

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

RANCHING OPERATIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 60th meeting (SC60, Doha, March 2010), the Standing Committee agreed to recommend a suspension of trade with Madagascar in *Crocodylus niloticus* (Nile crocodile) specimens until 30 September 2010. It further agreed to review the situation by postal procedure after 30 September 2010 if the Secretariat determined that Madagascar had implemented the actions agreed at the meeting, and to then determine whether its recommendation should be withdrawn.
3. The actions agreed at SC60 were those developed by the SC58 Working Group on ranching operations for *Crocodylus niloticus* in Madagascar (France, Japan, Madagascar, the United States of America, IUCN and the Secretariat).
4. In accordance with the Standing Committee's decisions at SC60, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2010/015 of 17 June 2010 recommending that Parties not accept imports of Nile crocodile specimens coming from Madagascar until further notice.
5. On 29 September 2010, the Secretariat received a letter and attachments from the CITES Management Authority of Madagascar explaining the steps that had been taken to implement the actions agreed at SC60.
6. In early October 2010, the IUCN/SCC Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) offered to undertake a review of the letter and attachments submitted by Madagascar, which the Secretariat accepted.
7. The Secretariat briefly discussed Madagascar's implementation of the SC60 actions with representatives of the CITES Management Authority of Madagascar in the margins of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nagoya, October 2010) and the Workshop to Enhance the Capacity of CITES Negotiators (Nairobi, November 2010). The Management Authority representatives indicated that Madagascar had done all that it could, within available resources, to implement the actions agreed at SC60.
8. In mid-November 2010, the CSG sent the Secretariat its written review of Madagascar's documentation and copied this to Madagascar. The review indicated that Madagascar should be commended for advances that had been made (e.g. revision and adoption of the Strategy and Management Plan for Crocodiles in Madagascar 2010 - 2015) but that a number of actions relating to the harvest and export of Nile crocodiles from Madagascar had not yet been completed. The CSG mentioned that it had offered its assistance to Madagascar but that this offer had not been taken up.
9. In January 2011, the CITES Management Authority of Madagascar advised the Secretariat that ranching operators had expected trade would be restored after 30 September 2010. The Management Authority asked what follow-up actions were envisaged by the Secretariat.

10. The Secretariat wrote in February 2011 to thank Madagascar for the work that it had done to implement the actions agreed at SC60, especially its adoption of a new Strategy and Management Plan. Nevertheless, the Secretariat explained that its initial evaluation of the information submitted by Madagascar indicated that the Government's actions were not sufficient to advise the Standing Committee that the recommended trade suspension be lifted. The Secretariat further explained that it wished to undertake a deeper analysis of the information, in consultation with representatives of the CITES Management Authority of Madagascar, before writing formally to the Management Authority and the Standing Committee about its evaluation. In this connection, the Secretariat indicated that it would be helpful to know whether Madagascar had responded to the review done by the CSG. The Secretariat suggested that it might be useful to have a video or telephone conference with Madagascar about its implementation of the actions agreed at SC60. In its correspondence, the Secretariat also acknowledged receipt of a letter dated 8 February 2011 from Madagascar, which explained that existing budgetary restrictions in government ministries made it difficult for Madagascar to fully complete certain actions, and which requested the provision of technical assistance for at least one year from a consultant with expertise in crocodiles. Madagascar explained that such technical assistance could help it achieve a withdrawal of the recommended trade suspension as quickly as possible for the benefit of the economic sector, while respecting the actions that had been agreed by the Standing Committee.
12. In March 2011, the Secretariat proposed to Madagascar that it undertake a country mission to evaluate, in consultation with the CITES Management Authority of Madagascar, the efforts made by Madagascar to implement the actions agreed at SC60. The Secretariat stressed that it was important to engage directly and on site with the Management Authority in order to assess properly the nature and impact of its efforts to improve the management of ranching operations for the Nile crocodile.
13. The CITES Management Authority of Madagascar indicated that a Secretariat mission would be welcome. At the time of writing (June 2011), however, no specific dates for the mission had been agreed.
14. The Secretariat has discussed internally the possible identification of external funds to assist Madagascar. The amount and focus of such funds, however, requires additional discussion with Madagascar.
15. In April 2011, and again in June 2011, the CSG advised the Secretariat of interest by the crocodile industry in Madagascar to assist the Government of Madagascar with its implementation of the actions agreed at SC60.
16. The SC58 Working Group on ranching operations for *Crocodylus niloticus* in Madagascar might meet in the margins of the present meeting to consider the results of any Secretariat mission which is undertaken, the information previously submitted by Madagascar, the review done by the CSG and any additional information that might be provided by other members of the Working Group. On the basis of its discussions, the Working Group could advise the Standing Committee on whether to withdraw the recommended trade suspension contained in Notification to the Parties No. 2010/015.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that the SC58 Working Group on ranching operations for *Crocodylus niloticus* in Madagascar meet in the margins of this meeting to develop and provide specific recommendations for the Standing Committee to consider.