

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 23 May – 3 June 2019

Species specific matters

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.124 to 17.130 on *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*), as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.124 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, and in consultation with relevant experts, commission the development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit that compiles relevant information and tools to assist in implementing the Convention with regard to trade in cheetahs, and addresses inter alia: identification of live cheetahs and parts and derivatives thereof; advice on procedures to be followed in case of seizures including handling, DNA sampling, guidance on the immediate and long-term disposal of live animals (e.g. decision trees based on relevant CITES Resolutions, veterinary care, contact details of experts or potential rescue centres, advice on procedures, reporting on disposal activities); and lists of suitable housing facilities for long-term placement of live cheetahs; and other relevant materials.*
- 17.125 *The Secretariat shall submit a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, together with recommendations on the languages in which it should be made available, and the formats in which it should be made available (e.g. hard copy, smart phone application, web-based), to the Standing Committee at its 69th or 70th meeting for its consideration. The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the Standing Committee, and subject to available resources, revise it as may be necessary to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and reflecting best practice.*
- 17.126 *The Secretariat, subject to available resources, is invited to assess the feasibility of creating a forum on the CITES website for Parties, experts, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to exchange and share information on cheetahs.*
- 17.127 *The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee on progress on all of the recommendations in Standing Committee document SC66 Doc. 32.5, paragraphs 17 and 18, and progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs.*
- 17.128 *The Secretariat shall keep the Standing Committee informed about its actions to implement Decisions 17.124 - 127 and report on their implementation and its efforts to halt illegal trade in cheetahs at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.129 *The Standing Committee shall review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit produced in compliance with Decision 17.125 at its 69th or 70th meeting, and formulate comments and recommendations to the Secretariat for its finalization and dissemination.*

Directed to Parties and donors

17.130 *Parties and potential donors are encouraged to provide funding support to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Decisions regarding illegal trade in cheetahs (Decisions 17.124 - 130), where needed.*

3. In accordance with Decision 17.128, the Secretariat reported to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Decisions 17.124 – 127 and its efforts to address illegal trade in cheetahs, at the 69th and 70th meetings of the Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017; SC70, Sochi, October 2018) [see documents [SC69 Doc. 45](#) and [SC70 Doc. 43](#)]. The Standing Committee at both these meetings agreed to recommendations on *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*), as presented in documents [SC69 SR](#) paragraph 45 and [SC70 Sum. 9 \(Rev. 1\)](#), paragraph 43.

Development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit: Implementation of Decisions 17.124, 17.125, 17.128, 17.129 and 17.130

4. The Secretariat received external funding for the development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit in accordance with Decision 17.124 in late May 2018, and thanks the United States of America for the generous funding it provided in line with Decision 17.130 to progress this work. The Secretariat contracted the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to develop a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, but due to the limited time available between May 2018 and SC70 it was, unfortunately, not ready for review by the Standing Committee at SC70. The Committee therefore invited the intersessional working group on cheetahs established at SC69¹ to review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit and the recommendations of the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 17.125. The Committee further requested the working group to formulate comments and recommendations on the finalization and dissemination of the resource kit, for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 71st meeting (SC71, Colombo, May 2019).
5. At the time of writing, it is expected that the draft resource kit, as well as the recommendations of the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 17.125, will be ready for review by the intersessional working group in early January 2019. The comments and recommendations of the intersessional working group on the finalization and dissemination of the resource kit will be presented to the Committee at SC71 for consideration. The Secretariat will then, in accordance with the comments and recommendations of the Committee as per Decision 17.129, finalize the CITES cheetah trade resource kit for dissemination.
6. The Secretariat notes that the current funding available is only sufficient for the development of the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit. Within its regular work programme, the Secretariat should be in a position to finalize the resource kit taking into consideration any inputs received from the intersessional working group and the Standing Committee. An oral update in this regard will, as required, be provided at the present meeting. However, depending on the recommendation of the Standing Committee regarding the languages and formats in which the CITES cheetah trade resource kit should be made available, further external funding might be required for translation and publication. In this regard, the Secretariat prepared draft Decision 18.AA, as presented in paragraph 16 of the present document for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.
7. In the light of the above the Secretariat considers that Decisions 17.124, 17.125, 17.129 and 17.130 can be deleted.

Forum to exchange and share information on the CITES website: Implementation of Decisions 17.126, 17.127 and 17.128

8. To implement Decision 17.126, the Secretariat developed a [webpage on cheetahs](#) on the CITES website. This webpage contains, among other things: links to relevant Decisions, Resolutions and Notifications to the Parties; tools and resources relevant to cheetahs; and a section that could serve as a forum for exchanging and sharing information on cheetahs, as appropriate. Parties, experts, intergovernmental and non-

¹ *The mandate and composition of this working group is presented in document [SC69 Sum. 6 \(Rev. 1\) paragraph 45](#)*

governmental organizations and other stakeholders that would like to share relevant information on cheetahs are encouraged to use the webpage for this purpose. This information should however not include sensitive information for law enforcement purposes. Such information should instead be shared via the cheetah closed user group elaborated upon in paragraph 9 below, or through other available channels,² as appropriate.

9. In accordance with Decision 17.127 and recommendation c) adopted at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC66, Geneva, January 2016) (see document [SC66 SR](#) paragraph 32.5), the Secretariat worked with the World Customs Organization (WCO) to establish a closed user group on cheetah on the WCO CENComm platform, to facilitate the exchange of information on illegal trade in cheetah specimens. The closed user group provides a secure communication system similar to email, that operates on a secure platform designated for law enforcement purposes. It also provides access to a digital library of documents which includes alerts and other relevant materials and information. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. [2018/046](#) of 7 May 2018, inviting Parties to join the cheetah closed user group. The Standing Committee at SC70 also encouraged Parties to communicate the establishment of the cheetah closed user group to their relevant national authorities, and to encourage its use.
10. The Secretariat considers that Decision 17.126 has been implemented and recommends that it be deleted.

