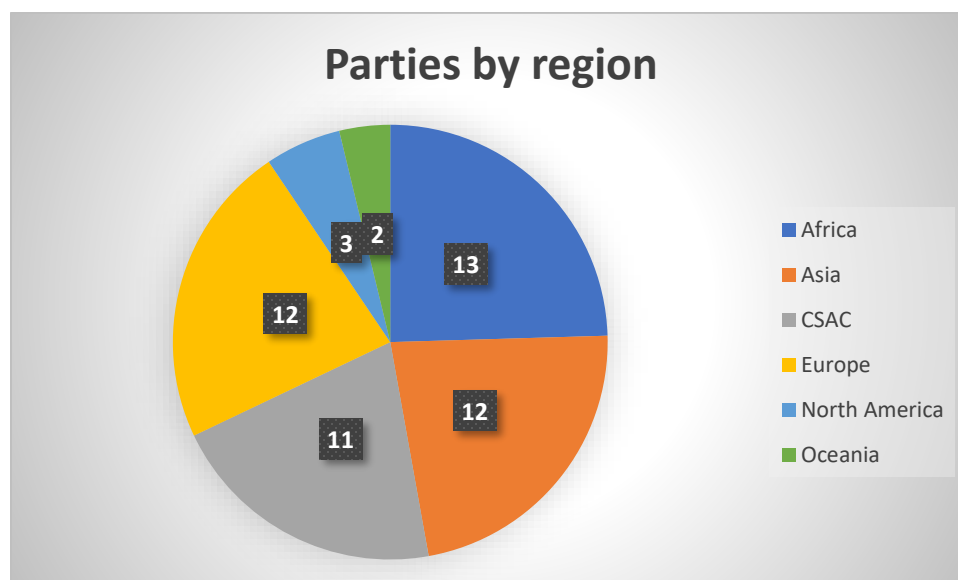
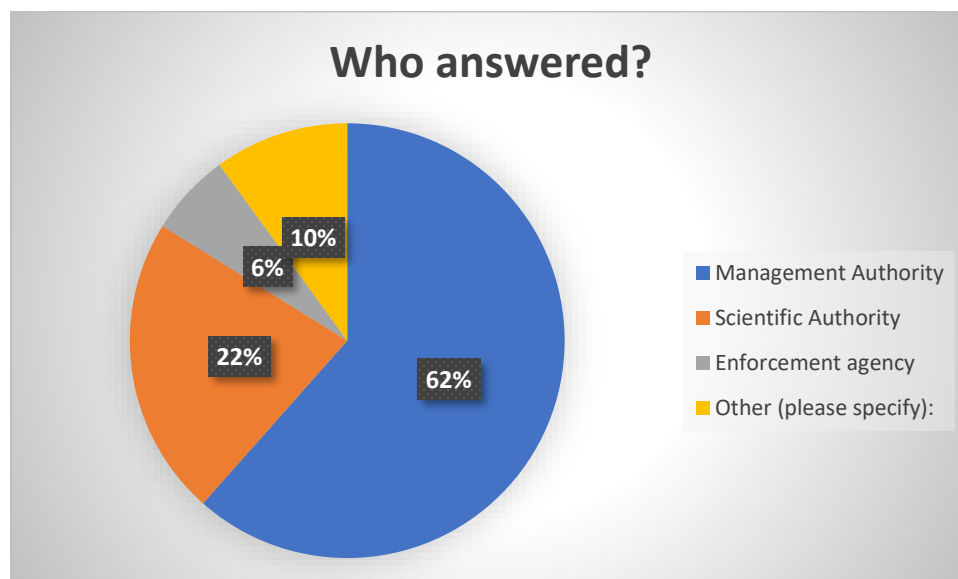


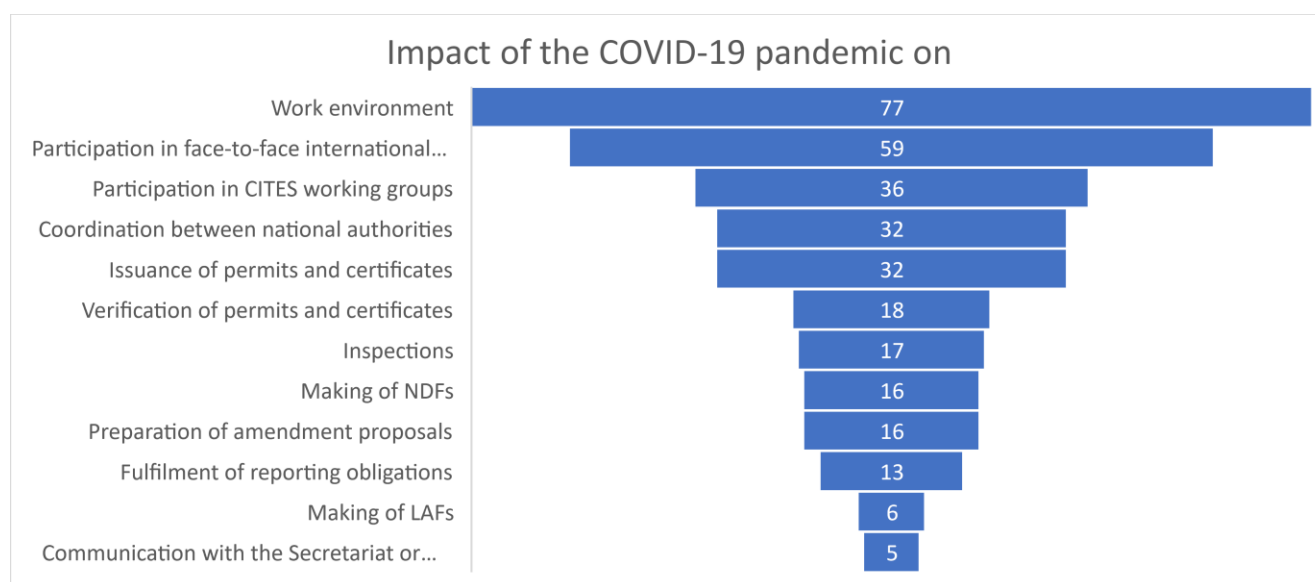
Survey on the experiences of Parties **in implementing the Convention during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Survey conducted from 17 March to 21 April 2021

Respondent analysis: 160 responses from 53 Parties



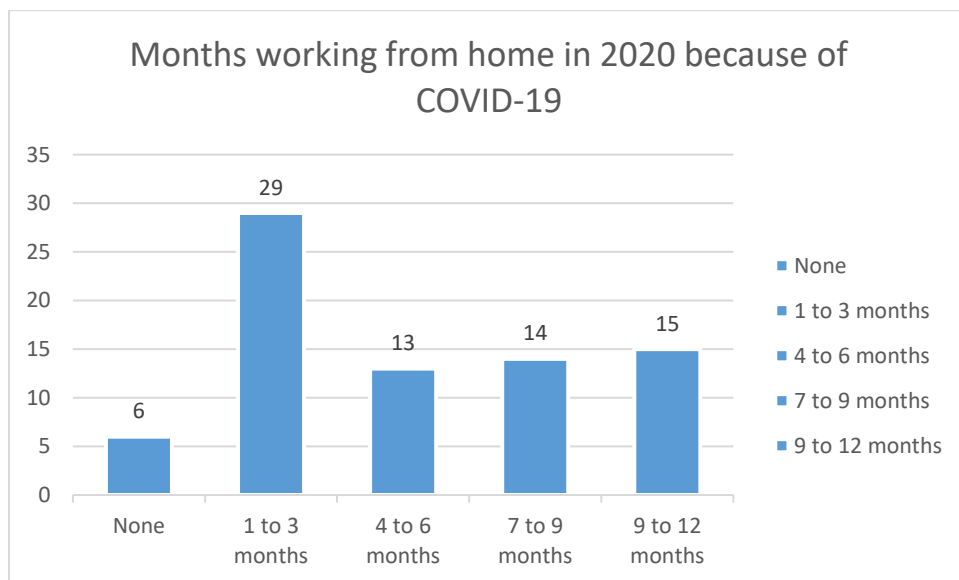
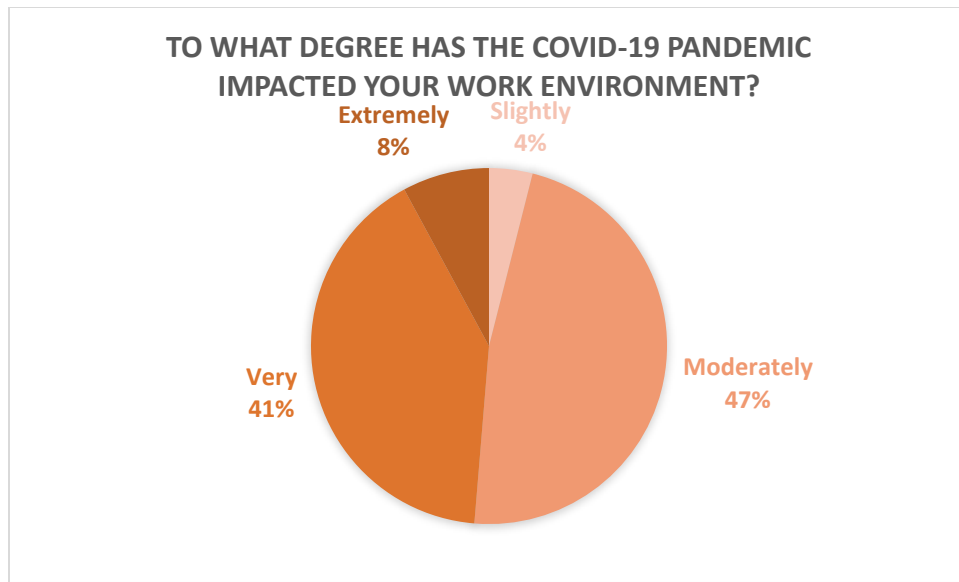
Has the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on... ?

