

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

Forty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee
Paris (France), 19-22 June 2001

Reports

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANTS COMMITTEE

This report has been submitted by the Chairman of the Plants Committee.

Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from April 2000 to April 2001.
2. Working Programme of the Plants Committee, approved at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be carried out up to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties:
 - a) To implement the Action Plan of the Plants Committee resulting from the adoption of the Strategic Plan for the Convention at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
 - b) To continue the process of the review of the Appendices, applying the criteria included in Resolution Conf. 9.24. The family Orchidaceae and a number of succulent taxa were already selected at the 10th meeting of the Plants Committee.
 - c) To implement the new resolution on significant trade in Appendix-II species, once adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting and to continue the implementation of the programme of significant trade in plants, as adopted at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
 - d) To participate in the process of the revision of the criteria for the inclusion of species in the Appendices (Resolution Conf. 9.24), as adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting.
 - e) To support the Secretariat in its work on the development of a programme to assist Scientific Authorities in making non-detriment findings in accordance with the provisions of Article IV of the Convention.
 - f) To take responsibility for the scientific analysis of problems related to the international trade in plants, in order to provide scientifically based findings for the drafting of proposals that could be presented to meetings of the Conference of the Parties.
 - g) To collaborate with the Identification Manual Committee, when requested, in the preparation of sheets on the identification of plants.

- h) To collaborate with the Nomenclature Committee, when requested, in the preparation of checklists.
- i) To promote the organization of regional meetings, and to improve the coordination between regional representatives.
- j) To strengthen the work of the regional representatives by developing and maintaining regional directories to: (1) identify more botanists in the Parties that can be contacted on CITES plants issues; (2) inform Management Authorities about the importance of plant issues and the need for proper scientific expertise and budget; (3) stimulate Parties to identify at least one botanist for their Scientific Authority; and (4) to tighten links between the Scientific Authority and the Management Authority.
- k) To improve representation and participation of French-speaking Parties at Plants Committee meetings.

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- 4. The Plants Committee wishes to express its deep gratitude to the Management and Scientific Authorities of the United States of America for their generous invitation and for the superb organization of the 10th meeting.
- 5. The following representatives of the six regions took part in the 10th meeting of the Plants Committee: Dr J. Donaldson (Africa), Dr Q. Luke (Africa), Mr Z. Shaari (Asia), Dr N. P. Singh (Asia), Dr E. Forero (Central and South America and the Caribbean), Dr M. Werkhoven (Central and South America and the Caribbean), Dr M. Clemente (Europe), Dr J. de Koning (Europe), Mr B. von Arx (North America), Dr G. Leach (Oceania). A total of 23 Parties were represented. One United Nations agency, one inter-governmental organization and 10 non-governmental organizations were also represented.
- 6. In the course of the 10th meeting, the United States of America offered USD 45,000 to the Plants Committee for high-priority projects. The Plants Committee is grateful for this generous donation and will be submitting to the United States of America a selection of projects which might be suitable for financing.

Main topics covered at the 10th meeting of the Plants Committee

- 7. In the closed session a renewed analysis was undertaken of the difficulties with which the regional representatives have to deal in order to carry out their mission adequately.
- 8. The Chairman reported that the Plants Committee had already requested the Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting, to provide additional resources to bolster the work of the regional representatives and also to assist with regional activities and meetings. Subsequently, the Committee had also considered it appropriate to request the Standing Committee to allow a certain flexibility in its utilization of the funds allocated, in the event that they were not fully used up in organizing the ordinary meeting. Similarly, the Plants Committee had repeated its request to have specific budgetary lines which could be used to provide direct support to the regional representatives and regional meetings. At its 42nd meeting, the Standing Committee had responded positively to that request and had also decided to allocate additional funds to the budget of the Plants Committee. At the present time, the amount allocated for the Plants Committee was CHF 90,000, and there was flexibility in the use made of any savings arising, to bolster the work of the representatives.

