

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



Sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 7-11 July 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

National reports

SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND  
REPORTING ON TRADE IN ARTIFICIALLY PROPAGATED PLANTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Standing Committee Working Group\* on Special Reporting Requirements, and the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, March 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted amendments to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16)<sup>1</sup> and Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP16)<sup>2</sup>, and adopted Decisions 16.43 to 16.46<sup>3</sup>, and Decisions 14.39 (Rev. CoP16) to 14.41 (Rev. CoP16)<sup>4</sup> on reporting.
3. To facilitate its consideration by Parties, the issues in this document are presented in five parts:
  - Part 1 provides information on implementation of Decision 16.44 which was directed to the Standing Committee;
  - Part 2 provides information on implementation of Decision 16.45 which was directed to the Animals and Plants Committees;
  - Part 3 provides information on implementation of Decision 16.46 which was directed to the Secretariat;
  - Part 4 provides information on implementation of Decisions 14.39 (Rev. CoP16) to 14.41 (Rev. CoP16) directed to the Secretariat, the Plants Committee, and the Standing Committee respectively concerning reporting on trade in artificially propagated plants;
  - Part 5 provides information on guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports.
4. Information on the late or non-submission of national reports is contained in document SC65 Doc. 24.1.
5. The Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements was established following Decisions 14.37 (Rev CoP15) and 14.38 (Rev CoP15). At its 62nd meeting (SC62, Geneva, July 2012), the Standing Committee decided that the Working Group should continue its work through to the 17th

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\* 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.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/04/04-06R16.php>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/11/11-17R16.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/195>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/194>

meeting of the Conference of the Parties<sup>5</sup>. The Working Group's mandate was re-established at CoP16 through Decision 16.44 (see Part 1 of this document), and Decisions 14.37 (Rev. CoP15) and 14.38 (Rev. CoP15) were retired. The Working Group is chaired by the United Kingdom; it currently has the following membership: Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Germany, Kenya, Switzerland, UNEP-WCMC, the Environmental Investigations Agency, the Species Survival Network, and the Secretariat.

6. The Working Group held its first meeting in the margins of the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee (SC61, Geneva, August 2011). A second meeting was held in the margins of SC62, a third virtual meeting of a subset of the Group was held on 12 September 2012, and a fourth meeting was held from 26 to 28 November 2013 in the Peterborough office of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), United Kingdom. Funds provided by JNCC and by the European Union made organisation of the face-to-face meeting in Peterborough possible, which was much appreciated. These meetings have enabled the Group to take forward its work and to develop this paper for the present meeting. The Working Group has also conducted its business by email, telephone and video conference.
7. The Working Group has focused on the need to keep reporting simple and targeted, to ensure the burden on Parties is minimised. It has considered that reports should assist with implementation of and compliance with the Convention, and that they should be used - by Parties, Convention bodies, or the Secretariat - to take forward the Convention's mandate. In particular, reported information should be used to assist decision making at specific meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee.
8. This document follows on from the report of the Working Group to CoP16 (see CoP16 Doc. 30 (Rev. 1)<sup>6</sup>). The paper makes a number of recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at the present meeting, and suggests next steps for the Working Group. It is planned to arrange a fifth meeting of the Working Group in the margins of the present meeting.

#### Part 1. Implementation of Decision 16.44

##### ***Directed to the Standing Committee***

16.44 *The Standing Committee, with the assistance of its Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements and the Secretariat, shall undertake the following actions at its 65th meeting or, if necessary, its 66th meeting (SC65 and SC66):*