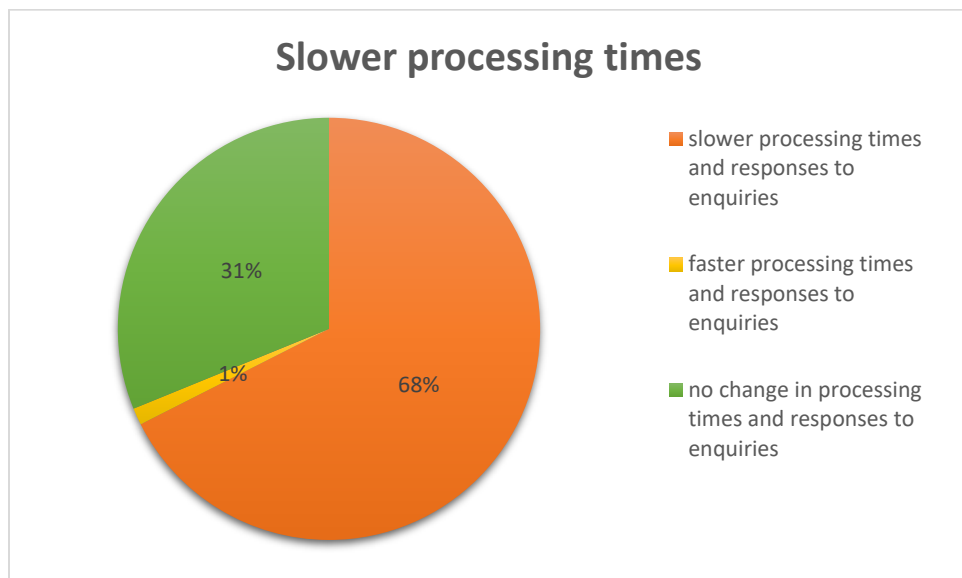
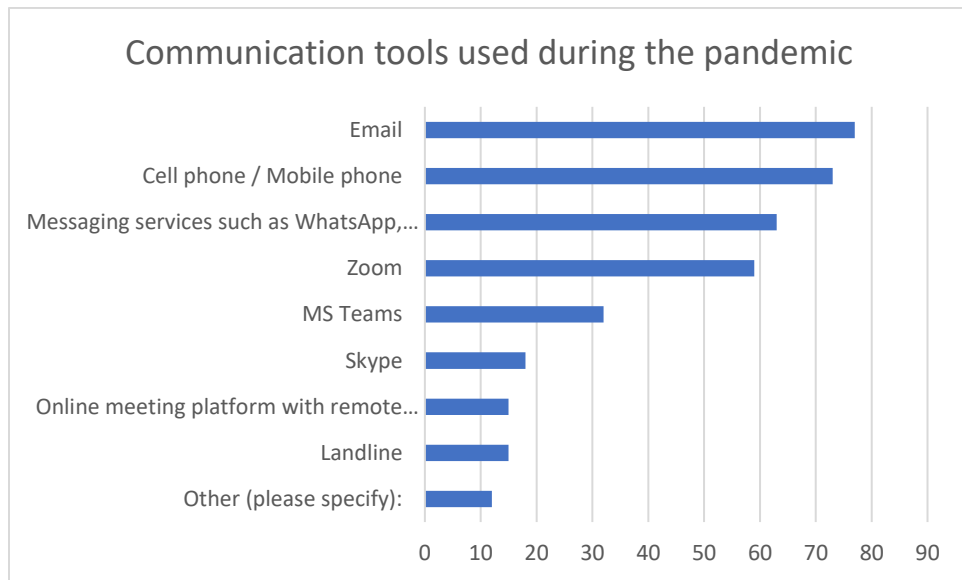
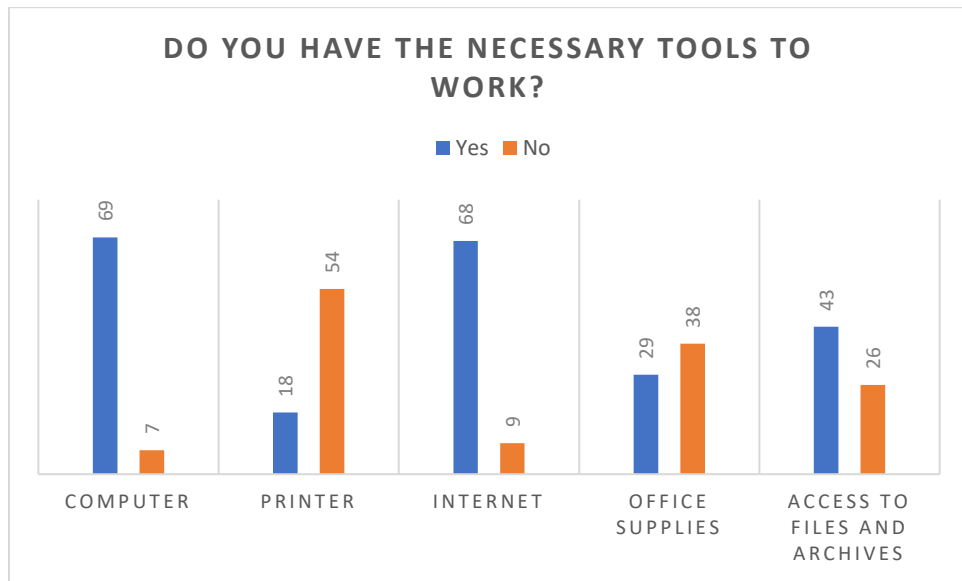


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IMPACT ON THE WORK ENVIRONMENT





