



for a living planet®



CITES 2004

www.panda.org/species/CITES

WWF POSITION STATEMENT

13th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO CITES, BANGKOK, 2-14 OCTOBER 2004

RAMIN

Proposal 50

Indonesia has proposed the inclusion in Appendix II of ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) including all parts and derivatives, except:

- a) seeds, spores and pollen (including pollinia); and
- b) seedling or tissue culture obtained in vitro, in solid or liquid media, transported in sterile containers (annotation # 1)

in accordance with the criterion listed in Resolution conf. 9.24 (Rev. Cop 12) annex 2a paragraph A and paragraph B.i and additionally, the criterion listed in annex 2b paragraph B.

WWF RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

SUMMARY

WWF supports the inclusion of ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) in Appendix II because:

- Commercially-valuable species within the genus *Gonystylus* are currently subject to overharvesting in many parts of their range, the majority of which is illegal and is driven by demand from the international market.
- *G. bancanus* clearly meets the criteria for inclusion on Appendix II as current levels of harvest exceed that which can be continued in perpetuity.
- For look-alike reasons, the remaining species in the genus also need to be listed on Appendix II to enable effective control of those species most in trade.
- Fifteen species of *Gonystylus* were categorized as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List 2003 (*i.e.* considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future).
- An Appendix II listing would assist range States in addressing illegal logging and conservation concerns for this species, through increased collaboration from importing countries in scrutinising the legality and source of imports, as well as ensuring that all harvest and trade in ramin is well-managed and not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.
- An Appendix II listing, if effectively implemented, could provide increased assurance to importers and consumers that ramin they purchase is not from illegal or unsustainable sources.
- The proposed annotation #1 for a ramin listing in Appendix II appropriately reflects that the majority of international trade in this species is in the form of sawn timber, semi-finished timber products and finished products.



WWF for a living planet®

RATIONALE

The genus *Gonystylus* consists of about 30 species distributed from the Solomon Islands and Fiji to Malaysia, Indonesia and Nicobar. The most heavily commercially-exploited species is *G. bancanus* which occurs in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak, Sumatra, Bangka, Kalimantan and Brunei Darussalem. At least six other species in the genus are also known to be commercially valuable. Fifteen species of the genus are included in the 2003 Red List as Vulnerable, including two of the commercially-exploited species, *G. bancanus* and *G. macrophyllus*. The majority of the species within the genus (27 species) occurs on the island of Borneo, while seven species are found in Sumatra and Peninsular Malaysia.

Indonesia and Malaysia have been the predominant exporters of ramin, with markets in other parts of Asia, Europe and North America. Ramin is used predominantly for timber and wood products, though occasionally also for agarwood. Overexploitation of ramin (*Gonystylus spp.*) in Indonesia is driven by continuous and high demand for this valuable wood, mostly by the international market. Between 1994 and 2003, Indonesia exported ramin to over 25 countries, totaling approximately 165,820m³ of finished products. Major importers included Japan (the largest importer in Asia), China, Singapore, Taiwan and Italy (the major European importer). Annual production in Indonesia decreased from 900,000m³ per annum in the early 1990s to 130,000m³ in 2000. The decline in log production in Indonesia appears to be a consequence of the stock declines in the peat swamp forest. Annual harvest quotas for 2002 and 2003 were set at 8,000m³ by the CITES Management Authority.

In Peninsular Malaysia, ramin production appears to have remained reasonably stable over the past ten years, but ramin production in Sarawak has declined from 521,000m³ in 1990 to 67,000m³ in 2000.

In 2001, in response to its declining ramin population levels, Indonesia introduced a total ban on exports of ramin logs, sawn timber and veneer sheets. Despite this ban, the international trade continues to thrive - supplied and facilitated by illegal harvesting in Indonesia and illegal trade of Indonesian ramin through Malaysia and Singapore to, for example, the European Union and the United States.

The most heavily-traded species, *G. bancanus*, meets the criteria for inclusion on Appendix II, as current levels of harvesting of the species for international trade exceed that which can be continued in perpetuity. All other species of the genus are of similar colour and density to *G. bancanus* and as these cannot be distinguished easily from each other, all other species within the genus should be included on Appendix II under look-alike provisions.

