

(English only, two copies per delegation only /
Únicamente en inglés, dos copias por delegación únicamente /
Seulement en anglais, deux exemplaires par délégation uniquement)

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



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE

1. The attached document has been submitted by Norway.
2. The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Ministerial Round Table

The Hague, 13 June 2007

Statement by Norway

Strengthening the CITES

CITES is in many respects a well functioning international body. We need to continue to ensure that wild fauna and flora are not endangered by international trade. Norway is a strong supporter of CITES in this respect.

It is essential to the legitimacy of CITES that listing is based on scientific advice. If listings are not based on solid scientific advice the standing of CITES will deteriorate. We expect Contracting Parties to live up to its Convention and base their decisions on scientific evidence.

Norway favours the cooperation between CITES and relevant international management bodies. Such cooperation will strengthen the scientific basis for decisions taken by CITES. While parties will benefit from exchanging information we must keep in mind that CITES is not a resource management body.

CITES should avoid duplicating work that is primarily the task of resource management bodies.

Tropical timber

Within the field of tropical timber trade, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and CITES appear to be natural partners. ITTO has all the main producers and consumers of tropical timber as members and provides the best statistics both on trade developments, and on the timber situation. ITTO provides funding to, and cooperates with CITES member states in applying and enforcing CITES regulations, but a formal agreement or MoU is still not in place.

Norway supports that the 14th CoP decides to approach ITTO with a view to conclude a formal agreement. Such an agreement should include the following elements:

- Provide, when possible, early information on decrease in species occurrence;
- Provide other information of possible relevance to CITES on tropical forest developments;

- Strengthen the financing and cooperation towards their member states in CITES-regulations enforcement;
- Cooperate with members in order to strengthen forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) to combat illegal logging and trade, and encourage measures like the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA/FLEGT) started up between EU and Producer Partner Countries.

As resources are becoming scarce in the face of growing demand, this is a field where we may achieve more by bringing the main actors closer together and unite their forces.

Marine species

CITES is an important instrument for protection of biodiversity. It is particularly useful for protecting endangered species that are not the subject of any other regulatory measures, and where the international trade contributes to the threat to a species.

Commercially interesting marine species are primarily regulated through national or regional fisheries management bodies. We must strengthen the regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and make sure that they have biodiversity concerns as a high priority and that they base their management decisions on an ecosystem approach.

CITES has, however, a role to play in cases where the national authorities and RFMOs do not live up to their duties as regulatory bodies. But before Governments propose to list species, we would expect them to ask the relevant RFMOs to consider regulating the relevant fisheries in order to solve the problem and take action. We must avoid that listing of a species through the CITES system becomes an excuse for failing to implement national regulations.

Norway places great emphasis on the MoU developed between CITES and FAO on marine species. The FAO expert panel consists of some of the world's foremost experts on commercially exploited marine species and we do expect CITES to take their advice seriously. It is therefore a matter of concern to us that the CITES Secretariat, in four cases out of seven, has chosen to discard the FAO expert panel's recommendations and made recommendations that seem to lack substantive scientific justification.