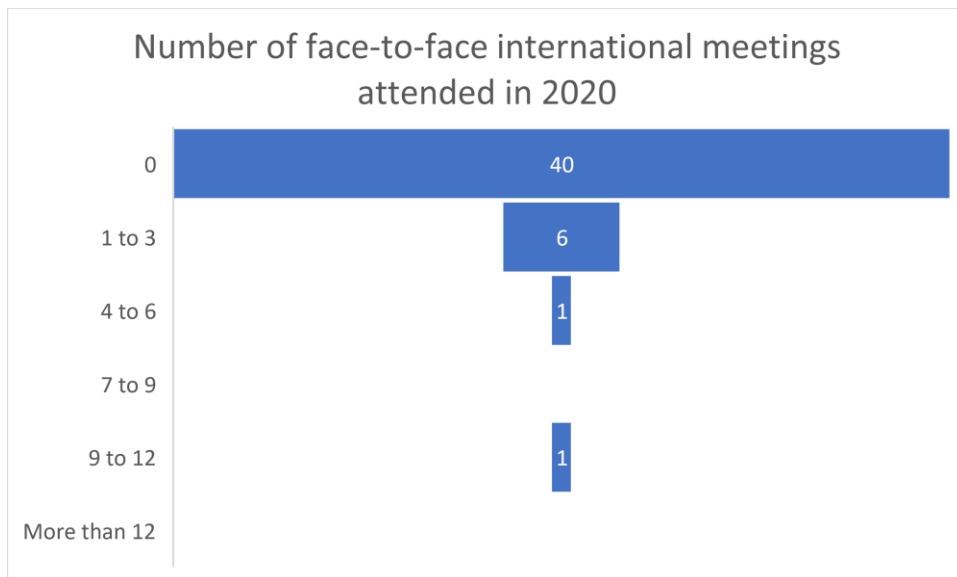
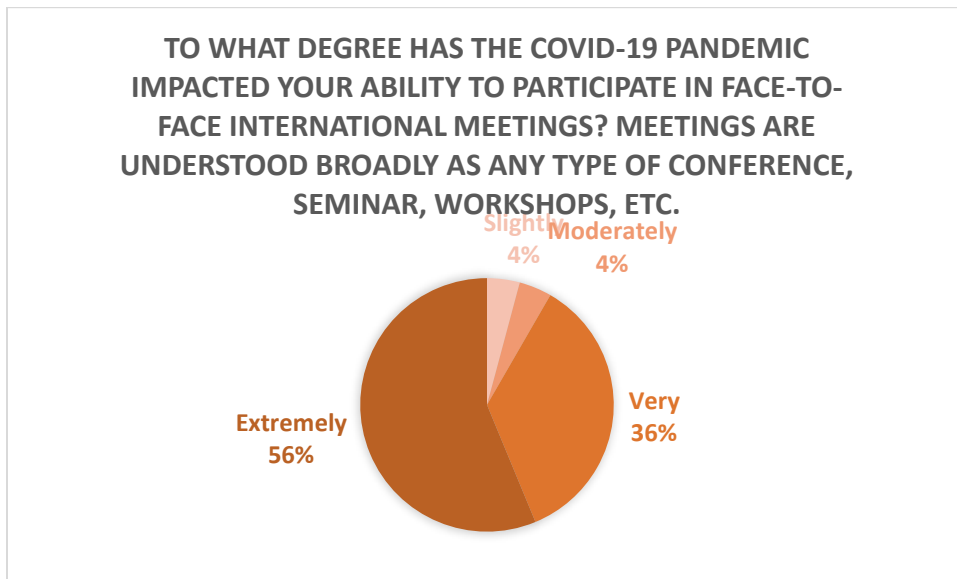
What initiative(s), if any, have you or has your organization taken to improve your work environment since the COVID-19 pandemic started?

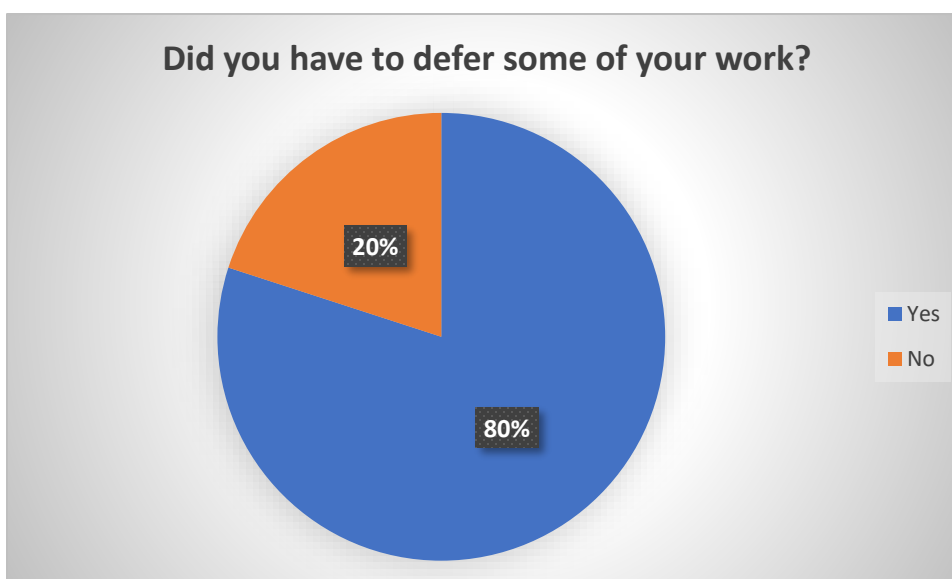
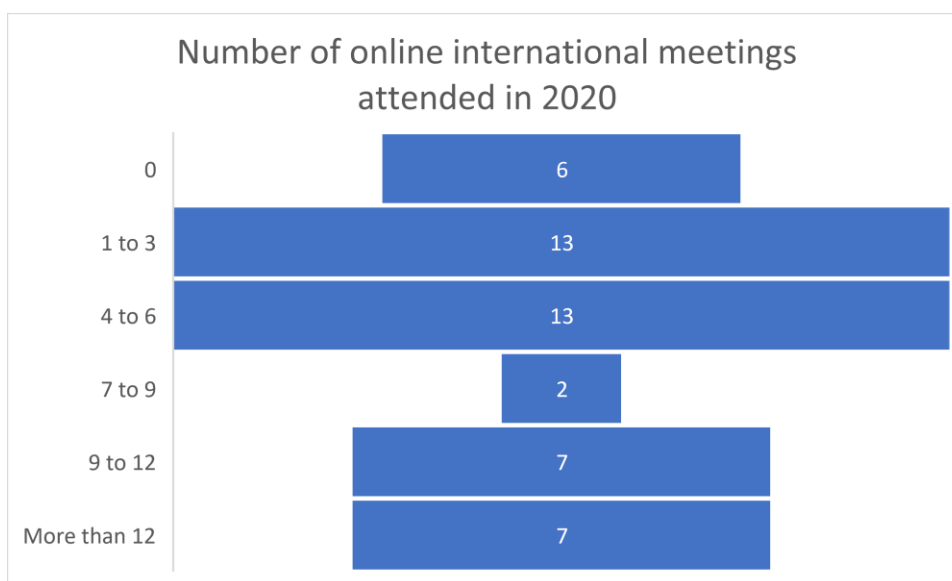
- Investment in new hardware and software
 - Procurement of laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. Laptop stands, keyboards, ergonomic chairs, etc. to work from home
 - Procurement of new software such as MS Team, professional Zoom account, Blackboard collaborate, video conferencing, systems, online meeting tools
- Provision of allowance for internet connection to employees
- Online courses – managing teams remotely, how to work from home...
- Access to internal databases from home office via VPN
- Remote IT support
- Social distancing protocols in the office (plexiglass separations, temperature checks, masks, hand sanitizer. PPE equipment
- Establishment of shifts at the office

In your opinion, what type of services can the Secretariat offer to support and facilitate your work during COVID-19 pandemic?

- Establish secure platforms for working groups to chat.
- Keep in contact via email and online meeting platforms
- More online training and resources for new staff who can't come into the office and get 'traditional' training, particularly on CITES implementation.
- Assistance to Parties that do not have computer equipment or do not have access to online tools or facilities, i.e. provide computer equipment or mobile phones
- Provide allowance for internet connections
- Confirm permits
- Establish an international online permitting system: Everything is online and that way you can have applicants upload everything and cross-reference with other countries easily
- Postpone or cancel non-urgent meetings and reports.
- Contact through other means besides email
- Ensure that online platforms have interpretation and can be accessed from all Parties
- Adjust the time of online meetings to conform with other Parties
- Constant sharing of information on COVID-19 statuses of member States

IMPACT ON FACE-TO-FACE INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS



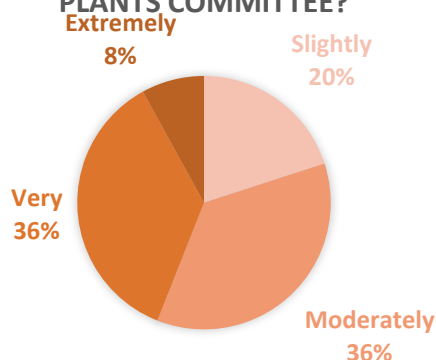


Suggestions for the Secretariat:

