

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Compliance

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII IN CAMEROON

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Introduction

2. At its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Standing Committee reviewed the application of Article XIII in Cameroon and adopted recommendations directed to Cameroon on the following topics:

- management of trade in specimens of *Pericopsis elata*;
- legislation and law enforcement;
- issuance of export permits; and
- development of the SIGIF2 information system

Two additional recommendations were made:

- the Secretariat and the importing countries should keep close communication and strengthen cooperation with Cameroon to better understand the different requirements and expectations regarding the implementation of forest regulations and to fully support the actions undertaken by Cameroon to implement these recommendations;
- Cameroon should invite the Secretariat to provide in-country assistance and conduct a second technical assessment and a verification mission with a representative of the Plants Committee and representatives of importing countries, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), to review progress in implementing the recommendations of the Committee.

3. Since the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat has supported Cameroon in implementing the recommendations of the Committee and other issues, including the publication of the national quota for *Pericopsis elata* and the verification of the submission of annual reports (particularly regarding trade in plant species).

4. In addition, Cameroon invited the Secretariat to conduct a second technical assessment and a verification mission. The mission took place from 26 to 31 August 2024, just before the regional workshop on capacity-building for West African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) range States held in Douala, Cameroon, from 2 to 6 September 2024 (see the summary report of the mission in the Annex to this document).

5. The Secretariat thanks Cameroon for its excellent cooperation within the framework of this second technical mission and for all the efforts made to ensure a successful visit. The Secretariat particularly thanks the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF, *Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune*) and its *Direction des Forêts* (Forest Department), as well as the *Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts* of Mbalmayo and the *Agence*

*Nationale d'Appui au Développement Forestier* (ANAFOR) for the technical and logistical support provided to the Secretariat in the planning of the mission and its entire duration. The Secretariat also thanks the European Union, whose generous contribution made it possible to conduct the mission.

6. This document presents the findings of this second mission and the recommendations of the Secretariat on the application of Article XIII in Cameroon.
7. Most of the background information as well as the description of the forestry sector of Cameroon, the logging titles and their mode of allocation, the SIGIF2 information system, the procedures for issuance of CITES permits and verification of legal acquisition, and controls at the ports of shipment provided in document SC77 Doc. 33.4 are still relevant. Consequently, this document focuses on the progress made by Cameroon in implementing the recommendations of the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting.
8. It should be noted that CITES-listed species only represent about 25 per cent of the species exploited by the timber exporting companies visited. The main species harvested in Cameroon are *Triplochiton scleroxylon* (Ayous), *Milicia excelsia* (Iroko) and *Entandrophragma cylindricum* (Sapelli), which are not included in the Appendices of the Convention. The main CITES-listed species exploited are *Pericopsis elata* (Assamela/Afromosia), *Pterocarpus soyauxii* (Padauk) and, to a lesser extent, species of the genera *Guibourtia*, *Khaya* and *Azelia*.
9. Finally, the players interviewed during the mission, both from the government and the forestry sector, drew the Secretariat's attention to the stricter domestic measures adopted by the European Union regarding deforestation. They highlighted their difficulties to implement these measures as well as the lack of a delay before their entry into force, which gives exporting countries little time to review their national procedures. However, the Secretariat understands that, in September, the European Union informed its partners of the establishment of a delay of 12 months for the progressive implementation of the Regulation<sup>1</sup>.

#### Progress made by Cameroon in implementing the Standing Committee's recommendations

##### *Regarding management of trade in specimens of *Pericopsis elata**

*a) Cameroon should strengthen the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authorities by building their capacity in the area of forestry and providing them with enough modern means to do their work, including issuing permits, controlling traceability, surveying populations of *Pericopsis elata* and other CITES-listed tree species to make non-detriment findings, setting annual export quotas before authorizing trade in specimens of CITES-listed tree species, and building administrative and scientific capacity at the national level.*

