

**9th Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)  
Regional Advisory Committee**

**Report: major conclusions  
Bujumbura, Burundi, 26-27 May 2011**

**Canada**

With the support of the Canadian Government

The 9<sup>th</sup> Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Regional Advisory Committee meeting took place on 26 and 27 May 2011 in Bujumbura, Burundi and witnessed the participation of about one hundred representatives of CBFP partners.

**The objectives of the meeting included:**

- Appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the 2010-2011 facilitation roadmap;
- Information to stakeholders on new contributions in the implementation of the Convergence Plan;
- Encouraging reflection on the COMIFAC institutional strategy in the face of new challenges and opportunities;
- Information and discussions on partnership actions in the wake of Cancun and Nagoya decisions.

**The main expected outcomes of the meeting included:**

- Stakeholders are informed on the implementation status of the roadmap and their opinion and orientations taken into account in the facilitation
- Identification of strategies for a stronger involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Convergence Plan;
- Nagoya and Cancun recommendations are shared and capitalized upon;
- An inventory of funds as well as current and potential instruments;
- Lessons learnt from the implementation of these funds and coordination of initiatives are shared and capitalized upon;
- A reflection on the reform of sub-regional support bodies to the Congo Basin forest ecosystem is launched.

**Conduct of meeting**

The meeting was chaired by the CBFP facilitator, Mr Gaston Grenier with the support of representatives of former Facilitators: (Cyril Loisel (France), Ellen Shaw (USA), Hans Schipulle (Germany), Madam Macumi Antoinette (Director General of Forest and Environment in Burundi) and Jean Marie Noiraud (consultant). The meeting was based on 6 points:

- Progress of CBFP Facilitation roadmap implementation from September 2010 to May 2011;
- Towards an active synergy within the COMIFAC Working Groups (WG) Conference on Central African Dense and Humid Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC) in the implementation of the Convergence Plan;
- Emerging and new results from partners in support of the implementation of the Convergence Plan orientations and the Facilitation Roadmap: From September 2010 to May 2011;
- Sustainability of Contributions and Institutional Reforms in Central Africa
- COMIFAC – Inter-State Partnership, Type I: Between Political Commitment and Effectiveness?
- Strategic Reflections and Prospects of COMIFAC, CBFP, CEFDHAC and COMIFAC Working Groups.

The first five points were examined in plenary while the 6th was examined in working groups under the following four themes:

- COMIFAC's strategic vision;
- Prospects of CBFP and its Functioning.
- Structuring and harmonisation of COMIFAC WG;
- Revitalisation of CEFDHAC.

## **Recommendations:**

### **I. Plenary Sessions**

**Recommendations of session 1:** Implementation status of the CBFP Facilitation roadmap from September 2010 to May 2011;

- Partners took cognizance of the multiple activities that are carried out within the framework of the implementation of the CBFP facilitation roadmap in the following areas (1) policies and their harmonisation, (2) support to COMIFAC and its local partners, 3) reinforcement of governance and consolidation of CBFP achievements. The acting team was encouraged to continue in its efforts on the implementation of the roadmap;
- Emphasis was made on the need to regularly encourage the provision of funds to COMIFAC by its members through the payment of outstanding dues and the promotion of Self-Financing Mechanisms;
- Boosting dialogue with China; a file which is handled by Germany within the framework of this facilitation in close collaboration with other partners and priority given to Facilitation;
- Partners acknowledged significant Facilitation efforts made in the area of communications and encouraged the Facilitation team to reinforce communication to rural communities and produce quarterly reports on development in the implementation of the roadmap;
- Participants encouraged collaboration between COMIFAC and CEEAC, and asked the Facilitation to promote a vision aimed at ensuring the independence of COMIFAC as a political organisation. Participants encouraged both institutions to work in synergy to ensure the promotion of Community Integration Contributions (CCI) and to define the roles and responsibilities of the two institutions;
- Participants recognized progress in Facilitation efforts in the promotion of COMIFAC self-financing mechanism encouraged the team to continue with its advocacy efforts among diplomatic missions, members of parliament and top decision-making bodies including ministries of finance.

