



THE CBFP AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY COLLEGE GEARING UP FOR A SPECIAL DAY ON 18 DECEMBER 2019.

Theme:

"Congo Basin forests at the crossroads between Conservation - Sustainable Management and Investments in the Forest Environment: Civil society's role and local communities' expectations"

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The three major Rio conventions adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, profoundly impacted the way States subsequently managed their forest resources.

The Johannesburg Summit in 2002, held in the aftermath of the adoption of the Yaoundé Declaration in 1999, reaffirmed the commitment of the International Community to sustainable development and led to the creation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), among others.

The partnership was established to support efforts to preserve and sustainably manage Central African forests and to increase the effectiveness of its members' programmes and initiatives by promoting dialogue, collaboration and communication between them.

Under the Facilitation of the Kingdom of Belgium, which has revamped this mandate, the focus has been placed on forests and forest-dependent people.

The current context of forest exploitation calls for sustainable management of forests as a lever for development and poverty alleviation in order to improve the livelihoods of people living around forests. This requires less devastated territories, less impoverished populations and civil society

getting more active in raising the alarm and calling for a better governance framework and improved livelihoods for people living around forests.

The 2018 Brussels Declaration stresses that "effective governance frameworks must be implemented with the active participation of civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth, in order to protect the potential of the Congo Basin forests and prevent the irreparable loss of their vast and unique biodiversity";

In collaboration with COMIFAC, the CBFP uses the Treaty establishing COMIFAC as its working tool. The Treaty, adopted in Brazzaville in 2005, recognizes the existence of CEFDHAC as an organization bringing together non-state actors including civil society and IPLCs, and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue, consultations, discussions and debates in the sub-region.

PROBLEM

Using resources received towards components of respective COMIFAC projects, CEFDHAC has continuously contributed to the implementation of the Convergence Plan. Among other things, it has made governance, improving livelihoods, protecting and taking into account the rights of the IPLCs its main concern, with the understanding that laissez-faire in the forestry sector is driving the inevitable deterioration of ecosystem functions as these ecosystems face demographic pressure or market demand. This concern is widely shared by the civil society organizations grouped within the ACRN.

Without playing to the much-touted dynamic of payments for environmental services, valuing forest products derived from sustainable practices, land law reform and community participation that is respectful of both scientific and traditional knowledge, investments are usually made for the benefit of people living in and around forests.

The challenge of improving the livelihoods of these people and tracking these investments in terms of "given-driven", requires accountability at all levels and power sharing between stakeholders.

This challenge is embodied in the legislative and regulatory texts in force in the Congo Basin countries, community participation and the urgent need to protect the rights of communities, which led civil society actors to sound alarms which were echoed by CEFDHAC and ACRN on 13 June 2019 in Malabo, during the 6th meeting of the CBFP Council.

Their detailed statement calls for deeper reflection on the development of sub-regional standards to measure the impact of investments made in communities living around forests.

The current context of conservation and sustainable management of Central African forests in general, and of protected areas and buffer zones in these areas in particular, is marked by a lack of indicators to assess:

- The impact of different initiatives geared towards the implementation of the Convergence Plan:
 - compliance and consideration of the rights of communities and the improvement of their livelihoods;
 - compliance with good governance and management efforts while avoiding encroachment on key conservation areas.

Civil society must take the lead in providing the sub-region with a standard developed in a participatory manner at regional level that would enable it to issue alerts at all stages of projects (development, implementation). Such standards would help to monitor and evaluate expected impacts of investments geared towards implementing the COMIFAC CP and benefiting the IPLCs.

In light of baselines for different expected impacts of certain projects, and recent developments regarding alleged violations of certain rights of Baka communities by certain international NGOs, it must ensure that national and sub-regional standards that will be used to assess the above-mentioned impacts are developed in a participatory manner.

It is in this connection that the Civil Society College would like to convey its gratitude to the CBFP Facilitation of the Kingdom of Belgium, for affording it the opportunity to track progress towards the holding of the special Civil Society Day scheduled for 18 December 2019. As part of the build up to the special day, discussion workshops, reflection and debate forums will be organized and their findings presented and reviewed at the upcoming meeting, culminating in the adoption of a roadmap.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

- To help ensure the operational anchoring of emerging themes related to conservation, sustainable forest management and improved livelihoods for people living in and around forests.
- To hold a Day of the Civil Society College to showcase the findings of discussions conducted upstream on emerging themes related to

conservation, SFM and improved livelihoods for people living in and around forests.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To take ownership of the participatory forestry roadmap and the development of its toolbox, as well as relevant initiatives that are ongoing or likely to be developed under emerging themes, in order to strengthen the capacities of civil society and local communities to work towards biodiversity conservation while improving the socio-economic status of IPLCs:

-To identify actions needed to implement one of the recommendations of the 18th MoP held in Brussels which recalls “the crucial need to effectively enforce national legal and regulatory frameworks which are meant to form the main pillar of good governance to nurture the economic, biological and cultural value of the renewable natural resources of the Congo Basin forests”;

-To take ownership of the N’Djamena anti-poaching roadmap including the challenge of managing protected areas, buffer zones and transboundary landscapes in order to increase civil society’s contribution to its implementation;

