

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Fifteenth meeting of the Plants Committee and 21st meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 20-21 May 2005

Regional communication

REVIEW OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH MEMBERS AND
ALTERNATE MEMBERS PERFORM THEIR DUTIES

1. This document has been prepared by the working group on the regional communication of the Scientific Committees. It is a progress report on the discussion so far that will be continued intersessionally.
2. The working group comprised all members of the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committee and their alternates.

The Working Group identified 5 major fields that can cause problems to the regional representatives and their alternates trying to carry out their duties:

1. **Communication**
2. **Commitment (member, Party, employer)**
3. **Funds, especially for chairs from developing countries**
4. **Double role: chair and national representative at the same time**
5. **Capacity to perform the duties**

In detail the following problems were outlined.

Communication

Member states do not react or properly react to requests from their regional representative, especially with regard to request for their annual activities. This may be due to several reasons:

Technical problems to reach the member states and vice versa.

Member states regard other CITES aspects as more important (prioritization).

Too many request are received in the course of the year by the AC, PC, SC or the Secretariat.

Everybody hopes that one of the other member states will react.

Member states do not react because of job rotation as the new person is not familiar with the issue or not even empowered to react on behalf of the member state.

Language problems, especially in regions with a high number different languages spoken.

The internal communication within the member state is lacking.

The regional representative has to consolidate the information he or she receives from the region's member states. This may make the member states feel underrepresented in the region's input to the AC/PC and they stop participating.

Maybe the regional representatives should target their requests to the member states to specific issues of the region, downgrade or cease requests for annual national activity reports or simplify the work of the member state by providing a questionnaire where only fields have to be ticked or numbers included or set time frames for requests.

Maybe regional sections for information could be put on the CITES homepage.

The regional representative should try to build up confidence in his/her region. If this is done, lack of response is not a serious problem.

Regional representatives do not consult the member states of their region in a way to enable them to participate in the discussion process.

Newly elected representatives are not fully aware of what their duties/responsibilities are, they have to learn by doing; a sort of directory or manual for regional representatives is needed.

Sometimes requests are only sent to the MAs who do not transfer the requests to their SAs.

Commitment and funds or capacity made available

There is a lot of enthusiasm by the member states at the CoPs when regional representatives are to be elected but as soon as the CoP is over this commitment is reduced to moral support and the regional representatives are left alone with regard to funds and capacities made available to them to perform their duties.

Supplement money from the CoP may help.

Many regional representatives lack the capacity to perform their duties adequately as they have too many duties, some of which not even in connection with CITES and the heads of their department set priorities counterproductive to CITES. A manual or directory of the duties may help to increase capacities granted by the institutions concerned.

There should be a recommendation by CITES to institute CITES fellowships to assist regional representatives in their work.