

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

Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Kyoto (Japan), 2 to 13 March 1992

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

RECOGNITION OF THE BENEFITS OF TRADE IN WILDLIFE

This document is submitted by Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Background

CITES recognizes the economic value of wildlife (*Preamble to the Convention, paragraph 2*) and the principle of sustainable use as an option for management of populations of wild species. However, commercial trade in wildlife and wildlife products has been increasingly portrayed in some quarters as having only negative effects on the conservation of species.

The attached draft resolution seeks to provide a distinction between trade which has a detrimental effect on the survival of species and trade which is beneficial to conservation.

The overwhelming majority of species of wild flora and fauna which CITES seeks to protect and enhance occur in the developing countries of the world. Many of these countries are characterised by poor economies, low agricultural production and rural poverty.

It is unreasonable to expect human populations, particularly in the most impoverished countries, to neglect an available source of food or money or to tolerate dangerous or destructive wild animals in the name of conservation. Conservation programmes need to be developed which take into account the needs of local people, which provide incentives for sustainable management of wildlife and which, where appropriate, ensure economic benefits to them.

With the exception of fisheries, the importance of wildlife as a food resource has never received the consideration it deserves. Consequently, its economic value is generally not recognised. This is of particular significance when areas are newly set aside for crop or cattle production in regions where wildlife (or a combination of wildlife and domestic stock) could be economically competitive if properly managed and sustainably used. In many cases wildlife can provide an attractive alternative land use provided its products are not undervalued. Where wildlife is properly valued, it is increasing on both private and communal lands in many developing countries and is to some extent replacing lower-valued uses such as cattle production and subsistence agriculture. Whenever such beneficial forms of wildlife use lead to international trade, CITES should not prevent their development.

Total prohibition of the use of wild flora and fauna, whilst appearing superficially to provide a quick answer to many conservation problems, may in practice be totally ineffective in achieving conservation goals. Such imposed "solutions" both alienate local people, who have the greatest influence over the survival of species, and preclude any legal economic return to them. In these circumstances, it should not be surprising if they do not support the actions taken.

When a programme of sustainable use of wild flora and fauna is implemented, the economic benefits that are derived ensure the maintenance of the habitat. All the species sharing that habitat are beneficiaries, thus contributing to the maintenance of biodiversity.

Whether the use of wildlife is beneficial or detrimental depends entirely on the conservation policies and practices in the States concerned. Trade should be viewed as beneficial when it is based upon sustainable use and the financial returns are used to:

- a) provide income to rural wildlife producer communities; or
- b) meet the costs of protected-area maintenance by government agencies; or
- c) further invest in wildlife development by landholders; or
- d) provide income at the national level to developing countries.

It might be argued that providing national income to developing countries is neutral or only slightly beneficial. In the long term it greatly influences the government attitude to land allocated to wildlife and may be very important.

Trade may be viewed as negative in its influence on wild flora and fauna when it is conducted by persons or agencies who return none of the benefits to conservation of the resource and when producer countries have no institutions or mechanisms to ensure that rural peoples benefit from sustainable use of their wild resources.

Trade is too often viewed in the CITES context as a simple matter of harvesting wild resources for financial gain. In practice, many of the most valuable wildlife products available for international trade from developing countries do not result from deliberate exploitation policies to obtain the products. They may result from natural mortality or they may arise as a by-product of management of species populations to maintain habitats. Legal trade in such products can be used to enhance species populations.

CITES also frequently fails to distinguish between illegal trade and legal trade which is supported by developing countries' Scientific and Management Authorities. When illegal trade has appeared to be excessive, CITES Parties have frequently voted to prohibit all trade. The paradox is that the returns from legal trade often provide the funds and incentive to contain the illegal trade in developing countries.

In submitting this draft resolution, the proponents are aware that trade must benefit conservation. Only in this way will a growing criticism of wildlife use for commercial purposes be stemmed.

The proponents are further aware of the fundamental problem that many Parties to the Convention do not allocate adequate resources for wildlife conservation, including CITES implementation. Wildlife conservation does not receive sufficient priority, either in relation to other spheres of interest or in relation to other international commitments to the environment. The proponents believe that undervaluing wildlife resources in producer countries may make the situation worse. The solution lies in ensuring a high economic value for wildlife coupled with enlightened policies to allow rural peoples to realise that value.

DRAFT RESOLUTION TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Recognition of the Benefits of Trade in Wildlife

NOTING that the overwhelming majority of species of wild flora and fauna which CITES seeks to protect and enhance occur in the developing countries of the world;

RECOGNIZING that wildlife management can provide an economically competitive and attractive land use as a alternative to conventional domestic livestock husbandry and subsistence agriculture in producer countries, provided its products are not undervalued;

BEING AWARE that, unless conservation programmes take into account the needs of local people and provide incentives for sustainable management of wildlife, alien land uses are likely to replace the use of land to support wild fauna and flora;

NOTING that the IUCN General Assembly in Perth (Australia) in 1990 adopted a resolution recognizing that sustainable wildlife utilisation can contribute positively to conservation (Annex);

RECOGNIZING that trade may be detrimental to conservation of wild flora and fauna when it is conducted by persons or agencies who return none of the benefits to conservation of the resource;

RECOGNIZING further that legal trade should not lead to increases in illegal trade, so justifying criticism of wildlife use for commercial purposes;

RECOGNIZING also that the returns from legal trade often provide the funds and incentives to contain the illegal trade;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOGNIZES that commercial trade in wildlife and wildlife products can be beneficial to the conservation of species and ecosystems; and

