

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



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Timber issues

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE BIGLEAF MAHOGANY AND OTHER
NEOTROPICAL TIMBER SPECIES [DECISIONS 15.91, 15.92 AND 14.146 (REV. COP15)]

This document has been submitted by the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species.*

1. Background

The Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group was renamed the "Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species" by Decision 15.91, and Annex 3 of the Decisions defines the mandate and membership of the group. Its activities and achievements have been as follows.

2. Actions taken

2.1 Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species

Notification to the Parties No. 2010/020 of 26 July 2010 made reference to paragraph 2. f) of Annex 3 of the Decisions, which stipulates that: "The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the working group shall be undertaken by people from the range States who will be selected by the Plants Committee on the basis of their curricula vitae within a period of one month after the entry into force of the Decision...", and recalled that the Secretariat had invited proposals for candidates through Notification to the Parties No. 2010/009 of 12 May 2010.

All the nominations received were forwarded to the Interim Chair of the Plants Committee for consideration within the committee, and the Plants Committee appointed the following candidates: Chair: Mr César Augusto Belletón Chacón (Guatemala), and Vice-Chair: Ms Fabiola Núñez (Peru).

2.2 Membership of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species sent Communication No. GTC 001/2010 on 12 October 2010 to: all the range States; the major mahogany-importing Parties: the Dominican Republic, the European Union (Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and the United States of America; and intergovernmental organizations: Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), Central American Commission for Environment and

* *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.*

Development (CCAD), European Union, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). All recipients were requested to forward the name of the person who would serve as their representative in the Working Group, accompanied by information such as personal and office address, e-mail address, personal and office phone numbers, and other information deemed helpful for purposes of communication.

Currently, the Working Group comprises 23 representatives from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and from these intergovernmental organizations: Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), European Union, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (see details in Annex 1).

Through Notification to the Parties No. 2010/031 of 28 October 2010, issued by the CITES Secretariat at the request of the Interim Chair of the Plants Committee, the Parties were requested to communicate the names and *curriculum vitae* of candidates from scientific institutions with relevant experience in forestry and management of neotropical timber species, experts from NGOs with experience in the forest management of these species in the region, and representatives from organizations of exporters from the three main exporting countries. The deadline having now passed, it still remains for the Plants Committee to communicate the names of the candidates selected to join the Working Group.

2.3 Proposed action plan of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species presented a draft action plan to the Interim Chair and to the regional representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean in the Plants Committee. The draft action plan outlined strategic lines of action, actions, results, indicators and activities to be undertaken under the mandate of the Working Group as defined in Decision 15.91 (see Annex 2 to the present document, Spanish only).

2.4 Creation of the blog of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species

As a result of initiatives by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species, a blog was created (<http://grupodetrabajocaoba.blogspot.com>) with the aim that it should become a medium to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of experiences on the sustainable use and management of these species and to contribute to capacity-building in the range States.

2.5 Participation in regional workshops

2.5.1 Capacity-building workshop on non-detriment findings for Central America and the Dominican Republic

As part of a *Capacity-building workshop on non-detriment findings* held in the Dominican Republic, the member States of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the environmental agency of the Central American Integration System (SICA), discussed on 17 November the Action Plan of the CITES Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species.

The CCAD, as a member of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species, in coordination with the Chair of the group, convened this meeting, which was attended by representatives of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, and by the CITES Secretariat represented by Ms Milena Sosa Schmidt. Comments, inputs and recommendations were made for a better implementation of the Working Group's Action Plan.