Implementation of recommendations adopted at SC66, SC69 and SC70, and progress to halt illegal trade in cheetahs: Implementation of Decisions 17.127 and 17.128

11. To facilitate its reporting at SC69 in accordance with Decisions 17.127 and 17.128, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. [2017/039](#) of 15 May 2017, inviting Parties to submit information on their implementation of recommendations a), b), d) and e) on cheetahs adopted by the Standing Committee at SC66, as presented in document [SC66 SR](#) paragraph 32.5, as well as on any other measures that they had implemented to halt illegal trade in cheetahs. In response to the Notification, only one reply was received. The Management Authority of Yemen requested support from the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to provide capacity-building for enforcement officers. The Secretariat explored with its ICWC partners the feasibility of organizing a regional workshop to address the illegal trade in cheetahs. In particular, convening a regional meeting for Eastern Africa and the Middle East, with a focus on illegal trade in cheetahs and illegal trade in other wildlife species affecting these regions was discussed with INTERPOL, but has not yet been decided. The Secretariat notes, however, that document CoP18 Doc. 76.1 on *African lion* (*Panthera leo*) includes a draft decision regarding the establishment of a CITES Big Cats Task Force (see paragraph 15 below). The Secretariat believes, to avoid duplication and achieve greater impact, it will be more appropriate to address matters related to illegal trade in cheetahs as part of such a Task Force. Therefore, should the draft decision in document CoP18 Doc. 76.1 be adopted by the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat will not pursue a regional meeting focusing on illegal trade in cheetahs and other wildlife for Eastern Africa and the Middle East.
12. The mandate of the intersessional working group on cheetahs, established by the Committee at SC69, includes providing advice to the Secretariat to support the fulfilment of Decision 17.127. To facilitate the Secretariat's reporting at SC70 in accordance with Decision 17.127 and 17.128, the working group on cheetahs developed a questionnaire with the Secretariat to assist Parties in compiling information on progress with the implementation of the recommendations on cheetahs adopted by the Standing Committee at SC66 and SC69, and on progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs. The Secretariat made the questionnaire available to Parties as an Annex to the Notification to the Parties No. [2018/058](#) of 4 June 2018. The Secretariat received replies from 17 Parties³ and one non-Party⁴, which were shared with the Chair of the intersessional working group on cheetahs. In addition, information concerning three Parties were received from two non-governmental organizations.⁵ Prior to sharing this information with the working group, the Secretariat consulted the Parties concerned on the submissions. One Party did not approve the use of this information and the two submissions for which approval were received, were subsequently shared with the Chair of the working group. The working group used the information gathered through the questionnaires to analyze progress of the implementation of the recommendations on cheetahs and in halting illegal trade in this species. This analysis is available as Annex 2 to document SC70 Doc. 43, and includes activities and measures regarding public awareness and education, enforcement and disposal of confiscated live

² <https://cites.org/eng/prog/imp/enf/introduction>

³ *Angola, Bahrain, Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Namibia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe*

⁴ *South Sudan*

⁵ *Cheetah Conservation Fund and Endangered Wildlife Trust*

cheetahs. A summary is presented in paragraphs 10 to 21 in document SC70 Doc. 43. Based on this information, the Committee at SC70 agreed a number of recommendations on *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*), as presented in document SC70 Sum. 9 (Rev. 1).

13. In light of the above, the Secretariat considers that Decisions 17.127 and 128 have been implemented, and can be deleted.

Joint CITES - Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) African Carnivores Initiative

14. At SC69, the Secretariat informed the Standing Committee that the CITES and CMS Secretariats developed a Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative, with inputs from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Through its establishment, the two Secretariats would seek to bring coherence and efficiency to the implementation of their respective resolutions and decisions relating to four iconic African carnivore species, i.e. African lion (*Panthera leo*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), and African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) (see Annex to document AC29 Doc. 29 for a description of the Initiative). The Committee, at SC69, noted the efforts of the CITES and CMS Secretariats, and the support of IUCN.
15. At the First Meeting of Range States for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (AC11, Bonn, November 2018), the participating African carnivore range States agreed on draft decisions for consideration at the present meeting, requesting the Secretariat to, subject to external funding, establish and convene a CITES Big Cats Task Force. It would aim to provide a platform to (i) discuss enforcement and implementation issues related to the illegal trade in specimens of big cats; (ii) as deemed appropriate, exchange intelligence and other information on the illegal trade in big cats; and (iii) develop strategies and make recommendations to improve international cooperation regarding the enforcement of CITES provisions concerning illegal trade in specimens of big cats. In document CoP18 Doc. 76,1, the Secretariat proposes the adoption of this draft decision.

Recommendations

16. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- a) adopt the following draft decision:

Directed to the Secretariat

18.AA The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the Standing Committee.

- b) delete Decisions 17.124 to 17.130.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.

The Secretariat should be in a position to, within its regular work programme, finalize the resource kit taking into consideration any inputs received from the intersessional working group on cheetahs and the Standing Committee.

The implementation of draft decision 18.AA is subject to the provision of external funds, and does not require core funds. Supervision of the work will require some time from the Secretariat, but should be a core part of the Secretariat's work and accommodated within its regular work programme. The funding required for the implementation of draft decision 18.AA will depend on the number of languages and formats the Standing Committee agrees the CITES cheetah trade resource kit will be made available. This can only be determined once the comments and the recommendations of the Committee are known.