

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

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

Regional matters

Regional reports

ASIA

1. This document has been submitted by the regional representatives for Asia.\*
2. General information
  - a) Representatives: Ms Tika Dewi Atikah (Indonesia) and Ms Yan Zeng (China)
  - b) Alternates: Ms Sumalee Tongdonae (Thailand) and Dr Chong Kwek Yan (Singapore)
  - c) Number of Parties in the region: 38
  - d) Answers were received from the following parties: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Syria Arab Republic and Thailand.

**Capacity-building Activities**

3. Projects

**Cambodia**

- a) CITES Project No. S-568 "Integrating the Development of Guidelines and Incentives for Piloting the Establishment of Small-scale Private Dalbergia Plantations with the Determination of a Non-detriment Findings Report in Preah Vihear Province in Cambodia".
- b) Project "Capacity Building on Law Enforcement and Forest Products Trade Procedures, and Piloting of Legal Timber Production and Governance Mechanisms in Plantation Areas (2020–2021)" funded by the FAO EU FLEGT Programme.
- c) FA-FAO project "Promoting Legal Timber Trade in Production Forest Areas and Strengthening the Information System for Monitoring Deforestation and Forest Degradation" under the UN-REDD Initiatives on "Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region" funded by the Norwegian Government through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and United Nations Environment Programme (2020–2023). Under this project, a review of "Current Production and Trade Pattern of Agarwood in Cambodia" was conducted. The study report from the review covered agarwood resources, plantation practices, processing technologies, and trade patterns of agarwood and agarwood products in Cambodia.

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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.*

- d) Project AFoCO/038/2023 “Advancing Restoration of native Agarwood - *Aquilaria crassna* and *A. malaccensis* – for Sustainable Use and Management in Southwestern Cambodia”.
- e) Project 2019P3-CAM “Establishment of High-Value Tree Species Breeding Centre in Cambodia (2020–2027)” funded by The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation.
- f) Project AFoCO/005/2014 “Establishment of Forest Genetics Research Centre for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia”

## China

In the first and second sessions of the “Talent Exchange Programme for Scientific Authorities for CITES” (TESA), fellows from scientific authorities or research bodies of Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Togo conducted joint studies with the China Scientific Authority (SA) for CITES and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. During their three-month stay in Beijing, they designed, refined, and implemented projects that contributed to the implementation of CITES from the perspective of natural and social sciences as well as ecological and economic research.

## Lao PDR

- a) The EU-funded “Safety Across Asia for the Global Environment” (SAFE) project, implemented by UNODC, UNEP, and FAO with the Laos CITES Management Authority (MA). The project aims to prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases linked to illegal wildlife trafficking. It involves strengthening biosafety regulations, conducting field surveys and risk assessments, and collaborating with various government departments, law enforcement agencies, and international organizations to address illegal wildlife trade and public health safety in the Mekong subregion.
- b) On 4 March 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry hosted the World Wildlife Day celebrations in Vientiane at the National University of Laos. The event was attended by hundreds of individuals from various government sectors, organizations, the National University of Laos, and the media. The event was presided over by the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Forestry (DoF) to open the event. The focus of the event was to raise awareness among students, researchers, organizations, and consumers about the laws and regulations of the State for the protection of fauna and flora. There was also a public exhibition from participating organizations.
- c) Staff of the CITES MA received specialized training in biodiversity research and monitoring, focusing on plant survey techniques and species identification. This training is part of the Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods project, aimed at enhancing research and conservation efforts in designated Protected Areas. This initiative is supported by the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility, and the Canadian Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility.
- D) Faculty members from the National University of Laos' Faculty of Forest Science, serving as the CITES SA, have undertaken botanical research projects. These projects contribute to the Flora of Laos initiative, aiming to improve plant species identification skills. The knowledge gained will be disseminated through training programs on CITES-related issues organized for the CITES MA staff.

## Singapore

World Wildlife Day was celebrated in 2024 with a 2-day Regional Youth Symposium conducted in February 2024, centring on the theme of “Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation”. The Symposium brought together almost 500 participants representing 15 countries, comprising 10 different workshops and a new Youth Showcase component, featuring youth-led conservation initiatives across Southeast Asia.

## Thailand

- a) National workshop on implementation and development of CITES operations in Thailand (online).
- b) Seminar on Wildlife Conservation and CITES Implementation for the developing countries in China (online).

- c) International expert workshop on NDFs in Kenya (onsite).