- a) *adopt a revised format for reporting under Article VIII, paragraph 7 (b) and ensure distribution of the revised format through a Notification to the Parties;*
- b) *review identified special reporting requirements and the results of related reviews undertaken by the Animals and Plants Committees in accordance with Decision 16.45;*
- c) *assess whether each special reporting requirement identified in paragraph b) above is still current and valid, or whether it is outdated or otherwise unnecessary and can be considered for deletion, taking account of advice from the Animals and Plants Committees as appropriate;*
- d) *consider how best to assist Parties with the preparation and submission of national reports, including the opportunities offered for using information technology to capture information using online or electronic report formats;*
- e) *consider appropriate means for collecting statistical information on illegal trade through the annual report, taking into account the data fields contained in the INTERPOL Ecomessage or other relevant reporting formats;*
- f) *consider the linkages between the CITES Strategic Vision, and its indicators, and the Aichi Targets, including how best to report CITES input to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, its Aichi Targets and related global biodiversity indicators;*

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<sup>5</sup> See Com.4 at <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/62/com/index.php>

<sup>6</sup> See CoP16 Doc. 30 (Rev 1) at <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/16/doc/index.php>

g) *consider whether any CITES Strategic Vision indicators should be amended, deleted or added;*

h) *provide advice to the Secretariat on the publication of the outcomes resulting from implementation of the CITES Strategic Vision indicators; and*

i) *prepare a report for the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the results of this work and its future recommendations, if any.*

9. The actions detailed in Decision 16.44 have been grouped below into three sub-sections based on work undertaken by the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements:
- A. Review of reporting requirements (paragraphs b and c);
  - B. Revision of the implementation report and strategic vision indicators (paragraphs a, d, f, g and h); and
  - C. Reporting on illegal trade (paragraph e).

#### Section A. Review of reporting requirements

10. The Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements has been undertaking a review of the reporting requirements that have been agreed by CITES Parties over the years. Details of the work undertaken so far have been provided in document SC61 Doc. 24, in document SC62 Doc 24.2, and in document CoP16 Doc. 30.

11. In order to facilitate its review task, the Working Group developed a spreadsheet of reporting requirements. This was intended to serve as a resource to help the Group see the breadth of requests for information that Parties face and to show the types of special reporting requests which have arisen over the years. Following CoP16, the spreadsheet of reporting requirements was revised. Some of the previous requirements were removed following retirement of Decisions and amendment of Resolutions, and some new requirements that had arisen at CoP16 were identified. The number of requirements identified currently stands at 57.

12. During its work, the Working Group has been guided by the following language contained in Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP16):

*ACKNOWLEDGES that the Conference of the Parties may request that Parties provide special reports not required by the Convention, if additional information is needed that cannot be sought via the national reports required under Article VIII, paragraph 7, of the Convention;*

*RECOGNIZES that the Conference of the Parties, when requesting special reports, should give consideration to making those special reports time-limited, where this is appropriate, to avoid the potential for unnecessarily increasing reporting burdens;*

13. The Group has also been guided by the following language contained in Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP15) under RECOMMENDS that:

*d) when drafting resolutions and decisions which require the gathering of information, a Party consider whether such information could be sought via the annual or biennial report, or if a special report is needed, and generally ensure that the reporting burden is kept to a minimum;*

14. This language is important context. Reporting should be undertaken for a purpose – reporting for the sake of reporting is a waste of resources. The implications of this are to:

- reduce the number of reporting requirements to the minimum necessary;
- delete reporting requirements that impose unnecessary burdens;
- avoid retaining reporting requirements for longer than is necessary; and
- avoid creating new reporting requirements unless they are really needed.

15. A table listing the reporting requirements to be reviewed is provided in Annex 1. To implement Decision 16.45 (see Part 3 of this paper) the joint session of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and 21st

meeting of the Plants Committees considered those requirements relevant to them<sup>7</sup>. Their recommendations have been collated into Annex 1. The Standing Committee now needs to follow through from the Animals and Plants Committees review by deciding whether to accept their recommendations or not, and to agree recommendations for the reporting requirements that were not reviewed by the Animals and Plants Committees.

16. The Standing Committee is requested to review the reporting requirements identified in Annex 1 and, for each, advise whether the requirement is:
  - (a) still current and valid, or;
  - (b) outdated or otherwise unnecessary, and therefore no longer required.
17. To facilitate undertaking this work efficiently, the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements have (for those requirements not reviewed by the Animals and Plants Committees) provided in the last column of Annex 1:
  - A recommendation whether each requirement should be maintained or deleted (bold text);
  - Explanatory points (plain text); and
  - A proposal for the action to be taken to fulfil the mandate in Decision 16.44 (italic text).
18. The Standing Committee could decide to accept the Working Group's recommendations regarding special reporting requirements identified for the Committee's review. However it may be better for interested Committee members, Parties and observers to attend a meeting of the Working Group to take place in the margins of SC65 so that they have a chance to consider and comment on the work undertaken so far, and to ensure that the whole of Standing Committee is comfortable with the recommendations being made. The Chair of the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements stands ready to help facilitate such a discussion.
19. Recommendations relating to reporting requirements are made in paragraph 57.
20. Next steps relating to the review of reporting requirements:
  - a) The reporting requirements spreadsheet will need to be revised/consolidated following discussions by the Standing Committee at the present meeting.
  - b) The Secretariat should thereafter take ownership of further changes to the spreadsheet.
  - c) The spreadsheet should then be made available on the CITES website as a resource for Parties.
  - d) If any reporting requirements are deleted from Resolutions or Decisions, then a paper proposing the relevant changes to those Resolutions or Decisions will need to be presented to the 17th Conference of the Parties.

#### Section B. Implementation report

21. At CoP16 the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements made a number of suggestions (in CoP16 Doc.30 and associated annexes) for changes to the structure and timetable of the CITES reporting processes. As mentioned above, revisions to Resolution Conf. 4.6 and Resolution Conf. 11.17 were agreed at CoP16. One of the effects of these revisions was to treat the biennial report as a report which would follow the cycle of Conferences of the Parties. Given the current timings for Conferences of the Parties, the report will effectively become triennial. This report is referred to below as an implementation report to distinguish it from the annual report on trade. CoP16 also adopted a new CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2020 (Resolution Conf. 16.3<sup>8</sup>), which is relevant to the Working Group's work on a revised reporting format.

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<sup>7</sup> See AC27-PC21 WG1 Doc.1 at <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac27-pc21/index.php>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/16/16-03.php>

