

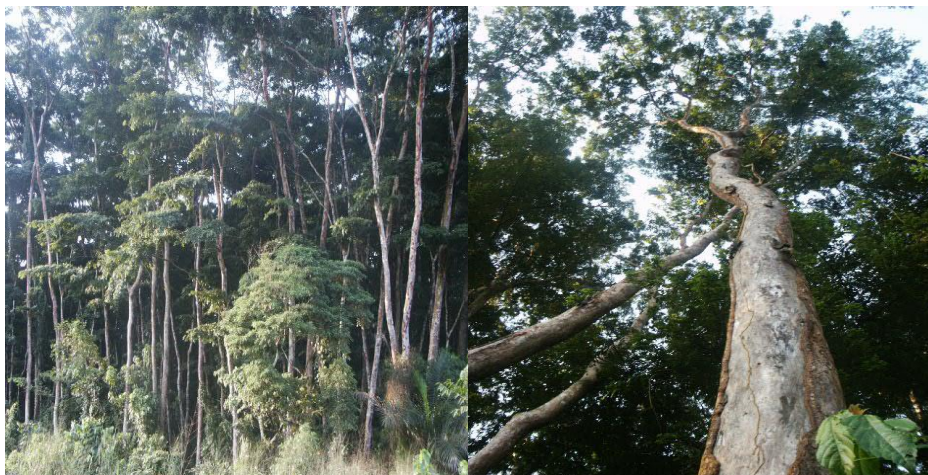


TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN AFRORMOSIA TIMBER IS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO ITS CONSERVATION

Report on the Regional Workshop on
the international trade in *Pericopsis elata* (afroformosia or assamela) timber

Hôtel Palm Beach, Kribi, Cameroon, 2 - 4 April 2008

ITTO/CITES Project on the Sustainable Management of Afroformosia in the Congo Basin



Photos: plantation (left) & stem (right) of *Pericopsis elata* near Kribi, Cameroon, by J. Ngueguim (IRAD)

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SUMMARY

A regional workshop was held in Kribi (Cameroon) between 02 and 04 April 2008 on the sustainable trade of *Pericopsis elata* timber, known under its commercial name *afroormosia* or *assamela*. The workshop was jointly sponsored by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and hosted by the Government of Cameroon through its Ministry of Forest and Wildlife.

The overall goal of this workshop was to develop a participatory Action Plan to build the capacities of countries to formulate clear Non Detrimental Findings for *Pericopsis elata* – an endangered species listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Some thirty participants from producer countries (Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo), consumer/buyer countries (Belgium, France, Japan), international organizations (CITES, ITTO, UNEP-WCMC), logging companies (*Groupe Décolvenaere*, *Groupement Bois*), NGOs (AMEA from Congo), sub-regional organizations (COMIFAC), regional organizations (European Union) were able to attend this workshop.

The workshop was conducted in a sequence of six units: The workshop opening ceremony, attended by Cameroonian Minister of Forest and Wildlife; presentations by experts and Government representatives of producer and importer countries; workshop sessions; a field trip to the forest reserve of Kienké South, the plenary session to validate the outcomes of workshop sessions; and the closing ceremony.

Four thematic areas were identified as potential components of a future Action Plan, they included: (1) the knowledge acquired through scientific research conducted on *assamela*, including its ecological status; (2) a general platform for collaboration between stakeholders of the industry, comprising *assamela* stand management, harvesting and timber marketing chain; (3) enforcement of relevant legal provisions and CITES provisions, and (4) building the capacities of stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General background and issues

Pericopsis elata is a leguminosaea species of the Fabaceae family, known under its trade/pilot name as afrormosia or assamela. It is a tree species of the close, Guinean-Congolese forest type. Its natural range is discontinued, with several isolated sub-stands in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, South-eastern Cameroon, Northern Congo, the North-eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the South-Western portion of the Central African Republic (CAR).

Pericopsis elata is classified by the World Alliance for Nature (IUCN) as endangered species, which led to its listing in the Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). As it is, the species is indeed endangered and has become all but locally extinct in West African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire (*Here, the species is virtually extinct* - Kouassi Amian, personal communication), Ghana and Nigeria, where the exploitation and international trade in this species had begun some 55 years ago. Significant stocks of the species still exist, however, in the Congo Basin, including Cameroon, Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In CAR, afrormosia is still hardly used.

In various African countries, policies have been established to ensure the sustainable management of forests having afrormosia stands in them. However, enforcement issues and control problems do persist. The development of clear procedures to deliver Non-Detrimental Findings (NDFs) remains a priority for most producer countries.

One of the mission priorities of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is to promote the sustainable management of timber species listed in Appendix II of the CITES. ITTO and CITES have been collaborating since the 1990s in the operations of the CITES Plants Committee and very recently, the two organizations have collaborated in the establishment and operations of the Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) Work Group; Mahogany, a South-American native species, is also listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Since 2005, ITTO and CITES have been working together to develop a large capacity-building project for range countries regarding three major timber species listed in Appendix II of CITES – they are *Swietenia macrophylla* (bigleaf mahogany) in Latin America, *Gonystylus spp.* (ramin) in South-East Asia and *Pericopsis elata* (afrormosia or assamela) in Central Africa.

The ITTO/CITES workshop on the sustainable trade of afrormosia timber conducted in Kribi, Cameroon between 02 and 04 April is part of this project.

1.2. Goals of the workshop

The overall goal of the workshop was to develop a participatory work plan to build the capacities of the countries concerned to formulate clear Non-Detrimental Findings for *Pericopsis elata*.

The specific objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- To raise the awareness of Governments, the private and public sectors on the importance of CITES Regulations;
- To describe the conditions of production, harvesting and marketing of afrormosia timber;
- To identify the opportunities for national cooperation between the various structures (Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities, logging companies, exporters, NGOs) and even the regional cooperation (between the various countries);
- To identify aid needs at the international level;
- To discuss joint approaches to control, monitor and develop potential private actions and facilitate information-sharing exercises;
- Based on these elements, to develop a participatory action plan aiming to build the capacities of countries to formulate by themselves and with clarity Non-Detrimental Findings (NDFs) or afrormosia. Countries primarily concerned with the Action Plan are for now those included in the sub-regional project - i.e. Cameroon, Congo and DRC.

