling exhibitions came from captive breeding.

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**Figure 6: Trade in live animals (number) for zoological purposes (left) and for circuses and travelling exhibitions (right) (2009-2018) by source**

***CITES and WAZA***

I think it goes without saying that WAZA can and should ensure that all its members trade in specimens of CITES-listed species in full compliance with CITES provisions.

We are nevertheless very fortunate that WAZA members are keen on bringing much more to CITES than the mere issue of correct implementation. The Convention can benefit greatly from your expertise, your vast influence among such a wide network, and your skill for practical solution-finding.

To consolidate this mutually beneficial collaboration, the CITES Secretariat and WAZA signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/disc/sec/CITES-WAZA.pdf) in December 2011.

This was aimed at facilitating access to expertise, the provision of training, and raising public awareness regarding the implementation of CITES.

Major fields of cooperation include:

* care and placement of confiscated live animals;
* transport of live animals, whether it be for commercial trade, breeding, research or conservation purposes;
* gathering and sharing information about current wildlife trade and conservation issues;
* knowledge and experiences in captive breeding;
* communication and awareness;
* and training and capacity-building.

Let’s look at each of these areas and see what we have accomplished to date, and where we see a scope for new approaches or expansion.

***Confiscated animals***

In many countries, zoos and aquariums are, or could become, important rescue centers or temporary holding facilities for confiscated or seized animals.

This role could be expanded, and WAZA members could advise on suitable solutions for confiscated live animals and share relevant information.

During the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2016, CITES developed and adopted much-enhanced guidance for the disposal of confiscated live animals.

WAZA members actively and significantly contributed to this renewed guidance. They could now assist in promoting its use, testing it on the ground, and bringing further improvements where needed.

The veterinary expertise of zoos and aquariums can be important when screening confiscated live animals for diseases, and possibly sourcing diseases. Such information could be shared with national health services, as well as CITES authorities, particularly Parties’ Scientific Authorities.

***Transport of live animals***

WAZA members have an excellent understanding of and significant practical experience with the transportation of live animals, which is an important component of the CITES regulations.

Before granting export permits, the Convention requires Management Authorities to be satisfied that – quote - “*specimens will be so prepared and shipped as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruelty treatment*”.

Resolution Conf. 10.21 (Rev. CoP16) on the *Transport of live specimens* sets out the way in which CITES deals with the matter.

Once permits have been delivered, Parties are required to ensure all living specimens are properly cared for throughout all periods of transit, holding or shipment.

For the transport of live animals, the Live Animals Regulations of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) are the guidelines that should be fully and effectively used by CITES authorities.

The IATA regulations are amended annually and are therefore more responsive to changing needs.

Through its networks and interactions with IATA, WAZA can support in keeping CITES transport guidance pertinent and up to date.

One way could be for WAZA to participate in the reviews of this guidance by the CITES Standing Committee or Animals Committee, where they can discuss new developments and share their expertise.

***Current wildlife trade issues***

The WAZA network can liaise with CITES scientists and researchers from national Scientific and Management Authorities, and provide assistance in the collection of data and information on the status of wild species.

This could greatly help in the process of making a Non-Detriment Finding, for example, but also in areas such as identification, taxonomy, marking and forensic sciences.

At CoP18, last year, Parties agreed to undertake work on a vast range of issues and species, with over 300 Decisions.

For some work, the contributions from the WAZA network in the coming years will be important not to say indispensable, and I know that in some areas, WAZA members are already providing hands-on assistance.

Let me give you a few examples.

* ***Marking and monitoring of live Asian elephants [D. 18.222-18.227]***

*All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations, and collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants. They should request as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the CITES Secretariat. At the moment, promising efforts are underway in this regard, led by AZA and the Columbus Zoo, and hopefully WAZA members will be key-partners to help put in place such a system work. It is much needed to better control the regional movements of, and trade in live Asian elephants.*

