



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

2015

Article XII of the text of the Convention requires the CITES Secretariat to prepare annual reports to the Parties on its work and on the implementation of the Convention. This document, which covers the year 2015, is the 38th annual report of the Secretariat.

CITES – A snapshot view

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is a treaty created to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. It entered into force on 1 July 1975 and is currently one of the largest multilateral environmental agreements in existence, with a membership of 181 countries. CITES works through a system of import and export permits, and accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species. Its Secretariat is part of the United Nations Environment Programme.

CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2020

In 2013, the Conference of the Parties to CITES, its supreme decision-making body, adopted Resolution Conf. 16.3 on the [CITES Strategic Vision: 2008-2020](#). This Resolution contains three goals that the Conference has identified as the key components of the Strategic Vision:

- Goal 1: Ensure compliance with and implementation and enforcement of the Convention.
- Goal 2: Secure the necessary financial resources and means for the operation and implementation of the Convention.
- Goal 3: Contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and to achieving relevant globally-agreed goals and targets by ensuring that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive.

The goals aim at consolidating the existing strengths of CITES, ensuring the implementation of the mandate of the Convention, and further improving the relationship with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and related conventions, agreements and associations.

CITES Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is located in the International Environment House in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Secretariat plays a coordinating, advisory and servicing role in the working of the Convention, with its functions being prescribed in the Convention text and various resolutions adopted by Conferences of the Parties. It provides assistance to Parties in the fields of legislation, enforcement, science, financing, technology and training; it arranges and services meetings of its technical committees and other workshops; it undertakes scientific and technical studies; it makes recommendations regarding the implementation of the Convention; it centralizes and distributes knowledge and information relevant to the Parties; it maintains all the reference texts essential to the implementation of the Convention (the list of protected species, the Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties, etc.); and it raises external funds to implement activities decided by the Parties.

In 2010, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has given the Secretary-General of CITES [delegated authority](#) on administrative and financial matters, which aims to ensure the provision of secretariat services to CITES or the Convention and to delegate the appropriate authority and responsibility to the Secretary-General within an accountability context.

In 2011, the Executive Director of UNEP and the Standing Committee of CITES signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to further clarify the relationship between UNEP and CITES. The memorandum covered issues such as the programmatic relationship between both entities, financial matters and budgets, administrative support and programme support costs, and performance evaluation and management review.

Human resources

The Secretariat is comprised of 20 regular staff based in Geneva as at the end of 2015. Along with these regular staff in Geneva, the Secretariat has two project professional staff and two support staff members, based in the UNEP headquarters in Gigiri (Nairobi), Kenya, for the implementation of the [Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants \(MIKE\) programme](#).

The regular staff and project staff of the Secretariat consists of 16 Professional staff and 10 General Support staff, which includes individuals representing 18 nationalities coming from the regions of Africa (Kenya, Morocco and South Africa), Asia (China, Japan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka), Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), Central and South America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Chile and Colombia), North America (the United States) and Oceania (Australia).

[Mr. John Scanlon](#) assumed the post of Secretary-General in 2010. Under the Secretary-General, the Secretariat is organized based on the following [organizational chart](#):

- Administrative Services
- Corporate Services
 - Governing Bodies and Meeting Services
 - Knowledge Management and Outreach Services
- Implementation Services
 - Scientific Services
 - Regulatory Services (Legal Affairs and Trade Policy and Enforcement Support)
- Capacity Building Services

Secretary-General support

The Administrative Services Team provides support to the Secretary-General on administrative and human resources matters and on financial management. It gives guidance on UN rules and regulations related to administration, including issues on recruitment, staff administration, internship, and any other personnel management issues. It also provides guidance on UN financial rules and regulations related to the Trust Fund management, bank account, travel, procurement, hospitality and other financial matters.

Corporate Services is comprised of two teams: Governing Bodies and Meeting Services and Knowledge Management and Outreach Services. These two teams provide support to the Convention on organization of meetings, matters related to information technology, e.g. trade monitoring database, e-permitting, knowledge management, liaison with major groups, fundraising and outreach.

Implementation Services is comprised of two teams: Scientific Services and Regulatory Services. These two teams provide assistance to the Parties on technical and policy issues which include review of significant trade, non-detriment findings, the national legislation project and enforcement matters.

Capacity Building Services provides a coordinating role within the Secretariat and with partners with regards to capacity building services to the Parties.

Performance management

The Secretariat applies the UN Performance Management and Development System in its staff performance appraisal. This is done through an electronic application (e-performance system) that captures the main stages of the performance process (work plan, midpoint review and end-of-year performance appraisal).

