

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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 8 – 13 July 2024

Species conservation and trade

NEOTROPICAL TREE SPECIES

1. This document was submitted by the representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Mr. Belteton Chacon), as Chair of the intersessional working group on neotropical tree species.*
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.257 to 19.260 on *Neotropical tree species*, as follows:

Directed to the Plants Committee

19.257 *The Plants Committee shall:*

- a) *update the list of neotropical tree species and the related CITES processes included in the Annex to document PC25 Doc. 29, taking into consideration the recommendations included in document PC25 Doc. 29, Addenda and the outcomes of CoP19;*
- b) *based on the above, establish priorities for strengthening the implementation of the Convention for the neotropical tree species concerned;*
- c) *cooperate with the Parties in making progress with the priorities identified; and*
- d) *report on the results of this work to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Parties

19.258 *Parties are invited to cooperate with the Plants Committee in the implementation of Decision 19.257.*

Directed to the Secretariat

19.259 *The Secretariat shall, at the request of the Plants Committee, support the implementation of Decision 19.257.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.260 *The Standing Committee shall consider any reports of the Plants Committee on Decision 19.257 and, if it considers it appropriate, develop recommendations for consideration of the Conference of the Parties.*

* *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.*

3. At its 26th meeting (PC26; Geneva, June 2023), the Plants Committee examined document PC26 Doc. 33, and established an intersessional working group on neotropical tree species, open to the range States of neotropical tree species, with the mandate to consider the recommendations in document PC26 Com. 7, and submit recommendations to the 27th meeting of the Plants Committee.
4. The Committee also invited the Secretariat to publish a Notification to invite Parties to express an interest in joining the intersessional working group, noting that all range States of neotropical tree species are invited to be members of the working group.
5. On 17 July 2023, the Secretariat published [Notification No. 2023/083](#) inviting Parties, *inter alia*, to express their interest in joining the intersessional working group.
6. The final composition of the intersessional working group was as follows:

Chair: representative for Central and South America and the Caribbean (Mr. Belteton Chacon);

Parties: Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, United States of America, European Union

IGOs and NGOs: International Tropical Timber Organization, Center for International Environmental Law, Forest Trends, International Society of Violin and Bow Makers, International Wood Products Association (IWPA), IPCI France Europe, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC, World Wide Fund for Nature.

7. The Plants Committee also:
 - (a) agreed to exclude from the prioritization process the species *Araucaria araucana*, *Fitzroya cupressoides*, *Pilgerodendron uviferum*, and *Abies guatemalensis*, *Podocarpus parlatorei*, *Balmea stormiae*; and noted that these recommendations to establish priorities may be applied to other CITES-listed neotropical species that are priority species for Parties who are range States;
 - (b) recommended that projects be designed and promoted for the targeted species in order to build capacities, including: research on population studies, management plans, identification of species and timber, non-detriment findings, legal acquisition findings, and traceability in the trade of the species concerned;
 - (c) recommended that mechanisms for cooperation with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental institutions be established in order to obtain funding to enable implementation of prioritized activities, for which purpose, the Secretariat's support will be required.
 - (d) invited the Secretariat to publish a Notification to the Parties (see [Notification No. 2023/083](#)) requesting range States of neotropical tree species to:
 - a) consider whether or not to confirm the prioritized list prepared by the working group at the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee; and
 - b) invite Parties to submit information on priorities for strengthening implementation of the Convention with regard to neotropical tree species, based on the notification.
 - (e) noted that donor-funded projects and cooperation efforts with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that already include species listed in the Annex to document PC26 Doc. 33 will continue to be implemented. Further fundraising efforts will be geared towards new projects, based on the priorities established by the relevant Parties that are range States, in accordance with the results of the aforementioned Notification to the Parties.
8. Replies received in response to Notification No. 2023/083 were forwarded to the intersessional working group for consideration, in line with its mandate.

