

Committee Reports and Recommendations

PLANTS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Introduction

1. This report covers the period from June 1994 to December 1996. During this period the Plants Committee (PC) met on two occasions (sixth meeting in

Tenerife, Spain, 19-23 June 1995; seventh meeting in San José, Costa Rica, 11-15 November 1996).

2. The PC comprised the following representatives of the six regions:

Region	Regional Representative	Alternate
Africa	Mrs Christine H.S. Kabuye (Kenya) Mr Rejdali Moh (Morocco)	Mr Jameson H. Seyani (Malawi) Mr A.B. Cunningham (South Africa)
Asia	Mr Zulmukshar Shaari (Malaysia) Mr De-yuan Hong (China)	Mr Wichar Thitprasert (Thailand) Mr Dwiatmo Siswomartono (Indonesia)
Europe	Mrs Margarita Clemente Muñoz (Spain)	Mr Bertrand von Arx (Switzerland) until March 1996 Mr Jan de Koning (Netherlands)
North America	Mr Bruce MacBryde (United States)	Mrs Yurina Noria Chassin (Mexico)
Oceania	Mr Jim A. Armstrong (Australia) until September 1996	Ms Janet Owen (New Zealand)
Central and South America and the Caribbean	Mr Enrique Forero (Colombia) Mrs Lúcia Helena de Oliveira (Brazil)	Mrs E. Mora de Retana (Costa Rica) Mr Federico Bascopé (Bolivia)

PC Meetings

- Almost all members participated in the two meetings: one representative of Central and South America and the Caribbean (from Colombia) was absent from the sixth meeting and replaced by the alternate; Oceania was not represented at the seventh meeting.
- At an informal meeting during the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the newly elected members of the PC present in Fort Lauderdale provisionally nominated Mr Jim Armstrong as Chairman of the PC. This nomination was later confirmed by the other members of the PC. Mr Armstrong held this position until September 1996, when he accepted the post of Deputy Secretary General at the CITES Secretariat. At its seventh meeting, the members of the PC nominated Mrs Margarita Clemente, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, as its Chairman, and nominated Mrs Lúcia Helena de Oliveira as its Vice-Chairman.
- The minutes of the sixth meeting (Clemente, 1995) have been sent to the Parties; additional copies are available from the CITES Secretariat. The minutes of the seventh meeting are being edited at the time of writing of this report.
- It is pleasing to note that the increase in the number of observers from Parties and non-governmental organizations attending PC meetings, observed in the period 1992-1994 (see document Doc. 9.14), has continued. The number of participants at the sixth meeting was 74 (from 30 Parties and 17 non-governmental organizations); the seventh meeting was attended by 81 participants (from 27 Parties and 13 non-governmental organizations).

Major Issues

Nursery Registration

7. Although the Resolution dealing with the registration of nurseries artificially propagating Appendix-I specimens

was adopted at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat included only one nursery in its register. It is currently evaluating two more applications. Although there was strong support for the registration mechanism, the PC is surprised that so few applications for registration have been received by the Secretariat. It will continue monitoring developments on this subject.

Review of the Appendices

8. The PC continued the review of the appendices to identify those taxa that had not been recorded in international trade. Various taxa were considered and debated over the past three PC meetings with the result that a number of Appendix-II taxa have been proposed for deletion and others for transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Timber Issues

9. The PC was pleased to note that the Secretariat has developed good relationships with ITTO, and expects that these will further improve. Although not directly involved in the discussion of the Timber Working Group (TWG), the PC was pleased with the reports presented by it and would like to congratulate the members of the TWG, and its Chairman, for the excellent reports, and to compliment the Secretariat's staff for the efficient support provided to the TWG.

Significant Trade – Plants

10. The PC discussed at length the subject of the Review of Significant Trade in Plants. The result of these discussions is presented to this meeting of the Conference of the Parties in document Doc. 10.56, and includes a programme that will result in a draft resolution on this subject for consideration at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### Trade in Medicinal Plants

11. In his report to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Chairman of the PC indicated that the trade in medicinal plants would be an important subject in the agenda of the PC meetings. In the period 1992-1994 the PC discussed a number of options for dealing with this trade. A project proposal has been discussed on the subject and has been approved by the Standing Committee. A first report has been prepared by the Scientific Authority of Germany (Lange, 1996), which also published a Directory for Medicinal Plant Conservation (Kasperek *et al.*, 1996). Particular attention was also given to the trade in *Prunus africana*. The PC will continue its close co-operation with the IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plants Specialist Group and it will continue monitoring the trade in medicinal plants by closely linking this to the Review of Significant Trade in Plants.

