

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

Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Lausanne (Switzerland), 9 to 20 October 1989

Reports and Recommendations of Committees

PLANTS COMMITTEE

This report covers the first meeting (PC1) of the Plants Committee (PC) of CITES, and some subsequent activities and plans. The second meeting (PC2) will be held at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Plants Committee made significant progress at PC1. The PC recognizes the need to strengthen plant information for Management Authorities and Scientific Authorities in most Parties. The PC plans to develop effective networks on plants in each of the six CITES regions by creating PC regional committees, and linking them to related conservation efforts. Clearly, to know which plants are or may be at risk from international trade either at export or import, Parties must have access to a system first to know plants, then to know which plants are or may be in international trade and which are or may be at risk. CITES national and international structures offer a unique framework to advance and integrate knowledge of threatened and potentially threatened taxa, especially in planning for the environment and development of natural resources.

Some PC Goals and Priorities

1. To improve the CITES mechanism and administration for plants so that the treaty is an effective, simple tool to conserve qualifying taxa in international trade, without encumbering trade in specimens that usually are not of conservation concern (such as artificially propagated specimens and scientific specimens). (A strategy usually effective and more so for plants than animals is to satisfy trade demand with a ready supply of truly artificially propagated specimens.)
2. To make CITES more effective for the many threatened and potentially threatened taxa as now regulated by it.
3. To assist Parties to add taxa to or revise Appendices I-III so as to bring additional protection to plants in need of CITES provisions.

PC Structure

1. The PC is an administratively stronger organization than the CITES Plant Working Group (PWG), since it is formally established through Resolution Conf. 6.1 Annex 3. (The PWG evolved into the PC in April 1988, when Dr. MacBryde was appointed PC Interim Chairman by the Standing Committee. He was PWG Chairman in 1985-1988.)

2. The PC in the narrowest sense is composed of the six members selected by Parties from and representing each of the CITES geographical regions, and consists of:
 - a. Africa (Dr Jameson H. Sevani, The National Herbarium and Botanical Gardens of Malawi, P.O. Box 528, Zomba, Malawi);
 - b. Asia (Dr Tirtha B. Shrestha, Royal Nepal Academy of Science, c/o B.N. Upreti, Nepal Dept. of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Babarmahal, P.O. Box 860, Kathmandu, Nepal);
 - c. Europe [Grenville Ll. Lucas (elected PC Vice-Chairman), Royal Botanic Gardens, The Herbarium, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE, England];
 - d. North America [Dr Bruce MacBryde (elected PC Chairman), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Scientific Authority, 725 Arlington Square Bldg., Washington, DC 20240, USA; telephone 703-358-1708, telefax 703-358-2202];
 - e. Oceania (Darryl J. Miller, c/o Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, GPO Box 636, Canberra City, ACT 2600, Australia); and
 - f. South America, Central America, and the Caribbean (Lic. Dora E. Mora de Retana, Universidad de Costa Rica, Jardín Lankester, San José 1000, Costa Rica).
3. The PC in a broader sense always includes one entitled observer for each of the Parties, and in the broadest (unrestricted) sense can include other observers if invited by the Chairman to participate. [The PC held two short sessions during PC1 in the restricted or narrower sense, for only members and entitled observers (and the European Community unofficial observer).]
4. PC subregional co-ordinators are being selected for large and complex CITES regions. Africa may be divided into two to four subregions. Asia has been divided into four subregions: East Asia (possibly Japan will be subregional lead); South-East Asia; Central South Asia [the 7 South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) nations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal (Dr Shrestha is also the subregional lead), Pakistan, and Sri Lanka]; and West Asia. Also, recognized subregions are the Caribbean, Central America (Lic. Mora de Retana is also the subregional lead), and South America. The PC also agreed to link Africa with Europe, Asia with Oceania, and Latin America and the Caribbean with North America as the members and other participants co-ordinate and develop appropriate matters. [E.g., the Chairman gave a workshop on CITES to botanists from 15 Latin American/Caribbean countries during the course of their training on herbaria in Washington, DC, USA.]
5. The PC regional committees intend to hold meetings with their constituents before 1992. Obtaining a modest core office-operating fund for each of the African, Asian, and Latin American/Caribbean PC committees (members and other subregional lead co-ordinators) remains a top priority.

First PC Meeting

1. The PC held its meeting 1-5 November 1988 in London, England, UK. PC1 began with an evening reception at The Linnean Society of London and then daily work at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, near London. About 40 people participated for all or part: 10-11 governments [Australia, Belgium

(perhaps also representing Luxembourg), Costa Rica, Denmark, Guernsey, Italy, Malawi, Netherlands, UK, and USA]; the European Community unofficially (also the prior PWG Vice-Chairman); 7+ units of the IUCN [6+ Specialist Groups of the Species Survival Commission (cycads, ferns, orchids, palms, succulents, trade, the proto-group for carnivorous plants), and the Plant Advisory Group]; 2 units of the WCMC (the Threatened Plants Unit and the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit); 3 conservation organizations [Friends of the Earth, UK; Natural Resources Defense Council, USA; and TRAFFIC (FR Germany)]; and several other specialists in general or plant conservation, taxonomy, and/or horticulture; (no one from the CITES Secretariat attended).

2. The PC made a successful transition from the less formal PWG, which held annual meetings in 1984-1987. Professional participation in the PWG was improving, and PC1 clearly had the best representation of the 5 plant meetings. Minutes of PC1 with documents presented (including the reports of PWG3 and PWG4) will be printed through the PC (the Secretariat has distributed reports of PWG1 and PWG2). The PC intends to continue to function (as the PWG had functioned) as much as appropriate in the broadest sense, with a wide spectrum of participants having diverse knowledge of and experience with plants and conservation.
3. Financial assistance for PC1 came from the Conservation Treaty Support Fund (for two PC members), Fauna and Flora Preservation Society (for host and PC1 Secretariat), Netherlands, UK, USA, World Wildlife Fund-US (for one PC member), and private individuals.

