

Committee on Resources

Witness Testimony

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COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND OCEANS
REGARDING THE RESULTS OF THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE
CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES)**

July 17, 1997

I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today regarding results of the Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, from June 9th through June 20th.

Six weeks ago I testified before this Subcommittee on the status of U.S. preparations for COP10. At that time, I outlined for you the overall importance of CITES for the United States and the specific U.S. positions on key issues to be debated during the COP. My testimony described the reasons why we believe that CITES is such an important part of this country's efforts to conserve the world's fauna and flora, both in halting the trade in species which are threatened with extinction and in fostering sustainable trade in other, less vulnerable species.

Now that the COP has been concluded and all of the participants have had a chance to reflect on the results, I am able to confirm to you that CITES clearly remains a vital and effective force for conservation. I say this even though the decisions made at the COP were in some instances contrary to the U.S. position -- as is the case with every CITES meeting, we had some notable successes but did not achieve all that we sought. As a general matter, however, CITES Parties demonstrated a collective will to move forward cautiously and prudently and to explore innovative approaches to conservation which gives us a sense of optimism for the future.

From the U.S. perspective, I believe we were able to field the most cohesive and effective delegation ever to participate in a CITES meeting. The lead responsibility for CITES implementation, including participation in the biennial conferences, is given by the Endangered Species Act to the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Given the wide range of issues and interests that were before the conference, however, other agencies play a critical role in the CITES process as well. The Department of State, for example, provided incomparable assistance and expertise in all foreign policy matters and local embassy support. In addition, representatives from the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (representing the States) also made important contributions to our positions on such issues as whales, sea turtles, elephants, mahogany, and domestic U.S. species. Without their full participation, we could not have effectively advanced U.S. positions on these issues. In addition, we were fortunate to have two Members of the House of Representatives and their staffs present as Congressional observers, lending us their insights and gaining a better understanding of the CITES process.

There was very active participation from a wide variety of U.S. non-governmental organizations in the

COP. Fifty-one U.S. organizations with 118 individual participants were certified by the Fish and Wildlife Service to attend the COP as U.S. national observers, and several more U.S. -- based organizations obtained approval from the CITES Secretariat as international observers. In order to keep all of these organizations well informed about the U.S. positions and their progress -- and to gain their perspective about how we were doing and what we might do differently -- we held daily briefings for all U.S. nongovernmental organizations immediately after the close of each day's session. These sessions were invaluable to the U.S. delegation, as well as to the NGOs themselves.

One problem for our NGOs was that, as the number of substantive issues before the COP began to back up in Committee I (which dealt with listing and other scientific issues), the Committee Chairman and Conference Bureau which manages the COP found it necessary to curtail the right of observers to speak on species listing issues. One of our priorities in preparations for the next COP will be determining how to ensure that such restrictions on the right to speak and participate are not needed or used again. It is our strong view that active participation by a broad spectrum of NGOs (national and international) is vital to the work of CITES.

Overall, the U.S. was pleased with the outcome of many key issues -- including the rejection of unsound attempts to reopen commercial trade in whales, sea turtles, and white rhinos; to water down the restrictions on commercial trade in Appendix I species, and to change the relationship between CITES and the International Whaling Commission. We also saw successes in the adoption of several U.S. initiatives, including those dealing with harmful invasive species, sturgeons, and others. Of course, on the one issue which loomed largest at the COP, the parties decided to approve the downlisting of African elephants in three southern African countries to allow the possibility of a limited trade in ivory stockpiles 18 months from now. The U.S. opposed this effort. However, we advocated our position in a constructive manner which allowed the U.S. to leave the COP with a stronger than ever cooperative working relationship with the affected countries. The details of this are described in the attached report on the results of the COP.

To put the final vote on elephants into perspective, I believe that the authorization has as many safeguards as we could have hoped for in any decision which involves a limited trade in ivory. The concerns expressed by the U.S. played a constructive role in affecting the thinking of those parties which negotiated this compromise; it is not even assured that there will be an ivory trade in 18 months, since the CITES Standing Committee must first decide that a number of important improvements have been implemented before it can allow these sales to take place.

