

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

NEXUS BETWEEN THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND  
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) AND  
THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES)

1. This document reflecting the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr E Molewa, summary of the key issues raised at the Ministerial Lekgotla that took place on 23 September 2016. has been submitted by South Africa.

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*



**MINISTERIAL LEKGOTLA  
23 SEPTEMBER 2016  
SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE**

***Nexus between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)***

***Summary by host and facilitator: Minister of Environmental Affairs, South Africa  
Dr Edna Molewa***

On the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species (CITES COP 17), 35 Ministers or Deputy Ministers, 129 country Heads of delegation and 10 Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs) met on the 23 September 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa to discuss the role of CITES in advancing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that was adopted for implementation and review by UN Member States in September 2015.

Specifically, Ministers, Heads of Delegation and IGOs discussed:

- a) The role that CITES plays in achieving this Agenda and its Goals; and
- b) How CITES may strengthen its contribution to the full realization of these efforts?

The dialogue was informed by an initial series of presentations from experts that focused on the nexus between CITES and the SDGs from a wide range of perspectives. The panel presentations addressed two (2) main themes, namely:

- a) Wildlife trade and CITES and its interface with the SDGs; and
- b) Conservation imperatives and its contribution to the SDGs.

Thereafter, Ministers, Heads of Delegation and IGOs engaged on these thematic areas to provide an initial sense of the political and policy direction that CITES may need to take if it is to contribute and be relevant to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and its' SDGs.

This facilitators summary is presented under her own recognizance, and aims to capture some of the common key issues raised by Parties, as follows:

**On the global context and intersecting issues within which CITES must operate:**

1. The world population continues to grow and is projected to only stabilize at around 11 billion people in the long term.
2. This has focused the attention of the international community on ensuring that all people of the world enjoy a decent standard and quality of life now and in the future, irrespective of whether they live in urban or rural areas.
3. The global sustainable development Agenda 2030 and its goals significantly strengthens and enhances focus on the social dimension of development, including among others, achieving:
  - a. Poverty eradication;
  - b. The elimination of hunger and achieving food security;
  - c. Improved community health and education;
  - d. Universal access to water and sanitation; and
  - e. Decent, equitable and sustainable livelihoods, settlements and communities.
4. In turn, these social outcomes require inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic development that **leaves no-one behind**, in a manner that remains within the ecological and environmental capacity of earth to secure socio-economic benefits for both present and future generations.
5. Species, biodiversity and ecosystems provide foundational environmental resources, goods and services that are essential and integral to achieving our sustainable development agenda. In this regard, the following two SDGs were specifically referenced: SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) and SDG 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems,

sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss).

6. CITES is a legally binding international cooperation instrument contributing towards the environmental dimension of sustainable development, which could also support socio-economic development opportunities for people.
7. CITES remediates one of the many threats to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity – namely inadequately regulated and illegal international trade in wildlife, recognizing that the people and sovereign states are and should be the best protectors their own wild fauna and flora.
8. On the one hand, CITES sets the rules and parameters for well regulated legal trade in endangered species covering both supply and demand side dimensions, which in many cases has significant job creation, economic and livelihood benefits, particularly for rural and coastal communities.
9. On the other hand, CITES through its enforcement measures also combats the drivers of illegal trade, which have significant impacts on species, ecosystem services and related potentially negative livelihood, tourism, corruption and security impacts.
10. It was stressed that the effective regulation of legal trade in species and the full implementation of necessary enforcement measures to address illegal international trade under CITES requires international cooperation, community participation and partnerships to ensure sustainability.
11. However, CITES is operating in a changed world. Recent times have seen information, communication and technological revolutions and the phenomenon of globalization. Although these changes and advances raise the challenge of shifting priorities for CITES, they also hold the promise that the CITES contribution to achieving the SDGs is imminently possible.

#### **On the need for CITES to address potentially conflicting objectives, issues and approaches**


12. With the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the international community recognized that major socio-economic challenges, particularly those of eradicating poverty, ensuring inclusiveness and equity, are overriding global priorities and are therefore of primary importance to the future success of CITES species conservation efforts.

13. In this context, the contributions of well regulated wildlife trade to sustainable development are recognized and, for some Parties, this forms a fundamental logic underpinning national conservation policies, including the conservation management of species and protected areas.
14. However, serious sustainability concerns are raised by illegal trade and/or inadequately regulated legal trade, which under CITES triggers stricter international or domestic measures to restrict or disrupt markets. This may unintentionally or perversely undermine the sustainable development benefit of well regulated trade. Many Parties emphasized that alternative approaches may be needed to ensure and maximize CITES relevance and contribution to Agenda 2030.
15. Many Parties stressed that in the context of ever increasing pressures on land and natural resources by an expanding population, it is critical for long term species conservation to empower and include marginalized poor communities in conservation and protected area decision making and equitably share benefits from CITES regulated trade. The future success of CITES efforts to address the threat posed by wildlife trade on biodiversity and species will depend on community participation.
16. These Parties noted that local and indigenous communities play an essential role in success of conservation of wildlife as part of the pursuit and achievement of their development rights – either positively or negatively depending on the situation. Experience where community empowerment, ownership and benefit have occurred has seen the recovery in wildlife numbers, as well as a positive attitude change towards conservation. This experience indicates the need to, at least ensure:
- a. Community access to and participation in the use and management of wildlife and an equitable share of the benefits that flow from this;
  - b. Their involvement in decision-making.
17. To this end, there may be a need to expand the scope of CITES governance processes to include the participation of local and indigenous communities and the effective consideration of their needs.

**On how CITES and national governments could resolve the above challenges in the context of achieving the SDGs**



18. In addressing these challenges for both CITES and governments, many Parties expressed the need to strengthen and enhance CITES' relevance and contribution to all 3 dimensions of sustainable development.
19. Much more needs to be done in terms of the full and coherent integration of development planning, legislative, governance and cooperative implementation efforts and the building of capacity in these areas, including through partnership approaches.
20. CITES interventions must decisively and effectively address illegal trade in wildlife and efforts to ensure well regulated trade of species should be integrated into a broader comprehensive "win-win" response that address the full spectrum threats impacting on species, such as human/wildlife conflict, habitat loss and degradation, climate change and invasive species.
21. Specifically, CITES should demonstrate its contribution to the SDGs. As such, through international, inter-agency and other partnership collective and cooperative efforts CITES and governments should:
- a. Strengthen and align CITES policy and legislation;
  - b. Build the capacity of enforcement and prosecutorial officials;
  - c. Strengthen and mainstream CITES in governance, inter-agency, civil society and private sector collaboration arrangements;
  - d. Enhance CITES communication, awareness and marketing programmes;
  - e. Develop and enhance capacity for CITES related research, monitoring, intelligence and other technical tools and systems;
  - f. Analyze and further understand the causality based on science and risk of patterns of both legal and illegal trade as a basis for planning, resource allocation and implementation of responses to;
    - (i) Enable smooth legal trade flows while preventing illicit trade;
    - (ii) Dismantle and disrupt illegal supply chains.
22. Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Heads of Delegation and IGOs stressed that this discussion should be continued in other fora, such as the Conventions on



Biodiversity, Migratory Species and in the International Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Only by working together can we face the difficult task of making the connections between the different global goals. We have demonstrated that the political commitment to deliver on sustainability exists.