

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Sixteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Lima (Peru), 3-8 July 2006

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

General information

- a) Names of the representatives:
Regional Representative: Mr Robert R. Gabel (United States of America)
Alternate Member: Dr Adrienne Sinclair (Canada)
- b) Number of Parties in the region: 3
- c) Number of Parties responding to communications: 3
- d) Names of other institutions and NGOs contacted for CITES work during the period:

CANADA: Provincial and territorial Management and Scientific Authorities, Canadian Forest Service, Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plants Specialist Group, TRAFFIC North America, Ontario Ginseng Growers Association, several commercial orchid traders (e.g. Paramount Orchids, Zephyrus Orchids, Balfour Greenhouses Ltd., Ontario Flower Growers Inc.).

MEXICO: Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad, CONABIO (Scientific Authority); Dirección General de Vida Silvestre, DGVS-SEMARNAT (Management Authority); and Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente, PROFEPA- SEMARNAT (Law Enforcement Authority). Instituto Nacional de Ecología, INE-SEMARNAT; Dirección General de Gestión Forestal y de Suelos DGGFS-SEMARNAT; Comisión Nacional Forestal, CONAFOR; Facultad de Estudios Superiores Iztacala de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM; Centro de Investigaciones en Ecosistemas, CIECO-UNAM; Instituto de Biología, Jardín Botánico, IB-UNAM; Instituto de Ecología, IE-UNAM; Instituto de Ecología, Unidad Hermosillo, UNAM; TRAFFIC North America–Mexico; and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP-WCMC.

UNITED STATES: White House Council on Environmental Quality, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, U.S. Forest Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Smithsonian Institution, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Regional Associations of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, State Natural Heritage Programs, State Agricultural Agencies, American Orchid Society, American Botanical Council, American Herbal Products Association, Institute for Culture and Ecology, International Wood Products Association, National Network of Forest Practitioners, North

American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Orchid Digest Corporation, Rural Action, West Virginia Woodland Owners Association and Wisconsin Ginseng Board.

Activities since the 15th meeting of the Plants Committee

1. Regional directories and representatives

Revised directories are contained in the Annex to this document.

Ms Cecilia Lougheed has been appointed Head of the Scientific Authority at Environment Canada, replacing Ms Carolina Caceres who is on maternity leave until January 2007.

Andrea White is replacing Adrienne Sinclair as Scientific Advisor of Plant Trade at Environment Canada while Dr Sinclair is on maternity leave until December 2006.

Dr Javier Alvarez has resigned his position as Branch Chief in the U.S. Scientific Authority. The position is currently vacant.

2. Medicinal plant annotations

CANADA: Canada contributed to the Medicinal Plant Annotations working group, with particular interest paid to American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) and goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*). American ginseng and goldenseal are Canada's largest medicinal plant industries, and it is important that the annotations used reflect the commodities that first appear in trade and which dominate trade. Progress has been made on improving the annotation currently used for American ginseng. Canada is working closely with the United States of America to develop an appropriate annotation for goldenseal, which would include regulation of powdered roots.

UNITED STATES: The United States actively participated in the working group on medicinal plant annotations and has coordinated closely with Canada on ensuring that the annotations to both American ginseng and goldenseal are properly worded to regulate the appropriate parts and derivatives in trade.

The U.S. Division of Scientific Authority also continues to chair the Medicinal Plant Working Group (MPWG), which is part of the Plant Conservation Alliance (PCA). The MPWG networks federal agencies and non-federal partners to examine issues particular to the sustainable use and conservation of medicinal plants. In 2005, the MPWG began collaborating with the IUCN-Medicinal Plant Specialist Group members to produce medicinal plant fact sheets that provide information on sustainability. MPWG is working with the industry and the *Hoodia* Working Group to create outreach material on *Hoodia* spp. The MPWG is co-sponsoring a regional workshop in the U.S. Pacific Northwest, in May 2006, to focus on issues related to medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products in that region. The MPWG collaborators continue to coordinate on monitoring several populations of black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), to examine the effect of varying levels of harvest on the species; this species is in international trade to relieve menopausal symptoms and is primarily wild-harvested. Additional focus areas include impact of invasive species on medicinal plants (i.e. the effect that spraying useful plants has on consuming populations) and efforts to promote cultivation of medicinal plants (i.e. using the Farm Bill to encourage farmers to grow medicinal plants as alternative crops). The MPWG's listserver is used to disseminate information about CITES issues (including listings and meetings). The MPWG Chairman spoke about CITES and the MPWG at the third Annual Ginseng and Medicinal Herb Festival (October 2005; Catskills, New York), the United States–Russian Federation Botany meeting (September 2005; Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), Ethnobotany Symposium (October 2005; Cumberland, Maryland), and the PCA Cooperators' Meeting (November 2005; St. Louis, Missouri). More information on the MPWG may be found at <http://www.nps.gov/plants/medicinal/>.

