



**“Efficiency in Coordination, Mobilisation, Consultation and Communication”**

**10<sup>th</sup> Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Meeting of Partners (MoP)**

## **Major Conclusions of the CBFP Meeting of Partners 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012, Douala**

### **Context:**

The 10th Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Meeting of Partners was organized in Douala **on 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012** under the chairmanship of the current COMIFAC Chairman, His Excellency Endundo Bononge, **Minister of Environment, Conservation of Nature and Tourism of the Democratic Republic of Congo**, and Cameroon’s Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, **His Excellency Ngole Philip Ngwese**. **This CBFP Meeting of Partners was organized with the technical support of several CBFP partners and technical and financial support from the Canadian Government.**

This meeting was attended by two hundred and twenty participants representing CBFP partners. Besides, representatives from the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat, national COMIFAC Coordinations and COMIFAC climate focal points, the meeting brought together Ambassadors and representatives diplomatic mission, representatives from CEFDHAC networks (REJEFAC, REFADD, REPAR, RIFFEAC, REPALEAC/RACOPY), government services, research and training institutions, sub-regional institutions, civil society organisations, technical and financial partners and private sector.

The 10<sup>th</sup> CBFP Meeting of Partners was preceded on 27 and 28 February 2012, by a workshop on forest research organized by **COMIFAC** with the support of CIFOR, IRD, CIRAD and the CBFP Facilitation, followed on 28 February 2012 by a **Workshop on the presentation of the objectives and activities of the FORAFAMA project** (Support to the Sustainable Management of the Congo Basin and the Amazon-Brazilian Forests) of CIFOR and the opening of the Scientific Committee of the Regional Pilot Programme (RPP) “Global Changes, Biodiversity and Health in the Humid Tropical Forests of Central Africa: RPP FTH-CA » of IRD.

At the sideline on these meetings, a **CBFP ex-Facilitation meeting** was held on 28 February to discuss priority and strategic issues of the CBFP Facilitation. Still at the sideline of the CBFP meetings, a thematic workshop was organized on 29 February on the central theme **“Governance of Resources and Land use in the Congo Basin: Critical Appraisal of Sub-Regional Reflections, Opportunities, Challenges, Stakes and Efforts”**. The ultimate objective of this

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workshop was to: “Improve the efficiency of partner support towards boosting forest ecosystem governance in the Congo Basin”. This comprise: (1) contributing to the strategic reflection and prospective on forest ecosystem governance and land use, including the superimposing of rights and landscape uses; (2) contributing in harmonizing existing and emerging initiatives on forest ecosystem governance in the Congo Basin.

At the sidelines of this meeting, two steering committee meetings were organized: One on the Central African Forest Observatory (OFAC) (3 March 2012) and the other on the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem by the year 2040 (CBFE 40) (5 March 2012).

## **Summary:**

### **The 10<sup>th</sup> CBFP Meeting of Partners (MoP) was organized around 6 sessions:**

1. Opening ceremony of the CBFP Meeting of Partners
2. CBFP Facilitation Road Map From Kinshasa to Douala (through Bujumbura)
3. Efforts of COMIFAC and its partners
4. CBFP and Facilitation actions according to opportunities and constraints Information market place
5. Opening ceremony of the State of the Forest (EDF) 2010 – Launching of EDF 2012
6. Followed by the Durban Declaration on REDD+  
Closing Ceremony

## **Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony, which was chaired by the Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Environment and Wildlife in Cameroon, Madam Kalsoumi, was graced by the effective presence of the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union, the Canadian High Commissioner, the representative of the current COMIFAC Chairman, Ambassadors of the United States to Cameroon and to Gabon and the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO).