### Budget

12. During the period **1995-1996**, the PC received the following annual budgetary allocation from the Trust Fund:

Year	Allocation (CHF)*	Expenditure (CHF)
1995	40,000	33,613
1996	50,000	40,984

\* 1995: USD 1 = CHF 1.19; 1996: USD 1 = CHF 1.22

13. The figures presented in the table suggest that the PC has operated successfully within its annual budget allocation for the period concerned. However, the figures in the table above do not indicate the substantial financial contributions from Parties (Spain, PTS 5,500,000; Costa Rica USD 20,000) hosting the PC meetings, in particular those for simultaneous interpretation and rental of meeting rooms, or those of Committee members and others actively involved in carrying out the tasks of the PC as charged by the Conference of the Parties. For both meetings, the Netherlands and the United States of America provided financial support to the Secretariat to assist a number of Parties with the cost of travel to the PC meetings. In addition, the Scientific Authority of Spain paid the hotel costs for nine participants at the sixth meeting. The Committee wishes to acknowledge, with gratitude, these important additional contributions, which have enabled the Committee to function in a manner and at a level expected by the Parties.
14. At the fifth meeting (San Miguel, Mexico, 1994), thanks to generous financial support from Japan, the

Netherlands and the United States it was possible to use an additional language of the Convention, Spanish. Since that meeting it has been possible to maintain simultaneous interpretation into Spanish and English at the sixth and seventh meetings, this being provided by the host countries, Spain and Costa Rica. For the eighth meeting (which will probably take place in Chile) it may be expected that such interpretation will also be provided by the host country. The possibility to use an additional language in the discussion had a very positive effect as can be concluded from the increased and strong participation from Spanish-speaking countries. They provided valuable knowledge and information on CITES implementation for plants in their countries. This also had a very positive influence on the work of the PC in general. If the Parties wish to maintain this open forum of discussion, it is important that the use of the languages of CITES be made possible because, for adequate participation from Parties other than the English-speaking ones, simultaneous interpretation is a necessity. However, one can not be sure that the host country will always be able to provide this assistance.

15. The **1997** budget for the PC was approved at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, as explained above, the Committee expects to be able to operate with the funds allocated.
16. The budget proposed for **1998-2000** is derived from the expenditures for the fifth, sixth and seventh meetings, taking into account a number of the remarks made above. All three had simultaneous interpretation into Spanish and English, provided for through external sources. The same will hopefully apply for the eighth meeting as well. In order to maintain adequate participation from Spanish-speaking countries and to encourage the participation of French-speaking ones, it will be essential to continue providing simultaneous interpretation facilities. However, one can not be sure that the host country will always provide this assistance. The possibility to provide simultaneous translation into French should be taken into account as well. Appropriate funds, therefore, have to be allocated in the budget of the PC. It would not be appropriate to expect simultaneous interpretation to be provided through external funding. This would seriously impede efforts by the Secretariat to seek funds to assist Parties that are not members to participate in meetings of the PC.
17. Also included is an amount of USD 10,000 annually for assistance to the regions (e.g. for travel to regional meetings).

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Travel of members	23,000	28,000	23,000 <sup>5</sup>	36,500	30,930	30,930	30,930
Interpretation French	none	none	none	none	14,000 <sup>6</sup>	14,000 <sup>6</sup>	14,000 <sup>6</sup>
Interpretation Spanish	9,000 <sup>1</sup>	8,000 <sup>2</sup>	3,500 <sup>3</sup>	none <sup>4</sup>	14,000 <sup>6</sup>	14,000 <sup>6</sup>	14,000 <sup>6</sup>
Proceedings	1,500	6,000 <sup>2</sup>	none <sup>7</sup>	3,500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Expenditure for members	none	none	none	none	10,000	10,000	10,000
				40,000	69,930*	69,930*	69,930*

