

FOCUS ON REDD

Newsletter on the REDD process in Cameroon



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Features

UN-REDD PROGRAMME

Cameroon has been admitted to the UN- REDD program

The country will no longer benefit only from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank in preparation for REDD+. Indeed the admission of Cameroon to the UN- REDD Program henceforth entitles the country to receive the technical support from this institution and gives it the opportunity to apply for financial assistance to support REDD readiness.

Central African Countries unite for REDD+

They adopted and released a joint statement during the 17th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, in order to promote REDD+ in the Congo Basin. This statement specifically involves 7 countries from COMIFAC (Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo and Rwanda), 8 partner countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, United States, United Kingdom) and the European Union.

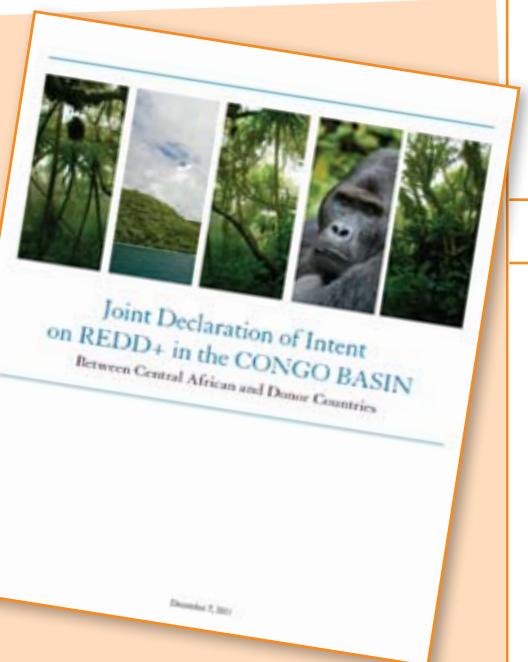
In this statement, COMIFAC countries pledged to strengthen forest governance in the Congo Basin and partner countries will align with this commitment to increase gradually the overall level of the financial and technical assistance available to develop and implement REDD+ strategies in Central African countries.

Equatorial Guinea and Gabon though members of COMIFAC did not sign this statement.

REDD+: The caravan for the awareness of local stakeholders continues

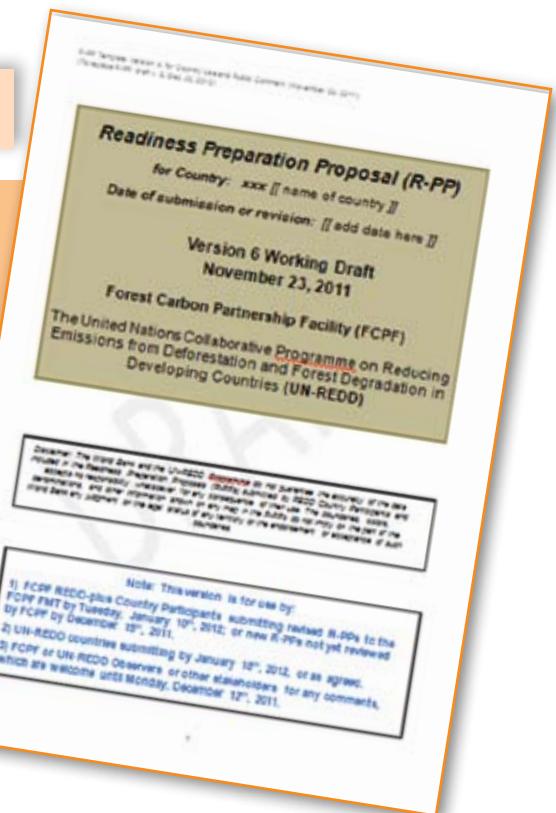
As part of the formulation of R-PP, workshops to raise awareness and provide information on the REDD+ mecha-

nism took place in November and December in the South West (Buea, Limbe), South (Kribi), Adamaoua (Ngaoundere and Ngaoundal), North (Lagdo and Garoua) and Far North (Maroua, Kousseri and Kaele) regions. During the workshop in Buea, it was noticed that a REDD+ project could be implemented in the Takamanda-Mone area (South West). The feasibility study of the said project was presented by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)



