

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

Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

Strategic matters

CITES AND FORESTS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. Forests are largely defined by lands of a given area that are predominantly covered by trees (FAO, 2018)¹. They help stabilize the global climate and comprise a significant part of the world's biodiversity. Effective implementation of CITES contributes to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the world's forests and forest genetic resources². In the case of Appendix-II listed species, this includes ensuring that exports of specimens of such species are regulated in order to maintain them throughout their range at a level that is consistent with their role in the ecosystems in which they occur (Article IV, paragraph 3).
3. An ecosystem-level contribution of CITES is reflected in the preamble of the Convention, where Parties have recognized that "*wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth which must be protected for this and the generations to come*" and is reflected in Article IV paragraph 3 of the Text of the Convention, which reads:

"A Scientific Authority in each Party shall monitor both the export permits granted by that State for specimens of species included in Appendix II and the actual exports of such specimens. Whenever a Scientific Authority determines that the export of specimens of any such species should be limited in order to maintain that species throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs and well above the level at which that species might become eligible for inclusion in Appendix I, the Scientific Authority shall advise the appropriate Management Authority of suitable measures to be taken to limit the grant of export permits for specimens of that species." (emphasis added)
4. In recent years, listings of flora species in the Appendices have steadily increased, in particular those of timber-producing tree species, supported *inter alia* by the urgent need to address threats posed by unsustainable levels of international trade. More than 900 tree species are listed in the CITES Appendices. Recent examples are the genus level listings of *Dalbergia* spp. (approximately 300 species) in Appendix II at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016) and of *Cedrela* spp. (17 species) at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019). The effective implementation of the Convention for trade in an increasing range of forest resources is of great importance for the management and conservation of forest ecosystems and from a livelihoods and socio-economic perspective.
5. The wider contribution of CITES to international environmental priorities, such as forests, is recognised amongst the purposes of the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030*. The goals of the Strategic Vision (in particular Goal 4) also aim *inter alia* at further improving the relationship with complementary international

¹ FAO. 2018. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Terms and Definitions*. www.fao.org/3/i8661en/i8661en.pdf

² *Forest genetic resources: the heritable materials maintained within and among trees and other woody plant species* (FAO, 2014; at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-j3825e.pdf>).

efforts to achieve conservation and sustainable development, including with other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and related conventions, agreements and associations.

6. Given this background and the urgent forest ecosystem focus within other intergovernmental environmental processes, the establishment of a more strategic framework under the Convention to streamline the implementation of forest-relevant mandates and contribute effectively to global forest policies and initiatives seems timely. The Secretariat therefore proposed to develop a resolution that would: give due recognition to the Convention's role in the long-term conservation of species of wild fauna and flora occurring in, and dependent on, forests (henceforth referred to as 'forest species'); enhance coherence between CITES and the international governance framework on forests; and, be used as a tool to leverage resource mobilization partnerships with other forest-related processes to support the implementation of CITES forest-relevant mandates.
7. The proposed resolution, as envisioned by the Secretariat, would serve a strategic purpose and therefore did not intend to replace more technical Resolutions. Rather, the goal was to represent a strategic point of reference to highlight the importance of the Convention in the conservation of forest ecosystems more effectively and contribute to the timely implementation of CITES provisions relevant to forests, including by building upon the collective knowledge, resources, mechanisms and networks of the existing global governance framework on forests.
8. The proposed resolution was intended as a proportionate measure for CITES to respond to the urgent call to conserve forests and other terrestrial ecosystems and accelerate their restoration as echoed throughout the global forest framework, including: the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030*; the Glasgow's Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use endorsed in the framework of the UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 (CoP26); and Resolution 73/284 of the United Nations General Assembly on the *United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)*. It would recognize the importance of valuable timber-producing tree species in addressing key Sustainable Development Goals, including in poverty alleviation, as highlighted by the Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) in its report "*Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations*" published by IUFRO and funded by Germany, Finland, the United States of America and Austria.
9. The Secretariat tabled the proposed resolution for consideration by the Plants and Standing Committees, respectively at their 25th (PC25, online, June 2021) and 74th meetings (SC74, March 2022, Lyon) for their technical and strategic guidance.
10. The draft resolution also sought to streamline resource mobilization for ongoing, new and upcoming strategic programmes relating to forests and their contributions to the implementation of CITES mandates relating to forest-listed species. This included formal recognition of the Secretariat's strategic partnerships with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the highly successful implementation of forest-related projects such as the "*CITES Tree Species Programme*" (see document CoP19 Doc. 20) and the "*Support to the implementation of the UN-REDD Initiative for Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong project, with a focus on trade in CITES-listed timber species*" (report available as an information document to the present meeting).
11. The CTSP and the SFT-LMR-CITES projects are highlighted here as they have proven a strategic component in support of the implementation of Resolutions and Decisions relevant to forests, and when effectively managed, a little goes a long way. In the case of the CTSP, ongoing projects have yielded outcomes beyond the scope of those initially set out in their objectives in support of compliance processes and core requirements of the Convention, for example:
 - a) non-detriment findings have been developed to inform the establishment of precautionary export quotas for country/tree species combinations under the review of significant trade, as is the case for Cameroon/*Prunus africana*, the Democratic Republic of the Congo/*Prunus africana* and *Pericopsis elata*, and Nicaragua/*Dalbergia retusa*;
 - b) traceability of CITES-listed tree specimens in trade has made significant progress thanks to the production of identification resources for valuable timber producing and rosewood tree species of the genus *Pterocarpus* in Africa, *Dalbergia* in Asia, and *Swietenia* in Central and South America and the Caribbean.
 - c) potential to support the implementation of recommendations emanating from the expedited application of Article XIII and Review of Significant Trade for West African rosewood *Pterocarpus erinaceus*; and,