10. Regarding the strengthening of the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authorities, a budget ligne of FCFA 11,000,000 (about USD 17,500) was created in 2024 in the *Fonds Spécial de Développement Forestier* (FSDF, Special Forestry Development Fund) to strengthen the implementation of CITES. This budget line made it possible to fund the organization of a national workshop to build the capacity of the Management Authority, the Scientific Authorities and other domestic stakeholders on non-detriment findings (NDFs) and a field mission to identify the difficulties faced in the implementation of CITES. Cameroon intends to strengthen this budget allocation in 2025. In addition, MINFOF has a triennial plan for the training of the staff and institutions under its authority, including the officials of the Management Authority and the Scientific Authorities (i.e., ANAFOR, *Ecole de Faune* and *Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts*).
11. Regarding trade in CITES-listed tree species, since the first mission of the Secretariat in 2023, Cameroon has strengthened the role of the Scientific Authority and the procedures for making NDFs. Under Cameroonian law, no logging is permitted until a comprehensive inventory has been made for each forest management unit exploited. These inventories provide the necessary data on the status and the stocks of existing species, as well as the harvesting potential of such species. NDFs are currently based entirely on these inventories and MINFOF only authorizes logging quotas on a species and concession basis, according to the harvesting potential determined by its professionals. Regarding the making of NDFs, Cameroon has started to include elements from the 9-Step process developed by Germany and is working to integrate the CITES NDF guidance developed by the International Expert Workshop on CITES NDFs in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 8 December 2023. Concerning *Pericopsis elata*, Cameroon has made an NDF for this species and set an export quota of 24,198.30 m<sup>3</sup>, which has been published on the CITES website. In addition, forest

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2024/10/16/eu-deforestation-law-council-agrees-to-extend-application-timeline/>

management plans have been reviewed or are under review to ensure that all the species harvested are covered by such management plans.

12. Moreover, Cameroon has endeavoured to collect additional information on species for which some scientific data are lacking. With the support of external partners, such as the International Tropical Timber Technical Association (ATIBT), the Scientific Authority was able to obtain important scientific information and an analysis of the existing scientific literature to improve its evaluations. Cameroon is also working with the European Union and Germany on new forest inventories. Voluntarily and subject to the availability of resources, the Scientific Authority intends to undertake a review of the existing timber trade involving CITES and non-CITES species in order to obtain additional information that might help strengthen existing NDFs, support the making of new NDFs, and also provide a better idea of the volumes of non-CITES species traded by Cameroon to ensure that their trade remains sustainable.
13. A new national database aimed at managing and monitoring the use of quotas has been created on the basis of the export quotas set thanks to the NDFs. The database contains the list of existing NDFs in Cameroon and all the data on the CITES permits issued by the Management Authority. This allows CITES authorities to monitor the use of quotas online and ensure that the sum of the volumes authorized in the different CITES permits remains within the limits of the quota authorized by the NDF (or the corresponding decision for non-CITES species) for each species. At the time of the previous mission, quota use was tracked with an Excel table, which did not enable real-time monitoring and implied a higher risk of error.
14. During its mission conducted in 2023, the Secretariat also noted a difficulty with the monitoring of all the land titles and concessions granted by Cameroon, both in the permanent domain and the non-permanent domain. This new database also includes all the land titles and concessions, regardless of the forest domain considered. Cameroon is working to ensure the interoperability of this database with the SIGIF2 information system so that all the data can be consolidated in a single database, thus enabling a better management and control of the land titles and concessions, the quotas allocated and the use of the quotas through the different CITES permits issued.
15. Regarding traceability, as reported in document SC77 Doc. 33.4, the SIGIF2 information system is the main system used by Cameroon to manage the forestry sector. The system documents and guarantees the sustainability of the harvest and the traceability and legality of forestry activities and of the timber produced. All the information regarding SIGIF2 and the traceability and legal verification system is presented in response to recommendation g) below.

*Regarding legislation and law enforcement*

*b) Cameroon should strengthen the regulatory framework on forest management, in particular, to address any gaps and loopholes that could result from the multiplicity of logging titles and modes of allocation. Cameroon should also adapt the relevant regulatory provisions to ensure that all CITES-listed timber species are managed sustainably as part of relevant forest management plans.*

*c) Cameroon should consider developing and implementing an enforcement strategy and related policies regarding illegal trade in tree species and strengthening its efforts to ensure full compliance with the Convention.*

*d) Cameroon should assess relevant authorities' law enforcement capacity, mandates and needs to strengthen the control of trade in CITES-listed species and the fight against transnational organized forest crime. Based on this assessment, Cameroon should build the capacity of enforcement bodies to increase CITES controls on the basis of risk-based management strategies, particularly the control of the parcs commerciaux in the ports of Douala and Kribi, and to combat transnational organized forest crime.*

16. Regarding legislation, the Forest Law of 1994 provided for the establishment of a ban on exports of logs of all species five years after its adoption, that is, in 1999. Before the entry into force of the ban, Cameroon adopted an ordinance whose implementation decree classified species into two groups:
  - "main species" (*espèces principales*), whose export in the form of logs is prohibited; and
  - "promotion species" (*espèces en promotion*), whose export in the form of logs is authorized despite the provisions of the law.

In July 2024, Cameroon adopted a new Forest Law (Law No. 2024/008 of 24 July 2024) which replaced the law of 1994. The new law provides for the entry into force of a new ban on exports of logs of all species from 1 January 2025. The implementation decree of this new law is expected soon.

17. One of the major innovations of the new law is that the most serious infringements involving fauna and flora are elevated to the category of crimes and are punishable by up to ten years' imprisonment. The law also strengthens the requirements of legality and traceability of forest resources. Cameroon is currently preparing a review of its national CITES legislation, particularly Decree (*Arrêté*) No. 222 on the procedures for the management of production forests, to reflect the innovations of the law of 2024, specifically the obligation to systematically consider CITES-listed tree species when calculating the possibility of performing logging operations and management simulations.
18. Regarding enforcement, Cameroon has established several bodies and initiatives. The President has created the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC, *Commission Nationale Anti-Corruption* (CONAC)). MINFOF has created an anti-corruption unit and developed a National Strategy for Forest and Wildlife Control (*Stratégie Nationale de Contrôle Forestier et Faunique*), which covers all trade and exports, including exports of timber, as well as a toll-free number to report any infringements involving wild fauna or flora to the authorities. A 2020-2030 national strategy to combat poaching and wildlife crime has been developed. Moreover, Cameroon has established a National Committee that brings together INTERPOL, the CITES authorities, the National Agency for Financial Investigations (ANIF, *Agence Nationale des Investigations Financières*), the General Delegation for National Security (DGSN, *Délégation Générale à la Sécurité Nationale* (DGSN)), the Ministry of Defence and customs. Forest crimes have been included in these strategies thanks to the adoption of the law of 2024, which reclassifies certain environmental infringements as crimes and increases the penalties incurred. The role of the players involved in trade, including timber trade, has been clarified and various capacity-building activities have been organized. In March 2024, a code of ethics and professional conduct regarding protected areas was also launched.
19. Regarding customs, a procedure has been established for systematically scanning shipments to be exported and high-risk containers or shipments are also targeted. The following customs units have been created to strengthen controls and the fight against illegal trade:
- the Customs Department monitoring unit, in charge of risk analysis, which has a monitoring room (*Cellule de veille de la Direction Générale des Douanes*);
  - the Customs Control Unit (*Cellule de la surveillance douanière*);
  - a Special Customs Intervention Group (*Groupement Spécial d'Intervention Douanière*);
  - a National Division in charge of customs investigations and control; (*Division Nationale des Enquêtes et de la Surveillance Douanière*);
  - the Main Customs Office of Douala Port VII, the only one with powers on exports and imports of CITES specimens; (*Bureau Principal Hors Classe des Douanes Douala Port VII*);
  - the brigades in charge of controlling the loading of containers and the preparation of exports (*Brigades d'Empotage*); and
  - an intelligence unit named HALCOMI or *Halte au Commerce Illégal* (Stop Illegal Trade). This unit collects and analyses data on trade, including wildlife trade, and provides information to relevant bodies to conduct control and enforcement actions against illegal trade. HALCOMI reports directly to the General Director of Customs.
20. Finally, at the international level, Cameroon has signed several bilateral and trilateral agreements with countries of the region, specifically the Central African Republic, the Congo and Chad, to strengthen cooperation and control of cross-border activities. The World Customs Organization (WCO) manages a Regional Intelligence Liaison Office in Douala under its West and Central Africa Region. This Office plays an important role in collecting and sharing intelligence, in particular to support activities for enforcement of customs legislation. Moreover, Cameroon continues its cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the CITES Secretariat, the WCO, INTERPOL and TRAFFIC, to develop capacity-building activities for the implementation of the Convention and the fight against wildlife crime. Cooperation is also under way with the Regional Bureau for the Great Lakes of Africa.
21. Cameroon has seen a reduction of cases of illegal trade since the launch of the SIGIF2 information system, which has been even greater since the process became electronic after the previous mission in 2023. The initiatives and strategies established have also led to the strengthening of actions to enforce and combat wildlife crime
22. The Secretariat notes, however, that since 2016 Cameroon has not submitted its annual report on illegal trade, requested according to paragraph 3 of Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19) on *National reports*. These reports are a key element of international efforts to monitor and combat illegal wildlife trade because they provide essential data on law enforcement, seizures and proceedings, as well as trends in illegal trade. Non-submission of reports undermines transparency and weakens the global ability to evaluate and react