Some Main Objectives from PC1

- 1.1 To develop a CITES Guide to Plants in International Trade published possibly at the end of 1990 as a 'field' book for the general public and regulatory officers [funds from Japan and UK; headed by UK (NGO)]. (The PC agreed to establish a format for individual sheets for the Identification Manual during PC2, but the Guide is orientation for the Manual and so takes precedence over prior production of such sheets.)
- 1.2 To develop published checklists (and on-going computer databases) for the higher taxa listed in CITES appendices (with synonymy, distribution by country, and IUCN categories on vulnerability for the recognized taxa; all except orchids to be done by 1993). [The checklist and database on Cactaceae (cacti) (Resolution Conf. 6.20) has begun, with completion planned in 1991, and checklists on succulent Euphorbia spp. and perhaps tree ferns may be completed in 1989.]
- 1.3 To conduct a study on significant (often high-volume) international trade in orchids. [A proposal for WTMU to do the work (also including some succulents) was submitted in December 1988 to a private US foundation, but not funded; new funding possibilities need to be determined.]
- 1.4 To further review traded non-CITES groups needing additional information, such as bulbs and timber [a Bulb Specialist Group of the SSC may be created as a result of the PC1 discussions; the PC formed an Action Group on Timber, led within the UK (NGO), to consider the best approach to follow]. (Concentrated review for medicinal plants may be needed.)
- 1.5 To improve understanding of and co-operation with CITES through educational and publicity efforts such as articles, presentations at meetings, and posters. [A proposal was submitted in December 1988 to a private US foundation (but not funded) for the PC (with the CITES Secretariat) to

conduct training and educational efforts in late 1990 and early 1991 in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean in conjunction with publication of the identification Guide. New funding possibilities need to be determined.]

- 1.6 To offer particular assistance to certain Parties in implementing the CITES provisions for plants. [Additionally, the Secretariat is being asked: (1) to distinguish plants from animals in future notifications on the annual reports of Parties (to improve Party reporting on plants); (2) to notify the Parties to enforce better for plants; and (3) to convey to the Commission of the European Communities the concern of the PC that the European Community enforce CITES strictly for plants when internal customs controls cease in 1992.]
- 1.7 To encourage especially Mexico and Turkey, which are major exporters of wild plants, to become Parties to CITES; (discussions now have been held with both countries).
- 1.8 To emphasize the need for the Secretariat to obtain a Plants Officer soon; (a Plants Officer will in fact be joining the Secretariat).
- 1.9 The PC discussed various objectives for improving and amending the appendices, such as: (1) a nomenclatural review; (2) particularly to clean-up the appendices by completing the 10-Year Review; and (3) to assist Parties as necessary to prepare proposals for other (3.1) delistings (e.g., Appendix II cycad seeds) and (3.2) downlistings (e.g. most of the 10 spp. of Appendix I orchids; appropriate artificially propagated Appendix I hybrids, to implement Resolution Conf. 6.19), as well as for (3.3) uplistings (e.g. some orchid genera; a palm and some succulent Euphorbia spp. and Pachypodium spp. from Madagascar; some Nepenthes spp.) or (3.4) first listings (3.4.1) in Appendix I (e.g. some Chamaedorea spp. and two Malagasy palms) or (3.4.2) in Appendix II [e.g. some additional Chamaedorea spp.; some European and Middle Eastern bulbs (e.g. Galanthus spp. and Sternbergia spp.); African mahoganies (Entandrophragma spp. and Khaya spp.)]. (Many of these have been submitted for consideration at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.)

PC2 and Some Continuing Subjects

1. The PC is planning to hold PC2 during the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, 9-20 October 1989 in Lausanne, although the Secretariat could not so schedule the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties that PC2 sessions would not be simultaneous with other activities; this conflict can limit Party knowledge and subsequent activity for plants. Information on the work of the PC is to be published regularly in the Threatened Plants Newsletter and perhaps Species. (The Chairman published articles in Threatened Plants Newsletter 20: 18-19 and Biological Conservation Newsletter 69: 1-2, both issues December 1988; an article was submitted for Species 12).
2. Some PC1 issues that will be the subject of further discussion, some at PC2, relate:

to artificial propagation: (1.1) how the orchid community can help Parties to evaluate those establishments that may qualify for the certificate of artificial propagation; (1.2) whether parts not regulated for Appendix II species (e.g. seeds) are therefore not regulated for Appendix I artificially propagated specimens, which are treated as Appendix II; (1.3) interpretation of artificially

propagated as defined in Resolution Conf. 2.12; (1.4) limited annual reporting on some specimens of taxa usually in Appendix II (options and criteria for not requiring details on some specimens artificially propagated in large numbers by some nurseries in some Parties); and

to salvage: (2) criteria beyond Resolution Conf. 5.14 for salvage and rescue by commercial entities.

Conclusion

The PC has taken on additional responsibilities (compared to the PWC), and commitment of the necessarily independent concern and time by the Chairman and other members and participants remains critical to the co-ordinated accomplishment of accepted tasks. How much will be done depends on each perspective on CITES within the competing demands of full schedules, and how the support of time or funds can be generated to do what is needed. Increased strength for plant efforts is suggested by the funds provided for the cactus checklist and identification Guide, and even submitting the two solicited proposals for other funding mentioned above (see under Objectives 1.3 and 1.5). A Plants Officer at the Secretariat can greatly improve what will be co-ordinated and accomplished for plants at risk from international trade.

7 August 1989

Bruce MacBryde
Chairman of the Plants Committee