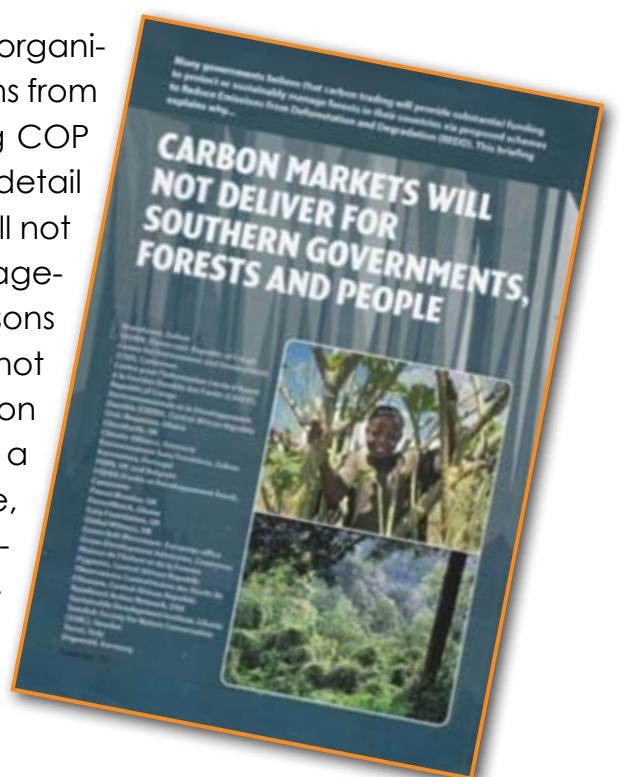
Will Cameroon submit its R-PP in June 2012?

In any case a staff of the MINEPDED REDD coordination unit made this statement during a civil society meeting in November 2011. However, up to now, the experts hired for the drafting of this document has not signed his contract and an official submission in June implies an informal presentation during the meeting of the Forest Carbon Partnership (FCPF) Committee Participants of March 2012 in Asunción, Paraguay.



Carbon markets will not deliver for southern governments, forests and people

This is the title of a report published by the FERN organization and signed by 28 civil society organizations from the North and the South, including CED, during COP 17. This four (4) page report clearly explains in detail why the carbon market in the REDD+ context will not provide substantial funding for sustainable management of forest ecosystems. Among other reasons given, the most expanded carbon market will not take into account the purchase of forest carbon credits until at least 2020 and the likelihood of a world carbon market is diminishing. Furthermore, the report suggests sustainable ways of financing the REDD+ mechanism, for instance the financial transactions tax (FTT) of which research carried out by economic institutions like the IMF have shown its technical feasibility.



It can be downloaded at
http://www.fern.org/node/carbonmarketswillnotdeliver_eng

The REDD potential of Cameroon to be known soon?

An exploratory analysis of the REDD potential of Cameroon is being carried out in the ministries in charge of environment and forests. According to our information sources, this study will serve as a baseline for the choice of the best strategic options for land allocation in Cameroon. It will also facilitate the dialogue with the officials of the different ministerial departments and other actors engaged in the process.

According to our informants, this study will be done in synergy with the R-PP development process, as well as «the study on the economic and social importance of the forestry and wildlife sector in Central African States: the case of Cameroon», commissioned by the Congo Basin Forests Partnership (PFBC/CBFP).

The study will include a current economic appraisal of Congo Basin forest areas; an assessment of the current level and likely future trends of deforestation and degradation of Congolese forest; an identification of levers and options to reduce deforestation and degradation, and increase carbon stocks or reduce their waste in forests. Finally, there will be a preliminary evaluation of potential emissions reduction and costs opportunities associated with the different REDD+ components as well as land use in Cameroon.

This study which is based on an analysis carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo should be presented during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio (Brazil) in June 2012.

7 consultants including 6 Cameroonian already on the field for the R-PP

A team made up of Professors Roger Ngoufo, Louis Zapfack, Isaac Bindzi, Doctors Thérèse Fouda, Timothée Fomethe, Mino Randrianarison and Mr. Motto has been commissioned by the MINEPDED REDD+ National Coordination to collect data for the elaboration of R-PP. According to the national coordinator, these data will serve as a baseline for the work of the international consultant.