During his speech, the US Ambassador underscored the fact that biodiversity in the Congo Basin was disappearing at an alarming pace. It was, therefore, urgent to act. The Canadian High Commissioner pointed out that political commitment, strengthening of institutions and efforts by partners were the required conditions for the achievement of CBFP objectives. The ITTO Executive Director appealed for the building of capacities in order to better manage forest resources and bring about a more significant added value. The representative of the current COMIFAC Chairman, Mr Illanga José emphasized the fact that support from technical and financial partners was still urgent. Before declaring open the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Partners, the

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Minister's representative pointed out that development of populations, food security, climate and energy issues should also be considered as part of the priorities because the sustainable management of forests depends on them.

**After speeches from these officials, the ITTO Executive Director, RIFFEAC Board Chairman and the COMIFAC Executive Secretary signed a donation Agreement from ITTO to RIFFEAC.** This project concerns the reinforcement of 7 member forest training institutions of RIFFEAC by ITTO, through a funding by the Japanese, Belgian and the Swiss Governments. It is aimed at overcoming the shortage of trained senior staff for the sustainable management of the Congo Basin forests, notably the review of training programmes in these institutions, with emphasis on biodiversity management, while providing these institutions with equipment, didactic materials and appropriate infrastructure to guarantee modern training.

### **Session 1 : CBFP Facilitation Road Map From Kinshasa to Douala, through Bujumbura**

**On the basis of presentations made by the CBFP Facilitator and Facilitator Delegate, the CBFP « Statutory » meeting in its session 1,** examined, among other things, the implementation status of the **2010-2012 CBFP Facilitation Roadmap**, new contributions by partners to the implementation of the Convergence Plan of the Central African Forest Commission. This meeting was chaired by the COMIFAC Executive Secretary, **H.E. Raymond Mbitikon** and it enabled participants to review and define the priority actions of CBFP and the Facilitation according to opportunities and constraints. The following recommendations and stakes were underscored:

#### Session 1: (CBFP Facilitation)

- An appraisal/evaluation of CBFP after 10 years of existence should be conducted as soon as possible; This appraisal should present progress made in the implementation of partner activities related to the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, by emphasizing the impacts of the CBFP in the last 10 years;
- The civil society can barely defend its positions in its efforts to defend its interests because it can only do this through very few and poorly structured platforms. This calls for some attention from partners and the CBFP Facilitation in order to avoid their marginalisation in policy discussions.
- The private sector in general is “inactive within the CBFP”, whereas operators are making undisputable progress in the sustainable management of forests. They are confronted by several difficulties that jeopardize the sustainable development of national economies; it is recommended that the Facilitation and CBFP should pay more attention to this sector in order to consolidate and diversify it.
- CBFP Facilitation must try to show the monitoring of its performance through monitoring indicators, using information from partners in such a way that it shows more transparency in the results achieved;

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- The CBFP Facilitation should pay attention to the multiple uses of financial resources from technical and financial partners on the same projects/programmes in the same member countries within the COMIFAC area.
- The need to facilitate intermediation between applicants and financial institutions such as the Development Bank of Central African States (BDEAC) should be encouraged;
- The call for political commitment at all levels should be advocated more forcefully by the CBFP with the support of the Facilitation.

## Session 2 : New efforts by COMIFAC and its partners

During its Session 2, the CBFP meeting focussed on a strategic reflection on the **efforts made by COMIFAC and its partners** in the face of new challenges and opportunities in an ever changing socio-economic environment. At the end of these reflections and discussions that were moderated by H.E. **Eric Benjaminson, US Ambassador to Gabon**, participants made the following recommendations and raised the following concerns:

- **Threats to Biodiversity and Wildlife and other Problems**
  - ✓ Partners are concerned by large-scale poaching perpetrated in countries of the Congo Basin. The underscored the importance of big mammals, especially elephants to the survival of Congo Basin countries. Partners noted the need to boost sub-regional coalition in the fight against poaching, which is imperative for biodiversity and the conservation of resources. **Recommendation:** All partners should support COMIFAC to rapidly implement regional action plans on wildlife trade adopted by the COMIFAC Council of Ministers.
  - ✓ Following these three observations: (1) We cannot do without the Paris Declaration on Aid Efficiency, especially on appropriation and adjustment (2) CBFP was created with the belief by its members that Congo Basin States had showed proof of different approaches: Yaounde Declaration, Creation of COMIFAC, Convergence Plan ...(3) 13 years after the signing of the Yaounde Declaration, the issue of the real political will of COMIFAC Member States was raised: COMIFAC still has not headquarters; to date, only few countries have met their financial obligations towards the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat; the weakness of COMIFAC national Coordinations does not allow for the appropriation and integration of the objectives of the Convergence Plan at the national level; there is not clear distinction between the roles of COMIFAC and ECCAS in the 'operationalization' of support to sustainable forest management (Ex. FLEGT) ; the poor contribution of States to the functioning of COMIFAC may raise issues on the survival of this institution. **CBFP Partners made the following recommendations:** Since it has been observed that COMIFAC is in a delicate situation, in spite of the progress made, member States must provide significant political and financial support to the institution as the regional dimension of sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin is inevitable.

- **COMIFAC and ECCAS**

- ✓ **Recommendation:** COMIFAC should continue discussions with ECCAS in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities between the two institutions on the coordination of management of forest ecosystem resources in Central Africa.

- **CEFDHAC, CSO**

- ✓ **Recommendation:** Support of partners is required to help resolve the various weaknesses observed by CSOs when they meet, just like for example, CEFDHAC fora in countries or better still on a networks which make it possible to position the civil society against the government.

### **Session 3: CBFP and Facilitation Priority Actions according to Opportunities and Constraints**

- **On scientific research for development:**

- ✓ Thanks to the workshop of 27 and 28 February 2012, research priorities have been clearly defined: Ecosystem mastery and management; Forest Governance; Integrating forest in sectoral policies; Documentation of forest benefits.
- ✓ The need to reinforce coordination and cooperation was examined through a network, a mega programme, platforms and other forms of liaison between institutions, between research teams and between researchers.
- ✓ The importance of research policies in the Congo Basin was emphasized.
- ✓ Sustained and regular funding is fundamental to ensure the quality and impact of research.

- **On Rio+20**

- ✓ Considering the limited time remaining for the preparation of this event, the occasion was ideal for the presentation of the achievements by COMIFAC and CBFP, which would serve in: Renewal of the political commitment of leaders of the Congo Basin countries, developing a common position on key issues such as green economy and the inclusion of biodiversity and forest themes on the list of sustainable development objectives that will allow for the completion of the global sustainable development agenda (MDG).
- ✓ This event is an occasion to conclude the cooperation MOU between secretariats of regional organisations of the three forest basins (OCTA, ASEAN and COMIFAC).
- ✓ COMIFAC is still searching for support to organize a workshop on green economy and the Council of Ministers' meeting.

- **On CBFP +10 and lessons learnt from the experiences gathered in the wake of the Yaounde Declaration.**
- ✓ Originality, at the international level, of the structure created with COMIFAC and CBFP, which could serve as an example in other regions.
- ✓ Need to initiate a new political commitment of Heads of State of the COMIFAC zone and an even stronger commitment by partners to support a Facilitation that would promote more efficient cooperation within the CBFP.
  
- **On dialogue with China**
- ✓ After an initial contact phase, China expressed its interest to develop strong cooperation ties in:
  - ❖ Exchanges in SFM approaches and instruments necessary for meeting the requirements of certification, FLEGT, REDD, etc... and promotion and reinforcement of Chinese operators in the in the implementation of SFM methods within their companies;
  - ❖ Since many partners are now involved with Chinese companies, the intention of the CBFP is to serve as a platform for coordination, research synergy and to help COMIFAC develop a well structured dialogue with the competent institutions;
  - ❖ It was recommended and accepted by Germany to continue its role as facilitator these exchanges.

