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

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CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE AND THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

The attached information document has been prepared by the Plants Committee in consultation with the Secretariat.

CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE AND THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

Introduction

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between Governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. All import, export, re-export and introduction from the sea of species covered by the Convention has to be authorized through a licensing system. Each Party to the Convention must designate one or more Management Authorities in charge of administering that licensing system and one or more Scientific Authorities to advise them on the effects of trade on the status of the species.

The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

– Appendix I include species threatened with extinction. Trade in wild specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and for non commercial purposes.

– Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival or the survival of other species which, due to similarity of appearance, cannot easily be separately identified.

– A key requirement of trade in Appendix I or Appendix II species is that a Scientific Authority has advised that the trade would not be detrimental to the survival of the species.

– Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

The CITES Plants Committee was established to fill gaps in biological and other specialized knowledge regarding species of plants that are (or might become) subject to CITES trade controls. Its role is, *inter alia* to provide technical support to decision-making about these species. Among others, the terms of reference for the Plants Committee include:

– undertaking periodic reviews of species, in order to ensure appropriate categorization in the CITES Appendices;

– advising when certain species are subject to unsustainable trade and recommending remedial action (through a process known as the ‘Review of Significant Trade’);

– drafting resolutions on plant matters for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Global Strategy for Plant Conservation Target 11 and CITES

The purpose of CITES, as outlined in the CITES Strategic Vision through 2007, is to *ensure that no species of wild fauna or flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade*. This purpose, central to all CITES activities, is well aligned with Target 11 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation - *no species of wild flora endangered by international trade.* In essence, Target 11 forms the core business of CITES activities.

For flora species already included in CITES Appendix I, the CITES Plants Committee suggest that CBD Parties, and in particular their Global Strategy for Plant Conservation focal points, be aware of the provisions in place through CITES by being provided with a full list of the flora species included in CITES Appendix I through the respective convention Secretariats.

CBD Parties are further encouraged to take Appendix-I species into consideration in their *in situ, ex situ* and sustainable use actions (CBD Articles 8, 9 and 10), particularly in actions outlined in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (Article 6). For example, CITES Parties have agreed to encourage cooperation between Parties with *ex situ* breeding operations and those with *in situ* conservation programmes (CITES Resolution Conf. 13.9). CBD Parties may wish to consider similar cooperative actions when developing or updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and addressing the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Ongoing actions undertaken for flora species included in CITES Appendix II can help ensure Target 11 is met. Appendix-II species can be subject to a Review of Significant Trade if monitoring of CITES trade data raises a

concern with potentially harmful levels of international trade in the species. The periodic review of the Appendices is another monitoring tool which can identify any changes to species status that may merit a change in its listing status (transfer between Appendices or deletion from the Appendices). Finally, the requirement that a non-detriment finding be made before trade in specimens of Appendix-II species occurs is in place to help ensure sustainability of trade and mitigate potential impact from international trade.

At the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (November 1994) CITES Parties adopted a set of scientifically-based criteria to be applied when considering species for addition to, deletion from or transfer between CITES Appendices. These criteria were subsequently reviewed and amendments were adopted at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (October 2004). Thus monitoring species transfers or deletion removal from Appendices after the adoption of these criteria can provide an indication of change in the perceived threat posed by international trade (see examples below).

Flora taxa that were removed from CITES Appendices or transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II since 1997

CoP	**Taxa removed from CITES Appendices**	**Taxa transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II**
CoP13 - October 2004		*Cattleya trianaei*
		Vanda coerulea
CoP12 – November 2002	*Lewisia maguirei*	*Dudleya traskiae*
		Aloe thorncroftii
CoP11 – April 2000	*Ceropegia* spp.	*Disocactus macdougallii*
	Frerea indica	*Dudleya stolonifera*
	Byblis spp.	
	Cephalotus follicularis	
	Kalmia cuneata	
	Lewisia cotyledon	
	Darlingtonia californica	
CoP10 – June 1997	*Lewisia tweedyi*	*Orothamnus zeyheri*
	Camellia chrysantha	*Protea odorata*

Case studies

Among the actions undertaken by the Plants Committee the following can be given as examples that show a positive contribution to GSPC:

Under the process of Significant Trade Review, important listed plant groups such as Cycads, Agarwood, Tree Ferns and some medicinal plants have been analyzed, resulting in measures being taken to ensure that the international trade is sustainable.

Even on non listed species such as *Harpagophytum* the Plants Committee has facilitated collaboration between range states to ensure that harvest on this species is sustainable in such a way that the inclusion in to CITES appendices is not needed.

