

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



Fifty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee
Doha (Qatar), 12 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Elephants

REPORT OF THE MIKE-ETIS SUBGROUP

1. At its fifty- ninth meeting (SC59), the Standing Committee agreed that the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup meet in the sidelines of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to discuss the issues in paragraph 3 of document SC59 Doc. 19 (the Standing Committee recognized that time had been too limited for the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup to meet before SC59).
2. As announced at SC59, the MIKE-ETIS Subgroup convened on 13 and 17 March 2010 in Doha. Those present during the meeting (or attending one of the two sessions) were China, Japan, Kenya, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zambia (Chair); four members of the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG); the ETIS Director (TRAFFIC); and the CITES Secretariat, including five MIKE Subregional Support Officers (Central Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia).
3. The agenda of the meeting, based on the one presented in document SC59 Doc. 19, was agreed.

MIKE and ETIS analysis for CoP15

4. The MIKE Data Analyst presented an updated version of the MIKE analysis for CoP15 (with reference to documents CoP15 44.2 (Rev.1) and CoP15 Inf. 41), and the ETIS Director provided the latest information on the ETIS analysis. He confirmed that, based on the limited evidence available, no relationship can be inferred between CITES decisions and levels and trends of poaching as estimated by the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE). Kenya remarked that such a relationship could also not be disproved.
5. Kenya noted that MIKE's site-based design should provide for analysis at the site level. The MIKE programme should analyze local drivers of poaching that operate in individual sites. In this regard, Kenya questioned the relevance of using national-level covariates in the analysis. Kenya was of the opinion that the conclusion of the MIKE analysis concerning the absence of linkages between trends in the levels of PIKE over time and the most recent CITES-authorized ivory sales were premature and misleading. Kenya believed that its practice in collecting data relevant to MIKE could be used as a model.
6. One of the TAG members clarified that PIKE trends and the general MIKE analysis gave an overall and averaged picture of the situation in the 70 MIKE sites in 38 range States included in the analysis, and that it was not designed to reflect the specific situation of individual sites or countries. It was also mentioned that the objectives of MIKE were to provide overall trends in levels of illegal killing of elephants, and do not specify requirements to provide analysis at site or national levels. The MIKE Data Analyst clarified that PIKE was at the moment the best available proxy for measuring and comparing elephant poaching, but that further research and refinement were ongoing. As an example, he indicated that a multinomial analysis

of elephant mortality instead of the current binomial one would take care of mortalities caused by extreme weather conditions.

7. The MIKE Coordinator pointed at the case study of Laikipia-Samburu included in document CoP15 44.2 (Rev. 1) that gave a site-specific analysis. In response to questions about the reasons for selecting this particular site as opposed to more “typical” MIKE sites, the MIKE Coordinator clarified that this specific analysis had been possible because the site had abundant and detailed information on elephants, land use and many other significant local influencing factors. Such data was more limited or unavailable for many other sites. Furthermore, Laikipia-Samburu is a site consisting of a mosaic of different land uses and elephant protection situations, and therefore an interesting model to examine relationships between PIKE and various local factors. The US nevertheless encouraged MIKE to undertake similar detailed site analyses, where feasible and sufficient MIKE and efforts data were available, to give a better representation of differences in data collection and analysis across the spectrum of MIKE sites.
8. The ETIS Director clarified that the Annex to document CoP15 44.1 (Rev. 1) with the ETIS data would not be revised but that an information document was under preparation that provided ETIS analysis for four subregions in Africa and two in Asia, allowing for comparison and linkages with the MIKE analysis. The ETIS Director confirmed that CITES decisions concerning ivory trade do not appear to be a principal driver of illicit ivory trade according to the trends analysis of seized ivory presented in document CoP15 Doc. 44.1 (Rev. 1).

The future of the MIKE programme beyond mid-2011

9. A MIKE gap-analysis and needs assessment, based on research conducted by the MIKE programme for reporting to CoP15, was briefly introduced. It was suggested that an analysis be performed to look for correlations between the MIKE and ETIS covariates at the national level.
10. With regard to the future of the MIKE programme, the Subgroup was informed that discussions with the MIKE Technical Advisory Group continued on further improvements and scientific and technical developments of the MIKE programme so that it could continue meeting its objectives in as effective and meaningful a manner as possible. These discussions were helping to elucidate the organizational and scientific design, and the corresponding requirements of a well-functioning MIKE programme. The EU Commission was committed to support MIKE in Africa until the end of 2011. Additional external funding would be required after 2011 to ensure the continuation of the programme in its current format (neither MIKE nor ETIS are included in the Secretariat’s regular budget proposals for CoP15).
11. The MIKE Coordinator explained that at the moment, no overall fundraising activities had been initiated for post-2011 (there was agreement that the timelines for implementing Phase II in Africa could be moved from March 2011 to December 2011). He noted that several smaller, targeted fundraising activities to support elephant population surveys in Africa and MIKE work in Southeast and South Asia were being undertaken. The Subgroup requested the MIKE and ETIS programmes to be kept informed about ongoing and planned fundraising efforts.
12. In Kenya’s view, there were still gaps in the running of the MIKE programme that would require external funding. It reiterated that the elephant range States should become independent from external funding for implementing MIKE. In response to Kenya’s suggestion to call for a review of the entire MIKE programme, it was explained that the current Phase II in Africa was already contractually bound to be reviewed at mid-term (before summer 2009) and at the end (in 2011/12). The Subgroup agreed that this was an appropriate way of evaluating the African component of the programme. It suggested that funding source countries have been limited and that funding could be sought from other sources to support MIKE in both Asia and Africa.
13. China explained that it was in the process of working with partners to establish an elephant fund that could serve to support programmes such as MIKE and ETIS in Asia. This was welcomed by the Subgroup.
14. The Subgroup was informed about the considerable MIKE work being undertaken in Southeast Asia by WCS. It was clarified that for effectively assisting the 13 MIKE sites in the 8 Southeast Asian range States of the Asian elephant, around USD 400,000 per year is required. This would allow reinforcing and building effective structures for elephant data collection and analysis; training in law enforcement monitoring and MIKE routines; equipping rangers, sites and range States; conducting population surveys; and providing the necessary regional technical and operational support. The annual costs for running a similar support programme in South Asia would be less.

15. The ETIS Director gave an account of the financial situation of the ETIS programme, which was currently experiencing a shortfall of USD 46,000. But he stated that the situation had improved since the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee in 2009 owing to a grant from the UK Government (DEFRA) through its Darwin Initiative. The ETIS Director signalled his intention to circulate an update of the financial situation of the ETIS programme, detailing funding needs between CoP15 and the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Potential revisions concerning MIKE and ETIS in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) (Trade in elephant specimens).

16. The Subgroup generally agreed with the approach to revise certain aspects of MIKE and ETIS in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) (*Trade in elephant specimens*), as proposed by the Secretariat in document CoP15 Doc. 18, Annex 7. Kenya felt that such a revision should involve the elephant range States and all other interested groups and countries, noting that communication challenges existed in gaining inputs from the range States. The Subgroup took note of the fact that ETIS was a global programme involving many more than just elephant range States. The majority of the Subgroup supported the view that the Standing Committee, as the representative body of all CITES Parties, would be an adequate forum for implementing such a review in consultation with the Secretariat and TRAFFIC, and that it could be tasked with presenting its proposals at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2013.
17. The MIKE coordinator explained that the issue of ETIS and MIKE data handling policies could be discussed in connection with the proposed revision of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14). He indicated that the policies could be explored that govern other types of data that CITES Parties are submitting on a regular basis in the context of compliance with CITES provisions, such as CITES trade data. These become available in the public domain when they are submitted by the Parties to the CITES Secretariat and published by UNEP-WCMC. The Subgroup recognized the importance of peer review in the scientific literature of the analytical methods applied by MIKE and ETIS.

The MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group

18. The Subgroup was informed about the 8th meeting of the MIKE Sub-TAG and the 3rd meeting of the ETIS Sub-TAG which had taken place in Nairobi on 14-15 and 16 December 2009 respectively. It expressed its appreciation for the work of the TAG, which was conducted by scientists mainly on a voluntary basis. It took note of the Terms of Reference for the MIKE and ETIS TAG that had been communicated in Notification to the Parties No. 2009/049 of 26 November 2009.

Any other business

19. The Subgroup was reminded that the Standing Committee had agreed at SC59 to re-appoint a MIKE and ETIS Subgroup at its 60th meeting on 25 March 2010. Of the current Subgroup members, China, Japan, Kenya and Zambia were expected to rotate off the Standing Committee after their two terms. In order to maintain a normal composition of the Subgroup as laid out in its Terms of Reference, they should be replaced by two (Anglophone) African elephant range States and two Asian Parties (one or two range States of the Asia elephant if possible).