#### **Session 4: Information Marketplace – Partnership Forum**

An innovation of the 10<sup>th</sup> CBFP Meeting of Partners was the creation of an information marketplace in order to boost communication, coordination, mobilization of CBFP partners, and the monitoring and evaluation of partnership actions related to the 2010-2012 CBFP Facilitation roadmap priorities. To this end, CBFP partners, through these marketplaces, had the opportunity to share information on innovations, latest results and lessons learnt that could lead to the identification of potential synergy initiatives. The information Marketplace and Partnership Forum was subdivided into four sub-marketplaces which reflect the priority intervention areas of the partners.

- **Marketplace N° 1 : Forest and Environmental Training in the Congo Basin (moderated by Dr Linjouom Ibrahim, FOGRN-BC Project Chief) with focus on an Overview and Harmonization of interventions of technical and financial partners on the “training objective” of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan.**
- ✓ Recommendation: Need to support ongoing major initiatives being implemented through RIFFEAC and other institutions.
- ✓ Recommendation: Associate users during the designing phase of capacity-building programmes.

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- **Marketplace N° 2 : REDD+ mitigation and adaptation (moderated by Anne Marie Tiani, COBAM Project Coordinator) – Progress made in the fight against Climate Change within the framework of REDD+ and adaptation initiatives**
  - ✓ Recommendation: Need to step up efforts to clarify questions on funding and sharing of benefits.
  - ✓ Recommendation: Need to lay more emphasis on “adaptation” which was neglected in favour of “mitigation”.
  - ✓ Recommendation: It is imperative to take actions at various decision-making levels to on issues related to land tenure, use and ownership.
  
- **Marketplace N° 3 : Poverty alleviation – Economic Growth (moderated by Jean-Noël Marien, CBFP 40 Project Coordinator) - New local initiatives on poverty alleviation and promotion of economic growth.**
  - ✓ **Sector-approach recommendation:**
    - Promotion of traditional know-how, using sector-approach (value chain), which will lead to the promotion of forest products and significant improvement in quality and other aspects.
    - The role of States is central in the establishment of commercial user rights and professionalization of the sector.
    - Local strategy will make it possible to move from the stage of food collection to crop cultivation.
  - ✓ **Recommendation: Local Organisation**
    - It depends on basic training and education remains a permanent challenge;
    - This education should allow for the professionalization of activities and the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises adapted to market and customer needs;
    - Moving from the level of cooperative, which is very frequent, to the level of enterprise, remains a major challenge to stabilize and sustain poverty-alleviation efforts, which is very present on the field.
  - ✓ **Recommendation : Access to funding**
    - Access to funding is important;
    - The offer by the PACEBco local development fund is a good example - Its open proximity with grass-root organisations underscored and confirmed the importance of education to these organisations in taking more advantage of these opportunities;
    - The lesson learnt from PACEBCo on the offer of targeted local development on 6 landscapes, could rapidly be extended;
    - It is important to extend this type of funding to landscapes.

- **Marketplace N° 4 : Landscapes – Protected areas within a context of national and cross-border landscapes: Lessons learnt – Stakes and Challenges (moderated by Bertrand Chardonnet, IUCN-PACO Programme Coordinator for “Protected Areas in Central Africa”) – New experiences in landscape and protected areas management.**
- ✓ **Recommendation : Improving management efficiency**
  - Need to rethink the management strategies on protected areas and their networks in the light of their reconstitution and to evaluate their real cost for a more efficient management;
  - Concerns are being raised on the effectiveness/efficiency of significant funds that have been spent on landscape management;
  - Revaluating real costs in order to improve management efficiency
  - Lessons drawn from the land extension initiatives in the DRC;
  - Improving the efficiency of today’s resources in order to impact on future strategies;
  - The present process for the study and extension the protected area networks in the DRC is very interesting and daring, especially with regards to its rational aspect that allows for the identification of conservation weaknesses and search for future solutions.
- ✓ **Recommendation : Use of new forms of funding (Trust Funds)**
  - In the Congo Basin, there is only one active trust fund (TNS) and two others a being created (Gabon, DRC). Africa represents only 9% of capital fund invested in Trust Funds worldwide;
  - Need to replicate the TNS experience if there are any opportunities because Africa is undercapitalized in terms of Trust Funds.
  - A fund like that of TNS funds only 20-25% of the management needs of cross-border protected areas – There is need to provide for additional funding to cover the entire costs.
- ✓ **Recommendation: Services offered by decentralized local community institutions like communal forests.**
  - Communal forests are a reality in the Cameroon landscape, with 400 000 ha of classified forest (75% with a long-term development plan) by the State, and 400 000 ha are in the process of classification;
  - They allow for the combination of biodiversity conservation and income-generating forest production;
  - They constitute an excellent peripheral zone for protected areas, which serve as a buffer between man-made pressures and the protected areas, while promoting development;
  - They are created by the local communities on a voluntary basis and then given an official status;
  - Phase II of the support project provides for the creation of 20 communal forest along the peripheries of protected areas.
  - Experience and expertise acquired at the end of the creation of the communal forests will give reason to envisage a replication of the action.



## Session 5: Follow up of Joint Statement

**One of key moment of the Douala meeting was the Joint Statement of Intent relating to the initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Conservation (REDD+) in the Congo Basin which was adopted in Durban during the COP 17 on Climate.** It was intended to promote the appropriation of the Statement by COMIFAC member countries and its partners, in order to speed up and reinforce the implementation of REDD+ in the Congo Basin.

Participants listened to details of the Statement, reasons for the Statement and the role of the CBFP which is mainly focussed on dialogue, consultation, identification of obstacles and emerging themes.

COMIFAC and the countries expressed their expectations based mainly on the effective implementation of concrete actions, effective mobilisation of funding for all COMIFAC member countries, capacity building at the national and sub-regional level, promotion of pilot activities and increasing the interest of local and indigenous population of the Congo Basin in REDD +.

Participants then listen to a presentation on new tools and instruments (registers, data bank, and other tracking systems), technical contributions by UNREDD, OFAC, WWF completed by other partners on the follow up of REDD+ and green economy.

Note was taken of the disparity in the level of commitment among member countries, between the support received, between the levels of interest in REDD+ activities in countries, poor understanding of REDD+, confusion between REDD+ and other international agreements and commitment phases of countries.

Finally, participants noted a few misunderstandings between donor countries and Congo Basin countries, which explain the need for a permanent and sustained communication.

### **At the end of the discussions, participants adopted the following recommendations:**

- Reassure and reinforce appropriation of the Statement by Congo Basin countries, and that the contributions of partners should be oriented towards the concerns of countries.
- CBFP Facilitation should capitalize on the ongoing studies and initiatives to clarify who does what, where and with which funding.
- Partners should take into account local communities and they should coordinate their activities more by orienting their interventions on priorities.
- Need to promote the concrete implementation of REDD+ projects on the field instead of concentrating more on the methodological aspects. Are contributions from partners truly oriented towards the concerns of countries?

- CBFP urges the Facilitation to work towards the putting place of the 2 thematic working groups that are opened to all interested partners between now and the next meeting in N'djamena in September 2012: (i) green economy under the leadership of WWF and CIRAD, (ii) coordination of MRV activities under the leadership of OFAC and probably the FAO. These two groups should organize a first physical meeting on the sideline of the next CBFP meeting. Following a comment that was made in the hall, it was made clear that the MRV should be understood in its wide sense, i.e. comprising not only carbon should also include the setting up of tracking systems for security clauses.
- The CBFP encourages any future CBFP Facilitation (whatsoever) to add these points on its future roadmap for works to be continued between 2013 and 2015.
- The CBFP calls on the Facilitation to add on the agenda of the September meeting, continuation of the discussion on the project tracking instruments and REDD+ funding, which the partnership needs in order to sustain discussions.
- The CBFP urges the Facilitation to present these working options, examine these conclusions and recommendations next meeting of COMIFAC Council of Ministers in order to trigger a feedback and to know whether it meets the expectations for the follow up of the Durban Declaration.