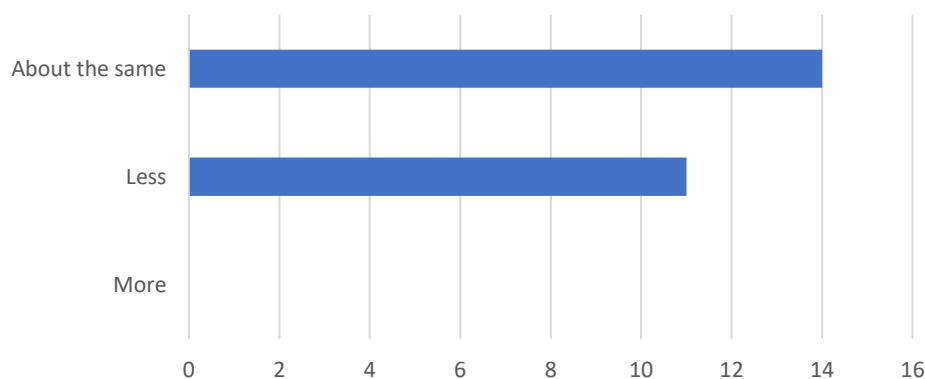
- Arrange online meetings on an agreed platform and provide guidance on the website to all Parties
- Organize regional briefings for AC, PC and SC
- Organize meetings on specific issues to progress the implementation of the decisions. Too many issues on the agenda make for long meetings with limited results
- Provide interpretation and send the information in Spanish
- Send information via email
- Eliminate all unnecessary meetings and limit the participation in necessary meetings to only Parties and international governmental organizations
- Update the national contacts of different Parties
- Ask Parties to share their upcoming meetings and post them on the CITES website
- Support Parties that do not have good internet connectivity and provide computers for less developed Parties
- Carry on with what is already being done, i.e. facilitate work through additional intersessional working groups and online committee meetings.

IMPACT ON CITES INTERSESSIONAL WORK

TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTED YOUR ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN WORKING GROUPS AND OTHER CONSULTATIONS OF THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE, ANIMALS COMMITTEE AND PLANTS COMMITTEE?



Has the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged you to engage more, less or about the same in CITES intersessional work?



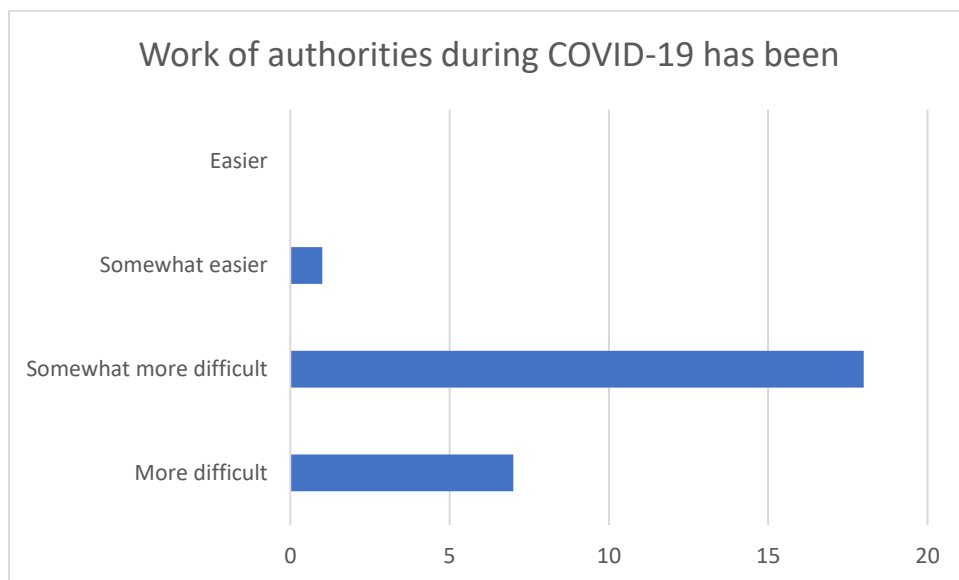
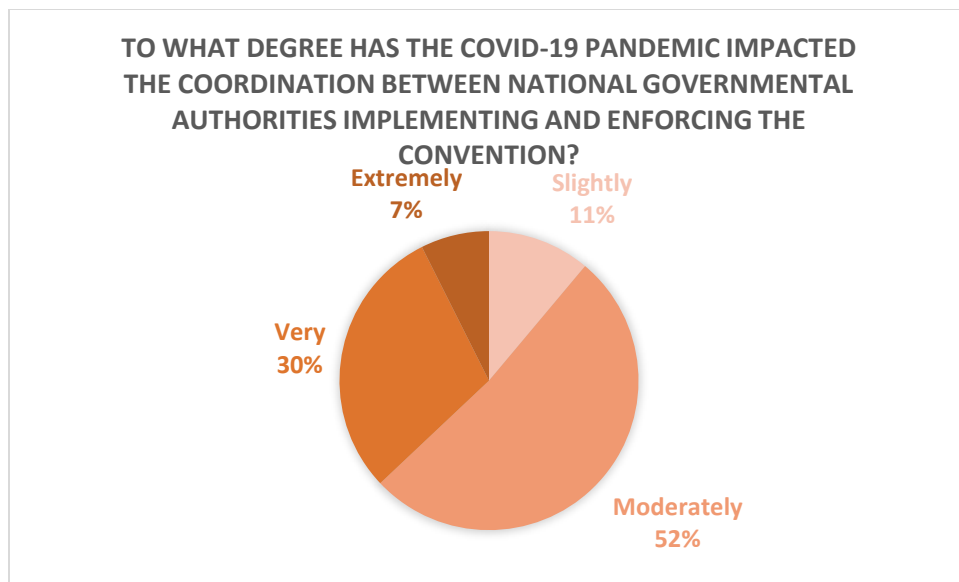
Why?

- Too many online meetings causing fatigue and cutting into the day-to-day work
- Level engagement remains the same, however, it is not always efficient to carry out work via email.
- Discussion time is quite limited due to the intense schedule
- Online meetings are difficult because of the absence of simultaneous interpretation
- Slow internet has impact participation in online meetings
- Lack of staff and heavy workload on non-CITES mandates, especially after link between COVID and wildlife trade was made.

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Train the chairs of WG to conduct online meetings and gather feedback via emails
- Manage email communication chains as these can be very long and lead to confusion. Maybe have a chat site for each WG where messages and responses can be posted rather than via emails
- Online meetings have proved to be helpful and could be an avenue for the delivery of expected outputs from meetings
- Too many documents to review
- Intersessional work should have started earlier, and it will be great if the Secretariat could help manage working timelines more.
- Provide better logistical support
- Send documents to participants by internet
- Encourage the Chairs of intersessional working groups to convene teleconference meetings with possibility to discuss openly with members of the working group.
- Secretariat to contact CITES national focal points to ensure that they participate in intersessional work
- Use reliable and secure online platforms for Parties to communicate
- Frequent and shorter meetings would be ideal

IMPACT ON NATIONAL COORDINATION

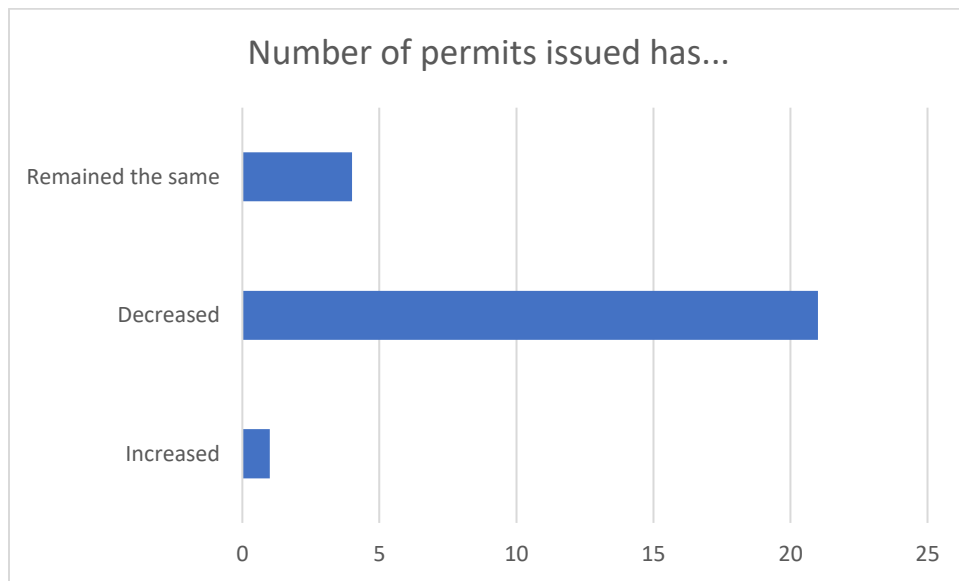
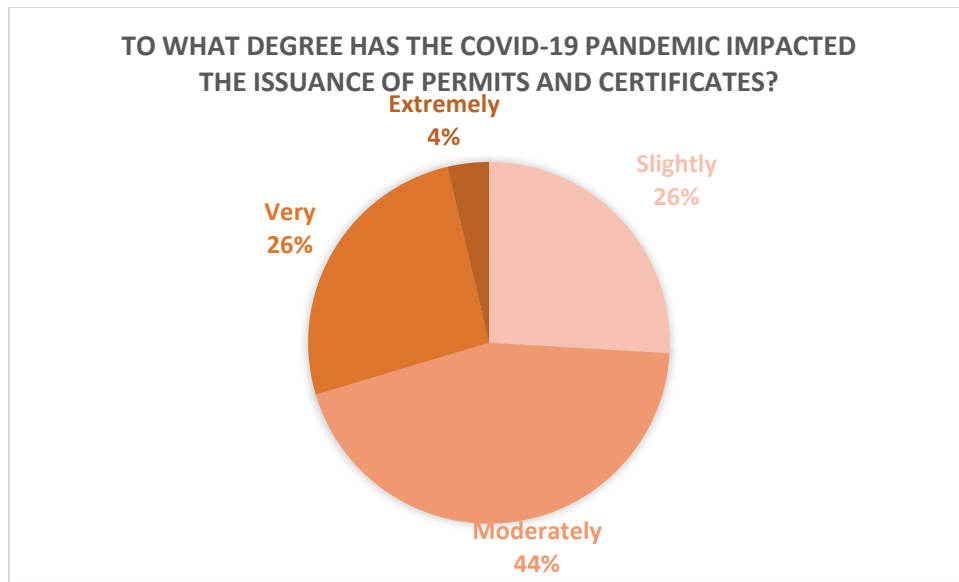


Why?

- Unable to call offices when emails are unanswered.
- Travel restrictions between regions and offices
- Limited opportunities to interact in person between colleagues – staff either working at home or working in shifts at the office
- Physical inspections made by our Environmental Inspectors were stopped
- Slower processing due to difficulties in coordination between each office or department
- Difficult to manage controls/inspection in the field due to pandemic measures
- Resources to facilitate the coordination process were significantly reduced
- For inspections, in-person inspections were no longer possible because of national lockdowns. Photographs or a video call sometimes used which add time to the process
- Training on CITES implementation jeopardized due to the pandemic

- Need to use physical message services to get original signatures on paperwork has slowed processing times
- Reduced availability of resources to facilitate operations of the national authorities.
- The unreliability of internet connectivity made communication difficult.
- Reduction in international trade, internal mobility and air and cargo traffic.

IMPACT ON THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES



Please describe the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic for the issuance of permits and certificates.

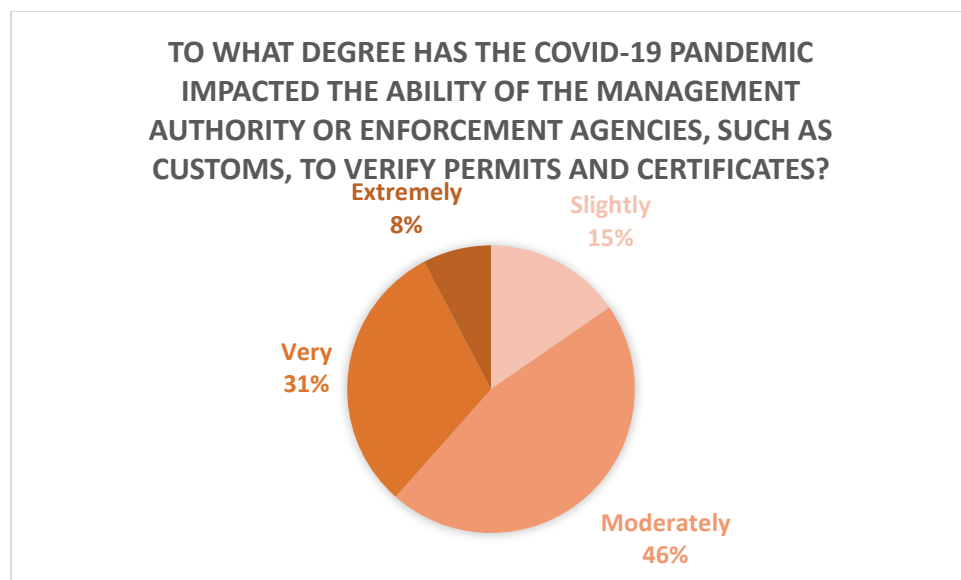
- Inspection of specimens and transport hampered by lockdowns
- Longer time for consultation and verification of hard copy documents
- No challenges for my agency as the licensing process can be done through the e-permit system.
- Originals sent through the post office or courier service meant increased delays
- No printer at home
- Travel bans meant that clients could not come and collect their permits
- Complication of getting the original signatures on paperwork
- NDFs and inspections that required face-to-face meetings (fieldwork) difficult to make due to travel restrictions
- A lot of travel and trade halted during the pandemic so we saw a decrease in permit applications.
- Limited office days and hours for permit withdrawals.

- Permits and certificates have to be printed on a special printer, signed and sent. All this can only be done at the office and not from home. Additionally, to process some applications, originals of documents have to be checked.

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Development and strengthening of electronic systems
- Provision of computers or mobile electronic devices that can help facilitate the exchange and transmission of information
- Provide capacity building on Simplified procedures for permits and certificates
- Promote the exchange of experience between CITES authorities, in particular Management Authorities
- Support Parties wishing to implement an e-permitting system.

IMPACT ON THE VERIFICATION OF PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES



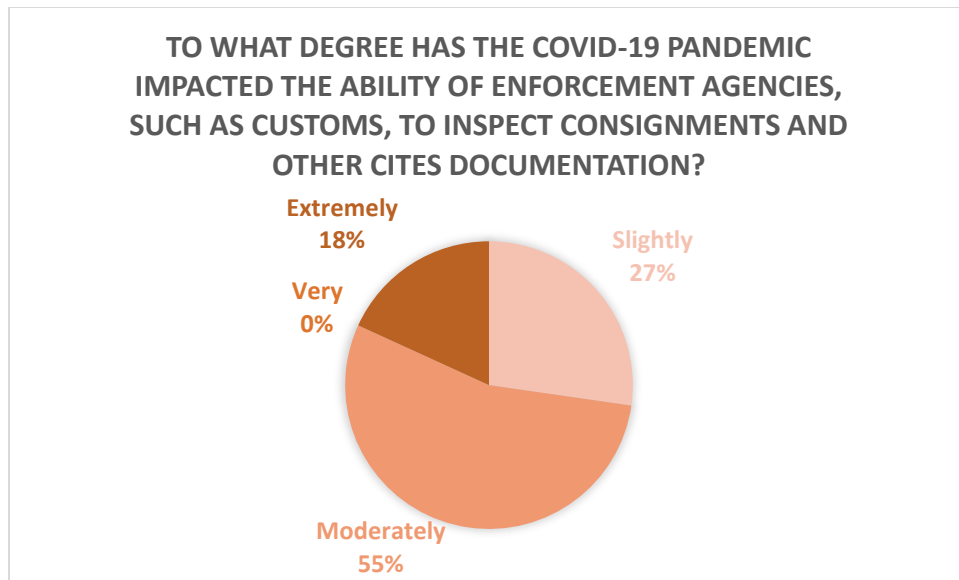
Why?

