

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 and 20-23 July 2020

Strategic matters

Cooperation with organizations and Multilateral Environmental Agreements

TOWARDS A RESOLUTION ON *CITES AND FORESTS*

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. Forests are largely defined by lands of a given area that are predominantly covered by trees (FAO, 2018)¹. The main contribution of CITES to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the world's forests and forest genetic resources² is through ensuring the proper implementation of the Convention for the plant species listed in the Appendices, which total around 30,000 species. In the case of Appendix-II listed species, this entails ensuring that exports of specimens of such species are regulated in order to maintain them throughout their range at a level that is consistent with their role in the ecosystems in which they occur (Article IV, paragraph 3).
3. The ecosystem-level contribution of CITES is also reflected in the preamble of the Convention, where Parties have recognized that "*wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth which must be protected for this and the generations to come*".
4. In 2018, the Secretariat joined the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), an informal, voluntary arrangement among 15 international organizations, institutions and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests. Its mission is to help enhance the contribution of all types of forests and trees outside forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals; to promote the sustainable management for all types of forests; and to strengthen long-term political commitment to that end. The core functions of CPF are specified in resolution 2015/33³ of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).
5. The 15 members of CPF are: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Secretariat); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES Secretariat); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Global Environment Facility (GEF Secretariat); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD Secretariat); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Forum on Forests

¹ FAO. 2018. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Terms and Definitions*. www.fao.org/3/I8661EN/i8661en.pdf

² *Forest genetic resources: the heritable materials maintained within and among trees and other woody plant species* (FAO, 2014; at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e.pdf>).

³ <https://undocs.org/E/RES/2015/33>

(UNFF Secretariat); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC Secretariat); World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); and the World Bank.

6. On 27 January 2020 (FAO headquarters, Rome), the CPF Principals of the member organizations endorsed the “*CPF Strategic Vision towards 2030*”. The vision states that: “*By 2030 all types of forests and forest landscapes are sustainably managed, their multiple values are fully recognized, the potential of forests and their goods and services is fully unlocked, and the Global Forest Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global forest-related goals, targets and commitments are achieved. To support countries to achieve these aims, CPF will effectively enhance coherence and synergy on forest-related issues and values among its member organizations and help move from deforestation to restoration*”. The full strategic vision statement is available in an information document.
7. The vision is to be achieved through the implementation of six strategic priorities:
 - a) support the achievement of the globally agreed goals and targets on forests;
 - b) promote science-policy interface and science-based decision-making;
 - c) enhance communication and outreach activities;
 - d) enhance cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence, coordination, and integrated approaches;
 - e) unlock the full potential and values of forests; and
 - f) identify emerging issues of significant concerns to forests.
8. The CPF 2017-2020 workplan is available here: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CPF-WorkPlan-2017-2020-rev-Feb2020.pdf>. It was last updated in 2019 to reflect, *inter alia*, the addition of the Secretariat as member, and its role as a partner in support of the joint initiative on *Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World Initiative* (SW4SW), which has as its goal to strengthen sustainable wood value chains to enhance their social, economic and environmental benefits from production to consumption.
9. The last meeting of the CPF took place by conference call in May 2020 and considered updates to the current workplan and options for the theme for the International Day of Forests 2021. The Secretariat will report at the present meeting outcomes of additional CPF meetings that might have taken place before PC25.
10. On the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May 2020, FAO and UNEP (both members of the CPF) launched “*The State of the World’s Forests 2020*” (SOFO). The full digital report, interactive story, and summary are available at: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8642en>. The report highlights that some 420 million hectares of forest have been lost through conversion to other land uses since 1990, and includes considerations on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and how it has thrown into sharp focus the importance of conserving and sustainably using nature, recognizing that people’s health is linked to ecosystem health. The role of CITES in the long-term conservation of forests and their genetic resources is recognized throughout the publication, and in particular in Chapter 3 (on Forest species and genetic diversity) and Chapter 4 (on People, biodiversity and forests). These chapters contain interesting insights on trends of (legal and illegal) international trade in CITES-listed flora (e.g. rosewoods, ebonies and mahoganies), which could serve to inform ongoing decision-making processes of the Convention relevant to forests.

