



Keynote Address - Plenary Opening Session

By John E. Scanlon

CITES Secretary-General

CITES – galvanizing a global collective effort to save wildlife

“CITES...an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development”¹

Hon. Martijn van Dam, Chair of the Conference, Minister for Agriculture of the Netherlands

Dr. Abiodun Williams, President, The Hague Institute for Global Justice

The Hon. Claudia McMurray, Senior Counselor, The Prince of Wales ISU

Distinguished guests, friends and colleagues

It is a great pleasure to be in The Hague for this week’s very timely Wildlife Conference, which will fittingly conclude on 3 March, UN World Wildlife Day.

The Netherlands has been a very strong supporter of CITES ever since it joined the Convention in 1984. This support includes having hosted the [14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties](#) right here in The Hague in 2007, where the first CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013 was adopted.

You have a wonderful [agenda](#) ahead of you, one that touches upon the myriad of issues that must be tackled if we are to bring illicit wildlife trafficking to an end, where you will hear from many wonderful speakers, including from African Parks and the Black Mambas who are serving in the front lines. Given the importance of this Conference, I have prepared a substantive paper but I have no

¹ UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) ‘The Future We Want’ para 203.

intention of reading it. Rather, in my brief presentation, I would like to draw from it to help set the scene for this week's event by giving you a sense of:

- the scale and nature of the threat facing wildlife and people;
- the global collective effort that is underway to tackle this serious threat, in the wider context of sustainable development; and
- the way our collective response is being woven into the fabric of many different conventions, organizations and processes, in particular in relation to enforcement, trade, tourism, transport and local livelihoods.

My paper provides more details on the matters that I will touch upon in my presentation, which will be posted on line.

The origins of CITES

The need for a convention to regulate international wildlife trade was first identified in a decision of the [IUCN](#) General Assembly held in Nairobi back in 1963. The 1972 [UN Conference on the Human Environment](#), held in Stockholm, called for negotiations on a convention to be concluded as soon as possible and the US Government heeded this call by hosting a Plenipotentiary Conference in 1973, which resulted in [CITES](#) being adopted on 3 March.

Following on from a Resolution that was sponsored by Thailand, and adopted by consensus at the [16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties](#) to CITES (Bangkok, 2013), the UN General Assembly in December 2013 recognized 3 March, the date of adoption of CITES, as [UN World Wildlife Day](#).

The first observance of World Wildlife Day was in 2014, and we will celebrate it for the third time in just two days' time under the theme 'the future of wildlife is in our hands' – with a particular focus on elephants under the sub-theme 'the future of elephants is in our hands'.

CITES entered into force on 1 July 1975 and today has [182 States Parties](#). It is regarded as one of the most successful of all international environment-related agreements, noting that CITES is increasingly being recognized in the context of sustainable development, as I will explain.

CITES was also the first, and possibly remains the only, global legal instrument to address animal welfare,ⁱ while noting some issues have been considered by the [World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#)² and several other conventions have adopted certain resolutions that relate to aspects of animal welfare.ⁱⁱ Most animal welfare issues are, however, addressed through domestic law rather than CITES or any other international law.

CITES – a vibrant convention that continues to evolve

The world has changed a lot since CITES was adopted. In that time we have witnessed growing prosperity, changing consumption and production patterns, vastly enhanced scientific knowledge, phenomenal advances in technology and, above all, exponential growth in global trade.

² CITES and the OIE signed a [Cooperation Agreement](#) in 2015.

Looking at population figures alone, since 1975 the world's population has grown from 4 to well over 7 billion people – and that is an additional 3 billion potential consumers of wildlife and wildlife products.

CITES is a focused, action-orientated and vibrant convention that has continued to evolve in response to changing conditions in many ways, including through developing [compliance procedures](#), bringing new [marine](#) and [timber](#) species under CITES trade controls, making the best use of emerging technologies and strengthening cooperative implementation and [enforcement efforts](#).

CITES has remained as relevant today as when it came into effect in 1975, [over 40 years ago](#), and is [an even more critical legal instrument in an era of globalization](#).

CITES and sustainable development

The enduring relevance of CITES was perhaps most powerfully expressed through the agreed outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development or [Rio+20](#) in 2012, which recognized in 'The Future We Want' the important role of CITES as "an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development."

