

Colombo Declaration Regarding CITES Appendix II Shark and Ray Listings Proposed at the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Representatives from the following countries agreed to the adoption of the Colombo Declaration on 30 August 2016: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, India, Maldives, Myanmar*, Nepal, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka.

RECOGNISING that more than 50 percent of assessed shark species (sharks, skates, rays, and chimaeras) are classified as Threatened or Near Threatened with extinction by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to high levels of fishing pressure in both targeted and bycatch fisheries and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU);

RECOGNISING that this fishing pressure is driven primarily by the demand for international trade of shark fins and meat, gill plates, and other shark-related products;

RECOGNISING the global, collective effort undertaken by the CITES Parties, CITES Secretariat, FAO, and nongovernmental organizations to ensure the necessary tools and resources are available for countries to fully implement the 2013 listings and those proposed at CoP17;

RECOGNISING the conservative life histories of these species, there is a need for the application of the precautionary principle in cases of uncertainty as stated in Annex 4 of the CITES Convention;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that further capacity building, alternative livelihood building and implementation work is needed to properly protect and manage shark populations, but that all CITES parties must act in a precautionary manner in the face of limited data to protect these species before it is too late:

ACKNOWLEDGING that while current data shows declines that fulfil the requirements for listing on Appendix II of CITES, the true scale of population decline is under-represented due to IUU fisheries, discards at sea, limited onboard monitoring, and ghost-nets;

ACKNOWLEDGING that opportunities and tools are available through international bodies, including regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), and international conventions, such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), to complement CITES Appendix II listings and to strengthen shark protections on a global scale;

The Participants at the CITES South Asia Pre-CoP17 Workshop who convened 29-30 August 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka:

NOTE that the Government of Sri Lanka is placing a bid to host CITES CoP18 in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2019 and call upon all Parties to support this bid;

*Myanmar recognizes the strong need of the importance to conserve these shark and ray species, but would like to align themselves with the common position of ASEAN in making a final decision

CITES South Asia Pre-CoP17 Workshop
30 August 2016

RECOGNISE the continued challenges to achieving sustainable shark populations in the region and the need for strengthening collaboration among all countries to ensure these resources are available for sustainable use into the future, and note the key role that CITES can play in delivering such a goal;

APPLAUD the shark conservation efforts discussed to ensure momentum continues so that shark populations are protected, and in turn, the marine ecosystems they inhabit and the economies of those relying on them are also protected; and

EXPRESS conviction regarding the justification of the proposed shark and ray listings at CITES CoP17 from a scientific perspective and commit to fully supporting the adoption of the proposals in Johannesburg.

*Myanmar recognizes the strong need of the importance to conserve these shark and ray species, but would like to align themselves with the common position of ASEAN in making a final decision