

CITES WORLD

Official Newsletter of the Parties Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Issue Number 4 - December 1999

Letter from the Editor

New Parties

The Secretariat is pleased to welcome to the ever expanding CITES family, Grenada, whose accession to the Convention comes into force on 28 of November 1999, thus becoming the 146th Party.

Grenada is a rolling, mountainous island, covered with spice trees and rare tropical flowers. In the interior of this volcanic island are cascading rivers, waterfalls, and lush dense rainforests. Grenada consists of three islands: Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique. Grenada is by far the largest of the three, with a width of 12 miles (18 km) and a length of 21 miles (34 km). Its surface of 133 sq. miles (440 sq. km.), has a varied environment, including crater lakes as well as a startling variety of plant and animal life. Grenada's population numbers about 93,000, comprising citizens of African, East-Indian, and European descent.

Staff at the Secretariat

Departures

Mr. John Kundaeli, Quota Officer and Regional Co-ordinator for Africa retired from the Secretariat on 1st July 1999. We thank John for his contribution during all these years.

Continued on page 2

Lisbon hosted the 42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee to CITES

The 42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee to CITES took place in Lisbon (Portugal) from 28 September to the 1 October 1999. Various issues were discussed, from the strengthening of the international protection for the tiger to a series of administrative topics relating to CITES and

the Secretariat.

From a population of over 100,000 in the 19th century, the Earth's wild tiger population has plummeted to an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 individuals. With several sub-species thought to be already extinct, the species' long-term survival is now at stake.

"The international community has a unique opportunity this week to pool its efforts to save one of the world's most endangered and revered creatures, the tiger," said the Committee's Chairman, Robert Hepworth of the United Kingdom. "Range States must do more to combat poaching and other threats to tigers,

Continued on page 3

In this Issue

Letter from the Editor	1,2
Lisbon hosted the 42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee to CITES	1,3
A CITES training seminar for Korea	1,3
CITES Training Seminar for Management Authorities and Customs Agencies of Eastern European Countries held in Germany, 23-27 August 1999	4
CITES and Plants - A User's Guide	5
CITES Transport Working Group (TWG) reviewed IATA Live Animals Regulations for Amphibians and Reptiles	5
Madagascar hosts the 15th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee	6
The CITES Secretariat, now located at the International Environment House	7
Global information networking	8
Associated Meetings	9
Web Sites of Interest	10
Follow the evolution of the CITES web site	10

A CITES training seminar for the Republic of Korea

It is late in the afternoon of Wednesday 30 June 1999 at the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) of the Ministry of Environment, one of the CITES Scientific Authorities in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The meeting room is large and has the most modern equipment. On the first floor the interpreters (English - Korean and Korean - English) are packing their material that was used to provide support to a three-day CITES seminar.

Some of the participants are excited but tired, reading the local newspapers, waiting for the participation certificate. The CITES Secretariat is also packing the high-tech equipment consisting of a lap-top hooked to a screen projector. TRAFFIC East Asia is having some discussions with the CITES Secretariat. They are glad of the achievements of a CITES seminar that has been in preparation for the last four months.

Continued on page 3

Letter from the Editor

Continued from page 1

At the end of September 1999, Mrs Elizabeth Eastwood-Barzdo, our Administrative Assistant, decided to leave the Secretariat after 11 years of service in order to devote her time to her family. The Secretariat is glad for Elizabeth's family but regrets her departure.

Arrivals

The new Chief of the Scientific Co-ordination Unit, Dr Malan Lindeque, started working with the Secretariat on 6 September 1999.

Agreements

The expanding network of partners continues. These partnerships will allow a better, coordinated and more efficient assistance to the Parties.

The CITES Secretariat agrees to nominate The World Conservation Union (IUCN) as a major technical advisor to the Convention. On 8 October 1999, the Secretariat and IUCN signed an agreement of mutual co-operation. Both the CITES Secretariat and IUCN recognize the potential benefits of establishing a formal basis for co-operation and ensuring all parts of the IUCN network to assist in the implementation of CITES. Among the tasks covered by this agreement are: provision of scientific information, development and implementation of field projects, assistance with the implementation of guidelines for non-detriment findings and the provision of scientific and technical advisory services.

