



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2014/022

Geneva, 5 May 2014

CONCERNING:

Secretary-General's Certificate of Merit

1. At its 61st meeting (Geneva, August 2011), the Standing Committee agreed that the Secretary-General's scheme for recognizing exceptional contributions to achieving the aims of the Convention should be extended to cover the work of Management and Scientific Authorities.
2. The Secretary-General of CITES has chosen to award the first certificate of merit for scientific contributions to CITES to the Scientific Authority of Mexico – Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO) – in recognition of the quality and exceptional nature of its contributions over several years.
3. CONABIO displayed exceptional foresight in organizing the International Expert Workshop on CITES Non-Detriment Findings, in Cancún, Mexico, in 2008. This initiative led not only to considerable advances in our understanding of non-detriment findings (NDFs) but also to the adoption of the landmark Resolution Conf. 16.7 on *Non-detriment findings* at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013).
4. CONABIO's participation in and contribution to the work of the Animals and Plants Committees in recent years has been exemplary. They prepared over a dozen documents for these meetings, making a major input to the work of the Committees, particularly in relation to: the periodic review of species included in Appendices I and II; and relations between CITES and other bodies, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity's Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. These were welcomed as significant inputs to the work of the Committees and therefore to CITES.
5. CONABIO supported a regional representative in the Animals Committee from CoP12 (Santiago, Chile, 2002) to CoP14 (The Hague, The Netherlands, 2007); and a CONABIO staff member has been a regional representative on the Plants Committee since CoP15 (Doha, Qatar, 2010) and is currently the Vice-Chair of this Committee. In its implementation of CITES, CONABIO has also formulated sound NDFs for lignum-vitae *Guaiacum sanctum* and candelilla *Euphorbia antisyphilitica* and is implementing a pilot project for the recovery of Morelett's crocodile *Crocodylus moreletii*, which incorporates wildlife trade as a central element.
6. CONABIO's activities in support of CITES are also reflected in its efforts to encourage the Government of Mexico to host meetings of the Animals and Plants Committee in Veracruz, Mexico, in April-May 2014.
7. The Secretary-General will award the certificate of merit to CONABIO at a ceremony during the joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees in Veracruz on 2 May 2014.