

EXPLOITATION AND EXPORTATION OF PERICOPSIS ELATA (Fabaceae) IN CAMEROON

Dr Jean Lagarde BETTI

[*betlagarde@yahoo.fr*](mailto:betlagarde@yahoo.fr)

PLAN

- INTRODUCTION
- BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR
- EXPLOITATION AND EXPORTATION OF *Pericopsis elata* IN CAMEROON
- CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

- Cameroon is located in Central Africa, tropical zone, and counts about 475, 000 Km²;
- Cameroon (see figure 1) is divided in ten administrative provinces.

ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF CAMEROON



HIGHT DIVERSITY OF PLANTS

- Cameroon totalises about 16.5 millions of hectares of dense rain forests;
- Hight Diversity of plants:
 - 333 timber species,
 - 6,000 food plants representing about 40 to 50% of the total flora,
 - and 1,000 medicinal plant species.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) to underline the progress made in the forest sector after the new law (first part of the work);
- (2) to explore the state of vulnerability of *Pericopsis elata* or *Assamela* in Cameroon;

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The elaboration of sectorial policies relating to the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development include mainly Forest and Wildlife Policy, the objectives of which include:

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- Protection of nation's forest and wildlife heritage by participating in the conservation of the environment and the preservation of biodiversity in sustainable manner, as well as renewing the forest and wildlife resources through better management;
- Regular supply of forest and wildlife products in a sustainable manner for the present and future generation;

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- . Forestry and Wildlife Law n° 94/01 of 20.01.94 and its various implementing decrees. Compared with past policies, it makes statutory the involvement of rural populations, partners and stake holders in its implementation, notably by the ownership of community forests. This innovation is intended to encourage people to better protect their vegetal cover. The management of forestry resources for actions in long term, with benefits, is central to the provisions of the law.

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- this new forest code is interesting since it takes in consideration, the three main dimensions of the sustainable use of the forest products as formulated by the convention on biological diversity and comprising: the ecological dimension, the social and cultural dimension and the economical dimension

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The ecological dimension aims to promote and guarantee the conservation of forest resources for future generations.
- To do this, Cameroon government acted in different logical steps: the knowledge of the resource, the zoning of the country and affectation of different land uses, the enhancement of the forest and wildlife control and monitoring.

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The national inventory conducted during the years 1980 led to the division of the forest zone in two main domain types, namely the permanent domain and the non-permanent domain.
- The permanent domain is the one which interests us since this domain comprises the production forests also known as the forest management units (FMU), the council forests, protected areas, hunting zones,

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The FMU are assigned to the sustainable production of the wood and other resources in respect to the conditions that allow the preservation of ecological, environmental, and sociological functions of the forests.
- Till date, a total of 83 FMU have been attributed for a total area of 1,835,367 ha

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- More than 20 forest companies have produced their management plans, some of which are in the process of validation by the Inter ministerial Committee, established to this end.
- The implementation of the management plan implies two main constraints for the company: the respect of a specific part of the forest that has to be exploited (block of about 2500 ha, to be exploited for 5 years) and the respect of the minimum exploitable diameter (DME).

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- Community forests (about 2500 ha) are also exploited for 5 years according to guidelines prescribed in a specific document called “simple management plan”.
- The community to whom the community forest is allocated has three main constraints, which are the respect of a specific surface of the forest that has to be exploited (block to be exploited for 1 year), the respect of the DME, and the respect of the total volume of timber to be harvested.

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- To ensure the control of the forest logging and wildlife exploitation in the country, the forest administration has created a National Brigade, which is working closely with an independent national observer (Global Witness).

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The social and cultural dimension is one of the important innovations outlined in the Cameroon forest legislation.
- This dimension states that, the local people may participate to the management of forest resources and may gain some profits of the exploitation of those resources.

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The concrete measures undertaken in this regard are:
 - the obligation of forest companies or wildlife societies to realise certain number of social activities (duties) such as the creation of schools, for the benefit of local communities;
 - the payment of the annual forest tax by the exploiter;
 - the allocation of community forests and community hunting zones to the local people .

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- The economical dimension states that, the exploitation of forest resources may contribute to the national budget.
- To attend this objective, Cameroon government revised the forest sector and initiated a forest fiscal reform (FFR)

BACKGROUND IN THE FOREST SECTOR/Forest law

- Cameroon government took two important measures:
 - the allocation of FMU by competition namely adjudication;
 - and by the creation of the Forest Revenues Enhancement Program (FREP).

EXPLOITATION AND TRADE OF ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON



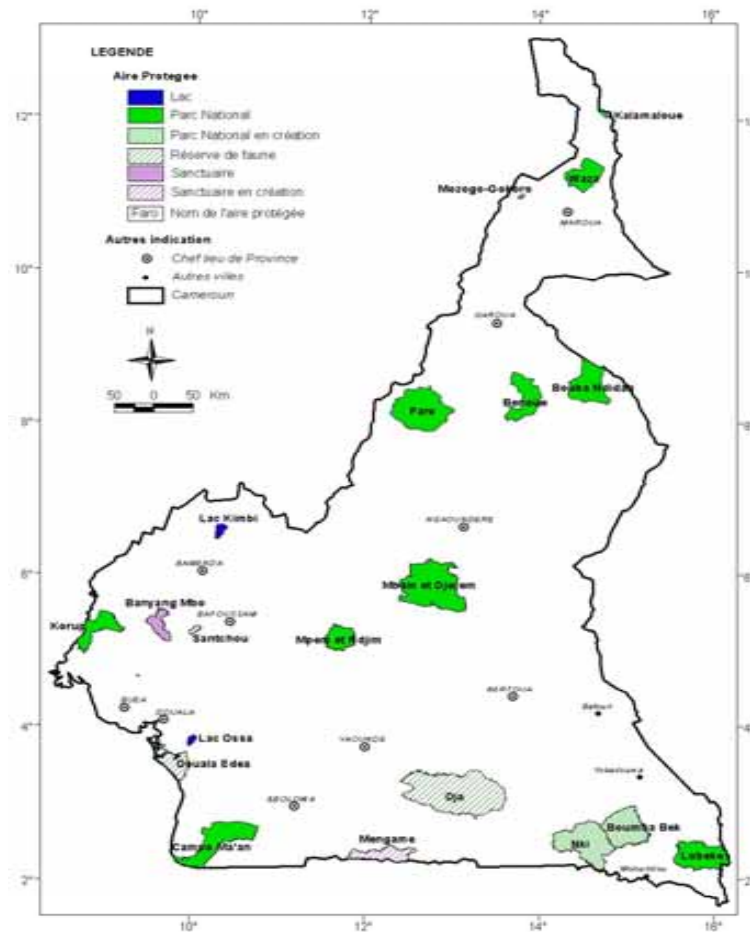
ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- *Pericopsis elata* largely known as Assamela or Afrormosia, is a high tree, belonging to the Fabaceae family, often found in the semi-deciduous forest types;
- In Cameroon, *Pericopsis elata* is limited to the South-eastern region, namely in the Dja, Boumba, Ngoko and Sangha basins .

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- Three national parks (see figure 2) exist within the specified area of Assamela, namely: Boumba-Beck, Lobéké and Nki, for a total area of 777,729 ha.
- The main phytogeographical area of *P. elata* in Cameroon covers a total area of 4,071,857 ha in the South-eastern region

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON



ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- About 43% of this area (South east) are protected areas, 42% are FMU, and only 15% are assigned to farms and other agroforestry activities.
- The updated results of the national inventory conducted in the forest zone of Cameroon, are not yet available.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- The only data often used for estimating the density of the plant species in the south east forest zone are those produced by forest companies. Those data are recorded during the exploitation inventories, with a sample rate of about 1%.
- Assamela is classified among the most important and economic value tree logs in Cameroon, with a FOB (Forward On Board) value ranging between 156,608 FCFA and 173,092 FCFA.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- Such an inventory cannot be very efficient, credible and useful since it is conducted by the forest loggers themselves for specific targets;
- Also, the inventory is limited to trees with diameter at breast height of above 20 cm.
- Nevertheless, according to those inventories, about 829,000 stems of *Pericopsis* exist on a total area of 1,602,209 ha, leading to the density of 0.52 tree/ha.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- According to Forni (1997), a plant species is said to be threatened if its medium density is less than 0,05 stem/ha.
- This assumption, which was used by the Cameroon forest administration as argument of claiming the non vulnerability of Assamela, is not enough.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- In fact, the vulnerability or the endangerment of plant species should be based on two groups of parameters or constraints: the internal constraints and the external constraints.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- the distribution of stems of Assamela per class of diameter tend to show Assamela requires the light.
- The regeneration of this plant species is weak in the primary forest.
- This means that, forest logging which is considered as a tool for forest clearance may have a positive effect in the survival of this plant species

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- According to ATIBT (2002), the harvest of *P. elata* of 80 cm diameter at breast height (dbh) improves the dynamism and facilitates the regeneration of the plant species.
- Management prescriptions of FMU in Cameroon are based on that important parameter of individual (or specific) curve.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- The DME of *P. elata* is equal to 100 cm; which is crucial for the sustainable utilisation of the plant species.
- This DME is considered as being the highest in the Congo basin.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- The wood of Assamela is mostly exported to the following countries: Italy, China, Holland, United State of America, Belgium, France, South Africa.
- The forest companies which export the high quantity of timber of Assamela from Cameroon are: SFID, CFC, SEBC, SEFAC, GRUMCAM, SFWI, and TTS.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- According to the available data, and mostly for the questions addressing the implementation of the management plans in different FMU, we can said that Assamela is not threatened in Cameroon.
- In 2004, the question regarding the absence of the scientific authority in charged with Assamela in Cameroon was targeted as one of the problem around this plant species. Today, it is clear that the ANAFOR which replaced the ONADEF, is the scientific authority for CITES plants in Cameroon.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- The control and monitoring of *Pericopsis* resource within the country is assumed by the forest department through the National Brigade.
- The independent observer (Global Witness) assists the Brigade in this task, and mainly for matters regarding the respect of logging area limits.

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- The main quantity of *Pericopsis elata* is exported from the Douala and Kribi ports.
- At these points, the General Society of monitoring (*SGS = Société Générale de Surveillance* in French) does not only records data regarding the timber volume exported, but it also controls this exportation, in collaboration with the FREP, customers and forest officers

ASSAMELA IN CAMEROON

- In regard to what precedes, we can note with satisfaction that the forest law and other measures undertaken by the Cameroon government provide an adequate basis regarding the sustainable exploitation and exportation of *Pericopsis elata* in Cameroon.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The background of the forest sector shows that Cameroon is one of the most advanced countries concerned with the sustainable use of forest resources in the Congo basin;
- *Pericopsis elata*'s exploitation and exportation are conducted within this forest policy framework, which implies the sustainable use of this plant species in Cameroon

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMANDATIONS

- Results of inventories conducted by forest companies show that the resource is still abundant in the south east forest zone of Cameroon, with 0,52 trees per ha.
- The scientific authority which is in charged of assisting the forest administration in the CITES/Flora questions is the ANAFOR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- To support the idea of sustainability in the exploitation and exportation of Assamela in Cameroon, the ANAFOR may conduct a certain number of activities;
- The first one is the obligation of conducting the national inventory of *Pericopsis elata* in the whole country;
- The second thing is to establish the vulnerability status of *Pericopsis elata* and other important useful timber and Non timber forest products at the level of Cameroon.