

CITES SECRETARY GENERAL EXPECTED IN ZIMBABWE...

CITES Secretary General Mr. Willem Wijnstekers is expected in Zimbabwe on Monday 8 January 2010. Mr Wijnstekers will be accompanied by Mr. John Sellar, Chief Enforcement Officer. Mr Wijnstekers and Mr. Sellar leave for South Africa on Friday the 12th of January 2010.

What is CITES?

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. It constitutes part of the United Nations Environmental Multi-lateral Agreements combining wildlife trade themes with legally binding instruments for achieving conservation and sustainable use objectives. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. All import, export, re-export and introduction from the sea of species covered by the Convention has to be authorized through a licensing system. Each Party to the Convention must designate one or more Management Authorities in charge of administering that licensing system and one or more Scientific Authorities to advise them on the effects of trade on the status of the species. The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority administers the Permit system regulating wildlife trade in the country.

The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

- Appendix I include species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
- Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
- Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other, CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties (CoP), is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention and comprises of all member States, currently there are 175 member States or Parties to CITES.

The Parties (member States) to CITES are collectively referred to as the Conference of the Parties. Every three years, the Conference of the Parties meets to review the implementation of the Convention. These meetings last for about two weeks and are usually hosted by one of the Parties. The meetings are often referred to as 'CoPs'. They provide the occasion for the Parties to:

- review progress in the conservation of species included in the Appendices;
- consider (and where appropriate adopt) proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II;

- consider discussion documents and reports from the Parties, the permanent committees, the Secretariat and working groups;
- recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention; and
- Make provisions (including the adoption of a budget) necessary to allow the Secretariat to function effectively.

The next COP 15 is taking place in Doha, Qatar from 13 to 25 March, 2010.

All Parties are required to strictly adhere to all the provisions of the Text of the Convention and to all Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Conference of Parties.

Zimbabwe has many species listed in CITES and therefore actively participates at Conferences of Parties. For example, the 14th Conference of Parties authorized Zimbabwe to sell approximately 4 000kg of raw elephant ivory to China and Japan. Zimbabwe received approximately USD490 000.00 from the auction.



The CITES Secretary General Mr. Willem Wijnstekers

Mr. Willem Wijnstekers is the current CITES Secretary General and he supervises the global implementation of CITES and its Strategic Vision. He is responsible for policy formulation and direction within the Secretariat. He manages the budget and secures timely financial contributions from the Parties and other donors. He directs all the activities on personnel matters within the Secretariat.

Mr. Willem Wijnstekers also represents CITES at meetings with senior members of Governments and liaises with a range of specialized agencies with the UN system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations at the global, regional and national levels. He attends meetings of other conventions and public events, and advances awareness and understanding of CITES through the media.



Chief Enforcement Officer Mr. John Sellar

The CITES Secretary General is accompanied by Mr. John Sellar, Chief Enforcement Officer. John M. Sellar is responsible for providing Parties with technical advice and support in relation to the enforcement of the Convention. He monitors illegal trade in wildlife and liaises with law enforcement agencies at the national, regional and international levels, particularly Interpol and the World Customs Organization. He also coordinates work by CITES Enforcement Task Forces and the CITES Enforcement Expert group.

Zimbabwe welcomes the visit by the CITES Secretary General as it affords an opportunity to interact with political leadership thus ensuring long term sustainable wildlife management policies.

During the CITES Secretary General's visit he will meet Environment and Natural Resources Management Minister, Hon F.D.C Nhema, the Minister of Defence Hon E.D.Mnangagwa, Minister of Justice Hon. P. Chinamasa, Zimra Commissioner General Mr G Pasi, Attorney General Hon J.Tomana, Police Commissioner General, A Chihuri and Prime Minister Hon M Tsvangirai and Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.