

CITES CoP18 Report and our activities there

The CITES CoP18 took place from 17-28 August 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

This CITES CoP was attended by 169 member governments and the European Union, including 1,700 delegates, observers and journalists.

Ivonne Higuero is the first woman and first Latin American to be appointed as a CITES Secretary-General. She said during her first meeting as CITES Secretary-General that “Humanity needs to respond to the growing extinction crisis by transforming the way we manage the world’s wild animals and plants. Business as usual is no longer an option.”

There was the Election of Chair, Alternate Chair and Vice-Chairs of the meeting and of Chairs of Committees I and II: Thomas Jemmi of Switzerland was elected as Chair; Awilo Ochieng Pernet of Switzerland as Alternate Chair; Maurice Isaacs of the Bahamas and James Lutalo of Uganda as Vice Chairs; Miet Van Looy of Belgium as Chair of the Credentials Committee; Rod Hay of New Zealand as Chair of Committee I and Craig Hoover of the US as Chair of Committee II. Standing Committee Chair Carolina Caceres of Canada.

CITES delegates addressed 57 proposals to increase or decrease controls on international trade in wildlife and wildlife products, submitted by 90 parties. In addition, a record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade in wild fauna and flora were submitted for consideration by the Conference.

OUR ACTIVITIES

CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society and the International Primate Protection League are pleased to invite you to our event:



**ILLEGAL TRADE IN APES
AND OTHER WILDLIFE IN
AFRICA AND THE AMERICAS**

Guest speakers:
Ian Redmond OBE, IPPL & Ape Alliance
Ericka Ceballos CEO CATCA EWS
Adams Cassinga CEO of ConservCongo
Daniel Stiles Independent Wildlife Trade Investigator

Refreshments will be served after the presentations

DATE: Sunday August 18th, 2019 TIME: 19:00 - 21:00 ROOM: Hall 3

We were honoured to collaborate with our colleagues of the International Primate Protection League in our Side Event during the CITES CoP18.

Our presentation was about the e-commerce of apes and other primates in Mexico and the Americas, Which was very well received by the delegates and observers.



CATCA EWS Presentation at the CITES Cop18



Daniel Stiles with his presentation of the Illegal Great Ape trade



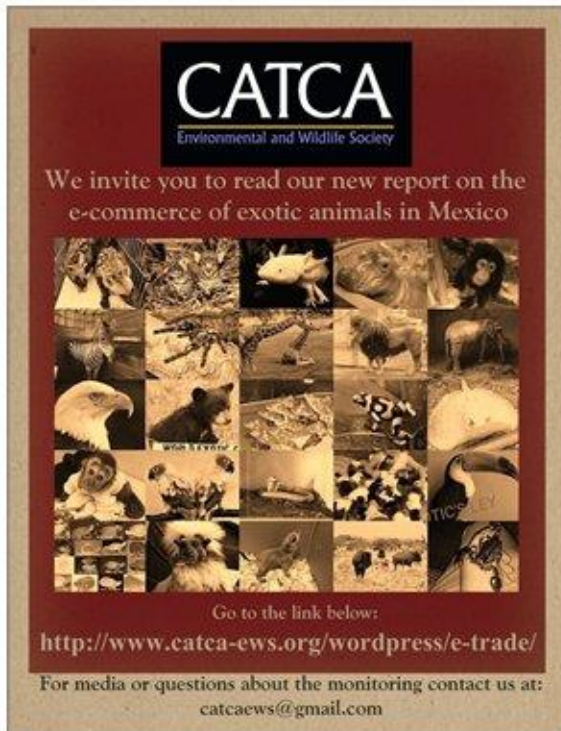
Ian taping Daniel's presentation for Adams



Adams Cassinga CEO of ConservCongo live from Kinshasa, told delegates and observers, about the work of his NGO in Kinshasa, DRC.



OBE Ian Redmond, Daniel Stiles and Ericka Ceballos of CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society



We also shared our new report on the e-commerce of felines and primates in Mexico and the Americas, which was received very well by all the delegates, specially by the African and Latin American governments, as many fauna species found are endemic to African and Latin American countries.