RECOMMENDS

- a) that trade be viewed as beneficial when it is based upon sustainable use and the financial returns are used:
 - i) to provide income to rural wildlife-producer communities; or
 - ii) to meet the costs of protected-area maintenance; or
 - iii) to further invest in wildlife development by landholders; or
 - iv) to provide income at a national level to developing countries; or
 - v) for any combination of these purposes; and,

in the context of species listed in the appendices to CITES, the Scientific Authorities comply fully with the provisions of Articles III, paragraph 2(a), and IV, paragraph 2(a), of the Convention;

- b) that trade should also be viewed as non-detrimental when it is not based upon the direct harvesting of wild resources for financial gain but rather on products of natural mortality or on by-products of wildlife management for other legitimate objectives;
- c) that, in seeking to limit trade, Parties distinguish between legal trade supported by producer States' Scientific and Management Authorities and illegal trade which all Parties have an obligation to contain;
- d) that rules adopted by the Parties do not penalize ranching, breeding or propagation operations but rather encourage them where appropriate; and

- e) that, whenever sustainable forms of wildlife use by local wildlife-producer communities lead to international trade, CITES should not be used to prevent such positive rural development.

18.24 Conservation of Wildlife through Wise Use as a Renewable Natural Resource

RECOGNIZING that use of wildlife may be consumptive or non-consumptive;

NOTING that some countries successfully conserve many species of their wildlife without using them consumptively, and that in many other countries the use of wildlife is necessary for the well-being of their people;

RECALLING that two fundamental aims of the World Conservation Strategy are to ensure the conservation of species and ecosystems for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of humankind;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the mission of IUCN is to provide leadership and promote a common approach for the world conservation movement in order to safeguard the integrity and diversity of the natural world, and to ensure that human use of natural resources is appropriate, sustainable and equitable;

RECOGNIZING that some wildlife conservation programmes provide for sustainable use;

CONSCIOUS of the complementary role provided by protected area management for wildlife conservation and the importance of such protected areas in maintaining biological diversity;

UNDERSTANDING that a country's lands (including its rivers, wetlands and territorial seas) are fundamental assets due to their potential for producing food and other natural products and that there are economic and humanitarian constraints on the extent to which they can be maintained as natural habitats;

RECOGNIZING that more effective mechanisms must be found that contribute towards the future economies of countries through wise use and conservation of their renewable natural resources;

CONCERNED that the decline of species and the loss of genetic diversity are often due to loss of suitable habitat and exploitation at levels that cannot be sustained;

BELIEVING that properly managed projects for the sustainable use of wildlife can enhance the conservation of wildlife populations and their ecosystems because of the economic and other benefits that such use provides;

NOTING that governments, IUCN members, development assistance agencies, and others are seeking guidance and assistance in the formulation of policies and the practical design and implementation of field projects on sustainable use of wildlife;

RECOGNIZING that the process of developing IUCN guidelines (including safeguards) for sustainable use of wildlife was initiated by a Workshop on Sustainable Utilization of Wildlife, held at this session of the General Assembly;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

1. **AFFIRMS** that ethical, wise and sustainable use of some wildlife can provide an alternative or supplementary means of productive land-use, and can be consistent with and encourage conservation, where such use is in accordance with adequate safeguards, namely:

- a. sound, scientifically-based monitoring mechanisms to ensure that such use is maintained at levels which can be sustained by the wild populations without adversely affecting the species' role in the ecosystem or the ecosystem itself;
- b. compliance with national and international legal obligations and policies;
- c. provision for the protection of wild animals from avoidable cruelty and suffering;
- d. conformity with the IUCN guidelines to be developed in accordance with sub-paragraph 5(a) below;

2. **URGES** all countries to:

- a. establish an adequate system of protected areas as an adjunct to the development of sustainable wildlife use programmes to further ensure the conservation of the species involved in such programmes;
- b. consider whether such sustainable use programmes based on IUCN guidelines, to be developed in accordance with sub-paragraph 5(a) below, would create economic and other incentives for the retention, rehabilitation and management of natural habitats and their biological assemblages outside such protected areas;
- c. urgently review, where necessary and desirable, current programmes and practices involving the use of wildlife and modify them to ensure their sustainability and conformity with the IUCN guidelines to be developed in accordance with sub-paragraph 5(a) below;

3. **RECOGNIZES** that, consistent with national and international legal obligations and policies, trade in clearly identified products derived from properly managed sustainable use of wildlife carried out in accordance with agreed guidelines and safeguards (as developed in accordance with sub-paragraph 5(a) below) can confer incentives that enhance the conservation of the species or population involved;

4. **ENCOURAGES** range states of shared populations of wildlife to cooperate in the conservation of such populations through international agreements;

5. **REQUESTS** the Director General to coordinate IUCN programme activities, in consultation with the Species Survival Commission and in collaboration with IUCN members, to:

- a. develop guidelines based on scientific, socio-economic, and traditional knowledge, the principle of equitable allocation of resources and distribution of benefits, and on other criteria recommended by the Workshop on Sustainable Utilization of Wildlife, for consideration by the Council;

- b. work to achieve the agreement of IUCN members to endorse and implement those guidelines;

- c. undertake or sponsor field projects to research and test factors needed to ensure successful sustainable use of wildlife;

- d. review as appropriate existing programmes and practices involving the use of wildlife and recommend modifications necessary in order to conform with the IUCN guidelines;

6. **REQUESTS** the Director General to investigate mechanisms to ensure, in so far as practicable, the equitable distribution of income and other benefits derived from the use of wildlife as set forth in this recommendation.