



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2014/024

Geneva, 2 June 2014

CONCERNING:

Snake trade and conservation management (*Serpentes* spp.)

1. At its 16th meeting (Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 16.102 to 16.108 on *Snake trade and conservation management (Serpentes spp.)* (see Annex).
2. In compliance with Decision 16.102, paragraph c), Parties are hereby informed that the results of the International Trade Centre (ITC) study on trade in python skins in Asia, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Biotrade Initiative Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, can be accessed as follows:
 - Kasterine, A., Arbeid, R., Caillabet, O. and Natusch, D. 2012. The Trade in South-East Asian Python Skins. International Trade Centre, Geneva
<http://www.intracen.org/The-Trade-in-South-East-Asian-Python-Skin/>
 - Ashley, D. 2013. Traceability Systems for a Sustainable International Trade in South-East Asian Python Skins. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva.
www.biotrade.org/Additional_Resources_VC.html

References to other relevant studies and information can be found in the documents relating to agenda item 19 of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee (Veracruz, 2014), and to item 44 of the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, 2014). The final outcomes of the activities referred to in paragraphs a) and b) of Decision 16.102 will be made available on the CITES website, following review and approval by the Animals Committee and Standing Committee.

3. Parties are encouraged to engage with interested institutions to investigate the possibility of forensic identification of specimens of CITES-listed snakes in trade, and are requested to inform the Secretariat about the results of such engagement.
4. Parties in the Asian region are requested to inform the Secretariat of their efforts in all the areas indicated in Decision 16.106, so that it can report at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.
5. Parties are invited to submit the reports indicated in paragraphs 3 and 4 above to the Secretariat by **31 December 2014**, to enable the Secretariat to prepare its recommendations in time for consideration at the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Annex

DECISIONS 16.102 TO 16.108
ON SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (*SERPENTES SPP.*)

Directed to the Secretariat

16.102 The CITES Secretariat shall, where appropriate in consultation with the Standing Committee:

- a) subject to external funding, hire independent consultants in liaison with local scientists, and local research and academic institutions to:
 - i) undertake a study of production systems for Asian snakes listed in CITES Appendix II and the use of source codes; and develop guidance to assist Parties in monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems, including information to assess their biological feasibility and, where possible, economic viability (i.e. whether it is financially viable for commercial facilities to produce and export specimens as permitted by national authorities);
 - ii) compile information and develop guidance that can assist Parties in the making of non-detriment findings, management systems for wild populations and the establishment of export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade, by undertaking relevant research, consulting with relevant experts, examining suitable examples and case-studies, and building on the results of the International Expert Workshop on CITES Non-Detriment Findings (Cancún, 2008) and recommendations on the making of non-detriment findings from the Conference of the Parties;
 - iii) undertake a study of one or more high-value snake species in the pet trade (e.g. unique colour or morphological forms, or range-restricted endemics) to determine the impacts on wild populations of legal and illegal harvest for international trade, and to provide information required for making non-detriment findings for trade in these species; and propose actions to enforce the Convention as it relates to trade in these species; and
 - iv) undertake a study on methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes in trade, including parts and derivatives, ensuring that the work is carried out in line with recommendations of the Standing Committee concerning source;
- b) issue a Notification to the Parties encouraging Parties to engage with interested institutions to investigate the possibility of forensic identification of specimens of CITES-listed snakes in trade, and requesting Parties to inform the Secretariat about the results of such engagement;
- c) inform Parties of the results of the International Trade Centre (ITC) study on trade in python snakes in Asia, the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, when these become available, and other relevant studies and information;
- d) present the outcomes of the activities mentioned in paragraphs a) and b) above, together with its recommendations, to the Animals Committee for review at its 27th or, as appropriate, 28th meeting, and make the final results available on the CITES website following review and approval by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.105;
- e) issue a Notification to the Parties requesting Asian Parties to report on their implementation of Decision 16.106 to the Secretariat, and submit a compilation of this information and its recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting; and
- f) subject to external funding, conduct one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES and other relevant authorities and stakeholders of range States of Asian snake species in international trade on:
 - i) the use of guidance for monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems, as agreed by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.105;

- ii) the use of guidance for making non-detriment findings and establishing export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade; and
- g) report on the results of these activities to the Standing Committee before the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17).

