

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

Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
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This document is being distributed at the request of Brazil.

Statement by the Delegation of Brazil on the Proposal by Guatemala and Nicaragua
for inclusion of Mahogany Species in Appendix II

Mr. President,

Brazil has participated in the debates held during this Conference on the inclusion of mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) in Annex II of CITES convinced of the importance of adopting adequate measures for its conservation and sustainable use. This has been a concern of the Brazilian society, which, together with the government, has firmly supported the strengthening of our laws and institutions for that purpose. Mahogany remains an important natural resource that has generated employment opportunities and income that are critical for the economic and social development of remote and poor areas of our country. Brazil, which included its populations of mahogany in Appendix-III in 1998, has been implementing a series of measures aimed at halting the illegal and unsustainable exploration of mahogany. Those measures include a ban on exploration outside the context of Sustainable Forest Management Plans – SEMP and the imposition of export quotas. We also imposed a total ban on trade in mahogany in October 2001 pending the entry into force of a new System for Monitoring and Control of Forest Products-SISPROF. Therefore, the Brazilian position regarding the inclusion of the species in Appendix II should not be misconstrued as one that casts any doubts about the importance we afford to the environmentally sound management and conservation of our mahogany populations.

The international community has recognized, in several internationally adopted documents, the sovereign right of States to use their own natural resources. Brazil firmly believes that natural forests can be sustainably explored, to the benefit of local communities, especially if their products are duly valued, in the context of sustainable forest management plans.

We have repeatedly stated in this Conference, as well as in other multilateral fora, our belief that the conservation of natural resources, especially those of high value in international markets, is compatible with open and transparent rules of international trade. We have repeatedly opposed proposals and procedures that may produce trade barriers to the sustainable exploration of natural resources.

Our concern with the listing of mahogany in Annex II of CITES is related to the utilization of the Convention as a legal basis for hindering the access of this timber to consumer markets. We hope that the procedures established in the Convention for monitoring the international trade of mahogany, especially the monitoring of export permits by foreign scientific authorities, will be done taking fully into account the national laws and regulations of the export countries. As the international community unanimously agreed in the Implementation Plan adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, last September, "trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade".