

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

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Eighteenth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Buenos Aires (Argentina), 17-21 March 2009

NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS: TIMBER SPECIES AND *PRUNUS AFRICANA*  
(PC18 Doc. 14.3)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

**Chair:** the observer from Canada.

**Members:** the representatives of Africa (Ms Khayota) and Asia (Mr Partomihardjo).

**Party observers:** Brazil, Chile, Malaysia, Mozambique, Peru, Portugal, Thailand, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

**IGOs and NGOs:** European Community, Assam Agar Traders & Agaroil Manufacturers' Association, Indena S.p.A. and TRAFFIC.

Mandate

Taking into account all available information and, in particular, the results of Group 1 of the workshop held in Cancún:

1. Develop principles, criteria and indicators for the formulation of non-detriment findings for wild specimens of timber species and *Prunus africana*; and
2. Collaborate with the chairs of the Groups on Medicinal Plants and on Agarwood, and, in this context, assess the possibility to propose the deletion of Decisions 14.135 and 14.143, or their replacement by a new decision or decisions, with an indication of the budget required for their implementation.

Recommendations

1. The Plants Committee is asked to agree on the following principles are presented as generic principles applicable to the NDF process in CITES regardless of the taxa being considered. They were discussed and agreed during a joint session of Working Groups WG9, WG10 and WG11:
  - The non-detriment finding (NDF) for Appendix I and II species verifies that traded volumes within the range state are not detrimental to the survival of that species.
  - The NDF considers whether the species is maintained throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs.
  - The data requirements for an NDF are tailored to appropriate precision according to the resilience or vulnerability of the target species.
  - The implementation of an adaptive management scheme based on regular monitoring is an important consideration in the NDF evaluation process.
  - The NDF is based on resource assessment methodologies.
  - The NDF employs appropriate broad-scale assessment, such as total harvest assessments.

The CITES Plants Committee is further asked to:

- a) Take note of the guidance document, in particular, information contained in Annex 1, prepared by the working group on NDFs for Timber species and *Prunus africana*;
- b) Propose to CoP15 the deletion of Decision 14.135, paragraphs a) and b), on the basis of the Decision having been fulfilled;
- c) Present this NDF guidance for Timber species and *Prunus africana* as part of the consideration of a NDF-specific Resolution;
- d) Propose to CoP15 that capacity building workshops on the use of the Timber species and *Prunus africana* NDF guidance should be conducted in the Range states with the cooperation of the importing Parties.

Non-detriment findingsTimber species and *Prunus africana*

## WORKING GROUP REPORT

Background

1. At its 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Parties adopted Decision 14.135 Timber species and medicinal plants: non-detriment findings, directed to the Plants Committee, as follows:

***The Plants Committee shall:***

- a) *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*
  - b) *before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, support the organization of a workshop on non-detriment findings for tree species.*
2. At the 17th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC17, Geneva, 2008), a working group (WG8) was convened to implement this Decision. The group was asked to liaise with the Chairs of the medicinal plant and agarwood NDF WG's in order to maintain consistency on key issues – in particular the definitions of principles, criteria and indicators.
  3. Mexico organised an International Experts Workshop on NDF methodology which was held in Cancun from 17-22 November 2008. The Timber species and *Prunus africana* WG9 has agreed that in addition to the report produced by the Trees working group, the working group report produced by the Perennials group at the Cancun workshop titled 'Perennial Plants Working Group Annex: Guidance for Scientific Authorities in making a CITES Non-Detriment Finding' (see PC18 Doc 14.2) includes general elements that are well-suited for adaptation to timber species NDFs.

Principles

4. At PC17 the Chairs of the three NDF working groups (timber, medicinal plants and Agarwood) were tasked with liaising and reaching agreement on common usage of the terms 'principles, criteria and indicators'. For the term 'principle' the Chairs considered material provided in the International Standard for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants document (ISSC-MAP), discussions at the Mahogany and Agarwood working group meetings, and the output from the Cancun NDF workshop, in particular the Trees Working Group. The following principles are presented as generic principles applicable to the NDF process in CITES regardless of the taxa being considered.
  - The non-detriment finding (NDF) for Appendix I and II species verifies that traded volumes within the range state are not detrimental to the survival of that species.
  - The NDF considers whether the species is maintained throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs.
  - The data requirements for an NDF are tailored to appropriate precision according to the resilience or vulnerability of the target species.
  - The implementation of an adaptive management scheme based on regular monitoring is an important consideration in the NDF evaluation process.
  - The NDF is based on resource assessment methodologies.
  - The NDF employs appropriate broad-scale assessment, such as total harvest assessments.

## Criteria and indicators

5. The terms 'criteria' and 'indicator' were not used by any Working Group in the Cancun workshop. In the Cancun Perennial Plants Working Group report, the term 'criteria', within the context of elaborating a NDF, correlates with the term 'factors' used in the risk assessment or 'factors' which constitute sustainability. It is suggested that the 'elements of guidance' used in assessing the factors/criteria are the indicators that would be used to measure the adequacy or robustness of an NDF. The WG suggests that the semantics of 'criteria' and 'indicators' distracts from the most critical and essential part of the Decision which is "... for the making of non-detiment findings for wild specimens of high-priority taxa such as timber species, *Prunus africana* and other medicinal plants". The process here outlined provides guidance for the formulation of an NDF for timber species and for *Prunus africana*. If this process is followed, a Scientific Authority will have confidence that the resultant non-detiment finding is robust and reliable. The WG believes this meets the spirit of the Decision.

