

14th AWCF Meeting: Summary of Proceedings by the Chair

Monday 09 November

The first day of the meeting was devoted to separate meetings of government and PH Associations delegates.

The government meeting discussed national and multilateral issues: including preparations for the upcoming CITES CoP 17 meeting in South Africa next year; preliminary information on the Tanzania Lion research project; and status of the ivory import suspensions for Tanzania and Zimbabwe by the US.

It was agreed that next year's AWCF meeting would be in July instead of November 2016.

Possible hosts of the meeting are Botswana, Mozambique, and South Africa – to be confirmed. SCIF undertook to consider including costs of the meeting in their next budget cycle.

Tuesday 10 November

Session 1: Official Opening

The Chair warmly welcomed all delegates and officially opened the meeting on behalf of the Minister and the government of the Republic of South Africa.

The meeting was also addressed by the Chair of the Operators and Professional Hunters Associations of Southern Africa: *Danene van der Westhuyzen*;

SCI Foundation President: *Joe Hosmer*, and Conservation Chairman *Al Maki*

Session 2: Land Use Planning in Africa

We started off with a presentation on human population dynamics that discussed the importance of thinking of Africa deep into the future, when conditions will change as a result of human population growth.

Then there were two highly stimulating presentations on existing government frameworks and methods to improve land use planning for better conservation measures.

The need to consolidate and document data on community benefits from biodiversity conservation at regional level was noted. Importantly, the report must also capture the costs of conservation to communities, not just benefits.

Session 3: Anti-Poaching

Two key presentations were made highlighting what is being done to combat organized crime syndicates in African parks, anti-poaching initiatives, and the effectiveness of these strategies.

Some of the technology being deployed towards anti-poaching is disappointing (especially when used under extreme weather conditions). We have heard that nothing beats good intelligence, motivated and well equipped rangers on the ground, as well as cooperation and alliances with neighbouring countries and stakeholders.

With the absence of Zimbabwe, an opportunity to share information with other countries in the region suffering from the same problem was missed.

Session 4: National Biodiversity Economy Development Strategy

South Africa's Department Environmental Affairs presented on the draft Biodiversity Economy Strategy, and this was followed by a very robust discussion.

Wednesday 11 November

Session 5: African Lion and other Predators

Namibia and SCIF provided an update on the African Lion Periodic Review process. There has not been much cooperation, and Kenya appears determined to propose listing of the lion on Appendix I at the next CITES CoP. There is need for range states to have their data validated before the next Standing Committee meeting, particularly Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zambia.

Other presentations were on the sustainability of Lion Management and Hunting in South Africa; and new research on Carnivores in the Zambezi Region and the Tanzania Lion Project in Serengeti National Park.

Session 6: Elephants

The need for Enhancement under the US Endangered Species Act by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was clarified; and the MIKE Programme results focusing on Africa was presented by the CITES Secretariat.

There was also an update on the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and impacts of the African Elephant importation ban on the CAMPFIRE program in Zimbabwe.

Session 7: International Trade Policy Part 1

Key Issues for CITES Standing Committee 66 and the CITES Convention of the Parties 17, and hosting arrangements by the Republic of South Africa were presented.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's view of the role of sport hunting in wildlife conservation was articulated, as well as current support towards combating illegal wildlife trade through the placement of attaches across continents.

Session 8: International Trade Policy Part 2

Economic perspectives on rhino horn trade were discussed, noting that internal dialogue is currently underway in South Africa.

We also heard about different Ports of Entry and the role they play in the importation of trophies, and were provided with a good understanding of the role Brokers play in international hunting; and common issues with import/export permits.

Thursday 12 November

Session 9: Color Morphs and Intensive Breeding

Starting yesterday, into this morning, we have heard interesting perspectives on the implications of intensive breeding and color variants in South Africa. The South African government does not have a position yet, and is currently busy with an internal national process, and public dialogue is underway.

Session 10: Country Reports

In the true spirit of AWCF, the country reports have provided us with a good understanding on anti-poaching, hunting and photo-tourism issues in each of the countries present at this meeting.

Action Items:

- To develop a comprehensive review of the benefits associated with the use of wildlife to the community level that reflects information compiled by Namibia. Namibia's model has been shared with the AWCF.
- The AWCF governments will continue working on the Periodic Review to assist Namibia complete a document prior to the CITES Standing Committee.

- To prepare an AWCF letter to the IUCN that suggests the creation of a special working group within an existing specialist group. The intention is to learn the extent of habitat condition and an appropriate management level of elephant populations.
- Governments to follow-up country reports by providing reference materials to the AWCF forum.