

**Réunion Plénière du
PARTENARIAT POUR LES FORÊTS DU
BASSIN DU CONGO (PFBC)
Palais des Congrès de Yaoundé
du 11 au 12 novembre 2009**

**Plenary Meeting of the
CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP
(CBFP)
Palais des Congrès of Yaoundé
11 to 12 November 2009**

**AGENDA OF THEMATIC WORKSHOPS
ORDRE DU JOUR DES ATELIERS THEMATIQUES
Version of 2 Novembre 2009**

**Workshop 1: Institutional strengthening of COMIFAC
*Atelier 1 : Renforcement institutionnel de la COMIFAC***

Venue: Palais des Congrès

Date : Thursday 12 November 2009
10:00 to 14:30

The COMIFAC is a sub-regional intergovernmental organization steered by an Executive Secretariat (ES) that coordinates, supervises and evaluates the implementation of the Yaoundé Declaration. The implementation of the Yaoundé Declaration itself is the responsibility of the member states and their sub-regional partner institutions (ADIE, OAB, OCFSA, RAPAC, and CEFDHAC). In order to ensure the operating modus of the ES and the long-term functionality of its regional institutions, still largely supported by technical and financial partners gathered around the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), member states of the COMIFAC through the 2005 Treaty that led to the creation of the COMIFAC, pledged to establish an autonomous financing mechanism that would cover the running costs of these structures.

In accordance with the roadmap of the German Facilitation of the CBFP (2007-2009), partners on their part committed themselves to supporting the COMIFAC in the following priority areas:

- The reform and strengthening of COMIFAC's institutional partners that are charged with the implementation of the Convergence Plan;
- The establishment of the autonomous financing mechanism of the COMIFAC through political dialogue and complementary studies and analyses;
- The implementation of the monitoring-evaluation system of the COMIFAC with particular emphasis on elaborating the State of Central African Forests report 2008;

- The strengthening of the National Representations (Coordination) of the COMIFAC, as indispensable intermediaries between the Executive Secretariat and the member states of the COMIFAC;
- Strengthening sub-regional dialogue and carrying the sub-regional issues to the international debate on forests and the environment

Nevertheless, political will in the region to finance the running costs of the ES of the COMIFAC and its sub-regional partner institutions, through a levy on import taxes from third countries has not been satisfactorily implemented; thereby exposing these structures to unprecedented financial difficulties. The implementation of the autonomous financing mechanism as suggested seems to have been rendered even more difficult by the decision of the Heads of Central African States to turn the COMIFAC into a specialized institution of the CEEAC. The majority of these institutions that do not benefit anymore from external funding; are in a state of constant struggle, some seeing themselves as being robbed of their statutory rights to the benefit of new structures that are managed directly by donors in the form of projects. The legitimacy and credibility of the COMIFAC are thus seriously threatened.

The workshop on institutional strengthening of the COMIFAC should therefore:

- Present the current state of affairs on the autonomous financing mechanism for the COMIFAC and its sub-regional partner institutions, and explore other possibilities of funding the running costs of these structures as well as other activities aimed at implementing the Convergence Plan
- Examine the particular case of the FORAF Project, the publisher of the State of the Central African Forests, and the long-term integration of its know-how into the Central African Forest Observatory (OFAC)
- Review the current state of affairs on the reform of sub-regional partner institutions (CEFDHAC, ADIE, OCFSA, OAB) as requested by Council of Ministers of the COMIFAC
- Review the current state of affairs on the application of Treaty requirements pertaining to the establishment of functional structures for the conservation and sustainable management of Central African forests

Chair: H.E. Emmanuel BIZOT, Minister of Waters, Forests, Fisheries and Hunting of the Central African Republic, current President of the COMIFAC

10.00 – 11.00 :

- Appointment of a facilitator
- Introductory talk by Chair
- Statement on the state of the autonomous financing mechanism (**ES/COMIFAC**)

11.00 – 11.45 :

- FORAF Project and the establishment of OFAC (**Carlos de Wasseige/David Abouem**)

11.45 – 12.30 :

- State of affairs on the reform of sub-regional partner institutions, hereafter: CEFDHAC (**Hon. Roger Louis Essola/Bihini**); ADIE, OCFSA, OAB (**Leticia Pina Cortez for introduction**)

12.30 – 13.00 :

- Statement on the application of Treaty requirements pertaining to the creation of the COMIFAC (**Claus Michael Falkenberg**)

Workshop 2: Governance and framework conditions in the Congo Basin states
Atelier 2 : Gouvernance et conditions cadres dans les pays du Bassin du Congo

Venue: Palais des Congrès

Date : Thursday 12 November 2009
10:00 to 14:30

In accordance with requirements of the Yaoundé Declaration and its detailed operational procedures laid down in the Convergence Plan, the Council of Ministers of the COMIFAC explicitly pledged itself to i) elaborate on and implement national forest programmes (NFP), in conformity with recommendations from the international dialogue on forests ii) respect forest laws and regulations by adhering to the FLEGT / AFLEG initiative of the European Union and signing voluntary partnership agreements with the latter iii) strengthen the sustainable management of production forests by applying credible certification standards to such forest concessions. By way of the roadmap of the German facilitation, partners equally pledged to support national initiatives in these major areas; by involving civil society, the private sector and important new actors like China and encouraging them to take part in the activities of the CBFP that in turn support the objectives of the COMIFAC.