During the workshop, participants examined the form for assessing the level of risk in the making of NDFs based on information available on *Swietenia macrophylla* (the bigleaf mahogany) in Central America and the Dominican Republic. Within the general conclusions of this analysis, highlights include: a) the analysis is the product of a rapid review of the elements included in the risk assessment form created at the International Expert Workshop on NDFs, held in 2008 in Cancún, Mexico; b) dealing with most elements of the form requires the generation of basic information, making it necessary to develop research at the local level and financial support mechanisms at the regional level in order to undertake baseline studies in each country, standardized at the regional level; and c) the participants identified 17 priority elements and four subsidiary ones for the analysis of mahogany, with five elements being considered not applicable to that analysis. In addition to the

analysis just described, the workshop also saw discussions on the applicability of the recommendations of the 2008 International Expert Workshop in Cancún.

2.5.2 Third Latin American Workshop under the ITTO-CITES Programme to ensure that international trade in CITES-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), as a member of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species, placed on the agenda of the Third Latin American Workshop under the ITTO-CITES Programme, held from 15 to 17 February 2011 in Brasilia, Brazil, a discussion on the Future of the Programme and of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species. The Chair of the Working Group presented the Action Plan, describing the strategic lines of action and the activities to be undertaken in the future. This was followed by a discussion and inputs by the participants, and there was general agreement that it was important to support the work that the Group may undertake for capacity-building and for exchanging knowledge and experience, as well as for generating information on the management and conservation of, and trade in, mahogany and the other neotropical timber species.

2.5.3 Regional meeting to prepare for the 19th Meeting of the Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

On 23 to 25 February 2010 the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) organized the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 19th Meeting of the CITES Plants Committee. Work on the present report was carried out at that meeting under the guidance of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group.

2.6 Progress in the implementation of the Action Plan for *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*, contained in Annex 4 of the Decisions

2.6.1 Background

The CITES Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2010/027 on 24 August 2010, listing the information to be submitted for consideration at future meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees. This Notification explained the responsibilities of the Parties with regard to *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*, and concluded with: "The Secretariat would appreciate receiving the above reports by 15 January 2011 so as to have sufficient time to collate and summarize the information in due time for the 19th and 25th meetings of the Plants and Animals Committee."

Parties were also requested to make their reports as succinct as possible. In order to facilitate reporting on progress in implementing the Action Plan for *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii* (see Annex 4 to the Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 15th meeting), specifically with reference to what is required in paragraphs 1. a)-d) and 2. a) and b), Ms Dora Rivera, regional representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean in the Plants Committee, prepared a questionnaire which was sent out by the CITES Secretariat. This was completed by the exporting and importing Parties and returned to the CITES Secretariat by 15 January 2011, so that the latter could incorporate this information and prepare the report to be submitted to the Plants Committee.

2.6.2 Results obtained

Reports from Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Guyana, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States were received through the CITES Secretariat; and reports from Cuba, Guatemala and Honduras through the Chair of the Working Group on the Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species. Malaysia and South Africa reported that they were neither range States nor importers of the species concerned. Côte d'Ivoire reported that it was evaluating its information.

The information received was organized and analysed, and the findings for each species and indicator are presented in the matrix of results of the Action Plan for *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*, attached as Annex 3 (Spanish only).

Information received on *Cedrela odorata*

From the information received, the countries reporting themselves to be range States of *Cedrela odorata* were Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico and Peru.

The countries reporting as importers of *Cedrela odorata* were Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States.

Australia reported that, while *Cedrela odorata* was not endemic to its territory, it had forest plantations of this species.

Information received on *Dalbergia retusa*

From the information received, the countries reporting to be range States of *Dalbergia retusa* were Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

The countries reporting as importers of *Dalbergia retusa* were Costa Rica and the United States.

Information received on *Dalbergia granadillo*

From the information received, the countries reporting to be range States of *Dalbergia granadillo* were Honduras and Mexico.

No information was received identifying importing States.

Information received on *Dalbergia stevensonii*

From the information received, the countries reporting to be range States of *Dalbergia stevensonii* were Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

The United States was the only country reporting imports of *Dalbergia stevensonii*.