3. Production Systems and Source Codes Working Group

CANADA: Canada continues to play an active role in the Production Systems and Source Codes working group, paying special attention to the compatibility of source code and production systems in regard to its medicinal plant industry and non-timber forest products.

UNITED STATES: The United States has served as chairman of the AC and PC joint intersessional working group on production systems and source codes and has submitted a document to PC16 and AC22 on this issue.

4. Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

Canada and Mexico, as co-Chairmen, continue to collaborate with members of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation Working Group on further identifying the important contributions CITES is making towards achieving the targets of this Strategy.

5. Review of the Appendices

MEXICO: Among the agreements arising from the 15th meeting of the Plants Committee, Mexico committed to review the six species of the genus *Pereskia* present in Mexico, as well as the species *Pereskia lychnidiflora*. Mexico's CITES Scientific Authority (CONABIO) retained Dr Salvador Arias of the Biology Institute (*Instituto de Biología*) of UNAM to prepare data sheets on these seven species. The work entailed a thorough review of all the available literature and of herbarium specimens. All the existing information on taxonomy, distribution, habitat, biology, morphology, importance, threats, management, use and trade (legal and illegal), and other aspects of conservation included in Annex 6 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13) was thus compiled and summarized. This information was supplemented with experiences and information drawn from unpublished reports and studies by specialists. The work also entailed making drawings and taking photographs.

To draw up potential distribution maps, information was compiled and validated on specimens from collections contained in the CONABIO National Biodiversity Information System (SNIB), the World Information Network on Biodiversity (REMIB) and the National Herbarium (MEXU) of UNAM. Utilizing this information, the Technical Directorate for Analysis and Priorities (*Dirección Técnica de Análisis y Prioridades*) of CONABIO generated the maps using DesktopGarp. The maps were then revised and validated in collaboration with the specialist.

The biological information was assessed according to the criteria for amending Appendices I and II of the Convention set forth in the aforementioned Resolution. The resulting conclusions and recommendations will be presented during this meeting for consideration by the Plants Committee.

6. Non-detriment findings

CANADA: Canada does not allow trade in wild American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) and goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), both considered species at risk in Canada. In collaboration with provincial scientific authorities and other experts within the species range, the documented basis for our non-detriment findings is near completion and should both be available publicly within the next year.

7. Species

MEXICO: Mexico has participated actively in the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group. As agreed at the 15th meeting of the Plants Committee and as established in the mandate for the work of this group in accordance with Decisions 13.55 and 13.56, Mexico is collaborating via email in the group's activities. Mexico's CITES Management Authority has submitted to the Chairman of the Mahogany Working Group, Mr Marco Romero Pastor, the contribution of Mexico to the joint strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of the species (17/03/2006 and 20/04/2006). Mexico is also considering sending a representative to the next meeting of the Working Group, to be held from 29 June to 1 July 2006 in Lima, Peru.

8. Research

CANADA

Ginseng Recovery Team: The Canadian Scientific Authority (A. Sinclair) is an active member of the Ginseng Recovery Team made up of Canadian federal, provincial and municipal government members. This Recovery Team monitors ginseng populations and their status, as well as researches

threats to ginseng and its habitat. Landscape-level and site-specific protection and recovery measures are being determined and implemented.

