



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

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Sri Lanka announces dates for the 18th Meeting of Conference of Parties to the CITES to be held in the Colombo in 2019

The Government of Sri Lanka has announced the dates for the 18th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to be attended by 183 State Parties, and held from 22nd May - 3rd June 2019 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in Colombo.

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha who made the announcement addressing the 69th Standing Committee of CITES meeting, said as a country with rich biological diversity, Sri Lanka is fully committed to the implementation of the CITES provisions to ensure sustainable trade that takes into account the conservation of wild fauna and flora essential for a healthy and prosperous economy. He further drew attention to the recent actions taken by Sri Lanka in fulfilling its commitment under the Convention, including the seizure of illegally traded blood ivory, which was publicly destroyed in 2016, as well as the initiatives taken to list thresher shark species under CITES Appendix II as a protected species. The offer to host the Conference was made as Sri Lanka is mindful of the challenges that remain to be overcome at national and international levels, the Ambassador added.

With more than 3,000 delegates expected to attend the event in Sri Lanka in 2019, it is expected to open up opportunities for the locals in the areas of biodiversity conservation, tourism promotion, and cultural diplomacy, and also promote Sri Lanka as a preferred venue for international conferences. The event and lead up to it, is also considered as an opportunity to raise awareness among Sri Lankans on trade in wild fauna and flora, and the need for conservation of rich biodiversity in the country.

The offer to host the 18th Meeting of Conference of Parties to the CITES to be held in Sri Lanka was initially made by Minister Gamini Jayawickrama Perera, which was endorsed by the 17th Conference of Parties to the CITES held in South Africa in 2016. CITES is an international agreement between Governments which aims to ensure that trade of wild fauna and flora does not threaten their survival, and the State Parties to the Convention meets as Conference of the Parties (CoP), every 3 years to adopt consensus measures for sustainable trade of wild fauna and flora. The last CoP was held in South Africa in 2016.

Sri Lanka delegation to the 69th Standing Committee meeting headed by Ambassador Aryasinha also included Mr. M.G.C Sooriyabandara, Director General of the Department of Wildlife Conservation and National CITES Focal Point, Ms. Mafusa Lafir, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka in Geneva and Mr. Daniel Fernando, Advisor to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, and Buddha Sasana.

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