For the full report, please click here:
<http://www.catca-ews.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/REPORTFB2018-19PDF.pdf>

CATCA EWS was very active lobbying for all the pro-conservation fauna species proposals, as well lobbying against the anti-conservation ones. We urged the governments to monitor their e-commerce of protected wildlife to end this popular trade of wildlife. Our activities played an important role in the positive pro-conservation outcome at this CITES CoP18. Our key work was for the e-commerce, jaguars, cheetahs, giraffes, elephants, rhinos, otters, lizards, geckos, iguanas and American crocodile, newts, tarantulas, turtles, sharks, guitar and wedge fishes. CATCA EWS created many new collaborations in this CoP.



CATCA EWS was very active in this CITES CoP18 with many interventions



With the CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero

Proposals

Prop 1- Heptner's markhor Proposal: This proposal was withdrawn.

Prop 2- Saiga (*Saiga tatarica*): Mongolia introduced this proposal to transfer Saiga antelope from Appendix II to Appendix I. Committee I agreed to the proposal by consensus as amended with a zero-export quota on all saiga species. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.2, as amended.**

Prop 3- Vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*): Argentina introduced this proposal to transfer the vicuña population of the Province of Salta, Argentina, from Appendix I to Appendix II with annotation #1, highlighting successful national conservation and management measures, and the need to enable trade in traditional craft products from vicuña fiber. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.3 as amended.**

Prop 4- Vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*): Chile introduced its proposal to amend the name of the population of Chile from "population of the Primera Región" to "populations of the region of Tarapacá and of the region of Arica and Parinacota." He explained the proposal would not change the scope of the current listing, and simply recognizes an administrative change in the name of the region mentioned. The Committee accepted the proposal by consensus. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 4 as amended.**

Prop. 5- Giraffe (*Giraffa Camelopardalis*): Chad introduced the proposal co-sponsored by the Central African Republic, Kenya, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. Explaining the proposal for listing in Appendix II, he noted the 40% decline in populations over 30 years, the "critically endangered" status of some giraffe sub-species, and evidence of increased international demand for giraffe parts and derivatives, including through online trade. The Central African Republic's giraffe specialist noted that the legal trade is likely providing cover for trade in giraffe populations that are under threat of extinction. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.5.**

Prop. 6- Small-Clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinereus*): The Philippines introduced the proposal to transfer the small-clawed from Appendix II to Appendix I, including a minor descriptive amendment to the nomenclature (*Aonyx cinerea*). **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.6.**

Prop. 7- Smooth-Coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*): India introduced the proposal to transfer smooth-coated otter from Appendix II to Appendix I, highlighting the emerging threat posed by the international pet trade. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.7.**

Prop. 8- Southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*): Eswatini introduced the proposal to remove the existing annotation on the Appendix II listing of the Eswatini's Southern white rhino population, permitting the regulated legal trade in Eswatini's white rhinos, their products (including horn) and derivatives. **Outcome: The CoP rejected CoP18 Prop.8.**

Prop. 9 -Southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*): Namibia introduced its proposal to transfer the Namibian southern white rhinoceros' population from Appendix I to Appendix II with an annotation limiting trade to live animals and hunting trophies, with all other specimens to be considered as Appendix I. **Outcome: The CoP rejected the proposal.**

Prop. 10-African elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*): Zambia presented the proposal to transfer its elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II, allowing trade in ivory only for parties who will not re-export. He stated this was for the benefit of conservation and local communities. Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana supported the proposal stating that the population met the requirements for Appendix II. **Outcome: The CoP rejected CoP18 Prop.10.**

Prop. 11-African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*): Botswana introduced its proposal to amend annotation #2 for the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to allow for two “one-off” sales of raw ivory from government-owned stocks. He stated that the countries had waited patiently for the nine-year ban on new proposals to end, and further that these sales will benefit communities and conservation efforts. **Outcome: The CoP rejected CoP18 Prop.11.**

