

CITES COP13 Report

1st October: 51st CITES Standing Committee

This was the first CITES Standing Committee ever, where there were no closed sessions, and the NGO observers were allowed to participate during the whole meeting. Several formal subjects were on the agenda, one of the most important one was the proposal to change the location of CITES secretariat (as Geneva is considered as one of the most expensive places). There were several proposals like: Bangkok, Nairobi, Bonn and Delhi, but according to the Secretariats report none of the proposed locations is suitable for this purpose. There were some discussions about certain reports concerning the interpretation and implementation of the convention. The most relevant ones for the CEE region were the "[Trade in falcons and falconry](#)" and the "[National Legislation Project](#)".

2nd October: Official opening of the 13th CITES CoP

The first day of the CoP on which the official opening took place, and certain personalities (Environmental Minister of Thailand, Chair of the CITES Standing Committee, General Secretary of the UNEP, Prime Minister of Thailand and the Secretary General of the CITES Convention) delivered welcoming addresses. Even if this was only the first day NGOs already started their lobby work for certain issues. There were certain meetings with different national and regional representatives and the printed materials were distributed. CEEweb representatives have had discussions about certain working documents with the representatives of their country of origin (Poland and Romania). At the time of the registration a demonstration took place, organized by local NGOs against the use of endangered species (like elephants and apes) for entertainment purposes (Circuses, Private ZOO's)

3rd October

During the plenary session delegates discussed such strategic and administrative matters as voting procedures, adoption of the rules of procedure, election of officers, adoption of the agenda, credentials, admission of observers and committee reports. European Union and the US highlighted, that to support transparency they continue to reject the use of secret ballots. Minister Suwit Khunkitti from Thailand was elected as COP Chair, David Brackett from Canada and Victoria Liechtenstein from Argentina as Vice-Chairs, Holly Dublin as Committee I Chair and Martin Basher from UK as Committee II Chair. Delegates adopted the list of observers which includes 11 intergovernmental organizations, 51 international organizations and 88 national organizations. In the Conference Centre some NGOs prepared several exhibitions concerning CITES issues. CEEweb representatives participated in IFAW morning meeting, in the plenary session and took part on the European regional meeting. During the European meeting Netherlands was announced as a candidate for the next Cop 14th organizer.

4th of October

In Committee I the parties considered 4 proposals concerning export quotas of leopards (Namibia and South Africa) and black rhino (Namibia and South Africa) species as well as

issues related to transport of live specimens and the trade and conservation of the rhinoceros species. All proposal concerning hunting quotas were accepted by the parties, although the quota of black rhinoceros for South Africa was reduced to 5. Even if the proposals were opposed by a number of parties, Committee I Chair Holly Dublin managed to push through the committee all the documents with a consensus approval. The acceptance of the black rhino hunting quotas was quite a disappointment for most of the participant NGOs (although WWF supported the Namibian proposal). By many it was considered that the message towards the society of the consensus approval in this issue can be very detrimental for the CITES idea and that there are high chances that the decision may trigger poaching activities. The secretariats document concerning the trade and conservation of rhinos, which proposed the repeal or amendment of Res. Conf. 9.14 (Rev.) and thus the deletion of the reporting requirements by the parties was not approved. Chair Dublin, proposed that the secretariat should closely cooperate with the IUCN on the reporting problem. Committee II accepted the Secretariats financial report for 2002-2003 and the estimated expenditures for 2004-2005. CEEweb organized a meeting of the Polish, Slovak and Czech Republic delegates with IFAW experts involved in elephant conservation. The discussion was focused on the documents developed by Namibia and Kenya concerning elephant conservation, and the amendments proposed by France to these documents.

6th of October

Committee I was working mainly on issues connected to the interpretation and implementation of the Convention. Quite a lot of time was given for discussions about the proper definition of “Artificially propagated plants” as well as about the consistent problems concerning registration procedures.

Probably the most important achievement of the day was the consensus adoption of a new document concerning amendments of Appendix I & II. The document improves

significantly the amendment criteria, common criteria was set for also for fungi species, this group is still not represented at all on the appendices of CITES.

Committee II was also dealing with general subjects, concerning interpretation and implementation of the convention.

On the floor there were several discussions between delegates concerning the relationships between ex-situ and in-situ conservation. Regular and special reporting requirements were also the main thematic of several discussions. During the day several meetings took place outside the committee sessions. Among other the Budget, Saiga, Export quota and Shark WG meetings were organized. Press briefing were held about the illegal trade in tiger skins and about the general situation of Asian turtles. CEEweb was represented on a meeting concerning the motivation of inter-agency cooperation for CITES enforcement organized by the CITES Management Authority of UK together with Traffic and WWF.



The delegation of Australia distributed an information paper supporting the proposal 32 for the listing of Great White Shark on Appendix II. As some parties argued that great white shark is not threatened by trade, the delegation prepared a small sampling on the internet trade of white shark parts (mainly jaws and teethes) on 2nd October (just on the day of the opening ceremony of the present CoP. The document presented the scale of the trade and the usual prices (up to 50.000 USD for jaws and 950 USD for teethes). The document triggered a lot of discussions on the issue between different delegates and participants.

