

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



Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee
Tbilisi (Georgia), 19-23 October 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

HARVESTING OF AND TRADE IN *PRUNUS AFRICANA*

1. This document has been submitted by the European Union (EU).*

Background

2. The African cherry (*Prunus africana*) has been listed in CITES Appendix II since 16 February 1995. It is a tree species from the mountain areas of tropical Africa and Madagascar and is mainly harvested for its bark, which has medicinal properties. Cameroon, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been the main exporters of the species over recent years, with the EU pharmaceutical industry being the main importer.
3. In 2005, the Plants Committee recommended inclusion of *Prunus africana* under the Review of Significant Trade in line with [Resolution Conf. 12.8 \(Rev. CoP13\)](#). At its 16th meeting (PC16, Lima, July 2006), the Plants Committee categorized *Prunus africana* from Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar and the United Republic of Tanzania as 'of urgent concern', and recommended that the Secretariat organize a dedicated workshop. This workshop took place in Naivasha (Kenya) from 8 to 11 September 2008, thanks to funding provided by France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Following this event, and based on the recommendations from the Plants Committee, several of the above mentioned Parties published a zero export quota pending the finalization of their Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) and adoption of sustainable export quotas. The Scientific Authorities of some of these countries subsequently undertook the preparation of NDFs in accordance with Article IV of the Convention.
4. To get assistance to carry out NDFs, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted applications to, and received support from, the "Programme for Implementing CITES Listings of Tropical Tree Species", jointly implemented by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the CITES Secretariat. The programme has been funded by the European Union together with other ITTO donors (U.S.A, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Netherlands, Japan, New Zealand as well as the private sector, including the pharmaceutical industry). Significant work has been done through this programme since 2009 to define and implement methodologies to perform NDFs. Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo used this programme as a basis for their management and export regime for *Prunus africana*.

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

5. Cameroon was able to resume trade in 2010 with an export quota of 150 000 kg of dry bark from the North-West region, which has progressively increased since then up to a national export quota of 1 082 879 kg of dry bark for the year 2015 based on the NDFs conducted in various regions of the country. Following a decision of the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (SC62, Geneva, July 2012), the Democratic Republic of the Congo was able to resume trade in 2012 with an export quota of 72 000 kg, which has increased since then to 232 000 kg for the year 2015. Uganda published its first export quota of 75 893 kg in 2009, which was then increased to 176 179 kg in 2011 following the completion of inventories in additional districts of the country.
6. At its 21st meeting (PC21, Veracruz, May 2014), the Plants Committee recommended again inclusion of *Prunus africana* under the Review of Significant Trade in line with Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13) on the basis of possible issues as to the sustainability of current levels of trade.

Monitoring of the sustainability of trade by the EU Scientific Review Group

7. The Convention is implemented in the EU through the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations (namely Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97). In accordance with this legislation, the Scientific Authorities of the EU Member States must be sure that current or expected levels of trade in species to be imported will not have a harmful effect on the conservation status of the species. On that basis, the Scientific Review Group (SRG), where all EU Scientific Authorities come together, reviews regularly the status of species imported into the EU, including *Prunus africana*.
8. Based on this legislation, the SRG has been monitoring the sustainability of imports into the EU of *Prunus africana* bark from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda over the last years. In that context, the EU has been in regular communication with these three countries. Building on this monitoring and exchanges with exporting countries, it has progressively become clear that a number of requirements should be met to ensure that international trade in *Prunus africana* is sustainable. NDFs should in particular take into account the following elements:
 - a) the sampling design for the inventories should be adapted to the species in order to allow for a proper estimation of the population to be harvested;
 - b) the inventory data set and the equation used to calculate the volume of bark available should be adequate to the characteristics of the species;
 - c) the bark should be collected through sustainable harvesting techniques, such as:
 - harvesting of trees with a minimum diameter at breast height of 30 centimetres minimum;
 - a rotation time which would allow sufficient time for trees to recover between two harvests, and which may vary depending on the region concerned and growing conditions of the trees;
 - d) the implementation of those sustainable harvesting techniques should be subject to regular controls and monitoring on the ground, based on well-defined quality standards;
 - e) products exported should be subject to a robust tracking system ensuring their traceability from harvesting sites to export points.
9. Analysing the scientific evidence available and comparing it with the current practice, the SRG was informed through various reports¹ about possible issues related to the sustainability of harvesting of and trade in *Prunus africana* since the resumption of exports in 2010. It was also brought to the SRG attention that the above-mentioned principles may not have been systematically taken into account. However, it should be noted that some of the above-mentioned requirements were identified recently, and that some time is needed before practical tools can be developed and implemented. This is in particular the case of the tracking system referred to under point e) of the previous paragraph.