9. Consequently, the Plants Committee had agreed at its 10th meeting that the regional representatives (in particular those from Africa, Central and South America and the Caribbean and Asia) should consider in which areas it would be appropriate to apply the additional funds and any savings which might be made in the budget of the Plants Committee in order to give a boost to the operation of the regional representation.
10. Concerning the regional reports, special mention should be made of the presentation on CD-ROM of the updated version of the regional directory for Europe produced by Spain and the presentation of the directories for Oceania and North America, produced by Australia and Canada respectively. At the present time the directories for Asia, Africa and Central and South America and the Caribbean are in the process of being created.
11. The Committee reviewed the decisions of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and set in motion the work dealing with *Harpagophytum* spp., *Guaicum sanctum* and *Aquilaria* spp.
12. The Plants Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare documentation relating to the definition of the term "artificially propagated" in relation to timber, and standard exemptions. In order to cover the topic of the definitions of the technical terms used in the annotations and the annotations for medicinal plants, a working group was set up, comprising China, Colombia as the representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean, France, Germany, the United States of America, TRAFFIC and the Secretariat.
13. The subject of *Araucaria araucana* was covered in depth. From the data provided, and especially those given by the Vice-Chairman of the Plants Committee, who explained clearly the origin and genesis of a population, it became clear that there is only one population of *Araucaria araucana*, namely that in Chile and Argentina. The Committee prepared a letter for the Chairman to send on behalf of the Plants Committee to the Chairman of the Standing Committee. The wording prepared for the letter, which was sent on 19 December 2000, was as follows:
14. "The Plants Committee in its tenth meeting thoroughly discussed the issue of *Araucaria araucana*, as presented in Doc. PC 10.9.1 and Doc. PC 10.9.1a.
15. The Plants Committee agreed unanimously that the intention at the ninth meeting of the Plants Committee was to achieve the objective of listing of *Araucaria araucana* in Appendix I without exclusions to avoid in this way the split listing of the species.
16. After having discussed the history of inclusion of populations of *Araucaria araucana* in the Appendices, the Plants Committee believes that there is no other "population" of the species outside Chile and Argentina.
17. The Plants Committee therefore informs the Standing Committee of this opinion and requests that the Standing Committee directs the Secretariat to issue a notification which reflects the original intent of the proposal, supporting the position of Argentina and Chile to include the species in Appendix I. The Plants Committee requests that this subject be dealt with urgently and intersessionally.
18. The Plants Committee is of the opinion that the discussion regarding naturalized populations in general should be addressed during the second meeting of the Criteria Working Group, which will be held in Spain in February/March 2001."

19. With respect to the topic of significant trade in plants, the Plants Committee supported the priorities given in the document prepared by the coordinator, giving high priority to the project in Madagascar.
20. The Plants Committee set up a working group to determine how to move forward with the review of the Appendices, and in particular how to proceed in the review of the family Orchidaceae. The group is expected to present its conclusions at the next meeting of the Committee.
21. With respect to the checklists, Austria offered CHF 5000 to start the work relating to *Bulbophyllum*, and the representative of South and Central America and the Caribbean offered cooperation in the work on the genus *Masdevallia*. The Plants Committee expressed its sincere gratitude for these contributions to its work.
22. Various nomenclature problems were covered, having to do with *Cactaceae*, *Aquilaria* spp, *Picrorhiza kurroa* and *Taxus wallichiana*. All of them were passed to the Vice-Chairman of the Nomenclature Committee so that the appropriate documentation could be prepared for the 11th meeting of the Committee.
23. The CITES Strategic Vision and the implementation of the actions directed to the Plants Committee were given special attention in that Committee. Actions were analysed and priorities established. Finally, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman were entrusted with producing a series of proposals for circulation to the members of the Committee and subsequently, once the proposals had been selected, submitting them to the United States of America in order to seek its approval for application of a part of its donation to financing some of the proposals. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman have already held a working meeting in the month of March, in Canada, to discuss the preparation of those proposals.
24. With respect to the implementation of the sheets on the identification of plants, the Secretariat reported that the manual of sheets corresponding to species of timber had been completed in English and French. Those sheets had been prepared from some basic work on a wider scale prepared by the Scientific Authority of Spain. Spain informed the meeting that the complete work was available in Spanish on the Web. The Spanish Management Authority had facilitated the work by sending it on CD-ROM to all the Parties and to all who had requested it.
25. Additionally, the Secretariat reported that a key for cactuses based on their vegetative form, which had been prepared by Switzerland, was being completed and that a similar key for orchids was also being prepared.
26. Germany informed the Committee of the inclusion of a complete set of identification sheets for medicinal species in the training manual, intended in particular for use by customs officials.
27. With respect to training initiatives, Spain gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the holding of the 3rd Master Course on "Management, conservation and control of species in international trade," which had been held from 3 October to 15 December 2000.
28. The course was given at the International University of Andalusia (at the Antonio Machado campus, in Baeza), simultaneously in Spanish and English, and amounted to 500 hours of tuition. There were 34 people taking the course, from the Scientific and Management Authorities and non-governmental organizations of 25 countries: Bolivia, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Greece, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Peru, Slovakia, Slovenia, Saint Lucia, Spain, Thailand, Venezuela,

Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. The participants were given a grant which fully covered the tuition and their accommodation. In addition, nine inspectors from the Spanish Management Authority took part in various weekly modules to enhance their training.