effectively against illegal trade. The Secretariat encourages Cameroon to submit its annual report on illegal trade within the established timeframes.

*e) Cameroon should establish a national platform for cooperation and coordination between competent enforcement authorities to strengthen the control of trade in CITES-listed species and to combat transnational organized forest crime, in accordance with paragraphs 9 a) and b) and Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Compliance and enforcement.*

23. In the framework of the implementation of the Convention, Cameroon established a National CITES Coordination Committee comprising MINFOF (including the CITES authorities), customs, the police and the gendarmerie, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Trade, INTERPOL and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The National Committee is the platform that brings together all the sectoral authorities involved in the proper implementation of CITES. It is supposed to meet twice a year but it was not possible to organize any meetings in 2024. The Committee is being revitalized and measures have been taken to resume its meetings in 2025.
24. The Management Authority and Scientific Authorities also meet every month to coordinate the implementation of the Convention on a national level. Other ministries or agencies participate in the meetings if the matters discussed require it. At the time of the second visit by the Secretariat, the latest meeting of the CITES authorities had taken place in July 2024, before the meetings of the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee, in coordination with the other relevant ministries.
25. Regarding cooperation in the implementation of the Convention and enforcement, MINFOF (which has its own judiciary police corps), customs and other specific units such as HALCOMI ensure the control of trade of goods in Cameroon or transiting through the country. Cameroon reported that all the efforts made seem to have led to a decrease in cases of illegal timber trade.

*f) Cameroon is invited to encourage companies to use innovative technologies to monitor timber and apply best practices to prevent illegally sourced or illegally traded timber from entering their supply chain.*

26. In addition to the improvements in the SIGIF2 information system and the efforts made to ensure the interoperability between the different platforms and databases used (see below), Cameroon encourages timber-related companies to use innovative technologies to improve the management of their activities and particularly to prevent illegally sourced or illegally traded timber from entering their supply chain.
27. As an example, the company ALPICAM / GRUMCAM has developed a new app for computers and smartphones that makes it possible to georeference inventoried trees, to track them with a GPS and to scan the barcodes assigned to trees via phone cameras. This applies to the company's own barcodes and the official barcodes of the SIGIF2 system. One of the main interests of this app, which generally improves the control of traceability of timber by complementing the SIGIF2 system, is that it can be synchronized with the management plans of concessions and the inventories made. In fact, the inventories and management plans can be updated in real time, given that scanning the tree's barcode provides information on its GPS position, its state, logging date if it was logged, date of transport, place of storage, etc. The company SEFECAM has also established its own traceability system to strengthen controls.
28. MINFOF has also developed partnerships with companies and enforcement authorities with the aim of providing security to the forest concessions granted.