#### 4. Meetings and workshops

##### **Cambodia**

- a) A training workshop on the CITES Convention and CITES Implementation in Cambodia was held on 27–28 March 2024, at Phnom Penh Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- b) A virtual training workshop on the CITES Non-Detriment Findings on *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* and the “Economic Analysis and Comparative Advantages of Plantations of *D. cochinchinensis*” was organized virtually on 24 November 2021 with 65 participants in attendance from the provincial cantonments of the Forestry Administration (FA), FA departments, NGOs, academic institutions, and the private sector.
- c) A “National Extension and Consultation Workshop on Rules and Guidelines for Private Forest Plantation Registration in Cambodia” was held on 26–27 November 2021 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- d) Two virtual sub-national training workshops on “Legality of Harvesting, Transportation and Export-Import of Timber in Cambodia” were organized by FA and FAO (January 2022).
- e) A national training workshop on “Legality of Harvesting, Transportation and Export-Import of Timber in Cambodia” was organized in Phnom Penh by FA and FAO (February 2022).
- f) A two-day online workshop on legal acquisition findings (LAFs) for timber and other wood products in international trade was held on 18 and 19 May 2021, organized in partnership between the CITES Secretariat and the FAO and with funding from Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative.
- g) An online “Workshop on Automated CITES Permit Management for the Lower Mekong Region” was organized by the CITES Secretariat on 25 May 2021.
- h) An online workshop on physical inspection of timber shipments in the Lower Mekong Region was organized in partnership between the CITES Secretariat and the FAO and with funding from Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative and was held on 25–29 Oct 2021.
- i) The Project Completion Workshop on “Improving Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region” supported by UN-REDD Technical Assistance and “Restoration for Resilience and Recovery” was held on 19–21 December 2023, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- k) A technical pre-assessment workshop on the status of native agarwood in southwestern Cambodia was held on the 13th of November 2023 in Phnom Penh Capital.
- l) Consultation workshops for subnational data consolidation were held in 2023, in Pursat, Battambang, Pailin, and Koh Kong, Cambodia.
- m) A training on seedling raising and plantation technology was organized on April 26, 2023, at Kun Ream Research Station in Siem Reap Province
- n) A training on “Strategy and Technology of Sustainable Development of Precious Timber Trees” was organized on April 21, 2023 at the forest and wildlife training centre in Phnom Penh

##### **China**

On August 17–18, 2023, the sub-forum "*Sustainable Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Promoting the High-quality Development of Import and Export of Endangered Wild Fauna and Flora and Traditional Chinese Medicine*" was held in Heihe City, Heilongjiang Province of China. The meeting discusses the current situation, trends, and substitutions of endangered wildlife as medicines, legal norms for importing and exporting wild animals and plants and their products, their traceability system, cross-border inspection and quarantine control, etc.

## Indonesia

Indonesia joined the workshop on Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) on 4–8 December 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, and held the CITES-ESCAP Regional Workshop on Electronic CITES Permitting Systems in Asia on 17–18 July 2023.

## Kyrgyz Republic

A regional meeting was held with representatives of the People's Republic of China, Great Britain, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan and a representative from the CITES Convention Secretariat. The meeting was held to strengthen cooperation and improve the fight against poaching, as well as to discuss the obligations of countries to submit reports to the CITES Secretariat.

## Lao PDR

- a) The CITES MA of Lao PDR actively contributed to the critical review and drafting of a comprehensive report focusing on policies and legislations related to regulated mining activities within concession areas and infrastructure development zones. This initiative is aimed at facilitating a thorough sustainability assessment of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*.
- b) The Department of Forestry of Lao PDR organized several strategic consultation meetings to discuss and formulate a robust strategy report for the conservation and sustainable management of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* within the country.
- c) From 23–24 August 2023, a bilateral cooperation meeting on transnational organized wildlife crime was hosted by the Lao Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor with the Vietnam Supreme People's Procuracy. This was followed by a trilateral judicial wildlife trafficking workshop with Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Cambodia from 23–25 January 2023.
- d) Two delegates from Lao PDR, one representing the CITES MA and the other from the CITES SA, successfully completed a training session at the Validation Workshop on Agarwood Report, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from June 20–22, 2022.

## Malaysia

- a) Meetings on the guidelines for the disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens under The International Trade in Endangered Species Act 2008 [Act 686] were conducted from October – December 2023.
- b) Workshop to revise the First and Second Schedules of the Wild Life Protection Ordinance & First, Third and Fourth Schedules of the Wild Life Protection Rules was held from 2-4 April 2024.
- c) 54 sessions of the Illegal Wildlife Trade Workshop were conducted from 2023 - March 2024.

## Mongolia

An intensive training course on “*Crime Scene Investigation and Forensics in Environmental Crimes*” highlighting a practical exercise in Khustai National Park was organized with Hanns Seidel Foundation, Germany and the USA Embassy in Mongolia. The training was aimed at environmental police officers, inspectors from the National Forensic Agency and lecturers from the Forensic Faculty of the University of Internal Affairs of Mongolia. <https://mongolia.hss.de/en/news/detail/crime-scene-investigation-and-forensics-news11458/>.

## Nepal

Organized two CITES orientation training events.

## Korea

Meetings have been launched in December 2023 to provide training for those in charge of the use of the electronic Comprehensive Wildlife Management System and to share recent cases in the import/export of CITES species.

