

San José, 28 de febrero 2006

William Wijnstekers
Secretario General
CITES
Geneva, Suiza

Estimado Señor Wijnstekers:

It has come to my attention that the UK CITES Authority has approved an import application for endangered green turtles *Chelonia mydas* from the Cayman Turtle Farm, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, BWI.

The green turtle is listed on Appendix I and trade in the species is therefore prohibited according to CITES. According to Resolution 10.16 (Rev) facilities such as the turtle farm on the Cayman Islands should be only allowed to export Appendix I listed species if complying with a rigorous set of criteria detailed in CITES Resolution 10.16 (Rev):

“..ii) *the breeding stock, to the satisfaction of the competent government authorities of the exporting country:*

A. Was established in accordance with the provisions of CITES and relevant national laws and in a manner not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild;..”

At the Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CITES, the Costa Rican delegation distributed copies of documentation demonstrating the illegality of the acquisition of a total of 29,731 green turtle eggs from a Costa Rican beach, eggs used to establish the Cayman Turtle Farm breeding stock (see attachment materials). Copies of the documentation were provided to all country delegations present at the 12th COP, including the United Kingdom delegation. For your information, the UK withdrew its application to register the Cayman Turtle Farm as a captive breeding operation involving *Chelonia mydas* at COP12.

The approval of this application with illegal breeding stock, opens the possibility that this kind of issue will be viewed as legal, when in actuality it would be against CITES objectives.

I would be most grateful if you could address the matter of the UK's recent approval of green turtle import in order to prevent the export of endangered green turtles from the Cayman Islands to the United Kingdom which Costa Rica believes is an action that would undermine efforts to conserve the species in the Caribbean region.

Cordially yours,

Lic. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez Echandi
Ministro del Ambiente y Energía
MINAE, Costa Rica

cc: Sr. Elliot Morley, Ministro de Estado, Departamento de Ambiente, Alimentos y Asuntos Rurales, Reino Unido

Sr. Robert Ford, Autoridad de Manejo CITES, Reino Unido

Sr. Hugo-Maria Schally, Comité de Comercio en Fauna y Flora Silvestres, UE

Sra. Georgina Butler, Embajadora del Reino Unido en Costa Rica