

Conf. 12.6

Conservation and management of sharks

RECOGNIZING that sharks are particularly vulnerable to overexploitation owing to their late maturity, longevity and low fecundity;

RECOGNIZING that there is a significant international trade in sharks and their products;

RECOGNIZING that unregulated and unreported trade is contributing to unsustainable fishing of a number of shark species;

RECOGNIZING the duty of all States to cooperate, either directly or through appropriate sub-regional or regional organizations in the conservation and management of fisheries resources;

NOTING that IUCN – The World Conservation Union’s Red List of Threatened Species (2000) lists 79 shark taxa (from the 10 per cent of taxa for which Red List assessments have been made);

RECOGNIZING that the International Plan of Action on the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-sharks) was prepared by FAO in 1999 and that all States whose vessels conduct directed fisheries or regularly take sharks in non-directed fisheries are encouraged by COFI to adopt a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Shark Stocks (NPOA-Sharks);

NOTING that, through the adoption of Resolution Conf. 9.17 and Decisions 10.48, 10.73, 10.74, 10.93, 10.126, 11.94 and 11.151, Parties to CITES have previously recognized the conservation threat that international trade poses to sharks;

NOTING that two shark species are currently listed in Appendix III of CITES¹;

WELCOMING the report adopted at the 18th meeting of the Animals Committee that noted that CITES should continue to contribute to international efforts to address shark conservation and trade concerns;

NOTING that States were encouraged by FAO to have prepared NPOAs for sharks by the COFI 24th session held in 2001;

NOTING that there is a significant lack of progress with the development and implementation of NPOAs;

CONCERNED that insufficient progress has been made in achieving shark management through the implementation of IPOA-Sharks except in States where comprehensive shark assessment reports and NPOA-Sharks have been developed;

CONCERNED that the continued significant trade in sharks and their products is not sustainable;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

AGREES that a lack of progress in the development of the FAO IPOA-Sharks is not a legitimate justification for a lack of further substantive action on shark trade issues within the CITES forum;

INSTRUCTS the CITES Secretariat to raise with FAO concerns regarding the significant lack of progress in implementing the IPOA-Sharks, and to urge FAO to take steps to actively encourage relevant States to develop NPOA-Sharks;

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to continue activities specified under Decision 11.94 beyond the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and to report on progress at the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties;

¹ This was correct at the time of the adoption of the Resolution but changed on 13 February 2003.

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to critically review progress towards IPOA-Sharks implementation (NPOA-Sharks) by major fishing and trading nations, by a date one year before the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES;

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to examine information provided by range States in shark assessment reports and other available relevant documents, with a view to identifying key species and examining these for consideration and possible listing under CITES;

ENCOURAGES Parties to obtain information on implementation of IPOA-Sharks from their fisheries departments, and report directly on progress to the CITES Secretariat and at future meetings of the Animals Committee;

URGES FAO COFI and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to take steps to undertake the research, training, data collection, data analysis and shark management plan development outlined by FAO as necessary to implement the IPOA-Sharks;

ENCOURAGES Parties to contribute financially and technically to the implementation of the IPOA-Sharks;

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make species-specific recommendations at the 13th meeting and subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties if necessary on improving the conservation status of sharks and the regulation of international trade in these species;

RECOMMENDS that Parties continue to identify endangered shark species that require consideration for inclusion in the Appendices, if their management and conservation status does not improve; and

REQUESTS Management Authorities to collaborate with their national Customs authorities to expand their current classification system to allow for the collection of detailed data on shark trade including, where possible, separate categories for processed and unprocessed products, for meat, cartilage, skin and fins, and to distinguish imports, exports and re-exports. Wherever possible these data should be species-specific.