2.6.3 Analysis of progress with the implementation of the Action Plan for *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*

Analysis of the information on *Cedrela odorata*

Range States

The range of *Cedrela odorata* extends from 26° North in Mexico to 28° South in the northern part of Argentina, and includes islands in the Caribbean (Styles, T.T. 1981; Cintron, Bárbara, 1990). The range covers the following countries: in North America, Mexico; in Central America, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; in South America, Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Suriname; and in the Caribbean, Cuba and the Dominican Republic: a total of 19 countries.

Nine countries completed and updated the information requested on the species, namely Mexico in North America; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in Central America; Brazil, Guyana and Peru in South America; and Cuba in the Caribbean. The data obtained were arranged in a matrix contained in Annex 3 (Spanish only). The results will be discussed below.

Legislation and national measures

All countries that responded to the survey have appropriate legislation relating to the use, sustainable management and conservation of forest resources. In addition, some have developed specific legislation for this species, as in the case of Honduras and Peru.

In addition to general legislation on forest species, some countries have taken special measures on the harvesting of this species, as follows: Honduras, Guatemala and Guyana have specific restrictions on harvesting, ranging from a complete ban to making harvesting conditional on the management categories of the protected wild areas; Brazil and Peru have implemented control measures directly related to felling procedures and Cuba has a programme that has prioritized the production of the West Indian cedar since 1920, based on genetic selection of seeds. Compliance with management plans is mandatory in every country.

Conservation status

Costa Rica reported that the conservation status of *Cedrela odorata* is very good; Cuba, Guyana and Mexico stated that the situation is good and stable; El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru reported that it is vulnerable; and Brazil did not have any data.

Coverage, distribution and type of forest

Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador and Peru reported that the species is widely distributed within each country, growing in various types of tropical and subtropical forest from sea level up to 1,400 metres. Guatemala and Mexico submitted more detailed data on distribution. In the case of Guatemala, the species is mainly found in the forests of Petén in the north of the country, covering approximately 3 million hectares. Mexico stated that its range covers 3.8 million hectares, while Guyana reported 13 million hectares, also with wide distribution. Honduras did not submit any information.

Forest types include evergreen, mixed, deciduous and semi-deciduous, including humid tropical forest, pre-montane forest, low montane forest, gallery forest, sub-humid forest, lowland dry forest, medium sub-deciduous forest, low deciduous forest, secondary forest, abandoned pastures and plantations, as well as others depending on the characteristics of each country. With regard to potential distribution, Honduras was the only country not to have any data. Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico and Peru provided estimates of population size, coverage and density.

Vertical stratification

With respect to the vertical stratification, Mexico and Peru both stated that this is a dominant tree species. Peru noted that *Cedrela odorata* has an adequate distribution by diameter, with individual specimens under the minimum cutting diameter present in greater numbers than specimens of larger diameter. Guatemala noted that, in unfragmented forest, the distribution by diameter demonstrated the normal pattern of natural populations and that, in fragmented forests, there was a lack of large trees, with 93 % of the trees being concentrated in the diameter range of 10 to 20 cm DBH. Guyana noted that the height of the forest canopy was between 30 and 35 m. Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba and El Salvador did not present data.

Regeneration dynamics

Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala and Mexico considered that the species had good natural regeneration within their territories, while El Salvador and Peru stated that regeneration was low. Among the factors identified as contributing to this poor regeneration were: a) loss of habitat from land use change; b) damage from pests; c) forest fires; and d) failure to implement appropriate silvicultural techniques. Brazil, Guyana and Honduras did not present information.

Inventories in natural forests

Guyana and Mexico reported that they had carried out inventories of the species in natural forests. Guatemala has preliminary results based on the national forest inventory, the first phase of the species-specific inventory, inventories to support management plans and the ongoing monitoring plots. Cuba and Peru have information from management plans and from inventorying in protected areas; while Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras do not have this type of information.

Management plans

The main objective of the management plans is to ensure sustainable timber harvesting, but Costa Rica included it in the schemes of payment for environmental services. If timber is to be harvested, compliance with the management plan is mandatory. The period of validity of these plans is very varied, ranging from one to 40 years. Within the primary guidelines of this instrument, it may be stressed that all the countries have established minimum cutting diameters, which range from 30 to 65 cm.

Zoning for harvesting and land use regulations

Cuba, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico and Peru apply zoning for the harvesting of the products of the species. El Salvador has some data, while Brazil, Costa Rica and Honduras do not have any regulations of this kind. All countries have land use plans governing changes in land use, except for El Salvador which is preparing its plan.

Plantations

The area covered by single-species and mixed plantations, intended for export, is as follows: Cuba 4,083 ha of established trees and 4,458 ha of young trees; Mexico 70,126.27 ha, with harvestable volumes of 200 to 600 m³ from single-species plantations and 150 to 180 m³ from mixed plantations; Peru 137.12 ha. Brazil and Guyana do not have plantations. Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala reported mixed plantations, but gave no further data. Honduras did not provide any information.

Exports

The main product exported is sawn wood but finished products, such as doors, windows and craft items, are also exported. Volume of *Cedrela odorata* exported over the past five years: Brazil 73,156 m³; El Salvador 56,344.22 kg; Guatemala 4,121 m³; Guyana 3,310 m³; Peru 131,924 m³. Cuba, Costa Rica and Mexico: no exports. Honduras: No report.

Importing States

Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States.

Imports

Volumes imported over the past five years: Costa Rica: 721.31 kg, originating from Canada, Colombia and Panama; Cuba (2010): 150 m³, originating from Spain; El Salvador: 400,829.22 kg; Mexico: 139,685.947 m³, originating from Guatemala, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia; Switzerland: 62 m³, originating from the Plurinational State of Bolivia; United States: 67,406.94 m³, originating from Guatemala and Peru.

Re-exports

Mexico: 234,801 m³, 94 pieces of timber as planks, destination United States; United States: 1,401 m³ of sawn wood, no destination given.

Plantations and exported products

Australia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States. All have plantations, except for Switzerland which did not provide information. Costa Rica and the United States use the product for domestic consumption. Cuba, El Salvador and Mexico have not exported any timber from their plantations. Australia, Côte d'Ivoire and Switzerland did not provide any information. Costa Rica exports finished products and Côte d'Ivoire sawn wood. The other countries do not have any information.

Analysis of the information on *Dalbergia retusa*

Range States

The range of this species extends from Mexico to Panama, covering eight countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama). Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico responded to the questionnaire to complete their information.

Legislation and national measures

All the range States have adequate legislation governing the conservation, management and harvesting of the species. Some countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico have taken special measures which range from a total ban to special provisions for its harvesting within protected wild areas.

Conservation status

Costa Rica reported that the status of the species is good. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras consider it vulnerable and Mexico is developing a project which will allow it to evaluate the situation.

Coverage, distribution and type of forest

The species is rare in El Salvador. Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico have very general information about coverage. Guatemala has no information on this. The species is found mainly in tropical dry forests, evergreen forests and live oak forests, but may also be found in disturbed areas and plantations. With regard to potential national distribution data, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Mexico have some information, while Guatemala and Honduras have none. No country has information regarding population size, coverage or density.

Vertical stratification

No data submitted.

Regeneration dynamics

Costa Rica reported good regeneration and El Salvador stated that there was natural regeneration. Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico had no information.

Inventories in natural forests

None of the countries has inventories of the species in natural forests. Guatemala reported on a validated methodology for undertaking the consolidated national inventory of CITES-listed timber species.

Management plans

The main objective of the management plans is to ensure sustainable harvesting of timber, but Costa Rica includes it in the schemes of payment for environmental services. Only Costa Rica and Guatemala have management plans for this species, both countries reporting a duration of between 10 and 40 years for such plans. The other countries did not report any data. Costa Rica added that the minimum cutting diameters for the species are from 40 to 60 cm.

