

27 JUNE -1 JULY 2005

MALAYSIA

**INTERVENTION NOTE**  
**AGENDA ITEM 23**  
**ILLEGAL TRADE IN RAMIN**

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Thank you Mr. Chairman for allowing us to take the floor on this subject.

Mr. Chairman,

Malaysia would like to update the meeting on the Tri-National Task Force on Trade in Ramin involving Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore:

**1) FIRST MEETING OF THE TRI-NATIONAL TASKFORCE ON TRADE IN RAMIN, PUTRAJAYA, MALAYSIA, 7-8 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Following the recommendations of the Tri-National Workshop on Ramin funded by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office and organized by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 April 2004, Malaysia agreed to take the lead in establishing the Tri-National Task Force on Trade in Ramin to ensure effective implementation of CITES. The focus of this effort would be to combat illegal trade as well as framing long-term cooperative action to manage legal trade in Ramin under CITES.

The first meeting of the Task Force was convened in Putrajaya, Malaysia from 7 – 8 September 2004, aimed at identifying and endorsing Task Force members from the three countries viz Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, and to formulate work plans with the aim of strengthening the enforcement provisions of trade regulation measures stipulated under Appendix III of CITES to ensure legality and sustainability of the Ramin trade.

The meeting was chaired by Tan Sri Dr. Abdullah Mohd Tahir, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Malaysia. The meeting was attended by Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore officials and representatives of the private sector. During the meeting, Malaysia indicated her supports on efforts to promote the legal and sustainable use of all timber species and ensuring the sustainable viability of the world's forest resources. Malaysia also giving full commitment towards its obligations under CITES provided all listing proposals are based on substantiated findings which meet the objectives of CITES.

The meeting formulated the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Tri-National Task Force and agreed on the need for better information sharing in monitoring and controlling illegal trade in Ramin. It further agreed to identify respective agencies from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore to function as the main focal points in tandem with the TOR of the Task Force.

The TOR of the Task Force are as follows:

- i) To enhance intelligence (information) sharing and monitoring of CITES implementation to help resolve illegal trade, and to frame long term cooperative action;
- ii) To improve existing mechanisms for rapid exchange of information on interdiction of infractions (and to encourage law enforcement) regarding trade in Ramin;
- iii) To disseminate information on all national Ramin export and re-export requirements (legislation and procedures) to ensure all relevant agencies are informed of existing regulations and the specific documents that are required to accompany each shipment (including barter trade);
- iv) To come up with a mechanism that will harmonise Customs codes between the three countries on Ramin products;
- v) To clarify statistical data discrepancies through consultation between CITES MAs and Customs Departments (to assist enforcement of Appendix III) and to demonstrate actions being taken at the national and international level.

At the meeting, Malaysia highlighted its existing laws and regulations in monitoring the Ramin timber trade and maintained its stand that Malaysia does not condone trade in illegal timber. It also imposes tough penalties for those involved in illegal activities. In compliance with CITES regulations, Malaysia has taken appropriate measures to strengthen procedures and enforcement measures to combat illegal timber from neighbouring countries. Efforts have also been taken to plug the loopholes pertaining to transshipment activities in the Free Zone areas at the various ports.

Indonesia reported on the measures taken to combat illegal Ramin trade and to regulate the exports of Ramin in line with CITES regulations. In expressing concern over the discrepancies in statistical data involving its export of Ramin against the volume of imports and re-exports recorded by Malaysia and Singapore, it sought the cooperation of the MAs of Malaysia and Singapore to

provide information on the names of Indonesian exporters of illegal Ramin. Indonesia further agreed to host the second Task Force Meeting the date of which has yet to be decided.

Singapore presented an update of its data pertaining to trade of Ramin at Jurong Port, the main point of Ramin transaction. Singapore also mentioned that it conducts regular inspection spot checks at timber yards and ports and provides regular briefings to Immigration Check Point (ICA) officers on CITES regulations pertaining to the Ramin trade

## **2. MALAYSIA CONDUCTED WOOD IDENTIFICATION COURSE FOR SINGAPORE**

Malaysia through the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) conducted a Wood Identification course with special reference to Ramin vis-a -vis other look-alike species for Singapore's Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) enforcement officials from 2-4 March 2005 in Singapore. This was done in tandem to the agreement of the Tri National Task Force cooperation and in the spirit of ASEAN cordiality and solidarity. The resource persons were from MTIB and Traffic Southeast Asia.