

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

Trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species

REPORT OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by the Chair of the intersessional working group on trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species, Ms. Ursula Moser (representative for Europe).\*
2. At its 19th meeting (Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.261 to 19.264 on *Trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species*, as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Plants Committee***

**19.261** *The Secretariat shall, in close collaboration with the Plants Committee:*

- a) *publish a notification inviting Parties to:*
  - i) *share information materials that have been developed to enhance awareness of CITES regulations and to encourage sustainable use and legal trade in CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plants and, as far as possible, liaise with key stakeholders of medicinal and aromatic plant trade supply chains for this purpose,*
  - ii) *review their non-detriment findings (NDFs) for medicinal and aromatic plants and consider sharing such with the Secretariat to be included on the NDF section of the CITES website;*
  - iii) *assess the utility of the Medicinal Plant Names Service (MPNS) database in their routine work to see if it can contribute to the expansion of the Species+ database; and share any experience of using the MPNS database;*
- b) *make information materials for raising awareness of CITES regulations for the medicinal and aromatic plant industry stakeholders and consumers available to Parties on the CITES website;*
- c) *subject to external funding, undertake an analysis of e-commerce supply chains in products of CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plant species, exploring the applicability of using the Medicinal Plant Names Service (MPNS) database in the analysis, and including*
  - i) *a stakeholder analysis of key producers, intermediate traders, manufacturers or distribution platforms to end consumers, and of institutions influencing the demand for CITES-regulated medicinal and aromatic plant products in biomedical, traditional and*

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\* *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.*

*alternative medical systems, cosmetic and personal care, food industries (as appropriate), and*

- ii) an assessment whether existing annotations are adequate with respect to the principles and principles recommended in Resolution Conf. 11.21 (Rev. CoP19) on Use of annotations in Appendices I and II; and*
- d) report to the Plants Committee on the implementation of this Decision, including suggestions, as appropriate, regarding Resolution Conf. 10.19 (Rev. CoP14) on Traditional medicines or a new Resolution in relation to medicinal and aromatic plant products.*

**Directed to Parties**

**19.262** *Parties are invited to support the implementation of Decision 19.261.*

**Directed to the Plants Committee, in consultation with the Animals Committee, as appropriate**

**19.263** *The Plants Committee shall:*

- a) be informed and review the report of the Secretariat, and the feedback from Parties as per Decision 19.261, regarding the utility of the Medicinal Plant Names Service, with advice from the nomenclature specialist, as appropriate;*
- b) taking into consideration the information in document PC25 Doc. 30, information document CoP18 Inf. 11, the report of the Secretariat as per Decision 19.261, and other relevant information, and in consultation with the Animals Committee, as appropriate, undertake a review of Resolution Conf. 10.19 (Rev. CoP14) on Traditional medicines, and prepare recommendations for a revised Resolution on traditional medicines or a new Resolution on medicinal and aromatic plant products; and*
- c) submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee or the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

**19.264** *The Standing Committee shall review the report from the Plants Committee as per Decision 19.263, as appropriate, and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Conference of the Parties.*

- 3. This document concerns the implementation of Decision 19.263 b) concerning a *revised Resolution on traditional medicines or a new Resolution on medicinal and aromatic plant products*, and also incorporates recommendations of the Secretariat regarding such a Resolution as per Decision 10.261 d). Document PC27 Doc. 32.1, submitted by the Secretariat, reports on complementary aspects related to Decisions 19.162 a) to c).
- 4. At its 26th meeting (PC26, 2023, Geneva), the Plants Committee noted that the Resolution on traditional medicines ([Res. Conf. 10.19 \(Rev. CoP14\)](#)) is on traditional medicines, but MAP materials are traded in quite different products (cosmetics, pharmaceutical products, aromatic products, etc.). The Committee also noted that there is preference for a new Resolution to be developed in an intersessional working group ([PC26 Sum. 3 \(Rev. 1\)](#)). As a new Resolution on MAPs will focus entirely on plant products, an involvement of the Animals Committee is not required.
- 5. Based on this consideration, the Plants Committee established an intersessional working group to address Decision 19.263 b), with the following mandate and membership:

- Mandate:**
- a) in accordance with Decision 19.263 paragraph b), take into consideration the information in document PC25 Doc. 30 and its addendum, information document CoP18 Inf. 11; document PC26 Doc. 34 / AC32 Doc. 41, and other relevant information;
  - b) consider paragraph 6 of document PC26 Doc. 34 / AC32 Doc. 41, the comments on those contained in Annex 2 of document PC26 Com. 5, and any report of the

Secretariat as per Decision 19.261, that may become available to further inform the review;

- c) draft a new Resolution on medicinal and aromatic plant products; and
- d) report its findings to the Plants Committee.