7 of October

Committee I started the work with discussion on nomenclature problems. Even if it sounds only “formally”, it has a crucial importance if some newly described or divided species belong to the genus enlisted in some Appendixes or not. Afterwards Committee I worked on botanical proposals about amendments of the Appendixes. Some cultivars of Euphorbia spp. were excluded from the provisions of the Convention according to the decision of the Committee. The down-listing of Christmas orchid (*Cattleya trianaei*) and blue Vanda orchid (*Vanda coerulea*) from Appendix I to Appendix II was also adopted. Committee adopted also proposal to up-list the malanabe palm (*Chrysalidocarpus decipiens*) from, Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee II discussed and accepted some reports. During the afternoon session the resolutions about great apes, bears, big cats and Tibetan antelope conservation and trade were considered. During the discussion there was some consternation when the delegation from one of African countries has disagreed with the elimination of great apes from usage as diplomatic gifts.

8 of October

Committee I started this day with plants issues. The biggest discussion was about the proposal of Indonesia to add the ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) into Appendix II. On the beginning several countries expressed their concerns regarding the proposal and expressed their wish for considerable amendments. According to these when Mrs. H. Dublin (on corridors of CoP13 named already: “Iron Madam Chair”) who was charring the session, succeeded to adopt this proposal by consensus, it was welcomed by loud applauses.

During afternoon sessions proposals concerning animals started to be discussed. From among the most controversial propositions, irravaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*) was transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Committee II came to subjects which were preliminary discussed but not finished in previous days – ex. “Synergy between CITES and CBD” (send again for the further consultation), “Sustainable use principles and guidelines” (agreed), “Economic incentives and trade policy (accepted).

9-10 of October

It was “free time” for CoP13 participants. Some of them took part in excursions organized by different bodies (ex. By NGOs).

For some participants however it was very busy time – they had to redraft proposals or documents after the discussions in both of Committees, there were plenty unofficial meetings and discussion.

11 of October

The main subjects of this day were elephants and ivory. In the morning session Committee I participants have had the possibility to listen reports:

- Of the “African elephant dialogue meeting”
- Of the “Elephant Trade Information System” (ETIS) developed by TRAFFIC
- Of the “Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants” (MIKE).

Afterwards Committee approved the draft action plan for the control of trade in African elephant ivory, proposed by CITES Secretariat. It was time for Kenya to present its proposition concerning illegal ivory trade and control measures of internal markets. Kenya delegates asked also for a period of 6 years without any more proposals of down-listing local populations of African elephants from Appendix I to Appendix II or proposals which are aiming for the re-opening of the legal ivory market. The delegation of Netherlands in behalf of EU proposed several amendments of Kenya proposal. This proposition indicated changing of “6 years period” into “a sufficient period”, without explanation, who and according to what criteria would be obliged to decide, when a period is already “sufficient”. As the Nederland proposition has also several legal gaps and was poorly explained, it caused a lot of confusions between delegates and as a result it was rejected by voting. As EU countries abstained voting for the un-amended Kenya proposition, it was also rejected with a high majority.

One of the few non-elephant proposals of the day was the US proposal for the deletion of bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) from Appendix II, which was withdrawn by the US. US proposed that the Animal Committee should resolve this issue during its periodic review of look-alike species. The proposal was accepted.

Several subjects were also discussed by Committee II. It finally adopted texts of amended documents on CITES-CBD synergy and great apes conservation.

On this day quite big number of decisions concerning proposals and documents were taken, thanks to the fact, that afternoon session of Committee II was extended and the Committee I has the additional, evening session.

12th of October

A full and overloaded day, which was supposed to be the last one for the committee sessions. Even if so, many important decisions were on the agenda, a lot of them constituting top priority issues for the participating NGOs. Committee I rejected Japans document on CITES listing of whale species and its relation with the IWC.

Quite a lot of proposals for amendments of the appendices were on the agenda, and some of them lead to quite passion heated discussions. The proposal for down-listing of some minky whale subpopulations was clearly rejected by the committee trough a secret ballot vote.

Swaziland's proposal concerning its white rhino population was also accepted, by this way the CoP granted another country with the possibility to legally trade with rhino trophies. The decision was taken despite of the fact, that NGOs and parties were outlining the possibility of enhancement of poaching activities because of such a decision.

Some decisions were taken concerning bird species as well. The bald eagle was down-listed from Appendix I. to Appendix II., one Agapornis species was deleted from Appendix II., and a Cacatua respectively one Amasona species was up-listed to Annex I.

The joint proposal of Mexico and the USA for the inclusion of Passerina ciris in Appendix II, was defeated.

The proposals concerning reptiles were highlighted by the acceptance of some of the most discussed Madagascar proposals. Both of Kenya's viper proposals were defeated. The great white shrike was included in the Appendix II. after the proposal was accepted by a huge majority of the parties, despite of the strong opposition of Japan and some other countries.

The listing of Cheilinus undulatus in Appendix II. on base of consensus was a huge surprise, as conservation organizations accepted a big fight from some traditional opponents of the listing of marine species.

Committee II, made a very good day, accepting a whole series of important documents regarding bushmeat, trade control and marking, strategic and administrative matters, etc. On the corridors everybody considered that the day was a major success for conservation organizations. And that some of the decisions may have very long-lasting effect on CITES.

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