

REPORT – STREAM 3 Climate Change

Sub-regional preparatory workshop for future UNFCCC meetings, 16-18 October 2018, Douala, Cameroon (Kribi, Republic of Cameroon: 16-18 October 2018)

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The sub-regional preparatory workshop for future meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held from 16 to 18 October 2018 at the FRAMOTEL Hotel in Kribi, Cameroon. The workshop was organized by the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) with the financial and technical support of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ).

The workshop was attended by delegates from Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Sao-Tome and Principe and the Republic of Chad.

Other delegates included representatives of CIFOR, USFS and the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC.

There were three (03) high points to the workshop: (i) the opening statement, (ii) the conduct of the proceedings in plenary session (iii) the closing statement.

1°- Opening statement

The opening statement was delivered by Mr. Gervais ITSOUA MADZOUS, Deputy Executive Secretary of COMIFAC, Technical Coordinator.

2°- Conduct of proceedings in plenary session:

Before the start of the proceedings, owing to the absence of Rwanda which currently serves as the Acting President of COMIFAC, Sao Tome and Principe was appointed to serve as the rapporteur of the meeting, with the support of the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC.

It then proceeded to amend and adopt the workshop agenda. The adopted agenda items are outlined below.

Day 1: 16 October 2018

Session 1: Decoding the findings of the Bangkok special session;

The first session of the day was devoted to clarifying the findings of the special session on the climate which took place from 4 to 9 September 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Following an overview of the objectives of the Bangkok meeting, a presentation was delivered by Mr. NDJATSANA Michel, Environment Expert at the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC. The presentation was articulated around three components to present the conclusions of the proceedings of the three corresponding bodies that were gathered for the meeting. The following points were discussed by the different bodies:

Component 1 Conclusions from the proceedings of the special working group on the Paris Agreement (APA 1-6)

- Additional guidelines on the section related to mitigation measures in decision 1/CP.21
- Communication on adaptation measures
- Modalities, procedures and guidelines governing transparency of actions and support framework
- Issues related to the worldwide/global review
- Modalities and procedures for the effective functioning of the Committee to ease implementation and foster compliance with provisions
- Other issues related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement: The Adaptation Fund
- Other business, excluding the Adaptation Fund

Component 2 Conclusions from the proceedings of the UNFCCC implementing body (SBI 48-2)

- Common timeframes for NDCs
- Defining modalities and procedures for exploiting and using public registers referred to in article 4.12 of the Paris Agreement (NDC registers)
- NDC registries and communication of adaptation measures
- The Report of the Adaptation Committee and issues related to LDCs
- Development and transfer of technology. Scope and modalities for periodic assessment of technological mechanism established to support the Paris Agreement
- Issues related to climate finance: defining data to be submitted by the Parties in line with the Agreement, article 9.5
- Impact of implementation of response measures: modalities, work program and functions within the framework of the Agreement of the Forum on the impact of implementation of response measures

Component 3 Conclusions from the proceedings of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)

- Development and transfer of technology. The technological framework under article 10.4 of the Paris Agreement
- Issues related to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement
- Rules on accounting for financial resources provided and raised as part of public interventions in accordance with article 9.7 of the Paris Agreement

The overview of conclusions and prospects of COMIFAC countries came to close this presentation from which it was apparent in Bangkok that there was more substantial progress in certain areas than others and that in the absence of consensus, negotiations would continue on all issues being discussed by various bodies at COP 24 in Katowice.

The discussions that followed each of the presentations allowed the participants to get a better grasp of the different issues that had been brought to their attention. Furthermore, the meeting discussed the implementing guidelines for the Paris Agreement as well as some of the stakes of COP 24 which helped to set priorities for the sub-region.

Sessions 2 and 3: Reviewing implementing guidelines for the Paris Agreement and setting priorities for the sub-region

The two sessions allowed delegates to identify the most relevant guidelines for the COMIFAC region, actions to be undertaken and the sub-region's positions as illustrated in the table below:

Guidelines	Actions to be undertaken	Sub-region's position
Additional guidelines on the section related to mitigation measures under decision 1/CP.21 Modalities, procedures and guidelines governing transparency of actions and support framework	Need to strengthen the capacities of countries in the sub-region for MRVs	Commitment of countries in the sub-region to take action must be matched by the developed countries' commitment to provide support
Development and transfer of technology, Scope and modalities for periodic assessment of technological mechanism	Need for technological needs assessment	

Support for the Paris Agreement		
Common timeframes for NDCs	Need to strengthen the capacities of countries in the sub-region for MRVs	Countries in the sub-region have agreed to harmonize the timeframes for submitting the NDCs but are making a prior request for an adjustment period to allow all countries to get on the same level before aligning with the harmonized cycle for submitting NDCs once in 5 years.

Following the sessions, Mr. Itsoua Madzous Gervais Ludovic, Deputy Executive Secretary of COMIFAC presented a summary of the GIEC report on the impacts of temperature increases of more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as requested by the Conference of Parties at the end of COP 21 in Paris. The report is structured as follows:

- Part one: Understanding global warming of 1.5°C.
- Part two: Climate change forecasts, potential impacts and related risks.
- Part three: Emissions and transitions of systems compatible with limiting global warming to 1,5°C.
- Part four: Strengthening the global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts.

The report notes that climate change is already affecting some development activities in the sub-region. It further underscores the importance of Central African forests as carbon sinks as well as their role in capturing and storing carbon.

