

# The real story in Harare

CITES

6300



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The 10th Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP10) met in Harare, Zimbabwe from 9 to 20 June 1997. The meeting was attended by approximately 1 500 people from all over the world.

South Africa was represented by a delegation consisting of the Deputy Minister, the High Commissioner in Harare and representatives of the Department, Foreign Affairs and four provinces.

South Africa submitted three proposals for discussion at the COP10, viz:

1. Transfer of *Protea odorata* (Swartland Sugarbush) from Appendix I to Appendix II.
2. Transfer of *Orothamnus zeyheri* (Marsh rose) from Appendix I to Appendix II.
3. Amendment to the annotation of the listing of the white rhinoceros population of South Africa in Appendix II.

The first two proposals were accepted by consensus.

As was expected, the proposal to amend the annotation of the listing of the white rhinoceros population in Appendix II generated a lively discussion. When it was brought to the vote in Committee 1, it was decided to go for a 'show of hands' instead of a 'secret ballot'. In retrospect this was probably not the right decision as the

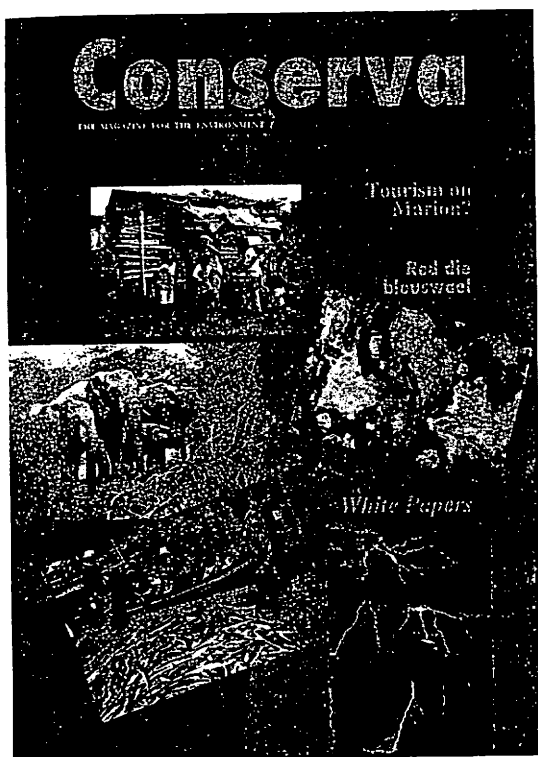
result of 60 in favour and 32 opposed was a single vote short of the required two-thirds majority. Various countries then urged South Africa to re-open the proposal for voting only during Plenary Session the next day and request a 'secret ballot'. This was done and the result proved to be a major disappointment in that 16 countries changed their position over-night and voted against the proposal.

However, the result of the voting does not have any influence on the position of the South African white rhinoceros population, as the status quo is maintained. South Africa can still export live animals as well as hunting trophies. South Africa will now discuss with potential importing countries the possible development of a system which will provide for strictly controlled legal trade in rhinoceros horn. Should such a system be developed it will then be submitted to a future meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES for approval.

As was the case at previous CITES meetings, the African elephant issue again dominated the scene. Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe submitted proposals to transfer their populations to Appendix II and be allowed to trade ivory bilaterally with Japan. These proposals were hotly debated with a major portion of the debate taking place in the corridors. A major objective was to develop consensus between the African range states on this issue. In this regard Deputy Minister Peter Mokaba played a very prominent and successful role. In the end the proposals were accepted albeit subject to certain conditions pertaining to the establishment of monitoring mechanisms during an eighteen month no-trade period.

The fact that the three elephant proposals were accepted does not have any influence on South African elephants. Following a decision by Cabinet a proposal on the African elephant in South Africa was not submitted to this CITES meeting. Should we wish to trade in elephant products South Africa must submit a proposal to this effect to a future meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

**The fact that the three elephant proposals were accepted does not have any influence on South African elephants**



#### Cover

A collage of photo's on the three White Papers - Environmental Management, Biological Diversity and Sea Fisheries

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