

3 October 2020

STATEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CITES DECISIONS 18.296 TO 18.298 ON MARINE ORNAMENTAL FISHES

We note [AC31 Doc.36 on marine ornamental fishes](#) was prepared by the Secretariat for submission to the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee due to be held between 13-17 July this year. The document invited the Animals Committee to confirm the scope of the work on marine ornamental fishes envisaged in Decisions 18.296 to 18.298 and to provide comments on the activities outlined in this document concerning the preparation of Thematic studies for the workshop.

We also note that due to the extraordinary circumstances we face globally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that the CITES Animals and Plants Committees have been postponed until 2021 and the work given to the 73rd Standing Committee by COP18 is under review.









We recognise that the instructions given to the Secretariat on its work programme for the intersessional period between COP18 and COP19 were clear. However, these instructions were issued prior to the unprecedented situation we currently face around the world.



We note with some concern the suggestion in paragraph 15 of AC31 Doc.36 that *“a full or partial online expert workshop, may need to be envisaged if the Animals Committee is to fully implement Decision 18.297”*. We do not believe this will offer a suitable opportunity to ensure the full and proper engagement of all interested stakeholders.

In light of the circumstances we face, we request the Secretariat and Parties to the Convention ensure that the opportunity for full and proper consideration is given to this issue, that sufficient time is allocated to it, that the Animals Committee is given the opportunity to consider the proposals outlined in AC31 Doc.36 at its next meeting, and that all relevant stakeholders are given the fullest possible opportunity to engage in all aspects of this work in order to ensure the best and most robust outcomes.

We therefore urge the CITES Secretariat and Parties to the Convention to reschedule the commencement of the implementation of Decisions 18.296 to 18.298 until after the rescheduled Animals Committee, rather than seeking to strictly adhere to the timelines agreed at COP18.

Signed:

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