

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 and 20-23 July 2020

Species specific matters

AFRICAN CHERRY (*PRUNUS AFRICANA*)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.260 to 18.262 on *African cherry* (*Prunus africana*), as follows:

18.260 Directed to the Plants Committee

The Plants Committee shall:

- a) *review the recommendations from the Prunus africana-related discussions within the 'CITES Tree Species Programme Regional Meeting for Africa' and advise the range States of Prunus africana of appropriate actions; and*
- b) *submit a report on the outcomes of Decision 18.260, paragraph a), and provide recommendations to the Standing Committee, as appropriate, and report to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

18.261 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall report to the Plants Committee at its 25th meeting about the recommendations from the Prunus africana-related discussions within the 'CITES Tree Species Programme Regional Meeting for Africa' for consideration and advice to the range States of Prunus africana.

18.262 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall review any report received from the Plants Committee on the implementation of Decisions 18.260, and provide recommendations as appropriate to the Parties and the Plants Committee.

Implementation of Decision 18.261

3. As per Decision 18.261, the Secretariat provides a summary of the *Prunus africana*-related discussions that were held in March 2019 at a regional meeting of the CITES Tree Species Programme (CTSP) in Africa. The full report on the outcomes of these discussions, with recommendations, is available in the Annex to this document.

Prunus africana discussions at the regional meeting

4. The *CITES Tree Species Programme Regional Meeting for Africa* took place in Dar es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, from 11 to 15 March 2019, and was organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The regional meeting dedicated nearly two days to *Prunus africana*-related topics. Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar provided information on national projects on *Prunus africana*, funded through the CSTP (see also document [CoP18 Doc. 16](#)). Representatives of academia, Germany (as an importing State) and of the CITES Secretariat also contributed to the discussions. Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda presented their efforts and experiences in making the harvest of, and trade in, *Prunus africana* beneficial to rural communities during a side event on *Sustainable management and livelihoods of Prunus africana*. Subsequent discussions amongst *Prunus africana* range States and participants addressed methodologies for inventories; sustainable harvest techniques; monitoring and traceability; and plantations and agroforestry. The participants then elaborated recommendations for each of the thematic areas indicated above to improve *P. africana* management in range States.

Recommendations emanating from Prunus africana-related discussions

5. The Secretariat reviewed the information and recommendations contained in the report shown in the Annex to this document and draws the attention of the Plants Committee to the following:
 - a) Several recommendations relate to the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) for trade in *Prunus africana* (see below). If considered relevant, the Secretariat could publish these recommendations on the CITES website. The Secretariat also recalls the ongoing Review of Significant Trade (RST) cases pertaining to *Prunus africana* (see documents PC25 Doc. 15.1 and PC25 Doc. 15.2). The process resulted in trade suspensions for a range State of *Prunus africana*, and in a Party agreeing to a voluntary zero export quota.¹ Advice on making NDFs could be helpful for addressing RST recommendations or lifting voluntary zero export quotas.

Methodologies for inventories

- i) *The grid based systematic design is the recommended method for inventory methods.*
- ii) *Inventories should include surveys of cultivated resources or agroforestry resources of Prunus africana (e.g. in gardens). Due to small extension, this should include complete sampling of 100% of trees.*

Sustainable harvesting techniques

- iii) *Based on a precautionary approach, it is recommended to use long rotation times of 7 years for a half rotation, and 14 years for a full rotation. The length of the rotation time should be based on local studies, if available, and adapted according to observed recovery rates.*
- iv) *Minimum harvested diameter at breast height should be 30cm. The bark should be harvested from one metre above ground to the level of the first branches.*
- v) *Harvest should not destroy the cambium of the tree.*
- vi) *The recommended harvest method is to harvest two quarters of the bark at opposite sides of the trunk.*
- vii) *In plantations or agroforestry, debarked parts of the trunks should be protected by adequate means, such as soil mixed with cow dung, manufactured or other adequate products, to protect against insect infestations.*

¹ [A trade suspension](#) for *Prunus africana* currently applies for Equatorial Guinea. Madagascar published a voluntary zero export quota for 2020.

Monitoring and traceability

- viii) *Scientific Authorities should regularly inspect harvest concessions and plantations or agroforestry systems of *P. africana* in order to monitor harvest impacts and compliance with recommended harvest practices.*
 - ix) *Parties should use suitable and cost-effective technologies and methods, such as physical or plastic barcodes, stardust paint or genetic approaches, in combination with standardized packaging to efficiently label and trace *P. africana* material from harvest to the point of further processing.*
- b) Several recommendations highlight avenues for future research which could further strengthen the implementation of provisions of the Convention for trade in *P. africana*, including compliance processes such as the RST process (indicated below). The Plants Committee may consider their relative importance and make suggestions on how these research activities could be undertaken.

