

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



Twenty-sixth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-20 March 2012 and Dublin (Ireland), 22-24 March 2012

SEA CUCUMBERS [DECISION 14.100 (REV.COP15)]
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the Animals Committee representative of Oceania (Mr. Robertson), co-chair of the intersessional working group on sea cucumbers*.
2. In Decision 14.100, the Animals Committee was instructed to evaluate the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on Sustainable Use and Management of Sea Cucumber Fisheries and to recommend appropriate follow-up actions at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to support this initiative.
3. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 516 *Sea cucumbers: A global review of fisheries and trade* was made available at the 24th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC24, Geneva, 2009). This publication is part of the outcomes of the FAO Technical Workshop which was held in Ecuador from 19 to 23 November 2007. The full report in PDF format is available on the FAO website (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0375e/i0375e00.htm>).
4. At AC24, the Committee considered the information in the FAO document, and made the following recommendations:
 - a) *The Secretariat should prepare a report containing the executive summary of the FAO Technical Paper and the "Evaluation of the pros and cons of a CITES listing" contained in the Galapagos case study and these should serve as the working group's evaluation of the FAO report for submission to CoP15;*
 - b) *The Secretariat should request from FAO their technical guidelines on Sustainable management of sea cucumber fisheries and inform the Parties of the website link for the document, along with the website link for the workshop report, in a Notification to the Parties.*
5. The Chair of the Animals Committee considered with the Secretariat the implementation of the recommendations made at AC24 and came to the conclusion that the report mentioned in paragraph 4 a) above was not necessary since the executive summary and the "Evaluation of the pros and cons of a CITES listing" contained in the Galapagos case study were already contained in the FAO technical paper (see the URL under paragraph 3).
6. At its 15th meeting (CoP15, Doha 2010), the Conference of the Parties considered the information on sea cucumbers contained in the report of the Chair of the Animals Committee (document CoP15 Doc. 7.2.1). It congratulated the Animals Committee on the detailed work undertaken and the positive collaboration with the FAO, and highlighted the need for these efforts to continue. The Conference of the Parties revised Decision 14.100, as follows:

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

14.100 (Rev. CoP15) *The Animals Committee shall evaluate the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on Sustainable Use and Management of Sea Cucumber Fisheries, conducted in 2007, and recommend appropriate follow-up actions at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to support this initiative.*

7. The Secretariat contacted the FAO about the progress made in publishing the remaining publications on sea cucumbers on its website. The FAO advised the Secretariat to delay the implementation of the recommendation from the Animals Committee in paragraph 4 b) above until the two remaining publications were made available online in early 2011. However, the publication "Putting into practice an ecosystem approach to managing sea cucumber fisheries" was not available on line until after the 25th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC25, Geneva, July 2011), and the proposed publication "Commercially important sea cucumbers of the world" was still not available online as of mid-January 2012.
8. At AC25, the Animals Committee established an intersessional working group to evaluate the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on Sustainable Use and Management of Sea Cucumber Fisheries, conducted in 2007, and to recommend at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties appropriate follow-up actions to support this initiative. Due to the delay in publication of the FAO reports, the intersessional working group made no clear progress. A report on its activities is included in the Annex to this document.
9. The Committee is invited to evaluate the various outcomes of the FAO workshop and the FAO publications, and recommend appropriate follow-up actions to report at the 16th Conference of the Parties.

ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON SEA CUCUMBERS

Members

Hugh Robertson (Oceania) and Rosemarie Gnam (USA) [co-chairs], Lesley Gidding (Australia), Andrea White (Canada), Xiaojie Dao (China), Ashish Srivastava (India), Suharsono Soemorumekso (Indonesia), Noriuki Mizobe (Japan), Jun Akamine (Japan), Hernando Benitez (Mexico), Jeff Kinch (Papua New Guinea), Yoo-ee Katpetch (Thailand), Johanne Fischer (FAO), Dena Cator (IUCN), Teresa Telecky (Humane Society US), Juyun Jeng (SWAN International) and Sabri Zain (TRAFFIC).

General Information

1. At the 25th meeting of the Animals Committee the Secretariat introduced AC25 Doc 20. During discussion, the need to help improve the capacity of countries to manage sea cucumber fisheries was emphasized, and there was debate on the extent to which CITES should be involved in the conservation and management of sea cucumbers. It was reported that the identification manual on sea cucumbers being prepared by FAO was expected to be published electronically within the next few weeks.
2. The Committee established an intersessional working group to evaluate the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on Sustainable Use and Management of Sea Cucumber Fisheries, conducted in 2007, and to recommend at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) appropriate follow-up actions to support this initiative.
3. Discussions by the working group were delayed pending the publication of the final FAO report, which had been expected to be available online in July or August 2011 following a delay from early 2011.
4. Given the delay, the co-chairs decided to recommend that the intersessional working group:
 - a) supports dissemination of the FAO documents from its 2007 sea cucumber workshop, Technical Papers No. 516 and 520 and *Commercially important sea cucumbers of the world* (when it becomes available), by the Secretariat through a Notification to the Parties;
 - b) encourages range countries to take advantage of the information in these and other documents available from FAO and the report from the CITES workshop in 2003 (CoP14 Doc. 62), and use this information to manage their fisheries, and, where appropriate, develop their own proposals to list species in CITES Appendices at the next or future Conferences of the Parties; and
 - c) if time permits at AC26, the Working Group could convene to summarize major points that have emerged from the FAO sea cucumber documents and this information could be included in the Notification. This would conclude the work of this Working Group, and the recommendation from the Animals Committee to CoP16 should be that the work directed to it with regard to sea cucumbers has been completed and the issue should not be carried forward.
5. The only response to this proposal was from Teresa Telecky (Humane Society of the United States), who considered that it was still worthwhile reviewing the two available documents from the workshop and, based on these, recommend actions to CoP16 because if we wait until the next Conference of the Parties, presumably in 2016, the data upon which the recommendations would be based would be a decade old (the workshop was held in 2007), and perhaps even less valid.

Recommendations

6. Given the lack of feeling for or against the proposal of the co-chairs, it would be prudent for the committee to establish a Working Group at AC26 to summarize major points that emerged from the various FAO sea cucumber documents and recommend follow-up actions as necessary for consideration at CoP16.
7. If the final FAO publication becomes available before AC26, it is posted as an information document for the meeting.