This outcome has reinforced the links between CITES implementation and sustainable development.

This link was further reinforced through the UN General Assembly adopting the first specific resolution on [Tackling Illicit Wildlife Trafficking](#) in July of last year and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) last September³, which include specific targets on stopping illicit wildlife trafficking. These resolutions emphasize the role of local communities and sustainable livelihoods.

The legal and sustainable use of wildlife will also contribute to a number of the SDGs and targets, including Goal 1 on ending poverty, as well as Goals 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17, which specify that member States will, *inter alia*, conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development and protect, restore and promote sustainable use of ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and halt biodiversity loss.

[CITES implementation is already contributing](#) in many ways towards achieving these Goals (and related targets) both through the legal and sustainable use of wildlife and in combating illicit wildlife trafficking.

CITES and illegal trade in wildlife

CITES regulates international trade in CITES-listed wildlife. The Convention regulates commercial and non-commercial international trade in over [35,000 species](#) of animals and plants, including their parts and derivatives, which often find their way into medicines, food, building materials, cosmetics, clothes or furniture. The nature of the various trade measures utilized by CITES to regulate this trade depends primarily upon the biological status of the species.

CITES addresses both legal and illegal trade. For domestic or international trade in wildlife to be described as illegal or as 'illicit wildlife trafficking', which is often used to refer to illegal trade, it must contravene either domestic or international law (or both).

³ Adopted by the UN Sustainable Development Summit.

CITES obliges States that are Party to the Convention (*inter alia*) not to trade in listed species other than in accordance with the Convention, to take appropriate measures to enforce the Convention and to prohibit trade in violation thereof, including measures to penalize such trade.

For certain species, commercial international trade in wild taken specimens is prohibited. These species are included in Appendix I of the Convention and they are categorized as threatened with extinction. This prohibition includes commercial trade in elephant ivory, rhino horn, great apes, marine turtles and tigers.

For other species commercial international trade is subject to strict regulation to be sure it is legal, sustainable and traceable. These species are included in Appendix II of the Convention and they are categorized as not yet necessarily threatened with extinction but they could become so if trade is not strictly regulated. This regulated legal trade includes commercial trade in crocodile and python skins, the meat of the queen conch, the wool of the vicuña, certain shark fins and meat, and the bark of the African cherry tree.

Consequently, illegal trade, or 'illicit wildlife trafficking', under CITES includes trading commercially in wild-taken specimens of Appendix I listed species and failing to obtain, or to follow the conditions within, the necessary permits or certificates to trade in Appendix I, II or III listed species, as well as the illegal possession of specimens illegally imported or otherwise acquired.

While different species of animals and plants are included on different appendices, the Convention does not draw any distinction between charismatic and lesser-known species, although the attention paid to different species, of animals in particular, varies considerably. In that sense, one could say that while all animals are equal under CITES, in the court of public opinion "some animals are more equal than others."⁴

CITES, international trade – the WTO and the TPP

As you will have gathered, CITES sets the agreed multilateral measures to regulate international wildlife trade for CITES-listed species. This means CITES has a direct interface with the international trade rules. But how do CITES trade measures fit with the trade rules?

The CITES regulatory regime has harmoniously coexisted with the World Trade Organization (WTO) (and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) for over 40 years, which we recently detailed in the 2015 publication [CITES and the WTO Enhancing Cooperation for Sustainable Development](#). As this publication points out, there has not been any WTO dispute directly challenging a CITES trade measure in the 40+ year history of the Convention.

Without CITES, international trade in wildlife would be unregulated. Such trade would only be regulated by national laws, where they exist, (or through bilateral and regional agreements), whose application could well lead to disputes under the WTO. The situation would be chaotic.

There are other trade agreements that are more limited in their scope but of great relevance to CITES. For example, the recently concluded Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations with twelve countries in the Asia-Pacific region sets a new, higher bar for combating wildlife trafficking and

⁴ Animal Farm, George Orwell, 1945

ensuring legal and sustainable trade, where applicable, including through enforceable obligations [requiring all TPP partners to implement their CITES obligations](#), promote the long-term conservation of species at risk, protect natural habitats like wetlands, and implement strong anti-corruption protections as bribery and corruption are often at the root of illegal trafficking schemes. TPP also provides a new international platform for enhanced regional and global cooperation among national and international authorities, such as CITES.