22. In Annex 5 to CoP16 Doc. 30 the Working Group made an initial suggestion of how the implementation report could be structured. The questions in the draft format were focussed on implementing the CITES Strategic Vision indicators so that the report would support assessment by the Conference of Parties on how well the Convention is being implemented and whether the Strategic Vision of the Convention is being achieved. The Conference of the Parties requested through Decision 16.44 paragraph a) that the Working Group continue this task and make a proposal for consideration by the Standing Committee at this meeting.
23. There is a need to avoid duplication between CITES website information that is regularly updated (e.g. the Directory) and the implementation report format. Information relating to, for example, the organisations providing scientific advice to management authorities, or changes in national focal point, should be provided to the Secretariat as it happens rather than waiting for a report. However, the report may prompt some Parties to provide updates if they have not already done so, so a reminder to update such information at the time of the implementation report may be useful. The recent revision of the CITES website to use a content management system may in due course offer opportunities for Parties to update specific information themselves in a structured manner rather than have to send information to the Secretariat and for the Secretariat to make changes.
24. The Working Group considered the opportunities for using information technology to aid delivery of Party reports, as required by paragraph d) of Decision 16.44, at its fourth meeting in November 2013. The Working Group reviewed the online system developed by UNEP-WCMC for use by the Convention on Migratory Species. That system is adaptable to the needs of CITES – by the entry of the specific questions for the report. The online system could potentially make the report easier for Parties to compile, for example by providing "help" sections, to assist Parties in interpreting the questions and perhaps provide definitions or examples where necessary. It is recognised by the Working Group however that issues of capacity and access to the internet in some parts of the world mean that an offline version should also be available for use, at least for the next report cycle or two.
25. Paragraph f) of Decision 16.44 relates to linkages between the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2020 and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Working Group considered this briefly in its November 2013 meeting, and concluded that further work is needed to make better use of a range of CITES information to show progress against relevant targets. The Working Group will need to come back to this after the present meeting.
26. The Working Group carefully considered the draft implementation report format at its meeting in November 2013. A number of questions were revised or deleted to try to ensure that the report is as focussed as possible. In addition, suggestions were made for changes to a number of the Strategic Vision indicators, in line with Decision 16.44 paragraph g), to make them fit better with circumstances which have changed since they were suggested, and to take account of changes in context – such as the development of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit. A consolidated proposal for revision of the Strategic Vision indicators is provided in Annex 2. The Standing Committee is asked to agree to the revised set of indicators in Annex 2 as a basis for measuring progress with the CITES Strategic Vision, and as a basis for the new implementation report.
27. Annex 3 of this document includes a (revised) proposed format for the implementation report. The Standing Committee is asked to review and adopt this format. If, at this stage, the Committee feels that further changes are necessary it would be most helpful to have specific wording suggestions rather than general comments.
28. Following the present meeting, in accordance with Decision 16.43, paragraph a), Parties should  
*submit the report for 2013-2014 using the revised format agreed at the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65) for reporting under the provisions of Article VIII, paragraph 7 (b), of the Convention;*
29. As a result of the revisions agreed at CoP16 to Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP16), the first implementation report will be due to be submitted by Parties to the Secretariat a year in advance of the 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17). The reason for setting the report to be due a year in advance of the following CoP is to allow information to be collated so it can be considered by the Standing Committee in advance of the CoP, and to allow time for publication of the Strategic Vision indicators in advance of the CoP. The exact dates for CoP17 are yet to be set, but the report can be anticipated to be due in early 2015.

30. An area for possible further change within the annual report or the implementation report remains; statistical information relating to enforcement. Consideration still needs to be given to the extent to which the questions in the special report developed by the Secretariat under Decision 16.46 paragraph d) should be consolidated into the annual report on trade or the new implementation report format. This is further considered in paragraph 37 in Section C of this document.
31. Recommendations relating to the implementation report and the Strategic Vision indicators are made in paragraph 58.
32. Next steps relating to the implementation report:
  - a. If necessary, the report format and Strategic Vision indicators will be further edited to take account of comments made by the Standing Committee;
  - b. Once the format has been agreed, and subject to available resources, the questions should be entered into the online reporting tool developed by UNEP-WCMC, and a small number of Parties asked to test the process for submission of reports. Volunteers would be welcome;
  - c. The new report format will then be issued by the Secretariat as a Notification.
  - d. Further work by the Working Group will be necessary to implement parts f) and h) of Decision 16.44 relating to linkages with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets together with advice on publication of the Strategic Vision indicators after information has been gathered through the new implementation report.

#### Section C. Reporting illegal trade

33. The Standing Committee, at SC61, requested the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements to consider the issue of gathering and analysis of data on illegal trade. Discussions at SC61 focussed on the recommendation from the Working Group on Illegal Trade to set up an illegal trade database. Concerns were expressed about the capacity of the CITES Secretariat to keep such a database up-to-date, and whether such a database would duplicate existing measures such as the use of Ecomessages and data already collated, for example by the World Customs Organisation (WCO), INTERPOL and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). The Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements was requested to consider how illegal trade information might fit into existing reporting processes.
34. Overall, the aim in relation to the gathering and analysis of data on illegal trade - as with other aspects of reporting - is to make reporting meaningful, harmonise reporting across relevant bodies, reduce Parties' reporting burden and provide regular feedback to Parties on the information reported. The gathering of data on illegal trade should be aimed at serving a particular purpose for the Parties (e.g. identification of high risk geographic areas / routes / transport methods / species / allocation of enforcement resources) and there should be regular, useful feedback on information that is reported. Greater sharing of enforcement data might assist law enforcement offices with their work and may be useful for analysis of illegal trade characteristics or trends. The sharing of these data is, at present, generally limited to law enforcement authorities.
35. The Working Group discussed this subject briefly during its second and third meetings in terms of considering possibilities to use electronic permitting to facilitate identification of the fraudulent use of permits, recognising the need to avoid duplicating existing communications channels used by INTERPOL and WCO, and identifying the opportunities that the annual report on trade might offer to flag up emerging issues. At SC62, the Working Group recommended (SC62 Doc. 24.2 paragraph 42a):