Directed to the Animals Committee

16.103 The Animals Committee shall:

- a) review the results of the activities indicated in Decision 16.102, paragraphs a) to c), as well as the results of the ITC study and other relevant studies on trade in python snakes in Asia and UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, when available; and, based on these studies and reports, develop guidance and recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee;
- b) examine the study undertaken by the UNCTAD Biotrade initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing mentioned in Decision 16.102, paragraph c), and any other relevant available information concerning:
 - i) existing marking and tracing systems and, where relevant, accompanying certification schemes of all kinds (and not necessarily limited to those currently in use for trade in wild species), which could provide best practices that might be applicable to snakes;
 - ii) a traceability system to confirm the legal origin of snake skins; and
 - iii) the economic feasibility of current technologies to implement such a traceability and marking system;
- c) advise the Standing Committee on the feasibility of implementing such a traceability system for snakes; and
- d) report on the status of this work at the 65th and 66th meetings of the Standing Committee.

16.104 The Animals Committee shall, at its 27th meeting, consider the final IUCN red list assessments for Asian snake species and, if available, incorporate new information and data and make appropriate recommendations, including recommendations to the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Standing Committee

16.105 The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the reports and recommendations from the Animals Committee and the Secretariat provided in accordance with Decisions 16.102 and 16.103 and, as appropriate, the results of the ITC study on trade in python snakes in Asia, the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, and any other relevant available information;
- b) examine the study undertaken by the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on reptile skin sourcing, and any other relevant available information concerning:
 - i) the socio-economic implications of such a traceability system; and
 - ii) the potential costs of the system at all levels along the supply chain, from producers to consumers;
- c) make recommendations to the Parties, the Animals Committee and the Secretariat as appropriate; and
- d) report on the implementation of Decisions 16.102, 16.104 and 16.105 at CoP17, with recommendations for consideration by the Parties, if deemed necessary.

Directed to Parties

- 16.106 Parties should eliminate the important illegal and unreported trade in specimens, whether live or parts and derivatives, of CITES-listed snake species by:
- a) ensuring that CITES permits and certificates are properly issued for trade in these specimens;
 - b) including information on trade in these specimens in their CITES annual reports;
 - c) ensuring that their annual reports are following the most recent version of the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports*, in compliance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP16);
 - d) examining their enforcement efforts regarding trade in these specimens to ensure that adequate steps are taken to deter and detect illegal and unreported trade;
 - e) undertaking education and outreach activities directed towards snake farms, buyers and sellers of live snakes, parts and derivatives, product manufacturers, shippers, brokers and staff from government agencies involved in controlling and monitoring this trade to ensure that snake specimens are traded in compliance with national laws and CITES provisions; and
 - f) in the case of Parties in Asia, reporting on their efforts in all of these areas to the Secretariat in time for its reporting for the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee, in compliance with Decision 16.102, paragraph e).
- 16.107 In order to support the sustainable use of Asian snakes, Parties are as necessary invited to:
- a) in the case of range States with shared CITES-listed species in trade, develop comparable, or as far as possible standardized non-detriment finding methodologies, including the establishment of quota setting systems; and
 - b) establish voluntary conservative annual catch and export quotas for CITES-listed snake species in trade, and to communicate the export quotas to the Secretariat.

Directed to ICCWC and ASEAN-WEN

- 16.108 The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) are encouraged to take note of the concerns about the illegal and unreported trade in snakes and their parts and derivatives, and to take these into account when developing work programmes and, if funding is available, undertaking relevant activities.