The interesting distinction between the WTO and the TPP is that the TPP makes it an obligation to implement CITES obligations, whereas under the WTO CITES trade-related measures fall within the “general exemptions” to the trade rules under Article XX of the GATT.

There is a clear path forward for enhanced collaboration with CITES under the WTO, TPP, and other trade agreements, which will serve to enhance the effective implementation of CITES at the national level. Only by continuing to forge even stronger, mutually-reinforcing partnerships can we tackle one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.

The scale and nature of illegal trade in wildlife

Leaving aside timber and marine products, it is estimated that the annual value of illicit wildlife trafficking is up to USD 20 billion a year ranking it amongst other serious transnational crimes such as the trafficking in people and arms. Let me share just three examples to illustrate the scale of the illegal taking that feeds this illicit trade:

The poaching of African elephants and the illegal trade in their ivory is one of the most noticeable and destructive forms of wildlife crime. Over the period 2010-2012, an estimated 100,000 elephants were poached for their ivory. In some regions, such as Central Africa, killings far exceed births, putting regional populations at imminent risk of extinction. When combined with loss of habitat, fragmentation of landscapes through new infrastructure, growing human population and human animal conflict, we face multiple challenges in ensuring the survival of the world’s wildlife.

The recovery of the White rhino is a great conservation success story, mainly due to the efforts undertaken in South Africa by both the public and private sector, but these gains are now under threat. Poaching was well under control up until 2007 when only 13 animals were poached. Since that time we have seen a rapidly increasing level of poaching, which reached a high in 2014 with a record 1,215 rhinos poached in South Africa alone for their horn, with a slightly lower number illegally killed in 2015 (1,175).

And these crimes are not only affecting iconic species that we all know well. Lesser known species such as the pangolin, a small ant eater living in Africa and Asia, are being poached at a massive rate for their scales and meat, with 10 tonnes of pangolin meat being recovered in just one customs seizure– that is the equivalent of 130 people of my weight.

But it is not only animals that are suffering from illegal trade, many plants are also affected. For example the illegal logging and illegal trade in rosewood is having a devastating impact on rosewood trees as well as the forests where it is found. Even in some ‘protected areas’, we see industrial scale illegal logging taking place.

And these crimes are also affecting lesser known tree species such as agarwood producing trees that are illegally taken for the precious timber that is impregnated with a highly valuable resin⁵.

Yet, if effectively regulated, legal trade in these tree species, which are found on Appendix II of CITES, could be put on a sustainable level with significant benefits for people and wildlife.

A Global collective response to illegal trade in wildlife

While combatting illicit wildlife trafficking presents major challenges, there is a [global collective effort underway](#) to combat it and we are witnessing encouraging progress both at national and international level in response to the changing dynamic of these highly destructive crimes, some aspects of which I will highlight. As we are in The Hague, I would like to mention the contribution made by Eurojust and Europol to these efforts, both of which are based here.

Reference has been made to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, the [outcomes](#) of which were endorsed in a resolution of the UN General Assembly, which explicitly recognized the “economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides” and emphasized “the importance of effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations.”

This message was powerfully reinforced when the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the first dedicated a resolution on [Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife in July 2015](#) and by the adoption of the [SDGs](#) in the same year, which have been referred to above.

These resolutions, and those taken by CITES and others, recognize that illicit wildlife trafficking increasingly involves transnational organized crime groups and in some cases rebel militia and rouge elements of the military. This has changed the dynamics of combating this highly destructive criminal activity, in particular as it relates to some charismatic species, such as elephants and rhinos.

The importance of treating certain illicit wildlife trafficking as a serious crime⁶ has been recognized by the UN General Assembly and others along with the need to combat corruption. The need for States to engage with national Customs officers, the police, rangers or inspectors, the judiciary, and sometimes the military to implement CITES effectively is also recognized, which may necessitate intervention from the highest political level.

The UN General Assembly, CITES Parties and others have recognized the need to ‘mainstream’ the response to wildlife crime in calling for all States to consider becoming Parties to the UN Conventions against Corruption and Transnational Organized Crime. As a consequence, international organizations that deal with Customs, the police, the judiciary, and related conventions dealing with corruption and transnational organized crime, become an essential part of the architecture for implementing CITES and combating illicit wildlife trafficking. The ultimate objective is for such entities to include the combating of illicit wildlife trafficking in their core programmes and as a part of their daily work.

