



GREENPEACE



To: All Ministers attending CITES CoP14 and the Ministerial Conference on June 13th

Subject: Timber species on CITES and enforcement

Amsterdam, 30th May 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

This year, the Dutch government is hosting the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 14) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and has taken the initiative to organise a Ministerial Conference on June 13th. Improving enforcement and implementation of CITES and protection of timber species are high on the agenda. Unsustainable trade in timber threatens the survival of traded species and causes widespread and irreversible destruction of forests and forest biodiversity. The undersigned NGOs are happy to see this important subject on the CITES agenda and would like to offer some recommendations with respect to both CoP14 itself and the ministerial declaration from the Ministerial Conference.

Eighty percent of the world's ancient forests have already been destroyed or degraded and what remains is under threat. This has led to substantial loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Deforestation is responsible for approximately twenty percent of global carbon emissions. In its recent Fourth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recognized halting deforestation, especially in the tropics, as one of the most effective measures to address climate change. Taking such measures would also benefit the world's poor, many of whom depend on forests and forest biodiversity for livelihoods, vital ecosystem services and as a nutritional safety net. According to the World Bank, ninety percent of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty are directly or indirectly affected by deforestation.

Up until now, the international community has not established effective measures to deal with the most important causes of forest destruction: excessive logging and conversion to plantations. CITES is one of the few instruments that have the international scope and support to address these practices. Although CITES applies only to species in international trade, the procedures and institutional capacity which CITES requires within a range State can support measures to halt illegal and unsustainable trade within that State's domestic market. CITES thus provides a very important tool in the fight against illegal and destructive logging and related trade. To achieve this, it is vital that more timber species be listed on CITES as a critical component of the global response to deforestation and biodiversity loss.

A recent analysis of threatened tree species in trade identified at least seventeen timber species that would warrant inclusion in CITES Appendix II, including commercial species such as merbau, moabi and ipé¹. Listing those species could contribute significantly to achieving the 2010 target for reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity and realizing the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

However, to realize its true conservation potential, the enforcement of CITES must be greatly improved. This is most evident in the implementation of commercially traded timber species such as ramin, bigleaf mahogany, cedro and afrormosia, none of which have been fully protected by CITES in practice. As a result, illegal and destructive logging are still threatening those species with extinction. The example of bigleaf mahogany is

¹ A report prepared by James Hewitt and commissioned by Milieudefensie (January 2007) "An assessment of tree species which warrant listing in CITES" suggests the following species as candidates for listing in CITES: moabi, African mahogany (*Entandophragma* spp., *Khaya* spp.), wenge, okoume, azobe, bubinga, ipé, jatoba, cumaru, merbau, belian/ulin, korean pine and possibly red meranti. www.milieudefensie.nl/globalisering/publicaties

compelling. Despite being listed on Appendix II since 2002, illegally and destructively logged mahogany continues to be exported from Peru under CITES permits issued in violation of the Convention. Peru has yet to prepare the scientifically-based non-detriment findings required for all exports of CITES-listed species, including mahogany. Peru's export quotas for mahogany in 2005 and 2006 were based on false and misleading information and at least 20 of the 24 companies exporting mahogany from Peru exported illegally logged mahogany in 2005. By continuing to accept shipments of illegal and destructively logged mahogany from Peru, importing countries like the United States, the European countries and other CITES parties are undermining the CITES convention and are contributing to the destruction of Peru's remaining forests.²

CITES CoP14 could make a difference for the protection of tree species and responsible management of forests if the parties would:

- Demand effective measures to improve the enforcement of CITES and offer targeted financial and technical assistance to range states in order to assure compliance with the requirements of CITES. This is particularly important for justifying export quotas and effective management of the species. Such support should be supplied directly by importing countries in proportion to the quantity of the species which they import from the range state.
- Include more commercially traded species in CITES in order to combat trade in illegal and destructively extracted timber, including all four species proposed for Appendix II listing at CoP 14.
- Ensure protection of CITES listed timber species by improving implementation of the convention.
- Consider CITES listing of all timber species classified as Endangered or Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- Suspend all exports of Peruvian mahogany until that country has the necessary scientific evidence and administrative ability to prevent unsustainable and illegal logging of mahogany, in line with the country's obligations under the CITES convention.

The undersigned organisations urge all Parties to CITES to take these actions at CoP14 and the ministerial conference to ensure CITES makes the fullest possible contribution to biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation. The ministerial conference should produce a strong declaration for CITES Parties and future CoPs to continue to expand CITES timber listings and to greatly enhance enforcement for listed species. Only with strong measures and a clear strategy, CITES will be important for the protection of flora and fauna, contribute to sustainable trade and improve livelihoods of forest peoples.

With Kind Regards,



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² AIDSESP (2007): La Tala ilegal de caoba (*Swietenia macrophylla*) en la amazonía peruana y su comercialización al mercado exterior. These practices are also described in detail in the Secretariat's report to the Standing Committee, SC55 Doc. 12.

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