* ***Live ornamental fish trade [D. 18.296-18.298]***

*At CoP18, the Secretariat was instructed to convene a technical workshop to consider the conservation priorities and management needs related to the trade in non-CITES listed marine ornamental fishes worldwide. It is now organizing workshop documents on marine ornamental fishes’ biology; conservation status; trade and management; applicable trade regulations; and enforcement. The technical workshop, whenever in 2021 or 2022 it may be held, is to bring together the CITES Animals Committee, representatives from range States, exporting, and importing countries, fishery stakeholder, industry representatives and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Active participation in this undertaking, and inputs and expertise from WAZA members, would be highly appreciated.*

* ***Appropriate and acceptable destinations***

*WAZA previously participated in a working group that developed non-binding guidance for Parties to use when considering whether the proposed recipient of a living specimen is suitably equipped to house and care for it. This guidance was adopted at CoP18 and is currently being applied by CITES Parties.**WAZA can continue to play an important role in this work by providing examples of best practice for housing and caring for animals and by working with the Animals Committee to develop more specific guidance for living specimens of African elephants and southern white rhinoceros, and developing best practice guidance on how to determine whether “the trade would promote* in situ *conservation”. This will be done through a formal working group on the definition of “appropriate and acceptable destinations”, that was recently established by the Animals Committee and we are happy to see that WAZA has registered its interest in becoming a member of this working group.*

* ***Amphibian trade and breeding [D. 18.194 - 18.196]***

*We were instructed at CoP18 to conduct one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES Authorities and other stakeholders about CITES and non-CITES listed amphibians in international trade. Again, the WAZA community, with its vast experience in keeping and breeding amphibians, would be very well placed to contribute to these undertakings. Background research to feed into these workshops is being organized, and we would highly appreciate if we could reach out to WAZA for assistance in this regard. One of the big concerns are pet markets for live amphibians. Understanding what species are most in demand, but also most fragile to overexploitation, would be very helpful.*

* ***Songbirds [D. 18256 – 18. 259]***

*Similarly, WAZA members will be in a strong position to assist us in the implementation of the CoP18 Decisions on songbirds, where we are instructed to consult with appropriate technical experts on the conservation, trade, management, enforcement and regulatory priorities of the songbird taxa in international trade. WAZA members can assist by providing their knowledge and expertise to help determine the scale and scope of the trade in songbirds in order to establish the management and conservation needs of those species.*

* ***Zoonotic diseases***

*A novel field of collaboration that could be explored is sharing veterinary expertise and know-how about zoonotic diseases. As indicated above, the CITES Convention's mandate concerning public and animal health is limited, an d largely focused on provisions 'to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment' of live animals during international transport.*

*We intend nevertheless to collate and provide information to our Standing Committee on how COVID-19 measures are impacting the functioning of CITES, and how in turn CITES could contribute to reducing risks posed by zoonotic diseases. Regarding the latter, it would be interesting to know WAZA’s views.*

* ***Trade in live animals in accordance with CITES***

*Finally, the zoo and aquarium community can act a bit as the eyes and ears on the ground concerning live-animal trade that may be questionable or unusual, e.g. by sharing up-to-date information about suspected offers, prices, or trade developments. An example that occurred in recent years concerned offers to zoos of ‘captive bred’ great apes from a country that was known not to breed these species. Alerting the broader CITES community for such dubious business proposals can help investigations and prevent illegal transactions.*

***Captive breeding***

We have observed a clear shift from trade in wild-caught animals to trade in ranched, captive-bred or aquaculture animals and their products. This brings new management and conservation challenges.

WAZA’s conservation strategy can enrich the ongoing discussion in CITES on the relationship between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation actions. There are many opportunities for WAZA to share its expertise.

Some recent practical areas of possible support and collaboration are the following:

* ***New Captive Breeding Resolution***

*At CoP17, the Parties adopted a new resolution on* Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity *(Resolution Conf. 17.7 (Rev. CoP18)). This resolution sets out a procedure to review biological, trade and other relevant information regarding animal species subject to significant levels of trade using source codes C, D, F or R, to identify problems associated with the implementation of the Convention and to develop solutions. At the first meeting of the Animals Committee after each CoP, a limited number of species-country combinations may be selected for review and the Animals Committee may commission reviews of the species concerned, in consultation with relevant countries and specialists. One of the aims of these reviews is to compile and summarize known information relating to the breeding biology and captive husbandry of the species, an area where the expertise of WAZA members would naturally be invaluable.*