Prior to the beginning of the performance cycle, and for the purposes of strengthening accountability in the Secretariat, senior managers meet with the Secretary-General and develop the action plan based on the implementation of goals in the Strategic Vision 2008-2020 and the Resolutions and Decisions adopted in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Priorities of each team are translated into work plans in the e-performance system. Work plans are developed in consultation with staff members concerned on an annual or biennial basis, depending on the needs of the team.

At the beginning of the performance cycle, the Chief of each team (First Reporting Officer) meets with the staff under their direct supervision to ensure that the objectives of the team are understood and individual work plans are prepared. First Reporting Officers work with staff members they supervise on the development of the staff member's individual work plan for the performance cycle.

During the course of the year, the First Reporting Officer and the staff member hold conversations and dialogue, formally and informally, and may have exchange of e-mails or other written communication on the progress of the performance goals set for the year. These conversations or written communications should address recognition for good performance and any shortcomings as they become apparent at any time during the cycle.

Within three months after the end of the performance appraisal cycle, the First Reporting Officer and the staff member meet to discuss the overall performance during the cycle.

CITES Financing

At its 16th meeting (Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties decided that the budget for the triennium 2014-2016 should be met by the Parties through their contributions. Through the costed programme of work, the Secretariat reports on its core and non-core activities, which shows the method of implementation of the activities with the corresponding funding from the Trust Fund or external sources.

The costed programme of work for the CITES Secretariat for 2015 can be found [here](#).

The total Trust Fund expenditure for 2015, including the programme support costs, amounted to USD 5.97 million, out of the budget of USD 6.02 million.

CITES Trust Fund

The main administrative costs of the Secretariat, the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of the permanent committees, and the CITES core activities are financed from the CITES Trust Fund.

The Trust Fund is funded by contributions from the Parties (member States) based on the United Nations scale of assessment, adjusted to take into account that not all members of the United Nations are party to the Convention. The Trust Fund budget for 2015 amounted to USD 6.02 million.

The paid contributions for 2015 amounted to USD 5.38 million. To date, the Secretariat employs a range of actions to ensure that Parties pay their contributions in a timely manner. The Secretariat sends requests to all Parties to pay their contributions before the beginning of the calendar year to which they apply. It also sends reminders at least three times a year to the Parties that have fallen into arrears with their contributions. The Secretariat also publishes and regularly updates information on the status of contributions to the CITES Trust Fund on the CITES website.

The status of Parties' contributions to the CITES Trust Fund as of 31 December 2015 can be found [here](#).

The CITES accounts form part of the UNEP financial statement and are administered by the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON). They are subject to a biennial audit by the External Board of Auditors of the United Nations. The UNEP audited accounts are certified correct and in accordance with the accounting policies and financial rules and regulations of the United Nations.

Implementation of Umoja

This administrative reform initiative for the United Nations Secretariat called "Umoja" took place on 1 June 2015 for UNEP worldwide and is intended to provide a simplified and real-time approach to the Organization's management of finances, resources and assets and required a complete re-working of the way the UN manages its administration in both business processes and systems.

Since Umoja was introduced, the UN has encountered several issues in harmonizing and unifying the disparate operating models and business practices used at over 400 UN locations into one common Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software solution.

As a result of the deployment of Umoja in June 2015, UNEP had identified 288 by the end of February 2016. These issues included matters related to reporting to donors, travel management, backlogs in processing of payments and correction of cash conversion issues that arose during the migration of data into Umoja. In September 2015, UNEP established an Umoja Competence Centre (UCC) to better meet the need to resolve concerns related to business processes surrounding Umoja, data conversion, reporting, mapping, support to UNEP's offices and training.

As of December 2015, there were still areas of uncertainty in relation to the implementation of Umoja and the precise nature of the impact it will have on the CITES Secretariat. For instance, since the deployment of Umoja, the delegation of authority related to approval and certifying functions has temporarily been suspended and is still centralized in UNEP, except for areas related to travel of staff and meeting participants and requisition functions relating to procurement, which were released back from the UNEP headquarters in late December 2015. Furthermore, changes in CITES bank accounts, which since 1 May 2015 have only been able to accept contributions and not make payments, has caused and continues to cause serious delays in processing of payments to consultants, implementing partners and vendors. As a result, the Secretariat is still limited to executing tasks in Umoja related to the creation of documents for processing, while the approving and processing of payments is done by either UNEP or UNON.

It should be noted that this change had a major impact on the operation of the Secretariat and affected the implementation of the programme of work for the remainder of the triennium 2014-2016. It has also placed considerable additional strain on the staff of the Secretariat, especially its administrative staff. Since the launch of Umoja, the Secretariat has continued to work closely with UNEP, its MEA focal point on operational and administrative issues, and UNON to resolve outstanding issues related to cash availability, donor reporting, and pending payments.

CITES Parties in 2015

One new Party joined CITES in 2015: the European Union. As of December 2015, 181 Parties had joined CITES. The complete list of CITES Parties can be found [here](#).