The CITES Secretariat and IUCN have a long history of



Signature of the IUCN-CITES agreement by Mrs Maritta R. von Bieberstein Koch-Weser (IUCN Director General) and Mr Willem Wijnstekers (CITES Secretary General)

co-operation in ensuring the most effective possible implementation of CITES.

The CITES Secretariat agrees to nominate TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce) as a

major Capacity Building collaborative centre. On 3 November 1999, the Secretariat and TRAFFIC signed an agreement that formalizes a co-operative arrangement that is now strengthened.

TRAFFIC is the joint wildlife trade-monitoring programme of WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature and IUCN-The World Conservation Union. TRAFFIC is an international network, with culturally diverse staff, based in offices on five continents, in 20 countries and territories, with ongoing research and activities in dozens of others. The main goal of TRAFFIC is to ensure that trade in wildlife is at sustainable levels. TRAFFIC recognises the diversity of cultural perspectives related to consumptive use of wildlife. TRAFFIC actively monitors and investigates wildlife trade, and provides its information to a diverse audience world-wide, as a basis for effective conservation policies and programmes. This non-governmental organisation often undertakes its activities in close collaboration with governments and the CITES Secretariat.

TRAFFIC and the CITES Secretariat recognise the great significance of creating a better understanding of CITES and the associated international trade in wildlife, including illegal trade, at all levels, in all countries. Through this agreement they will jointly endeavour to implement a structured, strategic approach to the application of resources and assistance, for CITES capacity building.

News from your CITES web site:

www.cites.org

In September 1999 for the first time, the Secretariat made available through the Internet the documents for a meeting of the Standing Committee. "Excellent service", said the United States when they tested the prototype. Similar words were expressed during the Standing Committee meeting about this new option.

Jointly with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), the Secretariat continues to improve the services provided to the Parties. The Parties having good access to Internet were able to download all documents without problem. However, Parties that have slow Internet access had some problems, because the downloading can take some time. The Secretariat is nonetheless glad to note that the time taken to obtain document is now measured in hours (if not minutes). This is a considerable improvement over the distribution of documents by the normal postal services, which can take days if not weeks! To meet the needs of all Parties, documents will be distributed through postal and Internet from now on.

The Secretariat

Lisbon hosted the 42nd Meeting of the Standing Committee to CITES

Continued from page 1

while rich consumer countries have a particular responsibility to fund tiger conservation efforts and halt the worldwide smuggling of tiger products.”

International trade on tiger parts and derivatives is completely banned under CITES. Nevertheless, habitat destruction continues at a rapid pace, live tigers enter the illegal exotic pet trade, tiger skins are bought and sold, and tiger parts are sought by traditional medicine practitioners to improve virility and achieve other presumed health benefits.

Meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1997, the Conference of the Parties to CITES agreed on the need for urgent and practical steps for addressing the crisis facing the tiger. A series of technical missions to the tiger range States (from India and the Russian Federation to China and Southeast Asia) and consumer nations was undertaken early in 1999.

The report of these technical missions recommends: that techniques be developed to determine the presence of tiger parts in various products; that the sale of tiger parts in Japan be prohibited; that enforcement activities for tackling organized smuggling routes, including the interrogation of poachers and traders who are apprehended, be undertaken; and that scientific studies of the actual effectiveness of tiger parts in traditional medicines be conducted in order to aid education and awareness campaigns.

The Standing Committee considered the verification report from the Secretariat on the experimental sale of ivory that occurred in April 1999. The Secretariat’s document concluded that Botswana, Japan, Namibia and Zimbabwe had completed with all the precautionary undertakings referred to in Decision 10.1, Part A, paragraph h).

The Secretariat acknowledged the extraordinary support received by the CITES staff, Customs and Police in each country.

On 17 July 1999, all the ivory from the experimental sales was imported into Japan. Funds obtained by the three countries must be invested in elephant conservation, as required by Decision 10.1, Part A, paragraph f). This condition will be verified by the Secretariat in November this year.

In the four countries involved, there was wide coverage by the press. In general, the press showed positive support for the experimental trade.

The problem of non compliance with CITES by several member States was also considered by the Standing Committee:

Egypt was congratulated for the adoption of legislation enabling it to implement the Convention fully.