Summary of the findings of the intersessional working group

9. The opinion of the ITTO, which is shared by WWF International, is that priority species for action in terms of capacity-building and implementation of the Convention should be species recently included in the Appendices at CoP19, i.e., genera including ipe and cumaru. The ITTO is currently implementing a project with the Universidad Agraria La Molina in Peru, and the University of Adelaide in Australia to develop a reference database that will facilitate geolocation of specimens of these species based on stable isotopes and DNA analysis. We consider that further work should be carried out in range States to prepare for the listings coming into force at the end of next year, and we coincide with the opinions of Mexico and Peru regarding the specific areas on which projects and other initiatives should focus. We believe that particular attention should be paid to developing/evaluating management plans and developing/implementing sound traceability systems for products of these species entering international trade. As regards funding for such work, the ITTO has limited resources to support member countries who wish to submit projects or concept notes for consideration. Nonetheless, additional funding will definitely be required to guarantee effective implementation of the listings of these species. While a large part of this funding will probably have to come from national budgets, proponents of listings might also consider the possibility of providing funding to contribute to their implementation.
10. With regard to the list of priority species, Brazil agrees that the list should comprise species that were recently included at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, i.e., species within the genera *Handroanthus* spp. and *Dipteryx* spp.
11. Brazil agrees with the view expressed by Mexico, Peru, and the ITTO, in that the working group should consider the following actions a priority for capacity-building and effective implementation of the Convention: a) regional information-sharing with range countries of *Handroanthus* and *Dipteryx* spp. to strengthen timber identification and the quality of harvested wood; b) performance of studies to determine whether the current legal framework for authorization and operation of a Sustainable Forest Management Plan guarantees sustainability of the species concerned (100 % regeneration/recovery capacity) in the Amazon region, in view of the parameters for felling intensity, cutting cycle, mean annual increment, minimum cutting diameter, etc.; and c) verification of the possibility of using the Identification Key of Commercially Representative Amazonian Timber Species – a project developed by the Forest Products Laboratory (Brazil) and the Sinchi Institute (Colombia) through ATCO, and funded by GIZ.
12. In connection with the elements that should be taken into consideration when designing and promoting projects that involve priority species that are of interest, with regard to capacity-building, Brazil noted that the efficient use of financial resources needs to be considered, and the aim should be to implement regional projects that promote information-sharing, capacity-building, and institutional development.
13. As far as cooperation mechanisms are concerned, governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental institutions are identified for the purpose of obtaining funding to carry out priority activities. Brazil noted that, in the case of recently-listed Amazonian species, there is a south-south cooperation arrangement in place that is promoted by Brazil through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, and that a further option would be a trilateral cooperation effort between Brazil, Germany and a third country that is interested in sharing information with Brazilian institutions (via the GIZ); also, any contributions that might be made through the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO).
14. In reference to the mandate in paragraph a) of Decision 19.257 directed to the Plants Committee, which requires an updating of the list of neotropical tree species, taking into consideration *inter alia* the outcomes of CoP19, the United States of America agreed with the decision of the Plants Committee to remove *Abies guatemalensis*, *Araucaria araucana*, *Balmea stormiae*, *Fitzroya cupressoides*, *Pilgerodendron uviferum*, and *Podocarpus parlatorei* from the list of neotropical tree species for prioritization of projects that foster capacity-building and effective implementation of the Convention.
15. Regarding Mexico's response to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/083 relating to *Abies guatemalensis*, Mexico noted that there are irregular cross-border movements of specimens of *Abies guatemalensis* between Mexico and Guatemala. If appropriate, the chair of the intersessional working group on neotropical tree species could propose that this matter be submitted to the Standing Committee for consideration.
16. With regard to the outcomes of CoP19, the United States of America agrees with other members of the working group that *Dipteryx* spp. and *Handroanthus* spp. should be added to the list of neotropical tree species, as should *Roseodendron* spp. and *Tabebuia* spp. (These four genera were included in Appendix II at CoP19 (entry into effect delayed until 25 November 2024)).