Towards a Resolution on CITES and forests

11. The provisions that the Conference of the Parties agreed to and that specifically relate to the implementation of the Convention for forests and their genetic resources tend to fall within five thematic categories:
 - a) tree species (including, but not limited to, timber producing species);
 - b) medicinal and aromatic plant species (MAPs);
 - c) ornamental plant species;
 - d) crosscutting implementation; and

- e) cooperation matters.

In Annexes 1 and 2 to the present document, the Secretariat has identified how Resolutions and Decisions that are in effect after the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18) and relevant to forests, fall within each of these thematic categories.

12. At present, there are no provisions that provide reference points for Parties on the broader collaboration between CITES, the CPF, and other relevant stakeholders; and only a few provisions on CITES work in matters relating to forests exist [e.g. Resolution Conf. 10.13 (Rev. CoP18) on *Implementation of the Convention for tree species*, and Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) *Non-detriment findings*]. Resolution Conf. 14.4 on *Cooperation between CITES and ITTO regarding trade in tropical timber*, and Resolution Conf. 16.5 on *Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (GSPC-CBD)* both address the collaboration between CITES and relevant stakeholders. However, these resolutions were adopted in 2007 and 2013 respectively, have not been revised since, and do not reflect the most recent developments in terms of collaboration with ITTO and CBD, which are partners in the CPF. The Secretariat provides updates on the implementation of Resolutions Conf. 14.4 and Conf. 16.5 in documents PC25 Doc. 8 (*Tree species programme*) and PC25 Comp. (*Compendium*).
13. Concerning Resolution Conf. 16.5, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.49 to 18.51 on *Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* at CoP18. Paragraph c) of Decision 18.49 requests the Secretariat to “consult the Secretariat of CBD concerning the post-2020 future of the GSPC, and collaborate with the Plants Committee in drafting any required revision of Resolution Conf. 16.5 on Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020”. As noted in document PC25 Comp. (*Compendium*), it remains unclear whether a specific proposal to update the GSPC beyond 2020 will be brought for consideration of the 15th meeting of its Conference of the Parties of the CBD. It is therefore not yet possible to draft revisions of Resolution Conf. 16.5 on *Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020*.
14. In recent years, the listings of valuable flora species in the Appendices steadily increased, and in particular those of timber-producing tree species, supported *inter alia* by the urgent need to address threats posed by potentially unsustainable levels of international trade. Recent examples are the genus level-listings of *Dalbergia* spp. (circa 250 species) in Appendix II at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016) and of *Cedrela* spp. (17 species) at CoP18. As suggested by the ongoing compliance cases related to flora, the effective implementation of the Convention for trade in an increasing range of forest resources has proven to be challenging, but of great importance for the management and conservation of forest ecosystems, and from a livelihoods and socio-economic perspective.
15. With a view to establishing a stronger and coherent framework for the implementation of the Convention for forests and their genetic resources, the Secretariat proposes to consider the strategic value of developing a consolidated resolution on *CITES and forests*, instead of revising or updating existing single-issue resolutions that relate to forests, or developing new ones on particular forest matters. The overall aim of the new resolution would be to provide broad recommendations and guidance on:
 - a) collaboration with relevant organizations (including but not limited to CPF partners);
 - b) resource mobilization to ensure timely implementation of Decisions and Resolutions relevant to forests;
 - c) the development, management and implementation of forest-related activities and programmes undertaken under CITES (such as the ongoing *CITES Tree Species Programme*, and any future initiatives relevant to forests); and
 - d) outreach, communication and visibility in relation to the work of CITES that is relevant to forests.
16. The proposed resolution would be of a strategic nature. It does not aim to replace Resolutions with provisions relating to forest and their genetic resources that are technical in nature. With this in mind, in Annex 1 of this document the Secretariat has further detailed the implications that the adoption of such a resolution could entail for existing resolutions relevant to forests and their genetic resources.
17. In the process of developing Annex 1, the Secretariat noted that Resolution Conf. 10.13 (Rev. CoP18) on the *Implementation of the Convention for tree species* does not include a definition of “tree species”. The proposed

resolution on *CITES and forests* could potentially host this and other definitions relating to forest resources, either by endorsing existing definitions (such as that of FAO⁴ for “trees”), or by developing new ones.

