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Pericopsis elata
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NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS REPORT ON *PERICOPSIS ELATA* (FABACEAE) IN CAMEROON

AUTHOR:
Dr Jean Lagarde Betti

Pericopsis elata, known under its trade/pilot name as Afrormosia or Assamela is a tree species of the close, Guinean-Congolese forest type. It 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). To ensure its conservation, the Government has fixed its minimum girth limit at 100 cm: this is called the administrative minimum exploitable diameter (MED/ADM).

In Cameroon the distribution of *Pericopsis elata* is largely restricted to the East province, particularly in the semi-deciduous forests of Boumba & Ngoko and Haut-Nyong divisions where it occurs with densities of 0.67 stem/ha for diameter classes ≥ 20 cm.

The basis of restoration and alleviation measures is outlined in element 5, article 6 of the arête n° 0222/A/MINEFI of 25 May 2001: calculation of the forest possibility and the determination of the managed minimum exploitable diameter (MED/AME). The parameters used for calculation include: the choice of the managed trees, the rotation, the growth rate in diameter of trees, the mortality rate, the logging damage rate. The principle of the simulation consists of increasing progressively the MED/ADM as to get a fair reconstitution rate (Re). The new MED which gives the best reconstitution (Re ≥ 50) is called the MED/AME.

Pericopsis elata is one of the scarce species for which the manager does not need to increase the MED/ADM. The summit of the specific curve is at 75 cm of diameter, which is less than the MED/ADM. This means that, it is almost dead individuals of Assamela which are logged. The individuals of diameter ≥ 100 cm are wilting, and stems of many of them are rotten. They are therefore often abandoned in the forest, which lead to an economic loss for both the forest company and the Cameroon government. Data gathered in ten management plans, tend to show that Assamela is not threatened in Cameroon, at least in the East province where it is logged. The average density

is 0.53 stem/ha while the average value of the reconstitution rate is 185, which is too high compared to the limit required for sustainable management. This high level of Re is due to the high value of the MED/ADM.

Control of timber exploitation, trade and exportation is the main responsibility of the forest administration. Three major provisions can be considered as specific to CITES implementation: (1) the signing in 2005 of an enactment decree to implement some provisions of the 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 plant species. But the current monitoring system faces many problems in the field, the most important being the lack of financial and logistical resources to appropriately conduct forest monitoring and achieve the several tiers of objectives ascribed to sustainable forest management (SFM). However, 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. This will contribute to reinforce the control and monitoring system in the timber sector.

The method used to calculate the forest possibility and the managed minimum exploitable diameter can be advised for a NDF protocol for CITES plant species for a specific country or specific production forest. The Cameroon case suggests that a NDF report should address a specific production or under management forest.

This report was drafted based mainly on available information found in the forest administration at Yaoundé. Some recommendations are made for a complete Non-detriment Findings report on *Pericopsis elata* in Cameroon