Ironically, one of our biggest successes for conservation involved a species proposal rejected by the Parties. A surprisingly successful outcome from the U.S. point of view was the decision on bigleaf mahogany. Instead of a controversial listing of the species in Appendix II, we achieved a consensus decision by all of the major range countries and importing countries to work together to advance the conservation of the species. Moreover, Bolivia, Mexico, and Brazil stated their intent to place bigleaf mahogany on Appendix III of CITES. Again, the details are addressed in the attached report.

The U.S. also succeeded in gaining new CITES protections for sturgeons and a continuing study of the conservation needs of sharks, in working with CITES on the major conservation threat of introduced harmful invasive species, and in defeating several initiatives which could have substantially weakened the protection for CITES-listed species. On the other hand, U.S. proposals for establishment of working groups on marine species and law enforcement were ultimately defeated -- but even here, we saw positive results. The discussions on the conservation of marine species will continue at future COPs, as CITES parties debate ways to use CITES protections to foster the conservation of commercially valuable marine species.

Furthermore, we saw an unprecedented level of communication between law enforcement professionals in attendance at the COP. With or without the formal structure of a law enforcement working group, these contacts between our Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement professionals and their counterparts in other countries will undoubtedly continue in the months and years to come.

One other issue of concern to us was the fact that so many decisions were taken by secret ballot. CITES adopted new rules prior to the 1994 COP making it easier to request secret ballots -- it now takes only a request from one party and ten seconders for a secret ballot automatically to be required -- but at the time these rules were adopted, it was with the understanding that secret ballots would rarely be needed. The excessive use of secret ballots at COP10 did not, in our view, foster accountability in the international decision-making process. The U.S. delegation, regardless of the number of secret ballots, announced how it voted in each case on listing and implementation issues. Such transparency is an essential part of our U.S. CITES process.

The attached report contains a summary of the debate and final outcome of major issues taken up in Harare. A more complete review of the results of every item at the COP will be included in a Federal Register notice now in preparation by the Fish and Wildlife Service. We will provide the Committee with a copy as soon as it is completed.

We look forward to working with the Members of this Committee and with the U.S. public as a whole as we implement the decisions made at COP10 and begin looking forward to the next COP in Indonesia in 1999.

**SUMMARY REPORT -- RESULTS OF MAJOR ISSUES
AT THE TENTH MEETING OF THE CITES CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
HARARE, ZIMBABWE -- 9 TO 20 JUNE, 1997**

Downlisting of African Elephants

As anticipated, the most visible and controversial issues at the Tenth CITES Conference of the Parties (COP 10) were the proposals by three range states (Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe) to downlist their elephant populations to Appendix II to allow for limited trade in stockpiled ivory to Japan, exports of sport hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes, exports of live elephants to appropriate and acceptable destinations, and (in the case of Zimbabwe) exports of hides and of leather goods and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes. The U.S. position, as announced at the House Resources Committee hearing on June 3, was to oppose all of these proposals because of the risks posed to elephants from any resumption of the ivory trade, particularly in view of the weaknesses in controls in the importing country identified by the CITES Panel of Experts appointed to review all of the proposals.

Just before the start of the COP, the African elephant range states held a meeting chaired by the World Conservation Union (with financial assistance provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service) to discuss the proposals. African countries also met frequently during the COP to continue their dialogue, but it was clear that many West, Central, and East African countries still had concerns about the potentially harmful effects on their elephants from any resumption of trade. When the debate was opened on the issue, South Africa offered a compromise amendment to all three proposals to try and address these concerns. However, the South African proposal was defeated in a secret ballot, falling three votes short of the required two-thirds majority because of continuing concerns about inadequate safeguards. On voting against this proposal, the U.S. explained that it could not support any downlisting proposal at this time because of serious concerns

about the potential for renewed poaching in other countries if limited ivory trade were resumed in southern Africa. Australia, India and Israel joined the U.S. in making statements against downlisting. The European Union also voted against the proposal.

Over the next day and a half, the proponent countries and a working group of representatives from other parts of Africa, Europe, and Canada negotiated further changes to the original proposals which were again put to a secret vote. This time, with the European Union parties changing their votes from opposition to abstention, all three proposals obtained the necessary two-thirds majority for adoption. The amendment approved by the parties takes the form of an annotation to the Appendix II listing, specifying that only certain activities may be conducted. In addition to authorizing the noncommercial exports of trophies, live animals, and (from Zimbabwe only) hides, worked leather goods, and worked ivory when the downlisting takes effect on September 20, the annotation will allow resumption of a limited trade in ivory 18 months later if, and only if, the following nine conditions are met:

1. the ivory control deficiencies identified in the Panel of Experts evaluation are remedied;
2. the CITES Secretariat verifies that all conditions have been fulfilled;
3. the CITES Standing Committee agrees that all conditions are met;
4. the three proponent countries withdraw their reservations to the elephant listing before the new listing takes effect (September 18, 1997);
5. there is a renewed commitment to regional law enforcement cooperation through such mechanisms as the Lusaka agreement;
6. mechanisms are established or strengthened to reinvest ivory trade revenue into elephant conservation;
7. a mechanism is developed by the Standing Committee for automatic re-transfer of downlisted populations to Appendix I (i.e. halting trade) if conditions are violated or if there is an escalation of illegal hunting or trade;
8. there is compliance with all other precautionary measures in the original proposals;
9. agreement is reached on an international reporting and monitoring system for poaching and illegal trade.

The COP also decided to renew the mandate of the African Elephant Panel of Experts to review all future downlisting proposals, including any proposals for changes to the annotations for the downlisted populations. In addition, the COP approved a decision that allows for non-commercial disposal of ivory stocks to generate resources for elephant conservation. Participating range states would be required to document and consolidate their stockpiles in a specified time period and agree to cooperate with the reporting and monitoring system for poaching and illegal trade.

After the final secret ballot, the U.S. publically announced that it had voted against the amended proposals because of our continuing concerns on poaching, though we had supported the decision regarding non-commercial disposition of stockpiles and supported the renewal of the Panel of Experts. The U.S. noted that it respected the decision of the COP and pledged to work cooperatively with the Standing Committee, the proponent countries, and other elephant range countries to minimize the risk to elephants throughout their range. The U.S. also noted the importance of continued work by the Standing Committee to develop formal procedures to deal with the increasing using of annotations to CITES listings. The U.S. plans to work actively, through our African Elephant Conservation Fund and through continued participation in meetings of the Standing Committee, to take a proactive role in developing the required international reporting and monitoring system for illegal trade, supporting regional law enforcement mechanisms, and institutionalizing the process for adopting and amending annotations to species listings.

Bigleaf Mahogany

The United States and Bolivia cosponsored a proposal to list bigleaf mahogany, a highly traded tropical timber species, in CITES Appendix II. The proposal would have required regulation of the trade in this species, which has been over-exploited in many portions of its original range in Mexico and Central and South America. During the debate on the issue, Brazil used its strong influence in the Latin American region to raise many objections to the proposed listing. In what was a hallmark of this COP, the vote was also done by secret ballot. After the vote was taken -- but before results were announced -- Brazil made a calculated announcement that it had abstained from voting, stating that it had already taken internal steps to address the issue. The proposal was rejected by Committee I, with 67 votes in favor and 45 against, missing the required two-thirds majority by 8 votes.

However, because of the relatively close vote and the potential backlash against Brazil from its surprise abstention in the first vote, the U.S. and Bolivian delegations began considering calling for another vote on this issue in the final plenary session (as is allowed under the CITES Rules of Procedure). However, in the last hours of the COP, the U.S., Brazil, and Bolivia forged what may be an even better outcome -- an agreement to work with all mahogany range states and with key importing nations to improve and ensure the sustainability of mahogany management and trade. The agreement envisions a working program to produce, over a period of 18 months, a report and recommendations on the status, management, and trade in mahogany, with the intent to improve sustainability of harvest and trade. Brazil also committed to list its populations of bigleaf mahogany on Appendix III and asked other range states to do the same. Bolivia and Mexico immediately announced they would follow suit. An Appendix III listing can be made by any individual range country and requires that importing countries verify that imports are accompanied by a CITES export permit from the listing countries, or a certificate of origin from other countries of export. This allows importing countries to ensure that shipments are legally acquired and to track imports from the countries that have made the listing. The species has been listed in Appendix III since 1995 by Costa Rica; additional listings by Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, and hopefully other range countries should be very helpful in developing better data on the level of trade.

Brazil committed to developing draft terms of reference for the proposed consultations within the next few weeks for review and comment. The U.S. intends to work very actively with Brazil and other range states and consumer countries to refine the terms of reference and to initiate the work program. The U.S. believes that this program may be able to produce a result which is even more effective for mahogany conservation than the original Appendix II listing proposal might have been, since it will be based on a cooperative effort by all of the leading exporting and importing countries.

Downlisting of Whale Stocks, the Relationship with the International Whaling Commission, and Illegal Trade in Whale Meat

The U.S. prevailed on all of its positions pertaining to whaling issues. Japan and Norway submitted five individual proposals for downlisting of specific whale stocks, none of which were adopted. In a vote taken early in the COP on a long-standing CITES resolution from 1979 (Conf. 2.9), the parties reaffirmed the vital link between CITES and the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which maintains a moratorium on commercial whaling. This resolution, now reaffirmed by the CITES Parties, supports and assists the IWC, by retaining in Appendix I those whale stocks subject to the IWC commercial whaling moratorium. Japan had proposed repeal of that resolution, but the Parties rejected Japan's initiative. In opposing all whale downlisting proposals, the U.S. noted both this earlier reaffirmation of the link with the IWC and that the precautionary measures required for downlisting under the CITES listing criteria (Resolution Conf. 9.24)

had not been met. In the end, again by secret ballots, no proposal for downlisting of whale stocks received the necessary two-thirds vote to be approved, although Norway's proposal to move two stocks of minke whales from Appendix I to Appendix II did receive a simple majority. The specific proposals were as follows:

- 1) Eastern Pacific Gray Whale: Japan's proposal to move this stock of gray whales to Appendix II was defeated by a vote of 47 in favor, 61 against, 8 abstaining.
- 2) Okhotsk Sea - West Pacific Minke Whale: Japan argued that downlisting would benefit small coastal villages that have been unable to harvest Minke whales under the IWC moratorium. The U.S. pointed out that the CITES status was irrelevant to this issue, since products from any small-type coastal harvest would not be traded internationally. The proposal was defeated with 45 in favor, 65 against, 7 abstaining.
- 3) Southern Hemisphere Minke Whale: Japan amended its proposal to include a quota of no more than the catch quota that would be set under IWC provisions. This proposal was defeated by a vote of 53 in favor, 59 against, 4 abstaining.
- 4) Northeast Atlantic and North Central Atlantic Minke Whale: Norway, in introducing this proposal, emphasized existing controls on the hunt and new means of identifying products from its commercial harvest. They promised that, should these stocks be downlisted, they would not allow export unless the importing country had an adequate scheme to monitor distribution of whale products. The proposal was defeated by a vote of 57 in favor, 51 against, 6 abstaining.
- 5) Western North Pacific Bryde's Whale: Japan withdrew this proposal after the preceding votes.

The United States also submitted a document dealing with the ongoing problem of illegal international trade in whale meat, which represented important collaboration between CITES and the IWC. Based on productive discussions in a working group, chaired by the U.S. and joined by Norway and Japan, the COP adopted a decision document on cooperation to stem this illegal trade and identify whale species in trade.

Sawfish, Sharks, and Marine Species Working Group

The U.S. proposal to list all seven species of sawfish on Appendix I was defeated by a vote of 24 in favor, 50 against. The majority of the Parties felt that the scientific information in the proposal was not sufficiently convincing, nor was there sufficient evidence that the species were threatened by directed international trade. The U.S. was also not successful in its proposal to establish a Marine Species Working Group to provide a forum to address the potential implementation issues involved with future listing of marine species. The COP did adopt, however, a discussion paper prepared by the Animals Committee on the biological and trade status of sharks. The COP endorsed the 18 recommendations in the paper, and also requested the chairman of that committee to serve as the CITES liaison with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other appropriate international organizations. This was a significant victory for the U.S. delegation, as Japan and several major international and intergovernmental fisheries organizations had mounted a major lobbying campaign against this proposal.

