

Statement on the contribution of CITES to the implementation of the UNSPF

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First I would like to thank the UNFF Secretariat for having invited the CITES Secretary General, M. John E. Scanlon, to be a panellist in this panel. Due to previous commitments he could not join you today although he would have liked to do so and, I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate on his behalf.

As stated in the UNFF site on this 12th Session, *the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 provides a global framework for actions at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests*. The 'implementation framework' of the UNSPF recalls the Roles and responsibilities of the intergovernmental partners and stakeholders at the international level. Between other multilateral environmental agreements that are today not members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is mentioned as it can make important contributions to the global forests goals and targets.

Assessing the nature and scope of activities encompassed in the six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets of the UNSPF, which we need to achieve by 2030, we can confirm that CITES can make direct contributions to all Goals and to most associated targets. Although these are voluntary, they touch the fundamental principles which are the pillars of CITES: all international trade in CITES listed species of fauna and flora, needs to be done legally and sustainably.

CITES can make particular contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 15 and 17. The CITES Strategic Vision Goal 3 calls for action to *Contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and to achieving relevant globally-agreed goals and targets by ensuring that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive*. Of CITES Strategic Vision Goal 3, objectives 3.1 and 3.4, call for cooperation between CITES and the international financial mechanisms and other related institutions in order to support CITES-related conservation and sustainable development projects. The contribution of CITES to progress on the SDGs has a direct impact on progress on the Global Forest Goals of the UNSPF. Halting loss of forest biodiversity is strengthened by ensuring that international trade in wild fauna and flora is conducted at sustainable levels. Now, objective 3.5 of Goal 3 of the CITES Strategic Vision, invites the Parties to CITES and the CITES Secretariat to cooperate with other relevant organizations and agreements dealing with natural resources, in this context, CITES partnered the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), from 2006 to 2016, to help implementing the ITTO-CITES Programme for Implementing CITES Listings of Tropical Timber Species.

In 1975 when CITES entered into force it regulated trade in 18 tree species. The implementation of the ITTO-CITES Programme demonstrated that implementing listings of tree species in CITES, can be challenging, but it showed that Parties to CITES are not alone to implement the requirements that result from those listings. At CITES 16th Conference of the Parties held in Bangkok in 2013 the number of tree listed species in CITES grew to over 600 species. The success of CITES in supporting legal, sustainable timber trade and addressing illegal trade saw a further 300+ tree species, including all *Dalbergia* species, being brought under CITES trade controls at CoP17 held in Johannesburg last year (2016). Today CITES regulates international trade in over 900 tree species.

CITES is a global instrument that reviews levels of International trade in the most economically valuable tree species and it puts an obligation all along the supply chain. Not only exporting but also

importing countries have obligations to fill and the latter are giving an increasingly importance to this Convention because it provides a good *quid pro quo*. CITES operates with a pragmatic operational approach and that is why countries are turning into this instrument for regulating international trade in more and more tree species. CITES works from the enforcement side and this underpins the efforts to ensure a sustainable harvest. Illegal logging jeopardizes efforts to ensure a sustainable use of forests. For example, when tree species get listed in CITES, the listings trigger a global obligation of monitoring and checks that often result in seizures and identification of sites in range States where illegal logging is taking place. The listings in CITES suddenly result into a global common effort to control and ensure sustainability, halting loss of economically valuable tree species hence halting loss of forest biodiversity, of course all this is in line with the **Global Forest Goal 1** and the Sustainable Development Goal 15.

As mentioned earlier, CITES can make direct contributions to all Goals and to most associated targets of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests. This Convention works on tree species that share their ecosystem with local communities. The work on *Prunus africana* (the African cherry tree) is a good example of CITES contributions to **Global forest goal 2**, the work done in Mont Cameroon led the Scientific Authority of that country state during a CITES CoP that those communities had learnt to take care of those tree species and would now make a decent living out of its management and trade in the dry bark. This work enhanced forest-based economy in Cameroon and provided social and environmental benefits. Following the work of CITES in line with the **Global forest goal 3** we can mention numerous cases, one being the work done in Peru on *Swietenia macrophylla* (big-leaf mahogany). During the years 2005-2010 CITES strongly focused on making progress to order the management, conservation and use of this species in the Peruvian forest. From not having a controlled management before that time, Peru made enormous progress on setting up national management strategies for the evaluation of commercial stocks and strategy for the sustainable management of *Swietenia macrophylla* in Peru, for establishing export quotas for this species, for strengthening the work and cooperation with the private sector to further develop conversion factors, and all this efforts resulted in an increased area of sustainably managed forest of this valuable species in that country. The ITTO-CITES programme is an example of interagency cooperation where CITES played a key role to mobilize financial resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management of CITES tree species forests. The work of that programme strengthened scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships as called for in **Global forest goal 4**. Today CITES is working on a continuation of the ITTO-CITES programme's work, with the imminent launching of the CITES tree species programme during which ITTO will continue having a prominent role. Regarding the **Global forest goal 5** the CITES Secretariat is currently assisting Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Niger and other Parties, to develop national legislation on international trade and in some cases to insert CITES provisions in their existing national forest legislation. Finally, on the **Global forest goal 6**, CITES is well placed to contribute to all the targets under this goal except for target 6.2 which calls for cooperation on forest related programmes across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. However, CITES has confirmed to the UNFF Secretariat, it's continued interest in the work of the CPF and its membership. In this regard, if the CPF would consider inviting CITES to join that partnership, the latter could contribute directly to target 6.2 of the Global forest goal 6 and suddenly it would be in a position to contribute to all targets of this goal. We are looking forward as well to hearing how do CPF members and partners plan to contribute to the implementation of the UNSPF, CITES is an international agreement of remarkable power and scope and thus can make robust contributions to the implementation of all goals of the UNSPF.