

UCBD'S STATEMENT

REVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II – NOTIFICATION N° 2001/037

BASIC REFLEXIONS

- ♦ The specific technological performance and the status of renewable raw material warrant trade in tropical wood.
- ♦ It is, in general, admitted, CITES is one of the most important legal instruments for nature conservation.

GENERAL REMARKS

1. The need for relevant scientific data with a view to regulating the trading in a species is generally recognised.
Questions are raised, among others, regarding the criteria which should be used in regarding a species as vulnerable and threatened and what methods are recommended to carry out measurements and estimates of the situation of a population.
2. The criteria for Appendix II were regarded in the past as more ambiguous than those for Appendix I. A number of terms were not properly defined which made the criteria difficult to apply. The terminology in the revised text is clearer and therefore easier to apply. Nature conservation policy certainly needs clearer terms.
3. Workable measures to protect forests are fundamentally different in nature from those aimed at protecting animals and also quite different from those relating to the protection of plant curiosities. Now CITES was originally intended to regulate trade in threatened animal species. Its convention was adjusted to include plants right from its inception. As wood trading will probably be increasingly discussed at CITES committee meetings, efforts should be made to produce texts that are more relevant for forest protection and the wood trade. In other words, CITES has real and potential consequences for the wood trade but still hasn't adapted its convention to the reality of forestry, exploitation and the wood trade. This lacuna explains why studies generated unfounded conclusions about wood species to be listed as threatened.

REMARKS RELATING TO NOTIFICATION 2001/037

p.12 *“A decline is a reduction in the abundance of area of distribution of a species”*

Abundance, when this is understood to mean the number of individuals per surface unit, is in forestry less useful than stampage, basal area, etc..

p.12 *“However, natural fluctuations should not normally count as part of a decline”.*

For forests, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to make a distinction between natural fluctuations and fluctuations influenced by human factors. Trees are long-lived organisms. An understanding of natural population dynamics can only be gained after very long-term investigation.

p.14 *“Population size”*

The term “population” refers in the CITES context to the total number of individuals of a species (Article 1 of the Convention). Fluctuations in population size are examined by means of population dynamics. In principle, population dynamics can also be applied to forestry. The methods of population dynamics, especially those based on the development of the number of individuals, are actually difficult to apply. In forests, the structure (physiognomy and age distribution) of a timber stand is more important than the development of numbers of individuals. Trees are generally long-lived organisms. A tree species population consists of a mixture of very large and very small individuals (rejuvenation). The nature of the distribution is important in forestry in order to judge the vulnerability of the population.

p.22 *“Information about similar species”*

Positively identifying tropical species is work for experts. Some species are extremely difficult to distinguish. (cf. common mahogany).

SUGGESTIONS

- ♦ Scientific bodies could be asked to supervise the setting up of a databank concerning wood species and relevant forestry inventories.
 - ♦ Given the very specific aspects of the timber trade, it is essential that experts, involved in the trade, with the relevant knowledge and experience sit on the various national and international CITES – Committees.
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