

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Species specific matters

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ROSEWOOD TIMBER SPECIES
[LEGUMINOSAE (FABACEAE)]

1. This document has been submitted by the European Union and Mexico.*

Background

2. Timber is one of the most high-value wildlife products in trade, and rosewood species are amongst the most demanded timbers on the international market due to their attractive ornamental heartwood. The term 'rosewood' is used to describe several species from different genera, but is most commonly applied to selected species of *Dalbergia*, a genus comprising 287 species with a wide distribution across tropical Southeast Asia, Africa and Central and South America (The Plant List, 2013). Not all *Dalbergia* are considered rosewoods, with the term restricted to tree species that possess the characteristic heartwood. In addition, species of the genus *Pterocarpus* may also be referred to as rosewoods in trade, such as African rosewood *P. erinacea* (Groves and Rutherford, 2015)¹. In 2014, a working list of species in the commercial timber trade reported that 32 species of *Dalbergia* and 12 species of *Pterocarpus* were present in trade (Mark *et al.*, 2014).
3. There are 58 species of *Dalbergia* currently included in the CITES Appendices. *Dalbergia nigra*, a Brazilian endemic, was listed in Appendix I at CoP8 in 1992, due to large-scale harvesting for the luxury timber trade (Taylor *et al.*, 2012). At CoP16 in 2013, four proposals to list logs, sawn wood and veneer sheets of *D. cochinchinensis*, *D. granadillo*, *D. retusa*, *D. stevensonii* and the 48 recognised *Dalbergia* species from Madagascar were accepted. In addition, all logs, woodchips, powder and extracts of *Pterocarpus santalinus* were listed in Appendix II at CoP9 in 1994.
4. Several species are also listed in CITES Appendix III. Panama listed all parts and derivatives (with the exception of seeds, pollen and packaged products for retail trade) of its population of *D. darienensis* in Appendix III in 2011, Guatemala listed logs, sawn wood, veneer sheets and plywood from its populations of *D. calycina*, *D. cubilquitzensis*, *D. glomerata* and *D. tucurensis* in 2015, and Nicaragua listed logs, sawn wood, veneer sheets and plywood of *D. tucurensis* in 2014. In 2016, all parts and derivatives of *Pterocarpus erinacea* were listed in Appendix III by Senegal due to rapid increase in trade of the species for the Chinese Hongmu² timber trade (PC22 Inf. 13).
5. Despite the recognised threat from overexploitation for trade as evidenced by these listings, data on the biology, current status of wild populations, and the extent of trade in a number of rosewood timber species are lacking. Assessments of *Dalbergia* and *Pterocarpus* species for the IUCN Red List have concluded

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

¹ Rosewood may also refer to Appendix II *Aniba rosaeodora*, which is traded for the fragrant oil extracted from its heartwood rather than its timber, and which therefore will not be discussed further in this document.

² Hongmu is the term used to describe the red-coloured tropical hardwoods used in the production of luxury furniture for the Asian market, primarily in China where the demand has increased sharply in recent years.

that 67 species are threatened by logging, with 29 assessed as Endangered and 19 assessed as Vulnerable. Many of these assessments are in need of updating, but recent work has supported concerns for the status of wild populations: in 2015, Mexico presented a risk assessment for the 20 native Mexican *Dalbergia* tree species (PC22 Doc. 24) that resulted in the identification of 15 species for further action, including protection under national legislation. There is evidence of international trade in 17 *Dalbergia* and *Pterocarpus* species that are not currently included in the CITES Appendices, many of which are in high demand for the Hongmu trade (Environmental Investigation Agency, 2016). Although all Hongmu products are covered by a Harmonized System (HS) code in China, there are no international species-specific HS codes for these or any other rosewood species. More research would be required to establish which additional rosewood species may benefit from CITES listings.

6. Currently, implementing CITES for rosewood species faces a number of challenges relating to:
 - a) species identification, particularly due to the presence of a large number of non-CITES lookalike species in trade and other taxonomic issues (PC22 Doc. 17.6). For example, the Appendix II listing of *D. retusa* was accompanied by the listing of its lookalike *D. granadillo*, as the timber of the two species is indistinguishable. Lookalikes include species of *Dalbergia* and *Pterocarpus* that are not included in the Appendices, but also species from genera such as *Cassia*, *Millettia*, *Guibourtia*, *Machaerium*, *Dicorynia*, *Caesalpinia*, and *Swartzia* that possess similar heartwood (PC22 Doc. 17.6). Work is underway to develop techniques for the accurate identification of species; however, the number of lookalike species is still poorly known and further research is required to address this (PC22 Doc. 17.6). Further questions also arise from the existence of taxonomic uncertainties for *Dalbergia*, due to the lack of a global monograph for the genus (PC22 Doc. 17.6). Furthermore, to date there is no reliable method (nor tried out by Customs officials) to identify *Dalbergia* products at species level, and;
 - b) need for information needed to prepare non-detriment findings (NDFs) in compliance with the provisions of Article IV of the Convention. The main information needs in this regard are related to the distribution and demographics of wild populations.
7. Whilst there are extensive gaps in knowledge about many rosewood timber species and their lookalikes that require further research, some taxa are better known and accordingly proposals to amend the Appendices for these taxa may already be appropriate for consideration at CoP17. Where species already meet the criteria for Appendix II listing, the inclusion of these species in the CITES Appendices will ensure that trade in these taxa is legal, sustainable and traceable whilst a more systematic review of non-CITES species within these groups is undertaken.

Recommendation

8. In order to gather information and data on wild populations and international trade in rosewood timber species, and to facilitate the development of recommendations to ensure that international trade in rosewood timber species is legal and sustainable, it is recommended that the Conference of the Parties consider the information presented in this document and adopt the draft Decisions presented in the Annex.

References

- Environmental Investigation Agency 2016. *The Hongmu Challenge*. London. 10 pp.
- Groves, M. and Rutherford, C. 2015. *CITES & Timber*. Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom.
- Mark, J., Newton, A.C., Oldfield, S. and Rivers, M. 2014. *The international timber trade: a working list of commercial timber tree species*. London, UK. 1-56 pp.
- Taylor, V., Kecse-Nagy, K. and Osborn, T. 2012. *Trade in Dalbergia nigra and the European Union*. TRAFFIC International, Cambridge. 24 pp.
- The Plant List 2013. *The Plant List Version 1.1*. Available at: <http://www.theplantlist.org/>.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The document proposes to undertake work on the biology and conservation of, and trade in non-CITES listed “rosewood timber species”. This would include compliance with CITES-listing criteria, assessing potential benefits of the inclusion of these taxa in the Appendices of CITES, and potential enforcement and identification challenges. One of the objectives of the proposed effort seems to facilitate and promote the inclusion of more rosewood species in the Appendices of the Convention through reviews conducted by the Plants Committee on the basis of studies managed by the Secretariat.
- B. “Rosewood timber species” is a common commercial name that has a wide scope encompassing various genera. The document mentions in various instances *Caesalpinia*, *Cassia*, *Dalbergia*, *Dicorynia*, *Machaerium*, *Millettia*, *Pterocarpus* and *Swartzia*, some of which are considered ‘rosewood’ and collectively could cover hundreds of species.
- C. Just to address one group, the taxonomy of the genus *Dalbergia* is under revision, which could cause inconsistencies between different sources concerning the number of species attributed of the genus. While this document states that ‘*Dalbergia*’ is a genus comprising 287 species, proposals CoP17 Prop. 54 and CoP17 Prop. 55 indicate that the genus has approximately 250 to 304 species respectively. Paragraph 5 of the document states that 19 species of the genus *Dalbergia* were assessed by IUCN as ‘vulnerable’, but proposal CoP17 Prop. 55 claims that 26 species are in this category. But the present document and proposals CoP17 Prop. 54 and CoP17 Prop. 55 are in agreement that the implementation of CITES for a limited number of *Dalbergia* species is extremely challenging, including the identification of timbers in international trade.
- D. The scope of the work proposed in draft decision 17.x1 will also depend on the outcome of discussions of proposals CoP17 Prop. 54 and CoP17 Prop. 55 at CoP17.
- E. Taking account of the questions concerning the scope of the work, which would have practical and financial implications for the research to be conducted, the Secretariat generally supports the activities outlined in the draft decisions in the Annex. It would however recommend to not only assess “the potential benefits of the inclusion of these species in the Appendices to the Convention”, but also to examine the challenges and costs, and the potential impacts on livelihoods. Furthermore, the Secretariat or its consultants may not be best placed to provide “conclusions and recommendations” “whether the inclusion of these species...would present an added value”. This seems to be an evaluation for the Plants Committee to make on the basis of objective information, and ultimately for the Parties to decide.
- F. The Secretariat observes that the timeframe for the implementation of draft decision 17.x1 paragraphs a) to c) seems too tight if full results need to be reported to the 23rd meeting of the Plants Committee, and therefore recommends that all references to the 23rd and 24th meetings of the Plants Committee be removed in the draft decisions.
- G. The document does not contain a budget estimation, and does not indicate where funding should come from. Depending on the number of taxa to be researched, the implementation of the studies mentioned in the draft decisions may cost between USD 100,000 and 500,000, and the organization of expert workshops USD 100,000 to 200,000. The required budgets would have to be secured from external sources.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES ON
INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ROSEWOOD TIMBER SPECIES

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.x1 The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding:
- a) contract independent consultants to undertake a study:
 - i) compiling available data and information, and identifying information gaps, on the biology, population status, management, use and trade in rosewood timber species that are not included in the Appendices to the Convention, in particular those species that are highly sought after for the timber trade, such as certain species of the genera *Pterocarpus*, *Millettia* and *Cassia* as well as other genera as relevant;
 - ii) assessing the effects of international trade on wild populations of rosewood timber species that are not included in the Appendices to the Convention;
 - iii) assessing the potential benefits of the inclusion of these species in the Appendices to the Convention;
 - iv) assessing the enforcement and identification challenges that are posed by the listings of rosewood timber species that are presently included in the Appendices to the Convention, and the potential benefits of the inclusion of additional species in the Appendices to the Convention;
 - v) providing conclusions and recommendations regarding:
 - A. whether certain rosewood timber species or genera that are not included in the Appendices to the Convention meet the criteria for inclusion in the Appendices;
 - B. whether the inclusion of these species would present an added value for their conservation;
 - C- whether the inclusion of these species, including at genus level, would present an added value to address the enforcement and identification challenges that are posed by the listings of the rosewood timber species that are presently included in the Appendices to the Convention;
 - b) make the report of the study available to the 23rd meeting of the Plants Committee (PC23) for its consideration;
 - c) issue a Notification seeking expressions of interest and contributions from Parties, in particular exporting, re-exporting and importing countries, to provide the Secretariat and their consultants with information needed for the purposes of completing Decision 17.x1 a) and experts contacts regarding international trade in rosewood timber;
 - d) organize, where appropriate, international workshops, inviting cooperation with and participation by relevant range States, trading countries, international organizations, industry representatives and other experts, with a view to presenting and discussing the results and recommendations of the study as referred to under a) and, if available, the recommendations of the Plants Committee as referred to under b);
 - e) make any workshop report available to the 24th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC24) for its consideration.

Directed to the Parties

- 17.x2 The Parties involved in international trade in rosewood timber species are encouraged to:
- a) provide the Secretariat and their consultants with information needed for the purposes of completing Decision 17.x1 a);
 - b) participate, where appropriate, in the international workshops as referred to under Decision 17.x1 b), and share their advice on the results and recommendations of the study as referred to under Decision 17.x1 a);
 - c) liaise with governments, inter-governmental organizations, international aid agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to share information and encourage the provision of funds to support the work to be carried out by the consultants as referred to under Decision 17.x1 a) and enable the implementation of international workshops as referred to under Decision 17.x1 c).

Directed to the Plants Committee

- 17.x3 The Plants Committee shall:
- a) consider, at its 23rd and 24th meetings, the study referred to under Decision 17.x1 a) and the workshop reports referred to under Decision 17.x1 d), and any other relevant information on international trade in rosewood timber;
 - b) provide, for consideration by the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, its conclusions and recommendations regarding:
 - i) whether certain rosewood timber species that are not included in the Appendices to the Convention meet the criteria for inclusion in the Appendices;
 - ii) whether such potential inclusion would present an added value to address the enforcement and identification challenges that are posed by the listings of rosewood timber species that are presently included in the Appendices to the Convention;
 - iii) whether such potential inclusion would present an added value for the conservation of these species.