29. The 3rd Course was given by 57 experts from 10 countries. Together with the experts from the Spanish Scientific Authority (Ministry of the Environment) and Management Authority (Ministry of the Economy), individuals from the Scientific or Management Authorities of Argentina, Australia, Cuba, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, the CITES Secretariat, the Commission of the European Union, the Phylogenetic Resources Secretariat of the FAO, the University of Granada, the Polytechnical University of Madrid, the Spanish Environmental Police (SEPRONA), the Spanish customs authorities, the Forensic Laboratory of the USA, IUCN, African Resources Trust and Adena-WWF, and others, also participated as experts.
30. The holding of the 3rd Master course was made possible by the International University which organized it, by the generous sponsorship of the Fundación Biodiversidad and by the assistance of the University of Córdoba, the Spanish Ministries of the Environment and the Economy, the CITES Secretariat, the Botanical Gardens of Córdoba and the zoos of Barcelona and Jerez. The contribution made by Spain in the year 2000 to finance the course was USD 170,000.
31. Over the three consecutive years (1998, 1999 and 2000) in which this Master course at university level has been given, under the direction of the Chairman of the Plants Committee, 87 participants have taken it. The course provides a solid training for the implementation of CITES and for future work and communication among countries. The participants have come from 36 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe). Additionally, there have been a further 50 participants from the Management Authority of Spain who over the three years have attended various weekly modules to enhance their training.
32. In the area of training and information the Plants Committee was also pleased to receive information from the United States of America on the production of a brochure about CITES and the timber trade. The brochure is intended to provide information to importers, exporters and the general public, and has been designed in such a way that any country can make use of it very economically, inserting into it whatever specific information it wishes to include. 30,000 copies in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese have been printed and sent to the Management Authorities of the Parties.
33. The United Kingdom reported to the Plants Committee on the very favourable reception given to the standard slide package. This work had been produced with the financial assistance of the CITES Management Authorities of the United Kingdom and the CITES Secretariat, together with assistance from the Scientific Authorities of the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy. About 600 copies of the set had been distributed and already the stocks of copies in English and Spanish were exhausted. However, more would be printed in the current year. It was also reported that the Management Authority of the United Kingdom had confirmed the offer of a new round of financing of GBP 100,000 over four years for the production of new packages of slides. The new titles which it was envisaged to produce were: CITES and Orchids; CITES and Succulents; Training Exercises for use by the Parties to CITES.

34. The Committee recognized the extreme usefulness of the CITES Secretariat's new Web page and requested that high priority be given to a section on plants, which should include Plants Committee documents as well as the regional directories and training materials.
35. For the 11th meeting of the Plants Committee which will be held in the first week of September, the formal invitation of Malaysia was accepted, and thanks were expressed to its Authorities for their welcome. The Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat has been distributed to the members of the Plants Committee for consultations in their regions.

Other meetings

36. For the First Meeting of the Criteria Working Group (CWG), held on 2-4 August 2000 in Canberra (Australia), the following experts from the Plants Committee had been nominated by the Chairman: Dr John Donaldson (Africa), Mr Zulmukshar Shaari (Asia), Dr Enrique Forero (Central and South America and the Caribbean), Dr Jan de Koning (Europe), Mr. Bertrand von Arx (North America) and Dr Greg Leach (Oceania). Dr Forero and Mr von Arx had stated that because of scheduling problems they would not be able to attend. Nominated to replace them were Dr Marga C.M. Werkhoven, who finally had not been able to attend either, and Dr Patricia Davila Aranda, who did attend. The results of that meeting were sent to the Parties and studied at the Second Joint Meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees, held in Shepherdstown (United States of America), on 7–9 December 2000.
37. The following representatives of the Plants Committee took part in that Second Joint Meeting: Dr J Donaldson (Africa), Dr Q Luke (Africa), Mr. Z Shaari (Asia), Dr N P Singh (Asia), Dr E Forero (Central and South America and the Caribbean), Dr M Werkhoven (Central and South America and the Caribbean), Dr M Clemente (Europe), Dr J de Koning (Europe), Mr. B von Arx (North America) and Dr G Leach (Oceania). During the meeting, the results achieved by the First Meeting of the CWG were studied, and it was agreed that it was necessary to hold a second meeting of the CWG to deal with Annex 5 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 referring to definitions.
38. The Plants Committee wishes to express its profound gratitude to the Management and Scientific Authorities of the United States of America for their generous invitation and for the superb organization of the Second Joint Meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees.