The participants however pointed out that the report failed to take adequate account of Central Africa’s scientific publications.

Day 2: 17 October 2018:

The day featured not only a variety of presentations but also discussion topics which did not require presentations as well as round table discussions during which participants were able to provide brief reports on the current state of affairs of the topic under discussion in their country.

Ahead of today's deliberations, the consulting firm Ernst and Young, which attended the meeting, took the opportunity to inform participants of the development of the fund-raising mechanism in the private sector to support climate actions (REDD+ Catalytic Fund). One-on-one discussions were held with country representatives on the sidelines to identify project ideas to be included in the project portfolio.

Session 4: Stakes of CoP 24

Mr. Ndjatsana Michel's presentation identified several issues for the CoP 24. However, the discussions placed greater emphasis on the obligation of the Parties to develop and submit long term low-emissions development strategies in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement.

Next, Gabon made a brief presentation of the study conducted to define the concept of forests in the country's context. During the ensuing discussions, the participants pointed out that it would be advisable for each country in the sub-region to provide a definition of the concept of forests before developing its strategy.

They also pointed out the need to refer to the definitions already provided by the FAO, UNFF and OFAC in developing these definitions, and also to refrain from establishing a uniform definition of forests for the entire sub-region given that each country has its own specificities.

Finally, the **COMIFAC Working Group on Climate Change (CWGCC)** urged the COMIFAC member countries to integrate the carbon dimension to the extent possible in their definition of forests.

Status of implementation of nationally determined contributions in COMIFAC member countries

A round table discussion was organized to allow each country to review the status of implementation of its NDC. The initiative was also expected to generate some ideas to contribute to the regional project on NDCs currently under development. During the discussions, one of the participants' raised a question as to the exact timetable for the launch of the implementation of NDCs, as well as for their review, given that the Paris Agreement had come into force earlier than expected.

The discussions that followed the countries' interventions revealed that the countries are at various stages in the implementation of their NDCs and that there is a need to review most of the NDCs.

Sub-regional Project on NDCs

A few points were selected to be included in the concept paper of the project:

- building the capacities of countries to prepare and review NDCs;
- identifying funding sources;
- intersectoral coordination to involve all relevant sectors in the project;
- Expanding the project to the national and sub-national levels in order to obtain reliable and realistic information;

Presentation on COMIFAC's strategies for participating in the CoP 24

This presentation was delivered by Mr. Ndjatsana Michel.

The strategies presented mainly entailed actions to be carried out both by countries at the national level, especially coordination of country participation (stands, side events, ...) and sharing of relevant information, and by COMIFAC at the sub-regional level, particularly by bringing in the relevant expertise to support the sub-region's delegates and coordinating country participation at the conference venue.

Session 5: Reporting under the UNFCCC

A round table discussion provided an opportunity for participants to report on the development of biennial reports and national communication in their countries.

During the discussions, Sao Tome and Principe reported challenges in preparing the documents due to language difficulties.

The participants recognized the need to share expertise among the countries of the sub-region in order to help those still struggling to meet this obligation.

Presentations of the Project Team – JICA

Under the JICA project, it is expected that the capacities of COMIFAC member countries to conduct negotiations at UNFCCC meetings be strengthened. In order to improve these negotiating capacities, each country should be able to evaluate the volume of GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation on its own territory, hence the need for training in "forest monitoring" and the development of the Sub-regional Forest Monitoring Manual including a section on forest inventory.

In the absence of Mr. Hiroshi Sasakawa, JICA's representative, these points were presented by Mr. Ndjatsana Michel, who advised the participants to send their questions directly to the former by mail.

Before closing the meeting for the day, the facilitator drew the attention of the participants to two documents that had been made available to them: the Decision on Climate Change pronounced at the African Ministerial Conference on Environment on 19 September 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Ministerial Katowice Declaration on Forests for Climate proposed by the incoming CoP Chair.

As he invited comments from the participants on this second document, he also requested their comments on the draft Brussels Declaration that is due for adoption at the 18th Meeting of the CBFP Parties to be held from 27 to 28 November 2018 in Brussels, Belgium. The draft version of the declaration was also made available to them.

Day 3: 18 October 2018:

As regards the draft documents for which participants' inputs were requested (Katowice Ministerial Declaration on Forests for Climate and Brussels Declaration), it was agreed that these inputs should be sent to the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat latest by Wednesday 24 October 2018.

A roadmap was adopted by the participants and is attached to this report.

The following recommendations were formulated at the end of the workshop:

To the Ministers during the CBFP Meeting

Recognizing that the Congo Basin countries have so far made substantial investments, drawing on their domestic resources, and acknowledging that these investments will still not suffice to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals) and Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

The WGCC recommends:

- That the COMIFAC States be assisted in integrating climate change concerns in public policies and developing and/or implementing significant climate investment plans in line with their development priorities;
- That the resources for implementing these investment plans be secured;

- That particular attention be devoted to the equitable distribution of financial flows and strengthening of institutional and individual capacities for sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin, given their key role in regulating the global climate.

3°- Closing statement

Closing remarks were made by the Deputy Executive Secretary of COMIFAC who thanked the delegates for their active participation and urged them to remain vigilant during the deliberations in Katowice to ensure that COMIFAC's submissions on issues still under negotiation within the different bodies are taken into account.

He ended his statement by wishing participants a safe return to their respective places of residence.

Done in Kribi, 18 October 2018.

The participants