

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-21 April 2011

Regional reports

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. This document has been submitted by the regional representatives Ms Dora Ingrid Rivera and Ms Mariana Mites, as well as the alternate regional representative Ms Adriana Rivera^{*}.
2. General information
 - a) Name of the representatives: Dora Ingrid Rivera, (Costa Rica), Mariana Mites (Ecuador)
 - b) Name of the alternate representatives: Adriana Rivera (Colombia) and Kenneth Richardson (the Bahamas)
 - c) Number of Parties in the region: 31
 - d) Number of Parties that responded to information requests: 14 (Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay)

This document was prepared with the information provided by the Parties that responded to communications, selecting the most relevant information in accordance with the template for regional reports. The full information is available in Annex 2. The information request was accompanied by a questionnaire prepared by the Chair of the Plants Committee with the aim of compiling relevant information and preparing the Regional Directory of Botanists (Annex 1). Communications were sent to at least two different addresses in each Party of the region, with two reminders.

3. Directory of CITES plant experts

See Annex 1 to the present document.

^{*} *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.*

4. Activities carried out regarding the following issues:

a) Significant Trade

COLOMBIA

The country responded to the information request sent by UNEP on *Swietenia macrophylla* and stated that the species cannot be legally traded since it is classified as threatened in the Red Book of Plants of Colombia.

ECUADOR

For the last 4 years there has been a ban on the harvest of *Swietenia macrophylla*. The ban ends this year.

NICARAGUA

There is a 10-year ban on the harvest of bigleaf mahogany, which has significantly reduced exports of the species. The only exports authorized are those of timber from trees felled by hurricane Felix, which was previously properly inventoried.

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

The harvest and use of trees of the species *Swietenia macrophylla* and any other type of activity involving the species are banned in the whole country, under Resolution 217 of 23/06/2006, published in Official Gazette No. 38443 of 24/05/2006.

b) Review of the Appendices

ARGENTINA

Appendix II, as agreed at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: the species *Bulnesia sarmientoi* (palo santo) was transferred from Appendix III to Appendix II.

Appendix I: after assessing whether *Podocarpus parlatorei* should be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II, it was decided to retain it in Appendix I.

GUATEMALA

A project was approved to study the population status of the endemic Guatemalan species *Tillandsia harrisii* and *Tillandsia xerographica*, both listed in CITES Appendix II. The project will be funded through the CITES – CCAD/DOI project.

PERU

The Peruvian Ministry of the Environment – the CITES Scientific Authority – commissioned the Museum of Natural History of the *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos* to review the CITES Appendices and the UNEP-WCMC database to update the list of wild plant species that are included in the CITES Appendices and occur in Peru.

c) CITES projects in the region

BRAZIL

In October 2009, Brazil and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) organized jointly a regional workshop for Management and Scientific Authorities about CITES plants found in member States of ACTO. The general objective of the workshop was to plan joint initiatives for the management of CITES-listed wild plant species in order to strengthen enforcement and monitoring from a regional approach. Several recommendations and proposals for joint regional work were developed in the workshop.

COLOMBIA

A proposal to prepare material to facilitate the identification of timber species is being prepared jointly by Brazil and Colombia.

An estimate of the current distribution of the West Indian cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) in Colombia was made, as well as a review of the occurrence of cocobolo (*Dalbergia retusa*). A map of the historical distribution and a map of the current distribution of *Cedrela odorata* were prepared. No natural populations of *Dalbergia retusa* were found in Colombia and no reports or evidence of trade in the species in that country were found either.

COSTA RICA

Under the auspices of CCAD (*Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo*, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development), the CITES lists for the region were reviewed. A document containing the lists of CITES animal and plant species of Central America and the Dominican Republic was published and distributed at CoP15 (in printed and digital formats).

The study entitled "Population status of and trade in *Cedrela odorata* L. and *Dalbergia retusa* Hemsl. in Costa Rica" was carried out. Its findings include the population status of both species, with distribution maps, and the assessment of the level of trade therein.

ECUADOR

A CITES capacity-building project is being planned jointly with Peru for enforcement authorities working on the border. The aim is to strengthen the control of trade between both countries.

GUATEMALA

Validation of the methodology and results of Stage I of the "Integrated national inventory of the species *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Cedrela odorata* and *Dalbergia stevensonii* in Guatemala", in the framework of the CITES Convention.

Development of the study "National tables for volumetric conversion of standing trees to sawn wood in various grades according to the international NHLA lumber grading rules for bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)", in compliance with the CITES action plan for the species.

NICARAGUA

Two regional CITES-related projects were carried out: economic assessment of trade in CITES species and update of lists of CITES species.

