

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of *Prunus africana* in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

Kenya.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Dicotyledonae
12. Order: Rosales
13. Family: Rosaceae
14. Genus: *Prunus*
- Species: *Prunus africana* (Hook. f.) Kalkman  
(syn. *Pygeum africanum*)
15. Common Names: English: Red stinkwood, African cherry  
French:  
Spanish:  
Kenya: Muri (Kikuyu)  
Cameroon: Iluo (Kom)  
Vla (Oku)  
Alumty (Bamenda)  
Wotangue (Bakweri)  
Kirah (Banso)
16. Code Numbers:

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: This species occurs in the tropical montane areas of West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa and on the islands of Madagascar, Grand Comore, Sao Tome and Fernando Po.
22. Population: While the species has a wide distribution, it is restricted to montane habitat. Its occurrence is discontinuous as it only appears in montane 'islands'.
23. Habitat: *Prunus africana* grows in forests at altitudes above 1200 m with rainfall in excess of 1000 mm, mostly on volcanic soils.

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization and Economic Importance: *Prunus africana* is valued as a timber and medicinal plant. The timber is durable and is used throughout its range for a variety of purposes, including furniture (Marshall and Jenkins, 1994) and household items such as grinding pestles (Cunningham, 1992). While use is primarily local, the timber is also used for commercial purposes (Chudnoff, 1984; Kenya Bureau of Standards, 1976), and is used as a purgative for cattle (Kokwaro, 1976).

The species is widely used in traditional medicine (Cunningham, 1994). On the international level, the bark of *Prunus africana* is used to treat prostate gland hypertrophy and benign prostatic hyperplasia, common diseases affecting older men. Bark extracts were patented almost 30 years ago, and have been marketed for the last 20 years in Europe. Both diseases can be treated successfully with surgery, but because of the high cost, the possibility of impotence, and the 1-3% chance of post-operative mortality, many patients opt for other treatments. Consequently, *Prunus africana* continues to be a popular treatment for these conditions (Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993).

32. Legal International Trade: Harvest of *Prunus africana* bark takes place in the following countries: Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and Zaire. The largest exporters are Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar and Zaire.

EXPORTS OF <i>PRUNUS AFRICANA</i> BARK		
Exporter	Volume (Tonnes)	
	1989	1990
Cameroon	652.5	432.0
Kenya	189.0	260.9
Zaire	39.9	178.6

(Source: Lewington 1992)

Note: Higher figures are given by Cunningham and Mbenkum (1993) for Cameroon as 1922 and 1969 tonnes for 1989 and 1990 respectively.

It was also reported that Madagascar exported approximately 240 kg of *Prunus africana* extract in 1983 (Chapeau, 1993). The importing countries of *Prunus africana* are Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Belgium.

33. Illegal Trade: There have been reports of illegal harvest in Uganda (Anonymous, 1993), and there is evidence of over-harvesting in Cameroon, in particular the illicit felling or complete stripping of trees (Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993).
34. Potential Trade Threats: The harvest of *Prunus africana* bark has seriously affected the montane ecosystem in which the species occurs due to excessive bark harvest which causes the tree to die. With a limited bark harvest, total bark regrowth can occur and therefore sustainable extraction of this product is possible. However, high demand for the bark has led to over-exploitation and unregulated harvest, and consequently depletion of the resource. In Cameroon, the average harvest of 1923 metric tonnes per year for the years 1986 - 1991 would represent 35,000 debarked trees. Die-offs affect the integrity of the forests and reduce food for rare birds especially in Cameroon (Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993).

Throughout its range, there is concern that populations are declining due to unregulated and unsustainable harvest. Without controls, this situation could cause significant damage to certain *Prunus africana* populations. In Cameroon, this is of utmost concern to traditional healers and rural communities (Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993).

341. Live specimens: None.

342. Parts and derivatives: Bark and extracts.

#### 4. Protection Status

41. National: None. In Cameroon, the partial ban on bark extraction imposed in 1991 was lifted a year later as it triggered massive illegal trade (Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993).

42. International:

43. Additional Protection Needs: Control of harvesting from the wild stands and establishment of plantations for the export market are needed.

#### 5. Information on Similar Species

#### 6. Comments from Countries of Origin

Malawi: *Prunus africana* occurs in Malawi but has not yet entered international trade. However, as the species is heavily traded in other African countries, the trade might shift and therefore Malawi supports this proposal.

Zimbabwe: The species is relatively rare and restricted to montane rainforest. Although formerly exploited for pharmaceutical use, it is no longer harvested in Zimbabwe. Based on Zimbabwe situation alone, they do not support Appendix-II listing for this species.

South Africa: Although exploitation is only for local trade and consumption, South Africa sympathizes with the proposal in view of the problem in Cameroon.

Cameroon: *Prunus africana* has been listed as 'endangered to extinction' by the Department of Forestry. The Ministry of the Environment and Forestry supports inclusion of this species in Appendix II.

#### 7. Additional Remarks

There are efforts underway to cultivate *Prunus africana* which is fast growing and amenable to cultivation on steep slopes where other crops can not grow. However, farmers are reluctant to plant unless a market is assured.

#### 8. References

Anonymous. 1993. Bushenyi trees ravaged. *The New Vision*, Friday February 5.

Chepeau, Anne. 1993. Medicines naturelles a Madagascar. *Options Futur*.

Chudnoff, Martin. 1984. *Tropical timbers of the world*. Agriculture handbook 607. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service: Washington, D.C.

- Cunningham, A.B. 1992. *Plants, people and park: Multiple use and development alternatives around Bwindi-impenetrable forest W. Uganda*. Report to CARE - international, Kampala, Uganda.
- Cunningham, A.B. and F.T. Mbenkum. 1993. *Sustainability of harvesting *Prunus africana* bark in Cameroon: A medicinal plant in international trade*. People and plants working paper 2 UNESCO: Paris, France.
- Kenya Bureau of Standards. 1976. *Kenya standards nomenclature of commercial Kenya timbers*. First edition. Kenya Bureau of Standards: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Kokwaro, J.O. 1976. *Medicinal plants of East Africa*. East African Literature Bureau: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Lewington, Ann. 1992. *Importation of medicinal plants and plants extracts into Europe: Conservation and recommendations for action*. Report for WWF project 3331. Unpublished.
- Marshall, Nina T. and Martin Jenkins. 1994. *Hard times for hardwood: Indigenous timber and the timber trade in Kenya*. TRAFFIC International: Cambridge, UK.