- d) decision-making processes for medicinal and aromatic species have benefited from the knowledge and findings of CTSP projects for tree species of the genus *Bulnesia* and *Guaiacum* in Central and South America and the Caribbean, and of agarwood tree species of the genus *Aquilaria* in Asia.
12. Likewise, the SFT-LMR-CITES project, designed in the framework of the UN-REDD Programme with a view to improve the implementation of the Convention concerning CITES-listed tree species in participating countries in Asia, has also funded the development of a repository on 'timber identification resources and tools'. The repository was designed in support of Decisions 16.58 (Rev. CoP18) and 18.142 on *Identification of timber and other wood products*, and is scheduled to go live ahead of the present meeting. A first for CITES, this online resource will provide CITES Parties with a long-needed interactive depository of the best available timber identification resources in the form of: manuals, guides and identification keys; mobile applications and other software; databases; collections and xhylotheques; institutions, organisations, networks and consortiums; relevant multimedia and infographics; and news and events.

Outcomes of the discussion at PC25 and SC74

13. At PC25, the Secretariat presented document [PC25 Doc. 12](#) and its [addendum](#) on *Towards a resolution on CITES and forests* for comments, providing the rationale for the development of such a resolution and its proposed structure.
14. Based on the outcomes of an in-session working group, the Plants Committee recommended that the Secretariat prepare two options for consideration by the Standing Committee: a) a draft strategic resolution and b) two draft decisions drafted by the Plants Committee.
15. Subsequently, the Secretariat submitted document [SC74 Doc. 15 with the two options, as suggested](#), for the consideration of the Standing Committee at SC74. The first option consisted of a draft resolution on CITES and forests (in Annex 1A to document [SC74 Doc. 15](#)) together with complementary decisions (in Annex 1B to document [SC74 Doc. 15](#)) to support the implementation of the draft resolution. The second option consisted of two draft decisions by the Plants Committee on the subject, which can be found in Annex 2 to document SC74 Doc. 15.
16. Following consideration of the recommendations contained in document [SC74 Doc. 15](#) and its two options, while the Standing Committee noted the importance of forests, it advised that it was premature to submit a resolution on CITES and forests. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat submit draft decisions to the Conference of the Parties that would ensure that the Plants and Standing Committees are involved in the development of any resolution on CITES and forests. The Committee further recommended that the Secretariat consider the points raised by Canada on behalf of the North American region in information document [SC74 Inf. 21](#), including activities the Secretariat could undertake during the intersessional period after CoP19.

Considerations for the Conference of the Parties

17. Following feedback received from the Plants Committee and the Standing Committee, as reflected in the summary records of the relevant meetings (see summary records PC25 SR and SC74 SR), the Secretariat has produced, for consideration at the present meeting, a set of draft decisions on *CITES and forests* as contained in Annex 1 to the present document. The language in the draft decisions has largely drawn from the draft decisions and resolution contained in the documentation considered at PC25 and SC74; the discussions and agreements resulting from their consideration; and the elements contained in information document [SC74 Inf. 21](#) by Canada.
18. In drafting the decisions, the Secretariat seeks to strengthen the coherence of the implementation of CITES mandates that are relevant to forests under the leadership of the Standing Committee with the support of the scientific committees, whilst remaining mindful of the Convention's species-specific focus.
19. Noting that forests are largely defined by lands that are predominantly covered by trees, the draft decision directed to the Plants and Animals Committees centres around flora-related activities, and trees in particular. But it is also expected to leverage the implementation of relevant terrestrial fauna-related mandates and decisions in effect, hence the involvement of the Animals Committee, as appropriate.
20. The draft decisions include an instruction to the Secretariat with a view to supporting the Standing Committee and the Plants and Animals Committees in the implementation of the instructions directed to them and calls for the development of a report including a compendium of valid Resolutions and Decisions relevant to

forests (referred to as the 'CITES forest compendium'). This report could also include updates on activities led by the Secretariat and other information, including but not limited to:

- a) the development of a webpage dedicated to CITES and forests, where the CITES forest compendium could be published;
 - b) the compilation of information on ongoing projects with relevant partners, including but not limited to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), in seeking and implementing funds to advance the implementation of the CITES forest compendium; and
 - c) the reporting of outcomes of consultations with Parties (e.g., via a Notification) on their experiences and progress in the implementation of the Decisions and Resolutions identified in the CITES forest compendium.
21. Further, the Secretariat is of the view that any strategic initiative on *CITES and forests* will be successful in the measure that it is built upon the best scientific and technical information available. Therefore, the draft decision addressed to the Secretariat also calls for the undertaking of a multidisciplinary study that will assist decision-making processes on such an initiative. The draft decision includes an outline of outputs expected from the study.
22. The outputs of the study proposed will be submitted by the Secretariat for consideration by the Plants and the Animals Committees and the Standing Committee for consideration under their respective mandates, with a view for the Standing Committee to have an oversight function in consolidating the recommendations that will be brought forward for consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.

Recommendations

23. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to the present document.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON *CITES AND FORESTS*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.AA The Secretariat shall:

- a) prepare a report for the consideration of the Plants and the Animals Committees and the Standing Committee summarizing existing Resolutions and Decisions relevant to forests (a 'CITES forest compendium') and advising on any measures to enhance the implementation of the Convention with respect to forests and to contribute more effectively to global forest-relevant mandates and forest policies and initiatives; and,
- b) subject to the availability of external resources, prepare a multidisciplinary study with relevant partners to assist decision-making processes on the future of any initiative relating to *CITES and forests* including by:
 - i) defining the scope of such an initiative, through an assessment of CITES listed species that could fall under the definition 'forest species';
 - ii) furthering the understanding of CITES-listed species that play a keystone role in the forests where they occur, and the co-benefits of their long-term conservation for other terrestrial species of wild flora and fauna. This analysis will likely centre around flora, and in particular tree species, but will be inclusive of other terrestrial flora and fauna species;
 - iii) assessing the value of CITES-listed forest species as components of forest ecosystems; and,
 - iv) developing recommendations to invest in CITES-listed forest species as essential components of forest ecosystems to enhance the timely and effective implementation of the CITES forest compendium, including by exploring resource mobilization strategies and programmatic approaches.

Directed to the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee

19.BB The Plants Committee, and the Animals Committees as appropriate, shall:

- a) consider any report by the Secretariat resulting from the implementation of Decision 19.AA; and,
- b) provide advice to the Standing Committee on its implementation of Decision 19.CC and to the Secretariat on its implementation of Decision 19.AA to ensure that any initiative relating to CITES and forests is technically and scientifically coherent, and supportive of provisions relevant to the implementation of the Convention for forest species.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider any report by the Plants and Animals Committees and the Secretariat resulting from the implementation of Decisions 19.AA and 19.BB;
- b) based on the above, explore options consistent with the *CITES Strategic Vision* to:
 - i) enhance the implementation of the Convention with respect to forests and CITES' contribution to global forest-relevant mandates and forest policies and initiatives; and
 - ii) raise awareness of the importance of investing in the conservation of CITES-listed forest species;

- c) assess the merits of proposing to the Conference of the Parties any measures, including the development of a resolution on CITES and forests, proportionate to the urgent call echoed in the global governance framework to enhance the implementation of global forest-relevant mandates and contribute effectively to global forest policies and initiatives; and,
- d) prepare a report on its implementation of the present Decision and submit any resulting recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.

Draft decision 19.AA

The resource implications of the implementation of paragraph a) of draft Decision 19.AA can be absorbed within the current financial and human resources of the Secretariat.

The resource implications of the implementation of draft Decision 19.AA paragraph b) are summarized in the table below:

Draft decision	Activity	Indicative costs (USD)	Source of funding
19.AA, paragraph b)	Prepare a multidisciplinary study to provide technical and scientific support to any initiative relating to <i>CITES and forests</i>	80,000	Extrabudgetary

Draft decisions 19.BB and 19.CC

There will be workload implications for the Standing Committee, the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee from the adoption of the draft decisions 19.BB and 19.CC, but it is expected that these can be delivered using existing resources.