

Parties to CITES debate sensitive wildlife conservation issues

Outcomes of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) included the listing of *Aniba rosaedora* (rosewood) and *Bulnesia sarmenoi* (hollywood) in Appendix II (which permits international trade under certain conditions), as well as listings of five species of tree frog, the unicorn beetle and several Madagascar plant species, among others. The session was held in Doha, Qatar from 13 to 25 March 2010, with attendance of about 1 500.

African countries negotiated an African elephant action plan, but controversy arose over some countries proposing (unsuccessfully) to permit sale of stockpiled ivory or downlisting of some African elephant populations to permit trade under certain conditions.

Another sensitive debate centred on the extent of CITES's mandate with regard to domestic trade policies that may have implications for international illegal trade. Concerns were raised that internal trade of captive bred tigers in China (where policy promotes farmed animals as substitutes for wild ones) could stimulate medicinal demand for tiger parts and thus potentially instigate poaching across the range and illegal international trade. The revised resolution on conservation and trade in tigers and other Appendix I Asian big cat species includes greater reporting requirements on the nature and scale of trade, which represents a step towards clarifying the role of CITES in addressing the intersection between international and domestic trade threats to protected species.

Roughly 5 000 species of animals and 28 000 species of plants are currently listed in three CITES appendices and thus protected against overexploitation through international trade. For more on CITES, see the article on p. 64.

CBD technical body addresses forest and wildlife issues

2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, is a momentous year for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In the lead up to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-10) – scheduled for 18 to 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan – the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) held a fruitful fourteenth session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10 to 21 May 2010. More than 700 participants attended. SBSTTA adopted 18 recommendations for submission to COP-10, of which a number are relevant to forests and wildlife.

Discussions of forest biodiversity centred especially on possible development of biodiversity safeguards under REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; see article on p. 56) and improvements in forest biodiversity reporting and monitoring. The debate also addressed consideration of indigenous and local communities' rights and participation in the



FAO/04921/BAIT

development of REDD biodiversity safeguards. Proposed work includes collaboration with FAO, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and other CPF organizations on streamlining forest-related reporting.

The relationship between climate change and biodiversity loss was a central issue at SBSTTA 14. Attention focused on mainstreaming climate change issues in CBD and on ensuring that biodiversity concerns and approaches are integrated appropriately in other processes, especially the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Delegates debated whether CBD should provide guidance for the development of REDD biodiversity safeguards and/or be involved in their implementation and monitoring. However no conclusion was reached on this point, as some preferred to wait until the issue is negotiated under UNFCCC.

Another prominent topic was the linkages between protected areas and climate change adaptation and mitigation. While some countries called for caution to avoid undermining the primary biodiversity conservation objective of protected areas, others thought that highlighting the adaptation and mitigation services of protected areas could be beneficial, helping to attract funding for biodiversity conservation. SBSTTA recommended that COP-10 invite parties to identify areas that are important for both biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation/adaptation, while recognizing that biodiversity conservation remains the primary objective of protected areas. SBSTTA also called for exploring how funding opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation could contribute to the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas. Discussions of CBD's work programme on protected areas also drew attention to the need for enhanced involvement of indigenous and local communities and benefit sharing.

SBSTTA recommendations on mountain biodiversity also emphasized climate change adaptation and mitigation issues, including *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of species under threat from climate change, reducing deforestation and restoring degraded forest ecosystems; establishment of conservation



corridors and connectivity; and cooperation among parties in developing regional strategies on animals that could cause conflict with humans, in particular large predators.

Under the topic of sustainable use, a bracketed recommendation calls on the COP to request that the CBD Executive Secretary convene, in collaboration with FAO, UNFF and other members of CPF, an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on sustainable use in agriculture and forestry. Delegates debated the scope of its eventual mandate, and settled on expanding it to include “non-timber forest resources”.

SBSTTA invited parties and governments to implement the recommendations of the Liaison Group on Bushmeat for more sustainable use of bushmeat, taking into consideration customary sustainable hunting practices for indigenous and local communities’ livelihoods.

Other SBSTTA recommendations addressed, *inter alia*, inland water, marine and coastal biodiversity; agricultural biodiversity; biofuels; biodiversity of dry and subhumid lands; invasive alien species; and incentive measures, as well as post-2010 goals and targets. The meeting also launched the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

UNESCO World Heritage Committee releases updated list of protected sites

At its third session in Brasilia, Brazil from 25 July to 2 August 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee added 21 new sites to the World Heritage List, including four natural areas partly consisting of forest land.

UNESCO encourages the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage with universal value to humanity. The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and ratified almost universally, allows sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, which signifies that the international community will cooperate in their protection. The convention aims at securing the financial and intellectual resources needed to protect these sites. The treaty also stipulates the listing of threatened sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The forested sites newly added to the World Heritage List are:

- six areas of China Danxia – erosional landforms characterized by spectacular red cliffs – in subtropical southwestern China, conserving subtropical broadleaved evergreen forests and hosting many species of flora and fauna, about 400 of which are considered rare or threatened;
- the pitons, cirques and remparts of Réunion Island, France, a part of La Réunion National Park whose rugged terrain includes escarpments, gorges and basins with humid subtropical forests and cloud forests that are natural habitat for a wide diversity of plants, presenting a high level of endemism;
- the Putorana Plateau in the Russian Federation, an isolated mountain range including pristine taiga and forest tundra, crossed by a major reindeer migration route;
- the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka, whose montane forests are home to an exceptional range of flora and fauna including several endangered species such as the western-purple-faced langur, the Horton Plains slender loris and the Sri Lankan leopard.

In addition, four sites were added to the List of World Heritage in Danger, including the Rainforests of Atsinanana in Madagascar and the Everglades National Park in the United States of America. The Everglades had only just been removed from the danger list in 2007, but was reinstated because since then, a significant reduction in water flow to the park has resulted in increased nutrient pollution.