Prop. 12-African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*): Gabon introduced this proposal to include all African elephant populations in Appendix I, a step that would mean transferring the listing of the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I. **Outcome: The CoP rejected CoP18 Prop.11.**

Prop. 13-Woolly mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*): Israel introduced the proposal to include the woolly mammoth in Appendix II highlighting that trade in mammoth ivory provides a cover for illegal trade in elephant ivory. **Outcome: CoP18 Prop.13 was withdrawn, but the CoP agreed to the draft decisions related to mammoth ivory.**

Prop. 14-17--Greater stick-nest rat (*Leporillus conditor*), Shark bay mouse (*Pseudomys fieldi praeconis*), False swamp rat (*Xeromys myoides* and Central Rock Rat (*Zyzyomys pedunculatus*)): Australia introduced these proposals to transfer from Appendix I to II the Greater stick-nest rat, Shark bay mouse and False swamp and Central rock rat. The AC30 determined that species meets the criteria in RC 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) for transfer from Appendix I to II. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Props.14-17 by consensus.**

Prop. 18-Reeves’s pheasant pheasant (*Symaticus reevesii*): China introduced the proposal to include Reeves’s pheasant in Appendix II highlighting that despite strict domestic regulation, wild populations are still declining due to threats such as poaching and smuggling. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.18 by consensus.**

Prop. 19-Black-crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina*): Senegal introduced the proposal to transfer the black-crowned crane from Appendix II to I taking in consideration their rapid decline due to habitat loss, domestication and both legal and illegal trade. **Outcome: The CoP adopted the CoP18 Prop.19 by consensus.**

Prop. 20-21- Lesser rufous bristlebird (*Dasyornis broadbenti litoralis*) and Long-billed bristlebird (*Dasyornis longirostris*): Australia introduced proposals to transfer from Appendix I to II the lesser rufous bristlebird and long-billed bristlebird noting the first is likely extinct and the latter endangered but is not found in trade, and suggesting that in keeping with the precautionary principle, both deserve protection. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Props.20 and 21.**

Prop. 22-American crocodile (*Cocodylus acutus*): Mexico introduced the proposal to transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II the American including a zero quota for exports of wild specimens. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.22 with an annotation to include “zero export quota for wild specimens for commercial purposes.”**

Prop. 23- Garden lizards (*Calotes nigrilabris* and *C.pethiyagodai*): Sri Lanka withdrawn this proposal to list these species of garden lizards.

Prop. 24-26-Garden lizards, Horned lizards (*Ceratophora* spp.), Pygmy lizards (*Cophotis ceylanica* and *C. dumbara*) and Hump-nosed lizards (*Lyriocephalus scutatus*): Sri Lanka introduced proposals to include in Appendix II with a zero quota the horned lizards and in Appendix I the pygmy and hump-nosed lizards.

Committee II agreed to amended Proposals 24 (transfer to Appendix II with a zero quota for exports of wild specimens for commercial trade), 25 (transfer to Appendix I); and 26 (transfer to Appendix II with zero quota for exports of wild specimens for commercial trade).

On Proposal 24, the US proposed draft decisions asking the Secretariat to review trade in horned lizards. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Props.24-26, as amended.**

Prop. 27-Leopard geckos, tiger geckos and cave geckos (*Goniurosaurus* spp.): China introduced the proposal to include leopard gecko, tiger gecko, and cave gecko populations of China and Vietnam in Appendix II), highlighting the small number of wild individuals and the threat posed by the international pet trade. China proposed an annotation to simplify that the listing includes *Goniurosaurus* spp., “except the species native to Japan.” **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.27, as amended.**

Prop. 28-Tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*): The EU introduced the proposal to include tokay gecko in Appendix II highlighting the high levels of international trade and reports of local extinctions caused by over-collection. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.27, as amended.**

Prop. 29-Grenadines clawed gecko (*Gonatodes daudini*): St. Vincent and the Grenadines introduced the proposal to include in Appendix I the Grenadines clawed gecko noting the acceleration of illegal collection, including through social networks in UK and Europe. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.29 by consensus.**

Prop. 30-Grandidier’s Madagascar ground gecko (*Paroedura androyensis*): Madagascar introduced the proposal to include in Appendix II Grandidier’s Madagascar gecko highlighting habitat loss and demand from the international pet trade. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.30.**

Prop. 31-Spiny-tailed iguanas (*Ctenosaura* spp): Mexico introduced the proposal to include in Appendix II spiny-tailed iguanas noting that imports to US quadrupled in 2018-19. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.31 by consensus.**

Prop. 32- Spider-tailed horned viper (*Pseudocerastes urarachnoides*): Iran introduced the proposal to include in Appendix II the spider-tailed horned viper highlighting the need to apply the precautionary approach and protect the species despite limited information on its biology and the extent of impact of illegal trade. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.32 by consensus.**

Prop. 33-35-Bourret’s box turtle (*Cuora bourreti*), Indochinese box turtle (*C. picturata*) and Annam leaf turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*): Vietnam introduced proposals to transfer from Appendix II to I the Bourret’s box turtle, Indochinese box turtle and Annam leaf turtle, noticing their high demand from the international pet trade. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.33-35 by consensus.**

Prop. 36- Indian Star Tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*): India presented this proposal to transfer from Appendix II to I due to its large illegal trade. **Outcome: The CoP accepted CoP18 Prop 36 by consensus.**

Prop. 37-Pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*): Kenya introduced the proposal to transfer from Appendix II to I the pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) citing its critically endangered status. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.37**

Prop. 38-Glass frogs (*Hyalinobatrachium* spp., *Centrolene* spp., *Cochranella* spp., and *Sachatamia* spp.): Costa Rica introduced the proposal to include in Appendix II glass frogs noting that their exotic and unique nature makes them coveted in the pet trade.

Due to absence of consensus, Committee I voted on the proposal and rejected it for failure to receive the required majority, with 75 voting in favor and 40 against.

A couple of days later, Costa Rica moved to re-open the debate. **Outcome: The CoP rejected CITES CoP18 Prop.38.**

Prop. 39-41-Spiny newts: Chinghai spiny newt (*Echinotriton chinghaiensis* and mountain spiny newts (*Echinotriton maxiquadratus*), Asian warty newts (*Paramesotriton* spp.) and Crocodile newts (*Tylototriton* spp.): China introduced proposals to include chinghai spiny newt and mountain spiny newts, Asian warty newts (*Paramesotriton* spp.) (CoP18 Prop.40) and crocodile newts in Appendix II. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Props.39-41 by consensus.**

Prop. 42- Shortfin Mako Sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and Longfin Mako sharks (*Isurus paucus*): Mexico introduced the proposal to include Shortfin mako shark and Longfin mako shark in Appendix II. In a secret ballot, Committee I adopted the proposal, with 102 in favor and 40 against. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.42.**

Prop. 43-Guitarfishes (*Glaucostegus* spp.): Senegal introduced the proposal to include guitarfishes in Appendix II, given declines caused by widespread and largely unmanaged fisheries, which yield large valuable fins that enter international markets. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.43.**

Prop. 44-Wedgefishes (*Rhinidae* spp.): Sri Lanka introduced this proposal to include wedgefishes in Appendix II, arguing that an Appendix II listing would raise awareness of the species' vulnerability and facilitate greater regional cooperation to ensure sustainable use. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.44.**

Prop. 45-Teatfish teatfish (*Holothuria (Microthele) fuscogilva*, *H. (Microthele) nobilis*, *H. (Microthele) whitmaei*): Seychelles introduced the proposal to list teatfish commonly known as sea cucumbers, under Appendix II noting their high commercial value and vulnerability. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.45, as amended.**

Prop. 46-Ornamental spiders (*Poecilotheria* spp.): Sri Lanka introduced the proposal to include ornamental tarantulas in Appendix II, citing their popularity in the pet trade, as well as their vulnerability to deforestation and commercial exploitation as the reasons for inclusion in Appendix II. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.46.**