Meanwhile forest reforms aimed at a sustainable management are progressing normally in all the countries of the Congo Basin - much to the satisfaction of the entire international community - and the first FLEGT agreements have been signed with the European Union, the export of timber and other forest products continues to suffer heavily from the global economic and financial crisis, with dire consequences for employment and local development. Furthermore, calls made by some national and international civil society organizations that question the credibility of current certification processes have given the sub-region a bad reputation on some sensitive markets. This gives a free ride to unscrupulous actors and permits them to capture less sensitive markets and to supply these with timber acquired illegally from unmanaged forest concessions.

The workshop on governance and framework conditions in the Congo Basin states is therefore expected to:

- Review the state of affairs on forest reforms and their implementation in the Congo Basin countries

- Review the state of affairs on the progress made in the certification of production forest concessions, the development of a regional certification standard and answer questions of credibility raised by some civil society organizations
- Review the progress made in the FLEGT negotiations with the European Union and to analyze the issue of legality of timber that is sold on both domestic and regional wood markets
- Discuss the implementation of measures aimed at mitigating the effects of the economic crisis in Central African countries
- Present the state of affairs on the dialogue with new important actors in the forest sector with the example of China
- Determine a strategy promote and share the knowledge gained in improving governance and framework conditions in the Congo Basin countries

Chair: H.E. Henri DJOMBO, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and the Environment of the Republic of Congo

10.00 – 11.00 :

- Appointment of a facilitator
- Introductory talk by Chair
- Statement on forest reforms and their implementation in the Congo Basin states (**ES COMIFAC**)
Results of measures taken by Central African states to reduce the impacts of the economic crisis on the forestry sector (**Richard Eba'a Atyi**)

11.00 – 11.45 :

- Certification of production forest concessions in Central African countries
 - Progress in certification (**Elie Hakizumwami, WWF/Marie Mbolo FSC**)
 - Certification and indigenous peoples (**Prosper Ngoma**)
 - Definition of the scope of additional requirements for logging companies (*cahier des charges*) and use of forest taxes (**Pierre Methot, WRI**)

11.45 – 12.30 :

- VPA negotiations and the legality of timber from domestic and regional markets
 - Progress in VPA negotiations (**Alain Penelon**)

- Legality of timber from domestic and regional markets (**Paolo Cerutti, CIFOR/ Jeanne Marie Mindja**)

12.30 – 13.00 :

- Dialogue with newly emerging actors in the forestry sector of the Central African sub-region; the example of China (**Cornelia Seegers/Shi**).

Workshop 3 : Implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan and major international environmental and forestry conventions

Atelier 3: Mise en œuvre du Plan de convergence de la COMIFAC et des Conventions internationales majeures sur les forêts et l'environnement

Venue: Palais des Congrès

Date : Thursday 12 November 2009
10:00 to 14:30

Through their cooperation framework adopted in Brazzaville (2005) CBFP members reaffirmed their determination to support the effective implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, and to share information in order to ensure a better harmonization of their activities in conservation, sustainable management of forest ecosystems, economic growth and poverty alleviation in the countries of Central Africa. To reach these basic objectives members of the CBPF agreed among other things to feed-in their efforts into the regional and national programs of the COMIFAC member states and to provide support in the implementation of their international commitments (major international conventions on forests and the environment); in defining and evaluating regional positions in the international dialogue on forests and the environment and in the development of national policies that coincide with these positions.

The last evaluation report of the Plan of Operation of the Convergence Plan however revealed that some COMIFAC countries have not sufficiently adopted this regional strategy that ought to steer national sectoral policies.