The majority of the international trade in ramin is in sawn timber, semi-finished timber products such as mouldings, and finished products such as doors, window frames, picture frames and billiard cues. Thus, in order for an Appendix II listing to be effective, the most appropriate annotation for this proposal is Annotation #1, as included in Indonesia's proposal. It is important to note that the trade in ramin and its products has very different dynamics to that of other timber species currently listed on Appendix II, which are mostly traded in the form of logs, sawn timber, veneer and plywood, and so a different annotation to an Appendix II listing of ramin is appropriate.



for a living planet®

Ramin and Appendix III:

Ramin was first proposed for inclusion on Appendix II at CoP8, in Kyoto, 1992 by the Netherlands. Indonesia and Malaysia opposed the proposal on the basis that the ramin populations were not threatened. At CoP9 in Fort Lauderdale in 1994, ramin was once again proposed for inclusion in Appendix II and was rejected because of range state opposition. However, seven years later, due to increasingly available information on the decline of ramin in the wild, a lack of proper harvest management and the level of illegal export, and because the majority of the harvested ramin is destined to supply international markets, the Government of Indonesia placed the Indonesian population of ramin on CITES Appendix III with a zero quota. This entered into force on August 2001. The annotation on the listing was annotation #1 (the same annotation as that included in Indonesia's proposal to include ramin on Appendix II). Indonesia did however provide for trade in *Gonystylus* spp timber and products from one concessionaire that holds a "Certificate of Good Forest Management" accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This concessionaire also holds a *Certificate of Sustainable Forest Management* from Lembaga Ekolabel Indonesia (LEI).

Malaysia, the other main exporting range State, entered a partial reservation on the Appendix III listing, and so it applies only to Malaysia's exports of sawn timber and logs. Since the listing, Indonesia has received a number of reports regarding interceptions of illegal trade of ramin (or ramin harvested illegally from Indonesia) from neighbouring countries (Malaysia and Singapore) as well as the European Union and the United States. While this indicates the Appendix III listing has significantly increased the transparency of the trade and has been beneficial in addressing the illegal trade, population data indicate that ramin continues to face significant population declines across its habitat range and Appendix II provisions will provide strong tools to address the problem of overexploitation.

Benefits to inclusion in Appendix II:

- Non-detriment findings

Because of the continuing deterioration in the status of ramin in the wild, it is becoming increasingly important for exports to be subject to the Appendix II requirement of a non-detriment finding by an exporting country's CITES Scientific Authority (which is not required for Appendix III-listed species). This should provide a powerful tool to ensure that export volumes of ramin are maintained within levels that will ensure the species' survival in the wild, and will not affect the role the species plays within its ecosystem, such as the peatland forests that are also habitat to many endangered species.

Indonesia has already established a non-detriment finding for the concession that is permitted to export ramin from Indonesia and this forms the basis for determining the concession's annual allowable cut. Thus, it should be noted that making a non-detriment finding should not form an obstacle to effective implementation of an Appendix II listing for ramin.

- Greater international co-operation to regulate trade

Listing of ramin in Appendix II would also stimulate international co-operation to control the illegal trade in ramin and promote international co-operation for its management and conservation. The improved monitoring of international trade and the tightening of import controls which should result from an Appendix II listing should also bring all logging of ramin into the formal sector, thus reducing the illegal trade. In this way, inclusion in Appendix II would help to eliminate market distortions favouring illegal activity.

Each country would have to apply Appendix II provisions which includes legality checks and non-detriment findings to ensure sustainability of the resource.



for a living planet[®]

In April 2004, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore agreed to create a tri-national taskforce, the aim of which would be to increase law enforcement co-operation between the three countries in managing the trade in ramin. The objective is to combat illegal trade as well as providing a framework for long-term co-operation to manage the trade in accordance with each country's obligations under CITES. The creation of this taskforce provides a useful vehicle to mobilise action to ensure the effective implementation of the potential inclusion of this genus on Appendix II of CITES.

- Provides stronger assurance for importers that ramin is not from illegal sources

The illegal harvest and trade of ramin is currently the focus of international scrutiny. Increased awareness amongst importers and consumers of the potential illegality of ramin timber and products could have extremely negative market repercussions. Listing in Appendix II would allow more effective international scrutiny of the trade and provide greater assurance on the importing side that wood products are from legal sources, as well as promoting better management over the longer term.

It is also important to note that CITES and voluntary market-based measures such as certification through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are complementary. This is evidenced also by the fact that the only ramin currently permitted to be exported from Indonesia originates from an FSC-certified concession. Measures implemented by CITES are very different to those of the FSC, not least because the former is regulatory while the latter is voluntary. However, Appendix II measures complement and support FSC certification, and for parties engaged in the FSC process, directly assist in the implementation of full certification. With respect to the "sustainability" requirements of each system, there is substantial complementarity between the two. Under FSC, certification bodies must be satisfied that forest management operations are fulfilling the Principles and Criteria, which include conserving biological diversity, and maintaining the ecological functions and integrity of the forest. Under a CITES Appendix II listing, the Scientific Authority must be satisfied that the trade will not be detrimental to the wild population, and must limit trade so that species are maintained throughout their range at levels consistent with their role in their ecosystems. An Appendix II listing is more limited in scope than FSC certification, but provides a globally applicable and immediate regulatory framework to assist in combating illegal logging, an issue of concern to all those involved in the trade of this species. While further consultation through CITES will be required to determine the feasibility of various harmonisation scenarios of the two systems, both mechanisms may be necessary if species conservation, continued supplies of ramin and consumer confidence are to be secured for the long term.