

**Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention  
Trade in Plant Specimens**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION FOR TIMBER SPECIES**

This document has been prepared and submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Introduction

1. A number of timber species have been included in the appendices to the Convention since it entered into force. However, the Parties first addressed the listing of significantly traded timber species at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, at Kyoto in 1992. Two commercially important species were listed at that meeting: *Dalbergia nigra* (Brazilian Rosewood, Appendix I) and *Pericopsis elata* (Afrormosia/ African Teak, Appendix II).
2. Experience in implementing the Convention with respect to these listings has revealed a number of administrative and other problems specific to regulation of the international timber trade, which, in terms of its volume, value, and complexity, is different from the trade in most other groups of products controlled by the Convention. Although these problems have received the attention of the Plants Committee and the Secretariat, it seems desirable, in the interests of the Convention's effective operation, that, at the ninth meeting of the Conference, the Parties specifically address the issues concerned as part of their consideration of any further proposals to list timber species in the appendices.

Nature of Timber Trade

3. Notification to the Parties No. 787 reported the results of the Secretariat's examination of trade in Appendix-II timber species, particularly *Pericopsis elata*. The structure of the trade, under which timber may be sold at sea or divided into multiple lots on arrival in a Customs free-zone, presents monitoring and enforcement problems. For example, importers and the importing countries may differ from those named on the export permit.
4. It may be possible to solve these problems on a case-by-case basis between individual exporting and importing countries. However, if, by listing further commercially important species in the appendices, the Parties decide that the Convention should play a more significant part in the conservation of vulnerable timber species than it has hitherto, then it may be preferable to undertake a wider review of the need and scope for modifying current administrative practices.

Identification

5. The identification of timber specimens as traded is complex. Many types of timber are traded in groups under commercial names rather than as individual species, and identification to botanical species or even family level is often difficult. This is a factor for the Parties to take into account in assessing proposals to list

species. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Plants Committee, has developed a proposal to prepare identification guidance for the Parties. The traders themselves also have their own mechanisms for ensuring that timber is correctly described when sold.

6. The successful implementation of the Convention's controls over timber will depend upon utilizing all relevant sources of expertise, including the experience of the traders, to enable Parties to distinguish listed species as traded.

Parts Controlled by Listing

7. In the case of timber listings, the parts named for control are likely to hold the key to successful implementation. Identification problems can become more acute where certain products are concerned. Listings should be targeted at products and commodities that are recognizable, with a view to ensuring effective enforcement, maximizing conservation benefit and avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Resolution Conf 8.3, adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, recognized that sustainable levels of commercial trade in wild fauna and flora may be beneficial to the conservation of species. The Convention plays an important part in the control and monitoring of such trade internationally. However, Parties have relatively little experience in controlling trade in commercially important timber, compared with trade in other species.
9. It is recommended that, in considering the Convention's future contribution to timber conservation, the Parties request the Secretariat to:
  - a) review current progress in addressing administrative and other problems specific to the implementation of timber listings;
  - b) consider what further action is required, including the case for establishing a small working group under the direction of the Standing Committee with a clearly defined remit and harnessing available expertise on the timber trade and the Convention; and
  - c) report to the first meeting of the Standing Committee in 1995.

Note from the Secretariat

The Secretariat supports the conclusions and recommendations in this document. It is unsure, however, whether the working group would be better established under the direction of the Plants Committee rather than the Standing Committee. The discussion regarding Ramin (*Gonystylus bancanus*) (Doc. 9.53) will also be relevant to this issue.

**Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention  
Trade in Plant Specimens**

RAMIN (*GONYSTYLUS BANCANUS*)

This document has been prepared and submitted by the Netherlands.

At the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Netherlands proposed to include Ramin (*Gonystylus bancanus*) in Appendix II of CITES. When it became clear that the range States did not support the proposal, it was withdrawn.

The Netherlands asked the CITES Plants Committee for advice on how to proceed. The CITES Plants Committee stated that CITES is a legitimate tool to monitor and regulate the international trade in products of tree species and advised the Netherlands to continue the selection of relevant species for inclusion in the CITES appendices and to prepare proposals for these. It also advised that the Netherlands consult and co-operate with the range States in preparing proposals.

The Plants Committee advised further that the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) was an institute properly qualified to support the Netherlands in the preparatory work.

Based on scientific advice, the Netherlands then selected Ramin as a vulnerable species, which could benefit from inclusion in CITES Appendix II. Under a contract with the Netherlands, WCMC prepared a new proposal for Ramin of which the first draft was ready in December 1993. This first draft was sent to the range States, asking them for consultation and co-operation and also inviting them to be proponents.

Advice was also asked of the European Community and the CITES Plants Committee and the draft was sent for information to several other organizations, including the ITTO Secretariat.

A second, updated draft was discussed in the 5th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee and received unanimous support. The proposal was also supported by the CITES Scientific Working Group of the European Community. The CITES Plants Committee is convinced that the proposal is scientifically sound and that the species qualifies for inclusion in Appendix II according to the current criteria.

It should be clearly stated that the Netherlands has thoroughly considered the pros and cons of proposing Ramin for CITES listing also in the broader context of the governments adopted Policy on Tropical Rainforests (1992).

The Netherlands wishes to stress that it is the sincere objective of the Netherlands to assist the range States in achieving sustainable management of tropical rainforests and of individual tree species. In this respect the Netherlands is convinced that CITES is a proper and effective tool that can successfully add to the conservation goals of both producer and consumer countries.

As a major consumer, the Netherlands feels a responsibility for the conservation of Ramin and would like to share this responsibility with the range States. International co-operation, as stated in the Preamble of CITES is the essential and constructive basis to reach common goals in nature conservation and the Netherlands prefers to proceed with further action in full bilateral co-operation with the range States: Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines and Myanmar.

Therefore the Netherlands has decided not to propose Ramin for inclusion in CITES Appendix II but to leave this option to the conference.

Information on this species obtained by the Netherlands during the preparatory work is presented in the annex to this paper.<sup>1</sup>

The Netherlands proposes to the Conference to adopt the following recommendation:

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION

APPEALS to the range States of Ramin (*Gonystylus bancanus*) to co-operate with each other and with consumer countries of this species to develop proper measures that contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of this species; and

INVITES the range States of Ramin (*Gonystylus bancanus*) and the consumer countries to jointly develop a proposal to list this species in Appendix II or III of CITES at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the "Foreword", these supporting statements are not reproduced in the Proceedings. (Note from the Secretariat.)