-To review the challenges associated with transhumance, strengthening the resilience of our communities to the adverse effects of climate change and all other relevant initiatives aimed at fighting climate change in order to increase carbon sequestration and hence step up the contribution of the Congo Basin forests to the fight against global warming with emphasis on REDD+ and other climate-related initiatives in such a way as to benefit the IPLCs.;

-To discuss potential financing available to civil society organizations to monitor and evaluate economic and social development projects implemented for the benefit of IPLCs, for submission during a dialogue to be held with the Donors’ College;

To take ownership of the process of preparing the New Deal Humanity and Nature and define the conditions for the Civil Society College's contribution to articulating the positions of its members, including those of IPLCs;

-To lay the groundwork for developing standards and indicators to enable each country and the sub-region to assess the impact of projects and investments implemented to foster conservation efforts, and for the benefit of the GDF and IPLCs.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- -The participatory forestry roadmap is internalized and the development its toolbox, as well as all relevant initiatives underway or likely to be developed under emerging themes, with a view to increasing the capacity of civil society actors and local communities to work for biodiversity conservation while striving to improve the socio-economic status of the IPLCs are launched;

- -Actions needed to implement one of the recommendations of the 18th MoP held in Brussels which recalls “the crucial need to effectively enforce national legal and regulatory frameworks which are meant to form the main pillar of good governance to nurture the economic, biological and cultural value of the renewable natural resources of the Congo Basin forests” are identified;

-The N’Djamena anti-poaching roadmap including the challenge of managing protected areas, buffer zones and cross-border landscapes in order to increase civil society’s contribution to its implementation are developed;

-The challenges related to transhumance, strengthening the resilience of our communities to the adverse effects of climate change and all other relevant initiatives aimed at fighting climate change in order to increase carbon sequestration and thus step up the contribution of the Congo Basin forests to the fight against global warming with emphasis on REDD+ and other climate-related initiatives in such a way as to benefit the IPLCs are reviewed.;

-Financing mechanisms that can be enlisted by civil society organizations to help implement economic and social development projects for the benefit of IPLCs, to be presented during a dialogue to be held with the Donors’ College are mapped out and listed;

-The preparation of the New Deal Humanity and Nature is internalized by the College and conditions for the Civil Society College’s contribution in articulating its members’ positions, including those of the IPCLs are defined;

-The groundwork is laid for developing standards and indicators to enable each country and the sub-region to assess the impact of projects and investments implemented to foster conservation efforts, and for the benefit of the GDF and IPLCs.

METHODOLOGY

The ToRs will be discussed within the Civil Society College represented by CEFDHAC and ACRN, with a view to consolidating them.

A task force, whose members will be chosen for their expertise based on CVs sent by the leaders of the member organizations of the Civil Society College, will be set up and chaired jointly by CEFDHAC and ACRN, comprising the following:

- 02 experts selected from the CVs submitted by the representatives of the CEFDHAC national fora;
- 02 experts selected from the CVs submitted by the representatives of the ACRN member organizations;
- 01 expert selected from the CVs submitted by each of the member organizations of the Civil Society College;
- A moderator.

The task force shall be assisted by:

- The Co-Facilitator and Coach of the Civil Society College;
- The Director of the GIZ Programme for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Congo Basin forests;
- The ECOFAC6 Programme Coordinator;
- The CEFDHAC Technical Assistant.

The task force will hold three sessions.

The first session will focus on:

- Preparing for the two workshops leading up to the 18 December 2019 meeting;
- Preparing the technical content of the said workshops, notably the proposed ToRs, themes and sub-themes to match the groups that are likely to be formed after reviewing the above-mentioned specific objectives, the profiles of the panelists, the agendas, participants selection criteria, as well as any related list.

The second session will be expected to:

- analyze the findings of the two preparatory workshops organized in view of the 18 December 2019 meeting;
- -prepare for the meeting proper: "the Civil Society College Day";
- Develop the technical content of the meeting, including proposed ToRs, themes and sub-themes, panelists' profiles, agenda, criteria for selecting participants as well as any related list.

The third and final session will take place in 2020, and will analyze the conditions for implementing the roadmap adopted at the end of the 18 December 2019 meeting.

Following the first session of the Task Force, preparatory workshops will be held to provide a framework to get a firm grasp of the themes, deepen reflection on the discussion topics and hammer out consensus on each theme discussed. The findings from these meetings will pave the way to the upcoming Day of 18 December 2019 for the members of the Civil Society College.

The Day will be devoted to presenting, reviewing, beefing up and validating the above-mentioned findings, with a view to reviewing, analyzing and summarizing them for the adoption of a position paper, together with a roadmap to be prepared and adopted at the end of the meeting.

TIMETABLE

No.	Activities	Deadline	Venue
01	Preparing - reviewing and consolidating ToRs	20 July 2019	By e-mail
02	Reviewing CVs and establishing the task-force	29 July to 2 August 2019	By e-mail
03	First task force meeting	10 - 11 September 2019	Kinshasa/Brazzaville
04	First preparatory workshop	16 - 17 October 2019	Brazzaville
05	Second preparatory workshop	23 - 24 October 2019	N'Djamena
06	Second task force session	6 - 7 November 2019	Kigali
07	Civil Society College Day	18 December 2019	Yaoundé or Kinshasa
08	Last task force session	1st quarter 2020	Libreville/Douala