MEXICO

Guaiacum: CONABIO has received the fourth report of the study "Abundance, distribution and conservation status of *Guaiacum sanctum* L. in Mexico", currently being carried out by CIECO-UNAM researchers with funding from Germany (through the CITES Secretariat), Mexico (CONABIO) and the United States of America (United States Forest Service). The information presented in this report fulfils virtually all of the objectives of the study, which has sought to assess the current distribution of the species in Mexico, the status of the population based on density and abundance surveys and the types of vegetation and habitat where the species is found; to compile basic biological information on survival, growth, mortality and reproduction at different stages of development; and to undertake a comparative analysis of these parameters in preserved and exploited populations.

With regard to the sustainable management of *G. sanctum* populations, the study initially provided population ecology criteria based on information collected during the first census of the populations under consideration (static information). Subsequently, with the information obtained from monitoring of the two populations, a matrix model of the dynamics of the forest population subject to extraction was proposed to assess the potential medium- and long-term impact of current exploitation patterns and explore possible extractive practices that would favour sustainable harvest. The model was used to estimate the annual population growth rate and to conduct a sensitivity analysis to identify the stages and vital rates that are relatively more important for the population dynamics of the species. Finally, a series of analyses was carried out with a view to exploring possible scenarios for the management of tree extraction in order to establish criteria for the sustainable use of natural populations of the species. These analyses and models will be supplemented with the information obtained from the third year of monitoring of the demographic variables (growth and mortality) of the three permanent observation plots (an additional one has been established) and the genetic analysis of the populations currently under way.

In general terms, the data generated so far by the study indicate that the current management system for the use of the species in Mexico is adequate and the harvest levels can be considered sustainable. Nevertheless, the study makes several specific recommendations which should be given due consideration. It also underscores the importance of continued long-term monitoring of the study populations.

CIECO is developing a geographic information system for the species, utilizing all the information compiled in the course of the study. The system will yield even more detailed information on the current distribution of the species and will make it possible to develop maps of density and abundance, which will be a very important additional tool for planning species management.

Appendix-I Cactaceae: Mexico is continuing to review the status of the populations of Mexican Cactaceae included in Appendix I through the study coordinated by the Consultative Technical Subcommittee for the Conservation of Cactaceae in Mexico. This work will make it possible to assess whether they are listed in the correct Appendix. The National Science and Technology Council of Mexico (*Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología de México*, CONACyT) provided the initial funding for this study, which is ongoing.

So far, a review of herbaria has been completed and a database of all the CITES species has been created. Population censuses and descriptions of habitat and community have been completed for seven species: (1) *Ariocarpus fissuratus*, (2) *Astrophytum asterias*, (3) *Aztekium ritteri*, (4) *Echinocereus schmollii*, (5) *Mammillaria pectinifera*, (6) *Obregonia denegrii* and (7) *Turbinicarpus horripilus*. Information will be completed for six other species during the first half of the current year. The studies of legal and illegal trade and of confiscations and seizures continue. In addition, the risk assessment method of the Official Mexican Standard NOM-059-ECOL-2001¹ was applied to several species (e.g. *Ferocactus robustus*). This method has been reviewed and validated by the Subcommittee.

¹ NOM-059-ECOL-2001 establishes the categories of risk, level of protection and specifications for the inclusion, deletion or reclassification of endangered species of wild plants and animals native to Mexico.

Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*): This species has been considered on two occasions by the Plants Committee as a possible candidate for the Review of Significant Trade, as a result of reports compiled by UNEP-WCMC on the export levels declared by Mexico and the United States (mainly) and also some concerns as to the effectiveness of the management plans and the scientific basis on which use and export permits are granted. Both times, the Plants Committee decided not to subject the species to such a review. Nevertheless, Mexico considered it important to carry out an assessment of the species with an eye to revising and improving existing conservation and management programmes.

Accordingly, the CITES Scientific Authority has commissioned a field study by specialists from the Ecology Institute (*Instituto de Ecología*) of UNAM (Hermosillo Unit) to assess the population status of the species in Mexico. The study will provide information on the population status and the extraction of and trade in saguaro cacti in Mexico, the aim being to formulate recommendations that will ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the species. Based on the needs identified to date, it is expected that the study will be carried out in two phases. The first will include the compilation of information on the distribution, abundance and conservation status of the species in Mexico, as well as basic information on its use and trade and preliminary recommendations on management. The cost of this stage is estimated at USD 30,000, part of which will be provided by CONABIO. The second stage of the project will produce information on population dynamics and genetics. The cost of this stage has not yet been estimated, nor have institutions that might contribute to its financing been identified.

