

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

Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Other themes and issues

Bushmeat

BUSHMEAT WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat on behalf of the CITES Bushmeat Working Group.

Background

2. At its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 11.166 as follows:

*The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *note the concerns, issues and suggestions contained in document Doc. 11.44 'Bushmeat as trade and wildlife management issue' and, taking this document as a starting point, convene a working group of interested range and donor States to examine issues raised by the trade in bushmeat, with the aim of identifying solutions that can be willingly implemented by range States; and*
  - b) *contact organizations such as the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and others that can make a contribution to achieve better and sustainable management of the bushmeat trade under their own mandates, and invite them to participate in the above-mentioned working group.*
3. The CITES Bushmeat Working Group was subsequently established, consisting of representatives from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. These Parties agreed to form a case-study region to identify the issues raised by and possible solutions to what is now commonly described as the 'bushmeat crisis'.
  4. At its 12th meeting (CoP12, Santiago, 2002), the Conference of the Parties noted document CoP12 Doc. 12.62 and adopted Decisions 12.19 and 12.20 as follows:

*12.19 The Bushmeat Working Group shall be maintained with its current balance of membership and approximate size until the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and shall continue, using external funding, to examine issues raised by the trade in bushmeat and to implement its action plan, with a view to proposing solutions.*

Directed to the Secretariat

*12.20 The Secretariat shall continue to facilitate and overview the work of the Bushmeat Working Group and shall report on its activities at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

5. The CITES Bushmeat Working Group has met twice since CoP12: in March 2003 and in January 2004.
6. Cameroon, the Congo and Gabon have adopted national action or management plans regarding trade in bushmeat.
7. At its fifth meeting, in Douala, Cameroon, in January 2004, the Group discussed a draft resolution for submission to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13), which would incorporate the lessons learned by the Group during its work and identify the issues that the Group believes must be addressed if bushmeat is to be regulated in a sustainable manner and illicit trade is to be combated effectively. The draft resolution is attached to this document in Annex 1 and is being submitted to the Conference of the Parties by the Secretariat on behalf of the CITES Bushmeat Working Group.
8. The CITES Bushmeat Working Group believes that it has fulfilled the mandate it was given by the Conference of the Parties and that the solutions it was tasked to identify are contained in the draft resolution. The Group suggests that there is still much to be learned from the initiatives that it has taken and that the Conference of the Parties may benefit from continuing to receive reports of their development. The Parties that are members of the Group are particularly keen to continue their activities and to receive support to do so. Consequently, draft decisions have been prepared that would facilitate this process but without the necessity for the Group to continue to be a working group of the Convention. Indeed, it is believed that it will be better served in its work if it can attract greater involvement and support from those organizations that deal with the many issues related to the trade in bushmeat that are outside the scope of CITES. The draft decisions are contained in Annex 2 of this document.

#### COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARIAT

- A. From its conception at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, it was always intended that the CITES Bushmeat Working Group would conduct the majority of its work without any significant involvement of the Secretariat and this has, in practice, been the case. The Secretariat provided assistance to the Group in preparing the draft resolution in Annex 1, as it believed that the adoption of a resolution was probably the most practical way in which the solutions that the Group was tasked with identifying could be brought to the attention of the Parties.
- B. However, the Secretariat is conscious that the majority of issues that initially prompted concern and that indicate that the trade in bushmeat may be unsustainable and may threaten endangered species are not issues related to CITES and that it is the levels of domestic harvesting, trade and consumption that pose the greatest threat. Indeed, it appears that international trade in specimens of CITES-listed species for bushmeat is limited and that actions at national level that will be needed if trade is to be conducted in a sustainable manner. The Secretariat is aware of relatively few examples of illegal international trade in specimens of CITES-listed species for bushmeat, although it is aware of illegal trade in non-CITES species. Anecdotal reports indicate that where illegal trade in specimens of CITES listed-species does occur, it is primarily with neighbouring countries and is, thus, a sub-regional issue rather than an international matter that deserves the attention of all Parties.
- C. Defining the term 'bushmeat' is extremely difficult and this may create problems for drafting appropriate legislation or policies. When this subject was first drawn to the attention of the Conference of the Parties in document CoP11 Doc. 11.44, bushmeat was defined as "meat for human consumption derived from wild animals". The Secretariat is aware of studies and literature that have described 'bushmeat' as 'non-timber forest products'. It believes that both approaches are too simplistic but also too all-encompassing. For example, whilst it would probably be appropriate to have a definition of the term that would take account of trade in primates from the forests of Africa and Asia, should it exclude consumption of turtle eggs, venison or salmon? Interpreted literally, aspects of the draft resolution could be taken to mean, for example, that countries in Europe should take action in relation to the domestic harvesting of, trade in and consumption of rabbits.
- D. In light of these observations, the Secretariat finds it difficult to endorse unreservedly the draft resolution. However, it is unable to readily identify a practical alternative approach at this time. If the Conference of the Parties agrees that the draft resolution contains useful advice and guidance, the

Secretariat suggests that the text should be viewed in this way and that the resolution, if adopted, should not be used as a standard against which Parties will be measured and that compliance with such a resolution should not be examined in a manner similar to those relating to, for example, bears, sturgeons or tigers and Asian big cats. To this end, the Secretariat suggests that the words, 'URGES' and 'RECOMMENDS' in the first three operative paragraphs should be replaced with the word 'ADVISES'.

