MEMORANDUM OF CONGOLESE ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE REDD PROCESS IN DR CONGO

Copy sent for Information to:

- His Excellency the Prime Minister;
- His Excellency the Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism;
- The Coordinator of the REDD National Coordination (REDD-NC);
- The UN REDD Regional Director;

Members of the Participants' Committee of the Fund for the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Washington DC/USA

Dear Members,

We, organizations of Congolese environmental civil society grouped within the platform "Climate Work Group REDD" (from its French acronym GTCR);

Welcome the commitment of participants' committee members of the FCPF in support of the REDD process in the DRC;

Reaffirm our commitment to contribute to the success of the process;

Appreciate the efforts of all stakeholders in preparing the country for REDD;

Remain, however, concerned about a number of issues in managing this process, following an internal diagnostic on the REDD process in the DRC, including:

1. the governance structure of REDD+;
2. the aspect of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC);
3. the Forest Investment Program (FIP, in French PIF)
4. the thematic coordination (TC, in French CT);

5. the Pilot projects.

On governance structures, the civil society deplores the excessive concentration of powers and responsibilities in the hands of the REDD-NC, irregular meetings held by the National Committee and institutional erasure of the Interministerial Committee on REDD . All this leads, therefore, to a generalized dysfunction of the governance structures of REDD + in DRC.

The IEC component appears in the DRC R-PP as a pillar prior to the construction of the national REDD+ strategy. The implementation of this project should increase the level of involvement and ownership by local communities and indigenous peoples. Specifically, the forecast budget[1] for this project was never allocated to related activities and, accordingly, the site IEC remained as ghostly.

The Investment Programme for Forestry that the DRC has submitted to the FIP Sub-Committee has had the support and participation of civil society in its development and validation. The concern that the civil society has is to see these forest investments contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. But also to contribute to improving living conditions of local communities and indigenous peoples who are languishing in poverty

Curiously, there is a diversion of FIP compared from its initial objectives[2]. As an illustration, the FIP workshop on mobilization and coordination of the private sector in agroforestry held from 20 to 23 May 2012 in Mbakana-Kinshasa is one of the compelling evidence of the diversion of FIP profits to unspoken interests and of a tendency to control the funds through clientelist organizations.

Also, the non-signing of regulations relating to local community forests by the Congolese Government compromises seriously the success of this program in the DRC. In addition, extensive consultations advocated during the adoption of the Congolese investment program have never taken place.

As for thematic coordinations, they should be understood as frameworks for multi-player thinking set up to raise the basic sectorial options to sustain the national REDD+ strategy.

Paradoxically, these structures which should play a leading role in the construction of the national strategy have long been inoperative. Lack of resources is cited by the REDD-NC to justify this state of affairs. Today, the REDD-NC imposes an agenda[3] intended to produce by

[1] See R-PP, the budget was 1,300,000 $ for IEC.

[2] The executive decision on the register and approval procedures for projects excluded communities and NGOs as carriers of REDD projects. The Memorandum of the Civil Society on said executive decision requires its withdrawal.

[3] A statement to facilitators and officers of TC boards of CN-REDD dated June 21, 2012 requests the development of program proposals for the national REDD strategy version 1 by July 15, 2012

July 15, 2012, a version of the national REDD+ by TCs while they have not reached a level of maturity[4] enabling them to contribute to its development with constructive proposals from both the literature review, discussions as field observations

Pilot projects that could enrich the national REDD + strategy in terms of field experiences are so far in their infancy. Which suggests that the pilot projects will not contribute substantially to enrich the national REDD+ strategy in DRC.

From the foregoing, the Civil Society issues serious reservations about the methodology used currently by REDD-NC, which tends to short circuit the process of drafting the national REDD+ strategy in DRC by retracting the steps previously agreed to by the stakeholders.

Thus, the Civil Society recommends:

- The functional effectiveness of the governance bodies of REDD+ in the DRC;
- The implementation of the IEC program as a prerequisite for the development of the national REDD+ strategy accompanied by sufficient accountability of the Civil Society;
- The recognition and respect of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples in the implementation of REDD projects / initiatives in the DRC;
- Further consultation of local communities and Indigenous Peoples on the FIP in the DRC;
- The immediate signing of regulations on the local community forests;
- Reframing the FIP in relation to the interests of all of all stakeholders
- The strict application of the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in REDD+ process in the DRC in line with the standards and socio environmental safeguards for REDD;
- Compliance with the roadmaps of each TC, the reframing of the work methodology and the effective operationalization of all TC by providing them with the necessary means;
- The relaxation of access mechanisms to finance pilot projects and accelerate the implementation of national REDD Fund;
- The transparent, participatory, and beneficial pilot projects for local communities and indigenous peoples, in order to draw relevant lessons for the National REDD+ strategy.

Done in Kinshasa on June 22, 2012

Signatories

[4] The TC are so far limited only to the stage of the inventory while the main steps in collecting field data and literature review have never been taken.