

the existing — Azuba said.
70% per annum.

Entebbe International Airport. The Government has also started the since their last visit in 2015.

Precious tree species faces extinction

KAMPALA

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and Petride Mudoola

About six months ago, this tree species — *Afzelia africana* — was not known to the communities in Lamwo district. But recently it became popular after residents discovered that it is lucrative.

Afzelia africana is one of the endangered tree species in the northern districts of Gulu and Lamwo.

Richard Komakech, the Lamwo district environmental officer, said forests had been invaded by illegal tree loggers who want to clear the most deciduous tree in the northern region.

In the region, he said, only two people have the licence to cut the tree, but over 20 other people have been cutting the trees illegally.

"The district has tried to block these people, but they say they do not have any way of surviving," Komakech said. He was on Wednesday speaking during a multi-stakeholder meeting held in Kampala.

The tree is also harvested from the wild for local use as food and medicine. The tree, according to Komakech, is



The *Afzelia africana* tree

bought from the locals at sh100,000-sh150,000, and the beneficiaries are said to be selling it at \$5000 (sh19m).

"The district discovered that the species is exported to Vietnam and Dubai. The practice is worrying the district as the species will soon disappear. The district is also facing environmental degradation," he added.

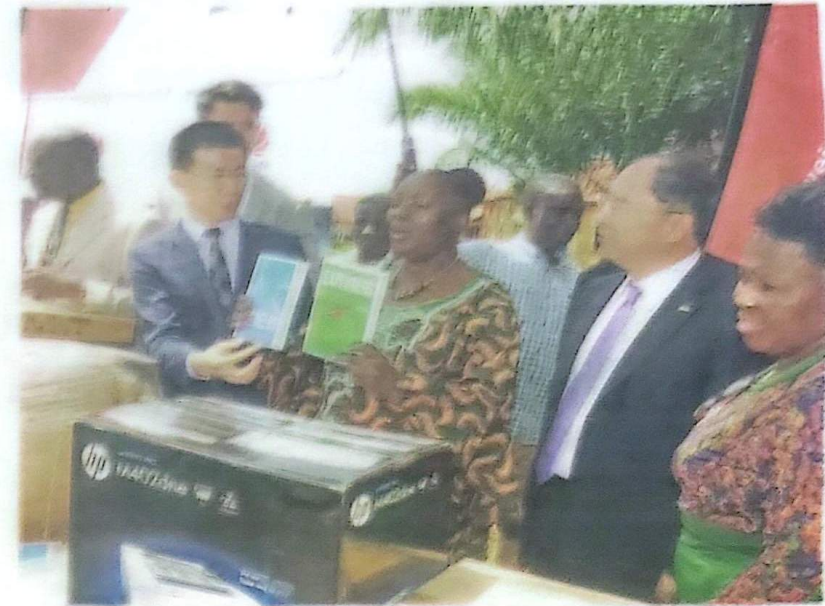
Afzelia africana, commonly known as African mahogany, is a large, deciduous tree with a spreading, open crown. It can grow between 10 and 25 metres tall while the trunk can be up to 40cm in diameter. The wood from the tree is considered to be of high quality and can be used as a substitute for mahogany. It is often exported to Europe as well.

Although it is a widespread species, it has declined in population. In 1998, it was re-assessed and re-classified as 'vulnerable' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list of species due to the threat of over-exploitation for timber on the international market.

Prof. Abwooli Banana, from the School of Forestry at Makerere University, said there are several trees which are endangered in the country depending on the region.

Banana, however, said *mvule* and mahogany are also under threat.

Lamwo district has 109,583 hectares of forests, of which 38% is made up of forest reserves managed by the National Forest Authority. The remaining 62% is community forests managed under customary leadership.



Huawei executive director in Uganda Bennie Bai (second-left) handing over Explorers textbooks to the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga (third-right), at Busoga kingdom headquarters on Tuesday during the hand-over of examination equipment to the kingdom. Looking on is the Ambassador of China to Uganda, Zheng Zhugiang (second-right) and Busoga kingdom state minister for education Nasabu Nantale (right).