AGENDA

27th-28th February 2012

Sub-Regional Workshop: « Research on Forest ecosystems in COMIFAC Countries”

Venue : Douala

Organizers : COMIFAC, CIFOR, CIRAD, IRD

29th February 2012

Congo Basin Governance and Land use Day

Venue : Douala

Organizers : Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)

1st -3rd March 2012

Tenth CBFP Partners' Meeting (RDP)

Venue : Douala

Organizers : Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)

5th -9th March 2012

Congo Basin Civil Society Sub-regional Workshop on REDD

Venue : Douala

Organizers : Rainforest Foundation Norway, Centre for Environment and Development (CED)

The World Bank assesses progress towards the elaboration of R-PP

A World Bank team visited Cameroon from 24th October to 4th November 2011, in order to assess the progress and support the process of elaboration of the R-PP.

For two weeks, the World Bank officials met with the main R-PP stakeholders in Cameroon, notably, the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT) and civil society organizations. Discussions focused on issues related to the elaboration of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) for REDD+ and the role of the different stakeholders engaged in the process.

According to the findings of the mission, the implementation of REDD+ in Cameroon will happen within a context where the deforestation rate of 1% will increase in the forthcoming years. This is due to agro industrial, mining and infrastructure envisaged for in the Growth and Employment Strategic Paper (GESP). About 2 millions forests hectares have thus been earmarked for agro industrial projects (creation of rubber, palm oil, banana plantations, etc.) mostly financed by investors from South-East Asia. Unfortunately, as it has been observed by the World Bank, the ministries in charge of environment and forests are not often involved in the allocation of these lands.

As concerns the elaboration of REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), the mission observed serious delay. Even the contract of the expert who will assist the government in drafting the R-PP has not yet been signed. Moreover, the draft ministerial order to set up the management structures of REDD+, that is

to say REDD+ national coordination committee and REDD+ technical unit is not yet released.

Thus, the mission recommended inter alia, the signing of the contract between the government and the consultant before mid-november. It also advised the Ministry of Environment,



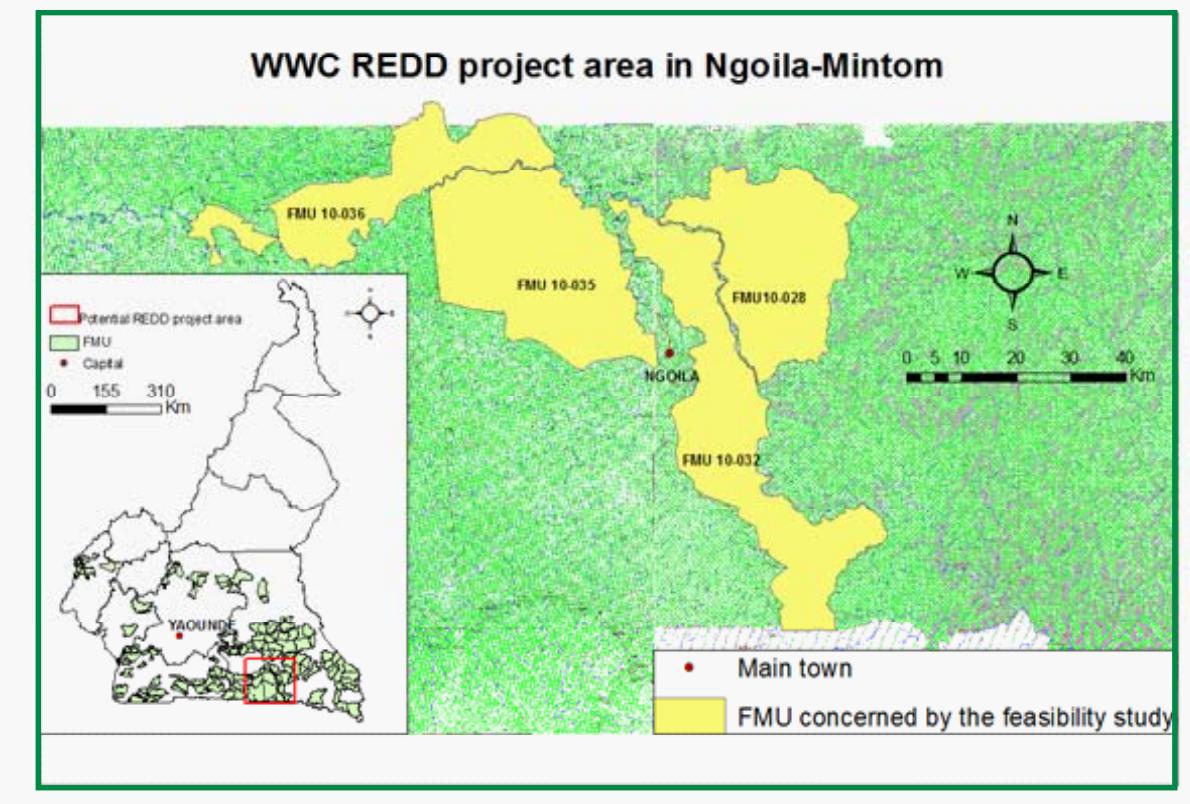
Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development to give greater priority to the project of the draft order setting up national structures in charge of managing REDD+ before it is submitted to the prime minister for signature. The aim is to foster a greater consideration of the opinions of the main stakeholders, notably those from the civil society. Finally, the World Bank expressed the wish that Cameroon puts in place a national communication plan aimed at sharing information on the REDD readiness preparation process among the different stakeholders, and ensures a better awareness of key stakeholders.

