



## NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2021/009

Geneva, 21 January 2021

CONCERNING:

### Intersessional decision-making of the Standing Committee

1. On 15 January 2021, the Chair of the Standing Committee approved the submission, under Rule 20 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure, of a recommendation by Canada on behalf of the North American region in relation to the establishment of a working group on the role of CITES in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade. The background and text of the recommendation are shown in Annex 1 to the present Notification.
2. In accordance with Rule 20.1 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat invites Parties to provide comments on the recommendations in Annex 1 to the present Notification to the Standing Committee Member(s) of their region for submission to the Secretariat by **1 March 2021**. Contact details for the Members of the Standing Committee can be found on the [CITES website](#).
3. Before this date, Parties have the opportunity to consult with relevant authorities, agencies and stakeholders with an interest in the matters covered by the recommendation.
4. After 1 March 2021, the Standing Committee Chair, with the assistance of the Secretariat, will submit the recommendation (revised, if appropriate, in the light of the comments received) to the Committee for final decision.
5. Members may object to the recommendation (or revised recommendation should that be the case) within 25 days of it being submitted to them. If there are no objections received by the Secretariat within the deadline, then the recommendation will be considered as adopted.
6. If any Member objects to the recommendation (or revised recommendation should that be the case) within the 25 day period, then the matter will be put to a vote by the Members in accordance with Rule 20.4 of the Rules of Procedure.

Proposal for an intersessional decision of the Standing Committee under Rule 20

The Chair of the Standing Committee has approved the submission of this recommendation.

Canada, on behalf of the North American Region submits the following recommendation for intersessional decision-making under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee.

As noted in Annex 2 to this Notification, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the trade in wildlife and the associated risks to human health and the global economy. It has underscored the connection between biodiversity loss and pandemics. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that Governments should review lessons learnt and, where appropriate, strengthen the global ability to prevent, detect, and respond to zoonotic diseases. Actions to reduce the future risk of pandemics may, for example, require strengthening of the global governance system and greater cooperation between nations and international bodies. In the context of this international discourse, the role CITES may have in supporting efforts to reduce the risk of zoonotic disease transmission has been raised. It is appropriate for CITES Parties and representatives, through the Standing Committee, to consider the views and recommendations being proposed and consider what advice it might provide to the CITES Conference of the Parties.

For this reason, Canada, on behalf of the North American Region, proposes forming a working group to examine the current work and recommendations being presented on the linkages between biodiversity and pandemics. Importantly, the proposed working group would provide the opportunity for CITES Parties to share their views and concerns regarding the role CITES might have, in any, in preventing future pandemics.

In this context, Canada submits to the Standing Committee the following recommendation for a decision to be taken under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure:

*That the Standing Committee agrees to:*

- a) establish an intersessional working group to consider what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade, with the terms of reference found in the attached document; and*
- b) invite the participation of the CITES Animals Committee to this working group through the Chair of the Animals Committee.*

Intersessional work of the Standing Committee  
2020-2021

ROLE OF CITES IN REDUCING THE RISK OF FUTURE ZOOBOTIC DISEASE  
EMERGENCE ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Background

1. Whilst the root cause of the COVID-19 pandemic may never be fully determined, it has shone a spotlight on the trade in wildlife and the associated risks to human health and the global economy.
2. The drivers of zoonotic disease emergence are a complex mix of globalisation, increasing human population densities and human behaviours, changing food systems, markets for human consumption, wildlife farming, habitat loss, high volume wildlife trade (domestic and international) and associated activities, climate change, and other factors.
3. Further, recent work has underscored the connection between biodiversity loss and pandemics. According to the IPBES workshop on biodiversity and pandemics, among other factors, “trade and consumption of wildlife is a globally important risk for future pandemics.” Concerns with the role of wildlife trade in pandemics have resulted in various recommendations on addressing wildlife markets and the role of CITES.
4. With this in mind, and in line with the Standing Committee Terms of Reference (Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of Committees*), it is proposed that the Standing Committee review the nexus between wildlife trade and public and animal health, considering what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade.

Recommendation

5. That the Standing Committee:
  - a) establish an intersessional working group to consider what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade, with the terms of reference found below; and
  - b) invite the participation of the CITES Animals Committee to this working group through the Chair of the Animals Committee.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

## WORKING GROUP ON THE ROLE OF CITES IN REDUCING RISK OF FUTURE ZOOBOTIC DISEASE EMERGENCE ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Taking into account relevant materials, including the outcomes of the IPBES workshop on biodiversity and pandemics, the working group shall review the nexus between international wildlife trade and public and animal health as follows:

- a) provide a summary of views on the current contribution of CITES, if any, to identifying and mitigating zoonotic disease risk;
- b) identify opportunities, as well as constraints on how, if anything, CITES could further support an integrated approach to animal, human and environmental health, and contribute to global efforts to reduce the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with wildlife trade; and
- c) report its conclusions to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee.

In undertaking its work, the working group could include consideration of:

- a) current evidence and information gaps regarding the links between international wildlife trade and zoonosis risk, including areas where advice might be sought from the Animals Committee;
- b) the context and scope of the current Convention text;
- c) existing Resolutions and Decisions and whether additional guidance to CITES Parties is needed; and
- d) the strengthening of existing cooperative relationships, or development of new relationships, between CITES and other intergovernmental organisations, including those involved in animal or public health, trade, food and transport.