### **Philippines**

- a) On September 8, 2023, the Philippines convened the first Joint Meeting of CITES MA and SA for Terrestrial Species and the Province of Palawan.
- b) The representatives of the Philippines attended the following events and seminars:
  - i) The *Seminar on Wildlife Conservation and CITES Implementation* hosted by the China National Bamboo Research Center of China on 6 to 19 June 2023. The training was held online and was attended by representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, specifically from the Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR National Capital Region and DENR Region 3.
  - ii) The *CITES-ESCAP Regional Workshop on Electronic CITES Permitting Systems in Asia* held on 17-18 July 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and was attended participated by representatives from the Biodiversity Management Bureau.
  - iii) The International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs), Nairobi, Kenya held on December 4-8, 2023 and represented by the CITES Scientific Authority for terrestrial species of the Philippines.
  - iv) 77<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Standing Committee Meeting held at Geneva Switzerland on November 6-10, 2023 and represented by the CITES Scientific Authority for terrestrial species and the CITES Management Authority for aquatic and marine resources of the Philippines; and,
  - v) A representative of the Philippines from the Biodiversity Management Bureau attended the CITES Youth Leadership Programme 2024 on 22 to 25 April 2024. The CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN) seeks to establish a platform for youths to gain necessary capacities to better understand the complexities of sustainable wildlife trade.

### **Singapore**

- a) In January and June 2023, sharing sessions with Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers on CITES and its permit requirements, inspection procedures and commonly traded plant species detected in parcel posts without CITES permits, e.g., American ginseng roots. Significant case studies such as agarwood and red sandalwood seizures were also shared with ICA officers.
- b) In April 2024, CITES briefings to cosmetic/fragrance and medical associations were held as part of continued engagements with stakeholders on CITES and its permit requirements. The associations were briefed on newly-listed CITES species following amendments to the Appendices after CoP19, and also shared commonly traded CITES-listed plant species in their industry, e.g., *Taxus wallichiana* (Himalayan yew) and orchid extracts used in the medical and cosmetic industry, respectively.
- c) An online workshop on the transport of live specimens was held in Mar 2024.

## **5. Publications**

### **Cambodia**

- a) A 10–15 minute video production on “Current status of key selected tree species in Cambodia and a shift to more sustainable livelihoods through other hardwood, teak and fast-growing tree plantation, a substitute for rosewood hardwood products” under SSFA/2021/4524 (2023).
- b) A “Communication Campaign Plan on Raising Public Awareness and Incite Social and Behavior Change on Forest-related Crimes and Issues in Cambodia” under Project “Reducing Emission from

Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) (UMOJA SB-018296) (SMA 92165)” Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA): SSFA/2021/4524 (2023).

- c) A review report on Timber Traceability from Tree Plantations and Community Forests in Cambodia (English & Khmer) (2023).
- d) A Wood Identification Manual for CITES-Listed Tree Species for Forest Law Enforcement and Legal Trade of Timber Forest Product in Cambodia (English & Khmer) (2023).
- e) A Study Report on Current Production and Trade Pattern of Agarwood in Cambodia. (English & Khmer) (2023).
- f) Guidelines on CITES Non-Detriment Findings for Agarwood-Producing Species in Cambodia (English) (2023).
- g) Non-detriment Findings Report (Case study) on *Aquilaria crassna* in Koh Kong and Pursat Province, Cambodia (English & Khmer) (2023).
- h) A “Report on the Virtual Training Workshop on the CITES Non-detriment Findings on *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* and the Economic Analysis and Comparative Advantages of Plantations of *D. cochinchinensis*” (2022).
- i) A report on the “Guidelines and Incentives to Encourage the Establishment of Private Plantations of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in Cambodia” (2022).
- j) Report on E-CITES permit feasibility study in Cambodia prepared by UNCTAD/ASYCUDA in consultation with CITES MA and funded by the UN-REDD Initiatives on “Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region” (2022).
- k) A “Systematic Survey Report of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* for Piloting Assessment on Sustainable Genetic Conservation in Choam Ksant District, Preah Vihear Province” (2021).
- l) Wild Orchids of Cambodia (FA, 2021).
- m) Biodiversity of Cambodia - Mushrooms (NIBR-FA, 2021).
- n) Timber Cambodia (DFI/FA, 2021).
- o) A report on a “Review of the taxonomy, biology, ecology, and the status, trend, and population structure of *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* in Choam Ksant District, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia” (2021).
- p) A report entitled “Assessment Report on the Conservation Status, Management Practices, and Harvest Monitoring of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in the Choam Ksant District, Preah Vihear Province” (2021).
- q) A report entitled “CITES Non-detriment Findings Report on *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in the Choam Ksant District, Preah Vihear Province” (2021).
- r) A 20-minute video on “Conservation and Management of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri* in Choam Ksant District, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia” (2022).
- s) A report on the “Guidelines on Private Forest Registration in Cambodia” (Khmer language with English Executive Summary) (2021).
- t) A “Report on National Extension and Consultation Workshop on Rules and Guidelines for Private Forest Plantation Registration in Cambodia, 26–27 November 2021, Phnom Penh, Cambodia” (2020).
- u) A Checklist for the Seed Plants of Cambodia (NIBR-FA, 2016).