9. Enforcement

CANADA: The Wildlife Enforcement Directorate conducted 3360 inspections and 350 investigations in 2005, with 26 charges being laid for 32 prosecutions, resulting in 10 convictions. Special efforts were made on commercial shipments and live specimens entering Canada.

MEXICO: In 2005, solely at ports, airports and borders, PROFEPA conducted 11,939 inspections of wildlife specimens, products and by-products and seized 1,955 wildlife specimens (not all of them CITES species).

10. Capacity building

MEXICO

Training for law enforcement authorities: The three CITES authorities of Mexico, together with specialists in various areas, offered several modules of the training workshop on selected topics for wildlife law enforcement officials (South–Southeast Region), developed and coordinated jointly by PROFEPA and TRAFFIC North America–Mexico. The workshop was aimed at environmental inspectors, police forces, and public safety and Customs personnel responsible for or involved in inspection, surveillance and law enforcement in relation to wildlife. The workshop was conducted from 2 to 4 May 2006 in the city of Oaxaca, Mexico. The topics covered included trade in wildlife, national law and legal framework, CITES (structure, operation, use of the Appendices, management of export, import and re-export permits and certificates) and wildlife checks and inspections, as well as topics relating to the identification, seizure and management of reptile, bird, mammal and orchid specimens, products and by-products traded in Mexico.

CITES Master's Course: With support from *Fundación Carolina*, the University of Andalucía and CONABIO, the Coordinator of Mexico's CITES Scientific Authority attended the fifth "Master's Course in Management, Access, Conservation and Trade of Species: The International Framework", offered by the International University of Andalusia (Antonio Machado Campus) in Baeza, Spain, from 3 October to 16 December 2005. The course provided tools that will enable a better understanding of how CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) work and how they are implemented in practice, complementing the continuing education programmes offered by the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico. The representative of TRAFFIC North America in Mexico also attended the course.

Regional workshop of the mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla* King) trafficking and identification training project: The workshop was conducted in Tapachula, Chiapas (Mexico), on 5 and 6 July 2005. It was aimed primarily at inspectors from the Law Enforcement Authority of Mexico

(PROFEPA) but was also attended by inspectors from Guatemala. One of the main objectives was to ensure that inspectors know how to distinguish bigleaf mahogany from other woods with which it is frequently confused [cedar and West Indian mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*)]. During the workshop, working groups were formed to find ways of collaborating at border crossing points between Mexico and Guatemala. Topics covered included official border points and mechanisms for returning confiscated goods, as well as interest in reviving bilateral agreements on mahogany. The scientist responsible for plant issues of the Scientific Authority attended this workshop.

Workshop for the optimization of nurseries to maximize the propagation of species native to Mexico:

The training workshop was offered by the Autonomous National University of Mexico (*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, UNAM) and was aimed at professional and technical personnel concerned with basic aspects of nursery design and management for the production of specimens of native species from the various terrestrial ecosystems of Mexico. The workshop sought to lay the foundation for optimum planning and management of nursery production of seedlings. The scientist responsible for plant issues of the Scientific Authority attended this workshop.

Application of Official Standard NOM-144-SEMARNAT-2004, which establishes the internationally recognized phytosanitary measures for the packaging of wood products used in international trade of goods and merchandise. The course was aimed at PROFEPA airport and border inspectors and was intended to inform and train them on the application of this standard, which entered into force on 16 September 2005. The scientist responsible for plant issues of the Scientific Authority attended this workshop.

Workshops on management of wildlife along the northern border of Mexico: Two workshops on wildlife management along the northern border of Mexico were held as part of the work being carried out by the General Wildlife Directorate (*Dirección General de Vida Silvestre*, DGVS), Mexico's CITES Management Authority, with regard to decentralization of functions, and in fulfilment of the agreements arising from the 10th Annual Meeting of the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management. The capacity-building group of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC) also collaborated in organizing the workshop, with additional funding provided by Canada, Mexico and the United States. The workshop was organized in response to the need for training in research techniques and in species and habitat management, as well as training needs for projects of common interest to the three countries.

