

ITTO Tropical Forest UPDATE

A newsletter from the International Tropical Timber Organization to promote the conservation and sustainable development of tropical forests



CITES branches out

UNTIL THE EARLY 1990s, there were relatively few timber species listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an organization established to monitor and control trade in endangered species by placing them in one of three Appendices, Appendix I having the strictest controls. Listed timber species generally had restricted ranges and minimal trade. Beginning in 1992, concerted efforts began to list wide-ranging and economically important timber species in the CITES Appendices, the most notable being afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*, listed in Appendix II in 1992), bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*, listed in Appendix III by several countries since the mid-1990s and in Appendix II with effect from 2003) and ramin (*Gonystylus* spp, listed in Appendix III by Indonesia since 2001 and in Appendix II with effect from 2005). Appendix II listing means that exports of specified products made from these timber species (primary products for the first two but all—including secondary—products of ramin) require certificates from any exporting country stating that the export of those specimens would not be detrimental to the species' future survival in the wild. These so-called non-detriment findings (NDFs) are essentially confirmation of the sustainable production of exports of these timber species, providing a clear link between the requirements of CITES and the work of ITTO.

This link was first recognized by ITTO in 1992, when the first of several International Tropical Timber Council decisions calling for cooperation between ITTO and CITES on the listing of tropical timber species was taken. The CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) called for ITTO to be consulted



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Cover image A large (35m +) mahogany tree on the Las Piedras River, Madre de Dios, Peru. *Photo: Walter H. Wust*

on proposed tropical timber listings in a resolution on implementing the Convention for timber species in 1997. ITTO participated in a CITES timber working group which gave rise to that resolution, and has been actively participating in (including co-funding meetings of) a CITES mahogany working group that provides advice on the implementation of the Convention for that species.

Recent developments indicate that the role of CITES in regulating the trade of tropical timber (tropical species make up virtually all of the timber species listed by CITES) is set to expand further, leading to increased opportunities for collaboration with ITTO. CITES is formulating a new strategic plan, which will include a special focus on timber. And at CoP 14 this June in the Netherlands, tropical timber will feature explicitly in several agenda items, including a review of Peru's mahogany trade, a report of the mahogany working group, another report of an ITTO-sponsored meeting on NDFs for mahogany, a proposal on (tropical) timber identification, a proposed CoP resolution calling for cooperation between CITES and ITTO on tropical timber trade, and proposals for listing five new tropical timber species in Appendix II (including all species in the genus *Cedrela*, economically important in Latin America—see page 22).

Given all of these developments, it is encouraging that ITTO and CITES have already laid the groundwork for collaboration in ensuring that countries have the capacity and means to effectively implement the requirements on listed timber species. A large joint project (page 5) is just getting underway which will, *inter alia*, provide assistance to countries to improve the management of listed species and the capacity to carry out NDFs for them. Workshops on mahogany and ramin (page 3) have been convened by ITTO to bring together all stakeholders involved in or impacted by the CITES listings of these species. ITTO has been instrumental in involving the trade sector, a key constituency in ensuring that CITES is implemented effectively, in such meetings. As is clear from the article by Brignole (page 6), however, there is still some way to go in ensuring that information is effectively channeled and understood by all to ensure

that CITES can meet its aim of promoting trade in sustainably produced specimens of listed timber species. Unfortunately, some traders (and some countries) continue to view CITES listings as barriers to trade rather than as a means to facilitate trade in sustainably produced specimens. CITES and ITTO have a shared vested interest in changing such perceptions.

As CITES branches out to cover more tropical timber species, it will increasingly bump up against the issues that have been ITTO's focus over the past two decades: the still limited progress towards sustainable forest management (SFM) in many countries, and the even more limited resources available to facilitate such progress. Alastair Sarre (our former editor and colleague) focuses on the issue of financing SFM in *Out on a limb* (page 32), and finds grounds for optimism in the recent global climate change discussions on averted deforestation. Certainly there is a need for additional resources for SFM at both the national and international level, including for the work of UNFF (currently in the process of approving an ambitious work program for 2007–2015—see page 24), CITES, ITTO and others working towards better forest management. We need to be relentless in seeking innovative new ways to attract more funds to SFM in the tropics, be it through carbon markets, biofuel schemes or other avenues, to ensure that tropical timber species can one day soon start being removed from the CITES Appendices rather than added to them.

Steve Johnson