Wildlife Works Carbon implements REDD+ in Ngoyla-Mintom

The WWC organization presented the terms of reference of the feasibility study of the REDD+ project in the Ngoyla-Mintom forest block to the different stakeholders of the area, on 24th November 2011 in Bertoua.

Four pilot sites are covered by the study. These are Forest Management Units (FMU) 10-028, 10-032, 10-035 and 10-036. The study which will be conducted within three months has several components which are risk analysis, additionalities and performance;

analysis of the causes of deforestation; analysis of land tenure, right holders of carbon credits and benefit sharing, stratification, sampling and inventory of forest species; development of a reference level with allometric equations ; collaboration between MINEP, MINFOF and



WWC in the development and implementation of future REDD projects.

However, the components of this study according to our informants do not include a section relating to alternative sources of income and opportunity costs of REDD which would enable to a rational analysis of the economic opportunities between REDD and other economic activities such as intensive and extensive agriculture, agro-industry, commercial breeding and intensive rearing, forest logging and mining exploitation.

Ideas debated during this workshop enabled

the different stakeholders to make recommendations. Representatives of local communities expressed the wish that the methodology used in the field study will be participatory and culturally adapted. They further expressed the wish that in the conduct of the studies, Wildlife Works Carbon (WWC) will associate persons with experience working with indigenous communities. In the course of these studies, the organization shall take into account the specificities of indigenous people.