Sturgeon

The parties adopted a proposal jointly submitted by Germany and the U.S. to list all of the world's species of sturgeon in CITES Appendix II (other than the four species which are already included in Appendix I or

Appendix II). The species of the Caspian Sea were listed because of their seriously declining population status and large volumes of illegal trade, and the remaining species because of the similarity of appearance problems of distinguishing caviar and meat from other species with those from the Caspian Sea. The effective date of the listing was delayed until April, 1998, however, in order to allow more time for range countries (including both Russia and the United States) to make necessary preparations to implement the listing. Provisions were made to allow for exportation of small amounts of sturgeon products for personal consumption, and a commitment was made to provide technical assistance to range country sturgeon conservation programs. The only country to voice objection to the measure was Iran. The Fish and Wildlife Service intends to work closely with sturgeon farmers here in the U.S. in order to expedite issuance of permits and administrative procedures necessary for export of products from their farms. An internal review of export procedures is now underway to identify ways of accomplishing this. The U.S. also intends to work cooperatively with Russia on the sturgeon trade, including the provision of technical expertise available from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Forensics Laboratory.

Downlisting of "Cuban Population" of Hawksbill Sea Turtles Defeated

Cuba proposed a transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II of the "Cuban population" of hawksbill sea turtles, annotated to allow trade in current stocks of turtle shell to Japan, and to allow an annual shipment of a specified number of turtles to Japan. The U.S. strongly opposed this proposal. Mexico, the Bahamas, Hungary, India, Saudi Arabia, and others pointed out that this population is part of a stock shared by many Caribbean countries, that it clearly qualified for Appendix I listing, and that reopening trade would undermine the conservation of hawksbill sea turtles throughout the world. The proposal was defeated in Committee I by a vote of 53 in favor, 39 opposed, and 18 abstaining. The European Union at the last minute announced that its 14 party countries would abstain from the vote; otherwise the proposal might not have received even a simple majority.

Cuba subsequently proposed during the Plenary session to reopen debate on the proposal, with its annotation amended to call for (1) an export quota of zero for shells from the traditional harvest and the experimental ranching program, (2) the sale of stockpiled shells, with a percentage of the proceeds earmarked for collaborative studies of hawksbills in the region and (3) reduction of the number of eggs taken for the experimental ranching program by 50%. When questioned about what "a percentage of the proceeds" for studies meant, Cuba was equivocal, but stated that it would be more than 10%. The amended proposal lost in a secret ballot: 55 for, 49 against, 7 abstaining, with the European Union stating that they voted against the proposal.

Reptile Proposals

Three U.S. proposals to include reptile species in Appendix II were not adopted. The proposals on the alligator snapping turtle and the timber rattlesnake were withdrawn after many parties indicated their belief that international trade in the species was minimal and that conservation problems for the species should be dealt with through domestic measures. The U.S. proposal to include nine species of map turtles in Appendix II missed the necessary two-thirds majority by one vote, with 37 for and 19 against. In response to these concerns, the U.S. delegation met with registered observers representing the four Regional Associations of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, to discuss ways of increasing coordination and consultation between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the States on CITES listing proposals involving U.S. resident species. Specific plans have been made to continue these discussions at the next meeting of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in September.

Vicuñas

Four proposals on vicuñas were adopted by the parties. Two from Peru involved changes in the current annotations in the CITES appendices that would permit trade in luxury handicrafts made from vicuña wool. The Bolivian and Argentine proposals were the first efforts to downlist populations of vicuñas in those countries to Appendix II, following the model set at previous COPs by Peru and Chile.

Revision of the Definition of "Primarily Commercial Purposes"

Namibia introduced a resolution that would have significantly revised the criteria for determining whether certain government-controlled commercial transactions in Appendix I specimens should be considered to be "primarily commercial", and therefore prohibited under CITES. As subsequently revised, the resolution would have required an importing country to take into account the "conservation benefits" of the exporting country's trade when deciding whether to issue a permit for a particular Appendix I specimen. The U.S., Germany, and many other parties strenuously opposed the draft resolution on the basis that it was in direct contravention the provisions of CITES and created an enormous loophole for commercial trade in endangered species. Namibia ultimately withdrew the resolution.