*The annual report format could be used more effectively with respect to illegal trade; Standing Committee should stipulate that illegal trade data should be a mandatory annual reporting requirement for all Parties, rather than optional as it is presently. This will enable analyses to be undertaken on species traded illegally, and potentially will reduce the number of requests for special species specific reports.*
36. The Working Group suggested that more work was needed to bring forward proposals on how to report illegal trade through the annual report, including how to handle the data collated, and the relationship between the fields of the annual report and the contents of INTERPOL Ecomessages or similar formats. There is scope for revising the annual report to include a separate section on illegal trade with information fields that are similar to those used by INTERPOL and WCO. However, it is important that any

work by CITES to increase the reporting of illegal trade is undertaken in a measured fashion to complement and avoid duplicating existing communication channels such as those of INTERPOL or WCO. Unfortunately, due to concentrating on other parts of its mandate, this analysis has yet to be undertaken.

37. At its fourth meeting in November 2013, the Working Group considered the opportunities that the annual and implementation reports might offer to flag up emerging issues or provide a statistical summary such as that being requested from Parties under paragraph b) of Decision 16.43 (see paragraphs 49 to 51 of this document). There was recognition that some Parties will find it difficult to provide very detailed information about every case, and that any reporting of illegal trade must respect judicial processes and not impact negatively on ongoing investigations and prosecutions, for example by prematurely releasing information that should be sub-judice. Summary statistics should however be easier to provide, and if aggregated across CITES Parties could give a good picture of enforcement issues as a regional or global level.
38. In December 2013 the Secretariat and the Chair of the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements took part in a workshop on effective enforcement indicators convened by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on behalf of International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC). The workshop was valuable in bringing together many interested parties to debate a framework for a set of possible enforcement indicators for voluntary use at national level. There are possible links with the role of the Working Group in considering the experience and potential contribution of CITES in collecting and summarising such information at a global or regional scale, particularly given the CITES Secretariat has agreed to take a lead in moving this work forward within ICCWC.
39. Under Decision 16.67<sup>9</sup> relating to great apes, an 'illegal trade reporting mechanism' is envisaged. It is not clear what this might turn out to be in practice. It could perhaps be an extension to the work on Minimising the Illegal Killing of Elephants and other Endangered Species (MIKES), or part of the work to capture information on illegal trade data under the annual report which is already being considered by the Working Group. Or it could be something entirely separate. Given the existence of the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements, and the work it is already doing to identify how illegal trade data might best be captured, the Standing Committee may wish to consider if the mandate of the Working Group should be expanded to consider this aspect of Decision 16.67 as well.
40. Recommendations relating to reporting illegal trade are made in paragraph 59.
41. Next steps relating to reporting illegal trade:

The Working Group should further analyse the opportunities for collating/collecting information on illegal trade by CITES and should report to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC66, Geneva, August 2015), including whether proposals for further change to the annual and/or implementation reports should be made at SC66 and/or at the 17th Conference of the Parties.