PERU

The results of the population assessment of the West Indian cedar were presented in Lima on 10 September 2010. The assessment was made in the framework of UNALM – ITTO Project PD 251/03 REV. 3 (F). The aim was to encourage decision makers, the timber industry and experts to replicate this type of study with other species.

SURINAME

Action Plan for *Cedrela odorata* in Suriname. Objectives: 1. Carry out a study on the occurrence of *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii* in Suriname. 2. Assess the populations of these species, considering, among other issues, the distribution, cover, density, size structure, regeneration dynamics and changes in land use. 3. Compile information on exports, volumes and products of the species listed above.

VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)

One of the CITES projects in the region is the *Proposal to develop an identification manual for CITES-listed species*, in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO).

d) Nursery registration

ARGENTINA

To date, eight nurseries have been registered.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

To date, 29 nurseries are registered; they all propagate ornamental plants.

ECUADOR

Although Ecuador does not have any nurseries registered with the CITES Secretariat, 4 commercial nurseries registered with the Ministry of the Environment export orchids.

PERU

Peru has a registration scheme for nurseries that artificially propagate specimens of plant species of the genus *Phragmipedium* (family Orchidaceae) included in Appendix I.

e) Registration of scientific institutions

ARGENTINA

To date, 10 scientific institutions are registered (http://www.cites.org/common/reg/s_si.html).

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dr Rafael Moscoso Puello National Botanic Garden keeps a register of scientific institutions dealing with plant issues.

ECUADOR

So far, 11 institutions – CITES Scientific Authorities – are registered. Six of them have herbaria and plant specialists.

f) Other matters

BRAZIL

The country is working on the implementation of an electronic system to register scientific institutions with the aim of implementing Resolution Conf. 11.15.

ECUADOR

Ecuador has started to record planted trees, plantations, natural regeneration and native forests in the forest register. The aim is to develop a reliable inventory of existing species, including the volume and distribution of the mahogany and West Indian cedar in each province of the country.

NICARAGUA

Two community-based projects are being implemented to establish agroforestry systems in the protected areas Miraflor Moropotente and Tepesomoto la Pataste. The aim is to improve forest ecosystems and the quality of life of human communities at the same time.

PERU

The Preparatory Regional Meeting of Member Countries of ACTO for CITES CoP15 took place in Lima from 24 to 26 February 2010. It was attended by representatives from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Suriname, and was supported by the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). It was devoted to reviewing the main amendment proposals submitted by the Parties of the region, strategic issues and

the implementation and interpretation of the Convention. It also planned activities to implement in relation to CITES issues with the support of ACTO.

The CITES Scientific Authority made non-detriment findings for populations of the bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) to set export quotas for 2009 and 2010.

Peru has a computer application that allows online access to information on CITES permits for the bigleaf mahogany in the portal of the Ministry of Agriculture (www.minag.gob.pe) from the Web page of the *Dirección General Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre*, or directly from the following address: (<http://www.minag.gob.pe/dgffs/>).

SURINAME

National Forest Programme: FAO finances activities to strengthen national forest activities. In Suriname, this programme was launched in 2009 and aims to develop projects in support of the implementation of the national forest policy over the three following years.

5. Capacity-building

a) Capacity-building on CITES issues

ARGENTINA

Capacity-building courses were held for Customs and law enforcement authorities, universities and the general public.

BRAZIL

In October 2010, 28 IBAMA officials were trained in the identification of non-timber plant species and animal species that are typically listed in the CITES Appendices. As regards timber species, 49 IBAMA inspectors received training in a 120-hour course and 17 inspectors of the federal police received training in a 40-hour course.

COSTA RICA

A capacity-building *Workshop on the curriculum and guidelines for handling confiscated wildlife* was held in December 2010 (Humane Society International and DOI-USA). It was aimed at government officials, Customs, the police, judges and quarantine officials.

CUBA

Workshops and meetings on CITES plant issues were held in the National Botanic Garden (Orchids). With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, training on CITES issues was given to the management staff of all companies registered to import timber; with a focus on new regulations on the West Indian cedar resulting from CoP15 and the inclusion of new timber species in Appendix III.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Two capacity-building workshops were organized for CITES authorities in the Dominican Republic, in the framework of the cooperation between DOI, CCAD and CITES. Capacity-building on CITES implementation must continue.

ECUADOR

Capacity-building workshops were held on the following topics: registration of collections, prevention of international wildlife trafficking, CITES capacity-building for border control authorities, CITES capacity-building for post office staff, and CITES capacity building for public prosecutors and Customs officials on the West Indian cedar and bigleaf mahogany. Several capacity-building workshops were also held for officials of the Ministry of the Environment in the various provinces.