The first part of the workshop took place in November 2005 in San Roque, Nuevo León (Mexico), and the second in February 2006 in Hermosillo, Sonora (Mexico). In each part, a total of 80 hours of instruction was offered, including presentation and analysis of relevant policies, theories, approaches, methods and techniques, and the application of these principles in the field. One segment of the workshop was devoted specifically to implementation of the international agreements to which Mexico is a party, including CITES and CBD. Representatives of federal and state agencies from North America, together with renowned researchers and project leaders from Canada, Mexico, and the United States, took part in the workshop. This created an ideal opportunity for the development and consolidation of a network of personnel involved in wildlife management who are working together on projects and programmes of common interest with a view to creating a dynamic process of support and collaboration for these activities in North America.

UNITED STATES

Timber: For some time, the United States has been promoting and providing financial support for policy and project work of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) to assist ITTO producer members in implementing CITES listings of tropical timber species. This has resulted in a number of decisions of the ITTO Council and ITTO activities related to listings of bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.). Recent examples include projects to assist Peru in conducting inventories of bigleaf mahogany and an ITTO-sponsored expert meeting on ramin (May 2006) that included support for an expanded meeting of the Tri-national Task Force on ramin (Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore). The United States has provided additional support to mahogany range countries through bilateral assistance implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Building on this work, in November 2005, an element was added to ITTO's biennial work programme to establish a new programme focused on building capacity to implement CITES listings of tropical

timber species effectively. The United States provided initial funding (USD 150,000) for this programme and is collaborating with other ITTO members to seek additional funding. All of these efforts promote and support greater synergies between the Secretariats of the ITTO and CITES.

CITES Master's Course: From 23 to 25 November 2005, the Chief of the U.S. Scientific Authority participated as an instructor in the module on plant trade of the fifth Master's course, "Management, Access, Conservation and Trade of Species: The International Framework" conducted by the International University of Andalucía.

11. Meetings and communication within the region

CANADA, MEXICO and the UNITED STATES: The three countries will meet at the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, to be held from 15 to 19 May 2006 in San Diego, California, United States.

This meeting is held every year, and rotates among the three countries as host. Mexico was the host in 2005, and Canada will host in 2007. The meeting regularly includes a CITES Table (session), which is co-chaired by one of the CITES authorities from each of the three countries in the region. This year's agenda will include coordination on Animals Committee and Plants Committee issues, preparations for CoP14, and exchange of information on common issues. Information on the meeting can be found at www.trilat.org.

CANADA

Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*) Association: In January 2006, Canada (K. Farr) attended the Canada Yew Association working group meeting. The Working Group is an open forum for parties interested and involved in the supply and processing of *T. canadensis* biomass for the global pharmaceutical industry. The Association has previously adopted criteria and guidelines for the sustainable harvest of Canada yew. At the 2006 meeting, participants considered codified operating standards and third party certification systems. Researchers from the Canadian Forest Service presented an overview of a *Taxus* Species Fingerprinting Project intended to develop reference standards for quick identification of *Taxus* species.

Canadian National CITES Workshop: In April 2006, the Canadian Management, Scientific and Enforcement Authorities from federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions, as well as other governmental agencies, and members from non-governmental organizations (e.g. TRAFFIC) met for the Canadian National CITES Workshop. The objectives of this meeting were: to provide ongoing training, to clarify CITES-related processes and tools, to prepare for CoP14, and to further develop Canada's national strategy for non-detriment findings.

MEXICO

High-priority species for Mexico: A prioritization exercise involving species of commercial interest is being conducted in accordance with the conceptual document (methodology) prepared by CONABIO in collaboration with other government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs. The results will be used to identify species requiring greater attention for which it would be advisable to carry out population studies to determine their current status and develop suitable management and conservation measures and, where appropriate, propose amendments to the CITES Appendices.