The Committee noted that, there being no confirmation of

the adoption of the new legislation to implement CITES in Guyana, the recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of CITES species with Guyana would be sent to the Parties by the Secretariat on 30 September 1999. Note: *Early October, after the Standing Committee, Guyana informed the Secretariat that the CITES legislation was officially published.*

It was noted that, in the absence of any apparent progress towards the adoption of legislation to implement the Convention in Senegal, the recommendation to suspend trade in specimens of CITES species with Senegal would be sent to the Parties by the Secretariat on 30 October 1999.

Also on the Standing Committee agenda was the review of the current status of the draft of a five-year Strategic Plan for the Convention. The Standing Committee agreed that the associated working group should continue its work and provide documentation for consideration at COP 11.

The Standing Committee provided further endorsement to the system for Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). It noted the significant progress in the implementation of MIKE through pilot phases in Central Africa and South-East Asia. The Standing Committee were encouraged to hear that the Southern African countries would be inviting the Secretariat to meet with them in November, to facilitate the implementation of MIKE in the Sub-Region utilizing funds from the successful ivory auctions.

The Standing Committee supported a detailed proposal presented by the Secretariat to organize a Regional meeting for Central, South America and the Caribbean. For the first time these important Parties will get together to define a common strategy for the region.

An important part of the Standing Committee meeting was dedicated to the preparation of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11), which will be hosted at the Nairobi headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme from 10-20 April 2000.

UNEP and UNON informed the Committee that preparations are well under way. The conference facilities at the UN compound in Gigiri (Nairobi) are being expanded and upgraded to accommodate COP 11 and all associated events. The Chairman of the Standing Committee requested all Parties to prepare themselves for a successful 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Secretariat

A CITES training seminar for the Republic of Korea

Continued from page 1

A successful three-day workshop on CITES rules and procedures was held in Seoul, Korea from 28 to 30 June 1999. It is the first time that such an event has been organized by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, jointly with the CITES Secretariat, with the support of

TRAFFIC East Asia.

The participants came from various offices from the Government: Ministry of Environment, Korea Food and Drug Administration, Korea Customs Service, Prosecutor's office and private association concerned with the management of traditional medicine, zoos, etc. This wide range of participants forms the group of persons involved with CITES issues in the Republic of Korea.

The seminar provided a unique opportunity for all these persons to become familiar with CITES rules and procedures. At the same time it was a unique opportunity for discussion in order to analyse issues of common interest and solutions. The overall evaluation of the seminar indicates that all participants were extremely satisfied and the workshop exceeded their expectations.

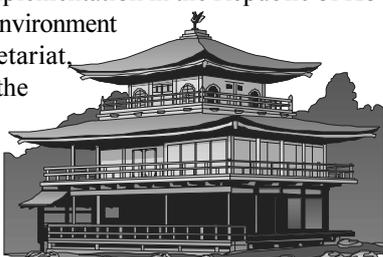
Based on the issues identified during the workshop, the CITES Secretariat provided a series of recommendations and suggestions. Korea considers that the topics suggested in the recommendations that emerged from the CITES training seminar are extremely useful. These topics will be addressed adequately in order to enhance the current CITES management structure through various measures such as strengthening co-operation among CITES-related authorities, establishing a computer aiding system, monitoring domestic markets randomly, etc.

The CITES Secretariat encouraged the creation of a National Action Plan for the Republic of Korea to strengthen the implementation of CITES. Implementation of such an action plan (called CITES-Korea-2002), that has a three-year duration, will bring CITES in the Republic of Korea to an excellent level of implementation.

The seminar also indicated that some of the problems identified may be solved through the implementation of stricter domestic measures.

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea is convinced that the country will contribute greatly to the global efforts to protect endangered species of wild fauna and flora. The Republic of Korea is already considering formulating and implementing the suggested Action Plan. This will be done on a voluntary basis, but we are conscious that such an Action Plan will assist us in planning to improve the implementation of CITES. Most of the issues raised by the Secretariat with regard to implementation of the Convention will be reflected in the Action Plan.