Some thirty participants from producer countries (Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo), consumer/buyer countries (Belgium, France, Japan), international organizations (CITES, ITTO, UNEP-WCMC), logging companies (*Groupe Décolvenaere, Groupement Bois*), NGO (AMEA of Congo), sub-regional organizations (COMIFAC) and regional organizations (European Union) were able to attend this workshop.

The Government of Cameroon, through its Ministry of Forests and Wildlife hosted the workshop.

This report includes an introductory section, a section on the conduct of the workshop and appendices.

2. CONDUCT OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop comprised four key stages:

- The ceremonial phase;
- Presentations and papers;
- Working group sessions and field trip;
- Official issuance of the Final Declaration and closing remarks.

The programme of the workshop is shown in Annex 3.1

2.1. Ceremonial phase

The inaugural session of the workshop was chaired by H.E. Prof. Dr. Elvis NGOLLE NGOLLE, Cameroonian Minister of Forests and **Wildlife**. The Minister was accompanied by:

- Mr Martin BENAË : Mayor of the rural community of Kribi I;
- Mr Neil ELLIS: Representative of CITES Secretariat;
- Dr. Steve JOHNSON: Representative of ITTO's Executive Director;
- Ms Célestine NTSAME OKWO: Regional representative of ITTO for Africa;
- And the local Administrative authorities of the City of Kribi comprising the Representative of the Ocean **Division** Prefect and the Sub-prefect of the Kribi **Sub-division**.

In his address, the Mayor of Kribi I **Sub-division** extended a warm welcome to all the participants in general and to H.E. the Minister of Forests and **Wildlife** in particular, who had travelled from Yaoundé for the occasion, which demonstrate, according to the Mayor's remark, the special significance of this regional workshop.

Speaking after the Mayor, the Regional Representative of ITTO, Ms Célestine NTSAME OKWO introduced her organization, describing the history and background of ITTO creation, its objectives concerning the international tropical timber trade and the sustainable management of tropical forest ecosystems. From her presentation, ITTO stands out as an intergovernmental organization whose scope is the tropical timber trade and industry with the following features as characteristics: An equal partnership in the decision-making process, the active participation of the civil society and trade organizations, the mobilization of skills in member countries, the establishment of a permanent consultation between stakeholders aimed at establishing an international cooperation on issues relating to the trade and use of tropical timber. Therefore, in this workshop, she recalled that ITTO has been included in the list of organizations designated by Conference of the Parties to CITES CoP to be consulted by Governments proposing to list timber species in one of CITES Appendices.

The Representative of CITES Secretariat, Mr Neil ELLIS insisted in his presentation on the three basic elements to be used as backbone of the workshop proceedings – the collaboration, continual improvement and confidence in the sustainability of the market. The workshop should reflect the spirit of collaboration which provides the foundations of CITES. He expressed his wish that participants seized the opportunity offered by this workshop to reflect on the effective implementation of the CITES Convention from the point of view of improving on current practices and achieving the sustainability of the trade in forest and wildlife species.

In his closing remarks to the series of addresses (annex 3.2), the Minister of Forest and **Wildlife** of Cameroon conveyed his appreciation to both the General Secretary of CITES and Executive Director of ITTO for having selected Cameroon to host this important workshop on the sustainable trade of *Pericopsis elata*. In support of the message by the Mayor, the Minister reiterated his welcome to all participants. He also focussed his address on the efforts **done** by Cameroon to own and implement CITES regulations. Three major points were highlighted in his address: (1) the signing in 2005 by H.E. the Prime Minister, Head of Government, of an enactment decree to implement some provisions of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); (2) one Ministerial Order issued in 2006 on the organizational and operational procedures of the Inter-ministerial Coordination and Monitoring Committee to Implement CITES; and (3) the designation of a CITES Scientific Authority for Endangered Species. This address also provided the Minister the opportunity to introduce the Cameroonian forest sector in its assets in terms of achievements, challenges and perspectives. For information, Cameroon is currently engaged in negotiations with the European Union to reach a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (APV/FLEGT) to improve the governance and transparency of the timber trade between the two partners.

After having introduced the challenges faced by Cameroon and inherent in the management of species listed in Appendix II of CITES, the Minister of Forest and Wildlife recognized the relevance of the workshop and expressed his wish that it would achieve its objective, i.e. the participatory development of an Action Plan aiming at undertaking an international trade non-detrimental to the conservation of assamela. On this note of hope, he opened the workshop proceedings.

After a short pause, the proceedings resumed under the conduct of the workshop facilitator, Mr ACHANCHO Valentine.

2.2. Paper Presentations

Eight presentations were made during this workshop, including the following:

- Sustainable use of afrormosia and joint ITTO/CITES efforts;
- CITES and afrormosia;
- Management of afrormosia in Cameroon;
- Situation of Congo regarding the production and export of afrormosia;
- CITES Regulations within the European Commission remit;
- Trade and importation of assamela in Japan;
- Belgium in the trade of *P. elata* timber;
- A summary assessment of the ecological status of *Pericopsis elata* in South-Eastern Cameroon

Papers presented are included in annex 3.7, have been recorded on CD-Rom and can also be downloaded from the ITTO website (www.itto.or.jp). A summary of these presentations has been compiled below, with the name of their respective authors.

2.2.1. Sustainable use of afrormosia and joint ITTO/CITES efforts to ensure that the trade in this tree species is consistent with its sustainable management and conservation (by Steve JOHNSON)

This presentation by Dr. Steve JOHNSON was made in the presence of the Ministry of Forests and **Wildlife**. The presentation detailed the context in which the project was formulated in terms of expected objectives, partners involved (ITTO/CITES), the level of financing (3 million Euros with a 2.4-million Euros share of financing provided by the European Union) and implementation of activities. The author of the paper reviewed the main outputs and activities expected from this project, including the hiring of a regional coordinator; the formulation of projects and action plans at national and sub-regional levels, a baseline study on the conservation and ecological status of the species, the implementation of management plans, the case studies undertaken in the range countries.