## Part 2. Implementation of Decision 16.45

### ***Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees***

- 16.45 *The Animals and Plants Committees, with the assistance of the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements and the Secretariat, shall undertake the following actions at their 27th meeting (AC27) and 21st meeting (PC21), respectively:*
- a) *review the special reporting requirements identified by the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements which relate to animals and plants, respectively;*
  - b) *assess whether any of these reporting requirements are still current and valid, or whether they are outdated or otherwise unnecessary and can be considered for deletion; and*
  - c) *advise the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements of the results of the review and assessments mentioned in paragraphs a) and b) above, in a timely manner, so that it can provide a collated report on valid reporting requirements for the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65).*

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/211>

42. The Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements recommended to SC62 that the Animals and Plants Committees should be involved in assessing which reporting requirements are still current and valid, and which are outdated or otherwise unnecessary and can be considered for deletion. The Standing Committee agreed<sup>10</sup>, noting the need to avoid any unnecessary burden on Parties and the Secretariat. That led to Decision 16.45 adopted at CoP16, directed to Animals and Plants Committees.
43. In May 2014, the joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees considered reporting requirements relevant to themselves (see AC27/PC21 Doc. 11<sup>11</sup>, and an associated information document AC27/PC21 Inf.1). The joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees agreed a recommendation for each of the reporting requirements considered<sup>12</sup>; these are documented in Annex 1 of this document. The Standing Committee now needs to take a view on whether to adopt the recommendations made by the joint session, or, if not, what action should be taken.
44. Recommendations relating to the implementation of Decision 16.45 are made in paragraph 60.

### Part 3. Implementation of Decision 16.46

#### ***Directed to the Secretariat***

#### **16.46 The Secretariat shall:**

- a) continue to collaborate with the Secretariats of other conventions, UNEP and other bodies in order to facilitate the harmonization of knowledge management and streamlining of reporting, including ways to reduce the burden of reporting on Parties;*
  - b) identify potential financial and other resources for publishing the outcomes resulting from implementation of the CITES Strategic Vision and its indicators;*
  - c) support the work of the Standing Committee and the Animals and Plants Committees, including their efforts to ensure that the graphic presentation of information on implementation of the CITES Strategic Vision indicators is published on the CITES website by the end of 2015 and then updated as resources allow, and as new information becomes available;*
  - d) develop a special report format for use by Parties under Decision 16.43 to provide statistical information for the calendar year 2013 on: administrative measures (e.g. fines, bans, suspensions) imposed for CITES-related violations; significant seizures, confiscations and forfeitures of CITES specimens; criminal prosecutions or other court actions; and disposal of confiscated specimens;*
  - e) collate for the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee a list of the currently valid reporting requirements under the Convention and advise on appropriate mechanisms for their implementation; and*
  - f) report at the 65th and 66th meetings of Standing Committee and at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the results of this work.*
45. With regard to paragraph a) of Decision 16.46, the MEA Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) Initiative among UNEP, other host agencies and a large number of global and regional convention secretariats is ongoing and continues to support the development of online reporting systems for its members. The CITES Secretariat acts as the Co-Chair of the IKM initiative as well as an EU-funded IKM project with UNEP. The project will develop a portal on reporting available through the IKM InforMEA website<sup>13</sup>.
46. Knowledge management and reporting are also elements of a UNEP-managed project on “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies”, funded by the European Union under its thematic programme on Environment and

<sup>10</sup> Item 24.2 in SC62 Executive Summary 5; available from <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/62/sum/index.php>

<sup>11</sup> See Document 11 and Inf.1 at <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac27-pc21/index.php>

<sup>12</sup> See AC27-PC21 WG1 Doc.1 at <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac27-pc21/index.php>

<sup>13</sup> [www.informe.org](http://www.informe.org)

Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (ENRTP). The ENRTP project was developed by UNEP, in consultation with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions.