Studies on biology and trade in taxa like: *Guaiacum* spp., *Taxus* spp., various timber species, *Tillandsia xerographica., Hoodia* spp., Mahogany, Orchidaceae, Cactaceae, Leaf bearing cacti, among others, have been undertaken to correctly reflect their conservation and management needs.“

Table of CITES activities and especially the CITES Plants Committee and their contribution to the 5 sub-objectives and 16 targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

	CITES contribution	Detail
A) Understanding and documenting plant diversity		
(1) A widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora	Yes	Work of the Nomenclature Committee, periodic review of the Appendices and Review of Significant Trade. CITES checklists are produced for various groups of plants including orchids, cacti, other succulents and bulb genera. These checklists become the standard resources for identifying and thus tracking trade in CITES-listed plant species. The checklists are widely accessible and thus form a contribution to the creation of a 'working list of known plant species'.
(2) A preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species, at national, regional and international levels.	Yes	The routine work of Scientific Authorities, the Plants Committee, and the Review of Significant Trade provide information on plant species which should or could contribute to this process. CITES Parties, through their Scientific Authorities, the Plants Committee or the Review of Significant Trade, often assess the conservation status of CITES-listed and non CITES-listed plants species to evaluate the potential threat of international trade. In these processes, information pertinent to the overall conservation status of these species is gathered which can contribute to GSPC target 2.
(3) Development of models with protocols for plant conservation and sustainable use, based on research and practical experience.	Yes	CITES Article IV provides guidance on regulating trade in certain species ultimately aimed at ensuring that international trade does not pose a threat to those species or other similar species (that trade is non-detrimental). Thus, in the application of Article IV, CITES Parties establish best practices from models for determining non-detriment findings and , use tools such as quotas. These are often based on research and practical experience and thus can contribute to achieving GSPC target 3. An example would be best practices for the sustainable use of *Guaiacum*.
(B) Conserving plant diversity		
(4) At least 10 per cent of each of the world's ecological regions effectively conserved.	No	
(5) Protection of 50 per cent of the most important areas for plant diversity assured.	No	
(6) At least 30 per cent of production lands managed consistent with the conservation of plant diversity.	No	

	CITES contribution	Detail
(7) 60 per cent of the world's threatened species conserved *in situ*.	Yes	CITES Parties recognize that *in situ* conservation is key for ensuring species conservation and have agreed on Resolutions towards that end (CITES Resolution Conf. 13.9 on *Encouraging cooperation between Parties with* ex situ *breeding operations and those with* in situ *conservation programmes*). A number of CITES actions can help the *in situ* conservation of threatened species. For example: Identifying the location/habitat of Appendix I species can provide guidance on key areas where establishing protected areas would have beneficial impact. Inclusion of species in Appendix I aims to eliminate trade as a threat to *in situ* populations. Continued efforts by CITES Parties to ensure sustainable use often provide an incentive for *in situ* conservation. Inclusion of species in the CITES Appendix II requires that a non-detriment finding be made before international trade in wild specimens can occur; these explicitly promote *in situ* conservation. Inclusion in the CITES Appendices may require management that also benefits non-target species *in situ*.
(8) 60 per cent of threatened plant species in accessible *ex situ* collections, preferably in the country of origin, and 10 per cent of them included in recovery and restoration programmes.	Yes	Inclusion in the CITES Appendices has motivated conservation work as opposed to simple collecting. Resolution Conf. 13.9 on *Encouraging cooperation between Parties with* ex situ *breeding operations and those with* in situ *conservation programmes* further demonstrates CITES Parties' commitment to this outcome.
(9) 70 per cent of the genetic diversity of crops and other major socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, and associated indigenous and local knowledge maintained.	No	
(10) Management plans in place for at least 100 major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems.	No	Although CITES actions do not directly contribute to the establishment of management plans for alien species, CITES Parties have recognized the link between trade and alien invasive species in Resolution Conf. 13.10 on *Trade in alien invasive species*.
(C) Using plant diversity sustainably		
(11) No species of wild flora endangered by international trade.	Yes	Everything CITES does contributes to this target.
(12) 30 per cent of plant-based products derived from sources that are sustainably managed.	Yes	Annotations to the CITES Appendices enable regulation of certain target commodities, and through the required non-detriment findings, CITES regulations promote sustainable use of the species listed in the Appendices.

	CITES contribution	Detail
(13) The decline of plant resources, and associated indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, halted.	Yes	CITES aims to ensure that international trade does not pose a threat or contribute to the decline of plant resources. CITES non-detriment findings contribute to the sustainable use of CITES-listed species.
(D) Promoting education and awareness about plant diversity		
(14) The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, educational and public-awareness programmes.	Yes	CITES, through the CITES Secretariat or individual Parties, uses a number of tools, such as training courses, Web pages, technical reports, slide packs, CD-ROMs, training officers, capacity-building unit within the Secretariat, to promote awareness of CITES aims, which includes promoting awareness of the importance of species diversity.
(E) Building capacity for the conservation of plant diversity		
(15) The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities in plant conservation increased, according to national needs, to achieve the targets of this Strategy.	Yes	CITES, through the CITES Secretariat or individual Parties, uses a number of tools, such as training courses, Web pages, technical reports, slide packs, CD-ROMs, training officer, capacity-building unit within the Secretariat, to build capacity.
(16) Networks for plant conservation activities established or strengthened at national, regional and international levels.	Yes	As an international convention with 169 signatories, CITES is a network. Further, Parties have provided a vehicle to focus specifically on plant conservation and sustainable use through the establishment of the CITES Plants Committee. CITES regional directories are also an expression of the network