Compilation and cleaning of the main database that will serve as the source of information for the exercise have recently been completed. This database includes species from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Red List, the CITES Appendices and Mexico's endangered species list, NOM 059. The data were reviewed for synonymies and orthographic errors in the scientific names, and it was determined whether the species are endemic to Mexico. This information was supplemented by species which are not included in the CITES Appendices, but which are known to be traded internationally. The database was cleaned by eliminating species not native to Mexico and species that have not been traded in the last 10 years. Finally, this initial database was added to the (already cleaned) trade databases of CITES species (UNEP-WCMC) and non-CITES species (DGVS). With this database in place, work on the assessment of the species will now begin, applying the aforementioned methodology.

Regional meetings: The 10th Annual Meeting of the Trilateral (Canada/Mexico/United States) Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management was held in May 2005 in Zacatecas, Mexico. The CITES Working Group met during the meeting and continued preparations with regard to the issues under consideration by the CITES committees. The 11th Annual Meeting of the Trilateral Committee will be held from 15 to 20 May 2006 in San Diego, United States. The CITES Working Group will be meeting again during that period to consider issues such as the periodic review of the Appendices, export quotas, preparations for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14), etc.

Proposal for an international workshop for Scientific Authorities on non-detriment findings: This workshop is being organized in response to the need to develop countries' capacity to implement CITES correctly, in particular the capacity to apply the methodologies, tools, information, experience and other resources utilized by Scientific Authorities to make the non-detriment findings required for the export of Appendix-II species. The workshop will build on the results and information derived from similar initiatives, such as the workshop for Scientific Authorities carried out in 2002 in Nicaragua and other more recent workshops focusing on specific taxa (*Swietenia macrophylla*, *Cheilinus undulatus* and *Aquilaria*). CONABIO intends to offer this workshop in October 2006 and is seeking support for that purpose from interested Parties and organizations.

Workshop on *Guaiacum*: Following on the study of the abundance, distribution and conservation status of *Guaiacum sanctum* L. in Mexico (mentioned above in the research section of this report), CONABIO plans to organize a meeting with specialists (academics), government agencies responsible for management (use) of the species, CITES authorities and producers for the purpose of analysing, on the basis of the study findings, the existing management and conservation plans for the species and proposing improvements in order to ensure sustainable use and export.

UNITED STATES

Workshop and public meetings on American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*): To obtain current information that would contribute to the annual non-detriment finding that the United States Scientific Authority must make on exports of American ginseng, a series of meetings was held to receive input from the public as well as from other government agencies. The first meeting was held from 31 January to 2 February in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and began with a half-day symposium on recent research findings on ginseng as well as presentations by industry representatives. This was followed by a public meeting, where anyone in attendance had the opportunity to speak and offer information on the biological and trade status of ginseng. Over the next day and a half, representatives of the U.S. CITES authorities met in closed session with the ginseng coordinators of each State that exports ginseng, as well as representatives of other Federal agencies that manage land where ginseng occurs (e.g. Forest Service and National Park Service) and that may either regulate or prohibit the harvest of ginseng. Three subsequent half-day public meetings were held in Asheville, North Carolina; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Sutton, West Virginia. Meetings were held in different venues across the range of ginseng so that input could be obtained from as many sources as possible.

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference: The Chiefs of the United States Management Authority and Scientific Authority attended the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference to consult with representatives from the State natural resources agencies on various CITES issues, including preparations for PC16 and AC22, as well as CoP14.

12. Other

MEXICO

Review of the protection status of endangered Mexican species: The Scientific Authority participated in the review of proposals to amend Annex II (lists of species) of NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2001 and to update the status of the species, subspecies and populations currently classified in some risk category. The participation of the CITES Scientific Authority in the working subgroup on plants was intended to contribute information and assessment criteria in relation to the use of and international trade in the species under review in order to enhance the species data sheets and help in decision-making on amendments to the risk categories.

Directory of CITES specialists in Mexico: Since its creation and, more recently, its designation as Mexico's CITES Scientific Authority, CONABIO has built close relationships with a number of specialists concerned with the study, conservation and management of wild fauna and flora. It is considered a priority to maintain and strengthen these ties, in particular with specialists of the various taxa protected under CITES. The Scientific Authority is therefore in the process of formalizing these relationships through the creation, updating and publication of a directory of CITES experts. Its purpose is to publicize and ensure ready access to information on specialists who collaborate and participate in various activities related to the implementation of the Convention, as well as to give them due recognition.