*Regarding issuance of export permits and SIGIF2 information systems*

*g) Cameroon should finalize the development of the SIGIF2 as an effective information system (subject to the availability of resources) to facilitate the issuance of CITES permits and certificates and the verification of legal acquisition of specimens in trade for all the modes of allocation of logging titles, while making it more difficult to tamper with CITES permits and certificates after their issuance.*

29. At the time of the Secretariat's mission in 2023, the following operations were possible with the SIGIF2 information system – launched in 2020 and made compulsory in 2021 – through the different modules developed:
  - recording and monitoring all the logging titles and concessions,
  - recording the quotas (i.e., logging volumes) validated and allocated by MINFOF,

- recording the forest inventories and annual operating plans,
  - recording logging permits,
  - recording logged trees,
  - recording logs,
  - recording transformed wood,
  - recording specimens to be exported, and
  - safely issuing all the waybills and log production reports (*carnets de chantier*)
30. Under SIGIF2, A barcode is assigned to each tree identified in the inventory. When the tree is felled, the original barcode is attached to the stump and the log is given a new barcode linked to the original one. Every product obtained from the log – timber or transformed wood – is given a barcode generated by the system. All these data are included in the DF10 log production report or *carnet de chantier*, an administrative record generated by SIGIF2 where all logging activities are reported. Thus, every movement of the logs or their products is monitored and recorded. All the waybills are also recorded in SIGIF2. Every waybill has a unique code that provides information on the shipment: individual barcodes of each log or product included in the shipment, dimensions and volume, species, place of departure and destination, and information on the vehicle used for transport, including the licence plate number, etc.
31. Company operators can therefore verify at any time that the information reported by field teams in their forms matches the data recorded in the system and vice-versa. The Secretariat was able to witness the possibilities of the traceability system and the management of the chain of custody implemented in Cameroon (see Annex).
32. As regards transport, in Cameroon there are 20 traceability checkpoints connected to the SIGIF2 system that cover the entire territory and all the points of entry and exit under customs control. Every vehicle transporting wood – originating from Cameroon or another country – must go through these checkpoints and have its documentation and load verified to be able to transport the wood to the ports of Douala or Kribi.
33. As regards MINFOF and the officials that control timber trade, the scanning of any of the barcodes provides access to all the data on the specimen or the shipment in question. The system thus ensures traceability from the point of control – including controls conducted at the port of shipment – back to the concession of origin. SIGIF2 also includes information on the quotas (i.e., logging volumes) allocated to each company. Consequently, MINFOF can verify at any time that a given timber shipment is within the limits of the quotas set.
34. MINFOF explained that, in the event of an irregularity, the specimens are seized, the vehicle – if the control takes place during transport – is immobilized and the matter is referred to a higher level of authority. Until the situation is clarified, the vehicle is seized and cannot leave the premises, where it remains under the custody of the officials of MINFOF. During the visit to the Elat checkpoint, the Secretariat was shown a vehicle carrying logs (non-CITES species) originating in Cameroon that had been immobilized for several months due to irregularities discovered at when it was controlled: the barcodes of specimens did not match those reported in the waybill, and the licence plate of the truck was also different from that reported in the waybill. MINFOF was conducting the necessary investigations, but administrative measures had already been taken by the authorities of Cameroon (i.e., immobilization of the vehicle, prohibition of unloading the shipment, suspension of the sale until the end of the investigations).
35. Since 2023, the SIGIF2 system has been improved. Several technical improvements have been made in the system itself, and new modules have also been launched. Currently, SIGIF2 enables the following:
- recording all timber exporters from Cameroon and all the timber declared by exporters as intended for export through the specification bulletins on timber for export that are currently digitized in SIGIF2; and
  - recording all vehicles that transport logs or sawn wood through Cameroon.

It is obligatory to register exporting companies since 1 January 2024. Companies that do not meet the criteria for registration lose their registration certificates as timber exporters and can no longer export. All the information on the exporting company is also available just by scanning the barcode of the certificates of registration as an exporter, duly generated by SIGIF2.

36. Two additional modules should continue to improve the system:

- a CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community) module to record and assign barcodes to all the wood from neighbouring countries in transit through Cameroon; and
- a module to certify the legality of forestry companies and authorize the export of specimens.

These two modules are already developed in the SIGIF2 system but are not operational yet. The Secretariat was informed during the mission that the CEMAC module would be launched as soon as the SIGIF2 system was updated. This was confirmed in the report submitted by Cameroon, with no indication of a timeframe.