Sustainable harvesting techniques

- i) *The recommended harvest method is to harvest two quarters of the bark at opposite sides of the trunk. Monitoring studies should ascertain whether this method is detrimental to the survival of the tree under certain climates.*
- ii) *Studies should determine harvest seasons that minimize detriment to the trees.*

Monitoring and traceability

- iii) *Long-term, scientific studies on representative sampling plots should identify which harvesting methods rotation periods are sustainable and monitor harvesting impacts.*
- iv) *Donors are requested to support the continuation of sampling efforts of *P. africana* populations, as precondition to enable rigorous genetic tracing of bark material.*

Plantations and agroforestry

- v) *More attention should be paid to ongoing or future informal, small-scale, use of *P. africana* resources, in private gardens or community forests. Parties should consider these resources in their inventories and management plans and gather basic information on such resources.*
- c) Some recommendations address overarching issues directed to donors and exporting and importing Parties, and the Plants Committee may consider how these could be acted upon.

Methodologies for inventories

- i) *Importing countries are invited to collaborate with range States on resource inventories to build trust and avoid doubts about the validity of applied methods.*

Plantations and agroforestry

- ii) *The working group recommends that regeneration in the wild should take precedence to agroforestry systems, which in turn are preferable to monocrop plantations.*
- iii) *Management of the species in the wild requires funding, such as regeneration or reforestation taxes collected by certain range States. However, Parties should ensure that the funds derived from such taxes are benefitting the regeneration of the species in the wild.*
- iv) *If owners or communities are provided with information, market access, and possibilities to acquire export permits, these resources could support local livelihoods and conservation. The working group recommends exploring mechanisms to provide such information, access and permits, for example registration and labelling, to professional smallholders or community associations.*
- v) *The working group recommends exploring national processing to achieve added values before the first export of the products.*

6. The Plants Committee may wish to establish an intersessional working group on *Prunus africana* to facilitate the review, formulation of recommendations and advice, and reporting called for in Decision 18.260.

Recommendations

7. In support of the implementation of Decision 18.260, the Plants Committee is invited to establish an intersessional working group on *Prunus africana* to:
 - a) review the recommendations from the *Prunus africana*-related discussions within the *CITES Tree Species Programme Regional Meeting for Africa* contained in the Annex to document PC25 Doc. 27, as well as their summary and synthesis contained in paragraph 5 of that document;
 - b) draft advice to the range States of *Prunus africana* for appropriate actions;
 - c) draft a report on the implementation of Decision 18.260 paragraph a); and
 - d) submit the outcomes of its work to the Plants Committee for consideration at its 26th meeting, including draft recommendations for the Standing Committee at its 74th meeting or the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

**Report on workshop on sustainable management of *Prunus africana*
[Decisions 17.250 – 17.252]
March 10-15, 2019, Dar es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania***

Working group on sustainable management of *Prunus africana* –
international workshop as requested by Decisions 17.250 – 17.252 (12-13 Mars 2019)

Participants of the workshop:

Daniel Amende	(Cameroon), Chair
Andy Mutoba	(DR Congo), Rapporteur
Crispin Mahamba Kamate	(DR Congo)
Jean Rushemeza	(Burundi)
Barmabé Sossa	(Benin)
Ayuba Bakut	(Nigeria)
Solomon Kyalo	(Kenya)
Boniface Roth Affi	(Cote d'Ivoire)
Tschide Antoine Augou	(Cote d'Ivoire)
Eric Jose Robsomanitrandrasana	(Madagascar)
Radanielina Tendro	(Madagascar)
Balakyèm Awesso	(Togo)
Issa Katwesige	(Uganda)
Donald Mikodo Iponga	(Gabon)
Margareth Thadei Mwakilasa	(Tanzania)
Jean Lagarde	(CTSP Regional Coordinator for Africa)
Martin Hitziger	(CITES Secretariat)

The workshop started at March 12, at 12am. The Chair assigned Mr. Mutoba the role of a rapporteur and introduces the schedule of the workshop. The first session is dedicated to four input presentations:

1. Dr. Ingram (Wageningen University, by videoconference) introduces her latest research on sustainable management of *P. africana*. Ms Ingram emphasised governance aspects, in particular complementarities and conflicts between various bodies of institutions and practices that influence *P. africana* management. According to her research, *P. africana* management is influenced in decreasing order by statutory regulation and international standards, project-based activities, corruption, customary regulation, and voluntary or market standards. Ms. Ingram also presented outcomes of her research that challenge current management assumptions: outdated inventory data, existence of cultivated *P. africana* populations, levels of national trade in the species, appropriate harvest methods, and levels of national use of the species. Ms. Ingram concluded with a call to raise awareness of the need of pluralistic and multi-sectoral governance approaches, *P. africana* cultivation, and international inventory and harvest standards.
2. Mr. Jean Lagarde, regional coordinator for Africa and researcher from Cameroon, presented his research on dendrological parameters, compliance with harvest regulations, growth and regeneration parameters, and harvest impact on *P. africana* populations in Cameroon. They found only 7.5% of *P. africana* trees in exploitable diameter classes larger than 30cm. However, more than 30% of all trees were harvested, with breast height diameters averaging only 23cm. Compliance with the recommended two quarters technique was found at a minority of all inventoried trees, while major numbers were debarked entirely or on one complete half of their trunks. Overall, they found 91% of the inventoried trees to be harvested without respect to the recommended norms. Mr Lagarde presented growth rates as 0.5cm per year for the diameter class below 10cm, which rises up to 2.7cm per year for the diameter class beyond 30cm. Bark thickness at unharvested trunk quarters rises from 3.8cm in the diameter class below 10cm to 7.5cm in the diameter class beyond 30cm. Bark regeneration rates varied by the inventoried sites, ranging from 0.6cm per year to 2.2cm per year. Regeneration rates decreased with the diameter class, which however was not a

* 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.

statistically significant effect. The regeneration rate varied with the applied harvesting technique and the climatic humidity. Based on the average bark regeneration rate of 2.15cm per year in an area similarly humid as on Mt Cameroon, Mr Lagarde suggested that rotation time in the Mount Cameroon area should be determined at 5.5 years. This rotation time would allow for regrowth of more than 11.5cm of bark, which is higher than average bark thickness at the same site. This recommendation is in contradiction to findings published in scientific literature (Cunningham et al. 2016). Mr Lagarde also emphasized a common misunderstanding of the rotation time, since the suggested 5.5 years refer to the half-rotation, after which two quarters are harvested which were left standing after the previous harvest. It is only after two half-rotation periods, that full rotation, i.e. harvest of the same two quarters that were initially harvested, occurs.

3. Martin Hitziger, from the CITES Secretariat, contextualized the management of *P. africana* with CITES work on medicinal plant species. He emphasized that medicinal products derived from wild-harvested species are a growing market that encompasses about 3000 internationally traded species. More than 1000 plant species in the CITES Appendices are registered as medicinal plant species in international databases, and contribute to the health care for substantial parts of the world's population. Many medicinal plants have characteristics in common, which also apply to *P. africana*. In particular, online trade in products from such species seems large, growing and mostly beyond the purview of the Convention, as demonstrated by some research done by the Secretariat with support from Korea and Germany. Furthermore, much of such trade uses multiple combinations of non-timber forest products in long and complex trade chains, which poses challenges in terms of identification, traceability and enforcement. Finally, traditional knowledge on the uses, properties and ecological characteristics of such plants has been locally collected over large time spans, and can provide relevant clues for sustainable management of such species. Mr. Hitziger continued to present elements of potential draft decisions and a workplan, which the Secretariat considers to propose to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
4. Daniel Wolf, from the German Scientific Authority, presented on challenges of *P. Africana* management from the perspective of an importing Party, elaborating areas in which importing Parties see need to improve management approaches. Mr. Wolf suggested that Inventories should use grid-based systematic designs, rather than adaptive cluster sampling, due to potential overestimations of available resources when using the latter approach. To calculate bark harvest volumes per tree, he suggested the Burkhardt equation. He emphasized that the two quarters method seemed to be appropriate despite suggestions that it might lead to tree die-off under certain climates or circumstances, but also indicated that an adaptive approach would allow to learn over time. As a precautionary approach, Mr. Wolf suggested half-rotation cycles of 8 years, and full rotation periods of 16 years. Monitoring should focus on effects of harvest on individual trees and their populations, as well as of trade chains. If done properly, such monitoring can inform adaptation and learning. Finally, governance issues were pointed out as crucial to ensure compliance with best harvest practice, legal acquisition, and traceability.

After concluding the four input presentations, the workshop continued with facilitated discussions of four thematic areas. A specific session was dedicated to each thematic area. Information from previous presentations, scientific sources, and personal expertise and experience of workshop participants were taken into account to elaborate recommendations to improve *P. africana* management in range States.

1. NDF I: Methodologies for inventories

The discussion of this thematic area focused on two issues. Range State representatives carefully assessed the available information on inventory methodologies and cultivated resources of *P. africana*. Representatives also mentioned to have observed instances of mistrust towards NDF's and resource inventories on behalf of importing Parties. Therefore, participants agreed on three recommendations to improve resource inventories.