The findings and suggestions from the CITES training seminar provided us with excellent information to strengthen CITES implementation in the Republic of Korea. The Ministry of Environment thanks CITES Secretariat, which co-ordinated the seminar and is grateful for the support provided by TRAFFIC East Asia. The Ministry of En-



vironment in particular appreciates the efforts dedicated to the suggestions and associated action plan. This seminar has provided an adequate basis for planning for the future of CITES in the Republic of Korea.

Mr Jong-Ryool Kim, CITES Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, and

Ms Minjeong Kim, former CITES team, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea

CITES Training Seminar for Management Authorities and Customs Agencies of Eastern European Countries held in Germany, 23-27 August 1999

CITES training seminar specifically designed for Management Authorities and Customs Agencies of Eastern European countries, was held from 23rd to 27th August 1999 by the German Federal Agency of Nature Conservation (FANC), supported by the Botanic Garden of Darmstadt and TRAFFIC Europe. The Seminar took place at International Nature Conservation Academy on the Island of Vilm. From those Eastern European countries having been invited, nine were represented during the one-week seminar: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.



The CITES Management Authority of Germany, which had organized and convened the seminar, was very pleased that so many Eastern European countries had responded to the invitation, thus demonstrating quite well the interest and importance of such meetings.

The objective of the seminar was to learn more from each other on how CITES is implemented in each participant's country, in order to further a better understanding, but also to identify areas of common concern. Furthermore, and even more importantly, the seminar was designed to help each other on a regional level to improve the working and implementation of the Convention, to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants is increasingly and consistently conducted at sustainable levels.

Being a Member State of the European Union, a close neighbour of Eastern Europe, Germany tries by regional co-operation to comply with the aforementioned goals and, by conducting special meetings or seminars, Germany accepts its special responsibility relating to both the Eastern European Region as well as for the EU in this context.

Major items on which the seminar focused were

- Basic biological knowledge and the appendices of the

Convention;

- CITES permits and certificates and general regulations;
- Specific regulations under the Convention (e.g. personal effects, transit or scientific exchange);
- Regulations of the European Union;
- Customs checks and clearing procedures; and
- Illegal activities.

Participants were also requested to contribute with exercises to the aims and objectives of the seminar.

At the end it was felt by all participants and organizers of FANC that it had been a rather successful gathering, which had significantly furthered the limited knowledge about CITES wildlife conservation issues within Eastern Europe for the benefit of the conservation status of the species concerned and especially for those for which the countries concerned have particular responsibilities.

The FANC is already planning for the coming year and probably beyond, other CITES training seminars for the Eastern European region, with consideration to be given to a wider range of subjects.

Dr D. Jelden, Head CITES Management Authority, Federal Agency of Nature Conservation

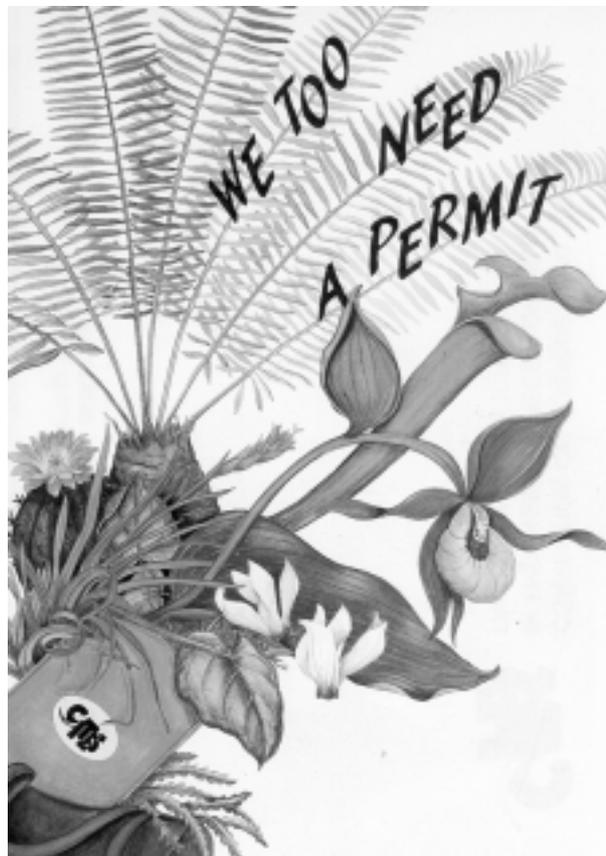
CITES and Plants - A User's Guide

While many identify CITES with tigers, elephants and other large animals, fewer people are familiar with CITES plants or how the Convention relates to them. The CITES species of flora are much more numerous than those of the fauna. However, fauna-related issues are better known, maybe because some of them are extremely controversial. There are many reasons for this 'discrimination' against the 'CITES plants'. We believe that one reason has been the shortage of suitable training materials. In absence of adequate training material, the plants-related issues are often not discussed and therefore they receive less attention although some issues are important.

