



NOTIFICACIÓN A LAS PARTES

No. 2022/046

Ginebra, 8 de junio de 2022

ASUNTO:

SIERRA LEONA

Aplicación acelerada del Artículo XIII para el palisandro de África Occidental
Pterocarpus erinaceus para todos los Estados del área de distribución

La Secretaría se complace en distribuir la información adjunta a pedido de Sierra Leona.

Secretaría de la Convención sobre el Comercio Internacional de Especies Amenazadas de Fauna y Flora Silvestres (CITES)

Dirección postal:
Secretaría CITES
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 8-14
1211 Ginebra 10, Suiza

cites.org

In replying, please quote
Ref.: FD/CITES/2405/22/02



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Forestry Division,
Ministry of the Environment
55 Wilkinson Road
Freetown.
Contact: +232-76-627-320
Email: majelarnett@yahoo.co.uk
24th May 2022

CITES Secretariat
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 8-14
CH-1211 Geneva 10
SWITZERLAND

Dear CITES Secretariat,

**REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CONDUCT A SCIENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT
IN MAKING A NON-DETRIMENT FINDING (NDF) FOR PTEROCARPUS ERINACEUS AND
THE ACCEPTANCE OF ISSUED EXPORT PERMITS**

With reference to your letter dated 19th April 2022 acknowledging receipt of Sierra Leone's response to the Notification to the Parties N° 2022/021 titled "Expedited application of Article XIII for West African rosewood *Pterocarpus erinaceus* for all range States" and indicating that I will be contacted in case you need additional information, I am pleased to reassure you that the Government of Sierra Leone is fully committed to the compliance procedure for *Pterocarpus erinaceus* based on document SC74 Sum.13-11/13/2022.

Further to the response letter from Sierra Leone and the letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (see copies attached), we will appreciate the recommendation of two appropriate technical experts to enable us as a country conduct a joint-scientifically based assessment in making a Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) for *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in June 2022.

We are committed to conducting an assessment that will be accepted as credible by the Standing Committee and will very much appreciate your assistance in that regard.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Majelarnett'.

We will continue to enforce measures already in place aimed at preventing the timber trade from illegality, with a particular focus on this species.

We are also committed to the reforestation of degraded forest landscapes nationwide by the end of 2023 through the ongoing Government funded National Tree Planting Project with particular reference to the North and North-West Regions, where *Pterocarpus erinaceus* is mostly found. The overall objective of this Project is to increase our forest cover by planting 5 million assorted seedlings including *Pterocarpus erinaceus* as a priority species. This will ensure sustainability of this globally endangered species and serve as a mitigating measure aimed at minimising the impacts of climate change and in fulfillment of the commitments in the country's Medium-Term National Development Plan and other international obligations. Beyond this measure, we would also very much appreciate support in the creation of sustainable forestry solutions.

As a country, we humbly crave the indulgence of the CITES Secretariat, Standing Committee, and the Plants Committee to consider our request for the acceptance of all rejected export permits that have been issued for this species before the Notification to the Parties N° 2022/021. This request, when accepted, would permit all importing Parties to allow containers of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* already at various ports or about to berth at ports around the world, and on the high seas to different locations.

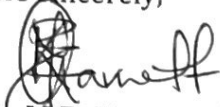
As reiterated in the response submitted by Sierra Leone, rejection of the export permits would bring unbearable hardships, among others, to those who have already made payments, three to six months ago, to the government through the Sole Timber Export Agent. In addition, as the country is emerging from the adverse effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, it may even lead to social unrest in the country, considering the impact it would have on the livelihoods of those in the timber trade.

In conclusion, the Government of Sierra Leone reiterates that it will only engage in a properly regulated and legitimate timber trade and will collaborate with all regional efforts to address the illegal trade in range States. We would also welcome any support from international partners such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Interpol in undertaking enforcement operations for the species.



While looking forward to your kind consideration and assistance in this urgent matter, please accept our assurances of the highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Kate M.B. Karemo-Garnett
Director of Forestry
CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, SIERRA LEONE

Cc:

The Chief Minister - Office of the President

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The Minister of Finance

The Minister of the Environment

The Deputy Minister of the Environment

Sierra Leone's Ambassador to Switzerland and PR to United Nations

The CEO Leadway Trading Company Sierra Leone Limited – Sole Timber Export Agent



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

11th May, 2022

Secretary-General,
CITES,
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 8-14
CH 1211
Geneva 10
Switzerland.