- v) Biodiversity of Cambodia - Lycophytes and Ferns (NIBR-FA, 2014).
- w) Biodiversity of Cambodia - Cardamom Protected Forest & Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area (NIBR-FA, 2013).

## China

- a) In August 2023, China published the book "*National Key Protected Wild Plants*". The book includes 1,067 species of wild plants (including subspecific taxa), which are most of the species listed in the List of National Key Protected Wild Plants (2021 Edition). Each species has a description of morphological *characteristics*, phenological periods, and geographical distribution, *accompanied* by photographs or line drawings, as well as their national conservation level, CITES appendices, and IUCN Red List categories. The publication of this book provides an important reference for capacity building and public awareness of wild plant conservation and management in China.
- b) In January 2024, China published the "*Evaluation report on the survival status of threatened species of wild fauna and flora in China (Volume I)*". In the chapter on medicinal orchids, scientists evaluate the endangered status of and threats on 54 medicinal orchid plants of *Anoectochilus*, *Bletilla*, *Cypripedium*, *Dendrobium*, *Gastrodia*, *Gymnadenia* and *Nervilia* and provide conservation and management suggestions.
- c) In January 2023, scientists from China published an article, "Can quantitative wood anatomy data coupled with machine learning analysis discriminate CITES species from their look-alikes?" in the Journal of the International Academy of Wood Science, *Wood Science and Technology*, using the QWA data coupled with ML analysis to discriminate CITES species from their look-alikes for forensic applications.
- d) In February 2023, the *Macroscopic Identification Atlas of Endangered Woods Common in Trade* compiled by China CITES MA was posted on the webpage of Timber Identification Resources and Tools of CITES website. This atlas covers a total of twenty-six CITES-listed tree species. It provides, inter alia, key identification features, in comparison with the similar (easy to be confused or look-alike) species. For each species, the atlas provides information on the taxonomy, geographic distribution, morphological characteristics of trees, wood description, identification characteristics of wood, type of wood products and conservation.

## Malaysia

- a) Lau, K.H., Muhammad-Alif Azyraf, A., Siti-Fariezza, K.T., Chua, L.S.L., Lee, S.L., Nurul-Farhanah, Z., Tnah, L.H., Ng, C.H., Ng, K.K.S. & Lee, C.T. 2023. Guidelines for the establishment of *Aquilaria malaccensis* arboretum in Peninsular Malaysia. FRIM Technical Information Handbook No. 56. Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Kepong. ISBN 978-967-2810-58-2. – *An output from the CTSP 2019–2022*.
- b) Sarawak Red List for Plant Series I, Published in 2014.
- c) Sarawak Red List for Plant Volume II, Published in 2022.

## Mongolia

- a) The latest report "*Mongolia's Wildlife Trade: An Analysis of International and National Legal Best Practices*", was released and is available in Mongolian and English. This report marks the third installment in a series dedicated to understanding and addressing Mongolia's wildlife trade. This report builds upon extensive reviews conducted in 2006 and 2019, focusing on policy coherence and its impact on regulating the wildlife trade chain. It also explores legal regulations of online wildlife trade in Mongolia and the connections between wildlife disease and trade. Additionally, the report highlights that Mongolia is not just a source country, and its legal environment needs to respond better to transit, illegal imports and re-exports. <https://mongolia.wcs.org/About-Us/News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/22330/Exploring-Legal-Insights-into-Mongolias-Wildlife-Trade.aspx>
- b) The Mongolian version of "*Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps*" has been printed with support from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Mongolia Program and the U.S.

Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). Written by two of the leading experts in crime prevention, this manual is intended for crime analysts and other police officers working on projects involving problem-based policing. The manual has been internationally recognized and translated into multiple languages, including Chinese, German, Italian, Bosnian, Malay, Japanese, Spanish as well as Mongolian. [https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/crime\\_analysis\\_for\\_problem\\_solvers\\_in\\_60\\_steps\\_mongolian.pdf](https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/crime_analysis_for_problem_solvers_in_60_steps_mongolian.pdf)

## Philippines

Threatened Plants of the Philippines published in April 2022

### Activities regarding

#### 6. Review of significant trade

##### Indonesia

Indonesia responded on August 14 2023, regarding the RST of *Aquilaria malaccensis* and *Gyrinops* spp. from Indonesia.

##### Singapore

Singapore has submitted information relating to the RST in *Aquilaria malaccensis* from Singapore to the CITES Secretariat on 18 August 2023.

##### Thailand

Thailand has submitted information regarding the RST in *Aquilaria crassna* and *A. malaccensis* from Thailand to the CITES Secretariat on 15 August 2023.

