

Concerning SDG17, there has been significant partnerships that were established and strengthened in order to support Parties in their effort to continue their work. Consultation and cooperation with multiple UN agencies and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements allowed CITES to explore and use online meeting platforms relatively early, with particular recognition to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) for sharing their expertise and experience.

b) Three key areas where transformative actions for accelerated progress have been successful, and three key areas where support is most urgently needed, with regard to the cluster of SDGs under review in July 2023.

Successful transformative actions for accelerated progress

- The science-policy interface has been strengthened to address emerging and emergency issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic
- The partnerships surrounding the ‘One Health’ approach has been advanced, including the discussion on the role of international trade in wildlife
- A rapid move for some Parties to consider the introduction of electronic business processing in CITES trade transactions

Areas where support is most urgently needed

- Technological advancement and mobilisation of financial resources to improve telecommunications and digital infrastructure (i.e., bridging the digital divide) and allow developing countries to better participate in online discussions and decision-making
- Sustainable financing for wildlife conservation, especially for those whose national revenues and livelihoods depend on wildlife tourism which was affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Advancement of affordable technologies to allow developing country Parties to effectively implement the Convention, including permit issuance, data management, law enforcement, and in other areas, with the increasing use of digital means

c) Examples of specific actions taken to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that also accelerate progress towards multiple SDG targets, including actions identified by your intergovernmental body, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving SDGs.

Recognizing that the international wildlife trade may occupy a significant part of the global wildlife supply chain, while at the same time trade in general has been an important driver for the recovery of economies and livelihoods of many, contributing to multiple SDG targets, the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and its subsidiary bodies have discussed in the last intersessional period (2019-2022) the role of the Convention in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade.

The main points of discussion have focused on:

- The current contribution of CITES, if any, to identifying and mitigating zoonotic disease risk;
- Context and scope of the Convention, identify opportunities, as well as constraints on how, if anything, CITES could further support an integrated approach to animal, human and environmental health, and contribute to global efforts to reduce the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with wildlife trade; and
- Including current evidence and information gaps regarding the links between international wildlife trade and zoonosis risk; existing Resolutions and Decisions and whether additional guidance to CITES Parties is needed; strengthening of existing cooperative relationships, or development of new relationships, between CITES and other intergovernmental organizations.

The CITES Secretariat has worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Animal Health Organization (WOAH), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other relevant biodiversity-related agreements, in recognizing CITES' role in advancing a 'One Health' approach. Cooperation with IATA has also been underway to review the IATA Live Animals Regulations in order to incorporate new animal and human health risk mitigation measures and strengthen existing measures, as appropriate, as well as to include relevant provisions in its guidelines for the non-air transport of live wild animals and plants.

d) Assessment of the situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body, and policy recommendations, commitments and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Conference of the Parties to CITES adopted Decisions 19.15-19.19 on *Role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade*³ at its 19th meeting held in Panama City in November 2023. The Decisions were discussed in light of how the Convention was impacted in the last intersessional period and provided guidance to continue strengthening the collaboration with partners and support Parties with improved information sharing that would prevent, reduce and mitigate the risk of pathogen spillover and transmission from wildlife trade and associated wildlife supply chains including markets.

³ <https://cites.org/eng/dec/index.php/44356>

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, Parties have made efforts to continue the discussion for the implementation of the Convention. The first online meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees were held in May – June 2021 to continue making recommendations on wildlife conservation issues, as happened also in the meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2022 in Lyon, which was held in-person. While in-person missions and hands-on training workshops had to be halted during most part of the intersessional period, the Secretariat was also able to hold successful online workshops on topics such as the joint workshop of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and CITES on *Modern Customs Procedures for Improved Control of Trade in CITES-listed Species*; national training workshop for Lao PDR on developing Non-Detriment Findings for Rosewood species; and a CITES - FAO joint workshop on the verification of timber legality in the Lower Mekong Region to name a few.

The periodicity of the CITES intersessional period of three years allowed Parties to avoid delaying the meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) - the ultimate decision-making body of the Convention. CITES CoP19 was held in Panama City in November 2022, where over 3,000 participants - including 164 out of 184 Parties - were represented. The CoP adopted 365 new decisions, 5 new resolutions and 45 proposals for amendments to the CITES appendices - showing that steady progress was made on various issues despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This successful and significant advancement of work, as well as efforts made by Parties to sustain the funding level of the Convention, has laid solid ground for the Convention to advance its implementation for the next intersessional period - and in turn progresses on the SDG goals through ensuring that wildlife trade remains legal, sustainable and traceable.

e) Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit.

- Confirm the importance of partnerships to implement all sustainable development goals, including in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, recovering from the effects and in mitigating the future risks;
 - Promote scientific and technological innovation as well as the mobilisation of financial resources to bridge the digital divide, particularly in situations when minimizing interpersonal interactions would be beneficial to mitigate risks to human health; and
 - Continue to seek new partnerships for sustainable financing for conservation and sustainable development.
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