- Work from home
- Limited resources available due to reallocation to tackle the epidemic
- Time lag in email exchange
- Backlog of physical documents
- With limited human resources, one staff on sick leave impacts the verification of permits
- Limited access to the office
- Lack of adequate Personal Protective Equipment

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- The Secretariat can assist by supporting information/notification and remote or zoom meeting.
- Development by the Secretariat of an electronic system that interconnects MA for real time inquiries
- Enable sharing of experience and lessons learnt between Parties
- Soliciting donations for PPEs and vaccines for low income Parties

IMPACT ON INSPECTIONS



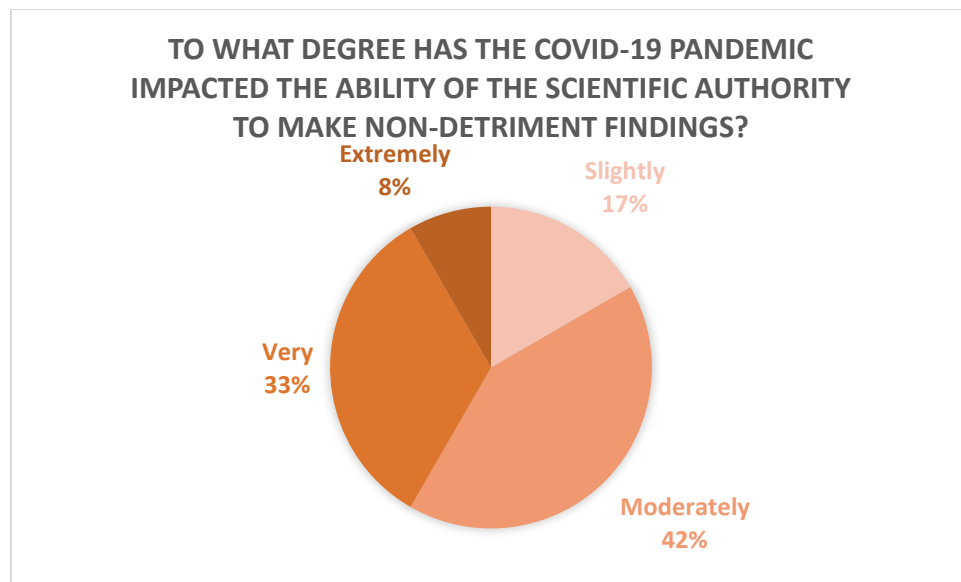
Why?

- Officers at border points were overwhelmed and priority was given to inspecting cargo that could carry COVID-19.
- When expert was needed and could not be present, everything had to be photographed from different angles which led to delays.
- Problems linked to inspections with PPE, especially for items from COVID red zones.

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Supporting information/notification or by remote or zoom meeting
- Financial support
- Establishment of a fund to provide protection equipment against COVID-19 for all agents involved in law enforcement
- Development of sterilizing/fumigation protocols for shipments

IMPACT ON THE MAKING OF NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS



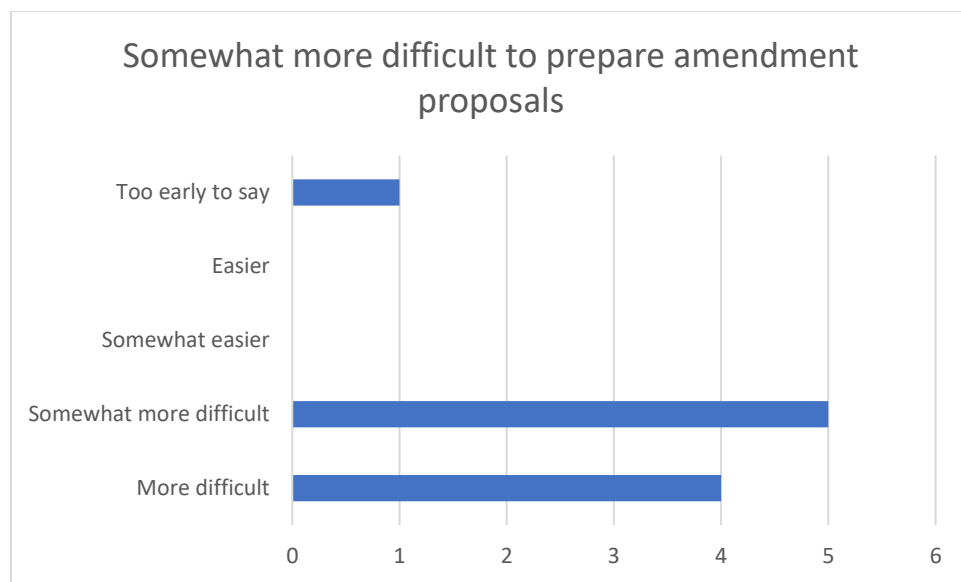
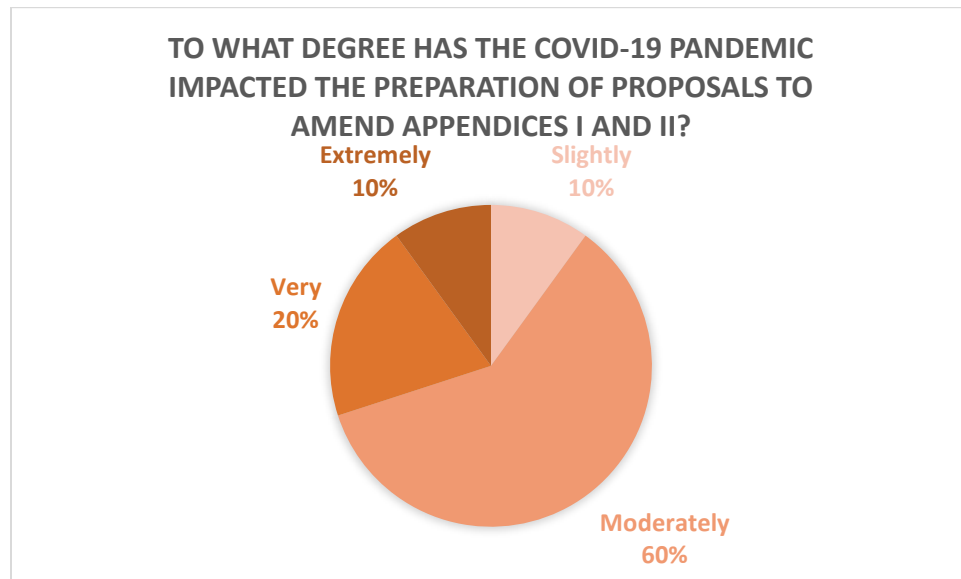
Why?

- Lack of field work has reduced data to complete NDFs
- Lack of contact to obtain NDFs from other Parties
- Cannot get into the office to retrieve information needed
- No transport in the country
- No traveling to fields for research works and surveys
- Some of the stakeholders in NDFs have no access to internet
- Increased time to obtain information
- Limitations on the organization of expert workshops

Suggestions for the Secretariat

- Assist in communication facilities such as Zoom, Teams licenses
- Financial support
- Good opportunity to train the SA.

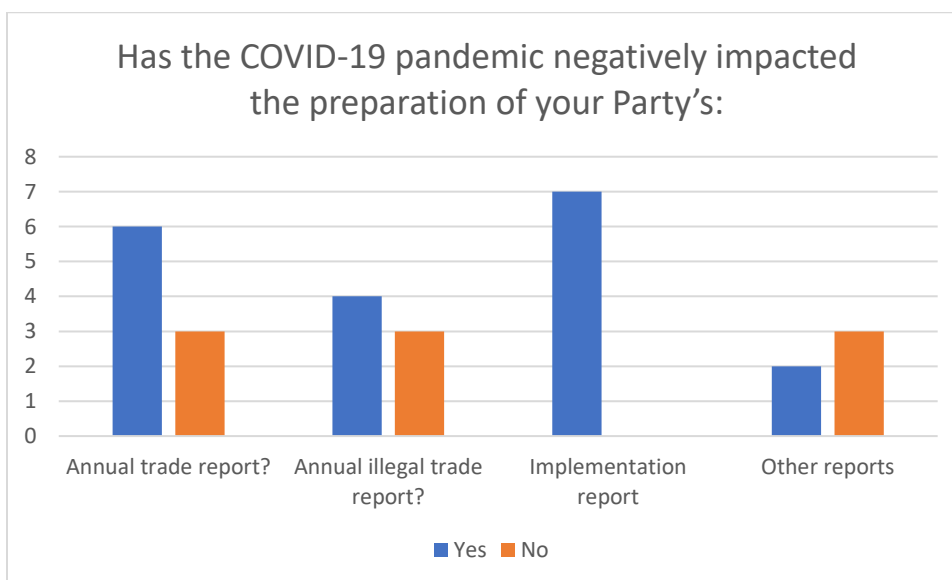
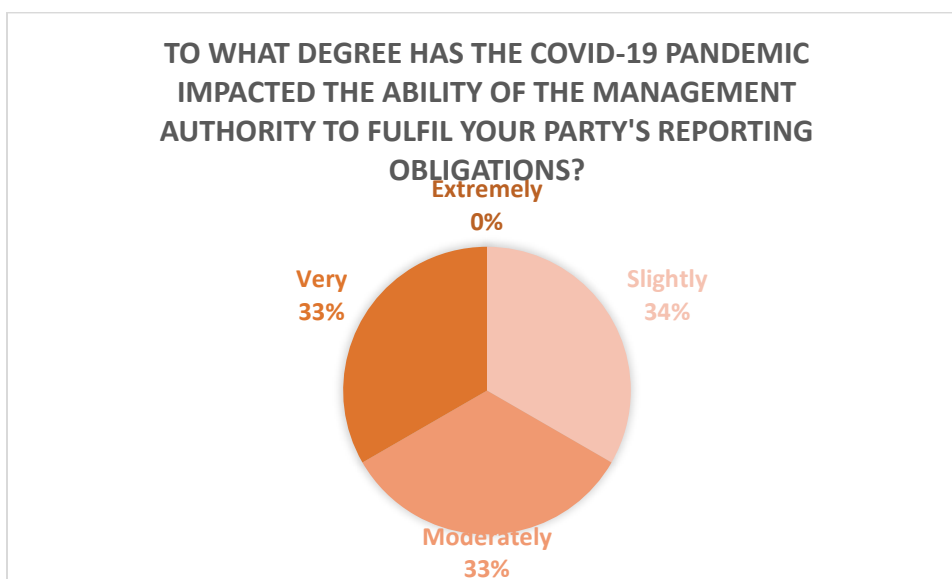
IMPACT ON THE PREPARATION OF AMENDMENT PROPOSALS