## **Visit to mangrove areas in Douala**

### **Recommendation on the Mangrove Forest theme**

In the afternoon of March 2, 2012, participants listened to a presentation by Dr Gordon Ajonina (PhD), Justin Nantchou and Daniel Kiam of CWCS/Mangrove Network on the field: "Mangrove Forest: perceivable but not very visible in the CBFP strategy". Some conclusions on the field trip and recommendations:

- There is a significant mangrove forest cover of 437 340 ha along the coast of Congo Basin countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, DRC and Angola) ;
- The role of mangrove forests in the protection of coastal areas (shoreline and seashore protection, stabilisation of coastal and shoreline substrate) against natural disasters such as floods. Besides, they help in the protection of aquatic and marine biodiversity reservoirs, spawning grounds and helieutic reproduction areas, regulation of climate and other ecosystem related services to ensure food and ecological security for more than 30% of the population of countries along coasts;
- There is rapid mangrove deforestation and degradation at a rate of over 1.3% annually according to the UNEP 2007 due to urban expansion, over-exploitation of resources and pollution resulting from industrial, agro-industrial and oil exploration activities.

The following recommendations were made to enable the mangrove forest to fully play its role:

- Strengthening of existing networks and partnerships (African Mangrove Networks, UNEP REDD+ Central African Mangroves, etc.) in order to generate a large-scale impact of mangrove forest protection and restoration initiatives through reforestation and sustainable management techniques;
- Reinforcement of networks of marine, including extensions, and coastal protected areas;
- Better focus on the mangrove forest problems in the designing and implementation of development projects and programmes within the framework of integrated management of coastal areas.

### Visit to the Douala seaport

On March 2, 2012, between 2 and 6 p.m., **about 70** participants made a guided excursion to the Douala seaport (PAD) . They had discussions with stakeholders in the sector on export control procedures at the Douala port and they, notably, examined the timber handling procedure (route) in member countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) that transit through Cameroon.

- Forestry posts at the Douala Port (1 & 2)
- The custom-bonded part of the port is managed by *Société d'Exploitation des Parcs à Bois du Cameroun (SEPBC)*- and the Douala International Terminal –DIT- which carry out storage and loading activities of timber of export;
- Administrative and commercial section (Commercial park)
- One-stop-shop of the Douala Port – Customs declaration ;
- Apart from these administrative structures and companies involved in storage and handling, other sector partner companies also participated seriously in the visit. This included, among others, *Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS)* and other partners working directly or indirectly on traceability.

Some recommendations and concerns raised by participants after the visit to the Douala port include:

- Introduction of a FLEGT one-stop-shop in ports and the use of a common IT application in the issuance of FLEGT licences, especially for national timber on transit (CEMAC);
- COMIFAC countries should determine (by mutual agreement) the institutional formula for the operation of the FLEGT counter in Douala;
- Technical and material support should be provided to the Timber-Park Customs Brigade, the Douala International Terminal and the one-stop-shop to ensure better mastery and verification of customs procedures;
- Extend inspection to lumber, given that current inspection is done only on logs;

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- A better regulation of break-bulk yard which are far from the borders and therefore difficult to control.

## Conclusions

**Conclusions drawn at the end of discussions, exchanges and presentations during the 10<sup>th</sup> CBFP Meeting of Partners will come to boost the CBFP Facilitation in its role as pilot and coordinator of the activities of the partnership.** Overall, the Meeting of Partners facilitated the coordination and harmonisation of support from Congo Basin Forest Partnership members. Emphasis was placed on open dialogue that would further examine themes that can facilitate the harmonious implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence and major international agreements on forests and the environment.