A new guide, *CITES and Plants - A User's Guide* by Marianne Syrylak Sandison, Margarita Clemente Muñoz, Jan de Koning and Maurizio Sajevo has been produced by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in co-operation with the Scientific Authorities of Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. The project was funded by the CITES Management Authority of the United Kingdom [the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)] and the CITES Secretariat.

This guide is an important resource for all involved with CITES and plants. The guide, for example, provides the basis for training courses and lectures. It has been designed with the idea that users can adapt the lecture to their own needs, either taking the basis as it is and/or

enlarging it with their own slides and experiences in order to illustrate examples better adapted to the area under discussion. We see this guide as a starting point to build a complete guide to CITES-listed plants and CITES-related issues.



The guide includes:

- 40 colour slides
- speaker / student notes
- information on aspects of CITES.

The guide covers:

- aims, mechanisms and organization of CITES
- main plant groups subject to CITES controls
- enforcement (briefly).

CITES and Plants - A User's Guide is available in English, French and Spanish.

The Secretariat is in the process of distributing one copy in the appropriate language to each Party. A digital version is under consideration. Further paper-slide copies may be obtained by contacting:

Email: M.Sandison@rbgkew.org.uk

Marianne Sandison, Conventions and Policy Section, Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom.

CITES Transport Working Group (TWG) reviewed IATA Live Animals Regulations for Amphibians and Reptiles



At its meeting, held on 8-9 October 1998, the Animals & Perishables Board of IATA considered two technical documents that recom-

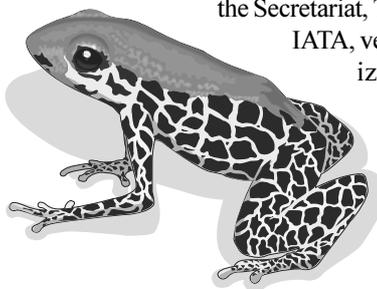
mended changes to IATA's current regulations on the transport of live reptiles and amphibians. One document was submitted by the United States of America and the other was submitted by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC). In addition, TRAFFIC North America which also attended the meeting, provided a document with a comparative analysis of the submissions from the United States and PIJAC.

The Animals Committee's Transport Working Group (TWG) requested with the agreement of the CITES Secretariat and the Chairman of the CITES Animals Committee, the Board to give it a mandate to review the Live Animals Regulations for reptiles and amphibians.

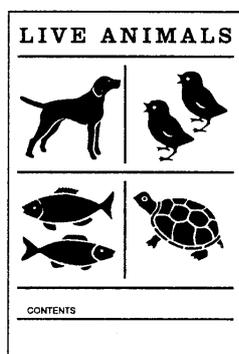
Although it was recognized that not all species of reptiles and amphibians are listed in the CITES appendices, it was thought that the handling and transport requirements for reptiles and amphibians are the same for CITES-listed species as for non-listed. The IATA Board therefore agreed to address this issue through the CITES Transport Working Group.

In January 1999, a special meeting of the TWG took place in Washington, D.C. It was well organized by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and in addition the United States Government provided financial support for the participation of some Party representatives and for the hiring of a scientific consultant. In addition to the TWG members, the Chairman of the Animals Committee, the Secretariat, TRAFFIC North America and

IATA, veterinary officials and specialized reptile dealers also attended the meeting. So, under the umbrella of CITES, a lot of technical expertise and international involvement was brought together to work on the issue at hand.



The meeting was held in a constructive atmosphere with the will of all participants to reach consensus. As a result, new special transport requirements for snakes, crocodilians, lizards, turtles, tortoises and amphibians were defined. The basic approach for each group of reptiles or



amphibians was to define a standard minimum transport-bag size, to define a means of measuring the length of different types of animals, to create size-classes of animals and to determine the stocking density for the different size-classes. Special attention was given to those specimens that are normally transported singly and/or species identified as poisonous or venomous.

The draft prepared by the TWG was presented at the IATA Board meeting in Montreal on 25 March 1999. In the course of the discussion, the TWG answered some questions raised by Board members and received helpful hints for finalizing the draft. There was no disagreement from the participants. The Chairman of the Board expressed his gratitude to the TWG for the extensive work that had been done in a very short time.

In mid-April the final text was sent out by IATA to the Animals and Perishables Board members for agreement. Because of the positive response to the presentation of the draft in Montreal, the TWG expects that the Board will agree to the proposed text. If it does, the text will be published in the 26th edition of the Live Animals Regulation.

Irina Sprotte, TWG

Madagascar hosts the 15th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee

In keeping with its established "outreach" practice to promote the Convention in different parts of the world, the CITES Animals Committee held its 15th meeting in Antananarivo, Madagascar from 5 to 9 July 1999. The meeting was attended by representatives of 32 Parties and 35 non-governmental observers, with more than 150 individuals registering their participation. The importance afforded the meeting was reflected by the presence of a large cross-section of Cabinet Ministers in attendance for the official opening by the Prime Minister.

The Government of Madagascar, through the efforts of the Ministry of Water and Forests, is to be congratulated for hosting the meeting and the professional manner in which it was organised. The high level of professionalism showed by the Malagasy Government and all the other people involved in preparing for the meeting is evidence that developing world countries are well able to host meetings of the Convention.

The agenda and working programme were dominated by implementation matters and the finalisation of draft resolutions for consideration at the forthcoming 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties which will be held at the UNEP headquarters located in Gigiri, Kenya, in April 2000. Draft resolutions were agreed to refine existing resolutions on the universal tagging of crocodilian skins (Conf. 9.22) and ranching and trade in ranched specimens (Conf. 10.18). Working groups were established to develop draft resolu-

tions on marking of sturgeon specimens in trade and reporting requirements for specimens of hard corals.

In addition to its programme of on-going business and considerations of those matters referred to it at the 1997 meeting of Parties in Harare, the Committee undertook a review of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 8.9 on Appendix-II listed animal species subject to significant levels of international trade. Following a presentation by the consultant engaged to undertake a review and analysis of the procedure, the ensuing discussion resulted in the formation of a small working group to review and propose revision to the procedure outlined in Decision 10.79, to remove confusing and unnecessary steps in the procedure and make it more transparent by providing more consultation with range States in the process. The meeting also agreed to a proposal to amend Resolution Conf. 8.9, prepared by the CITES Plants Committee, to extend its provisions to include Appendix-II listed plants.

The highlights of the meeting included discussion and input by the Committee on the draft Strategic Plan for the Convention and an afternoon seminar on wildlife management and conservation in Madagascar. The seminar, which comprised presentations on the Malagasy policy on wildlife use and conservation and crocodile management, was hosted by the Ministry of Water and Forests, the CITES Management Authority for Madagascar.

Reflecting on the outcomes of the 15th meeting of the Animals Committee, there is little doubt that the Committee is becoming an important forum within the administrative structure of the Convention. The Committee has assumed an increasingly important role in developing practical approaches to implementation problems that have been identified by the Conference of the Parties. While this is welcomed and should be encouraged, it does however, bring with it a negative side. As the issues that are being referred to the Committee, for further and more detailed consideration, become more complex and politically sensitive, it is becoming increasingly difficult to remove political considerations and review the technical aspects of an issue with any measure of scientific objectivity. The sensitive and seemingly intractable problems associated with captive breeding of Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes and the related registration procedure have attracted a large number of observers from Parties and organizations for whom these were the only issues of interest. The level of national and individual interest in these issues has proved problematic in enabling the Committee to review them objectively.

It may be timely for the Conference of the Parties to review the terms of reference for the Committee and the overall efficacy of "regional representation". A different approach that enables the Conference of the Parties to appoint a small number of individuals who are technically expert in the implementation of the Convention may provide a possible future solution. This Committee would meet in closed session to undertake scientifically objective reviews of

species' listings and develop conceptual frameworks to address particular implementation problems. The results of analyses and proposed administrative approaches could then be reviewed by a larger forum comprising representatives of Parties, non-Parties and organizations and could be amended as appropriate in preparation for further consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Hank Jenkins, Chairman of the CITES Animals Committee

The CITES Secretariat, now located at the International Environment House

The Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, with the support of the Swiss federal authorities and the authorities of the Canton of Geneva officially inaugurated the International Environment House (formerly named the Geneva Executive Center) on 14 September 1999. The building already houses some 25 organizations and



The International Environment House

units, including several units and divisions of the United Nations Environment Programme, the secretariats of CITES and the Basel Convention, several NGOs, and more.

The inauguration ceremony featured addresses by Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, Philippe Roch, Secretary of State and Director of the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, and Laurent Moutinot, Minister, State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and Head of the Department of Urban and Rural Planning, Infrastructure and Housing. Mr Töpfer announced the launching of a series of regular thematic briefings on environment topics for the international and Geneva communities.

The International Environment House is also the home of the Geneva Environment Network (GEN). GEN is a partnership between most of the organizations located in the House

(including the CITES Secretariat), environmental organizations based in the neighbouring canton of Vaud, as well as several other Geneva-based UN programmes and specialized agencies working on the environment and sustainable development.

GEN aims at improving information dissemination and public outreach and at developing other joint activities. A common Web site has been set up at:

www.environmenthouse.ch

to provide information on forthcoming environment-related events in Geneva, to direct users to affiliated Web sites, and to raise the profile of other information resources (such as databases, on-line library catalogues, etc.). A newsletter provides updates on the activities of GEN partners and on the International Environment House, while a common library located on the ground floor of the House offers publications contributed by GEN partners. The front area of the library contains permanent display shelves exhibiting GEN partners' own publications and public information materials. Opposite the library, a cybercafe provides users with access to the Internet so that they may explore Web sites related to environment and sustainable development, including GEN's own site.

GEN's membership is growing and is expected to continue to do so. Activities will also increase: a series of environment briefings will begin and other events will also be held, starting with a roundtable meeting for librarians from GEN partner organizations.

Aniket Ghai, Facilitator, Geneva Environment Network

to a fortunate and educated elite;

* efforts must continue to transfer to electronic media the masses of useful information collected in the past but currently available only in archives or printed form;

* methods must be devised to organize and structure information so that users can easily find just what they need.

The first two challenges can only be addressed collectively over the long term. But a solution for the third point — the organizational challenge — is within our reach.

To participate in global networking, each organization must develop some way to select, structure and make available its own information. A quick review of Web sites demonstrates that this process is already under way, with varying degrees of success. UNEP's new observing-and-assessment strategy, for instance, calls for working with its partners to construct a global environmental information meta-system within an integrated framework.

There is also a growing need now to move beyond the limits of each institution and to classify and organize the information from multiple institutions and sites around the world. We must do so without the information overload that comes with complete word searches and other "brute force" techniques. The UN system is beginning to address such questions through structures like the Information Systems Coordination Committee and the Geneva-based UN-system-wide Earthwatch. The Earthwatch Web site (<http://www.unep.ch/earthw.html>) provides some examples of simple low-cost networking across the UN system.

With the launching of the Geneva Environment Network (GEN), this process can be extended to a range of like-minded partners (both inside and outside the UN system)

within a limited geographic and topical area, which should make the problem more manageable. The GEN can promote common efforts to put more substantive environmental information on the Web, and not just in written reports. Scientists need harmonized and quality-controlled data sets. Assessment processes need up-to-date information on trends and impacts. Assessment results need to be communicated with indicators, graphics and maps that are easy for non-specialists to assimilate.

This information will have to be tailored to specific uses such as monitoring the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements or providing early warning of emerging problems. The opportunity is there for real creative communication. Geneva has a unique mix of information suppliers and users that should facilitate the joint design of useful and user-friendly information products.

The GEN can also develop into a major local

Global Information Networking

Information networking was never an issue until technology made it possible to transport information globally in seconds. Now the rapid pace at which information is distributed and the sheer volume of accessible information threaten to overwhelm us. We are only beginning to understand both the opportunities and challenges that computers and the Internet mean for information exchange between producers and users. The world is truly at our fingertips, but we are still wearing mittens.