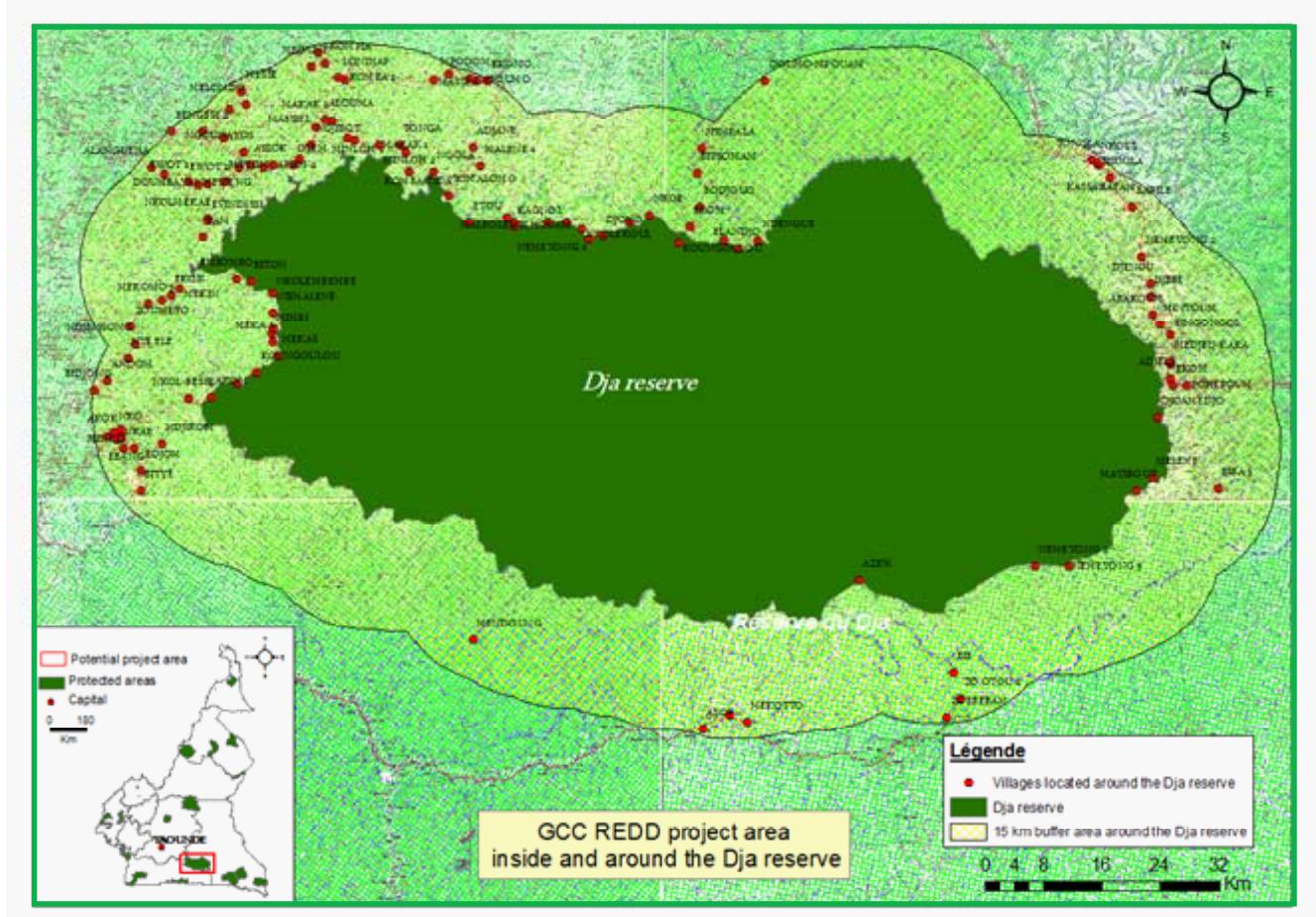
Cameroon authorizes the implementation of REDD in the Dja Reserve

The project will be conducted by Global Green Carbon and the tropical research centre of the Los Angeles University known as GGC-CTR Consortium.

The information was released in a statement from the Consortium. The official document authorizing the GGC-CTR group to conduct a feasibility study of REDD+ project in the Dja Reserve was signed by the minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) and the minister of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF).

"I have the honor to inform you of the approval of my ministerial department for the realization of feasibility studies by your consortium for the development of a REDD+ project in the

Dja Biosphere Reserve and buffer zone. With positive results from these studies a definitive agreement could be signed for the development and implementation of the project", Elvis Ngolle Ngolle the then MINFOF declared. The Dja reserve is known for its ecological value and its important biodiversity. According to the Consortium, the project is aimed at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, and improving carbon stocks on a land surface of 624, 000 hectares of the reserve. It is also aimed at rehabilitating a land surface of 15 km representing the buffer zone around the park which covers 604, 500 hectares.



On the whole, the REDD+ project of the Dja biosphere will contribute in the conservation /rehabilitation of 1, 228, 500 forest hectares in the Congo basin. Moreover, the project include a component relating to the strategic integrated land management which will benefit the Baka (indigenous peoples) and the Bantu communities in the region, in addition to facilities made available for research and sensitization on ecotourism.

The project which is implemented in Southern Cameroon may « generate carbon credits on the voluntary market in order to better protect and preserve the Dja Reserve and its rich biodiversity while generating profits for local communities» said Kirsten Mc Gregor, co-sponsor and president of GGC. Obviously, GGC would like to provide a model of sustainable management which may be duplicated in other REDD+ projects in Cameroon.

Civil society improves its understanding of the R-PP elaboration process

About forty representatives of civil society organizations and members of the REDD national coordination unit of the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), met to discuss the different steps in the elaboration of R-PP and the stakes of REDD+ process in Cameroon. The meeting which held from 22nd to 23rd November 2011 in Yaounde enabled the participants to examine the different phases in the implementation of REDD+ and the priorities which should be given to



civil society in the components of R-PP. Building on the experience of the Central African civil society in the development of R-PP, Bienvenu Kemandja from MEFP(Central Africa Republic), urged the Cameroonian civil society to take ownership of all components of the R-PP document in such a manner that the said document effectively takes into account the rights of indigenous and local communities.

According to Moïse Kono from the Association Baka in the Eastern part of the country,

this other training « is timely given the challenges that lie ahead for us as civil societies organizations in the next months ».

The meeting was organized by the Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and benefited from the financial and technical support of the Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) and a Central African organization called Maison de L'Enfant et de la Femme Pygmée (MEFP).

The impact of REDD on land

This topic was the focus of a workshop organized in Yaoundé by the International Centre for Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD) and the Paul Ango Ela Foundation (FPAE).

Nearly sixty experts in land tenure, forests and climate change attended the meeting. On the 25th and 26th November 2011, they discussed the reality, the scope and nature of commercial pressure on land in Cameroon and Central Africa.

They also examined the different impacts the REDD+ process may have on large scale land acquisition. The objective was to create an enabling research framework between research organizations and civil society organizations.

During the two days of work, participants deplored the increasing allocation of large forest areas to agro-industrial enterprises at the disadvantage of communities which have been occupying these lands for generations.

According to Alain Karsenty, a Researcher in CIRAD, « these commercial pressures on land are partly due to the high increase of the price of cereal grains in 2008. Faced with this situation, agricultural products' importing countries (Gulf and Asian countries, in particular) expressed their worries. They thought for their food security, it was now necessary to buy or rent land and cultivate it, without having to de-



pend on the international markets where prices fluctuate widely. On the other hand, investors are now turning away from the financial markets in crisis to invest in real estate, since land has become a scarce commodity. »

Cameroon, according to experts should emulate the example of Indonesia who signed a moratorium on its lands under the REDD+ agreed upon with Norway, in order to reduce land allocations for industrial cultivation of palm oil.

REDD showcased at the Promote Trade Fair

Alongside this business meeting, IUCN organized a series of meetings with experts working on REDD related issues.

The REDD process was discussed in almost all its aspects on 6th December 2011 in the Yaoundé Conference Centre. Participants were enlightened through various presentations ranging from the definition of the process to the presentation of its potentialities in Cameroon, up to the current stakes and challenges, as well as investment opportunities in Cameroon and the presentation of REDD pilot projects. These papers were presented by representatives from the ministry of forestry and wildlife (MINFOF), civil society (CED), university scholars and IUCN.

First, Haman Unusa, MINEPDED REDD coordination team made a presentation on the difference between the concepts of REDD and REDD+. REDD he said, « means the process of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from deforestation and degradation » whereas REDD+ « is a mechanism by which a country is paid either to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from Deforestation and Degradation, or to maintain or increase (+) its carbon stocks. Each of the presenters therefore addressed in his paper a specific aspect of the REDD process.

The REDD potential in Cameroon is huge ac-

cording to Marie-José Atangana from MINFOF. This potential she said is found in « activities aimed at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, conserving carbon stocks and sustainably managing forests (FMU) ». Owing to this reality, in 2009 CED started implementing a project on the Payment of Ecosystems Services (PES) in two community forests (Nomedjoh and Nkolenyeng) in Cameroon. The objective was to « establish a PES on carbon and biodiversity and to protect and sustainably manage forests taking into account the livelihood of communities » Fredy Mbianda said. In this regard, the challenge of REDD according to Haman Unusa, will be to « include all the concerns relating to agricultural development, livestock, urbanization, mining in REDD since forests represent a low cost opportunity in the search for climate change solutions ».

It now remains to address challenges that arise. That is, among other things, ensure the greater involvement of local /indigenous people in REDD strategies; identify services provided by forests, the sellers and buyers of these services, evaluate forest carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

FLEGT and REDD at the core of forest governance in Central Africa

The link between the two processes was presented to participants at the Central Africa forest Governance Forum held on the 21st and 22nd November 2011 in Yaounde.

The REDD+ and VPA /FLEGT processes are established to address deforestation and forest degradation. This synergy was revealed by Joachim Kondi, the representative of the ministry of environment of the Republic of Congo in his presentation. This link stems from the fact that the REDD+ process is highlighted in order to change the behavior of stakeholders in the areas of logging, farming, mining and petroleum, land-use planning, etc. Whereas VPA/FLEGT is highlighted in order to change the behavior of stakeholders in the area of logging (sawn timber, energy wood) Joachim Kondi explained.

In the presentation on « Forest Governance and REDD+ in Cameroon » made by Georges Akwah Neba from IUCN, it is clear that the vision and adaptation of the two processes is effective in Cameroon. Dialogue between the different sectors, regions and major cities as well as the involvement of civil society organizations with all local, national and international partners is encouraged.

The theme of the third of the six sessions on the agenda of this forum organized by the « IDL Group » with the financial assistance of the European Union was the « link between FLEGT and REDD ».

Outcomes of the Durban climate talks, dubbed the African COP

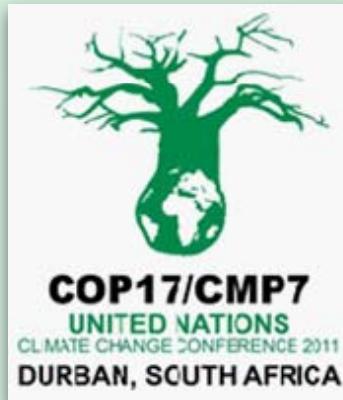
The South African resort town of Durban was host to the 17th conference of parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 28th November to 11th December 2011, taking two extra days to the official end of the conference. Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and has been at the centre of discussions since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Expectations for a global deal to address climate change were frustrated in Copenhagen in 2009, leaving many keen observers cynical over the whole UNFCCC negotiation process. The Cancun agreement, concluded at the COP16 in Mexico, brought some hopes with major advancements in the decision on REDD, the creation of the Green Climate Fund as well as prescribing specifications for action by the different UNFCCC organs for the COP17 in South Africa. With the progress in Cancun, some optimists thought the deal would be sealed on the African soil, in Durban, South Africa.

Preparations for Durban heightened with the African countries, through the African Group block of negotiators meeting and coming out with one of the strongest stance since they staged a five hour walkout during the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations. The Africa Group's position was clear on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol and other binding outcomes from the COP. Social and environmental civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, farmers' movements, women and international organizations mobilized through various manifestations from streets demonstrations, occupying entrances to negotiation halls to formal and informal meetings with party delegates. Several high level events were organized in Durban, bringing very important dignitaries including several presidents, amongst them the South African president Jacob Zuma, Barack Obama, speaking in events through teleconference, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Mon, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan among others.

In response, Durban delivered a "package" that includes, a new commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, without which hopefully Africa and other developing countries would have walked out a road map towards a truly global deal to be effective by 2020 at the latest, without which the European Union wouldn't sign on to a new Kyoto and the operationalization of the Green Climate Fund, without which developing countries wouldn't sign on to such a global road map.

Thus, in a nutshell, delegates left Durban having

agreed on: a new commitment period under Kyoto for the EU and 11 other countries beginning January 1, 2013; an agreement to negotiate a global deal by 2015, the Durban platform, which would be effective from 2020 and legally binding to all countries; a Green Fund launched, with regional groupings to nominate board members in the coming three months. In addition, it was decided that: a technology mechanism will be launched in 2012 – to assist developing countries build capacity and gain access to climate friendly technologies; the Adaptation Framework will become operational in 2012, providing guidance and advice on national adaptation plans etc. Agriculture will be addressed under the Convention through work under the Scientific Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA); a Registry of developing country mitigation plans (NAMAs) will be set up in the coming year; amongst others.



Most importantly, the final agreements in Durban include decisions on three fundamental issues for REDD+: the social, environmental and governance safeguards agreed in Cancun, how to measure if deforestation is reduced or reference levels, and on financing for REDD+.

