

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

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Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Exemptions and special trade provisions

Operations that breed Appendix-I species in captivity for commercial purposes

Relationship between *ex situ* breeding and *in situ* conservation

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMERCIAL *EX SITU* BREEDING OPERATIONS  
AND *IN SITU* CONSERVATION OF APPENDIX-I SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by Mexico.

General background

2. The question of artificial propagation and the complex relationship between *ex situ* breeding operations for Appendix-I species and *in situ* conservation of those species has been under discussion at CITES since the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (San José, 1979). Building on earlier discussions, Resolutions and Decisions, the Conference of the Parties directed the Animals Committee at its 11th and 12th meetings (Gigiri, 2000, and Santiago, 2002), in Decision 11.102 (Rev. CoP12) to:

*continue to examine the complex issues related to the legal origin of founder breeding stock and the relationship between ex situ breeding operations and in situ conservation of the species and ... to identify possible strategies and other mechanisms by which registered ex situ breeding operations may contribute to enhancing the recovery and/or conservation of the species within the countries of origin...*

3. In December of 2001, IUCN organized a workshop in the United States of America on the impact of commercial captive production and artificial propagation on wild species conservation. One of the recommendations of that workshop refers to the need for Parties and others to assess the potential consequences of commercial captive-breeding operations on the conservation of wild populations. In a document prepared by the Secretariat for the 18th meeting of the Animals Committee (San José, April 2002, document AC18 Doc. 10), the Secretariat noted that this issue was, in its opinion, of considerable importance, and should be explored further. The Secretariat then requested the Animals Committee to recommend to the Conference of the Parties to continue work on this subject after its 12th meeting.
4. Some of the concerns discussed at the 2001 IUCN workshop and reflected in an IUCN report for the 19th meeting of the Animals Committee (Geneva, August 2003, document AC19 Inf. 5, *Relationship between ex situ production and in situ conservation*) include the following:
  - a) *ex situ* production systems may create disincentives for habitat protection and *in situ* conservation by requiring less strict controls over captive-bred specimens in trade, thus making it easier and cheaper to produce specimens for trade through captive breeding than through maintaining wild populations;
  - b) *ex situ* production may result in a shift in production and trade from range States to non-range countries, thus eliminating incentives to preserve wild populations in range States;

- c) it may be wrongly assumed that *ex situ* production systems have no negative conservation impacts or, even worse, contribute to conservation in the wild, without data proving that this is the case; and
  - d) *ex situ* production systems can be used to launder illegally traded specimens.
5. Some other concerns that have been expressed by Parties are:
- a) it is still essential to foster cooperation between *ex situ* breeding operations and *in situ* conservation programmes in order to reduce effectively pressures in countries of origin;
  - b) land use change, alien invasive species and illegal trade, are still among the main causes of biodiversity loss. Therefore, cooperation with *ex situ* operations should be promoted in order to benefit *in situ* conservation initiatives that can help stop biodiversity loss; and
  - c) in some cases, *in situ* operations based on local communities cannot compete with those *ex situ* (competitive disadvantage).

#### Proposal for resolution

6. In recent years, this important issue has become more complex by its relationship to access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). However, we urge Parties not to allow the ongoing CBD debate to obscure the fact that this is also a trade issue, and as such certainly deserves to be considered in the CITES context. Captive-breeding operations for CITES Appendix-I species are often established in non-range States in response to an Appendix-I listing, and supply specimens for a domestic trade as well as for the international trade. While these operations may serve to relieve harvesting pressure on wild populations, they may also remove the economic incentive for range States to conserve those populations. In order to contribute to conservation, these non-range States could make direct and indirect contributions by paying conservation levies, making donations to support *in situ* conservation projects, donating specimens or genetic material to support recovery projects, transferring technology and providing training to *in situ* breeding facilities, among others. We realize that the incentive for undertaking such efforts is small, and therefore urge Parties to enter into voluntary cooperative agreements to support *in situ* conservation of these Appendix-I species. Mexico therefore recommends the adoption of the draft resolution annexed to this document.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat welcomes this document, which highlights some of the aspects to be taken into account when considering the relationship between *ex situ* production systems and *in situ* conservation.
- B. While strongly in favour of cooperation between Parties to assess the impact of commercial captive production and artificial propagation on the conservation of wild species, the Secretariat considers it premature to adopt a new resolution on this complex and delicate matter.
- C. As pointed out in paragraph 9 of document CoP13 Doc. 56.3.1, the Animals Committee was unable to finalize the tasks given to it in Decisions 11.102 (Rev. CoP12) and 12.78, paragraph c), and did not manage to come to concrete conclusions and recommendations.
- D. The Secretariat believes that this matter should be further discussed in the context of the work on national trade policy reviews and economic incentives. Building on the findings and recommendations of those discussions, a resolution could be prepared and submitted at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- E. In view of the above the Secretariat can not support this draft resolution, but it suggests that the issue and recommendations brought up by Mexico be taken into consideration in the context of the national trade policy reviews and a workshop on economic incentives, as proposed by the Secretariat in document CoP13 Doc.13.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Encouraging cooperation between Parties with *ex situ* breeding operations  
and those with *in situ* conservation programmes

RECALLING Resolution Conf. 8.3, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting (Kyoto, 1992) which recognized that the sustainable use of wild fauna and flora, whether consumptive or non-consumptive, provides an economically competitive land-use option, and that the returns from legal use may provide funds and incentives to support the management of wild fauna and flora to contain the illegal trade;

RECOGNIZING that Article VII, paragraph 4, of the Convention provides that specimens of an animal species included in Appendix I bred in captivity for commercial purposes, or of a plant species included in Appendix I artificially propagated for commercial purposes, shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix II;

RECALLING Decision 12.11, paragraph I), directing the Plants Committee to analyse the relationship between *in situ* conservation and *ex situ* production of plants;

RECALLING Decision 11.102 (Rev. CoP12), directing the Animals Committee to continue to examine the complex issues related to the origin of founder breeding stock and the relationship between *ex situ* breeding operations and *in situ* conservation of the species, and to identify possible strategies and other mechanisms by which registered *ex situ* breeding operations may contribute to enhancing the recovery and/or conservation of the species within the countries of origin;

FURTHER RECALLING Decision 12.22, directing the Secretariat to conduct, in cooperation with the Parties, a review of their national policy regarding the use of and trade in CITES-listed species, taking into account economic incentives, production systems, consumption patterns, market access strategies, price structures, certification schemes, CITES-relevant taxation and subsidy schemes, property rights, mechanisms for benefit sharing and reinvestment in conservation, and to produce a report analysing the economic impacts of wildlife trade policies in terms of socio-economic and conservation benefits and costs, economic value, levels of legal and illegal trade, improvement of the livelihood of local communities, and the role of the private sector involved in wildlife trade;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES:

- a) Parties with *ex situ* operations that breed Appendix-I animal species or that artificially propagate Appendix-I plant species outside the range States to enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements with range State Parties to support *in situ* conservation programmes for those species;
- b) *ex situ* operations that breed or artificially propagate Appendix-I species within the range State, to support *in situ* conservation programmes; and
- c) Parties to consider that such support should consist of, *inter alia*, technical support, contribution of funds, exchange of specimens for reintroduction into the wild, capacity building and training, technology transfer, investment, infrastructure, incentives, and other forms of benefit sharing.