Why?

- Reduced resources due to staff being on sick leave in the MA and furloughed off work in the SAs mean that preparation of proposals to take to CoP19 has been difficult.
- These proposals require the groups to meet physically to discuss the issues that may be controversial. Online platforms though useful, do not seem to give the desired outcome.
- Poor coordination due to expensive and limited internet connectivity
- There was no possibility to gather people to discuss the issues to be proposed for amendments. The limitation was because experts couldn't travel from one point to another.
- Parties were to meet at the regional level to discuss what they submit as block for COP-19, even online meeting are not there because more focus is placed on the fight of the pandemic.

IMPACT ON REPORTING OBLIGATIONS



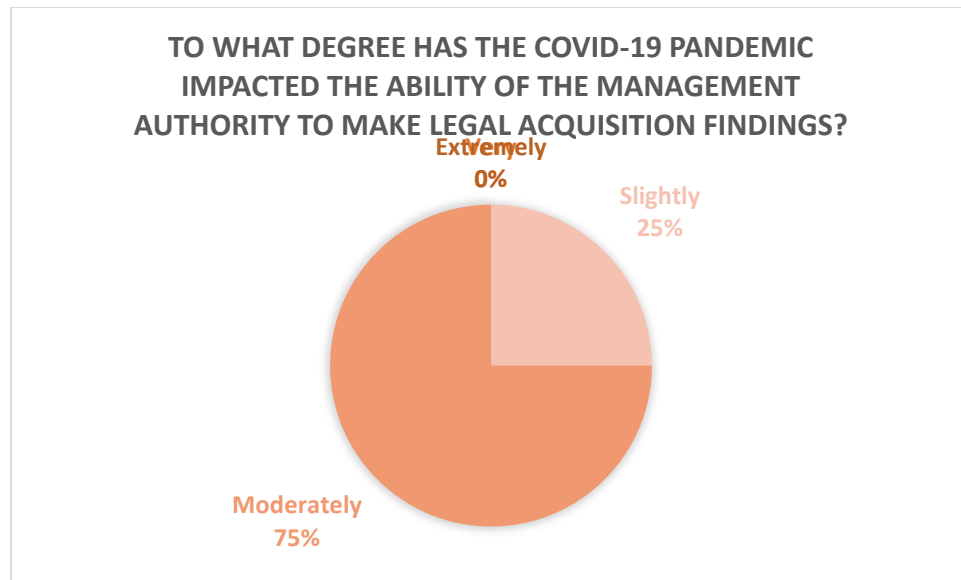
How?

- Absent staff or staff on sick leave meant a delay in the submission of the implementation report
- Documents not available to prepare the annual reports
- Difficulty in collecting data from protected areas due to travel restrictions. Rangers and police officer not trained in the use of internet and informatic tools.
- Limited bandwidth on network to get the volume of data required.

Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Where deadlines aren't fixed, ensure that Parties are given at least two months' notice of the deadline to allow the reporting to be planned in with other priorities. Or extend the due date for all reports.
- Ensure that all documents are sent in Spanish for the preparation of these reports
- Develop packages on how to collect data remotely. Train park wardens and rangers on how to prepare and share data on illegal trade

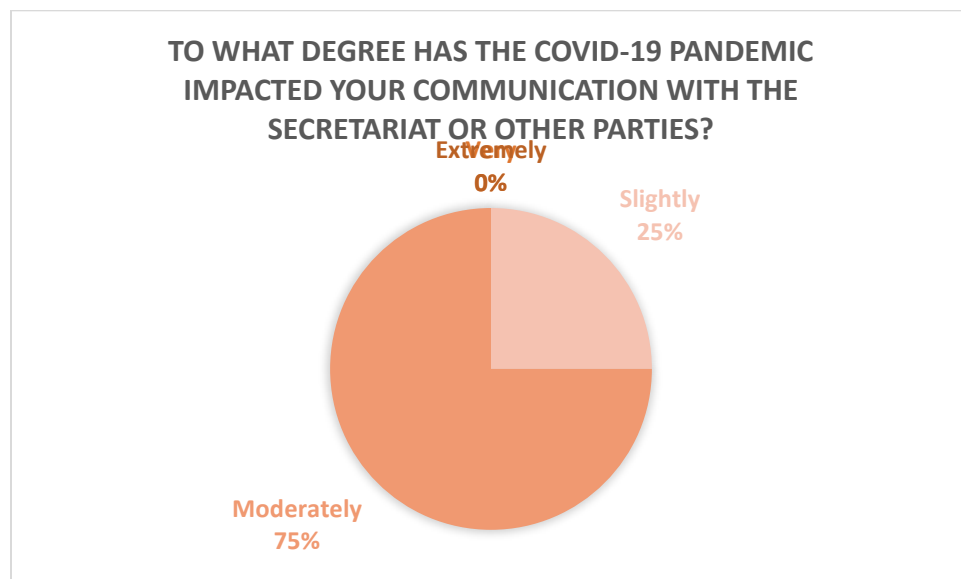
IMPACT ON THE MAKING OF LEGAL ACQUISITION FINDINGS

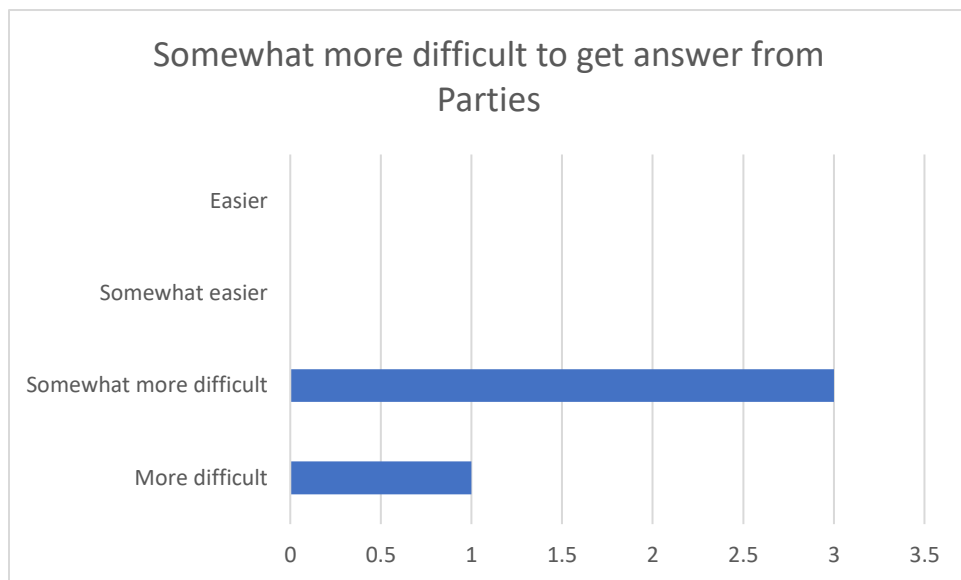
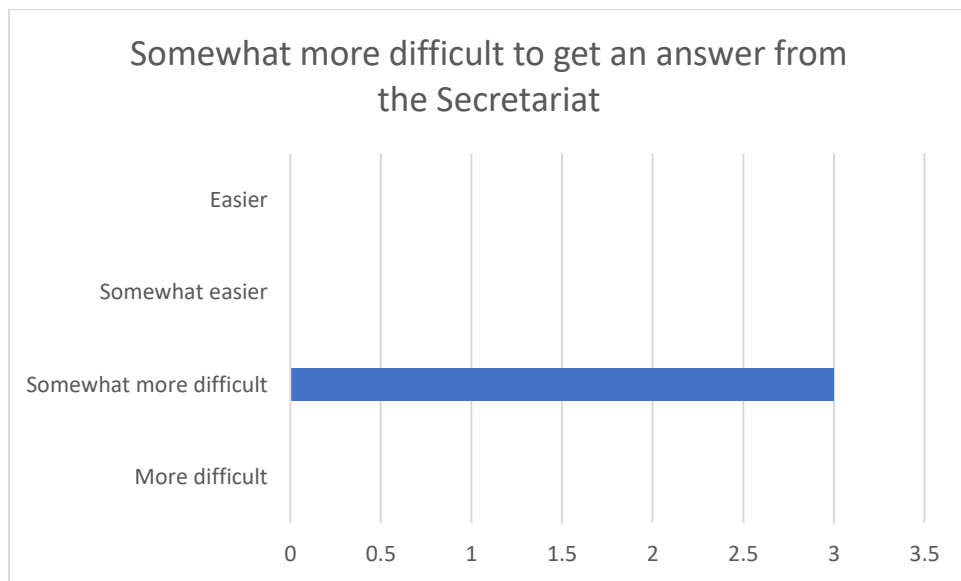