With regard to the ongoing international negotiations on the two major conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention on Climate Change), the working groups created to this effect were charged with coordinating the development of regional positions to be transmitted to the various national negotiators in order to permit them to establish a regional strategy. Until now, we observe only a weak involvement of the political echelon of states; the very level that bears the responsibility of defending the position of the sub-region at negotiations. This setback has fortunately been overcome recently in Kinshasa (DRC), where the Ministers in charge of forests and the environment in the Central African sub-region have adopted the "Kinshasa Declaration", which presents the common position of the COMIFAC countries on the new post-Kyoto 2012 climate regime that will be negotiated at the Copenhagen Summit in December 2009, and that will involve factors related to reduction mechanisms of major importance to the conservation of forests of the Congo

Basin. In order that this common position be firmly declared and defended in Copenhagen, an appropriate strategy now ought to be developed.

The Workshop on the implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan and of major international conventions on forests and the environment is therefore expected to:

- Examine and propose measure to better adopt the Convergence Plan of the COMIFAC at the level of each member state
- Examine and propose measure for an balanced implementation of all the axes of the Convergence Plan at the national level of COMIFAC member states
- Examine and propose appropriate steps for i) an efficient preparation of sub-regional positions on ongoing negotiations ii) an efficient preparation of technical and political negotiators charged defending them iii) the development of a common strategies to be followed

Chair: H.E. Jose ENDUNDO BONONGE, Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

10.00 – 11.00 :

- Appointment of a facilitator
- Introductory talk by Chair
- Measures for a better adoption of the Convergence Plan of the COMIFAC at the level of each member state (**COMIFAC National Coordinators**)

11.00 – 12.00 :

- Measures for an balanced implementation of all the axes of the Convergence Plan at the level of the member states of COMIFAC (**ES COMIFAC/ Landing Mane-OSFAC/Abdoulaye Dagamaissa/BAD for CBFF**)

12.00 – 13.00 :

- Appropriate steps towards an efficient development and defence of sub-regional positions at international negotiations on forests and the environment (**COMIFAC GT Climate for REDD/ COMIFAC GT BAC/ Oko Rufin for APA**).

**Workshop 4 : Reconciling Conservation with sustainable use of forest areas
(example of the Sangha Tri-National)**

Atelier 4 : L'Equilibre entre la conservation et l'utilisation durable des terres forestières à l'exemple du TNS (Trinational de la Sangha)

Venue: Palais des Congrès

Date : Thursday 12 November 2009
10:00 to 14:30

Drawing from the concept of ecoregions or that of fragile ecosystems the majority of countries in Central Africa have mapped out several protected areas, which at present make-up about 10% of their total land area. These measures however do not necessarily follow a systematic and coherent approach that aims at integrating all ecosystems in order to ascertain the conservation of the vast biological diversity of this sub-region. Axis 4 of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan adopted in 2005 by Heads of States of Central Africa thus aims at establishing at a regional scale, a network of protected areas that takes the different ecosystems and biological diversity into consideration. This particularly entails strengthening national networks of protected areas, undertaking a concerted management of protected transboundary zones and areas, and to optimize the exploitation of phytogenetic resources of the sub-region, in order to preserve the biological and genetic heritage of forest ecosystems and to significantly contribute to the socioeconomic development of the sub-region.

However, the establishment and management of these protected areas is increasingly undermining other uses of these forest areas and this questions the legitimacy of the current model, which lays down the role and duties of all concerned actors (state, NGO, local populations) but fails to sufficiently integrate the whole.

In lending their support to the implementation of the convergence plan of the sub-region, members of the CBFP have equally helped the sub-region to protect its biodiversity for the benefit of local populations, the countries concerned and the entire humanity, by lending their support to activities related to protected areas and to networks of protected transboundary parks through their conventional methods.

By using the example of the Sangha Tri-National the workshop on reconciling conservation with sustainable use of forest areas ought to:

- Outline the state of current locations of protected areas in Central Africa in regard to reaching the goals set in the convergence plan
- Describe current situations and their development regarding the initial idea of the TNS and propose solution options to improve the current situation (resolve conflicts of interests)
- Make a critical analysis of the protected area management approach
- Discuss integrated financing mechanisms for the sustainable management of forest lands.

Chair : H.E. Elvis NGOLLE NGOLLE, Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Cameroon

10.00 – 11.00 :

- Appointment of a facilitator
- Introductory talk by Chair
- Review current state of protected areas in Central Africa in regard to reaching the objectives set in the convergence plan (**Jean Pierre Agnangoye, RAPAC**)

11.00 – 11.45 :

- Current situations, their development regarding the initial idea of the TNS and involvement of the civil society in the TNS; solution options to the issue of conflicts of interests (**Jeff SAYER/IUCN**)

11.45 – 12.30 :

- Critical analysis of the approach of management of protected areas (**Tim Fomete, TNS**)

12.30 – 13.00 :

- Integrated financing mechanisms for sustainable management of forest lands (**Sven Walter, Global Mechanism**)
- Multiple benefits of REDD at the Landscapes level - the example of TNS (**Ken Creighton, WWF**)