#### 7. Non-detriment findings (NDFs)

##### Cambodia

###### a) Rosewood

- i) The scoring conducted in the assessment of Non-Detriment Findings for *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* revealed the severity of the state of most of the parameters incorporated under the factors affecting the management of the harvesting regime. The principal difference in the scoring was that *D. cochinchinensis* exhibited states of greater severity because of its attenuated dispersal distribution, smaller population density, and greater instances of illegal selective logging gleaned from numbers of forest offensive cases than did *D. oliveri*, even though the regenerative capacity of *D. oliveri* exhibited considerable vulnerability, as well.
- ii) The management measures associated with the distribution of tree seedlings that contribute to the recovery of both of the populations of the *Dalbergia* species have been useful. At the national level, 1.2–1.4 million seedlings were reported to be produced annually, with an estimated 60–70% of those sold and subsequently planted by private households, landowners, monks, and at pagodas, petrol stations, and restaurants. It is recommended that the genetic conservation of these species should now be further concentrated through restoration, planting, and the maintenance of natural populations.
- iii) While Article VII of the CITES Convention includes provisions for the exceptions of specimens produced as the result of artificial propagation, it is concluded on the basis of the results of this report that the current policy of the Cambodian CITES MA, in which the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has suspended the exports of all products extracted from luxury grade timber species, including *Dalbergia*, irrespective of whether the specimens have been artificially propagated or derived from natural forests, should continue unimpeded.

###### b) Agarwood-producing taxa



- i) From the results of the “Non-detriment Findings Report (Case study) on *Aquilaria crassna* in Koh Kong and Pursat Province of Cambodia”, the Cambodia CITES SA should provide the Cambodia CITES MA with a negative NDF recommendation and associated conservation measures that should be made for any request for export of wild agarwood products and/or its derivatives originated from all *Aquilaria* species in Cambodia.
- ii) Unless a compliance study is made accordingly and fully meets the terms defined as “artificial propagation” determined by CITES, the export of agarwood from plantations should not be allowed either.
- iii) Following the requirements of CITES, the agarwood exporters should be registered with the Forestry Administration.
- iv) Law enforcement should be further strengthened to prevent all *Aquilaria* species from being harvested within natural habitats.
- v) Enrichment planting should be conducted for these species in accordance with their natural habitat preferences as well as in community forests.
- vi) Commercial agarwood plantations are also considered effective for the *ex situ* conservation of these species.

### China

China submitted a case study on the NDF of *Rhodiola rosea* to the Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) in Nairobi, Kenya (4–8 December 2023) and discussed items regarding plant NDFs under source code Y.

### Indonesia

Indonesia submitted documents on 31 May 2023 regarding NDFs, including those for *Dalbergia latifolia* in Indonesia.

### Lao PDR

The National Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) of Lao PDR has successfully completed a pivotal project focusing on the distribution patterns of *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri*. This initiative, aimed at paving the way for the development of a comprehensive NDF for these species, was generously supported by funding from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and technical expertise provided by the CITES Secretariat. This project forms part of a broader effort to enhance forest governance across the Lower Mekong Region.

### Nepal

Nepal managed *Nardostachys grandiflora* based on an NDF (2019 – 2024).

### Thailand

Thailand is now carrying out NDFs on *Dalbergia* section *Stachyobium* and *Paphiopedilum thaianum*, and also making NDF on similar species of CITES plants as *Pterocarpus* genera and *Sedum susanae* ( not listed in CITES but related to species of *Rhodiola*), respectively.

## 8. Identification of specimens of plant species

### Cambodia

- a) For Agarwood-Producing Species in Cambodia (*Non-detriment Findings Report (Case study) on Aquilaria crassna in Koh Kong and Pursat Province, Cambodia*)
  - i) It has been commonly known to Cambodian people that only *A. crassna* exists in Cambodia, and perhaps this is due to the fact that some look-alike species, such as *A. baillonii*, *A. banaensis*, *A. rugosa*, and *Gyrinops vidalii* are identified as *A. crassna*, or were also targeted

and wiped out in natural forest in the past decades. In one instance, *Aquilaria baillonii* was recorded from Kravanh mountain in Cambodia, but hardly any wild occurrences of *A. baillonii* were found left in Cambodia.

- ii) Not only were the above-mentioned species most likely to be over-exploited, but another look-alike species (*Aquilaria rostrata*) was almost wiped out in the wild owing to substantial demand for agarwood in the markets.
  - iii) During the survey conducted from February to April 2023, the survey team took leaf samples from seven *Aquilaria* individuals for DNA sequencing; five samples were confirmed as *Aquilaria crassna*, whereas the other two samples were confirmed to be from *Aquilaria rostrata*.
- b) A Wood Identification Manual was developed to provide information on wood characteristics and geographic distributions for the identification of CITES-listed tree species in Cambodia. The manual contains mainly tree species listed in CITES Appendix II, some of which are native to Cambodia, while a few species that are not native to Cambodia have been introduced to Cambodia for plantation or their wood products used to be imported into Cambodia.