There are three significant challenges that must be overcome if the potential of global information networking is to be fulfilled:

* ways must be found to provide electronic access to all those who want it, and not just



node in global information networking. It can facilitate world-wide access to information available in the Geneva area. And it can provide convenient ways for Geneva-based information users to find what they need from the global networks. Participants in international meetings, staff of permanent missions and international organizations, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) all need the access that such a node would provide.

Many potential users are barely connected to the information superhighway, and some are virtually computer-illit-

erate. Introducing them to the information available and helping them to access it for themselves will need to be part of capacity-building. The Geneva area is particularly well placed to experiment with and develop information products for these "international" users. The experience gained can then be used around the world as global information networking develops.

Arthur Dahl, Co-ordinator, UN-system-wide Earthwatch

Associated Meetings

- CMS - 9th meeting Scientific Council

4-6 November, Cape Town, South Africa,

e-mail: cms@unep.de

- CMS - Twentieth Standing Committee Meeting

9 November, Cape Town, South Africa,

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

Tel: (49 228) 815 24 05

fax: (49 228) 815 24 49

e-mail: cms@unep.de

- Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS (COP6)

10-16 November, Cape Town, South Africa,

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

tel: (49 228) 815 24 05

fax: (49 228) 815 24 49

e-mail: cms@unep.de

- Symposium on Animal Migration

13 November, Cape Town, South Africa,

UNEP/CMS Secretariat

Tel: (49 228) 815 24 05

fax: (49 228) 815 24 49

e-mail: cms@unep.de

- The Southern Africa Water and Water Association's (SAWWA) First Workshop Gaborone

15-19 November, Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. H. Gopalan, UNEP

tel: 254-2-62-3246,

fax: 254-2-62-3861/3846,

e-mail: hiremagalur.gopalan

- Eleventh Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol and the Fifth Conference of the Parties

29 Nov-3 December, Beijing, People's Republic of China

Mr. K. Madhava Sarma,

Coordinator,

Ozone Secretariat,

UNEP Nairobi,

tel: 254-2-62-3851,

fax: 254-2-521930,

e-mail: ozoninfo@unep.org

- Fifth Meeting of the Expanded Bureau to the Basel Convention COP4

3-4 December, Basel, Switzerland

Mr. Per Bakken,

Secretariat for the Basel Convention,

tel: 41-22-979-9111,

fax: 41-22-797-3454,

e-mail: sbc@unep.ch

• Fifth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention

6-10 December, Basel, Switzerland

Mr. Per Bakken,

Secretariat for the Basel Convention,

tel: 41-22-979-9111,

fax: 41-22-797-3454,

e-mail: sbc@unep.ch

• International Biodiversity Day

29 December, Convention on Biological Diversity,

tel: 1-514-288-2220,

Fax: 1-514-288-6588,

E-mail: chm@biodiv.org

Web Sites of Interest: Follow Esmeralda the Turtle on the Web

<http://www.rmplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/bcgonweb>

Visitors will follow Esmeralda as she swims away from her Mediterranean Island and embarks on migration to her wintering grounds. Tracking her movements by satellite, and allowing scientists to understand more about this wonderful but endangered species.



<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/telematics/EuroTurtle>

Visitors will be able to share the excitement and dangers of Esmeralda, a green sea turtle, and her adventures in the blue Mediterranean Sea.

See also: <http://www.seaturtle.org/mtrg/>

Follow the evolution of the CITES web site:

www.cites.org

As a request from the CITES Parties and within the CITES Information Management Strategy, the CITES www site continues to evolve. Several functions related with the Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP 11) will be made available soon. Users will be able to register for COP 11 and/or to reserve a meeting room for their related discussions.

As it was done for the Standing committee, COP 11 related documents will be available at the CITES web site for consultation.

Parties not having access to Internet will continue to receive all the above-mentioned services through normal postal procedures.

With the objective to increase the network of CITES information, the Secretariat would like to include links to other Internet-CITES Parties-sites. Parties willing to participate should contact the Secretariat (Capacity Building unit).

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If you would like to submit an article, or make suggestions or comments please contact the Capacity Building Officer.



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