*h) Cameroon should facilitate liaison and integration with other permitting/certification systems relating to the harvest of and trade in CITES-listed species, for example, concession authorizations, phytosanitary documentation, or customs declarations.*

37. SIGIF2 is the system that records all the information on logging activities in Cameroon. The Cameroon Customs Information System (CAMCIS) is the system used by customs for its operations, while the Single Window for Foreign Trade Operations (GUCE, *Guichet Unique des Opérations de Commerce Extérieur*) is used for export procedures.

38. As reported above, Cameroon continues to develop SIGIF2 with the launch of certain modules but is also working to link SIGIF2 to the various databases used, such as the new database that monitors the use of CITES quotas. As regards the management of exports, CAMCIS is integrated in the GUCE platform, which is also used by the Ministries of Finance and Trade. Exporters are also registered in GUCE and can thus manage their export procedures via the platform. Finally, phytosanitary certificates, which are required for exports, are also issued and recorded in the GUCE platform. They are also recorded in the electronic phytosanitary certificate system (ePhyto) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) to facilitate the phytosanitary checks of importers.

39. Cameroon is also working to integrate SIGIF2 into GUCE so that all the data recorded in SIGIF2 can be accessible from GUCE and thus facilitate controls prior to export. To this end, a memorandum of understanding is being finalized between MINFOF and the Ministry of Finance through a joint team involving both ministries. In November 2024, at the request of the Ministry of Finance, which designated a specialized team, MINFOF also designated focal points to facilitate cooperation between both ministries in the monitoring of enforcement and trafficking of CITES species and informed the Ministry of Finance of these designations.

40. The long-term goal is to ensure that all the procedures for issuance of permits/certificates, control and export authorizations can be conducted via the GUCE platform as a single window at national level, specifically based on the data recorded in SIGIF2. Another objective is to better control the tax base through the predictions made by SIGIF2, which ensures better monitoring of logging operations and would therefore make it easier for the Ministry of Finance to collect taxes.

*i) Cameroon should ensure that export permits and re-export certificates are endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp, by an inspecting official such as a customs official and not by the Management Authority, in the export endorsement block of the document. This part of the permit or certificate should also be endorsed, with quantity, signature and stamp.*

41. Cameroon confirmed that, when issuing CITES permits or certificates, MINFOF, as the Management Authority, pre-fills box 14 of the standard CITES form – the box for the export endorsement by customs in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19), Annex 2 – reporting the number of specimens and volumes concerned. Yet, customs has the responsibility of verifying the shipments before their export and, after the inspection, of signing and stamping box 14, thus certifying the data reported. MINFOF has recently sent a reminder of this requirement and the Secretariat was able to see several CITES permits showing the certification by customs.

#### Discussion and conclusions

42. All these developments show that Cameroon has made significant progress in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee. This progress concerns the capacity building of CITES authorities in the forestry sector, the survey of populations of trees exploited, including *Pericopsis elata*, the making of NDFs and the setting of annual export quotas, the development of legal acquisition findings and

traceability methods, the strengthening of legislation and enforcement, and the development of technological solutions to support the implementation of the Convention on a national level.