¹ Cunningham AB, Avana Tientcheu M-L, Anoncho VF, Nkuinkeu R and Sunderland T. 2014. Power, profits and policy: A reality check on the *Prunus africana* bark trade. Working Paper 153. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR; Van der Velde B (2014). Prostates, *Prunus* and policy: A remarkable tree, a contested study, and tough choices ahead ; Delvaux C (2015). Preconditions for the sustainable use of *Prunus africana* in Central Africa. SRG 72/4/1/2

10. Noting that information is available with regard to cultivation and agroforestry systems, the SRG also expressed interest in the potential that might represent the development of plantations or agroforestry systems involving the species as a possible complementary mean of producing bark of *Prunus africana* in a sustainable manner. Such systems could generate additional income for local farmers and communities and at the same time reduce pressure on the natural stands of the species. In that context, there may be added-value in training local farmers and community foresters about vegetative propagation and nursery techniques with a view to developing agroforestry.
11. The SRG suggested that it may be worth organizing an international workshop on the sustainable use and the control of international trade in *Prunus africana* which could gather exporting countries, importing countries as well as interested stakeholders such as ITTO, the industry, and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) with a view to developing recommendations for *Prunus africana* harvesting and trade.

Recommendations

12. To ensure sustainable trade in *Prunus africana*, and to assist the Plants Committee as well as exporting countries in the assessment being carried out under the Review of Significant Trade, the Plants Committee is invited, possibly through the establishment of a working group during the 22nd meeting of the Plants Committee, to:
 - a) review the information contained in this document under points 8, 9, 10 and 11;
 - b) provide guidance as to the requirements which should be met to make NDFs for *Prunus africana* and ensure that international trade in the species is sustainable;
 - c) consider whether it would be appropriate to prepare draft Decisions for consideration by the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17, Johannesburg, September 2016), which would entail the organization of an International Workshop on the sustainable use and the control of international trade in *Prunus africana* (see Annex to this document); and
 - d) consider whether any other actions are needed, such as the preparation of a draft Resolution for consideration by the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Draft Decisions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties

Directed to the Secretariat:

17.xx The Secretariat shall:

- a) organize, within one year after the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and subject to available resources, an International Workshop on the sustainable use and the control of international trade in *Prunus africana* with the participation of all relevant Parties, including exporting and importing countries, forestry experts and stakeholders with a view to producing recommendations, among others, on methodologies to be used for inventories (including regarding the sampling design and the inventory data set), sustainable harvesting techniques, monitoring and traceability systems, and perspectives in terms of developing plantations or agroforestry systems as a possible complementary mean of producing bark of *Prunus africana* in a sustainable manner, as well as any other relevant issues;
- b) seek external funding, in particular from interested Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the International Tropical Timber Organization; in order to organize the International Workshop as called for under paragraph a); and
- c) report to the Plants Committee about the recommendations made by the International Workshop for discussion, endorsement and adoption by the Plants Committee.

Directed to exporting and importing Parties:

17.xx Exporting and importing Parties of *Prunus africana* shall cooperate with the Secretariat in the organization of the International Workshop by providing expertise among others on methodologies to be used for inventories, sustainable harvesting techniques, monitoring and traceability systems, perspectives in terms of developing plantations or agroforestry systems and funding on a voluntary basis.

Directed to the Plants Committee:

17.xx The Plants Committee shall:

- a) cooperate with the Secretariat with regard to the organization of the International Workshop;
- b) review the recommendations from the International Workshop for discussion, endorsement and adoption by the Plants Committee; and
- c) submit a report and provide recommendations to the Standing Committee and to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties .