

EPCH's emphatic representation to get Dalbergia sissoo delisted from CITES threatened list

14th - 25th November 2022; CoP 19 Meet, CITES, Panama City, Panama

Dalbergia genus (all species- around 275 including sheesham and rosewood) has been enlisted in the Appendix-II of the CITES in 2016 resulting in the issuance of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) permit by Wild Life Crime Control Bureau [WCCB] or comparable document in lieu of CITES permit i.e. Vriksh Shipment Certificate by EPCH for exports of wooden handicrafts items made from Dalbergia sissoo & Dalbergia latifolia. The issuance of certificates includes establishing of the chain of custody and legality of the procured wood by the exporters.

The proposal (No. 47) for delisting of Dalbergia sissoo from Appendix II of the CITES was once again placed by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India in the 19th meeting of Conference of Parties (CoP) of CITES held in Panama City, Panama from 14th -25th November, 2022.

In order to create awareness amongst opinion makers, foresters, diplomats, attendees, press and other stakeholders, an awareness presentation was organised on "**Dalbergia sissoo - Trees for Life and livelihood and Vriksh-Indian Timber legality assessment & verification scheme**" on 15th November 2022 on the side-lines of CoP19.



The Indian delegation at CoP 19 (L to R): Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Director, EPCH; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH; His Excellency, Mr. Upendra Singh Rawat, Ambassador of India to Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua; Mr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Additional Director General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC); Mr. Maheshwar Dhakal, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Govt. of Nepal; Mr. K C Rajendra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Kathmandu, Govt. of Nepal; and Mr. VP Thakur, Director, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India

The speakers of the side event included Mr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Additional Director General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; His Excellency, Mr. Upendra Singh Rawat, Ambassador of India to Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua; Mr. Maheshwar Dhakal, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Govt. of Nepal; Mr. V P Thakur, Regional Director, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Director, EPCH.

While initiating the discussions, Mr. Satya Prakash Yadav spoke about the findings of Non-Detrimental Finding (NDF)

study and the importance of *Dalbergia sissoo* in providing livelihood to the farmers growing the tree and the artisans producing handicrafts using the timber. Other panellists also stressed on the role played by *Dalbergia sissoo* wood in economic upliftment of farmers and artisans in the subcontinent and based on the availability of the species in abundance in the region, urged representatives of various parties present in the side event to support India's proposal of delisting of *Dalbergia sissoo* from appendix II of the CITES.

The presentation on *Dalbergia sissoo* - Trees for Life and livelihood and Vriksh-Indian Timber legality assessment & verification scheme was made by Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Director, EPCH, followed by a presentation on Impact of listing *Sissoo* (*Dalbergia sissoo*) into CITES II appendix for Nepal by Mr. K C Rajendra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Kathmandu, Govt. of Nepal.

Around 40 international delegates from countries like UK, USA, Canada, Bangladesh, Nepal, Madagascar, Iceland, Bhutan, Tanzania, Turkey and others representing various organisations attended the programme. They posed various queries pertaining to the significance of *Dalbergia sissoo* in Indian rural economy and also related to the legality certification in India.

The Indian delegation had meetings with various parties in the matter to gather support for India's proposal to delist one of the species under *Dalbergia* genus i.e. *Dalbergia sissoo* (*Sheesham*) in the interest of the artisans and farmers of the sub-continent.

While placing the proposal before the committee, Mr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Additional Director General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India, said that in Indian subcontinent, *Dalbergia sissoo* has wide geographical distribution and is abundantly available in wild



and the cultivation of the species has a very fast growth rate. He further informed, all natural forests in India are covered under scientifically prepared long-term management plans, based on sustainable forest management principles which are approved by the central government and the species are also supported by procedures and laws to regulate harvests of the natural population.

Mr. Maheshwar Dhakal, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife

Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Govt. of Nepal, informed that Nepal supports India in the proposal of Delisting of *Dalbergia sissoo* from Appendix II. *Dalbergia sissoo* is a fast growing and multi-purpose perennial tree species which is a part of local livelihoods and economically important species for its value in forestry, agroforestry and horticulture.

Nepal, as co-proponents and Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Island Waste Management Corporation (IWMC) supported the proposal. While supporting the proposal, Bhutan suggested to amend Annotation #15 by adding the following paragraph as (f) "finished furniture and handicraft products of *Dalbergia sissoo* when first exported from India and Nepal".

While speaking on the proposal European Union, Argentina, Canada, UK, Australia and WWF did not support the proposal.

With no consensus, the Chair called for a vote, however, due to lack of support from other parties, Prop. 47 to delete *Dalbergia sissoo* from Appendix II was rejected. ■



Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH, speaking at the side event, organised during the CoP 19



Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Director, EPCH making a presentation during a side event