

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



Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee  
Tbilisi (Georgia), 19-23 October 2015

Regional matters

Regional reports

OCEANIA\*

1. This document has been submitted by the regional representative for Oceania (Dr Greg Leach, Australia).
2. As it was received by the Secretariat after the deadline for submission of documents, it is provided herewith in English only (the language in which it was submitted).

General information

3. a) Representative: Greg Leach (Australia)
- b) Alternate: Marika Tuiwawa (Fiji)
- c) Number of Parties in the region: 8 (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). The following 9 countries in Oceania are not Parties to the Convention: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu.
- d) Parties responding to communications: Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu.
4. Directory

The Australian Management Authority continues to maintain a regional directory of contacts and experts in the region. A version dated September 2015 is available and attached as an Annex.

Communication with Parties in the region since PC 21 (Veracruz, May 2014)

5. A report of PC21 highlighting those issues of relevance to Oceania was distributed to CITES contacts in the region and this was followed with a further update in February 2015. Items highlighted included:
  - a) Support to SC on Annotations.

Oceania is on the SC working group on Annotations.

---

\* *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.*

- b) Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Resolution Conf. 16.5).

Oceania is represented on this WG. Oceania Parties could consider including reference to CITES related activities in its reporting to the CBD on the GSPC as many CITES activities contribute beyond Target 11 of the GSPC.

- c) Guidance on making non-detriment findings for perennial plants

Oceania Parties interested in NDF capacity building were encouraged to consider including NDF approaches and methods in any regional workshops.

- d) Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species [Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13).

No Oceania species are in any stages of the Significant Trade Review. Of interest to the region is that *Hoodia* has been selected along with some long-standing problem species such as *Prunus africana* and *Pterocarpus santalinus*. Oceania participated in the WG.

- e) Agarwood glossary (Decision 16.155)

Oceania participated in the WG to further refine the glossary. Comments received from AU were provided to the co-chairs. The glossary side event was held at the Agarwood workshop in India focussed on plantation management. The workshop results have been provided to the Australian company that has developed Agarwood plantations. PNG as an Agarwood range state did not attend the workshop in India.

- f) Reporting on trade in artificially propagated plants Decision 14.40 (Rev. CoP16)

Oceania did not participate in the WG.

- g) Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) and Malagasy rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.) (Decision 16.152)

Oceania did not participate in the working group.

- h) East African sandalwood (*Osyris lanceolata*) (Decisions 16.153 and 16.154)

Oceania had interest in this in terms of implications for Oceania species of Sandalwood. Identification issues between East African Sandalwood and Asian/Oceanian Sandalwood for products in trade may be a concern. Given the considerable amount of work going on with wood identification for CITES-listed species then the region should ensure that Sandalwood (both listed and non-listed) is now included in these activities.

- i) Agarwood-producing taxa (*Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp.) [Resolution Conf. 16.10; Decisions 16.156, 16.157 and 15.95 (Rev. CoP16)]

Parties in Oceania have differing views on how CITES should deal with mixed species plantations. Oceania is a member of the intersessional WG formed to progress this Decision.

- j) Periodic Review of species included in Appendices I and II [Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP16)]

There were a number of sub items under Periodic Review. A WG was formed. No species from Oceania are in the Periodic Review process.

#### Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

6. As has been reported regularly to PC, capacity remains the over-riding issue for CITES implementation in the region. There is a small population size in relation to area administered, and for island states the government departments are small. CITES is normally but a small part of the wide range of environment and conservation responsibilities of a small number of government officials. Often just one or two people deal with all of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and staff turnover rates are often high in the small public services of island nations. Some Parties have very low levels of trade in CITES species and so attending to CITES requests for information is a low priority. Electronic communications to registered MAs and SAs often fail.

7. Vanuatu reported that due to constrained human and financial resources their awareness raising about CITES in the country is done on an ad hoc basis especially with the media, the tourism industry, souvenir shops, market vendors, including customs, quarantine and Police officers. The Department does not have a specific officer dealing with CITES. CITES is being handled by several officers as part of their responsibility.
8. In a region dominated by the marine environment and with numerous Small Island Developing States, the marine CITES listings attract a significant amount of attention. Conversely, plant issues have received very little attention in this period and have not been a specific component of any regional workshops. The considerable interest in the implementation of the new shark and ray listings and the challenges of providing NDFs has raised the profile of CITES within many parties and regional organisations.

#### Capacity-building activities and awareness campaigns

9. In March 2014, the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), assisted by the CITES Secretariat and Australia, ran an NDF workshop with staff from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in the Solomon Islands. The workshop focussed on the live and dead (curio) trade of corals from the Solomon Islands; the trading requirements of the main markets (USA and EU); and, the consequences of not having robust NDFs in place, with discussion about the Review of Significant Trade process that has looked at the sustainability of exports of several other marine taxa in the region.
10. Australia has facilitated a successful bid to the Secretariat to obtain EU funding to assist Parties (and non-Parties) in Oceania to develop NDFs (or comparable documentation) for their CITES-listed stocks of sharks and rays.
11. Seven of the eight Oceania Parties to CITES attended the IUCN/SPREP Second Pacific Islands Species Forum meeting in Fiji (6-8<sup>th</sup> July 2015) along with the CITES Secretariat. In part, the forum sought to inform country representatives of the status of species conservation in the Pacific and at the same time contribute to national understanding of strategies, policies and MEAs related to species and ecosystems. The 3 day forum had a half-day session focussed on Threats to species: trade and sustainable use. The day after the forum, a technical workshop titled "Improved implementation of CITES within the Pacific Islands region" was held and focussed on:
  - Key CITES-listed species and trade partners
  - (potential) benefits
  - Level of awareness and interest (for non-Parties only)
  - Current capacity level (on enforcement, legislation, scientific expertise, information management capacity)
  - (potential) challenges and capacity gaps in relation to CITES implementation/joining (in the area of enforcement, legislation, scientific expertise, information management capacity)

Australia provided funding for the workshop to the CITES Secretariat, and it was run with the assistance of SPREP. The workshop was an extremely productive day, which was useful both for identifying key needs of Oceania Parties and building networks and sharing knowledge regarding CITES. Non-Parties were also in attendance and it was a useful forum for them to gain further information about the benefits of CITES and what is required in terms of implementation.