

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



Fifty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Doha (Qatar), 12 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement issues

RANCHING OPERATIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat and addresses ranching operations in Madagascar for the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*).
2. At the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58, Geneva, July 2009), the Committee agreed on a list of priority actions to be undertaken by Madagascar by 31 December 2009 in order to avoid a Standing Committee recommendation to suspend all international trade in specimens of Nile crocodiles originating from Madagascar (see the SC58 summary record).
3. The Committee further agreed that the Secretary-General should send a letter to high-level officials in Madagascar which formally conveyed to them the list of priority actions and expressed the Committee's serious concerns that provisions of the Convention were not being effectively implemented by Madagascar in relation to its trade in the Nile crocodile.
4. Following SC58, France, Madagascar, IUCN's Species Survival Commission Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) and the Secretariat began discussing the resources needed to organize the capacity-building workshop and ranching operation audits envisaged under SC58 priority actions 1 d) and e). Unfortunately, changes in Madagascar's government during late August 2009 then affected communication with the CITES Management Authority.
5. On 29 August 2009, the CSG wrote to Japan to express its deep concern about the conservation status of the wild population of Nile crocodiles in Madagascar and to request that Japan check carefully whether shipments of Nile crocodile skins from Madagascar were in compliance with the Convention (see Annex 1).
6. An agreement on financing certain activities, including those envisaged in Madagascar, was signed by France and the Secretariat in October 2009. Under the agreement, the Secretariat is expected to report at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Doha, 13-25 March 2010) on the results of the workshop organized in Madagascar and this will be done under agenda item 28 on *Ranching and trade in ranched specimens*.
7. In early November 2009, the Secretariat was officially notified that a new Director General of Forests and a new Minister of Environment and Forests had been appointed with responsibility for CITES in Madagascar. The Secretariat sent the letter requested at SC58 to the Minister, together with the list of SC58 priority actions, shortly thereafter (see Annex 2).
8. On 10 November 2009, Japan responded to CSG's letter of August 2009 (see Annex 3) to explain that its trade surveillance system was appropriate and that CITES export permits were checked at the border. Nevertheless, it also advised that Japanese importers seemed to be suspending their trade in Nile crocodile skins from Madagascar for the foreseeable future.
9. During the second half of November, the Secretariat received the external funds from France which were intended to support the organization of the workshop and audits mentioned in paragraph 4 above. The Secretariat would like to thank the Government of France for providing these funds.

10. In early December, the Secretariat sent two draft Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to the Management Authority of Madagascar and the CSG but did not receive any substantive comments on them before the Christmas and New Year holidays.
11. In early January, as envisaged under priority action 3 agreed at SC58, the Management Authority of Madagascar sent a report on its progress in implementing the SC58 priority actions in January 2010 (see Annex 4).
12. During the same month, discussions on the MoUs were renewed and it was ultimately agreed that the workshop and audits would take place during February 2010. At the request of the Management Authority of Madagascar, the Secretariat consolidated the two draft MoUs into one MoU between the Secretariat and the CSG, and made provision under that MoU for certain funds to be transferred by the CSG to the Management Authority of Madagascar.
13. It is unfortunate that overall implementation of the SC58 priority actions has been delayed by a number of unanticipated events. The workshop and audits should nevertheless ensure that many of the actions are implemented before the present meeting.

#### Recommendation

14. The Secretariat will provide its recommendation to the Standing Committee during the present meeting, after taking into account the outcomes of the workshop and audits undertaken during February 2010.