Why?

- Not everyone is in the office
- No transport facility
- Restriction on mobility

IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION WITH THE SECRETARIAT OR OTHER PARTIES

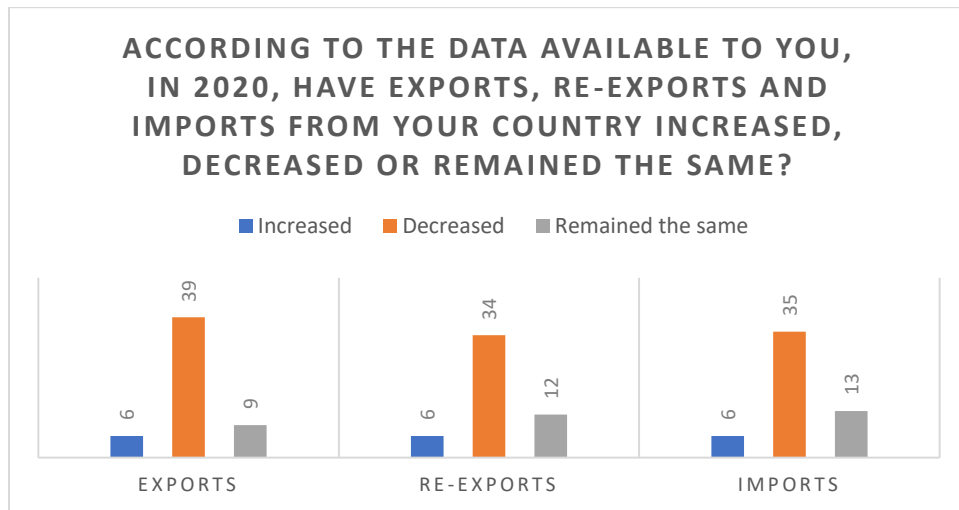




Suggestions for the Secretariat:

- Reduce the paperwork directed to Parties.

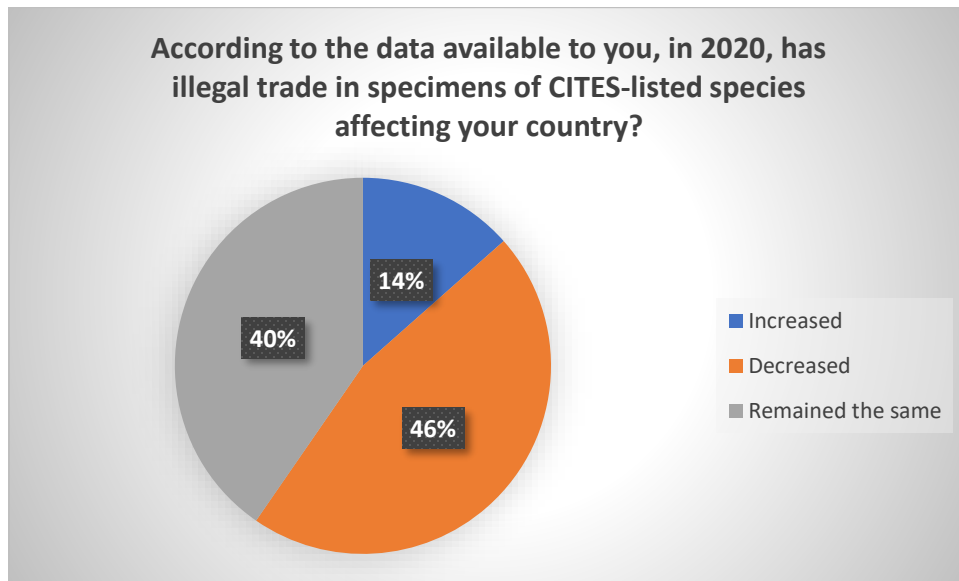
PERCEIVED IMPACT ON TRADE



Why?

- Travel restrictions and lockdowns
 - Closure of ports and airports
 - Flights from and to the country were restricted
- Anecdotal decrease in number of applications received
- Declared ban of wildlife transportation from March 26, 2020 to April 30, 2020
- Change on import and export policy of countries
- Hunters unable to come to the country led to a reduction in the export of specimens, specifically hunting trophies
- Permitting process has slowed significantly.

PERCEIVED IMPACT ON ILLEGAL TRADE



Why?

- Restricted movement of people reduced the mobility of illegal trade and thus illegal trade
- Less transport and shipments and reduced flights into and out of the country (closed borders and airports)
- Increased control on internal transports as a COVID prevention measure
- Increased enforcement by the police and military
- Only estimation as enforcement activities have also decreased leading to less detection of illegal trade.
- Less capacity for surveillance and inspection
- Poachers took advantage of movement restrictions
- Increased illegal trade on online platform
- Increased capacity of our monitoring system

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SECRETARIAT

- The best practice is to communicate by emails and arranging virtual meetings.
- We recommend to the Secretariat to organize capacity building events for Parties; and, develop online platform which will facilitate consultation/sharing between Parties and the Secretariat, and if possible among Parties in relation to the implementation of the Convention
- Ensure Parties are given as much notice as possible of meeting postponements and the dates of rearranged meetings to enable preparation and attendance (online) to be factored into work programmes.
- Information emails and exchange platforms with the Secretariat to ask questions
- Virtual meetings with Parties in the various regions to discuss issues and solutions.
- The best practice is to use electronic services.
- Digitalization of the systems would help the continuity of trade with minimal disturbance during such unfortunate events
- Continue with the enhanced level of communications
- Build capacities to improve trade
- Post COVID travel support for future meetings for developing countries as they may not be able to finance themselves in the next two to three years.
- The postponement, cancellation or rescheduling of meetings, committees and others, has taken a long time, and Parties had been left in doubt about the time to submit documents and other planning. Probably knowing about these situations (updates more often) would have helped. Similarly, there are issues that Parties do not want to discuss via online meetings due to the 'sensitivity' of the matter. We suggest that the Secretariat take into consideration that there are issues that cannot be addressed in this way, to consider other avenues or eliminate or postpone the agenda items.
- Official online capacity building
- Encourage sharing of best practices and lessons learned
- Support Parties with funding and technical expertise how to best address issues of law enforcement in times like this.
- Coordination of meetings and translation
- Regular communication with Member States and sharing information. There is also need to enhance communication among member States outside the Conferences of Parties (CoPs)

SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER PARTIES

- With limited mobility, Parties may focus their activities on organizing capacity building of personnel and law enforcement-partner agencies using online platform, as well as public information dissemination about the Convention and relevant domestic laws/policies using social media
- Organization of webinars
- Government authorities should raise awareness among the general public about best practices and the protection of for fauna and flora
- Improve communication
- Move to e-permitting as soon as possible
- Facilitate sharing of information from other parties on best practices
- Strengthen their participation in regional meetings
- Regular communication with other Member States will improve the sharing of important information.
- Raise awareness on the importance of the conservation of wild fauna
- Establish a participatory management system with local communities