Zoning for harvesting and land use regulations

Only Guatemala has zoning and land use regulations on the harvesting of this species, which is undertaken in accordance with the management categories of the national system of protected wild areas. El Salvador is preparing similar measures. The other countries only have rules on changes in land use.

Plantations

Costa Rica and Guatemala indicated that they have mixed plantations including this species, but reported no data on their area or on the usable volume.

Exports

The main exported product is sawn wood. Guatemala reported that it exported 19.83 m³ in 2008.

Importing States

Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire and the United States.

Imports

Costa Rica: 271.4 kg originating from Nicaragua; United States: 15 m³ originating from Guatemala. There are no data on re-exports. Of these countries only Costa Rica has plantations, but did not report data on exports or utilization.

Analysis of the information on *Dalbergia granadillo*

Countries that provided data in response to the survey: Honduras and Mexico.

Legislation and national measures

Both countries have adequate legislation governing the conservation, management and harvesting of the species. Mexico has no additional measures, but Honduras has established a ban.

Conservation status

Mexico did not report data. In Honduras the status is vulnerable.

Coverage, distribution and type of forest

There are no data on forest coverage but Mexico has a potential distribution map and harvesting data covering Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacán, Jalisco and Veracruz, where the species is reported in low deciduous forest, live oak forest, mixed pine and live oak forest and induced grassland. In Honduras the species is found in broadleaf forest. There are no data regarding population size, coverage or density.

Vertical stratification

No data reported.

Regeneration dynamics

No data reported.

Inventories in natural forests

No data reported.

Management plans

Both countries require management plans for harvesting of the species. Mexico does have management plans that include the species. The main objective is harvesting the timber. These plans are valid for 10 years. No information given on minimum cutting diameters.

Zoning for harvesting and land use regulations

The only land use regulations reported are at municipal level.

Plantations

No data reported.

Exports

Mexico has not exported specimens in the past five years. Honduras has a ban on exporting.

Importing States

No information received.

Analysis of the information on *Dalbergia stevensonii*

Countries that provided data in response to the survey: Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

Legislation and national measures

The three countries have adequate legislation governing the conservation, management and harvesting of the species. Guatemala and Mexico have no additional measures, while Honduras has established a ban.

Conservation status

Mexico did not report any data. In Guatemala and Honduras the status is vulnerable.

Coverage, distribution and type of forest

There are no data on national distribution or forest coverage, nor on the potential range of the species. Only Mexico has a map of potential distribution and records of harvesting in Chiapas. The species is found mainly in broadleaf forests and possibly in forest plantations. As for population size and density, Mexico has averages for Campeche, Chiapas, Nayarit, Quintana Roo and San Luis Potosí.

Vertical stratification

No data reported.

Regeneration dynamics

No data reported.

Inventories in natural forests

No data reported. Guatemala reported on a validated methodology for undertaking the consolidated national inventory of CITES-listed timber species.

Management plans

The three countries require management plans for harvesting, but only Guatemala has authorized plans covering this species, primarily to harvest the timber. The management plans are for a period of 30 to 40 years, and no minimum cutting diameter is reported.

Zoning for harvesting and land use regulations

Guatemala applies zoning and controls harvesting based on the management categories of the protected natural wild areas. In the case of Honduras and Mexico, land use plans are at municipal level.

Plantations

Only Guatemala reported that the species exists in single-species and mixed plantations, but gave no data on area or potential harvestable volume.

Exports

Guatemala has exported 322.21 m³ during the past five years. Mexico has not exported. Honduras has a ban on exporting.

Importing States

Côte d'Ivoire and the United States.

The United States has imported 21 m³ of sawn wood during the past five years, and has re-exported 8.3 m³, but gave no destination information. Côte d'Ivoire provided no information.

Details of the confirmed members of the Working Group on the
Bigleaf Mahogany and Other Neotropical Timber Species

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