2.2.2. Afrormosia and CITES Regulation (by Neil ELLIS)

M. Neil ELLIS introduced the responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of the CITES provisions. He also retraced the history of afrormosia listing in the Appendix II of CITES and recalled the concept of Non-Detrimental Findings (NDFs). Mr ELLIS emphasized the responsibilities of the Management Authorities and Scientific Authorities in exporting countries regarding the species listed in one of the CITES Appendices. He also addressed the role of the CITES Secretariat and importing countries. The list of endangered species developed by IUCN (Doc 11.3 Cop11) as **was** also disclosed and explained to all participants based on the concept of risk underlying NDFs.

2.2.3. Afrormosia management in Cameroon (by M. AKAGOU ZEDONG and M. MBARGA Narcisse)

Mr. AKAGOU ZEDONG Henri Charles, Head of the Forestry Standards Bureau (Chef de *Service des Normes d'intervention en milieu forestier*) with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), in his capacity as Management Authority described assamela management practices in Cameroon in terms of natural range, timber potentials, effective production and management provisions. The natural range extends over some 3,731,225 ha located exclusively within South-eastern Cameroon in the basins of Dja, Boumba, Ngoko and Sangha rivers systems. This area is sub-divided into a number of Protection Areas (the national parks of Lobéké, Boumba Bek and Nki) and forest concessions under management (some thirty Forest Management Units). Concerning the timber potentials of the species: the density of assamela tree occurrences is 0.5 trees/ha. Annual production forecasts in the managed forests are over 45,000 m³ raw timbers (round timber). Most of assamela timber produced by Cameroon is processed, increasingly into solid flooring boards. During the past four years, production levels have been under 10,000 m³ of lumber, although its annual exportation quota is 15,200 m³. The conservation of assamela in Cameroon has not been supported by any particular actions in connection with its status as a CITES listed species. A few general provisions for its management have nevertheless been taken; they include the minimum girth limit: 100 cm in Cameroon instead of 80 in other countries of the Central African sub-region, the marking of seed-trees (with a record of GPS coordinates for each one of them); adequate spatial distribution and artificial regeneration work undertaken in some management units.

Mr. MBARGA Narcisse of the CITES Scientific Authority for Plants presented information on the deployment of this authority in Cameroon. Considering the role of the CITES Scientific Authority for plants in the chain of decision for the trade of CITES-listed species, it would be interesting to build its capacities in order for it to be better able to fulfil its mandate. The CITES Scientific Authority for Plants being a rather young body, it suffers from a shortage of technical, financial and material capacities. This situation does not enable this Authority to formulate any Non-Detrimental Findings on the assamela exports from Cameroon in the present circumstances. It is essentially in view of this situation that decision-makers of the Scientific Authority have submitted ITTO a project to build the capacities of its executives. This project idea was recognized as relevant by the Members of ITTO's Expert Panel. General and specific

observations issued by these experts to improve the draft project document will be incorporated within the next few days before re-submitting it shortly to this Panel.

2.2.4. *The status of afrormosia production and exportation in Congo (by MASSIMBA Claude Etienne)*

The representative of the Congo Republic described the situation of afrormosia in his country. This country suspended the trade in this species in 2006. According to the speaker, afrormosia is mainly found in the *Haute Sangha* (higher reaches of the Sangha River) in the north of the country. It is all but absent or extremely rare in the forests of the South. Its natural range within the country is estimated to reach 4.4 million hectares. Outside those areas suitable for logging, there are also afrormosia trees in the Noua bale N'doki and Odzala Kokoua national parks. For the speaker, the problem with afrormosia mostly results from the absence of any in-depth knowledge of harvestable reserves and natural regeneration characteristics.

This knowledge gap is in the process of being bridged through the obligation – recently imposed by the Government through the management conventions it has signed with the logging companies established in the natural range of the species – for the logging companies to have management plans ready and to start their implement upon establishing the concession. These management plans will enable the Congolese Government not only to better manage and control both logging and exportation activities but also to have a clear notion of the amount of revenue generated by the afrormosia trade in the short-, medium- and long-term time span. The exportation suspension was lifted in 2007. The decrease in afrormosia timber volumes recorded in Congo comes in direct consequence of this suspension.

2.2.5. *CITES Regulations within the remit of the European Commission (by Marc VEDELE)*

Within the jurisdiction of the European Union (EU), the whole set of CITES regulations is enforced with a number of additional conditions resulting from its particular context comprising 27 member States. Therefore, for the products listed in Appendix II, an importation permit is issued by the authorities based on the exportation permit. Free circulation within the EU is then possible for the Appendix II products. It is important to ensure adequate consistency between importing and exporting countries. The Scientific Review Group (SRG) of the EU may be required to suspend importations. There is for this purpose a clear separation between management and evaluation. The various assamela importation statistics have been presented under the combined configuration of the country of origin, of nature and quantities of timber products.

2.2.6. *Pericopsis elata and the Japanese market (by Kazuyuki MORITA)*

The Japanese import of assamela has been decreasing in recent years. It reached nearly 9,000 m³ in 1984 but only 600 m³ in 2006. The species is used mainly for flooring, wood-decking and furniture to substitute teak in the Japanese market. The price of assamela is comparatively high and the market is unlikely to expand again to the same scale of 20 years ago.

It is important to implement CITES rules and to promote consumer awareness on this issue because of the limitation of law enforcement. Ramin is a more popular species that comes from SE-Asia to Japan. Japan's Forest Agency collaborated with NGOs to persuade the importers to carefully check the necessary documents under CITES when they import ramin. As a result, while some industries have stopped using ramin, most now recognize the importance of CITES rules.

It would be useful to introduce a simple and reliable timber tracking system to make it easier to analyze trade flows (including between producing countries) and to demonstrate the credibility of CITES implementation especially to prevent troubles in the verification process. Japan can provide information of a model of such a log tracking system using barcodes which was developed under cooperation with Indonesia.

2.2.7. *Belgium in the P. elata timber trade (by Nils BOURLAND)*

This presentation contained a number of quantitative data concerning the particular position Belgium occupies in the *P. elata* timber trade, based on data supplied by the WCMC data based (for period between 1993 and 2006). The speaker reviewed the most salient points including the predominance of sawnwood, the irregularity of imported volumes, the existence of three main country of origin (the majority of imported volumes coming from Cameroon) as well as the position of Belgium among the three major importer countries. The main processed goods in Belgium are doors and doorframes. Finally, the various challenges faced by the customs department and the actions undertaken to address them have been described in conclusion.

2.2.8. *A summary synthesis of the ecological status of Pericopsis elata in South-eastern Cameroon (by Nils BOURLAND)*

The author introduced the natural range of *Pericopsis elata* in Africa. There are still a number of aspects in the ecological status and behaviour of the species that need to be further studied; the species has high commercial potentials and is suffering a regeneration challenge in South-eastern Cameroon. Its main botanical properties (behaviour and response to environmental characteristics, method of seed dispersion, etc.) and technological properties (hard-

weariness, workability into sawnwood, etc.) have been detailed. The presentation was closed with a summary review of the literature on the species.

2.2.9. Responses to presentations

All these presentations raised a keen interest among workshop participants who asked the presenters many questions. The topics most discussed included the lack of knowledge of CITES mechanisms, their implementation and operation; the responsibility to include a species in the list of any CITES Appendix; the specific requirements and conditions to implement CITES in the European Union; the method in use to set export quota for afrormosia in Cameroon, the lack of capacity by CITES Management Authorities in the countries of the sub-region to assume their role and fulfil their function; the assamela regeneration issues in connection with the phenological properties of the species; the availability of seeds; whether there are control posts available or not; the formulation of projects; the definition of procedure and criteria for the listing of a species in any CITES appendix; the chain-of-custody and log tracking issues, including the introduction of DNA testing already developed for monitoring the assamela trade; the possibility for a State who is a party to CITES to initiate a listing procedure for a species in any CITES Appendix whilst this species has a natural range spanning several adjoining countries; the cost of activities leading to the issuance of a NDF; funding approaches and opportunities for the CITES Scientific Authority, etc.

For the sake of efficiency, these concerns have been integrated into the three broader thematic areas: Stakeholders information and awareness-raising on CITES implementation procedures; capacity-building of CITES Management Authorities and/or that of the authorities responsible for CITES implementation; regional coordination of the project.

2.3. Working groups and field trips

2.3.1. Working groups

After the various presentations made during the first two days of the workshop, three groups were created to conduct working group proceedings. Each group worked on at least two different thematic areas. Four thematic areas were decided upon and identified as follows:

- (1) Research elements on assamela ecological status;
- (2) Collaboration platform between the various stakeholders of the assamela timber logging, marketing and management chain;
- (3) Enforcement of legal and CITES provisions; and
- (4) Building stakeholders' capacities.

Each working group was to review each of the four aforesaid thematic areas in the form of a matrix identifying actions or expected outcomes, activities to be conducted, responsibilities, partners and the period of implementation for each activity. The working group sessions lasted during the remainder of the second workshop day. The outcomes of working group sessions were to be validated in plenary session on the next day after returning from the field trip.

2.3.2. Field trip to the Kienké South Forest Reserve

The day of 04/04/2008 started with a field trip to the Kienké Sud Forest Reserve. The purpose of this event was to visit a planted forest in order to provide participants with a hands-on experience of assamela trees. According to the descriptions provided by the scientist at the IRAD station in Kribi, who guided the group through this visit, the two assamela parcels observed by the participants date back from 1975. The trees were planted in a 4x4 and 3x3 spacing pattern.

Describing the challenges faced in the management of the plantation, he mentioned the abandonment of the rplantation since the 1990s, with consequent lack of technical, health and administrative monitoring on the plots; and the research station's lack of capacity to carry out thinning operations to stimulate tree growth. He also mentioned the record keeping issue for this forest reserve. Incomplete historical records for this tree plantation make it difficult for anyone to accurately describe the establishment and early management conditions of the plantation. After the field trip, we can conclude that the expected outcome of this workshop was fully achieved. The participants had the opportunity to observe afrormosia whose management is at the core of workshop proceedings during the past two days.

The validation session reporting the outcome of the working group session started right after the return of participants from the forest reserve. This session led to the preparation of the Action Plan introduced in annex 3.3.

2.4. Reading of the Final Declaration and closing remarks

Before the closure of the workshop, a final declaration (annex 3.4) was prepared and signed by all participants whose list is shown in annex 3.5. In his closing remarks, the Divisional Delegate of Forest and Fauna for the Ocean Division, official representative of the Minister commended the endurance and determination with which all participants (annex 3.6) had worked during the workshop. The Minister pledged to instruct the Regional Project Coordinator Dr BETTI to undertake the early implementation of the resolution taken under this workshop. Before parting, a farewell cocktail was given to all participants at the Palm Beach Hotel.

3. ANNEXES

3.1. Programme of the sub-regional workshop on the sustainable management of afrormosia

Tuesday, 01 April 2008.

16:00 Arrival and installation of participants in the hotel (PALM BEACH)

Wednesday, 02 April 2008.

7:30 Registration of participants
8:30 Workshop opening ceremony

- Welcome address by the Mayor of Kribi
- Address by CITES Representative
- Address by ITTO Representative
- Opening address by H.E. the Minister of Forests and Fauna

9:00 Keynote addresses

- Introduction of participants;
- Introduction of workshop programme and organization;
- Sustainable use of afrormosia and joint ITTO/CITES efforts (Dr Steve JOHNSON);
- Afrormosia and CITES Regulations (Neil ELLIS).

09:45 DISCUSSIONS
10:30 ADJOURNMENT OF THE SESSION

- Family photograph
- Coffee break

11:00 Introducing exporting countries experience in production, harvesting/processing and marketing of afrormosia timber.

- Management of afrormosia in Cameroon (AKAGOU ZEDON Charles and MBARGA Narcisse)
- Production and export of assamela in Congo (MASSIMBA Claude)

11:45 Discussions
13:00 LUNCH
14:00 Introducing importing countries experience in the use of afrormosia timber.

- CITES Regulation within the legal remit of the European Commission (Marc VEDELE)
- Trade and importation of assamela in Japan (Morita KAZUYUKI)
- Belgium in the trade of *Pericopsis elata* timber (Nils BOURLAND)

14:45 Discussions
15:45 COFFEE BREAK
16:15 Continuation of discussions
17:00 Synthesis of the day

Thursday, 03 April 2008

08:00 Summary of the outcome of previous day proceedings
08:15 Reminder of the day's programme
08:30 Identification of the main focus areas of the Action Plan
09:00 Workshop session on the development of the Action Plan (thematic groups)
10:00 Resumption of working group sessions
10:30 Resumption of working group sessions
13:00 LUNCH
14:00 Resumption of working group sessions
15:30 COFFEE BREAK
16:00 Resumption of working group sessions
17:30 Synthesis of the day
17:45 Introducing the programme of the last day
18:30 Return

Friday, 04 April 2008

07:30 Excursion / Field trip
10:30 Return
11:00 Presentation of working group results and discussions
11:30 Coffee Pause
12:00 General synthesis
13:00 Preparation and presentation of the Final Declaration
14:00 Closing Ceremony
14:30 Final Cocktail

3.2. Address by the Ministry of Forests and Fauna of Cameroon to the Workshop on the sustainable trade of afrormosia timber

- Honourable Representative of ITTO Executive Director,
- Honourable Representative of CITES General Secretary,
- Honourable Divisional Officer of Ocean Division,
Honourable Sub-Divisional Officer of Kribi,
- Honourable Mayor of Kribi 1 Rural Community,
- Distinguished Representatives of the Donors Community and Partners of Development,
- Distinguished Representatives of the Forestry and Timber Trade,
- Distinguished Representatives of *Pericopsis elata* producer and consumer countries
- Distinguished Representatives of the Civil Society,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure and a pleasant duty for me to deliver this address to you in this solemn circumstance, to express the gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the General Secretary of the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), who have consented to select Cameroon as the host country of this Regional Workshop on the Sustainable Trade in *Pericopsis elata* a.k.a afrormosia or more commonly named assamela,

I express my sincere thanks to the preceding speakers for their kind comments and I join them to extend a warm welcome to you and wish you a pleasant stay in this sea resort town of Kribi.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cameroon signed the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species in June 1981 and ratified it in September of the same year. To guarantee the effective implementation of this Convention, and in pursuance of the relevant provisions of its Articles 8 and 9, Cameroon adopted a number of legislations, including:

- Decree n° 2005/2869/PM of 29 July 2005 setting forth the enactment provisions of a number of provisions of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES);
- Ministerial Order N° 067/PM of 27 June 2006 providing the organisational set-up and operational procedure of the Inter-ministerial Coordination and Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES);
- Decision N° 0104/D/MINFOF/SG/DF/SDAFF/SN of 02 March 2006 providing the designation and definition of role of the CITES Scientific Authority in Cameroon.

The adoption of these regulations bears witness, if need be, of the ownership process of this Convention by Cameroon at national level.

CITES as well as ITTO are among the international **organisations**, where major decisions are discussed and taken regarding the fate of world ecosystems. In this respect, we can only commend and encourage initiatives such as this workshop as they exemplify the synergy of actions between International Organizations working towards the sustainable management of our forests.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fate of forests is today one of the major challenges facing the international community. Forests are at the cross-section of climate change issues while simultaneously providing many countries in the tropical belts with a unique resource base effectively generating the development potentials they are striving to achieve.

The Congo Basin is one of the two most extensive forest continue at global level, second only to the Amazon basin; it epitomizes the dialectics of conservation and forest use for sustainable development. Because forests provide both a source of income and a life-supporting environment to many peoples, forest use and exploitation and even forest conservation pose more complex challenges.

For as it is, the forest sector of Cameroon contributes to some 30% of total non-oil export revenues. Presently, the timber industry ranks first in terms of exported goods deadweight and accounts for 20% of the total value of exported goods.

Its contribution to GDP rose from 4.3% in 1992 to 8% in 1999 and is currently exceeding 12%. It directly and indirectly employs 90,000 persons.

This development potential can only become sustainable within a participatory management plan articulated both outside and inside the country. ITTO has anticipated this vision and has been steadily supporting the efforts of Cameroon. Our country is delighted to see one of her sons at the **head** of this organization.

Concerning CITES: to this date, in addition to the many animal species representing a fair share of Cameroonian biodiversity, there are two plant species intensively traded while listed in Appendix II of CITES – they are *Prunus africana* (pygeum) and *Pericopsis elata* (assamela).

Speaking of *Pericopsis elata*, it is one of the most valuable timber species of Cameroon whose natural range is only average in size. It is confined in the South-eastern corner of the country, in a **range** divided between the protected areas comprising the Lobéké, Boumba Bek and Nki natural parks, and in some thirty forest concessions under management. The annual national production level averages 20,000 cu.m in roundwood equivalent, is entirely processed into lumber/sawnwood and increasingly into floor boards for export to various destinations.

Ensuring the management of *Pericopsis elata* – and *Prunus Africana* – in full compliance with the CITES rules and provision constitutes a challenge for Cameroon, and most likely for other countries in the African region. Concerns have been aired and reflected into threats of trade suspensions, which were responded by further recriminations, and it is therefore worthwhile reviewing such concerns and problems in the best interests of all stakeholders involved. To meet his purpose, we have welcomed the initiative to organize this workshop, which will mostly consider the case of *Pericopsis elata*.

For as it is, beyond the issues specifically associated with *Pericopsis elata*, the Cameroonian forest sector is faced with many challenges, which include:

- The lack of financial and logistical resources to appropriately conduct forest monitoring and achieve the several tiers of objectives ascribed to SFM;
- The lack of command of the international timber trade operational mechanisms, etc.

ITTO and CITES are suitable fora for laying down the problems associated with the marketing of forest products. Globalization has enabled the emergence of global processes and made more conspicuous the ineffectiveness of isolated solutions and unilateral measures. The way forward is in the capacity of these organizations to reconcile the principles of world trade with sustainable management policies. Therefore, the enhancement of synergies between all stakeholders will help overcome these pitfalls.

Cameroon has often been at the forefront of this drive and has taken ad hoc measures to ensure healthy trade practices. I can readily present an open list of those measures already taken by Cameroon to meet the challenge:

- The allocation of logging titles by an inter-ministerial commission assisted by one independent observer;
- The support of one independent monitoring organization (Global Forest Watch) to monitor the status of plant cover;
- The publication of a national strategy document for forest and wildlife controls in Cameroon is validated by all stakeholders;
- Forest logging documents are secured;
- Forest revenue are secured through the MINFOF/MINFI platform, which is the *Programme de Sécurisation des Recettes Forestières* (PSRF) (Forest Revenue Securing Programme)
- The reinstatement of the visa to certify the legal origin of timber;
- The suspension or rescission of concession agreements where applicable tax have not been paid or where the details of the forest management plan have not been validated;
- The requirement to have an environmental impact study implemented before the start of any forest management work for all concessions exceeding 50 ha.

The Government of Cameroon is firmly committed to improving the national forest governance but is also committed to raise the level of confidence that already exists between the Cameroonian forest sector and its external partners who have been providing their long-standing support.

The overall objective of this Workshop is to elaborate in a participatory way an action plan aimed to develop an international trade not detrimental to the conservation of *Pericopsis elata*. For its own part, Cameroon has adopted in 2002 an annual export quota set at 15,200 cu.m. of lumber from this species, while the country has so far exported less than 10,000 cu.m. of *P. elata* lumber. These figures, in addition to the measures just mentioned, provide some grounds for confidence in the sustainability of *P. elata* management on the national Cameroonian territory. I don't have the slightest doubt that the same applies in all producing countries in the sub-region.

Cameroon is currently engaged in negotiations for a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (APV/FLEGT) with the European Union, and we are satisfied that the novel framework expected to result from this process can only promote the strengthening of the structures in charge of CITES in Cameroon, and that it will therefore be beneficial to the sustainability of the *Pericopsis elata* trade whose fate will be the main topics of your discussions.

Therefore, I urge you to build upon all sub-regional experiences, whether already available or in the making, and to make this workshop an opportunity to highlight all promising initiatives likely to lead us to a sound ownership of the CITES mechanisms and operations and a better management of *Pericopsis elata*.

I guarantee the higher quality of participants, experts who have come from every region of the world to make this workshop an outstanding success.

Long live international cooperation. Thank you very much.

3.3. Action plan to ensure that the international trade of *Pericopsis elata* is not detrimental to its conservation

Thematic area 1: To improve the knowledge of ecological status and silvicultural properties of *Pericopsis elata*

Expected outcome	Activities	Responsible Parties	Partners	Duration required
A. Desk study on literature research about <i>P. elata</i> completed	A1. To develop terms of reference A2. To complete the study	Local CITES Scientific Authorities	NGOs, Scientific institutions, Economic operators, Engineering and Consultants' firms	6 months
B. Knowledge gaps highlighted by the desk study are bridged	B1. To identify knowledge gaps based on the desk study B2. To implement actions to bridge knowledge gaps	Forestry research organizations	NGOs, Scientific institutions, Economic operators, Engineering and Consultants' firms	36 months
C. <i>P. elata</i> timber potentials are known within its natural range	C1. To implement inventories or to make use of existing inventories	Local CITES Scientific Authorities	NGOs, Scientific institutions, Economic operators, Engineering and Consultants' firms	12 months
D. A data base on <i>P. elata</i> is established	D1. To develop the terms of reference D2. To hire one or several consultants D3. To validate the data base	Local CITES Scientific Authorities	NGOs, Scientific institutions, Economic operators, Engineering and Consultants' firms	6 months
E. Research results on <i>P. elata</i> are disseminated	E1. To create a web site E2. To convene awareness-raising sessions E3. To publish a book compiling research results	Local CITES authorities	NGOs, Scientific institutions, Economic operators, Engineering and Consultants' firms	Permanent

Thematic area 2: Promoting assisted regeneration programmes for *Pericopsis elata*

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
A. Seed trees are identified	A1. To review existing inventories A2. To select individual seed trees A3. To map selected seed trees	Ministry of forests	Economic operators, NGOs, Local communities	Permanent
B. Seed collection operations are organized	B1. To organize field team operations B2. To conserve seeds in optimal conditions, as appropriate	Ministry of forests	Economic operators, NGOs, Local communities	Each year during the most adequate period
C. Seedlings are raised within nurseries	C1. To establish the nursery C2. To produce high quality seedlings	Ministry of forests, Economic operators, NGOs, Local communities	Local or international donors	Permanent
D. Parcels are regenerated using <i>P. elata</i> seedlings	D1. To identify regeneration parcels D2. Planting D3. To maintain/tend seedlings D4. To apply appropriate silvicultural treatments	Ministry of forests, Economic operators, NGOs, Local communities	Local or international donors	Permanent

Thematic area 3: Governance and Marketing

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required	
A. Chain of custody (tracking) functional and quotas complied with.	A1. To adapt a legal and regulatory framework	State	Operators, NGOs, donors, CITES, ITTO, organizations.	Permanent	
	A2. To establish a management plan (inventories, studies)	Operators/ State	Consultants' firms, NGOs, donors community and local communities.	Permanent	
	A3. To establish annual quota per country	State		Annual	
	A4. To inform all stakeholders involved	State	Operators, organizations	Annual	
	A5. To undertake an external review/monitoring	Independent observer	Peers (stakeholders)	Permanent	
	A6. Review, assessment and reporting	State		Organizations, Independent observers	Annual
B. Better knowledge of market conditions	B1. To make technical and administrative documents available	Administration	Operators	Permanent	
	B2. To establish a consistent and appropriate data collection mechanism (secured documents, several page data sheets, compliance with submission dates)	Administration	ITTO, FAO	As soon as possible	
	B3. To establish a sub-regional level market monitoring centre to ensure information sharing with other producer countries.	COMIFAC	Operators and other stakeholders in the industry		
	B4. To encourage agreements with importer countries (FLEGT/ APV, trade agreements)	State/Gov. authorities, Operators	Importers EU		
C. Tighter legal control procedures	C1. To focus controls: . On logging sites . At mill gates . At border check points (and port customs authorities) and export cargo loading facilities	State/Gov. authorities			Permanent
	C2. To inform importer countries of the issuance of export licence	CITES Management Authorities		ATO, ITTO, CITES, COMIFAC etc.	Permanent
	C3. To promote mutual consultations between the countries of the sub-region on control procedures	State/Gov. authorities		Donors, ITTO, EU	Permanent
	C4. To build capacities and increase the resources required to ensure better	State/Gov. authorities			One annual session

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
	control procedures.			

N.B. Cross-cutting areas: Certification, harmonisation of minimum girth limits

Thematic area 4: Building the capacities of producer and buyer countries to implement CITES provisions

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
A. The capacities of scientific authorities to implement CITES Provisions have been effectively improved	A1. To identify the resources and involve institutions capable to contribute to the issuance of non-detrimental findings to ensure better collaboration			Short- and medium-term
	A2. To provide information to CITES in relation to the issuance of non-detrimental findings	CITES Secretariat	CITES Plant Committee , Regional Representative, ITTO, UNEP-WCMC	
	A3. To provide continuous information to the scientific staff (retraining activities including via webcasts and video-conferences)	Scientific Authority		
	A4. To identify all resource needs to effectively meet non-detrimental findings requirements (questionnaire to scientific staff?)	Regional Coordinator/ Scientific Authority		
	A5. To develop CD-Rom discs specific to afrormosia timber			
	A6. To ensure regular access to internet networks by the Scientific Authority, for it to have access to updated information on the species	Scientific Authority		
B – The capacities of management authorities to implement CITES provisions have effectively improved	B1. To provide information on the implementation of CITES regulations; e.g. to issue Controller's licences (training via video-conferences, webcasts or CD-Rom manuals)	CITES Secretariat	CITES Plant Committee , Regional Representative, ITTO, UNEP-WCMC	Short- and medium-term
	B2. To provide a continuous flow of information to the Management Authority (retraining activities including via webcasts and video-conferences)	Management Authority		
	B3. To identify Management Authority's training needs to help it to operate effectively (questionnaire submitted to management authorities = study of training needs)	Management Authority/Re-gional Project Coordinator		
	B4. To draw the attention of management authorities to the needs and use of biennial reports (one every two year)	CITES Secretariat		

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
	B5. To provide training to Management Authorities in drafting biennial reports	CITES Secretariat		
	B6. To prepare biennial reports in full and to submit them in a timely fashion	Management Authority		
	B7. To have regular access to CITES website via appropriate internet servers to ensure that the Scientific Authority has access to updated information	Management Authority		
	B8. For each Member State, to identify a focal point to coordinate the work of all management authorities where the country concerned has more than one.			
C. The attention to and participation of CITES authorities have improved and/or are better integrated in each country's policies.	C1. To identify all governmental institutions concerned by CITES provisions. C2. To involve all governmental institutions concerned by CITES problems in discussion meetings and induce their full participation	Management Authority	CITES Secretariat	Short Term, Permanent
	C3. To establish a better coordination between the authorities of one country (more meetings, more interactions)			
D. The implementation of CITES provisions in producer and buyer/consumer countries has improved	D1. To draw attention to existing regional trade data (i.e. the CITES data bank) and undertake efforts to improve upon existing practices	Management Authority /Scientific Authority	ITTO, CITES Secretariat	Permanent
	D2. To identify or to create CITES Focal Points in producer countries			
	D3. To put in place and maintain administrative structures			
E. Implementation of CITES provisions is controlled and monitored	E1. To promptly submit annual market data in the prescribed format	The parties (countries)	ITTO, UNEP-WCMC	Permanent
	E2. To publish reports on regional trade	Producer and buyer countries		
F. Relationships between countries and the Regional Plant Committee and between members of the	F1. CITES Secretariat must disseminate CDs containing information on CITES and CITES training to all participants, including to all parties recommended by	CITES Secretariat		Permanent

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
CITES Plant Committee are strengthened are strengthened	participants.			
	F2. To consult countries and to prepare regional reports.	CITES Members or Regional Rep.		
G. The coordination (or collaboration) between producer and buyer countries is strengthened	G1. To establish a communication forum to include all producer and buyer countries, in playing the role of a clearinghouse for information	CITES Members or Regional Rep in producer and buyer countries		Permanent

Thematic area 5:

Building the capacities of producer and buyer countries to sustainably manage *Pericopsis elata*

Expected outcomes	Activities	Responsible party	Partners	Duration required
A regional platform of stakeholders involved in the management of afrormosia is established	<p>A1. To identify stakeholders interested in the sustainable management of Afrormosia in each country.</p> <p>A2. To identify focal points in each country.</p> <p>A3. To identify communication channels and to establish networks.</p> <p>A4. To identify and to secure potential funding sources to facilitate regional communication (this should be a national initiative to demonstrate the needs to organize meetings or workshops).</p> <p>A5. To identify one coordinator for the regional platform in order to facilitate the efforts of the various countries.</p>	Regional Project Coordinator and focal points	ITTO, CITES Secretariat	
B. Improved knowledge of afrormosia timber market	B1. To undertake research on afrormosia and disseminate research findings.	Producer countries/ buyer countries	ITTO	Short term, Medium term and permanently
C. Non-detrimental findings (NDFs) in the various countries are harmonized at regional level.	<p>C1. To develop standardized data collection forms.</p> <p>C2. To collect data in various producer countries in order to undertake or issue Non-detrimental Findings</p> <p>C3. To actively share data or information with other participants to the Regional Network during when establishing or issuing Non-detrimental findings.</p> <p>C4. To undertake the analysis of NDF data for the Sub-region.</p>	Producer countries, Regional project coordinator, Members of the Regional CITES Committee	ITTO, CITES Secretariat	Short- and Medium-term

3.4. Final Declaration

ITTO/CITES REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE SUSTAINABLE TRADE OF PERICOPSIS ELATA 2 - 4 April 2008. KRIBI, CAMEROUN

FINAL DECLARATION

Pericopsis elata is a timber producing species native to countries of West and Central Africa occurring in the Guinean Equatorial Forests. It is currently classified as endangered by IUCN and it is listed in Appendix II by CITES. Legislation and administrative procedures are in place to manage the species in all producing countries but problems of implementation and enforcement remain.