47. Reporting issues were one of the key issues discussed during a meeting of the Basel Convention Implementation and Compliance Committee (Paris, December 2013). With funds provided by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, the CITES Secretariat was able to participate in the meeting and to share the experience on reporting and other compliance matters that has been gained under CITES. Secretariats for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR), the Cartagena Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, the London Protocol, the Montreal Protocol and the UNECE Espoo Convention also participated.
48. The Secretariat has not yet begun to work on implementation of paragraphs b), c) and e) as the steps preceding such work have not yet been completed.
49. Paragraph d) of Decision 16.46 is linked to paragraph b) of Decision 16.43 of the Conference of the Parties, which directs Parties to:

*submit a special report by 30 June 2014, using a format provided by the Secretariat, which provides statistical information for the calendar year 2013 on: administrative measures (e.g. fines, bans, suspensions) imposed for CITES-related violations; significant seizures, confiscations and forfeitures of CITES specimens; criminal prosecutions or other court actions; and disposal of confiscated specimens.*
50. On the basis of guidance provided by the Standing Committee Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements, the Secretariat developed a draft of the special report format required under part d) of Decision 16.46. This draft was discussed within the Secretariat and then revised, at which point it was shared with the Chair of the Working Group. At the time of writing, the Secretariat was preparing a further revised draft to share with Party members of the Working Group before preparation of a final draft of the format. A Notification to the Parties containing the new format should be issued before the present meeting. As the provision of this format to Parties has unfortunately been delayed, the Standing Committee may wish to consider revising the deadline for Parties to submit their reports.
51. The Secretariat intends to take the opportunity of provision of the special report format to practically test the concept of online reporting for CITES. This is through adaptation of a tool developed by UNEP-WCMC for reporting under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The Secretariat believe that testing the concept of online reporting for CITES will positively contribute to the implementation of paragraph d) of Decision 16.44. The use of the online mechanism for this special report will however be on a voluntary basis, as it is recognised that technological issues may be a problem for some Parties.
52. Recommendations relating to implementation of Decision 16.46 are made in paragraph 61.

#### Part 4. Reporting on trade in artificially-propagated plants

##### **Directed to the Secretariat**

14.39      *The Secretariat shall, subject to available funding, in consultation with the UNEP World  
(Rev.      Conservation Monitoring Centre:  
CoP16)*

- a) *conduct a survey of reporting practices of Parties relating to trade in artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II, e.g. regarding the degree of completeness and detail;*
- b) *identify cases where the compilation of trade data pertaining to artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II has contributed to a significant extent to the detection of illegal trade or to any other analysis related to the conservation of wild flora;*
- c) *taking into consideration the results of paragraphs a) and b) above, analyse the Convention text and Resolutions in order to identify binding and non-binding elements of reporting, with special emphasis on artificially propagated plants of taxa included in Appendix II. The Secretariat shall list options for streamlining such reporting; and*
- d) *report on its findings to the Plants Committee prior to its 21st meeting.*

### **Directed to the Plants Committee**

- 14.40        *The Plants Committee shall, after considering the report of the Secretariat:*  
(Rev.  
CoP16)     a) *determine whether there are any taxa of Appendix-II plants artificially propagated for which detailed reporting is less valuable; and*  
  
              b) *report its findings to the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting.*

### **Directed to the Standing Committee**

- 14.41        *The Standing Committee shall:*  
(Rev.  
CoP16)     a) *taking into consideration the findings of the Plants Committee, determine whether it is possible to streamline the reporting of trade in artificially propagated Appendix-II plants; and*  
  
              b) *report on its findings at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and submit draft wording to amend Resolutions concerned, where appropriate.*

53. The Secretariat's report on progress with implementing Decisions 14.39 (Rev. CoP16) and 14.40 (Rev. CoP16) was provided to the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (PC21, Veracruz, May 2014) in document PC21 Doc.16<sup>14</sup>. Additional information on the issue, compiled by UNEP-WCMC, is contained in document PC21 Inf. 2 (Rev. 1) and document PC21 Inf. 3.
54. The Plants Committee established a working group to discuss document PC21 Doc. 16, whose report is contained in document PC21 WG7 Doc. 1. Following related discussion in plenary, the Plants Committee decided to form an inter-sessional working group which would further consider the issue and report back at the 22nd meeting of the Plants Committee (2015). It is understood that the Plants Committee would thereafter provide the findings envisaged under Decision 14.41 (Rev. CoP16) to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (2015).
55. Recommendations relating to reporting on trade in artificially propagated plants are made in paragraph 62.