- E. The Secretariat believes that CITES has made a good start in identifying both the issues and the solutions but that work on this subject should be continued by other agreements or organizations, such as those listed in the final paragraph of the draft resolution. Since it believes that future work is better conducted under the auspices of other agreements or organizations, it does not endorse the draft decisions in Annex 2.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Bushmeat

RECALLING Decision 11.166, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), relating to the establishment of the CITES Bushmeat Working Group;

RECOGNIZING that poaching and illicit trade in bushmeat constitute the greatest threat to the survival of wildlife species, for example gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants and crocodiles, in Africa in general, but especially in Central Africa, and also in all other countries in the world;

CONSIDERING that illicit trade in bushmeat increases poverty and the food deficit among rural communities using bushmeat as their main source of animal protein;

ALSO RECOGNIZING the political will of the States in the sub-region to work for the sustainable management of forest resources as expressed in sub-regional initiatives, including the Yaoundé Declaration;

ALSO CONSIDERING the recognition by the States of the sub-region of the bushmeat crisis as a major threat to the preservation of biodiversity;

ALSO CONSIDERING the potential negative consequences of the development of the timber industry and the exploitation of natural resources;

NOTING the resolution of the European Parliament regarding the non-sustainable exploitation of wildlife and the illicit trade in bushmeat as a major threat to the survival of wildlife species, including apes, and also a threat to the food security of the rural communities living in forested areas and depending on bushmeat in their diet;

NOTING that the trade in bushmeat involves many species listed in the Appendices of the Convention but also species the trade in which is not regulated by CITES;

CONCERNED that unregulated trade in and consumption of bushmeat may bring risks to human health;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES all relevant Parties:

- a) to prohibit the offtake of Appendix I species for consumption as food and to maintain sustainable levels of offtake for species in Appendix II and III of the Convention;
- b) to improve the domestic management of CITES-listed species harvested, traded and consumed as bushmeat through the review and, if needed, strengthening of relevant informative, legislative, *in situ* conservation, monitoring, enforcement and social or economic incentive measures;
- c) to define clearly the administrative responsibilities of the government agencies that may be involved in, or can contribute to, the domestic regulation of trade in bushmeat and the import, export, re-export and transit or transshipment of bushmeat;
- d) to clarify or establish property rights regarding CITES-listed species harvested, traded and consumed as bushmeat and to involve local communities in the monitoring of harvest, trade and consumption;
- e) to review and, if needed, revise logging and other natural resource concessions to ensure that they contribute to the legal, non-detrimental harvesting of, trade in and consumption of bushmeat;
- f) to encourage the adoption of codes of conduct by the timber, fishing and other natural resource extraction industries that take account of harvesting, consumption and trade in bushmeat; and

- g) to identify alternative sources of protein and other measures to reduce the demand for bushmeat, particularly the consumption of specimens of Appendix-I species;

URGES:

- a) all Parties and non-Parties to raise the awareness of staff in government agencies responsible for the regulation and inspection of food for human consumption, especially those engaged in CITES border controls and ensure that any cross-border trade in food derived from CITES-listed species is accompanied by the necessary import or export permit or re-export certificate; and
- b) all relevant States that are not party to CITES to accede to the Convention at the earliest possible date in order to improve control of international trade in bushmeat;

RECOMMENDS that:

- a) all relevant Parties carry out appropriate education campaigns directed at both urban and rural communities to raise awareness of the conservation concerns associated with the trade in bushmeat, especially the consumption and trade in specimens of Appendix-I species, and of the risks to human health associated with unregulated trade in food derived from wild animals;
- b) all relevant Parties take measures to increase awareness among enforcement, prosecution and judicial authorities of the illicit trade in specimens of CITES-listed species for human food consumption;
- c) the Parties provide to the Secretariat detailed information on significant cases of illicit international trade in bushmeat and inform each other of all circumstances and facts likely to be relevant regarding such trade, with the aim of eradicating it; and
- d) relevant Parties make use of information gathered in the MIKE (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) system, which may assist in providing data regarding the use of elephant meat in the bushmeat trade and contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of poaching and the trade in bushmeat;

REQUESTS:

- a) countries and organizations with relevant expertise to support range and consumer States in the preparation or distribution of practical identification techniques to help determine whether bushmeat is derived from CITES-listed species; and
- b) that, since biological and distribution data are essential for sustainable trade in bushmeat, donors assist in funding and providing expertise to develop computer databases and mapping and other necessary conservation management techniques; and

CALLS UPON relevant international organizations and the secretariats and parties to international treaties to recognize the important role they can play in providing assistance, especially to range States, in regulating the trade in bushmeat and tackling the associated issues of poverty, habitat degradation, human population growth and utilization of natural resources, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, including its Great Apes Survival Project, and the United Nations Population Fund.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Regarding bushmeat as a trade and wildlife management issue

- 13.xx The CITES Bushmeat Working Group, renamed the Central Africa Bushmeat Working Group, is encouraged to continue its work and report to the CITES Secretariat on progress made in implementing national action plans relating to the trade in bushmeat and other initiatives it takes regarding this subject. If appropriate, a report on the subject of bushmeat should be submitted to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 13.xx Governments and intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and other donors are encouraged to support the work of the Central Africa Bushmeat Working Group and its member States to implement national action/management plans and to develop a database regarding trade in bushmeat.