GUATEMALA

In coordination with the *Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo* (CCAD) and with the support of the CITES Secretariat, the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) developed a capacity-building programme for CITES authorities, including enforcement authorities, as well as other agencies and organizations, to improve the implementation of the Convention on a national and regional level. From May to September 2010, five capacity-building and information-sharing workshops and events were held. They dealt with general issues related to the sustainable use of CITES-listed species and procedures for Customs control of trade in these species. They were aimed at Customs administrators and officials, public prosecutors and judges. The "Workshop on procedures to inspect shipments of CITES-listed timber species" was held with the support of CONAP (*Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas*, the National Council for Protected Areas) and ACOFOP, the Association of Forest Communities of the Peten area.

NICARAGUA

Capacity-building workshops on the implementation of CITES were held for institutions directly involved in the control of both legal and illegal trade of wild plant species, such as Customs, the department in charge of processing export applications, the police, the army and judicial environmental authorities.

PERU

Capacity-building programme for enforcement authorities and stakeholders involved in the control of CITES-listed endangered wildlife. In the framework of this programme, a capacity-building course-workshop was held on CITES. It was aimed at staff of the National Police and dealt with general aspects of the Convention, regulations, taxonomy and nomenclature of CITES-listed species, and control, identification and handling of wild flora and fauna. There were also workshops on forestry trials, identification of commercial timber from Peru, timber volume calculation and forest monitoring techniques.

b) Capacity building on non-detriment findings (NDFs)

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica participated in the *Capacity-building workshop on non-detriment findings in Central America and the Dominican Republic* held in Santo Domingo in November 2010 (CCAD-DOI-USA).

The country also participated in the *CITES regional workshop for Central and South America* aimed at strengthening CITES implementation to guarantee sustainable management of wild species and non-detrimental trade. Bogota, Colombia, December 2010 (CITES Secretariat).

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The International Workshop on non-detriment findings was held from 15 to 18 November 2010 under the auspices of CCAD-DOI.

ECUADOR

Ecuador participated in the workshop on non-detriment findings held in Bogota (Colombia) in December. A capacity-building workshop on NDFs for Scientific Authorities is planned for the second week of February.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala participated in the *Capacity-building workshop on non-detriment findings in Central America and the Dominican Republic* held in Santo Domingo in November 2010 (CCAD-DOI-USA).

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua participated in the regional workshop on non-detriment findings held in the Dominican Republic. A case study on trade in bigleaf mahogany was used as a subject for group work.

PERU

The Annual Coordination and Capacity-Building Workshop for CITES Scientific Experts – Peru was held from 13 to 15 September 2010 in Lima. The main topic of the workshop was the making of non-detriment findings. The workshop was attended by the experts accredited by the Ministry of the Environment, whose work supports the making of the various findings prior to issuing CITES export permits.

c) Other matters

BRAZIL

A scientific technical committee for the species *Aniba rosaeodora* was created in October 2010. The committee consists of researchers and experts on the species, as well as representatives of the industry. Its purpose is to help the Scientific Authority in its decisions on authorizations of management plans and other issues related to the species. There were also meetings of the scientific technical committee for the bigleaf mahogany to assess a management plan. Preparation of a DVD entitled "CITES – Importance and fundamentals: inspection subsidies – PLANTS". The DVD has been provided to IBAMA for use in its inspection-related activities. Preparation of an identification manual of timber resembling mahogany with an illustrated key for anatomical identification in the field. Preparation of a macroscopic identification key for timber species.

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua steered the development of the regional network of environmental prosecutors and attorneys for the control of wildlife trade.

d) Contacts with specialists and/or NGOs

ARGENTINA

Specialists from various institutions – Scientific Authorities and NGOs – are regularly consulted.

COSTA RICA

Humane Society International, *Asociación Preservacionista de Flora y Fauna* (APREFLOFAS), TRAFFIC, BirdLife, WWF, Widecast, WHMSI.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Jaragua Group

GUATEMALA

Main contacts: BIGU Herbarium of the University of San Carlos of Guatemala, *Centro de Datos para la Conservación de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala*, *Fundación Naturaleza para la Vida – NPV*, Rainforest Alliance.

PANAMA

University of Panama, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI).

6. Difficulties in implementing CITES in the countries in the region

a) Conservation issues

BRAZIL

There is a lack of information on *in situ* conservation of timber species. Inspectors are also needed at several ports of exit of CITES-listed species.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic has defined its policy for the conservation of its natural resources and has designated new national protected areas, which are being inventoried and monitored.

ECUADOR

Ecuador has problems controlling orchids, given that it is difficult to distinguish between artificially-propagated and wild orchids. To improve controls, it is necessary to know the list of orchids that are difficult or impossible to propagate.

PERU

Studies are needed on the phenology of *Swietenia macrophylla* and *Cedrela odorata*, because of the impact of climate change. It is also necessary to study the management of natural regeneration in pure and mixed plantations.