43. The Secretariat considers that most of the recommendations directed to Cameroon can therefore be considered as met, and that there are no longer any compliance matters regarding trade in CITES-listed tree species from Cameroon, including *Pericopsis elata*.
44. However, several challenges remain concerning the management of trade from third countries in transit through Cameroon, which, as a transit country, is not able to guarantee their durability, legality or traceability.
45. In fact, Cameroon verifies that transport companies are in possession of the required documents to allow the transit of timber, including CITES documents for CITES-listed species. However, as a transit country, Cameroon has no powers to verify that the conditions of issuance of CITES permits – particularly the making of NDFs and legal acquisition findings – were respected in the countries of origin. The documentation and shipments are inspected by customs when entering Cameroon, and subsequently by the officials of MINFOF at each checkpoint to ensure traceability between the point of entry into Cameroon and the ports of Douala or Kribi. In the event of any irregularity, the same procedure described above is applied, that is, the vehicle and the shipment are immobilized. In addition, the authorities of Cameroon inform the relevant embassy of the situation. However, these checks only involve the stamping of the transport documents in the various checkpoints along the route. There is no thorough control of specimens, volumes or species transiting through Cameroon, even though there are manual records of timber from the CEMAC region at the checkpoints. In fact, it has been reported that a high proportion of CITES-listed species exported from the ports of Cameroon come in fact from the Central African Republic and from the Congo and only transit through Cameroon. Cameroon itself mostly exports non-CITES species.
46. The Secretariat considers that the launch of the additional CEMAC module is therefore of great importance as it will enable the recording of timber from other countries in the SIGIF2 information system and the allocation of barcodes to all items in the shipment. It will also be possible to record all the documents (including CITES documents if appropriate) covering the shipment as well as details on the carrier and the vehicle used. The module will thus improve the monitoring of statistics, volumes and timber species from neighbouring countries and enable a better traceability of specimens during their entire transit through Cameroon. Now that the system is electronic, the module will simplify the procedure by eliminating a part of the paper-based procedure, reducing the risk of errors.
47. Improvements could also be made in the management of the storage of logs at the ports of shipment. SEPBC, Société d'Exploitation des Parcs à Bois du Cameroon, is the company commissioned by the government to manage stocks of timber at the port of Douala. Upon arrival at the port, all specimens are stored in the commercial yard (*parc commercial*). Exporting companies have 90 days to complete the necessary formalities and obtain the export authorization, otherwise the timber is seized by the State and auctioned. Once the export authorization is obtained and customs has cleared the shipment, SEPBC takes the specimens to the loading yard (*parc de chargement*) for loading onto the ships. Only SEPBC can move the specimens within the port area and one of the companies visited shared with the Secretariat some examples of situations in which specimens were lost or mixed in several exports. Timber from Cameroon and timber from neighbouring countries is stored in different sections of the commercial yard. However, the timber storage conditions both in the commercial yard and the loading yard could be improved, specifically by establishing a real physical separation between the different stocks of timber. Currently, all the logs and other specimens are stored in different zones, with no particular separation between them.
48. Moreover, specimens from neighbouring countries are not subject to the same control procedures as timber from Cameroon. The authorities of Cameroon only verify the presence of the required documents but the procedure of entry into the port, customs clearance and export is managed directly by the authorities of the countries concerned, which have offices in the port of Douala and cooperate with the customs of Cameroon. It is therefore not possible to thoroughly monitor the exports made by the countries of the region that transit through Cameroon.
49. Consequently, any improvements in the procedures governing trade and transit of timber in Cameroon would help the country further strengthen the implementation of the Convention on a national level, including for specimens in transit through its territory.



## Recommendations

50. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) take note of the progress made by Cameroon in the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting and congratulate the country for this;
- b) determine that there are no longer any compliance matters regarding trade in CITES-listed tree species from Cameroon, including *Pericopsis elata*; and
- c) encourage Cameroon to continue strengthening the implementation of the Convention regarding specimens of CITES-listed species in transit through Cameroon, specifically by:
  - i) submitting an annual report on illegal trade, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19), paragraph 3;
  - ii) continuing to develop the SIGIF2 information system, particularly the creation of the CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community) module to record timber from third countries, particularly the Central African Republic and the Congo, thus enabling a better monitoring of statistics, volumes and timber species from neighbouring countries and a better traceability of specimens during their entire transit through Cameroon, considering the Convention and the provisions of Resolution Conf. 9.7 (Rev. CoP15) on *Transit and transshipment*; and
  - iii) promptly conducting an evaluation of the role and methods of work of the Société d'Exploitation des Parcs à Bois du Cameroon (SEPBC) for the management of stocks of timber at the ports of shipment, ensuring a clear and strict separation between stocks of specimens from Cameroon and those of specimens from neighbouring countries, and between the different types of specimens traded.

## SHORT SUMMARY OF THE SECOND TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION MISSION OF THE SECRETARIAT IN CAMEROON UNDER ARTICLE XIII

The second technical assessment and verification mission of the Secretariat in Cameroon was organized in three parts:

- A first part in Yaoundé, during which the Secretariat was received by His Excellency Jules Doret Ngondo, Minister of Forests and Wildlife of Cameroon, and listened to several presentations on the implementation of the Convention in Cameroon and on the progress made in the making of non-detriment findings for Appendix-II tree species, the methodologies to control the use of CITES quotas, the implementation of the SIGIF2 system, and the national control and enforcement strategy. The Secretariat met with representatives of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife and the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authorities [*Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts de Mbalmayo* and ANAFOR, *Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Forestier*], the SIGIF2 technical team and the representatives of other ministries and agencies (e.g., foreign affairs, trade, finance, justice, police, customs).