CITES species data sheets: In connection with the request for proposals for the preparation of data sheets (containing information on biology, threats, management and risk status) for the Mexican species included in CITES Appendices I and II (2004), the Scientific Authority has participated in the review and validation of more than 100 data sheets produced by projects that received funding as a result of the request for proposals, which have to do with groups of CITES species such as orchids and cacti. These species sheets are prepared using Biótica®, an information system designed specially by CONABIO for the management of curatorial, nomenclature, geographic, bibliographic and ecological parameter data. It forms the bio-informatic foundation for the National Biodiversity Information System (SNIB). The data sheets published to date may be viewed on the CONABIO website at the following address:

<http://www.conabio.gob.mx/conocimiento/ise/fichas/doctos/introduccion.html>

Requests for proposals: The CITES authorities of Mexico have published the following notices and requests for proposals:

Call for the registration of scientific institutions holding museum and herbarium specimens of species included in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): SEMARNAT, through DGVS, in coordination with CONABIO, has issued a notice to institutions and scientific collections, requesting them to register with DGVS in order to enable them to avail themselves of the simplified procedure for the exchange of herbarium and museum specimens in accordance with the exemptions provided in the text of the Convention. This is expected to facilitate international loans, donations and exchanges among scientific institutions. The text of the notice is posted on the CONABIO website at the following address:

http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/cooperacion_internacional/doctos/ConvocatoriaColeccionesFINAL.pdf

Request for proposals to amend the CITES Appendices: SEMARNAT, through DGVS, PROFEPA and UCAI, in collaboration with CONABIO, has issued a request to the general public for proposals to amend (inclusion, deletion or transfer of species) the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The deadline for receipt of proposals is 31 July 2006, except for proposals relating to the transfer of populations from Appendix I to Appendix II for purposes of captive breeding, for which the deadline was 23 December 2005. The call for proposals is available on the CONABIO website at the following address:

http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/cooperacion_internacional/doctos/convocatoriaenmiendaappendices.pdf

UNITED STATES

The United States approach to bilateral and regional trade agreements provides support for effective implementation of CITES. The United States includes core environmental obligations in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the obligation that a Party shall not fail to effectively enforce its environmental laws in a manner affecting trade between the parties. The scope of this obligation includes laws to implement CITES. In addition, and as a complement to our FTAs, we establish environmental cooperation mechanisms for capacity-building to help our FTA partners improve their enforcement capabilities and increase their levels of environmental protection. The environmental cooperation mechanisms and their work plans have specifically identified endangered species issues and CITES-related enforcement as a priority in environmental cooperation activities.

DIRECTORY OF CITES AUTHORITIES FOR NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

The Management and Scientific Authorities at the *Canadian Wildlife Service* (CWS, ENVIRONMENT CANADA) have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Convention in Canada. There are also other Federal departments involved, such as:

- the *Fisheries and Oceans Canada*: marine species and fish;
- the *Canadian Forest Service*: trees / Timber;
- the *Canadian Customs and Border Services Agency*;
- the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency*;
- the *Foreign Affairs Canada*.

Also 12 of the 13 Provinces or Territories have their own designated Management and Scientific Authorities.

In any case, CWS should be contacted at the numbers and addresses below under "*general information*" and CWS will forward messages to relevant authorities. When sending email, please use cites@ec.gc.ca

Wildlife Trade and International

Fed	Lynda MALTBY Director	Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Environment Canada	OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0H3	T: + 1 (819) 997-2957 F: + 1 (819) 994-3684 E: lynda.maltby@ec.gc.ca
Fed	Carolina CACERES A/Chief, Wildlife Trade and International ON LEAVE until Jan. 07 please contact C. Lougheed	Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Environment Canada	OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0H3	T: + 1 (819) 953-1429 F: + 1 (819) 994-3684 E: carolina.caceres@ec.gc.ca

Management Authority (MA)

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

For all issues pertaining to the Plants Committee, letters or documents should be sent (mail or e-mail) to the Scientific Authority; they will then be forwarded to the Management Authority.

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