Monitoring: in the framework of its commitment to transparent management of bigleaf mahogany populations, Peru verifies 100 % of the trees declared in management plans, has dedicated staff working on these activities, and devotes a high percentage of the budget of the Management Authority exclusively to monitoring the populations of one species: *Swietenia macrophylla*.

b) Technical aspects

COSTA RICA

Conduct of reviews of significant trade.

ECUADOR

Ecuador does not yet have an inventory of populations of the bigleaf mahogany and West Indian cedar.

PERU

There is little staff specialized in the identification of wild plants. It is necessary to allocate funds for regional capacity-building on monitoring and control. A stronger relationship and better communication are needed between CITES Enforcement Authorities, Management Authorities and the Scientific Authority. It is necessary to have a clearer allocation of responsibilities and a working plan to strengthen CITES implementation at the national level, with greater involvement of stakeholders and a common vision. More information must be generated on the status of populations of CITES-listed non-timber species in order to make non-detriment findings.

c) Legislation

ARGENTINA

Complementary regulations to CITES need to be strengthened.

d) Other matters

ECUADOR

A shipment of orchid specimens was seized in The Netherlands. According to the Dutch Scientific Authority, the orchids were wild. However, no formal complaint was made through our embassy, so it was not possible to prosecute the case. A request was made for the plants to be re-exported in order to verify whether they were wild or not. Unfortunately this procedure took too long and many of the orchids died.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala's main difficulty implementing actions in the framework of CITES is the lack of financial resources, especially to complete the CITES projects in the region: funds to start Stage II of the "Integrated National Inventory of the Species: *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa* and *D. stevensonii* in Guatemala". Funding is also needed to organize capacity-building courses to strengthen CITES implementation in Guatemala.

PANAMA

Capacity building on the making of non-detriment findings, funding to make inventories of populations of endangered plant species, and funds (e.g. cooperation fund and scholarships) to provide specialized training in plant groups (orchids, among others) are all needed.

7. Other matters related to CITES (e.g. medicinal plants and timber species)

ARGENTINA

Several institutions are planning to study harvest practices of native plant species whose natural populations are experiencing various degree of decline due to their use as herbal products or to make beverages, textiles or dyes.

ECUADOR

Capacity-building workshops on the importance of species, pests and diseases were held in communities. One of the results of controls performed in the National Post of Ecuador is the control of viable seeds of endemic species. Capacity-building courses held in 2008 were followed by a seizure every week. In 2009, there was a seizure every three months, because the Post Office staff did not accept parcels containing biological samples if they did not have a permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment. All scientific samples must be accompanied by a certificate.

GUATEMALA

All exports of CITES-listed timber species authorized by CONAP (160 shipments) were verified. Guatemala participated in the coordination and steering of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species of Guatemala, as a national Scientific Authority for timber species. Preparation of the technical proposal of the Manual of Procedures for International Trade in Timber Species Listed in CITES Appendices II and III (*Swietenia macrophylla* King, *Swietenia humilis* Zuccarini, *Cedrela odorata* L, *Dalbergia retusa* Hemsl and *Dalbergia stevensonii* Standl). Capacity-building aimed at staff of CITES implementation and enforcement agencies. Creation of the annual newsletter of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species of Guatemala.

8. Work to be done until the next Plants Committee meeting

ARGENTINA

The technical identification sheet for the species *Bulnesia sarmientoi* is currently in the stage of preparation and consultation with range States.

ECUADOR

Ecuador is planning to list the species *Bursera graveolens* (palo santo) and *Croton lechleri* (sangre de Drago) in CITES Appendix III.

PERU

The CITES Scientific Authority has been reviewing Peruvian species of wild flora listed in the CITES Appendices to contribute to the work done by the CITES Secretariat through UNEP-WCMC and improve the species database on the CITES website.

Continue implementing the Strategic Action Plan for Mahogany. Register with the CITES Secretariat those nurseries that need to be. Continue training scientific experts and enforcement authorities.

Binational Training Course with Ecuador for Enforcement Authorities. Review the conservation status of the genus *Phragmipedium* (Appendix I), mainly *P. pearcei*. Prepare identification manuals.

9. Other matters

NICARAGUA

As regards legislation, Nicaragua has prepared a wildlife bill, which will be submitted to the National Assembly for approval. The country has also begun updating the decree on rules and procedures for the export and import of wild flora and fauna (the legal instrument for CITES implementation).

URUGUAY

There were no commercial activities involving plants. Uruguay does not have CITES-listed timber species, and orchids, cacti and epiphytes of the genus *Tillandsia* do not have commercial importance. Last year, there was only one export of plant material: drinkable gel of *Aloe arborescens* Millerii produced from cultivars and exported to Italy.