



## NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2020/056

Geneva, 21 September 2020

CONCERNING:

### Intersessional decisions of the Plants Committee

1. The Notification is issued at the request of the Chair of the Plants Committee.
2. Following the postponement of the 25th meeting of the Plants Committee, which was originally scheduled to take place from 17 and 20-23 July 2020, the Secretariat initiated a procedure for intersessional decision-making in accordance with Rule 19 [***Procedure for intersessional decision-making***] of the Rules of Procedure of the Plants Committee.
3. Through intersessional decision-making, the Plants Committee agreed to the following:
  - a) Ms. Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo (representative for Africa) and Ms. Rosemarie Gnam (representative for North America) are confirmed as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Plants Committee respectively;
  - b) The Plants Committee workplan for 2020-2022 (CoP18 to CoP19), as outlined in document [PC25 Doc. 7.2](#), is approved; and
  - c) Ms. Rosemarie Gnam (representative for North America), Ms. Fabiola Rocío Núñez Neyra (representative for Central and South America and the Caribbean), and Ms. Yan Zeng (alternate representative for Asia) are nominated as the Plants Committee representatives on the Standing Committee working group on capacity-building.
4. The Plants Committee decided furthermore to establish six intersessional working groups as follows:
  - 1) **Identification of timber and other wood products**, (Co-chairs: Rosemarie Gnam, César Augusto Beltetón Chacón, and Yan Zeng), with a mandate to:
    - a) consider the progress reported by the Secretariat in document [PC25 Doc. 19](#) on the implementation of Decisions 18.140 to 18.143 and 16.58 (Rev. CoP18), and any other relevant documentation produced by the Secretariat or published on the CITES website;
    - b) determine gaps and complementarities in various tools and knowledge sources for timber identification, such as existing field identification guidelines and keys, and on their availability and usefulness;
    - c) develop standardized information templates and other tools that could be used by Parties to facilitate information sharing on the content and status of wood sample collections, and exchange with research institutions, law enforcement agencies, and other authorities;
    - d) assist Parties in identifying existing laboratory services for the identification of timber and wood products and in strengthening screening and forensic capacity to identify CITES-listed tree species in trade;

- e) determine methods to stimulate global, regional and national exchange of best practices in wood identification technologies between Parties; and
  - f) prepare an update on progress in the implementation of Decision 18.140 for the Standing Committee and draft recommendations for CoP19, as appropriate, for consideration at the next meeting of the Plants Committee.
- 2) **Rosewood tree species**, (Co-chairs: César Augusto Beltetón Chacón, Ursula Moser, and Yan Zeng), with a mandate to:
- a) consider the progress reported in document [PC25 Doc. 26.1](#), the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/032 in information document [PC25 Inf. 6](#), and the compilation and analysis thereof in paragraphs 8 to 11 of document PC25 Doc. 26.1;
  - b) consider the findings and recommendations contained in document [PC25 Doc. 26.2](#) on *International trade in the African Pterocarpus rosewood species*;
  - c) provide recommendations in preparation for the study and international workshop referred to under Decision 18.234, including recommendations to organize it under the framework of the 2nd international workshop on guidance for making NDFs, as per Decision 18.134 on *Non-detriment findings*;
  - d) should external resources become available for undertaking the study and organizing the international workshop, consider the final study and outcomes of the workshop as they become available, and draft recommendations as per paragraph b) of Decision 18.236; and
  - e) report the outcomes of its work to the Plants Committee at its next meeting, including draft recommendations to the Standing Committee and the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.
- 3) **African tree species**, (Co-chairs: Ali Mahamane, Beatrice Khayota, and Daniel Wolf) with a mandate to:
- a) work primarily via electronic means;
  - b) seek to facilitate the circulation and exchange of experiences among the range States, importing countries and other stakeholders on the sustainable use and management of CITES-listed African tree species;
  - c) consider the overview of African tree species presented in the Annex to document [PC25 Doc. 28](#);
  - d) consider the Secretariat's recommendations on *Prunus africana*, contained in document [PC25 Doc. 27](#), and draft a report on the implementation of Decision 18.260, paragraph a);
  - e) seek to identify gaps and weaknesses in the capacity of range States of African tree species to effectively implement CITES for these species;
  - f) examine how the processes currently used by countries to develop annual export quotas compare with the processes recommended under CITES and develop recommendations for reconciling them;
  - g) explore the conversion factors used for different commodities (e.g., logs, sawn wood, bark) and develop recommendations for improving such processes;
  - h) seek to identify other African tree species that may benefit from inclusion in the CITES Appendices;
  - i) bring any issues related to implementation and enforcement of CITES listings for African tree species to the attention of the Plants Committee; and

