

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



Intersessional work of the Standing Committee  
2020-2021

MALAGASY PALISANDERS AND ROSEWOODS (*DALBERGIA* SPP.)  
AND EBONIES (*DIOSPYROS* SPP.):  
UPDATE ON PROGRESS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

#### Introduction

2. The issue of Malagasy palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.) and ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) was discussed for the first time in 2013 at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013) and was also dealt with at the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65, Geneva, July 2014), which followed. At its 70th meeting (SC70, Sochi, October 2018), the Standing Committee continued to review the progress made by Madagascar in the implementation of its recommendations based on the report of the Secretariat (document SC70 Doc. 27.5.2). The members of the Standing Committee and the Parties noted that substantial progress had been made in the implementation of these recommendations. Yet, concerns were raised about the Business Plan and further actions were recommended in the framework of this process (document SC70SR).
3. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.94 to 18.99 on Malagasy palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.) and ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.). These Decisions follow those adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016) and essentially cover the issues discussed at the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee.
4. In accordance with **Decision 18.98, paragraph b**), the Standing Committee at its 72nd meeting (SC72, Geneva, August 2020) established an intersessional advisory group at the request of Madagascar to assist and advise Madagascar on the implementation of all measures adopted at CoP18 regarding *Dalbergia* spp. and *Diospyros* spp. The advisory group is composed of the following members: Madagascar (Chair), the European Union, Ireland, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Thailand and the United States of America.
5. In accordance with **Decision 18.99, paragraph d**), this report documents the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made at the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee and the Decisions adopted at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, particularly Decision 18.96.

#### Implementation by Madagascar of the recommendations made at the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70, Sochi, October 2018)

6. Regarding the implementation of Standing Committee recommendations a) and c), Madagascar reported during the discussions in the advisory group (see paragraph 14 below) that a pilot project signed in 2019 and funded by the International Tropical Timber Organization and the World Bank would make it possible to partially implement Steps 1 and 2 of Phase 1 of the Business Plan (in particular, the re-verification of the 'officially controlled' stockpile and the inventory of the 'declared but unverified' stockpile). However, a difficulty related to the transfer of the funds delayed the implementation of this project from 2019 to 2020.

7. Regarding recommendations b), d) and e), Madagascar is currently revising a part of the Business Plan and its implementation modalities, particularly through the discussions of the intersessional advisory group.

#### Implementation of the Decisions adopted at the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019)

8. In accordance with **Decision 18.99, paragraph c)**, the Secretariat issued Notification No. 2019/051 calling on potential destination countries, of shipments of illegal specimens of *Dalbergia* spp. and *Diospyros* spp. from Madagascar to take appropriate measures to ensure that such timber is not illegally transported or traded, including prohibiting entry, seizing such specimens upon arrival and apply appropriate sanctions against traffickers in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
9. On the invitation of Madagascar, the intersessional advisory group has conducted two virtual meetings. At a first meeting, held on 15 July 2020, it discussed the scientific aspects of Decision 18.96, paragraphs a) to d). At a second meeting, held on 8 October 2020, it discussed the governance aspects of Decision 18.96, paragraphs e) to h), with the participation of Ms. Baomiavotse Vahinala Raharinirina, Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Madagascar.
10. Regarding the implementation of **Decision 18.96, paragraphs a) to d)**, at the first meeting of the intersessional advisory group, Madagascar provided additional information to the report submitted to the Plants Committee (see paragraph 14).
11. Regarding the implementation of **Decision 18.96, paragraph e)**, Madagascar noted the will of the Government to restructure the precious wood industry. In accordance with the current policy, there have not been any legal exports of precious woods from Madagascar since January 2019 (as per the instruction note given on 29 January 2019, banning any logging, exploitation, movement or export of Malagasy ebonies, palisanders and rosewoods). The 'zero tolerance' policy is upheld and the control and surveillance measures at the border and in protected areas have been strengthened. There is close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that individuals found guilty of illegal logging or trade of precious woods fully serve their prison sentences.
12. Regarding the implementation of **Decision 18.96, paragraph f)**, as a reminder, the document entitled *Mécanisme de Vérification des Stocks et Business Plan* [Stockpile Verification Mechanism and Business Plan] (document SC70 Doc. 27.5.1) distinguishes between two different types of timber stockpiles: an 'officially controlled' stockpile of rosewood and ebony, also known as 'stockpile of seized wood', and a stockpile of palisanders, rosewoods and ebonies known as 'declared but unverified' stockpile. The key issue currently discussed in the intersessional advisory group is the status and use of these stockpiles by Madagascar. Below, the Secretariat provides some clarifications to the Standing Committee on the current status of both stockpiles and the intentions recently expressed by Madagascar on their future use:
  - a) The stockpile of rosewood and ebony known as 'officially controlled' stockpile or 'stockpile of seized wood' remains under the control of the Government and is stored in several locations of the country. It comprises 28,666 logs (that is, approximately 3,200 m<sup>3</sup>, which are equivalent to about 188 containers). Regarding the use of this stockpile, Madagascar reported that its wish was to use it domestically as a first step. The processing of logs into finished products would be done by the domestic sectors with the aim of supporting them, since they have suffered from the wood crisis for several years now. Depending on the ability to absorb the stockpile on a domestic level, part of this stockpile could possibly be the subject of international trade and thus be exported, adhering to legal and international conditions. Before using this stockpile, a pilot project will make it possible to conduct an inventory and mark the logs using an adapted traceability technology.
  - b) The stockpile of palisanders, rosewoods and ebonies known as 'declared but unverified timber' is based on the declarations made by private owners under Ordinance 2011-001 of 8 August 2011. The Government does not have control over this stockpile, which, according to the declarations made in 2011, comprises a total of 301,653 logs, 10 containers, 589,344 planks and 1,774 kg. Regarding the use of this stockpile, Madagascar reported that there is a real potential to export it provided that national and international regulations allow it.
13. Regarding the implementation of **Decision 18.96, paragraph g)**, Madagascar reported that it is preparing a budget proposal to ask for the assistance of the Parties and technical and financial partners in the implementation of this Decision.

14. In accordance with **Decision 18.96, paragraph h**), Madagascar submitted a report to the Plants Committee (document PC25 Doc. 16.1) on the scientific aspects of Decision 18.96, paragraphs a) to d).

#### Conclusions

15. Madagascar has shown a strong will to implement the recommendations of the Standing Committee and Decision 18.96 of the Conference of the Parties, despite the difficult current situation. Discussions are ongoing, particularly through the intersessional advisory group, to pursue the implementation of these measures.