Reactions to the outcomes of Durban were very divergent, some felt the REDD decision was a complete failure and a step backwards from what was agreed in Cancun, as the safeguards information system negotiated did not provide clear guidance on robust reporting of the safeguards, the reference levels have to be decided by each country and will be based on historical basis but adjusted according to national circumstances and financing for REDD includes amongst other options the market based option seen as a false solution to climate change, whereas others find the decisions as a good compromise and basis to learn from how they will be implemented on the grounds and improved within the Convention.

In a like manner many welcomed the adoption decisions including on the Green Climate Fund, and the Durban Platform, as well as the process to launch an agreement with legal force, while others continued to insist on the urgent need to significantly scale up the level of ambition to address the gap between existing mitigation pledges and the needed emission reductions recommended by science. Every COP sees an innovative terminology arising, while Cancun brought forth the "Blue Carbon", Durban came up with "Climate Smart Agriculture". But the immediate and most outstanding reaction to the Durban outcomes was Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol.

What safeguards for REDD+?

REDD+ means Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, including keeping forests standing through conservation and sustainable management of forests. The coming of REDD, creates a strong link between forests and climate change, hence putting forests at the centre of international discourse. Forests are also the abode and source of livelihoods and spirituality for indigenous and local communities. Current forest policies and practices have most often disregarded the rights of communities. Since the inception of the concept of REDD, several social and environmental civil society organisations have been advocating for stringent social and environmental safeguards on REDD both at national and international levels where, respectively, pilot REDD schemes are being implemented and negotiations for a global legal instrument within the UN framework convention on climate change are ongoing.

Just like fire that provides light and heats up the house, but could burn the house if not well guided, REDD could provide multiple benefits for the climate and humanity, but could create great harm as well.

Safeguards literally means to protect something from loss, threat or damage; to guard that something or someone remains safe; better still, something that is designed to protect people from threats, risks or danger. The results of years of advocacy led to a series of safeguards identified in the Cancun Agreement and include the "full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders...including indigenous peoples and local communities;" respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples, "taking into account relevant international obligation,...noting the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, and ecosystem services to enhance other social and environmental benefits

Safeguards for REDD, just like the chimney or guidance to avoid fire burning the house, include respecting the rights (to land, territories, culture, etc..) of the indigenous and local communities living in and around the forest, taking into account the biological diversity of the forest and other issues related to governance (peoples' participation and free prior informed consent, equitable benefit sharing mechanisms, just to name a few). What does this mean

in real terms? If communities are banished from the forest or their activities within the forest prohibited in the course of implementing REDD, this will create social harm. What happens if a natural forest like that around the Dja, containing or frequented by a diversity of wildlife, including, butterflies, bees producing honey, gorillas, elephants and the spirits of the Baka people as well as medicine and wild fruits yielding plants, are replaced by a monoculture rubber, eucalyptus or palm plantation? The plantation trees will sequester carbon no doubt, but will not serve the other cultural and ecosystem functions.



Civil society organizations militating for strong safeguards in UNFCCC REDD debates

How can REDD happen without creating harm to people and the environment? Since Copenhagen through to Cancun much progress has been made in developing safeguards, but Durban's African COP flawed with a decision on the Safeguards information system. Civil society organisations have advocated for REDD safeguards to be consistent with other international legal instruments, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which most countries or parties have ratified or signed. To avoid REDD from being a threat to the rights (especially land rights) of indigenous peoples and local communities, forest protection and combating climate change, there is need for robust safeguards whose implementation are transparently reported.

SOME READINGS

Is REDD-readiness taking us in the right direction ? Case studies from the Accra Caucus, November 2011

Government and agencies around the world are now preparing to implement programmes on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). The Accra Caucus for Forests and Climate Change is a coalition of civil society and indigenous peoples' organizations from the Global North and South, which have followed the negotiations at the UNFCCC since 2008. In this report, the Cau-

cus looks at examples of readiness in its various forms including national REDD+ strategies, legal reform, pilots projects and funding.

It shows how the implementation of REDD+ projects, policies and plans is being shaped by a readiness process which is focused on attracting carbon income rather than on protecting the environment or the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