* ***Inspecting breeding facilities***

*An area that is becoming increasingly important is the development and use of practical guidance for inspecting commercial captive breeding facilities. Such guidance has been prepared and is being rolled out by the Secretariat in recent years, and is also available on our website.*

*WAZA seems ideally placed for providing very pertinent practical examples, help us promote and update the guidance, or take part in training.*

* ***Tiger farms [D. 17.226 & 18.100 - 18.10]***

*In connection with the preceding, CoP18 directed the CITES Secretariat to undertake missions to 7 Parties in whose territories are facilities which may be of concern in keeping very large numbers of Asian big cats - tigers - in captivity, with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the operations and activities undertaken by these facilities. The Secretariat identified the countries and facilities with unusually high number of tigers by using WAZA information on ‘normal’ numbers of Asian big kept in reputable zoos.*

*It may be useful for these missions if WAZA could share any inspection protocols they apply when visiting zoos.*

***Communication, training and capacity building***

Raising awareness about trade in and sustainable use of wild species seems a natural role of WAZA-affiliated institutions. Could we perhaps develop joint WAZA-CITES information and education campaigns?

WAZA members from all parts of the world have leveraged their capacity to bring an increasingly urban global population closer to nature. Efforts like the WAZA Nature Connect Grants Programme and the *Reverse the Red* campaign, undertaken in partnership with IUCN, are just some of the latest examples of your collective work in this respect.

These are aimed at both raising awareness of, and taking action in fields that are also critically important to CITES, and they could serve to promote our common objectives in terms of conservation and sustainable use.

Conversely, the CITES Secretariat has also worked to make tools, materials and information-sharing platforms available to Parties and their officials. These include detailed case-studies on livelihoods and sustainable use, and the online courses of the CITES Virtual college.

The platforms could greatly benefit from the collective expertise and inputs of WAZA’s membership, which could bring its knowledge on issues that are central to the work of national agencies, like customs. These could touch upon disposal of confiscated specimens, as mentioned before, but also on transportation of live animals, veterinarian care, identification, or conservation matters.

One of the issues that is often challenging to communicate about is that wildlife trade, when conducted legally, sustainably and transparently, can benefit both species conservation ***and*** human livelihoods.

The difference between - *quote-unquote* - ‘*good’*, ‘*not so good*’ or ‘*bad*’ wildlife trade is not always easy to explain. However, it is important that we work to keep making such distinctions in order to support sound conservation and sustainable development policies. The support of the vast WAZA network in spreading such a balanced message could be immensely valuable.

***Conclusions***

CITES is a multilateral agreement that connects international commitments with national action. It is also a Convention that attracts a diverse range of stakeholders and generates a lively and passionate debate around trade, development, environment, livelihoods, animal welfare and animal rights, and more. Some issues fall under the mandate of CITES while others remain exclusively in the domain of national law.

The success of CITES relies upon the contributions, ongoing commitment of, and collaboration between, multiple organizations and people coming from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. The Convention benefits from the rich, diverse and constant level of interest it receives, whether from partners, staunch supporters or long-standing critics.

WAZA Members have expertise in animal breeding and care; marking and tracing animals; transport of live animals; *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation; sustainable use; education, training and research; and many, many more areas.

All of these areas are particularly pertinent to CITES, and our cooperation has borne fruit. But over the course of the last ten years, since our memorandum of understanding was first signed, new challenges have arisen.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made some throw into question our entire relationship with nature, including key aspects of it for both CITES and WAZA and its membership.

How do we deal with valuable species, essential for trade and human livelihoods, when it comes from a possible hotspot for diseases? How do we ensure that vital resources for, say the purpose of medical research, remain accessible to scientists without harming species or their environments? How can we best combat wildlife traffickers’ increasingly complex criminal arsenal and restore seized or retrieved specimens to their natural habitats?

These are just some of the issues where the CITES community would greatly benefit from an expanded partnership with WAZA and its global network of zoos and aquariums.

We look forward to continuing to explore avenues for cooperation. We have great hopes that, as we strive towards achieving our common objectives of conservation and education, we can make a genuine difference in tackling the immense challenges we are faced with today, and contribute to building practical solutions to conserving our planet’s most precious wildlife.

Thank you for your attention.

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