Alien Invasive Species

Another important U.S. initiative at the COP concerned ways that CITES can be used to draw attention to the threat of invasive alien species. Parties concurred that live specimens of plants and animals in commercial trade can become introduced to new habitat as a result of international trade. The Parties agreed unanimously to adopt a document submitted by the U.S. and co-sponsored by Argentina and New Zealand, making several recommendations, including: consideration of the threats that invasive alien species pose when developing and implementing sustainable use management plans for species in international trade; cooperation and collaboration between CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international organizations on the issue of alien species; and work with the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group to identify species in trade with the biological potential for becoming invasive; and heightening awareness among and within countries on risks of invasive alien species. The CITES consensus on this issue was gratifying, and the U.S. will work actively with other CITES Parties on this important conservation issue in the coming years.

Illegal Trade in Bear Specimens

In response to the serious problems caused by the illegal trade in bear parts and products of Appendix I species, this issue was placed on the agendas of the Animals and Standing Committees, which led to the referral to the COP. A resolution co-sponsored by China, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States was adopted that addressed all major U.S. concerns and which will provide very positive benefits for global bear conservation. Key elements include: urging party countries to adopt, confirm, or improve national legislation controlling illegal trade in bear parts and products; increased wildlife law enforcement training programs; documenting of domestic demand for these parts and derivatives; and working with traditional medicine communities. The resolution also calls for an international workshop on law enforcement and forensics techniques essential to stopping illegal trade in these products. Preliminary discussions indicate that both China and Korea may wish to host this workshop. The FWS will work actively with the CITES Standing Committee in a continuing review of implementation of the resolution.

The "Annotations" Issue

In recognition of the recent practice of CITES parties to transfer a number of species from Appendix I to Appendix II subject to a "parts or products annotation", the COP adopted a Swiss proposal for an amendment to all such annotations that would clearly indicate that those specimens not included in the annotation "be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix I and the trade in them shall be regulated accordingly." However, in further recognition of points raised by the U.S. and supported by Germany, the COP also agreed to ask the Standing Committee to develop detailed guidance on the standards and procedures that the parties should follow on the use of such "parts and products" annotations for consideration by the parties at COP11. At a short Standing Committee meeting held at the close of the COP, the U.S. agreed to provide a background document for the next meeting of the Standing Committee in 1998, and to remain actively involved in this issue.

Feasibility Study on Mechanisms to Finance Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

France offered a resolution that called on the Standing Committee to conduct a study on the possibility of developing funding "on the basis of . . . international trade" that would be necessary to finance species conservation and the implementation of CITES. The U.S. opposed the draft resolution because the limited budgetary resources available to the CITES Secretariat should not be expended on the study of measures -- such as indirect taxation -- that would address financial and implementation issues beyond the scope of CITES, and because the U.S. did not believe CITES can or should impose international taxes on wildlife trade. The draft resolution was rejected.

Standing Committee

Moments after the close of the COP, the 39th meeting of the Standing Committee took place. The U.K. was elected chair, and Namibia vice chair. The new chairman and the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP signed a new Memorandum of Understanding between the CITES and UNEP developed by a Working Group of the old Standing Committee in which the U.S. took a very active role. The U.S. will no longer be a member of the new Standing Committee, giving up its chair as past host to Zimbabwe, with Mexico serving as the North American regional representative. However, the U.S. will continue to participate actively with Mexico in preparation for the Standing Committee's annual meetings and at the meetings themselves. Among the key issues to be dealt with by the new Standing Committee, as described earlier, are developing a new procedure for dealing with annotations to CITES listings and the critical decision in early 1999 about whether the conditions have been met for allowing sale of ivory stocks from Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to Japan. Other issues include the African elephant Panel of Experts, preparations for COP11, execution of the CITES budget, and management of the CITES Secretariat. The countries that are members of the Standing Committee are: United Kingdom and Russia (for Europe); Mexico (for North America); Argentina and Panama (for Central and South America and the Caribbean); Sudan, Namibia, and Burkina Faso (for Africa); Japan and Saudi Arabia (for Asia); Papua New Guinea (for Oceania); Zimbabwe and Indonesia (last and next host countries); and Switzerland (permanent representative, as Depositary government).

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