### China

- a) During CoP19, the CITES secretariat released the Directory of Laboratories that Conduct Wildlife Forensic Testing. Research Institute of Wood. The Chinese Academy of Forestry was included in this directory, focusing on timber and timber product identification. In 2023, this laboratory cooperated with 14 customs ports in China to accomplish the identification of more than 1,400 wood samples involving CITES-listed tree species and provided two training courses on wood identification for law enforcement officials.
- b) With the support of China CITES MA, scientists from China invented a portable deep-learning-based wood identification tool---*iWood*, which could discriminate more than 40 CITES-listed timber species from their look-alikes within seconds and provide the taxon information (scientific name, commercial name, range states), CITES Appendix and annotations, HS code, trade suspensions and national legislation on wildlife conservation.

### Lao PDR

The CITES SA of Lao PDR has conducted the identification of wildlife specimens seized during transit at the international airport in Vientiane. Currently, the case is undergoing legal proceedings, with the matter being referred from the prosecutor to the courts.

### Malaysia

- a) There are on-going activities as part of the preparation for the establishment of the Wildlife Forensic Lab in Sarawak.
- b) Training courses have been conducted on the identification of orchids and *Nepenthes* in Peninsular Malaysia.

### Philippines

The Philippines develop a tool to help the DENR personnel and law enforcement agencies in identifying wildlife species and reporting wildlife crimes. This tool is known as the “*Wildlife Agency and Citizen Law Enforcement Reporting Tool*” or *WildALERT*. It serves as a library of wild fauna and flora species for easy reference of their field personnel.

## 9. Specimens produced through biotechnology

Member for the Asia region, Ms Yan Zeng, and several Asia Parties participated in the IUCN initiative of developing a policy on the implications of synthetic biology in nature conservation through the IUCN Citizens’ Assembly and the IUCN Res123 Policy Development Working Group on Synthetic Biology in relation to Nature Conservation.

## 10. CITES projects

## Cambodia

A summary of the achievements of the project on “Integrating the Development of Guidelines and Incentives for Piloting the Establishment of Small-scale Private *Dalbergia* Plantations with the Determination of a Non-detriment Findings Report in Preah Vihear province in Cambodia” was presented at the “CITES Tree Species Programme – International Closing Meeting and the Seventh Meeting of the Advisory Committee” in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 5–7 October 2022.

## Singapore

From 22–25 April 2024, Singapore organised the inaugural CITES Global Youth Leadership Programme that brought together 41 youths from diverse countries and backgrounds in sustainable wildlife trade and conservation to establish a network. Participants engaged in a series of activities including visits to Singapore’s Centre for Wildlife Forensics and Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation, engaging in a simulated CITES Conference of the Parties, and a High-Level Panel Discussion on Global Environmental Leadership. The event ended with the participants reflecting on their experiences, establishing the framework of the CGYN Leadership Committee, and charting a roadmap for the future of the youth network.

### 11. Implementation of CITES, including conservation, legislation and law enforcement activities.

#### Cambodia

- a) The RGC has issued regulation No. 601, dated 24 April 2014, to suspend exports of all forest products and forest by-products derived from luxury grade timber species, including *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* and *Dalbergia oliveri*, until it is informed via new regulations. This aims to improve sustainable forest resource management and usage.
- b) The RG C issued Sub-Decree 53, dated 29 May 2006, which is concerned with trade restriction of species listed in CITES Appendices.
- c) The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries issued Prakas 89 on Prohibited Forest Products and Non-timber Forest Products for Harvesting from Reserved Permanent Forests in Cambodia in 2005. The announcement establishes minimum felling limits of *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri* as 0.45 m diameter at breast height.
- d) Law Enforcement Strengthening

The Prime Minister’s Order 02, dated 22 February 2013, initiated measures and controls on the cutting, transporting, collecting, storing, and exporting of *D. cochinchinensis* throughout the country.

The RGC has established the Sub-Committee Taskforce for Implementing the Immediate Outcomes (IO) of the findings from the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) of the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) with respect to Anti-Money Laundering / Countering the Financing Terrorism (AML/CFT). Forest and wildlife crime were included in Natural Resources and Environmental Crime IO-6, IO-7, and IO-8. The FA has established a Specialized Taskforce on Forest and Wildlife Crime related to Money Laundering that consisted of 59 officers from the FA Headquarters, chiefs of 4 Regional Forestry Administration Inspectorates and 25 Municipal and Provincial FA Cantonments. This specialized task force was tasked to implement the IO 6, IO-7, IO-8 of FATF and AML/CFT.

#### China

- a) In November 2023, in response to the 23 global conservation targets of the *Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* (GSPC) (2023 – 2030), the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Chinese Academy of Sciences jointly formulated a pilot version of the China Strategy for Plant Conservation (2021 – 2030), proposing China’s conservation targets of plant species.
- b) On September 6–8, 2023, in Beijing, the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized the China Workshop on Data Reporting Tools for Multilateral Environmental Agreements (DaRT) as the first tool supporting Parties to effectively use knowledge and information management

synergies for national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions. China SA for CITES participated in the workshop, learned the use of DaRT, and mapped the targets and indicators of the CITES strategic vision against the 2023 SDGs and the Kunming-Montreal GBF and its monitoring framework.

- c) In June 2023, the Technical Committee for Standardization of Wild Plants of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration was established, and formulated a standard system for wild plant conservation, including sustainable collection, artificial propagation, plant species identification and traceability, which aims to provide technical support for NDF and LAF of CITES-listed species.

### **Indonesia**

- a) Indonesia has conducted population surveys of tree species in various regions such as Sumatra, East Kalimantan and Papua.
- b) Indonesia has conducted evaluations and guidance for agarwood cultivators in the Jambi, Tangerang and West Java regions.
- c) The Directorate-General of Law Enforcement, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, has planned collaborative efforts with neighbouring countries to combat wildlife trafficking, including the initiation of the establishment of circulation checkpoints on the border routes of National Border Posts in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua and Nusa Tenggara Timur. The primary challenge in this activity is the absence of a legal framework for binding activities between Indonesia and neighbouring countries.

### **Kyrgyz Republic**

CITES and Identification of Species Training was conducted for the Customs and Border Services.

### **Lao PDR**

- a) With support from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and other development partners, Lao PDR is currently revising the CITES Government Decree, which is expected to be approved in June 2024.
- b) The Wildlife Law and Aquatic Resources and Fisheries Law were launched on March 3, 2024 (National and World Wildlife Day). With WCS support, the DoF has disseminated the Wildlife Law, CITES SC77 trade suspensions and recommendations as well as the Laos action plan to address the recommendations, with national and local authorities across sectors as well as captive-breeding facilities and plantation businesses.
- c) The Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Health took part in the review of the exporting list of rare/endangered plant products, which is prepared by a related division of the Department of Forestry.

### **Malaysia**

- a) Reviewed the list of totally protected and protected plants stipulated under the Second Schedule Part I and Part II) of the Wild Life Protection Ordinance, 1998 (Cap.26), Sarawak.
- b) Various enforcement activities were carried out by management authorities and enforcement authorities, particularly through 'Ops Bersepadu Khazanah'.
- c) Maintenance and data collection at two *Aquilaria malaccensis* arboreta that were established for the genetic conservation of the species in Peninsular Malaysia. This is an output from the CTSP (2019–2022).
- d) Inclusion of Forest Research Institute Malaysia in the CITES directory of laboratories that conduct wildlife forensic testing on 10 July 2023.

### **Mongolia**

- a) A new chairman and new members of the national CITES management authority and scientific authority have been appointed by resolution # A60 signed by the Minister of the Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, dated March 14, 2023. The *Rule for National CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authority: How to Act* was updated and approved by resolution # A240, signed by the Minister of Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, dated April 26, 2024.
- b) The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and the Department for International Program and Policy within the USA Forest Service (USFS) signed an agreement, which started the implementation of the 2- year project entitled “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Combat Wildlife Crime in Mongolia” with funding support from the United States Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Office of Global Programs and Policy (INL/GPP). The project objectives are:
  - i) Improving national and/or international understanding of issues related to wildlife crime, with a focus on wildlife trafficking, in each target country;
  - ii) Enhancing the capacities of key partners to contribute to and/or implement effective law enforcement strategies to combat wildlife trafficking and associated natural resource crime;
  - iii) Strengthening national, regional, and/or global networks and communities of practice on combating wildlife trafficking. The program will produce a standardized ranger training curriculum, protein tester for biological samples, guidelines on the management of collected evidence related to wildlife crime to CWT in Mongolia

## Nepal

Nepal has published a new CITES act and regulations. The authorities have provided CITES law-related training courses for officials and traders.

## Korea

The Ministry of Environment of the ROK has officially run the Comprehensive Wildlife Management System since December 2023. This is an electronic declaration and permit system to manage the wildlife imported or exported into the Republic of Korea, as well as the entire process from domestic distribution to their mortality after import. The Korean CITES MA and SA are using this system to systematically manage and monitor CITES-listed specimens, especially to better control trafficking, false declarations, and poor management.

## Philippines

- a) The DENR, through BMB had initiated the amendment of RA 9147 known as “Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act” to better deter commission of wildlife crime offenses, provide common interpretation of penalties to be imposed against violators by the Court, and address other policy gaps. The proposed Bill has been approved at the Philippines House of Representatives-Committee on Natural Resources thru House Bill No. 8586. It was led by the DENR-BMB through the assistance of USAID Protect Wildlife Project and DENR-ADB/GEF Illegal Wildlife Trade Project. The said workshops/consultations were participated in by representatives from various national government agencies, including enforcement agencies, local government units, the wildlife industry, academic and scientific institutions, and the civil society organizations;
- b) The policy on guidelines for the commercial propagation and trade of *Aquilaria* species and its by-products and derivatives in the Philippines is on drafting. It aims to enhance knowledge on biology and ecology of *Aquilaria* species in the country, including its distribution towards management of natural population; ensure the sustainable use of the country’s *Aquilaria* species by regulating its commercial propagation, collection of seeds and wildlings, transport and trade; and, promote the agarwood industry in the country as the Department’s contribution to the socio-economic well-being of the Filipino. The said policy is still for approval.
- c) On November 6-11, 2023, the Bureau organized a two-day rollout of eCITES PH, an online permitting system with the assistance from the DENR-ADB/GEF IWT Project to facilitate the processing permit applications for import, export, and re-export of terrestrial wildlife listed under CITES. The eCITES PH will likewise augment the online tracking of permit applications applied by

