

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

BIGLEAF MAHOGANY

1. This document has been submitted by the Chair of the Plants Committee, on behalf of the Committee*.
2. At its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted an "Action plan for the control of international trade in the bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)" (see Decision 14.145 and Annex 3 to the Decisions).
3. In that Annex, the Plants Committee was instructed to:
 - a) *be the body under which the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group shall continue its work. The Working Group shall primarily comprise the range States of the species, the main importing countries and at least one member of the Plants Committee;*
 - b) *analyse at its 17th meeting the reports presented by the range States and progress made in implementing the present Action Plan directed to Parties, and review the need to include the species in the Review of Significant Trade;*
 - c) *discuss and examine at its 18th meeting the progress made with the implementation of the regional strategy; and*
 - d) *submit a report at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the progress made by the Working Group.*
4. At its 17th meeting, the Committee analysed the following reports: the Secretariat's *Progress report on the implementation of the action plan for bigleaf mahogany* (see document PC17 Doc. 16.1.1), the results of the *International workshop of experts on non-detriment findings on bigleaf mahogany (Cancun, April 2007): endorsement and adoption of guidelines for making NDFs for mahogany* (document PC17 Doc. 16.1.2) and *Volumetric conversion of standing trees to exportable mahogany sawn wood* (document PC17 Doc. 16.1.3).
5. The Chair of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group (Mexico) informed the Committee of the analysis of the reports from the 14 bigleaf mahogany range States, nine of which had submitted to the working group documentation on progress made in implementing the Action Plan for the bigleaf mahogany. It was clear from this analysis that only three range States had sufficient information to make non-detriment findings.
6. Following a discussion focusing primarily on the possibility to include the bigleaf mahogany in the Review of Significant Trade, in compliance with Annex 3, paragraph 6. b), of the CoP14 Decisions, the Committee

* *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.*

decided unanimously to include in the Review of Significant Trade the populations of those countries that had not demonstrated that they had sufficient information to make non-detriment findings, in compliance with Article IV, paragraph 2. a), of the Convention. Thus Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia were included in the following phase of the review, whilst Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico were excluded from it.

7. The Committee also agreed on the following regarding the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group:
 1. Mandate of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group:
 - a) to promote the preparation and official adoption, as a priority, of mahogany management plans at national and subregional levels;
 - b) to promote the conduct of forest inventories, as well as progress, and to promote programmes to determine and monitor the distribution, population size and conservation status of mahogany;
 - c) to facilitate and promote the development of capacity-building programmes in monitoring and management relating to CITES procedures and documents. To this end, if considered appropriate, it may request assistance from the Plants Committee and the Secretariat;
 - d) to utilize the existing Action Plan for the bigleaf mahogany for further guidance; and
 - e) to facilitate the organization and establishment of working groups, if considered necessary.
 2. The Working Group should continue its work composed of at least the following members:
 - a) main bigleaf mahogany exporting Parties (Belize, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia);
 - b) main bigleaf mahogany importing Parties (the Dominican Republic, the Member States of the European Union and the United States of America);
 - c) members of the Plants Committee (the representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean and of Europe);
 - d) a member of the CITES Secretariat; and
 - e) by invitation, members of relevant NGO organizations and relevant timber industry associations.
 3. The Working Group should conduct its work intersessionally (between PC17 and PC18), mainly through remote communication (email, fax or phone) and should present the results of its work at PC18, in line with the mandate described above.
8. With regard to the results of the international workshop of experts on non-detriment findings on the bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) (see document PC17 Doc. 16.1.2), the Plants Committee welcomed the report of the international experts' meeting and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive description of elements requiring consideration in the process of making non-detriment findings for the bigleaf mahogany.
9. The Plants Committee endorsed document PC17 Doc. 16.1.2, recognizing that: i) the elements it contained represented indicative guidelines for non-detriment finding determination for the bigleaf mahogany; ii) the specific implementation of this approach would necessarily require modification to respond to specific national circumstances; and iii) the elements in the document be interpreted as including adaptive management as an approach to respond to future uncertainties, including the effects of climate change.