Dear Secretary-General,

**RE: EXPEDITED APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XIII FOR WEST AFRICAN ROSEWOOD
PTEROCARPUS ERINACEUS FOR ALL RANGE STATES**

The attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has been drawn to a correspondence from the CITES Secretariat titled: ***“Expedited application of Article XIII for West Africa Rosewood Pterocarpus erinaceus for all range States.”*** requesting through the Director of Forestry at the Ministry of the Environment, who happens to be the CITIES representative in Sierra Leone *inter alia*, importing Parties to reject all export permits concerning *Pterocarpus erinaceus* due to concerns related to sustainability and legality of the international trade in that species. In addition, the correspondence requests a number of range States, including Sierra Leone, to provide non-detriment findings, legal acquisition findings, and/or request zero quotas.

The effect of this correspondence is that it presents the timber trade in Sierra Leone as illegal and therefore its Rosewood products are being rejected. The perspective presented by this correspondence is erroneous and must be rectified.



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This Ministry wishes to state that the timber trade in Sierra Leone is legal, and has been so since His Excellency, President Julius Maada Bio, assumed office in 2018. The trade is regulated and supervised by the Government, through the Forestry Division in the Ministry of the Environment. In order to further insulate the trade from illegality, the Government of Sierra Leone appointed a Sole Timber Agent in June 2018, who is supervised by the Chief Minister and the Ministry of Finance.

The Timber Agent has handled the trade responsibly and paid all revenues emanating from tax levy on export of timber in full, amounting to over a Hundred Million United States Dollars. The Secretariat is implored to verify revenues generated from timber export as testament to the legality of the trade in Sierra Leone.

We are committed to undertake our non-detriment and legal acquisition finding survey that will help inform policies on the trade. We have requested technical assistant in support of the survey, in a letter to the CITES Secretariat. The Government has also imposed a five-month nationwide ban every year from 1st June to 31st October, during which no logging/harvesting and transportation of timber is allowed. Furthermore, the Forestry Division in the Ministry of the Environment organises an annual countrywide Tree Planting Programme, an exercise that is fully-funded by the Government of Sierra Leone which has resulted in the planting of 2.8 million trees since June 2019. These are modest efforts initiated by the Government to help protect the timber trade.

The abrupt "Notification to the Parties" dated 28 March 2022, without notice, is onerous to us as a Government, as well as those in the timber trade. This decision, if not rescinded, will have serious financial implications for those involved in the timber trade, most of whom are women and Chinese Entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs have paid for reasonable quantities of empty containers to the Government of Sierra Leone and are yet to receive the containers. This is because the global shipping logistics with respect to container deliveries have had serious challenge worldwide with global supply chain and Sierra Leone is no exception. This has delayed the delivery of empty containers to these entrepreneurs for loading of their timber products. Please be informed that all payment to the Government have been made months before the 28th March 2022 notification.



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Based on the above, Government will appreciate your timely engagement with the relevant authorities in Beijing and at the CITES Secretariat in Geneva, to allow all entrepreneurs to clear their consignment at the various ports in the People's Republic of China and to allow those on the high seas exported prior to the 28th March 2022 notification, while we engage and await the CITES Secretariat's reply to our letter of response to their notification which was sent through the CITES representative in Sierra Leone and who happens to be our Director of Forestry in the Ministry of the Environment.

Let me conclude by reiterating that the timber trade in Sierra Leone is legal and that we are the greatest beneficiary as a Government. Let me also confirm that we have received well over One Hundred Million United States Dollars, which has helped Government to meet its social-development obligations to the people of Sierra Leone.

Please accept our assurances of the highest consideration while we look forward to your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Professor David J. Francis

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

CC:

The Chief Minister- Office of the President

The Minister of Finance

The Ambassador- Peoples Republic of China to Sierra Leone

Dr Wu Peng- Beijing Director Africa Division

The Minister of Environment

The Director of Forestry/CITIES Representative

Government Sole Timber Agent



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