### **Part 5. Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports**

56. As reflected in the Working Group report contained in document CoP16 Doc. 30, comments and suggestions have been provided by UNEP-WCMC for improving the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports (see Annex 4 to document SC62 Doc. 24.2). The Working Group recommended that an updated set of Guidelines and an updated reporting format be considered and approved at SC63, following the invitation of comments from Parties through a Notification. This has not been possible, however, due to the press of other work priorities. A Notification to the Parties will be issued as soon as possible, inviting comments from Parties on both the current Guidelines found at <http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2011/E019A.pdf> and the proposed revisions to the Guidelines put forward by UNEP-WCMC. The Guidelines will be revised on the basis of all comments received and then presented to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration and possible approval.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/21/index.php>

## Recommendations

### Implementation of Decision 16.44

#### 57. Recommendations relating to reporting requirements:

- a) The Standing Committee should review all of the reporting requirements listed in Annex 1 and make a decision on whether they should be maintained or deleted.
- b) To increase the response rates for reports the Secretariat should raise the profile of reporting, for example by:
  - i. one or more reminder notifications before reports are due;
  - ii. consolidating all reporting in a particular, highly visible, section of the CITES website;
  - iii. developing a reporting search tool on the CITES website, to allow searches on reporting requirements, general advice or individual country reports. This would aid Parties to find the information needed for implementation and also find guidance on report submission and content.

#### 58. Recommendations relating to the implementation report and Strategic Vision indicators:

- a) The Standing Committee should review the proposed changes to the Strategic Vision indicators in Annex 2 and adopt the revised indicators (subject, if necessary, to detailed feedback provided at SC65).
- b) The Standing Committee should review the draft implementation report format in Annex 3 and adopt it (subject, if necessary, to detailed feedback provided at SC65).

#### 59. Recommendations relating to reporting illegal trade:

The Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements should further analyse the opportunities for collating / collecting information on illegal trade by CITES and should report to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.

### Implementation of Decision 16.45

60. Subject to comments on individual reporting requirements by SC65 under Decision 16.44, the recommendations for maintaining or deleting reporting requirements relevant to the Animals and Plants Committees listed in Annex 1 should be adopted.

### Implementation of Decision 16.46

61. Parties should, where possible, use the online reporting process for provision of the special report on enforcement measures. They should submit such reports by 31 October 2014 and are invited to provide comments on the process to the Secretariat by the end of November 2014.

### Reporting on trade in artificially-propagated plants

62. In view of the Plants Committee decision to continue its consideration of this issue until PC22 (2015), as described in paragraph 54 above, the Standing Committee should defer consideration of the issue until SC66.

### Annual report guidelines

63. It is recommended that the Secretariat revise the Annual Report Guidelines on the basis of previous comments received from UNEP-WCMC and any comments received from Parties in response to a Notification to be issued after the present meeting. It is further recommended that the Secretariat present the revised Guidelines to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration and possible approval.

### Next Steps

64. Suggestions for next steps for taking forward the remit of the Working Group on Special Reporting Requirements are proposed section by section – please refer to:
  - a. Paragraph 20 with respect to the review of reporting requirements;
  - b. Paragraph 32 with respect to the implementation report and Strategic Vision indicators;
  - c. Paragraph 41 with respect to reporting on illegal trade;
65. A meeting of the Working Group in early 2015 is likely to help with taking this work forward. Whether a meeting is possible will be subject to the availability of resources to enable the Working Group to convene, as the discussions required are likely to need to be very interactive, and therefore more suited to a physical meeting than electronic discussions.

### Annexes

66. This paper is supported by three Annexes:
  - a. A list of reporting requirements and draft recommendations for consideration by Standing Committee, including recommendations from the joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees on those reporting requirements reviewed by them (Annex 1).
  - b. A proposal for a revised set of Strategic Vision indicators (Annex 2).
  - c. A proposal for the implementation report format (Annex 3).