⁵ Agarwood is in fact the most expensive wildlife product traded under CITES, with one kilogram of woodchips of the highest quality reaching a price of up to two million USD in the international market.

⁶ As defined in the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

And great strides were made in this direction when five key intergovernmental agencies dealing with wildlife crime formed a new alliance in 2010 called the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime ([ICWC](#)) – an initiative that is today providing coordinated support and technical assistance to countries, including on the use of sophisticated investigative and anti-money laundering techniques, the sharing of intelligence and use of modern forensics.

ICWC has just celebrated its 5th Anniversary and, at the 66th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee held just two months ago in Geneva, it launched its [Strategic Programme 2016-2020](#) – a comprehensive strategy outlining the types of activities to be pursued by the Consortium up to 2020 based on funding availability and donor support. ICWC also launched an [indicators framework](#) for wildlife and forest crime, which will enable CITES Parties to measure and monitor the effectiveness of their own law enforcement responses to wildlife and forest crime.

ICWC is today a mature and well-functioning Consortium that is supporting States deploy the same sorts of tools and techniques to combat illicit wildlife trafficking as are used to combat other serious crimes, such as human trafficking and arms smuggling.

We have also seen the United Nations Security Council adopt two Resolutions on UN sanctions targeting armed groups in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo financed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including poaching and illicit wildlife trade. Individuals or entities involved will be subject to travel bans and asset freezes. Such measures are critical when dealing with States where there is a breakdown in law and order and where armed groups are operating.

CITES and conservation, including sustainable use

CITES is both a conservation and a trade-related Convention and at Rio+20 it was described as an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development.

CITES neither promotes nor discourages trade. Rather it regulates trade in CITES-listed wildlife when it does take place to ensure it is legal, sustainable and traceable. Under international law States have sovereign rights to exploit their own biological resources.⁷ The decision about whether or not to allow trade is one for the country itself to determine – subject, of course, to meeting their international commitments, and in particular those under CITES.

When a State decides to trade in a CITES-listed species, the Convention sets out three requirements that must be met, namely the need to:

- make a legal acquisition finding – being a certification that the specimens have been taken in accordance with national law;
- make a non-detriment finding – being a science-based biological sustainability finding that takes account of the role of the species in the in its ecosystem;
- issue the appropriate permit/certificate and report the trade – being the formal authorization and report of the trade transaction to the CITES Secretariat.

⁷ See Convention on Biological Diversity Article 3

There are over 15,000,000 recorded authorized trade transactions in the [CITES trade data base](#) And the benefits that legal and sustainable trade can have for both wildlife and people has been formally recognized by CITES through a [resolution](#).

Trade in the wool of the vicuña from South America to Europe and the meat of the Queen conch from the Caribbean to North America as mentioned earlier are just two examples where local people and wildlife have benefited from well-regulated trade.⁸ Georgia offers another excellent example with the trade of in snowdrop bulbs. Georgia exports annually some 15 million wild, CITES-listed snowdrop bulbs, providing a sizeable income for local people and incentives for protecting the fragile mountain ecosystems where the bulbs are harvested. The Netherlands has given great support to this work and it is a major actor in the global trade in ornamental plants – noting that CITES lists over 20,000 orchids in its Appendices.

CITES continually reviews the levels of international trade in CITES-listed species through its [Review of Significant Trade](#). This is conducted by the CITES Animals and Plants Committees, which can ask exporting Parties questions about the levels of trade, including about their non-detriment finding, and make recommendations to the Party.

If recommendations are not adequately implemented, the Standing Committee can take [compliance measures](#), which can, as a last resort, result in a recommendation to suspend trade in the affected species. This robust process was on display again at the last CITES Standing Committee held in [Geneva in January](#), where decisions to recommend a suspension of trade in several species were taken, and where a number of existing recommendations were lifted.

CITES and livelihoods and local communities

CITES recognizes the potential positive and negative impacts that CITES listings can have on [livelihoods](#). Legal and sustainable trade can have benefits for both wildlife and people, as has been referred to (such as in the context of vicuña) but listings may also have negative impacts on livelihoods. CITES recognizes these issues and several CITES resolutions and decisions are focused on identifying such impacts and mitigating any negative impacts. This recognition is, however, in the context of implementing decisions to list species under CITES, rather than in considering a decision on whether to list a species or not.