During this part of the mission, a meeting was also held with the representatives of international organizations, non-governmental organizations and organizations of the forestry sector (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, TRAFFIC, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the International Tropical Timber Technical Association) as well as various representatives of timber companies and a union of forestry companies.

- A second part during which the Secretariat, accompanied by the Management Authority and the Scientific Authorities, travelled to the east of Cameroon to visit the forest concessions and the timber processing plant of the ALPICAM / GRUMCAM Group in Mindourou and the processing plant of the STBK Group in Batouri.

These visits allowed the Secretariat to better understand how the forestry industry operates in Cameroon, both regarding CITES-listed species and non-listed species, and particularly the allocation of concessions and logging permits to companies or communities by the government, the management of these concessions, the making of inventories, harvesting plans and felling plans, the logging procedures, the management and storage of logs, the processing and transformation (if applicable) and the transport of the timber to the ports of Douala or Kribi for export.

The Secretariat was able to test the procedures for verification of traceability via the SIGIF2 system to ensure that the harvested timber is legal and can be traced back to the concessions and logging units. Specifically, during its visit to the plant of the ALPICAM / GRUMCAM Group, the Secretariat proposed a verification exercise, selecting trees in the management plans and logs in the yard of the plant and requesting a visit to the concession to locate the trees or the stumps of logged trees, using SIGIF2 and the company's internal traceability system. The trees and stumps were easily found. One of the trees selected (a specimen of *Pterocarpus soyauxii*) had unfortunately been knocked down by the fall of a tree felled in the regular operations of the site. It was explained to the Secretariat that, in these cases, the tree is declared as a "logging accident" and recorded in SIGIF2. The tree is given an individual barcode but can only be used if it exceeds the minimum exploitable diameter. Otherwise the tree is marked and labelled but remains in the forest.

These visits also provided a better understanding of the challenges faced by forestry companies regarding the harvest of CITES-listed species. The Secretariat also visited the nursery created by the ALPICAM / GRUMCAM Group for reforesting the concessions exploited, including through planting local CITES-listed species even if they are not harvested by the company.

Finally, during the return journey to Douala, a stop was organized at the Elat traceability checkpoint (*poste de contrôle forestier et chasse d'Awae*) to understand the role of these checkpoints in Cameroon's timber traceability and management system.

- A third part in Douala, during which the Secretariat met with the Regional Delegate of MINFOF in charge of the coastal region and her team, as well as representatives of customs and GUCE, the Single Window for Foreign Trade Operation. The Secretariat listened to several presentations on the procedure to authorize exports by the Regional Delegation of MINFOF, customs procedures in Cameroon and the operation of the GUCE platform and

its links to SIGIF2 and other databases used in Cameroon such as the Cameroon Customs Information System (CAMCIS) or the database of the Ministry of Finance.

Two field visits were also organized: one to the port of Douala, which included a visit to the last traceability checkpoint before entering the port area, a visit to the Port 1 and Port 2 offices of MINFOF in charge of checking the shipments of logs and/or sawn wood before the issuance of the export authorization signed by the Regional Delegate, and a visit to the storage yards and the new timber terminal (not yet operational).<sup>2</sup> The second visit was that of the processing plant of the company SEFECAM. During these visits, the Secretariat obtained additional information on the established procedures in Cameroon for the implementation of the Convention and particularly regarding trade in *Pericopsis elata* and *Pterocarpus soyauxii*.

The mission ended with a last meeting between the Secretariat, the Management Authority and the Scientific Authorities to review the agenda of the mission and the activities conducted and clarify certain points related to the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that a second visit to the port of Douala was conducted in the framework of the regional workshop on capacity-building for West African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) range States, during which the Secretariat was able to meet again with various stakeholders and collect additional information [see document SC78 Doc. 33.2 on the Expedited application of Article XIII for West African rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) for all range States].