## Sources and references used

6. The Timber and *Prunus africana* WG9 has tried to build as much as possible upon existing guidance for making NDFs. Particularly useful is the "Guidance for CITES Scientific Authorities"<sup>1</sup> (hereafter called IUCN checklist) and particularly, the factors within Tables 1 and 2 of the IUCN checklist.
7. Of particular and significant value are: PC18 Doc. 14.2, Annex 1, Principles for Non-detiment Findings (NDF) for Trees and; PC18 Inf.2<sup>2</sup> which provides detailed information specific to the making of NDFs for *Prunus africana*.
8. Additional elements were incorporated from the following sources:
  - Cancun Workshop Case Studies<sup>3</sup>
  - EU-SRG Guidance Paper<sup>4</sup>
  - Susceptibility matrices published by Cunningham (2001) and Peters (1994)<sup>5</sup>.

## Process for making non detriment findings

9. The process for making non-detiment findings for Timber species and *Prunus africana* builds upon the Cancun Perennial Plants and Timber species WG reports, the IUCN Checklist, and on other references. It incorporates the sources of information and methods that can be used to evaluate certain factors as well as identifying when a more rigorous approach is needed (i.e., when more information or more rigorous field methods are needed).
10. Taxonomy: According to Res. Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP14), species that are listed in the Appendices of CITES should have a valid CITES-recognized name, as reported in CITES-approved checklists. The first step is therefore to assess whether the taxonomic circumscription, including authorities and synonyms, is stable or is dynamic. If the status of the taxon is dynamic, then the taxonomy is usually uncertain (e.g., the taxon may consist of several entities which have to be assessed separately). Sources of information include published floras, CITES checklist, identification guides, and taxonomic experts.
11. The Scientific Authority should then consider the harvest regime and determine whether specimens are taken from a plantation or from the wild. If specimens are taken from a plantation, the NDF can be made relatively quickly since it considers that the plantation has been verified by the Management Authority and that the removal of the specimens does not affect populations in the wild. This implies the operation is of reduced risk.
12. If specimens comes from the wild, the Scientific Authority should take a more cautious approach and consider whether the harvest implies removal of the whole tree.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosser, A. & M. Haywood. 2002. *Guidance for CITES Scientific Authorities. Checklist to assist in making non-detiment findings for Appendix II exports.* - xi+146 pp., IUCN, Gland and Cambridge

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/18/E-PC18%20Inf%2001.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/cooperacion\\_internacional/TallerNDF/Links-Documentos/WebPage%20-%20Format%20-%202023%20May%202008.doc](http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/cooperacion_internacional/TallerNDF/Links-Documentos/WebPage%20-%20Format%20-%202023%20May%202008.doc)

<sup>4</sup> Duties of the CITES Scientific Authorities and Scientific Review Group under Regulations 338/97 and 865/2006. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/srg/guidelines.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> CUNNINGHAM (2001): Applied ethnobotany. Earthscan; PETERS (1994): Sustainable harvest of non-timber forest plant resources in tropical moist forest. An ecological primer. - WWF Biodiversity Support Program, Washington.

13. If removal of the specimen does not result in the death of the tree (as can be the case for *Prunus africana*, other medicinal trees and agarwood-producing species), the guideline of maintaining the resource in the population over time and through a recovery period between harvests should be followed, with the objective of minimizing the impact of harvesting on species populations.
14. If removal of the specimen results in the death of the tree, then adherence to comprehensive guidelines (encompassing available information and possible methodologies) is required. The essential elements of such guidelines comprise:
  - Characterization of the species' distribution at different spatial and jurisdictional scales so that production and conservation areas can be identified;
  - Characterization of species population status (standing stocks and dynamics) to provide standards for evaluating harvest impacts;
  - Determination (based on sufficient knowledge of distribution and population parameters) whether management systems will be appropriate to the species populations subject to harvest and whether projected harvest levels are sustainable;
  - Determination that adequate monitoring & verification systems are in place to ensure sustainability of harvest;
  - Determination that safeguards are in place to ensure that representative natural populations and phenotypic and genetic diversity represented in harvested populations, and the role of the species in the ecosystem are conserved.

#### Recommendations

15. The CITES Plants Committee is asked:
  - to take note of the guidance document prepared by the working group on NDFs for Timber species and *Prunus africana*;
  - to propose to CoP15 the deletion of Decision 14.135, parts a and b, on the basis of the Decision having been fulfilled;
  - to present this NDF guidance for Timber species and *Prunus africana* as part of the consideration of a NDF-specific Resolution;
  - To propose to CoP15 that capacity building workshops on the use of the Timber species and *Prunus africana* NDF guidance should be conducted in the Range states with the cooperation of the importing Parties.
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