

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

---

Forty-first meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 8-12 February 1999

Issues relating to the appendices

TIMBER WORKING GROUP

Introduction

1. At the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee (London, March 1998) the Secretariat reported that, at that time, there were no urgent reasons to reconvene the Timber Working Group (document Doc. SC.40.5.7) and the Standing Committee agreed.
2. Since that time, Canada and the Philippines have informed the Secretariat that they would like the Standing Committee to consider reconvening the Timber Working Group to discuss particular issues.
3. To ensure clarity, the Timber Working Group that presented its report to the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be referred to below as the first TWG, whereas the Timber Working Group that the Standing Committee might wish to convene now will be referred to as the second TWG.

Issues that could be considered by the second TWG

4. Request from Canada
  - a) The Management Authority of Canada informed the Secretariat that it had difficulties in determining whether paper-backed veneer was subject to the provisions of the Convention.
  - b) Following discussions with its representative to the first TWG, it concluded that the intention of the first TWG was that only raw veneer sheets should be subject to the provisions of the Convention. For that reason the first TWG recommended that code 44.08 of the Harmonized System of the World Customs Organization be used to refer to these veneer sheets (see also Resolution Conf. 10.13).
  - c) However, a more detailed analysis of the definition by Canadian Customs revealed that this definition also included paper-backed veneer. It could be argued that this veneer should no longer be regarded as 'raw veneer' and would therefore not be subject to the provisions of the Convention.
  - d) The Management Authority of Canada requested that this be clarified and that consideration be given to including this in the terms of reference of the second TWG. However, this could be dealt with by the Plants Committee.

## 5. Request from the Philippines

In a letter to the Secretariat, the Management Authority of the Philippines requested that the second TWG be convened in order to evaluate the applicability to timber species of the current criteria for the amendment of Appendices I and II as contained in Resolution Conf. 9.24.

## 6. Follow-up to discussions in the first TWG

a) Decision 10.127 instructs the Secretariat to investigate the potential for silvicultural techniques (e.g. enrichment planting, assisted natural regeneration) to be dealt with in the general context of Resolutions on ranching and quotas, as well as in accordance with the definition of "artificially propagated" contained in Resolution Conf. 9.18 (Rev.), to determine whether these concepts provide useful bases for establishing trade regimes for timber species listed in the appendices.

b) Following discussions with donors of funds for the activities of the first TWG, it was agreed that the remaining funds could be used to hire consultants for the preparation of discussion documents on this subject. The Secretariat is currently preparing the terms of reference for this consultancy and expects to be able to hire a consultant or consultants at the beginning of 1999. An evaluation of the resulting documents could also be part of the terms of reference of the second TWG.

7. From the above, it would seem that the only reason to reconvene the Timber Working Group at this time is the request from the Philippines regarding the review of the criteria. However, a final decision on this should be taken in the context of the whole process of review of the criteria. See document Doc. SC.41.19.

## Composition of the second TWG

8. Regarding the composition of any future Timber Working Group, there are some considerations to be taken into account that the Standing Committee might wish to submit to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

9. The first TWG was composed as follows:

a) Parties:

**Africa:** Cameroon, Ghana

**Asia:** Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea

**Central and South America and the Caribbean:** Brazil, Costa Rica

**Europe:** European Union, Switzerland

**North America:** Canada, United States of America

**Oceania:** Not represented

b) Intergovernmental Organizations:

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), World Conservation Union (IUCN)

c) Non-Governmental Organizations:

International Wood Products Association (IHPA), TRAFFIC

10. However, at the meeting of the Standing Committee where the composition of the first TWG was decided (Geneva, 1995) there was considerable debate about which Parties should be represented. Also, when the report of the first TWG was discussed at the 10th

meeting of the Conference of the Parties, various Parties expressed their strong interest to be represented in future meetings of the Timber Working Group.

11. At its 10th meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided that the Timber Working Group should be maintained with its current balance and approximate size until the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Decision 10.67).

12. However, "current balance and approximate size" leaves open the possibility to make changes to the composition of the second TWG. If the Standing Committee decides to reconvene the Timber Working Group some time in the future, it may wish already to consider the following options:

a) Regarding Party representation:

- i) Maintain the current composition without any change;
- ii) Slightly expand the current composition by nominating one additional member each from Africa and Central and South America and the Caribbean, and one member from Oceania, taking note that Asia has three members, and North America two members (Canada representing the boreal forestry aspect); or
- iii) Request the regions at their regional meetings during the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to elect their members to the second TWG in the numbers referred to under either i) or ii) above.

**Note:** in view of the working experience during the meetings of the first TWG, and the quality of the reports produced, and to maintain its efficacy, the Secretariat recommends that the second TWG not be enlarged beyond the size indicated under ii) above.

b) Regarding non-Party Representation:

- i) Maintain ITTO and IUCN in the membership.
- ii) With regard to the Representation of TRAFFIC and IHPA, it would seem logical to maintain TRAFFIC. It could, however, be argued whether IHPA would be the appropriate organization to represent all trade interest. Unfortunately, most trade organizations are organized on a regional basis. It could be considered whether an organization like the FAO might nominate a person to represent these regional trade organizations.

#### Chairmanship of the second TWG

13. Regarding the Chairmanship of the second TWG, the Standing Committee could consider the following options:

- a) Follow the path taken at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, where the Chairman of the Plants Committee was nominated as Chairman of the first Timber Working Group.
- b) Have the second TWG elect its own Chairman. This might prove to be a delicate and time-consuming process, in view of the fact that the members are elected to represent the interests of their region or organization.
- c) The Standing Committee could nominate the Chairman.