- The grid based systematic design is the recommended method for inventory methods.
- Importing countries are invited to collaborate with range States on resource inventories to build trust and avoid doubts about the validity of applied methods.
- Inventories should include surveys of cultivated resources or agroforestry resources of *Prunus africana* (e.g. in gardens). Due to small extension, this should include complete sampling of 100% of trees.

2. NDF I: Sustainable harvesting techniques

The discussion of this thematic area focused on available evidence of on-compliance with recommended harvesting techniques, and partially contradicting evidence for bark regeneration and rotation times. Representatives appreciated all received inputs, and contributed their own experience, and chose to take a precautionary and adaptive approach due to the lack of conclusive information. Representatives also mentioned issues off tree die-off due to insect infestations after harvesting in dense stands, such as gardens or cultivated areas.

- Based on a precautionary approach, it is recommended to use long rotation times of 7 years for a half rotation, and 14 years for a full rotation. The length of the rotation time should be based on local studies, if available, and adapted according to observed recovery rates.
- Minimum harvested diameter at breast height should be 30cm. The bark should be harvested from one metre above ground to the level of the first branches.
- Harvest should not destroy the cambium of the tree.
- The recommended harvest method is to harvest two quarters of the bark at opposite sides of the trunk. Monitoring studies should ascertain whether this method is detrimental to the survival of the tree under certain climates.
- In plantations or agroforestry, debarked parts of the trunks should be protected by adequate means, such as soil mixed with cow dung, manufactured or other adequate products, to protect against insect infestations.
- Studies should determine harvest seasons that minimize detriment to the trees.

3. Monitoring and traceability

The discussion of this thematic area focused on monitoring approaches to enable long-term adaptation of regulations and management of *P. africana* harvest and trade.

- Long-term, scientific studies on representative sampling plots should identify which harvesting methods rotation periods are sustainable and monitor harvesting impacts.
- Scientific Authorities should regularly inspect harvest concessions and plantations or agroforestry systems of *P. africana* in order to monitor harvest impacts and compliance with recommended harvest practices.
- Parties should use suitable and cost-effective technologies and methods, such as physical or plastic barcodes, stardust paint or genetic approaches, in combination with standardized packaging to efficiently label and trace *P. africana* material from harvest to the point of further processing.
- Donors are requested to support the continuation of sampling efforts of *P. africana* populations, as precondition to enable rigorous genetic tracing of bark material.

4. Plantations and agroforestry

The discussion of this thematic area focused on the lack of attention, that has been previously paid to cultivated *P. africana* resources. A second emphasis was on the potential contributions of *P. africana* cultivation towards the livelihoods of rural populations, which so far lack market access.

- The working group recommends that regeneration in the wild should take precedence to agroforestry systems, which in turn are preferable to monocrop plantations.
- Management of the species in the wild requires funding, such as regeneration or reforestation taxes collected by certain range States. However, Parties should ensure that the funds derived from such taxes are benefitting the regeneration of the species in the wild.
- More attention should be paid to ongoing or future informal, small-scale, use of *P. africana* resources, in private gardens or community forests. Parties should consider these resources in their inventories and management plans and gather basic information on such resources.
- If owners or communities are provided with information, market access, and possibilities to acquire export permits, these resources could support local livelihoods and conservation. The working group recommends exploring mechanisms to provide such information, access and permits, for example registration and labelling, to professional smallholders or community associations.
- The working group recommends exploring national processing to achieve added values before the first export of the products.

The workshop concluded with a presentation and general discussion of the recommendations to all four thematic areas through the rapporteur of the working group.

The workshop was complemented by a side event in the form of a panel discussion on the sustainable management and *P. africana* and livelihoods (not part of the official workshop, chaired by Mr Hitziger from the CITES Secretariat). During the panel discussion, Cameroon, DR Congo, Uganda, and Madagascar presented their efforts and experiences in making the harvest and trade in *P. africana* beneficial to the livelihoods or rural populations.

Cameroon described the gradual transformation of national forest legislation towards increased participation and inclusion of local populations. Challenges remain, such as low benefits to local harvesters and sellers despite high export value of their collected products. However, Cameroon emphasized that Mt. Cameroon can serve as a model area of the implementation of the revised national forest legislation.

DR Congo presented their experiences in involving local populations as field assistants, researchers and knowledge sources for five NDF's (all on *P. africana*).

Uganda contributed successful experience with agroforestry and small-scale plantations to enhance livelihood benefits to rural populations.

Madagascar described that it was lacking substantive experience in any of these approaches, since no exports were currently taking place, while the trade in the species before the current trade suspension was largely illegal. However, it remarked that it was intending to work towards lifting the suspension, and was eager to learn from other Parties.

The Panel discussion concluded with a summary of successes, challenges, and lessons learnt.