

CITES Conservation NGO Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting

11am-1pm, Mon 11 April 2016, London Nobel House

MINUTES

Attendees:

1. Mark Baxter (Defra)
2. Emma Black (Defra)
3. Cheryl Case (Defra)
4. David Cowdrey (IFAW)
5. Cathy Dean (Save the Rhino)
6. Paul De Ornellas (ZSL)
7. Jim Gray (Pew Trusts)
8. Simon Hedges (WCS)
9. Rob Hepworth (DSWF)
10. Amy Hinsley (UNEP-WCMC)
11. Stacey Hughes (Defra)
12. Richard Jenkins (IUCN)
13. Mark Jones (Born Free)
14. Laurence Jessup (UKBF)
15. Georgina Lamb (DSWF)
16. Alison Littlewood (JNCC)
17. Claire McLardy (UNEP-WCMC)
18. Grant Miller (UKBF)
19. Donna O'Connell (RSPCA Intl)
20. Abbie Parker (Cruelty Free Intl)
21. Emma-Jo Pereira (WCL)
22. Rose Simpson (RBG, Kew)
23. Shruti Suresh (EIA)
24. Mark Simmonds (HSI)
25. Noeleen Smyth (RBG, Kew)
26. Katherine Secoy (ZSL)
27. Martin Sims (NWCUC)
28. Heather Sohl (WWF-UK)
29. Will Travers (SSN (Born Free))
30. Dominic Whitmee (Defra - chair)
31. Dan Willcox (EIA)
32. Cathy Williamson (WDC)
33. Emily Wilson (WAP)

Apologies: Debbie Banks (EIA), John Gripper (Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust), Simon Hewitt (APHA), Tania MaCrea-Steele (IFAW), Ian Redmond (Ape Alliance), Mary Rice (EIA), Michael Sigsworth (Defra).

Minutes of the last meeting and action point updates:

1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. Action points were either completed or discussed under later agenda items.

Corporate updates:

2. Jane Elliot-Malpass and Jeremy Eppel left Defra in March as part of Defra's voluntary exit scheme. Cheryl Case has succeeded Jeremy as Deputy Director; Stacey Hughes has taken on Jane's CITES role. The Directorate merged with Marine in January to form the EU, Marine and International Directorate. Defra has moved to a new internet-based telephone system and all telephone numbers have changed.

Action point 1: Stacey to re-circulate the CITES team's new telephone numbers. **Completed.**

Cheryl Case 0208 026 2888

Dominic Whitmee 0208 026 6656

Michael Sigsworth 0208 026 3704

Mark Baxter 0208 026 6794

Stacey Hughes 0208 026 6911

3. NWCUC has secured another four years' funding. Defra is also giving NWCUC an additional £29k to tackle illegal trade via the internet; however, NWCUC's HR and Finance are more than doubling their charges so NWCUC's finances are approx. £51k less overall.

Recent meetings:

(a) Save Wildlife Conference, The Hague, Netherlands 1-3 March 2016

4. The international conference on wildlife crime was hosted by the Dutch Government and Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit. A UK delegation including Minister Rory Stewart attended. The Hanoi conference on IWT will be held 17-18 November. It is not yet known if the Conference will be open to NGOs but this is being considered. CLG members agreed that it was important for international IWT meetings to focus on achieving outcomes rather than simply agreeing actions. It might be worth looking at reporting obligations from other fora eg ICCWC.

Action point 2: Emma Black to arrange for the Minister's Hague speech to be transcribed and circulated to CLG members.

Action point 3: Emma to contact Dutch colleagues to stress the importance of following up on Conference outcomes and to hold participants accountable for agreed actions. Emma also similarly to contact colleagues in Hanoi re the Vietnam Conference. [**Update:** *Emma has emailed Netherlands colleagues.*]

Forthcoming meetings:

(a) 74th Management Committee / 3rd Expert Group

5. There were no comments on the agenda of either meeting.

(b) 17th Conference of Parties (CoP17) to CITES, 24 Sept – 5 Oct

- EU and 3rd Country proposals, and UK priorities

6. Defra requested information from CLG members on proposals being submitted for consideration by CoP17. South Africa will be holding a Ministerial-level meeting on sustainable use immediately prior to CoP. CoP17 is likely to be a controversial and divisive meeting so we need to look into how we can achieve positive outcomes. Items for discussion will include amending the Rules of Procedure and EU voting rights.

Action point 4: Defra to provide CLG members with further details about the South African Government meeting on sustainable use when more is known.

[**Update:** *The proposed date of the meeting is 23 September. Current plans are for the meeting to discuss the link between the Sustainable Development Goals, CITES and the challenges posed by illegal wildlife trade.*]

7. UK priorities are likely to be focussed around elephants, rhino, tigers and lions, subject to Ministerial agreement. The deadline for submitting proposals is 27 April. The EU and Member States (EU+MS) are considering putting forward 7 listing proposals [**Update:** *now 5, the EU is co-sponsoring the other 2*] and 7 proposals in relation to Resolutions/Decisions. These will need to be agreed by the European Council before 27 April – separate Council agreement will be needed to agree EU+MS' positions on non-EU proposals. The UK has been involved in the development of all of these but the one on hunting trophies is high on the UK's agenda. Defra ran through the draft proposals currently under consideration, including those that the EU+MS have been asked to co-sponsor.

Action point 5: Defra to provide a list of EU proposals, with co-proponents, to CLG as soon as it is available. [**Update:** *EU proposals submitted to CoP17 are available on the European Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/events_en.htm#cop17*]

Action point 6: CLG members to share with Defra any updates on non-EU CoP17 proposals.

8. CLG shared intelligence on possible 3rd country proposals. Possible proposals include:

- a third attempt by the USA to uplist the polar bear;
- a continent-wide lion uplisting by Kenya,
- sale of ivory and rhino horn by South Africa [**Update:** *South Africa no longer intends to proceed with its rhino horn proposal. See para 3.4 of <http://www.gcis.gov.za/newsroom/media-releases/statement-cabinet-meeting-13-april-2016>. However Swaziland has submitted a proposal to allow trade in its white rhino horn. Proposal attached to the email circulating these minutes*];
- various proposals to uplist all 8 pangolin species;
- delisting proposal of the N. Atlantic minke whale population by Norway;
- South Africa proposal to downlist the Cape Mountain zebra to Appendix II;
- South Africa proposal to include wild ginger in Appendix II;
- African Elephant Coalition proposals on (i) uplisting the remaining four Appendix II populations of southern African elephants to Appendix I, (ii) postponing/halting further discussion on the ivory Decision Making Mechanism, (iii) destroying ivory stockpiles, (iv) closing domestic ivory markets, and (v) live elephant trade. IUCN is funding a Secretariat assessment evaluating live elephant trade, which is likely to lead to draft Decisions calling for tighter controls.

MSs will develop positions on non-EU proposals from May to July.

9. There is confusion among CLG members over China's announcement of its stricter measures on trade in ivory in CITES [Notification 2016/034](#). Having an end date of 31 December 2019 implies that this is a temporary measure and that trade will resume on expiry of the deadline. The Group noted the list of exclusions from the restrictions.

10. CLG expressed concern that the recommendation to suspend trade with Laos had been withdrawn on the basis of Laos submitting a progress report on its National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP). They felt it should not be enough simply to submit a report, a Party should implement the actions it contains.

11. Some CLG members were also concerned about increasing evidence that China is involved in illegal trade in rhino horn.

Action point 7: Cathy Dean to provide copies of NRDC's 'Rhino Rage' report on China's consumption of rhino horn, and article by Karl Hamman on the demand for rhino horn and ivory within China. Cathy also to share information on synthetic rhino horn production. **Completed.**

Action point 8: Defra to consider issues relating to synthetic or biofabricated wildlife products.

12. On National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs) CLG considered it better that implementation be independently and objectively assessed, in place of self-assessment.

Action point 9: Defra to consider further the suggestion that Parties' progress against NIAPs should be independently assessed. Simon Hedges to provide Defra with a report/paper on this.

- **Logistics, planning and NGO engagement**

13. CoP17 proposals will be published from early to mid-May. The European Commission will be holding a stakeholder meeting on 23 May. Defra plans to arrange NGO consultation meetings

(CLG/CSUG) at the end of May/early June and ask for written comments on proposals by mid-June. These will feed into the development of UK positions for the meeting of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI) on 27 June and 75th meeting of the EU Management Committee on 28 June. [**Update:** Defra is reconsidering the timeline for stakeholder engagement/input and will be in contact about this shortly.]