18. By formalizing and building upon the collective knowledge, mechanisms and networks of CPF members and other relevant organizations, the proposed new resolution could provide a collaborative framework to more effectively contribute to the timely implementation of CITES provisions relevant to forests.
19. The inputs of the Plants Committee concerning the possibility of developing a new resolution on *CITES and forests* would be of great value in the process of further developing this initiative, should it be brought forward by the Secretariat for further consideration by the Standing Committee.

Recommendations

20. The Plants Committee is invited to:
 - a) provide comments to the Secretariat on the value of exploring the development of a new resolution on *CITES and forests*; and
 - b) provide general or specific recommendations on the proposed new resolution for the Secretariat to take into account, should it bring the initiative forward for consideration by the Standing Committee.

⁴ FAO. 2018. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Terms and Definitions*. www.fao.org/3/I8661EN/i8661en.pdf

Overview of Resolutions in effect specifically relevant
to forests and their genetic resources

The categorization in the first column follows that outlined in paragraph 15 of the document, *i.e.*: a) tree species; b) medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs); c) ornamental plant species; d) crosscutting implementation; and e) cooperation.

The table is limited to those Resolutions that are *directly* and *specifically* relevant to forests and their genetic resources. Therefore, cooperation and strategic resolutions that relate to the implementation of the Convention for *both* fauna and flora, were not taken into account (e.g. Resolution Conf. 18.4 on *Cooperation with IPBES*). The table does also not include Resolutions concerning the implementation of CITES for trade in plant species in general (e.g. Resolution Conf 18.7 on *Legal acquisition findings*; Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*; Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP18) on *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species*).

Category	Resolution and associated PC25 item	Actions anticipated should a Resolution on CITES and forests were adopted
a) Tree species	Resolution Conf. 10.13 (Rev. CoP18) on the <i>Implementation of the Convention for tree species</i> Agenda item: N/A	The Resolution is mostly of a technical nature, but its paragraph 1 a) includes recommendations that are strategic (<i>i.e.</i> collaboration with international organizations, including some that are already CPF members). Proposed action: Whilst the technical aspects of the resolution would remain unmodified, the Secretariat proposes that cooperation elements of paragraph 1 a) could be migrated and merged under a new, consolidated resolution on <i>CITES and forests</i> .
b) MAPs	Resolution Conf. 16.10 on <i>Implementation of the Convention for agarwood-producing taxa</i> Agenda item: PC25 Doc. 24 on <i>Agarwood-producing taxa (Aquilaria spp. and Gyrinops spp.)</i>	No immediate action envisioned, beyond the recommendations proposed in the relevant PC25 agenda item.
d) Crosscutting	Resolution Conf. 11.11 (Rev. CoP18) on <i>Regulation of trade in plants</i> Agenda item: PC25 Comp.	No immediate action envisioned, beyond the recommendations proposed under the relevant PC25 agenda item.
d) Crosscutting	Resolution Conf. 9.19 (Rev. CoP15) on <i>Registration of nurseries that artificially propagate specimens of Appendix-I plant species for export purposes</i> Agenda item: PC25 Comp.	No immediate action envisioned, beyond the recommendations proposed under the relevant PC25 agenda item.
d) Crosscutting	Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP18) on <i>Standard nomenclature</i> Agenda item: PC25 Doc. 31 on <i>Report of the nomenclature specialist</i>	No immediate action envisioned, beyond the recommendations proposed under the relevant PC25 agenda item.
e) Cooperation	Resolution Conf. 14.4 on <i>Cooperation between CITES and ITTO regarding trade in tropical timber</i>	The Resolution was adopted at CoP14 in 2007 and has not been updated since. The collaboration between CITES and ITTO has evolved and grown

Category	Resolution and associated PC25 item	Actions anticipated should a Resolution on CITES and forests were adopted
	Agenda item: PC25 Doc. 8 on <i>Tree species programme</i>	considerably, particularly in the framework of the CITES tree species programme and collaboration through the CPF. Proposed action: Guidelines on collaboration with ITTO to be updated and integrated in the proposed new resolution on <i>CITES and forests</i> .
e) Cooperation	Resolution Conf. 16.5 on <i>Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity</i> Agenda item: PC25 Comp.	The Resolution was adopted at CoP16 (2013) and, based on the post-2020 framework CBD might adopt, it will require to be either significantly revised, or reconsidered. Proposed action: In anticipation of CBDs post-2020 framework, rather than revising this Resolution, guidelines on cooperation with GSPC to be updated and integrated in the proposed new resolution on <i>CITES and forests</i> .

Overview of Decisions in effect specifically relevant
to forests and their genetic resources

The categorization in the first column follows that outlined in paragraph 15 of the document, *i.e.*: a) tree species; b) medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs); c) ornamental plant species; d) crosscutting implementation; and e) cooperation.

In the case of Decisions, the grouping into these categories was based on the mandates and activities themselves. For example, whilst the implementation of the Convention for orchids could fall under categories b) (MAPs) or c) (ornamental plant species), the mandates of Decisions 18.327 to 18.330 on *Products containing specimens of Appendix-II orchids* are more directly relevant to MAPs.

Category	Decision(s)	Title	PC25 agenda item and comments
a) Tree species	18.234 – 18.237	Rosewood tree species [Leguminosae (Fabaceae)]	PC25 Doc. 26.1
a) Tree species	17.302	African tree species	PC25 Doc. 28
a) Tree species	18.299	Neotropical tree species	PC25 Doc. 29
a) Tree species	18.307 – 18.308	Production of a CITES Checklist for <i>Dalbergia</i> spp.	PC25 Doc. 34
a) Tree species	18.321 – 18.322	Annotation #15	PC25 Doc. 36
a) Tree species	18.140 – 18.143 & 16.58 (Rev. CoP18)	Identification of timber and other wood products	PC25 Doc. 19
a) Tree species	18.14 – 18.17	Tree species programme	PC25 Doc. 8 Overall guidelines for the development, management and implementation of programmes such as the CTSP, and any future initiatives relevant to forests, would be acknowledged through the new resolution on <i>CITES and forests</i> .
b) MAPs	18.203 – 18.204	Agarwood-producing taxa (<i>Aquilaria</i> spp. and <i>Gyrinops</i> spp.)	PC25 Doc. 24
b) MAPs	18.205 – 18.208	Boswellia trees (<i>Boswellia</i> spp.)	PC25 Doc. 25
b) MAPs	18.260 – 18.262	African cherry (<i>Prunus africana</i>)	PC25 Doc. 27
b) MAPs	18.300 – 18.303	Trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species	PC25 Doc. 30
b) MAPs	18.323 – 18.326	Annotation for Cape aloe (<i>Aloe ferox</i>)	N/A [Next reporting at PC26]
b) MAPs	18.327 – 18.330	Products containing specimens of Appendix-II orchids	PC25 Doc. 37
c) Ornamental	18.304 – 18.306	Nomenclature (Cactaceae Checklist and its Supplement)	PC25 Doc. 31 [Next reporting at PC26]
d) Crosscutting	18.79	Enforcement	N/A

			The decision relates to the establishment of a Task Force on illegal trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species. The Secretariat will report progress on this at the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.
d) Crosscutting	18.92	Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa	PC25 Doc. 15.5 The decision refers to the inclusion of African rosewood (<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>) in the Review of Significant Trade.
d) Crosscutting	18.94 – 18.99	Malagasy palisanders and rosewoods (<i>Dalbergia</i> spp.) and ebonies (<i>Diospyros</i> spp.)	PC25 Doc. 16.1 and PC25 Doc. 16.2
d) Crosscutting	18.178	Guidance on the term 'artificially propagated'	PC25 Comp.
d) Crosscutting	18.179 – 18.181	Specimens grown from wild-collected seeds or spores that are deemed to be artificially propagated	PC25 Doc. 23
e) Cooperation	18.49 – 18.51	Cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation	PC25 Comp.