**Recommendations of session 2:** Towards an active synergy among COMIFAC Working Groups and within CEFDHAC in the Implementation of the Convergence Plan:

- Participants appreciated the pertinence of the themes and the roadmap of the working groups;
- A good balance must be struck between the participation convention focal points in international forums (COP, conference...) considering the high cost « Business international», capacity building of focal points (for example through reinforcement of COMIFAC Working Group) at the sub-regional level, and ESPECIALLY, its implementation at the local and national levels;
- In spite of significant progress made in the recognition of the rights of indigenous communities in the sub-region, special attention must be given to the issue of their various forms of marginalisation and exclusion, given that this issue remains sensitive and deserves permanent attention;
- Need to clarify the role of the Network of Indigenous and Local Communities (REPALEAC) within the International Forum for Indigenous People in Central Africa (FIPAC) institutionalised by States (network synergy/forum) ;
- Partners are encouraged to give multiform support to COMIFAC Working Groups, partner institutions and the CEFDHAC Forum, especially the Kigali 7<sup>th</sup> Forum that is scheduled in November 2011, which are real tools for the implementation of the Convergence Plan.

**Recommendations of session 3:** Emerging and new results from partners in support of the implementation of the Convergence Plan orientations and the Facilitation Roadmap: From September 2010 to May 2011;

- Following the multiple presentations by partners, participants recognized diversity in actions and the complexity at the geographical and thematic levels of CBFP programmes;
- It is important to continue sharing information and aligning all these programmes in the interest of the communities in order to reinforce ownership among beneficiaries;
- All work by partners must be in line with the COMIFAC strategic vision to ensure coordination, harmonisation and consistency;

- Discussions highlighted the need to take advantage of CBFP meetings to promote some key themes like land tenure, familiarisation with the resources provided in the publication on “the State of Forests”, “Green Economy, certification, etc. ;
- It is necessary to always exercise patience and endurance in the implementation of projects and programmes.

**Recommendations of session 4: Sustainability of Contributions and Institutional Reforms in Central Africa:**

- Figures presented in the study on the financial contributions of partners<sup>1</sup> (Noiraud, 2011) may be very useful as decision-making tools, which should be extrapolated to other countries within the COMIFAC zone in order to have a synoptic vision of the contributions of partners and their impact in the sub-region.
- New financing mechanisms must be capitalized upon and extended to the main financial instruments of the stakeholders concerned. A balance must be maintained between stakeholders (States, communities and other stakeholders);
- Lesson learnt from the financing models of national programmes (Forest, Environment, Natural Resources), notably on the balance and efficiency between national contributions and external financial support must be capitalized upon.

**Recommendations of session 5: COMIFAC – Inter-State Partnership, Type I: Between Political Commitment and Effectiveness:**

- Partners reaffirmed the multiple advantages that COMIFAC has compared to other tropical forest basins, which explains the pertinence of its existence and need for its reinforcement. However, the CBFP Facilitation is urged to regularly inform partners, including countries, on the threats and risks they are exposed to.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ccr-rac.pfbc-cbfp.org/documentation-du-9eme-comite-consultatif-regional-ccr.html?file=docs/ccr/presentation\\_conclusions\\_ccr2011/ccr/session%204/CCR%20Session%204%2011%2005%2025%20prestant%20cam%20Bu%2025%20mai-1.pdf](http://ccr-rac.pfbc-cbfp.org/documentation-du-9eme-comite-consultatif-regional-ccr.html?file=docs/ccr/presentation_conclusions_ccr2011/ccr/session%204/CCR%20Session%204%2011%2005%2025%20prestant%20cam%20Bu%2025%20mai-1.pdf)

## II. Working Groups

### Recommendations of Group 1: Strategic Reflections on COMIFAC

During this session, a reminder was made of the following main responsibilities of COMIFAC: representation of the Congo Basin outside the sub-region, harmonisation of regional framework instruments (directives, agreements, resolutions, etc.), monitoring of the convergence plan orientations and support activities by sub-regional organisations of COMIFAC ....

It is necessary to:

- Clarify and even rule on the issue of the dichotomy between forest and environment on the one hand, and also the relationship between COMIFAC and other sectors of activities on the other hand. This may also mean the appellation COMIFAC would have to be modified in order to envisage a wider vision of the sector: This also means establishing ties with other development sectors and similar organisations to COMIFAC, where they exist.
- Renewed and detailed identification of the role of COMIFAC within a context that has changed since its creation ; verify the themes and the organisations that were in charge of them ; decide, if necessary, on the closing of some organisations that have out grown their usefulness ; study their attachment of their role to COMIFAC and the form it has to take. This means remaining flexible while acting in such a way that the roles will be covered. The COMIFAC Executive Secretariat (ES) mandate is not unlimited. However, it has to make sure that all functions under the convergence plan are well covered and the persons in charge clearly designated to ensure the expected results; responsible organisations ought to be bound to by a performance bond;
- Provide for an update of the awareness of countries on instruments, management and support tools and mechanisms related to COMIFAC, notably among the authorities in charge of the forest;
- Institute a periodic reporting obligation on the level of implementation of the convergence plan within Member States through national services, especially through national coordination efforts and groups under the Central African Forest Observatory (OFAC).