Looking beyond the impacts of regulated trade, the impacts of illegal trade is severe. Such illegal trade not only negatively impacts wildlife, and in some cases entire ecosystems, it also poses a grave threat to people and their livelihoods – as well as national economies and in some cases national and regional security. It has major implications for sustainable development that extend well beyond the species themselves.

Brave rangers serving in the front lines are being killed and injured in the line of duty, officials are being corrupted, and local communities are being deprived of making their own development choices, including through the legitimate use of their wildlife resources. Many countries also rely upon wildlife-based tourism to generate significant national and local revenue and jobs as I will highlight shortly.

⁸ For more, watch CITES and Vicuñas - a conservation journey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROnMnfBDUQ4>

The increasing recognition of, the importance of engaging with, local communities in implementing CITES, both for well regulated trade and combating illegal trade, has seen the active engagement of the UN Development Programme, the World Bank and regional organizations such as OAS (Organization of American States) and others in the work of CITES.

CITES and wildlife based tourism

In December of last year, the [World Bank Group Forum](#) highlighted the economic power of tourism, including the benefits of wildlife based tourism. The event showcased the role that tourism can play in enhancing economic growth and in lifting people out of poverty, as well as its links to the SDGs.

Wildlife based tourism can greatly benefit wild animals and plants, local communities and national economies. In some countries, such as Kenya, it is already a major contributor to GDP and generates many jobs for local communities.

Wildlife based tourism is an increasingly important contributor to many other economies, including in [Sri Lanka which I just visited](#). The “top seven” wild animals found in Sri Lanka, representing the land and the sea, have been identified – six of which are CITES-listed, and they are being actively promoted as a major part of Sri Lanka’s tourism appeal.

In fact, many developing countries are blessed with abundant wildlife assets, but these assets are also under multiple threats, including from poaching and smuggling and conflicts between people and wild animals. Magnificent wildlife destinations are being plundered by poachers for the illicit trade, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites that are being degraded across Africa, such as the Selous Reserve in United Republic of Tanzania – which has been included on the World Heritage ‘in danger’ list due to the high levels of poaching.

If this precious wildlife is lost, so too is the tourism and the jobs and that rely upon it. Wildlife is an asset to be cherished from many perspectives – aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational and economic – and these wildlife assets need to be continually nurtured and protected in order to grow their tourism potential.

Well managed wildlife based tourism can serve to drive away poachers and smugglers and allow local people and national governments to develop their own natural resources – rather than have them plundered by illegal traffickers who exploit wildlife for a short term illicit profit putting money in the hands of organized criminals, often in distant countries, and at the expense of local people, national economies and wildlife.

Wildlife based tourism can also serve as an incentive to help achieve harmony between local people and wildlife, especially where local people are deriving their livelihoods from this tourism.

It can be a win-win-win. But it needs to be managed carefully and sustainably and with benefits accruing to the local people who are living amongst wildlife, while also recognizing that not every location will lend itself to tourism.

CITES and transport

International trade in CITES listed species, both legal and illegal, is caught up in the wider context of the globalization of the world economy. It, by definition, involves some form of cross border

transport, whether by air, land or sea and the transport sector has a vital role to play in tackling illicit trafficking of wildlife.

We are fortunate to live in an interconnected world. There are today over:

- one billion international tourist arrivals each year;
- 100,000 flights every day; and
- 500 million containers shipped a year.

Regretably, legitimate forms of transport are being exploited by transnational organized criminals and others to transport their contraband. This can pose a safety risk to staff and passengers and it may also give rise to potential legal, reputational and financial risks.

Illegal trade in wildlife is of an industrial scale, but in the context of the overall volumes of air and sea transport, we are often searching for a 'needle in a haystack', with only a tiny fraction of the overall cargo or passengers carrying illegally traded wildlife.

This contraband will, however, often travel vast distances and go through many hands on its way to illicit markets, meaning there are many points along the way where it can be disrupted. Our collective objective must be to maximize the risk of trading illegally by disrupting it at every step along the illegal supply chain.

