

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



Fifty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6-10 July 2009

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Elephants

DECISION-MAKING MECHANISM FOR AUTHORIZING IVORY TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.77 concerning Elephant conservation as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, shall propose for approval at the latest at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties a decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory under the auspices of the Conference of the Parties.

3. At its 57th meeting (SC57, Geneva, July 2008), the Standing Committee supported a recommendation from the Secretariat to initiate the implementation of this Decision by conducting an independent study on the development of a decision-making mechanism and process for future trade in elephant ivory for review by the Standing Committee (see documents SC57 Doc. 33.4 and SC57 Com. 4). Based on proposals from the Secretariat concerning this study and inputs from an open working group established at SC57, the Standing Committee agreed to the following:

The study, which could be coordinated by the Secretariat in consultation with stakeholders including African and Asian elephant range States and which would be subject to the availability of external funding, is proposed to cover the following issues:

- a) examination of the various processes and decision-making mechanisms related to ivory trade that are or have been operating under the provisions of the Convention, including compliance and enforcement provisions;*
- b) evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of international trade regimes and associated controls, safeguards and monitoring methods for other high-value commodities in the context of future trade in ivory;*
- c) basic principles and factors that could guide future trade in ivory, and proposals on how an effective, objective and independent decision-making mechanism could operate, taking into account the provisions of the African elephant action plan and experiences from Asia; and*
- d) exploration of the conditions under which international trade in elephant ivory could take place, taking into account: ecological and economic sustainability of ivory trade; the impact of trade on the illegal killing of elephants; the initial impact of the one-off sale of ivory that*

was agreed at CoP14; levels of illegal trade; enforcement challenges and capacities; information on linkages between legal and illegal trade, and methods to elucidate these linkages; methods to track the chain of custody; etc.

4. The Secretariat estimates that a minimum of USD 60,000 is required to undertake the study mentioned above. This budget would cover the costs of a six-month consultancy, including salaries, travel and communication, a contingency and overheads. Since SC57, the Secretariat has approached several donors and will inform the Standing Committee on progress in securing the external funding required.

Recommendations

5. The Standing Committee is invited to take note of the Secretariat's efforts in launching the study on the development of a decision-making mechanism and process for future trade in elephant ivory, and to encourage Parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other donors to support this activity financially.