Original language: English CoP18 Inf. 37
(English only / seulement en anglais / únicamente en inglés)

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

Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Geneva (Switzerland), 17–28 June 2019

THE GLOBAL TREE ASSESSMENT SUPPORTING CITES

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat in relation with agenda items 16, 65, 74 and 93.[1]

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The Global Tree Assessment supporting CITES

CITES is an essential tool for the sustainable management of commercially important tree species. Over 560 tree species are currently included in the Appendices of the Convention, either listed at species or generic level. The listings include some of the world's most precious and most threatened timbers (308 species), trees which are also of immense ecological importance. It also includes at least 54 species traded for their resin e.g. *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops*, and trees traded for their medicinal and other desirable properties.

The Global Tree Assessment (GTA), an initiative launched in 2015, aims to assess the conservation status of all the world's tree species by 2020 as a basis for conservation policy implementation and action. With over 60,000 known tree species, the GTA is the largest biodiversity assessment ever undertaken at a species level. The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria are being utilised for the new tree species assessments with full supporting documentation recorded. Based on assessments already available at the global or national level or included in botanical literature, we estimate that 19 percent of the world's tree species are threatened with extinction globally. This has profound implications for the future of forests and the goods and services they provide.

The GTA involves experts working collaboratively worldwide. It is coordinated by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) together with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Global Tree Specialist Group (GTSG). Partnerships are in place for assessments of endemic trees in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, United States and Venezuela. In total these countries account for >50% of all tree species globally. Other important regional initiatives and taxonomic specialists are contributing to the GTA, as is the work of other SSC Plant Specialist Groups.

Of direct relevance to CITES, all tree species currently listed on the Appendices will be assessed by the GTA and published on the IUCN Red List by the end of 2020. Associated documentation may be important in developing NDFs, supporting significant trade reviews and identifying appropriate expertise. In addition, all other trees that are used for timber and traded commercially at an international scale are being prioritised for assessment through the GTA. This will provide a baseline for considering future CITES listing proposals.

Assessments for 289 CITES-listed tree species are currently published on the IUCN Red List, meaning over 50% of all CITES trees have been assessed for their conservation status. Of these assessments, 192 have been published since 2010 including a complete assessment for all species of the agarwood-producing genus *Aquilaria* (20 spp.). Timber species make up the majority of the published assessments for CITES trees, with 199 timber species assessed. In 2019, assessments for 69 tree species have been published, including new assessments for mahoganies (*Swietenia* spp.), and Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp.). Over 90% of the Malagasy *Dalbergia* assessed were categorised as threatened

with extinction in the wild, including two Critically Endangered and five Endangered species. Ongoing illegal trade was acknowledged to be a major a factor in the decline of these species - although difficult to quantify. Assessments for *Dalbergia* in Central America have also been prepared at recent GTA workshops.

A wide variety of resources are utilised to produce IUCN Red List assessments for CITES timbers. Generally species-specific production and trade information is unavailable, does not cover a long enough time period or is not available for the entirety of a species' range. A combination of information at a generic, habitat or country level or recorded under a trade name may be used to produce a draft conservation assessment. To complete the assessment, regional and taxonomic experts are consulted who have relevant field knowledge and, to the extent possible, knowledge of the species in trade. This helps to confirm the extent of decline in the species, and can also help to verify whether offtake from the wild is sustainable and how this relates to other threats. For example, *Platymiscium parviflorum* (listed under *Platymiscium pleiostachyum*) is native to dry forest in Costa Rica and Panama. Although the trade of the species is now restricted due to rarity and strict protection, the species was recently assessed as Critically Endangered due to loss of 98 percent of its habitat in Costa Rica.

Over the next 18 months the GTA will host a wide range of workshops to assess tree species and undertake expert reviews for tree assessments already produced. Priorities include completing assessments for *Dalbergia* spp., *Prunus africana*, *Aniba rosaeodora*, *Cedrela angustifolia* and *Paubrasilia echinata*. Completing the GTA provides outstanding opportunities to collect information on the world's tree species of relevance to CITES decision-making and national implementation.

For more information on the GTA visit www.globaltreeassessment.org.

To become involved or provide financial support for training and workshops please contact:

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