applicants. Automation of CITES processes further enforces regulations, increases transparency and reduces opportunities for corruption and use of fraudulent documents. The rollout was participated by a total of 34 participants from different DENR Regional Offices, specifically from the Licenses, Patents and Deeds Division (LPDD). Representatives from WRD's Wildlife Regulation Section served as resource speakers and facilitators during the event.

## Singapore

- a) The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, which is the national legislation that gives legal effect to CITES, was amended and gazetted to reflect amendments made to the Appendices at CITES CoP19, and also when new Appendix III species are listed by CITES Parties.
- b) Implementation of a new CITES licencing platform (GoBusiness Services) with effect from 26 September 2023 using blockchain technology. Key changes include scannable QR codes on every issued CITES permit to replace the existing watermark feature. Using blockchain technology, the QR code scan enhances the security of Singapore's CITES permit by confirming that the scanned permit is issued by the Singapore Government, has not been tampered with, and has not been revoked.
- c) Singapore received a CITES permit application to import 2 containers of *Dalbergia granadillo* timber from Mexico. The Mexico CITES export permit was sent to the Mexico CITES MA for verification on its authentication as part of Singapore's risk profiling of selected applications for targeted checks. Mexico CITES MA confirmed the CITES permits were invalid. Arrangements are ongoing for the return of the containers back to Mexico authorities for further investigations.
- d) Publishing of CITES Notification 2024/052 on Changes to CITES Permits and Certificates.
- e) Publishing of CITES Notification 2024/035 on the Establishment of the CITES Global Youth Network.

## Syrian Arab Republic

National legislation regulating the trade in living organisms is being issued in its final form.

## 12. Challenges and needs of CITES implementation

Many Asian economies are underdeveloped and lack the technical, financial, and human resources to successfully implement CITES. The lack of resources in local languages is an important limiting factor. Common challenges to Parties from the Asia region include:

- a) Regarding identification, there is a lack of tools, knowledge, and capacity for wood identification (i.e., iwood etc.) and plant laboratory technologies (ex., DNA analysis, sequencing) for general tree species and CITES-listed tree species in Cambodia. Training courses on identifying species and their products are needed (Syrian Arab Republic). Cambodia has specific funding needs for capacity-building and developing some techniques to distinguish between plantation-origin and wild-origin wood products of *D. cochinchinensis* and *D. oliveri*. Scientific Authorities must constantly improve species identification techniques to meet challenges at the forefront of law enforcement. (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand)
- b) Regarding implementation, there are limited resources and knowledge to implement and comply with CITES regulations and provisions, harmonize national laws, and develop a traceability system and chain of custody. Challenges in law enforcement and gaps in the capacity and knowledge of the enforcement officers are widespread. As new risks emerge, such as the growth of the internet wildlife trade, agencies must continuously revise their regulations, monitoring methods, and enforcement strategies. (Cambodia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, Syrian Arab Republic)
- c) Regarding science-based decisions, current knowledge of species status and trade trends is essential for the effective application of CITES. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to estimate population sizes and compile NDF reports to make well-informed decisions on which species to prioritize due to a lack of thorough, trustworthy data. (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia)

- d) Regarding cooperation, it is difficult to cooperate with state parties in confirming and verifying CITES certificates, holding workshops or training courses, and even participating in the meetings and activities of CITES (Syrian Arab Republic). Law enforcement organizations frequently face challenges such as inadequate agency cooperation, capacity constraints, and the requirement for specific training and tools. (Lao PDR) A potential workshop on the sustainability of legal trade in CITES-listed alpine medicinal plants would welcome your support and participation. (China)
- e) Regarding awareness, limited knowledge and understanding of CITES at all levels, such as the process of NDFs and LAFs for CITES-listed species among government departments and businesses, and public awareness regarding CITES regulations and requirements. The success of CITES depends on the general public's comprehension of and support for its goals. To decrease the market for illicit wildlife goods and to promote public involvement in conservation efforts, it is imperative to increase public knowledge of the value of wildlife conservation and the role of CITES in safeguarding endangered species. Training courses and workshops are needed to raise the level of knowledge about implementing CITES (Cambodia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand)
- f) The Syrian Arab Republic highlights the weakness of financial and technical support from donors and international organizations in biodiversity conservation, in particular CITES, and the difficulty in financial transfers to Syria due to unilateral coercive measures.

13. Representatives and alternates thank the regional Parties for their efforts.