

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 April 2008

Non detriment findings

AGARWOOD-PRODUCING SPECIES

1. This document has been prepared by the Plants Committee regional representative of Oceania.
2. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.143, directed to the Plants Committee and the Secretariat on *Agarwood-producing taxa*, as follows:

The Plants Committee shall:

On the basis of the work on non-detriment findings for agarwood-producing species, that has been developed by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia and the Secretariat, the Plants Committee, in consultation with range States and the Secretariat, shall develop principles, criteria and indicators for the formulation of non-detriment findings for agarwood-producing species.

3. The Committee should note that the wording of this decision is similar to Decision 14.135 (on timber species and medicinal plants: develop principles, criteria and indicators for the making of non-detriment findings for wild specimens of high-priority taxa such as timber species, *Prunus africana* and other medicinal plants) and this decision also has some relevance to agarwood-producing species given the use of agarwood (as a medicinal) in various traditional Asian medicinal systems.
4. TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, in collaboration with the Malaysian Government and the CITES Secretariat, organized an Experts Group Meeting on Agarwood in Kuala Lumpur (14-17 November, 2006) which was attended by national representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Thailand, The United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Saudi Arabia – encompassing range, trade and consumer States. The national representatives were predominantly from the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, as well as forestry management and research institutions. They were joined by national and international agarwood industry participants, including growers, traders, manufacturers, researchers, exporters/importers/retailers and consumers. The CITES Secretariat, members of the CITES Plants Committee for Asia and Oceania, the IUCN Global Trees Specialist Group and TRAFFIC also attended.
5. At this Experts Group meeting, the challenges of making non-detriment findings (NDFs) were debated in both plenary and working groups. Particular issues of difficulty that were noted included the current lack of information on wild population status of agarwood species (particularly to species level) from national forest inventories; identification of products in trade to species level; and conversion factors of harvested trees to agarwood yield, and of agarwood pieces/chips/powder to

agarwood oil. The question of which agarwood product types should be possibly exempted from CITES controls in the future was also debated.

6. TRAFFIC Southeast Asia has also been contracted by the Secretariat to prepare a draft methodology for the formulation of non-detriment findings for agarwood-producing species. Following presentation of this draft methodology at the Experts Group Meeting and subsequent feedback from participants, TRAFFIC has continued to revise this NDF approach. As this document is lengthy and the work is still evolving it would be premature to translate it for the present meeting, and it will be presented as an information document in English only. The Plants Committee is invited to provide comments on this draft, and to consider how to further develop principles, criteria and indicators for the formulation of non-detriment findings for agarwood-producing *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* species.
7. The Committee is invited to decide on any further action needed to comply with Decision 14.143, and to consider how best to achieve its effective implementation, taking into consideration the practical needs and challenges faced by range States.
8. At CoP14, it was discussed that various initiatives on non-detriment findings should be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort. Decisions 14.49–14.51 established an International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings under the responsibility of a Steering Committee chaired by Mexico. The Steering Committee of this workshop has agreed that a goal of the workshop is to produce both general and case-specific guidelines (criteria and principles) for developing NDFs. Agarwood is specifically included as a case study in the life-form group of ‘Trees’ which will include timber, medicinal and aromatic plants.
9. TRAFFIC is participating in the international expert workshop and has agreed to assist with preparation of a case study on agarwood to be considered at the workshop.
10. The Plants Committee can provide feedback on the draft methodology which will ensure Plants Committee input to the agarwood case study presentation at this International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings. Making use of both the Committee’s input and the results of the workshop would appear likely to meet the requirements of Decision 14.143. However, as the workshop dates are set for November 2008 (see agenda item 10), the results of this workshop could only be considered at the 18th meeting of the Plants Committee.
11. The Committee is invited to consider the recommendation that Decision 14.143 be implemented through the International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings and reported on at PC18.