Prop. 47-Mindoro peacock swallowtail (*Achillides chikae hermeli*): the Philippines introduced this proposal to include the Mindoro peacock swallowtail) in Appendix I as well as a proposed amendment to the nomenclature of the current Appendix I listing of *Papilio chikae* to *Achillides chikae chikae*, emphasizing that such a listing would avoid the split-listing of two sub-species. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.47 by consensus.**

Prop. 48-Riverside swallowtail (*Parides burchellanus*): Brazil introduced this proposal to list on Appendix I the riverside swallowtail. **Outcome: The CoP adopted CoP18 Prop.48.**
Most of the species were protected and voted pro-conservation in this CITES CoP18.
In this CoP18 we had a record number of non "charismatic species" protected, which was a great outcome.

Other issues

E-commerce

All endangered CITES protected fauna has fallen victim to the internet and social platforms that widely exploit the trade of these species. South Africa cautioned that the appendix listings do not have enough protection for the “non-charismatic species,” as the W.W.W. and social media platforms has a large demand, asking the countries where these species are wanted to get involved and do their share to end this form of popular illegal trade. Many questioned what CITES can do to address the illegal e-commerce of wildlife worldwide.

Due to all the increasing of the illegal e-commerce of protected wildlife and how the W.W.W. and social media platforms disseminate and promote such trade, CITES is now starting to look for solutions, e.g. getting the expertise of intergovernmental organizations such as INTERPOL or the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its partnership with the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC). The cyber crime decision adopted at CoP18 established a working group on capacity building to advise the Standing Committee on the actions for the development of a joint agenda to improve implementation of the Convention as it relates to e-commerce. The parties urged the Standing Committee to find ways to how to reduce such demand. This decision opens the possibility for parties to work on public education while also working with online platforms owners, which could have an important role to play in reducing the selfie driven online demand of protected animal species.

IF ONLY they would have listened when we alerted them of these issues a decade ago...

Documents

Combating wildlife cybercrime: The Secretariat introduced CoP18 Doc.33.1, followed by the report of the SC (CoP18 Doc.33.2).

Committee II accepted draft decisions in 33.1 and those in 33.2 were amended to ensure consistent use of the term “wildlife crime.”

Results: The CoP, in the decisions (CoP18 Doc.33.1) recommends the parties to contact INTERPOL in Singapore for their advice and assistance in their efforts to fight the cyber wildlife crime and to make full use of the INTERPOL guidelines on how to battle the cyber wildlife crime.

Disposal of confiscated specimens: In Committee II, the SC introduced CoP18 Doc.35, including draft decisions, stressing the great deal of knowledge available on how to care for the confiscated specimens.

Working conditions of wildlife rangers and their implications for implementation of CITES: Nepal introduced CoP18 Doc.37 highlighted a survey of ranger working conditions undertaken by WWF with their partners. The DRC supported the document.

Electronic Systems and Information Technologies: Switzerland introduced CoP18 Doc.41.

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18. Doc.41), the CoP directs:

parties to provide the Secretariat with information on their approaches and experiences in the authentication and control of CITES permits; and

the Secretariat will prepare in consultation with interested parties, an in-depth study on the current practices in CITES permit authentication and control, using a selection of parties as case studies on how current trading practices and the use of technologies affect their CITES trade regulation process.

Specimens produced through biotechnology: Mexico presented CoP18 Doc.43 on specimens produced through biotechnology, highlighting the evolving nature of these technologies and their potential impact on trade in CITES-listed species.

Species Specific Issues

Illegal trade in cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*): The Secretariat introduced CoP18 Doc.60 and highlighted the work of the intersessional working group to develop the CITES cheetah trade resource kit, which collects pertinent info and tools to assist parties in implementing the Convention. It was introduced a draft decision calling for further funding for the work to be completed. The proposal by the in-session lion working group to establish a big cats task force was highlighted, noting that matters related to illegal trade in cheetahs could be addressed by such a task force.