Budget of the Plants Committee

39. The CITES Secretariat has provided the figures for the costs incurred in holding the 10th Meeting of the Plants Committee, as follows:

	USD	CHF
Logistics costs for the meeting (interpretation)	24 526	42 970 ¹
Report-writer for the meeting	960	1 622 ²
Translation of documents	886	1 497 ³
Travel costs and subsistence for the members of the Plants Committee	24 699	41 691 ⁴
TOTAL	51 941	87 780

¹ *The costs of the interpretation equipment were covered by the Authorities of the USA.*

² *USD 1,000 for report-writing and the written report will be paid from the current year's budget.*

³ *External translations; the costs of translations carried out in the Secretariat are not included.*

⁴ *The two representatives from Europe and the one from North America were financed by Spain, the Netherlands and Canada respectively.*

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

Regional Meetings in 2001

40. At the time of drafting the present report it is possible to announce the holding of the 4th Regional Meeting for Europe (Plants) in Izmir from 24 to 27 April, organized by the European representatives in response to the kind invitation of Turkey.

41. Also in April, there will be a trilateral meeting of the representatives of the North American region, in Ottawa (Canada).

Problems in regional representation

42. At the 10th Meeting of the Plants Committee, the Chairman spent some time giving a PowerPoint presentation to explain to the representatives, particularly the new ones, the terms of reference of the Committee and their own functions. The representatives are selected by their regions on the basis of their scientific background, but at times they are not familiar with how the Convention operates.

43. In the light of the warm welcome given to this exercise by the representatives in the Plants Committee, it would be desirable that a short seminar should be organized for the representatives at the beginning of each term of office to explain their tasks to them and also to give them a general picture of the procedures followed within CITES.

44. The terms of reference of the Plants Committee are laid down in Resolution Conf.11.1 (Annex 1).

45. The functions of the regional representatives in the Plants Committee are contained in Decision 11.110 approved at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which stipulates the following:
- a) Each member should collaborate with his/her alternate regarding the work to be done between the meetings of the Plants Committee.
 - b) Each member should maintain a fluid and regular communication with the Parties in his/her region.
 - c) When a region has more than one representative, the Parties should also agree which Parties each represents. Contact persons should be identified in those countries. Also non-Parties in the region should be identified.
 - d) Each member should increase the awareness of the existence of the Plants Committee, its mandate and the issues of concern to his/her region.
 - e) Before the meetings of the Plants Committee, the members should inform the Parties in their regions about the items on the agenda and request their opinions on these, in particular on matters specifically relevant to the countries of the region.
 - f) The members should submit a written annual report to each meeting of the Committee.
 - g) The members should inform the Parties in their regions of the results of each meeting of the Plants Committee.
 - h) The members must inform the alternates well in advance if they will not attend a forthcoming Committee meeting.
 - i) A regional meeting should take place between meetings of the Plants Committee, subject to the availability of funds. The members should convene these meetings.
 - j) The organization of subregional meetings should be considered in large regions where it is difficult to bring all Parties together.
 - k) The members should provide to their successors all relevant information on the activities in the region.
46. As can be seen, the regional representatives have to take on a considerable and complex workload. Some of them, including myself, receive support and financing to carry out their tasks, from the CITES Authorities of the country from which they come. But this desirable situation is the exception rather than the rule. Up to the present, at least as far as the Plants Committee is concerned, the personal enthusiasm and willingness to volunteer on the part of some of the representatives are making up for the lack of institutionalized support which some of them are encountering.
47. Unfortunately, on occasions, it becomes evident that some of the representatives are able only to express their own personal opinions or those of their country, owing to the difficulties encountered in carrying out their task of regional consultation in an appropriate manner, the impossibility of holding regional meetings or even the difficulty of making contact with the other representatives in the region.
48. From my own experience as the Chairman of the Plants Committee I have to point out to the Standing Committee that this is a long-standing problem which needs to be resolved if

it is wished to make good use of the money used for the meetings of the representatives in the Plants Committee, so that they will genuinely bring to the Committee the points of view and the scientific knowledge of the Parties which they represent.

49. The present situation is less than ideal and there is a need to look for a solution to this problem rationally and urgently, if the work of all the regional representatives is to be highly fruitful and if they are to be able to fulfil their functions appropriately.

Closing remarks

50. I should like to remark that the young Plants Committee has had a shorter, but no less productive, career within CITES than its Animals counterpart. One could cite many examples in which the work of the members of the Plants Committee has made a significant contribution to progress: the process and procedures of the review of the Appendices, with some 300 species reviewed and submitted to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Strategic Vision, the operating procedures of the Committee, the holding of regular regional meetings in certain regions, procedures and work on significant trade, training and information activities, and so on.
51. In short, both the plants and the CITES Plants Committee are the younger siblings which have found themselves obliged to grow rapidly, for that very reason. This rapid ripening, demonstrated by way of systematic and well-executed work, was warmly acknowledged by the Parties during the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
52. There is no doubt that this phenomenon is closely related to the constant efforts of the representatives, who both in my earlier period as Chairman and in the present one have contributed their outstanding personal capabilities and commitment to the Convention, to the efforts of the Parties and to the efforts of the non-governmental organizations which cooperate actively and enthusiastically with the Plants Committee which I have the honour to chair.