

**Verbal Notes on the PowerPoint presentation
by Eugène Lapointe at the COMHAFAT Symposium
3-4 March 2021**

1 – There is a forceful attempt by USA politicians (150 Senators and Congressmen) and US Environmental NGOs (150 +) to increase the relevance of *Climate Change* and *Pandemics* in the international decisions dealing with environmental matters, mainly with respect to CITES listings of terrestrial and aquatic wild species.

- a) *Section 5* of the petition presented by the US NGOs to President Biden, calls for the President «...*under the authority granted in Section 8 of the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen’s Protective Act, 22 U.S.C. § 1978... to conduct an expedited review of each nation’s compliance with CITES*” and that “*Immediate sanctions will be imposed on any nation...*” In addition to spreading diseases to humans, “*Wildlife trafficking remains ... a source of funds for terrorists.*” For the US NGOs, every single calamity is caused by wildlife trade (*both legal and illegal*, as stated in the document). It should be noted that action is required from the President, under the Fishermen’s Protective Act.
- b) In December 2020, a group of Senators/Congressmen revived a draft legislation - which was going nowhere in the previous session – by simply changing the name from "*Legislation on trade and importation of wild animals*" to "*Preventing Future Pandemics Act*". **The text of the Bill remained unchanged.** [It confirms that the main objective of the attempt referred to in paragraph 1 above, is to limit, restrict or prohibit harvesting, use, trade in, and consumption of wild resources.]
- c) To cap all the above, President Biden suggested a remake of “Don Quixote fighting the windmills”, by suggesting that US Military Forces be involved in combating Climate Change and Pandemics”. (Pentagon, 10.02.21)
- d) In a final move to confirm the seriousness of its intentions, the US Government requested the CITES Standing Committee to establish a Working Group to analyse the potential involvement of CITES in the efforts to counter the Pandemics.

2 – The process to render a decision as to the CITES involvement in the Pandemics is the following:

- a) At its meeting of 4 to 7 May 2021, the SC73 will (most likely based on previous comments) decide to create the Working Group.
https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notifications/E-Notif-2021-021_0.pdf

b) The Working Group will forward its findings to the Animals Committee which will meet at an unknown date.

c) The Animals Committee will forward its findings and advice to CoP19, currently scheduled for May 2022.

3 – It is worth repeating that neither concept/phenomenon (Climate Change and Pandemics) have a place in CITES. Neither falls within the legal parameters of the Convention.

A decision to have CITES involved in the prevention of Pandemics will carry the following consequences:

a) It will be contrary to the text of the CITES Convention and to its fundamental *raison d'être*.

b) It will provide a dangerous extension of CITES prerogatives and activities.

c) It will have, as practical implication, to turn legitimate activities in the field of livelihoods into criminal behaviour.

d) It will constitute an assault on the Sovereign Rights of individual states.

5 – In line with the objective of the Symposium, and in line with the advice from the COMHAFAT Chair, it is highly recommended that Member States involve themselves early in the process by participating massively in the Working Group, should it be created. Fisheries now account for some 40% of CoPs agenda and bound to increase.

African Fishing Nations, under the leadership of the COMHAFAT, shall participate massively and actively in the process, starting with the activity of the Working Group.

If you so wish, IWMC could keep you informed on the procedures and provide you with arguments for countering this dangerous initiative