In compliance with the Project "Ensuring international trade CITES-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation", the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) organized a workshop on sustainable trade of *P. elata* in Kribi, Cameroon, 2-4 April 2008. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Cameroon, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a participatory action plan to ensure that international trade in *P. elata* is consistent with its sustainable management and conservation in Africa. The workshop developed five thematic areas for such an action plan as follows:

1 - Building capacity of exporting and importing countries on implementation of CITES.

This would lead to achieving the following outputs:

- 1a Capacity of CITES Scientific Authority to implement CITES effectively, improved.
- 1b Capacity of CITES Management Authority to implement CITES effectively, improved.
- 1c Awareness & participation of collaborating CITES Authorities increased or improved (at national level).
- 1d Implementation of CITES in importing and exporting countries improved
- 1e Implementation of CITES monitored
- 1f Linkages between countries and regional CITES Plants Committee & Standing Committee representatives strengthened
- 1g Co-ordination between exporting and importing countries strengthened

2- Building capacity of exporting and importing countries to manage *P. elata* sustainably.

This will be achieved through the following outputs:

- 2a Regional platform for stakeholders involved in management of *P. elata* established
- 2b Knowledge on *P. elata* in timber trade improved
- 2c Non Detrimental Findings (NDFs) for *P. elata* in each range State within the sub-region harmonised

3- Improving the ecological and silvicultural knowledge of *P. elata*

The proposed outputs are:

- 3a Implementation of research on *P. elata* realized
- 3b Identified gaps observed from the research filled
- 3c Potential of the species in its natural area of distribution determined (via new inventories or based on existing ones)
- 3d Databases of previously collected statistics created
- 3e All relevant information disseminated (via a website, awareness-raising campaigns and reference document(s))

4. Promotion of support programmes for regeneration of *P. elata*

From the above theme the following outputs are hoped to be achieved:

- 4a Potential fruit bearing trees identified based on existing inventories and their maps produced
- 4b Seed collection activities organised and, if necessary, proper preservation processes ensured
- 4c Viable and adequate *P. elata* seedlings produced
- 4d Appropriate planting and silvicultural techniques applied

5. Governance and marketing of *P. elata*

The main outputs shall be:

- 5a Chain of Custody and national quotas on *P. elata* complied with by adapting legal and regulatory frameworks (including management plans) and information disseminated
- 5b Market knowledge improved through inventories, readily available technical and administrative documents, putting in place of a coherent and adequate data collection mechanism, setting up a sub regional market observatory for information swapping with other range countries, arrangements with importing countries (VPA, FLEGT, Government procurement policy and other trade agreements)
- 5c Control and legality increased notably by stepping up actions in sensitive and strategic sites; constant information by exporting countries on the issuance of export permits; consultations between countries of the sub region and building technical capacities and resources for these control activities.

Done in Kribi Cameroon on this day 4th April 2008

3.5. List of participants

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3.6. Closing address by the Representative of the Ministry of Forest and Fauna after the Workshop on sustainable trade in *Pericopsis elata*

- Distinguished representative of ITTO Executive Director,
- Distinguished representative of CITES General Secretary,
- Your Excellency the Divisional Officer of ocean Division,
- Your Excellency the Mayor of Kribi I Urban Council,
- Distinguished representatives of Forest Industries and Timber Trade,
- Distinguished representatives of producer and consumer countries for *Pericopsis elata*,
- Distinguished representatives of the Civil Society,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have reached the closing stage of our Regional Workshop on the “sustainable trade of *Pericopsis elata*” a.k.a. afrormosia or more commonly known under the trade name *assamela*, jointly convened by ITTO and the CITES Secretariat.

On behalf of His Excellency Elvis NGOLLE NGOLLE, the Minister of Forests and Wildlife who was prevented to attend this meeting by other engagements, I wish to convey the appreciation and congratulations of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon for the results achieved after three days of intense deliberations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been particularly impressed by the relevance of your recommendations, and I trust you have thereby laid down the foundations for a new start towards a more sustainable management of *assamela* in the various producer countries. This concern for the sustainable management of *assamela* is now broadly shared by all stakeholders of the production chain down to the final consumers and this fact itself should be taken as a sure sign that the *assamela* trade is on its tract to sustainability. In this respect I believe we should view the future with optimism.

I therefore urge you to translate these recommendations into effective actions at field level. May these recommendations be for each stakeholder a commitment that he will fulfil and make effective.

For its part, Cameroon will spare no efforts to contribute to the implementation of these commitments. It will shoulder the largest share of responsibility to have these commitments fulfilled through the Regional ITTO/CITES Project Manager, Dr. BETTI Jean Lagarde, from whom I request to act with special diligence in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations from this workshop.

I should not conclude this address without reiterating my thankfulness to the General Secretary of CITES and the General Secretary of ITTO through their representatives, for the multi-faceted support they and their respective organizations have always provided us. Please kindly convey the expression of our gratitude to them.

To all participants, I trust your stay in the resort town of Kribi has been a pleasurable one and that you will keep a fond memory of it.

On this hopeful note I hereby pronounce the closure of the proceedings of our sub-regional workshop on “the sustainable trade of *Pericopsis elata*”, and I wish to each of you a safe return to your respective countries and homes.

Long live international cooperation! Thank you very much.

3.7. Presentations and papers presented at the workshop

All presentations and papers referred to in this report are available in their original languages on CD-ROM, on request from the ITTO Secretariat (eimi@itto.or.jp). The presentations and papers are also available for download from www.itto.or.jp.