Membership:

Chair: representative for Europe (Ms. Moser);

Members: representative for Asia (Ms. Zeng), representative for North America (Mr. Boles);

Parties: Austria, Canada, China, European Union, Germany, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe; and

IGOs and NGOs: United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre, International Union for Conservation of Nature, American Herbal Products Association, TRAFFIC, World Wide Fund for Nature.

Implementation of Decision 19.263 b)

- 6. The working group started at the end of August 2023 with the focus on the mandate c) to draft a new resolution on medicinal and aromatic plant products. In a first step, the opinion of the working group members was sought to guide what this new resolution should provide. PC26 Doc. 34 paragraph 6 (page 3) lists some guidelines which were taken into consideration, together with the provisions made by the North American Region in PC26 Com. 5, Annex 2 and the existing Resolution 10.19 (Rev. CoP14) on *Traditional medicines*, to avoid duplications.
- 7. At the first online meeting with the working group in November 2023, the compiled draft was discussed with the summarized comments based on a document submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Chair then decided, together with the Secretariat, to prepare a draft resolution with detailed inputs from some Parties, which was discussed in a second online meeting of the working group in February 2024. The output of the working group resulted in a draft resolution, which is attached to this document as Annex to the present document.
- 8. One member of the working group called for additional revisions and streamlining of the current draft resolution, which could be done in an in-session working group during the 27th meeting of the Plants Committee.

Recommendations:

- 9. The Plants Committee is invited to:
  - a) note the text of the draft Resolution on *Medicinal and aromatic plant species* proposed by the WG;
  - b) also note that one WG member considers that this text could benefit from additional streamlining and precisions;
  - c) establish an in-session working group with the mandate to:
    - i) further improve the draft resolution on *Medicinal and aromatic plant species* in the Annex to the present document in line with Decision 19.263, paragraph b); and
    - ii) formulate recommendations for consideration of the Committee in line with Decision 19.263, paragraph c); and
  - d) submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee or the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

## Conf. 20.XX Medicinal and aromatic plant species

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RECALLING that trade in CITES-listed species, including CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plant species (MAPs), must meet the requirements specified of the Convention;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need for trade in wild MAP species to be biologically sustainable to ensure their survival in the wild consistent with their roles in their ecosystems;

RECALLING Decision 15/4 of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022 adopting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and, in particular, Goals A and B, and Targets 4, 5 and 9 thereof;

ALSO RECALLING the updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation adopted by the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022;

RECOGNIZING the contribution of MAPs to human health, and the role of the sustainable management and trade of these species in a One Health approach<sup>1</sup>;

AWARE of World Health Organization reports that traditional medicine forms an integral resource for health in almost all countries, that a large share of pharmaceutical formulations is based on natural products and that landmark drugs, including aspirin and artemisinin, originated from traditional medicine<sup>2</sup>;

ALSO AWARE that trade in all plant specimens combined accounts for 90% of trade in CITES-listed species when estimated in whole organism equivalents<sup>3</sup>;

ACKNOWLEDGING the diversity of production systems that contribute to international trade in MAPs, including traditional forms of community management and assisted production as well as novel techniques to produce specimens through biotechnology;

RECOGNIZING the particular complexity of international trade in MAPs, which often is regional, informal, and increasingly taking place on online platforms; the high diversity of stakeholders and uses of medicinal and aromatic plant products; and the cultural and ecological values of MAPs that include but go beyond utilitarian or economic benefits referred to in Resolution Conf. 8.3 (Rev. CoP13) on *Recognition of the benefits of trade in wildlife*;

RECALLING that close collaboration with groups of traditional-medicine practitioners and consumers can improve public education and awareness programmes towards the elimination of illegal use, and the avoidance of overexploitation of MAPs, as recommended in Resolution Conf. 10.19 on *Traditional medicines*;

EMPHASIZING the knowledge local practitioners and communities have of MAP populations, habitats and ecology, often developed by managing MAP populations locally, as also referred to in Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings* and Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *CITES and livelihoods*;

AWARE of Resolution Conf. 19.2 on *Capacity building*;

RECALLING Resolution Conf. 13.2 (Rev. CoP14) on *Sustainable use of biodiversity: Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines*, which focuses on local and national decision-making and governance structures and emphasizes benefits of systemic approaches, adaptive mechanisms and participation for managing biological resources sustainably; and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/2831701368>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-global-centre-for-traditional-medicine/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac31-pc25/E-AC31-14-01-PC25-17.pdf>

ALSO RECALLING that the sustainable management of MAPs benefits from synergies at the international level, as called for in Resolution Conf. 18.3 on the *CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030*, Resolution Conf. 18.4 on *Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, Resolution Conf. 18.5 on *Cooperation and synergy with the World Heritage Convention*, Resolution Conf. 16.5 on *Cooperation with the Global strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity*, Resolution Conf. 16.4 on *Cooperation of CITES with other biodiversity-related conventions*, and Resolution Conf. 10.4 (Rev. CoP14) on *Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity*;

## THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

### **Regarding a characterization of the scope of the term medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs)**

1. AGREES that medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) can be characterized as the group of plant species that are used for therapeutic, aromatic and/or culinary purposes, as components of cosmetics, foods, medicinal products, other natural health products, oils and waxes;

### **Regarding general CITES implementation for CITES-listed MAPs**

2. REMINDS Parties of the requirements to comply with CITES obligations to ensure compliance with CITES requirements for trade in CITES-listed MAPs, including the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) as appropriate and legal acquisition findings (LAF);
3. URGES Parties to implement regulations on source codes A, D, W and Y for plants as contained in Resolution Conf. 11.11 (Rev. CoP18) on *Regulation of trade in plants*, Resolution Conf. 10.13 (Rev. CoP18) on *Implementation of the Convention for tree species*, and Resolution Conf. 16.10 on *Implementation of the Convention for agarwood-producing taxa* that account for the diversity of production systems involved in the production of MAPs that may involve multiple steps and transactions of propagation material or seedlings before harvest of mature plants;
4. URGES Parties to ensure correct reporting, in their national reports, of source, quantity and units of MAPs, in line with the most recent version of the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports*;
5. URGES Parties to ensure annotations of CITES-listed MAPs align with the criteria specified in Resolution Conf. 11.21 (Rev. CoP19) on *Use of annotations in Appendices I and II*;

### **Regarding identification, traceability and legal acquisition findings for CITES-listed MAPs**

6. ENCOURAGES Parties to use guidance contained in Annexes 1 to 3 of Resolution Conf. 18.7 (Rev. CoP19) on *Legal acquisition findings* to verify legal acquisition along the chain of custody;
7. ENCOURAGES Parties to develop traceability systems for medicinal and aromatic plants and their products that take account of the complexity of MAP products in trade, including tools to improve the understanding of e-commerce in MAPs, and to improve the guidance to verify legal acquisition along the chain of custody;

### **Regarding species monitoring and management and non-detriment findings**

8. ENCOURAGES Parties to use the information available through the Medicinal Plants Names Service<sup>4</sup> on local, traditional, and trade names of MAP specimens when monitoring trade in MAPs;
9. ENCOURAGES Parties to consult with local practitioners and communities to use local and traditional knowledge in the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) and for participatory species monitoring and management in line with guidance contained in the CITES guidance on livelihoods<sup>5</sup> and relevant sections of the CITES NDF guidance<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kew.org/science/our-science/science-services/medicinal-plant-names-services>

<sup>5</sup> Part I: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/Livelihoods/Guia\\_Parte1\\_CITES\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/Livelihoods/Guia_Parte1_CITES_eng_final.pdf);  
Part II: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/Livelihoods/Guia\\_PART2\\_CITES\\_ENG\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/Livelihoods/Guia_PART2_CITES_ENG_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://cites.org/eng/prog/ndf/index.php>

10. INVITES Parties to share non-detriment findings for CITES-listed MAPs, including any case-studies that use voluntary certification standards information or apply relevant sections of the CITES NDF guidance<sup>7</sup> for CITES-listed MAPs;

***Regarding capacity-building to improve CITES implementation for MAPs***

11. URGES Parties to develop and share adequate knowledge and tools, to raise awareness, and to build capacities at national level to support regulation of trade in CITES-listed MAPs in line with the recommendations contained in the present Resolution, in particular paragraphs 7 and 9, and to contribute financially to international capacity-building programmes such as the CITES Tree Species Programme or specific initiatives focused on MAPs, as appropriate;
12. ENCOURAGES all CITES MAPs trade stakeholders to create, support and strengthen collaborative platforms, including e-commerce platforms, to prevent illegal trade and to define best practices and share experiences towards sustainable and legal use and trade in CITES-listed MAPs;
13. INVITES the submission of national protection plans on CITES-listed MAPs and case studies relevant to paragraphs 2 to 12 of the present Resolution, including CITES livelihoods case studies<sup>8</sup>, to the Secretariat for the publication on the CITES website and for consideration of the Plants Committee, to support the further development of best practices in the management of CITES-listed MAPs, and of CITES guidance, as appropriate;
14. INVITES Parties to provide feedback to Kew Gardens to collate names in various languages, expand its database and update the Medicinal Plant Names Service; and
15. DIRECTS the Secretariat to maintain a section on MAPs on the CITES website to publish relevant information, as appropriate.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://cites.org/eng/prog/ndf/index.php>

<sup>8</sup> <https://cites.org/eng/prog/livelihoods>