Action point 10: Mark Jones to forward to Defra the invitation to the European's Commission's stakeholder meeting on 23 May. Stacey to circulate to CLG members. **Completed.**

14. CITES [Notification 2106/020](#) provides general information and deadlines for CoP17 attendance. The registration deadline for observers is 10 August and, to register, national NGOs must provide approval from the CITES Management Authority (MA) of the country in which they are located.

Action point 11: CLG members wishing to attend CoP17 should submit requests for UK MA accreditation to Stacey Hughes (Stacey.Hughes@defra.gsi.gov.uk) by 29 July at the latest.

Policy updates:

(a) European Commission proposal for an EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

15. The proposal was on the agenda for discussion at the WPIEI meeting on 11 April. This is an opportunity to press for greater action in some areas eg on hunting trophies and increasing controls on trade in raw ivory. We need to explore further whether action will be more effective at national or EU level. It is a European Commission document and will need agreement by the European Council in June.

(b) ivory trade

16. The UK Government is continuing to refine options for implementation of its manifesto commitment and Defra has had cross-Whitehall discussions (with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Home Office, Cabinet Office, Foreign Office and Number 10) and with affected stakeholders, including the antique sector. A number of options are under consideration but we need to gather more evidence on the situation in the UK. We are looking forward to a Chinese-Government-funded TRAFFIC survey on the UK ivory market and what it might tell us. We are also looking to learn from the US experience.

(c) lions and hunting trophies

17. Rory Stewart committed to prohibiting the importation of lion trophies by the end of 2017 unless there is an improvement in hunting practices. To inform this, he has commissioned Prof David MacDonald of Oxford University's WildCRU to lead a piece of work looking into existing practices and best practice criteria. The UK is also working with EU+MSs on a CoP17 hunting trophy proposal, developing criteria to enhance the assessment of sustainable hunting.

18. The IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group has proposed a new taxonomic split of the lion into two subspecies, one from Asia and West, Central and North Africa, and another from South and East Africa. This new taxonomy is expected to enter into use in June/July 2016. It could have implications for any species-wide lion CoP17 proposals as the conservation status of the two proposed new subspecies is quite different.

(d) Asian big cats

19. With the 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference on tiger conservation taking place in Delhi 12 to 14 April, it was announced that tiger numbers in the wild had increased to 3,890. Although good news, there is still a long way to go to achieve the target of doubling wild tiger numbers by 2022. The UK

will be represented at the meeting by the British High Commission. The UK Government's interest in tiger conservation has not diminished but the UK's level of engagement at CoP17 will depend on available resources.

Action point 12: Mark Baxter to contact the CITES Secretariat to find out their plans for Cop17 on ABCs and whether they plan to issue a Notification to Parties?

Completed. *The Secretariat will report to CoP17 as required in Res Conf. 12.5, including implementation of CoP16 Decisions. The draft Decisions adopted by SC66 will be included in the Secretariat's report. The recommendations adopted at SC66 will be reported by the Secretariat at SC69 and SC70. They are not currently planning to issue any Notification on Asian big cats.*

(e) COTES

20. With thanks to CLG members for their comments, Defra has a final draft of the COTES Statutory Instrument (SI). This is currently going through cross-Whitehall gateway processes. With CoP17 ahead, any problems could derail the COTES timetable. CLG asked if the SI included sentencing guidelines.

[**Update:** *NWCU is in the process of writing wildlife crime guidelines for policing on a national level and CPS guidelines for prosecutors. The CPS has already completed CITES guidelines but they will need updating once the new COTES Regulations come into force. However, neither cover sentencing which is dealt with by the Sentencing Council. The Sentencing Council has advised that guidelines for wildlife offences are not part of its current workplan.*]

Recent meetings cont'd:

(b) SC66

21. No comments.

(c) 75th Meeting of the Scientific Review Group (SRG)

21. There was disappointment about the SRG's positive opinion on the export of lions from Zambia and Tanzania, in view of a lack of independent data and alleged corruption. In the case of Tanzania, the decision was made on the basis of information provided by Tanzania on their adaptive management programme and taking into account the latest population status surveys and views from independent lion experts. In response to an invitation by Tanzania to EU MSs, JNCC, on behalf of the UK, has indicated their interest to the Commission in forming part of a delegation to see first-hand how their lions are managed.

Date of the next meeting

22. The next meeting will be held late May-early June. [**Update:** *As mentioned previously, Defra is reconsidering the timeline for stakeholder engagement/input and will be in contact about this shortly.*]