### Concerning updating of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan:

- The Convergence Plan must focus on the policy and strategic orientations, without getting into the details;
- The Convergence Plan must be reviewed within a joint and comprehensive reflection framework with CEEAC, including all economic development and social sectors;
- Focus mainly on issues of forest legislations and on sustainable financing strategies and tools of the strategies developed (protected areas, forests, etc.);
- Introduce Climate themes and related tools and mechanisms: REDD, MRV, Mitigation, Adaptation, etc.;
- Better address the priorities of Member States and their specificities depending on whether they have light or dense forest coverage, etc.;
- Make provision for the harmonisation carbon measuring policies and tools, environmental standards, issues on zoning, land tenure, etc.;
- Take into account the need for institutional, administrative and financial reforms of ministries in charge of the forest, where it has not yet been done.

### Concerning the organisation of COMIFAC itself:

- First of all clarify the operating method between CEEAC and COMIFAC, and more specifically between the CEEAC SG and the COMIFAC ES;
- Clarify the coordination role which the COMIFAC ES and COMIFAC in general should assume with regard to member countries; reinforce the ties between regional and national COMIFAC bodies;
- Create awareness on the provisions of the COMIFAC decision concerning the form, institutional framework, content and functioning of COMIFAC national coordination bodies, and implement these provisions;
- Avoid the formalisation of working groups, preserve their flexibility without adopting any rigid approach as reflections on these themes must remain flexible; Working groups are not formal structures in themselves, they are reflection tools with the capacity to manage or spearhead reflection.



## **Recommendations of Group 2: Reflection of the functioning of CBFP**

- Main discussions on the functioning of CBFP organs:
  - ✓ CBFP meetings:
    - Every 2 years: Link the CBFP meeting with the COMIFAC Ministerial Meeting, with more emphasis at the level of the media and policy, before, during and after the meeting,
    - +/- every six/eight months: Organise meetings opened to all members and at all levels, with special emphasis on technical discussions on thematic issues.
  - ✓ Organisation of meetings in close collaboration with the COMIFAC ES and Presidency, and ensure that a support group of partners facilitates preparation through national COMIFAC coordination bodies and the participation of national representatives;
  - ✓ Facilitation of some thematic discussions on the sidelines of these meetings, notably in relation with other events (for example: Racewood)
- Ensure a simple annual monitoring through Facilitation by members;
- Make efforts to increase private sector contribution;
- Make a proposal through the Facilitation for a reviewed cooperation framework including a calendar for the next year;
- Reflection at the level of identifying a Facilitator in future.

## **Recommendations of Group 3: Organisation of working groups**

- The COMIFAC ES has been requested to help in the structuring of groups in line with the GTBAC model;
- Need to find sponsors for each of the groups such as GTBAC;
- Need for national focal points to be supported by interdisciplinary experts concerned with the theme and formalisation of this team at the national level;

- Need for the COMIFAC ES to examine a strategy to ensure the sustainable financing for running the groups.

#### **Recommendations of Group 4: Strategic reflection on CEFDHAC**

- Develop a communication and visibility strategy for sub-regional and regional platforms;
- Analyze the capacity building needs of the networks;
- Assist Regional Steering Committee with a technical secretariat;
- Establish a memorandum of understanding between the facilitation agency and the CEFDHAC RSC;
- Improve national representativeness within the networks and especially at the level of critical sites;
- Monitor the provisions of the convention between CEFDHAC and COMIFAC;
- Advocate for the sponsoring of national CEFDHAC forums through Partnership;
- Present an operating plan to financing partners;
- Draw up a marketing strategy.

Participants to the CBFP Regional Advisory Committee expressed their cordial gratitude to the Burundi Government for the multiform support in the organisation of these meetings.

**Done in Bujumbura on 27 May 2011**

**Participants**