17. In reference to capacity-building for implementation of the Convention for neotropical tree species, and as to which elements should be taken into consideration when designing and promoting specific projects, in line with Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and the ITTO, the United States of America favours projects that strengthen the capacity of range States to make non-detriment findings and legal acquisition findings, particularly when the listings of *Dipteryx* spp., *Handroanthus* spp., *Roseodendron* spp., and *Tabebuia* spp. come into effect.
18. Recognizing that funding for the work to be undertaken is not unlimited, the United States of America proposed that priority should be given to projects relating to management plans for sustainable harvesting of neotropical tree species, and traceability systems (from stump to port of export) for specimens in trade. Capacity-building for identification of species and their woods should be a priority for range States and importing Parties, particularly with regard to the identification tools required by frontline customs and enforcement officers at border posts, and also for forensic analysis for species identification.
19. The U.S. Forest Service – International Programs (USFS-IP) currently runs several programs related to the technologies (e. g., DART–TOF mass spectrometry, XyloTron, stable isotopes) used to identify the wood of a number of neotropical tree species listed in Appendix II in Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru. The USFS-IP is also working with World Forest ID (<https://worldforestid.org/>) to create collections of voucher wood samples for *Handroanthus* spp., *Tabebuia rosea*, and *Dipteryx* spp. in Peru, and possibly Brazil in 2024. Wood sample collections will be added to the DART-TOF and XyloTron comprehensive mass spectrometry database, which will enable law enforcement agencies to better identify wood from unknown species in domestic and international trade.
20. The United States of America noted that the working group should also be aware of the work (study commissioned by the Secretariat and carried out by TRAFFIC) and the outcomes from Decision 19.243, which was directed to the Secretariat in reference to CITES-listed rosewood species, including species (*Dalbergia* spp, *Aniba rosaeodora*, *Paubrasilia echinata*, *Platymiscium parviflorum*) from the list of priority neotropical tree species.

Evaluation of implementation of Decisions 19.257 to 19.259

21. With regard to Decision 19.257 referring to the updating of the list of neotropical tree species and related CITES processes included in the Annex to document PC25 Doc. 29, and taking into consideration the recommendations included in document PC25 Doc. 29, Addenda, and the outcomes of CoP19: based on the feedback from the Parties in response to Notification No. 2023/08, the working group formed at the 26th meeting of the Plants Committee recommends that *Abies guatemalensis*, *Araucaria araucana*, *Balmea stormiae*, *Fitzroya cupressoides*, *Pilgerodendron uviferum*, and *Podocarpus parlatorei* be removed from the list of neotropical tree species for prioritization of projects aimed at fostering capacity-building and effective implementation of the Convention.
22. In reference to the priorities for strengthening implementation of the Convention for the neotropical tree species concerned, there is a broad consensus on promoting those projects that strengthen the capacity of range States to make non-detriment findings and legal acquisition findings, especially for the genera *Dipteryx* spp., *Handroanthus* spp., *Roseodendron* spp., and *Tabebuia* spp., whose listing will take effect shortly.
23. As regards cooperation with Parties in order to move forward with the defined priorities, available funding mechanisms are identified in the range countries of prioritized neotropical tree species, e.g., U.S. Forest Service – International Programs (USFS-IP), projects implemented by the ITTO, the south-south cooperation arrangement promoted by Brazil through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), the contribution from the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in Amazonian countries funded by the German Agency for International Cooperation, and the studies commissioned by the Secretariat and carried out by Traffic.
24. Concerning Decision 19.260, in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/083 relating to *Abies guatemalensis*, Mexico noted that there are irregular cross-border movements of specimens of *Abies guatemalensis* between Mexico and Guatemala. It is therefore suggested that the Standing Committee take note of this information and make consultations in order to obtain further information and due analysis.

Recommendations:

25. The Plants Committee is invited to:

- a) recommend publication of the findings and conclusions of the intersessional working group on the CITES and Forests webpage;
- b) consider the decisions to have been fully implemented at CoP20; and
- c) recommend that the Standing Committee take note of the information submitted by Mexico regarding irregular cross-border movements of specimens of *Abies guatemalensis* between Mexico and Guatemala, and make consultations in order to obtain further information and relevant analysis.