<sup>1</sup> External funding from the Netherlands and the United States

<sup>2</sup> External funding Spain

<sup>3</sup> External funding Costa Rica

<sup>4</sup> External funding Chile (expected)

<sup>5</sup> No participation from the representative of Oceania

<sup>6</sup> This amount contains a component for travel and per diem (ca. USD 5,000) since it is not sure that interpreters can always be recruited locally

<sup>7</sup> Proceedings will be published in 1997

\* Budget allocation CHF 100,000 at USD 1 = CHF 1.43

## Other Issues of Importance

### Regional Representation

18. From discussions in the PC, it is clear that it has frequently been difficult for some regional representatives to establish contacts with the Parties in their regions, or even to organize regional meetings. In the European region these contacts have been developed best. The first regional meeting on CITES plant issues was held in Palermo (Italy, December 1995), and a second meeting will be held in Sofia (Bulgaria, April 1997). Also a directory was compiled, containing names and addresses of persons in the Management and Scientific Authorities dealing with CITES plant issues. It is important that such directories be developed for other regions as well. The regular changing of many of the regional representatives at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties may also be an explanation of why it is difficult to establish good contacts in the region. This is one of the reasons why the PC supports the idea to have the membership to the PC extended for a period of two intervals between consecutive meetings of the Conference of the Parties. However, it felt that the final decision on this subject should be the responsibility of the regions themselves. The PC is of the opinion that the membership of the PC should be based on the selection of persons, not on the selection of countries.
19. Also, the PC would like to express some concern about the lack of support provided to some of the members by the Management or Scientific Authorities of the countries from which they came. It strongly recommends these countries to ensure that the current regional representative from their country will be present at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, if only to ensure that, if required, the PC can act as a Plants Working Group to discuss particular issues during the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
20. Finally, having seen the number of Parties in the European region increase to 31, the PC believes it is important that the representation of this region be increased to two individuals.

### Role of the Scientific Authorities

21. In his report to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Chairman of the PC indicated concern about the effective functioning of Scientific Authorities in CITES Parties, in particular for plants. The PC carefully studied the document prepared by the Secretariat, following a consultation of the Parties. The PC finds it particularly important that special training be developed aimed at improving the functioning of the Scientific Authorities, and it will gladly assist the Secretariat with regard to plant issues.

### Further Directions

22. Regrettably, the implementation of CITES with regard to international plant trade still remains a matter for

concern. The PC was established to help address these problems and to provide the Conference of the Parties with the much needed expert technical advice it requires to consider the implementation of the Convention. The PC is attempting to establish effective networks within the regions (particularly in the larger regions of Africa, Asia and Central and South America and the Caribbean) so that proposals that will have an impact on plant trade in the countries of each region are discussed adequately prior to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Little progress will be made however if the Parties remain apathetic to plant trade issues or choose to ignore the opportunities to liaise with their representatives on the PC.

### Working Programme until the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

23. At its seventh meeting, the PC discussed the tasks it saw as important to carry out before the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. These are as follows:
24. – Development of a programme for a Review of Significant Trade in Plants included in Appendix II. A document on this subject has been presented for consideration at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
25. – Review of the appendices, applying the criteria included in Resolution Conf. 9.24, carried out in close connection with the Review of Significant Trade;
26. – Continuation of the preparation of a checklist of those taxa that should be included in the Review of Significant Trade;
27. – Preparation of sheets for the Identification Manual (see also document Doc. 10.17 on this subject, prepared by the Secretariat);
28. – Improvement of the co-operation within the regions through the preparation of special directories containing information on the persons in Management and Scientific Authorities who are responsible for CITES implementation for plants.

### References

29. Clemente, M. (Ed.) 1995. Proceedings of the VIth Plants Committee meeting; Tenerife, Spain, 19-23 June 1995 (Spanish 54 pp., English 45 pp., Annexes 32 pp.).
30. Kasperek, M., A. Gröger and U. Schippmann. 1996. Directory for Medicinal Plants Conservation. IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plants Specialist Group. 156 pp.
31. Lange, D. 1996. Untersuchungen zum Heilpflanzenhandel in Deutschland. Bundesamt für Naturschutz. 130 pp. + 24 pp.