j) report its findings and recommendations to the next meeting of the Plants Committee.

**4) Neotropical tree species**, (Co-chairs: Fabiola Rocío Núñez Neyra, César Augusto Beltetón Chacón, and Paulo J.L. Carmo) with a mandate to:

- a) agree on a priority list of CITES-listed neotropical tree species, and decide on associated activities that will most significantly contribute to the implementation of the mandates in Resolutions relating to neotropical tree species and that are addressed to the Plants Committee, taking into account the overview of neotropical tree species contained in the Annex to document [PC25 Doc. 29](#);
- b) in the process of developing the priority list referred to in paragraph a) above, special consideration shall be given to neotropical tree species-listings in effect since the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; to neotropical tree species that are currently under the Review of Significant Trade (or other compliance mechanisms of the Convention); as well as those that are known to represent implementation challenges particularly in matters related to the formulation of non-detriment findings and identification of specimens in trade;
- c) exchange experiences, information and skills between countries on the priority neotropical tree species;
- d) report on progress made in the management and conservation of, and trade in, priority neotropical tree species, as well as on lessons learned, including on the generation of studies on the status of their populations; implementation of traceability and chain of custody systems, which strengthen the transparency and sustainable trade in timber species; and creation of materials for identification and training in the different existing methods, with an emphasis on those that can be used easily by authorities; and
- e) report the outcomes of its work to the Plants Committee at its next meeting, including draft recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.

**5) Trade in medicinal and aromatic plant species**, (Co-chairs: Byoung Yoon Lee, Yan Zeng, and Daniel Wolf) with a mandate to:

- a) review the Secretariat's report on progress in the implementation of Decision 18.300, as contained in document [PC25 Doc. 30](#) and its Annexes;
- b) in line with Decision 18.302, take into account information document [CoP18 Inf. 11](#);
- c) draft recommendations for reporting to the Standing Committee or the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
- d) report its findings and recommendation to the Plants Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

5. Through intersessional decision-making, the Animals and Plants Committees have also decided to establish a joint working group as follows:

**6) Identification materials**, (Co-chairs from the PC: Rosemarie Gnam, Yan Zeng, and Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo), with a mandate to:

- a) review selected identification materials, including material compiled as per Decision 18.136 paragraph a), and assess the need for their revision and improvement, taking into account the materials that are being developed or have already been developed by Parties and materials requested in Decisions or Resolutions;

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- b) review Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, taking into account the proposals of the Secretariat in paragraphs 6 and 7 of document AC31 [Doc. 15/PC25 Doc. 18](#), and the reviews outlined in paragraphs a) and c) of Decision 18.137;
    - c) consider ways to improve the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species; and
    - d) report on progress with these activities at the next meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees.
  6. The Committee hereby invites those Parties and observer organizations that have been accredited to attend previous CITES meetings (see the [Annex](#) to Notification No. 2020/021) to indicate their interest in joining one or more of the intersessional working groups indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5 above. Observer organizations whose participation in PC25 had been approved by the PC Chair can also indicate their interest in joining the working groups. Such Parties and observers are requested to convey their interest by clicking on this link: <https://pc25-wgs.questionpro.com>, and taking the steps there indicated. The deadline for declaring an expression of interest through this online platform is **2 October 2020**.
  7. After this deadline, the Chair of the Plants Committee will confirm the final membership of these intersessional working groups on the CITES website, ensuring respect for its rules of procedure concerning the balance of representation between Parties and observers, as indicated in Rule 17.1.