

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

Administrative matters

Financing and budgeting of the Secretariat and of meetings of the Conference of the Parties

NON-PAYMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 14.1 which:

REQUESTS all Parties to pay their contributions as far as possible during the year prior to the one to which they relate or, otherwise, promptly by the beginning of the calendar year (1 January to 31 December) to which the contributions apply;

NOTES with concern that a number of Parties have not paid their contributions to the core budget (CITES Trust Fund) for 2006 and prior years which were due on 1 January of each year, thus affecting adversely the implementation of the Convention;

RECOMMENDS all Parties with arrears, that have ratified the amendment on the Convention adopted on 22 June 1979, to pay without delay and, in the event that there is no improvement in the payment of contributions by Parties, INVITES the Secretary-General to submit proposals with a facilitative approach for dealing with non-payment of contributions by Parties for consideration and review by the Conference of the Parties at its 15th meeting.
3. While the Secretariat sends letters to all Parties requesting them to pay their contributions before the beginning of the calendar year to which they apply, it also sends reminders at least twice a year to the Parties that have fallen into arrears with their contributions. In addition, the Secretary-General has visited and met with the Ambassadors of the 25 Parties with the highest level of arrears and requested them to assist in having them settled. This initiative was welcomed by all permanent missions visited and most of them responded positively.
4. The regional representatives to the Standing Committee were also asked to provide assistance and follow-up with those Parties in arrears in their regions. This proved to be effective since several Parties contacted the Secretariat, asking for their balances and have made payments since then.
5. Nevertheless, in spite of these efforts, there are still some Parties that have not paid their contributions for three years or more. In August 2009, the Secretariat sent letters to those Parties that are in arrears for years prior to 2007, asking them to fulfil their obligation and, if unable to do so, to submit a payment plan by 30 September 2009. These letters were also copied to those Parties' permanent missions in Geneva to seek their assistance regarding this matter. Several Parties responded and have made payments while some submitted their payment plans. This has been acknowledged by the Secretariat as a positive effort by those Parties concerned, which will enable them to eventually pay their contributions.
6. Annex 1 shows the updated table of unpaid contributions as of 31 December 2009. Greece and Mali settled their unpaid contributions upon receipt of this letter. Comoros, Morocco, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Yemen submitted payment plans and made commitments of paying their arrears. The Secretariat is following-up with these countries on their payment schedules.

7. However, the following countries did not respond to the above-mentioned letter:
 - a) Parties in arrears from 2000 and prior years: Antigua and Barbuda, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Paraguay, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, and Uzbekistan.
 - b) Parties in arrears from 2002 to 2007: Bolivia, Cape Verde, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Iran, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Nepal, Palau, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and Suriname.
8. A few Parties have requested that their long overdue and unpaid contributions be cancelled. The writing-off of unpaid contributions has been discussed on several occasions at meetings of the Standing Committee. At SC41 (Geneva, February 1999), the Parties expressed concern that writing-off would be an undesirable precedent, leading to an expectation that debts would be written-off after a certain time. Consequently, they have not agreed to write-off long overdue contributions.
9. The Secretariat proposes that the Conference of the Parties adopt the decision in Annex 2 to this document.