The transport industry cannot, however, become *de facto* customs or enforcement agencies, which perform core functions of government. But enforcement agencies cannot operate in isolation, they require access to good information and intelligence from multiple sources and this is where the transport sector can play a critical role.

Transport companies have tens of thousands of staff in the field dealing every day with customers, clients, cargo, products, and passengers and have a deep knowledge of their own facilities and supply chains on the ground, on the oceans and up in the air.

CITES has actively reached out to industry associations, like [IATA](#), and industry leaders to alert their members and staff to the issue of illicit wildlife trafficking and to encourage them to make it a priority not to be used to carry, or to facilitate the carrying, of any illegal wildlife or wildlife products. These staff can be extra sets of eyes and ears on the ground – looking, listening and passing on information of anything that looks suspicious to relevant authorities – or providing what Sir Tim Clark of Emirates has described as “street intelligence.”

In addition, airports, like planes, have a captive audience. In recent years, we have seen airports participate in public awareness campaigns to draw attention to CITES and the issue of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife. And we have [reached out to all airports](#) to put in place prominent CITES displays to raise awareness amongst the travelling public of the scale and consequences of illegal trade in wildlife, and of the serious penalties that could apply to trading illegally.

We have had an excellent response from the transport sector. As an example of CITES's cooperation with the sector, the IATA CEO, the CEOs of Emirates and of Kenya Airways, the CEO of DP World port terminal operators, the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, myself and other leaders are all part of a [Transport Task Force](#) established by The Royal Foundation, under the

patronage of HRH the Duke of Cambridge. It is chaired by Rt. Hon. Lord William Hague – a distinguished former UK Foreign Secretary.

This unique group of people has been meeting over the past 12 months to determine how the transport sector can best assist in combating illicit wildlife trafficking. The Task Force will meet again in London in two weeks' time to sign off on an agreed [Declaration and set of Commitments](#).

This is a truly remarkable achievement, and this group of Government, senior industry representatives, UN and NGO players would never have been brought together if not for the initiative and passionate commitment of the Duke of Cambridge.

Closing remarks – International commitments and national action

CITES is an international agreement that connects international commitments with national action.

It is also a Convention that attracts a diverse range of stakeholders and generates a [lively and passionate debate](#) around trade, conservation, development, environment, enforcement, livelihoods, [animal welfare](#) and animal rights, with some issues falling under the mandate of CITES and others remaining in the domain of national law.

The success of CITES relies upon the contributions and ongoing commitment of, and collaboration between, multiple organizations and people coming from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives and the Convention benefits from the rich and diverse level of interest in the Convention, as is on display this week here in The Hague.

Distinguished delegates, we are continuing to face a serious and immediate threat to wildlife through illicit trafficking. We are quite literally getting down to the wire with a number of truly extraordinary species and if we do not act immediately they will be lost on our watch.

This week's wildlife conference in The Hague, being convened under the theme 'act now or game over', is not only spot on but timely.

This Conference will generate ideas and support for protecting wildlife and build momentum for September's World Wildlife Conference, where the 182 Parties to CITES, our many stakeholders and the world's media will all gather in Johannesburg, South Africa for the [17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties](#).

In Johannesburg, CITES Parties will collectively evaluate the progress made since 2013 and take decisions on what additional measures are needed to bring illicit trafficking in wildlife to an end. It will also consider many proposals to bring additional species under CITES trade controls, as well as issues concerning livelihoods, the review of significant trade, traceability, and the effectiveness of CITES implementation amongst many others.

We are taking action but we need to do more. Whether we do or not will depend upon each one of us – the future of wildlife is in our hands. Is it game over? No. It's game on!

ⁱ In particular: national authorities being satisfied that "any living specimen will be so prepared and shipped so as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment"; the proposed recipient of a living Appendix I specimen to be imported or taken from the high seas "is suitably equipped to house and care for

it”; any living Appendix II specimen taken from the high seas ‘will be so handled as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment’; during any period of transit, holding or shipment, living specimens “are properly cared for so as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment”; designated rescue centers are able “to look after the welfare of living specimens, particularly those that have been confiscated”; and trade in certain live animals is only to “appropriate and acceptable destinations.”

ⁱⁱ For more read: ['CITES and wildlife trade – how CITES works and what it is and isn't'](#)