10. With regard to document PC17 Doc. 16.1.3, on the *Volumetric conversion of standing trees to exportable mahogany sawn wood*, the Plants Committee decided to:
 - i) endorse the document, recognizing it as an important step that illustrated a useful methodology for improving management of timber export quotas, and the relationship these quotas should have to non-detriment findings;
 - ii) request from range States that they note the crucial need for transparency in the identification of methods, such as conversion factors, to link harvest volumes approved by Scientific Authorities to export shipments;
 - iii) note that wide variation exists in potential results and methodologies for determining conversion factors given differences in species, harvest and production systems, mill efficiencies, sampling sizes, and products;
 - iv) request from range States that they report on studies being performed in line with paragraph 1. b) of the bigleaf mahogany Action Plan, and include in their report for PC18 specific information on how they implement these volume conversion methodologies in their quotas and/or a timetable for doing so;
 - v) urge Parties to explicitly and transparently address, in future non-detriment findings, the need to apply conversion factors and/or other methodologies that link harvest timber volumes to export shipment volumes; and
 - vi) request that volumetric conversion factors be discussed by the intersessional Non-detriment Finding Working Group when it addresses guidance for making non-detriment findings, and at the International Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings in Cancún, Mexico, in November 2008.
11. In Notification to the Parties No. 2008/058 of 24 September 2008, the Secretariat requested that Parties report progress on the implementation of the strategy, and the responses received were submitted at the 18th meeting of the Committee (see document PC18 Doc. 13.1.1).
12. With regard to paragraph 8 of the Action Plan, the Committee noted that the Secretariat had funded, together with the International Tropical Timber Organization, the fourth meeting of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group. That meeting was held simultaneously with the first Latin-American workshop of the CITES-ITTO project entitled *Ensuring international trade in CITES-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation*, which was held on 14 and 15 November 2008 in Cancún, Mexico.
13. The Committee noted the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group's progress report, which presented the results of the two meetings mentioned in paragraph 12 above [see document PC18 Doc. 13.1.2 (Rev. 1)].
14. In view of the information received, progress made and fact that the species had been included in the Review of Significant Trade, the Plants Committee agreed to request at CoP15 that Decision 14.145 be replaced with the draft decision contained in the Annex to the present document, except for item 5 of the Action Plan (Decision 14.145), whose continuation or deletion should be decided by the Standing Committee.
15. With regard to activities and necessary funding, the Chair of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group stated that he would submit this information at a later time. However, as none has been received, an estimated figure of USD 45,000 is put forward, based on the organization of a meeting of the working group.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat agrees with the Plants Committee on the need to exchange experiences on the sustainable management of the bigleaf mahogany, thereby contributing to capacity building in range States and to a complete an effective implementation of the Review of Significant Trade in the range States concerned.
- B. However, the Secretariat believes that the Plants Committee's remit under Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP14) already enables it to contribute a great deal to these tasks without the need for the Conference of the Parties to specify the nature of any Plants Committee working group required for these activities. Consequently, the draft decision proposed in the Annex to the present document does not appear necessary.
- C. Additionally, the Secretariat does not believe that USD 45,000 should be sought through external funding unless the purpose of any meeting about *Swietenia macrophylla* is clearly determined. Consequently, the Secretariat does not support the request in paragraph 15 of the present document as currently drafted.

DRAFT DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group

Decision 15 XX

Directed to the Plants Committee

- a) The Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group shall continue, under the Plants Committee, to disseminate and share experiences on the sustainable management of mahogany, thereby contributing to strengthening capacity in range States and to implementing fully and effectively the Review of Significant Trade in range States affected by this process.
- b) The Working Group shall prepare a report on progress made with the management and conservation of and trade in the species, and with the lessons learnt. It shall submit this document at the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee, so that the Committee may agree on how to forward it to the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- c) The membership of the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group shall comprise:
 - i) all range States;
 - ii) the Parties that are the main importers of mahogany: the United States and the European Union (Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
 - iii) a representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean on the Plants Committee;
 - iv) intergovernmental organizations: European Union, IUCN, ITTO; and
 - v) non-governmental organizations: TRAFFIC, WWF and three representatives of exporters' organizations from three major exporting countries.
- d) The chair and vice-chair of the working group shall be selected by the Plants Committee one month after the coming into effect of the present Decision through the submission of *curricula vitae* of candidates from the range States. Should there be no candidates or should the chair or vice-chair resign from their functions between CoP15 and CoP16, the regional representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean shall act as chair and/or vice-chair of the working group.