Kuwait supported by Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and others, emphasized that the illegal trade in cheetah in the Gulf States has decreased due to enforcement efforts and some public campaigns. It was suggested that the proposed big cats task force address illegal trade in cheetah issues.

Chair Hoover proposed to accept the draft decision (18 AA). The Committee accepted.

Five days later Ethiopia, seconded by Kenya, moved to reopen the debate, claiming that there had been an inadequate time to consider the decision. Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia opposed reopening the debate. The motion failed, as 29% voted in favor of reopening the debate, and 70% against.

Outcome: In the draft decision (CoP18 Doc.60), the CoP directs the Secretariat subject to external funding, to make the final version of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the SC.

This CNN video and article appeared just after the CITES CoP18 for cheetahs was taken:
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/28/africa/somaliland-cheetahs-gulf-intl/index.html>
https://m.cnn.com/en/article/h_442e6f1cbd233c74fd8fcc3bc611d5bbintl/index.html?nost=1572181441

If this video and article would have appeared just one day earlier, it may have made a big difference in the decision for the cheetahs.

Big Cat Task Force: The CoP18 also established the CITES Big Cat Task Force to improve enforcement, tackle illegal trade and promote the collaboration on conserving cheetahs, jaguars, leopards, lions and tigers. CoP18 rejected proposals to permit some limited trade in ivory from African elephants. Chair Hoover clarified that one document on jaguar was withdrawn (CoP18 Doc.77.2).

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18 Doc.77.1 (Rev.1)), the CoP directs:

the Secretariat subject to the availability of external funding, directs a study on illegal trade in jaguars to map the illegal trade of jaguars throughout its range and how that is linked to wildlife trafficking in the region; for the parties to identify the jaguar as the flagship species of its range countries, so the protection and conservation of the species and its habitat becomes a joint priority.

Illegal trade in Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*): The SC presented document (CoP18 Doc.78), which reported that the conservation status of Tibetan antelope has improved and proposed to amend the Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP17) to remove the requirement to report back on enforcement measures at each CITES CoP. Switzerland agreed that “in principle” it was unnecessary to report at each CoP and mentioned that collaboration and information exchange is still needed, as many aspects of the illegal trade remain unclear. Committee II and the CoP noted the SC document.

Songbird trade and conservation management (*Passeriformes*): US introduced CoP18 Doc.79. Benin with Senegal and Ukraine supported this document and the proposed workshop. Guyana and Benin stated that they would consider an Appendix III listing for some species. Bird Life International expressed its support for this study and workshop.

Helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*): Indonesia presented CoP18 Doc.84 and recommended adopting the decision to implement the 10-year Conservation Plan and Action Strategy, noticing that external funding for the Secretariat had not been made available for this work.

US introduced revised draft decisions, which the Committee accepted.

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18 Com.I.12), the CoP directs:

Parties, especially range, transit, and consumer states, to provide information to the Secretariat on their implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.11; and the Secretariat, subject to the availability of external funding, assist relevant parties in their implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.11.

Tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines spp.*): The Secretariat introduced CoP18 Doc.88 noting that the proposed guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade had not been completed. The US noted the guide would provide continued support for implementation and would help address illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles.

Committee II agreed to the document and draft decisions.

Outcome: The decisions (CoP18 Doc.88), inter alia, direct the Secretariat, subject to available funding, to contract consultants to develop, in collaboration with relevant parties, experts and the ICCWC, a guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade.

Banggai cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni*): The AC Chair introduced CoP18 Doc.82 and outlined the conservation and management measures Indonesia has undertaken for the species.

The Chair as the EU suggested, convened a small drafting group to develop agreed language. Following consultations among the US, Indonesia, and the EU, Committee I accepted the draft decisions.

African grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*): South Africa introduced CoP18 Doc.81. The US voiced support for this document and the amendments put forward by South Africa and supported, along with the EU and the Parrot Breeders Association of Southern Africa, the extension of Decision 17.258 until CoP19. The EU proposed language referring to internationally agreed guidelines for reintroduction and noted reservations taken by the DRC on this species.

Two days later, in plenary Angola’s request to reopen this discussion was rejected as no party seconded their request.

Outcome: The draft decisions (CoP18 Doc.81) direct range states are to undertake a scientifically based field survey to establish the population status and review progress made towards the restoration and conservation of the species.

Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.): Report of the SC and the Secretariat: The Secretariat introduced CoP18 Doc.83.1 and draft decisions, highlighting that the annual number of rhinos poached in Africa has been declining since 2015 and the decline seems to have continued into 2018.

The Committee adopted the report with these amendments.

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18 Com.II.12), the CoP directs:

The parties are to ensure the timely reporting of seizures and submission of DNA samples to range states and unceasingly review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens, and report to the Secretariat by October 2021.

China, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, South Africa and Vietnam are to make every effort to pursue the initiation of joint investigations and operations aimed at addressing members of organized crime networks across the entire illegal trade chain and to report to the Secretariat by October 2021.

Revisions to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17) on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses and associated decisions: Kenya introduced CoP18 Doc.83.2. The US shared Kenya's apprehensions about domestic markets for trade in rhino horn and proposed a draft decision. South Africa supported and proposed a minor amendment to include reference to illegal trade.

Committee II accepted the document including the draft decision proposed by the US, with the amendment suggested by South Africa.

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18 Doc.83.2), the CoP directs parties where illegal markets for rhino horn exist to develop demand reduction programmes targeted at key identified audiences, taking advantage of the experience and expertise developed in other jurisdictions and by other organizations.

Black Sea Bottlenose Dolphin (Tursiops Truncatus Ponticus): The AC Chair presented CoP18 Doc.90, which provides an update on implementation of CoP17 decisions regarding the use of genetic analysis by parties to confirm the origin of dolphin species prior to issuing export permits.

Committee I accepted the document.

Outcome: In the decision (CoP18 Doc.90) the CoP directs the Secretariat to continue its collaboration with ACCOBAMS in the context of the cooperation with CMS.

Conservation of vicuña (Vicugna vicugna) and trade in its fibre and products: Argentina introduced CoP18 Doc.91 with some proposed changes aimed at creating more effective collaborations between CITES and the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Vicuña to regulate and control the trade in vicuña fibre and prevent its illegal trade.

Committee II accepted the draft resolution as amended.

Totoaba (Totoaba macdonaldi): Ivonne Higuero introduced CoP18 Doc.89 (Rev.1). Mexico highlighted its activities to conserve the totoaba and to halt the illegal shipments of totoaba swim bladders collaborating with the US and China. Mexico proposed hosting a second trilateral meeting to promote collaboration. Mrs. Higuero mentioned the actions to protect and allow the recovery of the vaquita, which include a permanent

ban on fishing with gillnets. Mrs. Higuero supported the draft decisions with some amendments including providing semi-annual rather than monthly updates to the Secretariat.

Conservation management of and trade in marine ornamental fishes: Switzerland presented CoP18 Doc.94, noting the sharp increase in trade in ornamental fishes, which now amounts to an estimated 1.5 billion marine and freshwater ornamental fishes traded annually. He added that more data is needed on, inter alia, exports, species traded, and conservation impacts of this trade. Committee I agreed to the draft decisions.

Outcome: The decisions include directing the Secretariat to convene a technical workshop to consider the conservation priorities and management needs related to the trade in marine ornamental fishes worldwide emphasizing on the data from exporting and importing countries.

Guidance materials, activities, and tools aimed at enhancing parties' capacity to regulate bushmeat trade: The Secretariat introduced CoP18 Doc.95. The Chairman noted that the Central African Bushmeat Working Group is no longer operational as it was confirmed by Cameroon. The EU, Norway, China, and the CBD welcomed the adoption of the term "wild meat

Committee II accepted changes to Resolution Conf. 13.11 as amended by the EU.

Outcome: The amendments to the resolution include making use of the voluntary guidance for a sustainable bush meat sector in the tropics and subtropics.

African Carnivores Initiative (ACI): The Secretariat presented the document on the African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) (CoP18 Doc.96), describing the planned joint work between CITES and CMS on four African carnivore species: cheetah, leopard, lion and wild dog. CMS spoke supporting this joint work and highlighted its upcoming Conference of the Parties in India as well as plans for a new position to support the ACI.

Outcome: In the decisions (CoP18 Doc.96), the CoP, inter alia, directs

West African vulture trade and conservation management: Burkina Faso presented CoP18 Doc.97. The Chair emphasized on the issues causing the deterioration of the West African vulture populations, mostly by poisoning associated with illegal poaching activities. The Chair highlighted the aim of increasing cooperation between CITES and CMS, emphasising the CMS Multi Species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures.

Committee I accepted the document.

Outcome: The decision (CoP18 Doc.97) directs the AC to establish a working group which can address significant gaps in information as it relates to the biological and trade issues highlighted by the CMS Action Plan.

Review of Resolution Conf. 10.9 on consideration of proposals for the transfer the African elephant populations from Appendix I to Appendix II: Germany introduced the CoP18 Doc.104. The Chair carried the Working Group on Resolution Conf. 10.9's recommendation that Resolution Conf. 10.9 was no longer necessary, as Resolution Conf. 9.42 (Rev. CoP17) on criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II provided enough direction on the issue.

Highlights of the CITES CoP18



*) For the first time in 45 years since CITES was created, the CITES CoP18 was challenged by the parties concerns about new modern urging issue threatening fauna and flora species. These issues are habitat loss, the constant human wildlife conflicts, disease, biodiversity loss, so on. These threats are forcing CITES to start to take into consideration the meaning of the “sustainable use” wording, as not only trade is wiping out these fauna and flora species.

*) There were fierce arguments regarding the different views on the conservation of elephants, giraffes, and rhinos. Parties and many observers mentioned the deepening issue of a “Divided Africa”. This was because the pro-hunting African countries keep trying to down list their rhino and elephant populations to be able to sell their ivory and rhino horn, but if approved, that could start a wide trophy hunt of these species in these countries. The 36 pro-conservation African countries are fighting to protect and conserve their elephant and rhino populations and want to do it all over the African continent. This was the reason behind the contradictory proposals from the pro and anti conservation African countries.

*) The CoP adopted an amended resolution on CITES and Livelihoods that encourages the empowerment of rural communities through engagement in national processes, such as preparation and consultations on listing proposals, draft resolutions and draft decisions for consideration at meetings of the CoP.

*) The Convention is now also embracing new technologic devices and technologies to fight against the illegal trade.

*) One of the highlights of the convention, was when Mrs. Higuero highlighted on the “Vanishing Species” and urged The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) findings , lead the urgency of the meeting, as she reminded the CoP that plants, birds, reptiles, and smaller animals are vital for the survival of life on earth and need just as much attention as megafauna.

The assessment emphasizes nature’s unprecedented decline and the millions of species on the brink of extinction. Higuero stressed that “business as usual is no longer an option” and highlighted CITES’s important role in combating over-exploitation, one of the key threats identified in the IPBES assessment. She called on all the parties to work together to ensure that international trade in wild flora and fauna is legal, sustainable and traceable.

*) This CoP saw a record number of listing proposals, in keeping with the trend at recent CoPs for increased numbers of listings. Whereas in the earlier years of the Convention, CITES listings were mostly of land-based animals, in the last seven years many marine species have also been listed.

*) All the Parties and observers, whenever they took the floor for the first time, they all expresses their condolences to Sri Lanka, as this CITES CoP28 was to be hosted by this country in April, but then the horrific terrorist that shaken that small country happened, so the venue was moved to Geneva, Switzerland and kindly organized and hosted by the government of Switzerland and the CITES Secretariat.

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