



COMIFAC WORKSHOP:

“Experience sharing between China and Central Africa countries on sustainable management and use of forests”

Douala – Cameroun, 26 April 2010

GENERAL REPORT

With the support of CBFP





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Introduction

In order to promote sustainable forest management and legal trade of timber from the region, the Congo Basin Forests Partnership, in support of member countries of COMIFAC, promotes dialogue between China and COMIFAC countries concerned with timber production and trade.

Thus on 26 April 2010, COMIFAC organised with support from the CBFP and technical partners involved in the process of promoting responsible forestry in the Congo basin, such as WWF and IUCN, a discussion workshop between China and Central African countries and actors of the forestry sector with the aim to (i) enable the Forestry Administration of China to provide technical experts of Central Africa its forest management guidelines for Chinese companies operating out of China, (ii) enable Central African countries to share with the Chinese delegation their experience in promoting sustainable management and forest certification, (iii) enable the Chinese delegation and representatives of Central African countries to discuss the added value of its guidelines in the process of sustainable forest management and forest certification in Central Africa, (iv) enable the Chinese Government and experts from Central Africa to identify elements for the development of a common strategy for promoting sustainable management and use of forests in Central Africa and responsible timber trade between China and Central African countries, (v) develop a roadmap for cooperation between China and Central African countries for the development and implementation of a common strategy for the promotion of forest management and use and responsible timber trade.



This workshop took place in two thematic sessions.

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1 – Conduct of the workshop

The first session was devoted to the presentation of forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China for Chinese companies operating outside China, and the presentation of the experience of Central African countries in promoting sustainable forest management and certification, with emphasis on the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, but also on (i) the role of government in promoting sustainable management of forests in the Congo Basin (ii) promoting forest certification, (iii) promoting legality, (iv) and the private sector's role in promoting the sustainable management of forests.

The second session was devoted to discussions on the added value of forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China for the Chinese companies operating outside China in the process of sustainable management and forest certification,

identification of elements for the development of a common strategy for promoting sustainable management and use of forests in Central Africa, and responsible timber trade between China and Central African countries, and development of a roadmap for the development and implementation of this common strategy.

The workshop was chaired by Mr Raymond MBITIKON, Executive Secretary of COMIFAC in the presence of Mr. Su Ming (Deputy Director of Forestry, SFA China), Mr. Hans Schipulle (CBFP Facilitator), Mr. Samuel Makon (Delegate Facilitator of CBFP), the other members of the delegation of the National Forestry Administration of China (SFA), representatives of the administrations in charge of forestry in several member countries of COMIFAC (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, CAR), representatives of national and international forest companies operating in Central Africa (the largest logging company in China AC Vicwood group) and technical partners of Central Africa countries and China involved in the promotion of responsible forestry in the Basin Congo (WWF, IUCN).



The complete participants' list is in appendix 3.

2 – Main issues discussed in the workshop

- **What is the added value of the implementation of directives of the Chinese Administration on sustainable management of forests in Central Africa?**

On this question, several other issues were raised namely, how will Chinese companies implement these guidelines in terms of criteria and indicators? In practice, what penalties will they be exposed to, and if there is a problem, what will China do to the offender? What monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be put in place to ensure compliance by Chinese companies? Which approach will the Chinese government going to adopt to implement guidelines?

- Forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China are based on the experience of China with foreign companies operating in China for the past 30 years. They were developed from the elements and knowledge of the laws of various countries and thereby constitute an instrument that reinforces the enforceability of laws and regulations in the COMIFAC area. Moreover, they lay the groundwork for future cooperation between China and countries of the Central African sub-region



in terms of helping to improve the image of Chinese companies, and hence that of China in the countries where they operate. The Chinese side hopes that this document be seen as a code of conduct for Chinese companies operating outside China with regard to sustainable forest management. However, as long as there is plus value, these guidelines do not constitute a legally binding document. China stresses that in case of litigation or non-compliance is the national administration to judge the offender on the basis of laws and regulations of the host country, given that China can not replace the host country and its jurisdiction. The representative of the Chinese government insisted that China wants that host to be rigorous and simply and regularly enforce their own regulations.

- **If the directive is supplementary, what are the expectations of each party (COMIFAC, SFA, CBPF)?**

After recognizing that the forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China further improves the image of China abroad and enhances the applicability of laws and regulations of countries where Chinese companies operate, the question is, **what does each party expect from the other?**

- The need for governance to improve the question of legality has been raised by the Central African countries that recognize that good forest management can reduce community imbalance. They thus ask the Forestry Administration of China to officially transmit its forest management guidelines to Chinese business operators established in the sub region for information and consideration. Following this, national administrations can work more clearly with these companies towards getting them implement these guidelines. A powerful idea has been raised by African countries: **see China join the CBFP initiative**, for the forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China id developed along the lines of the Convergence Plan and thus fall in line with the objectives of COMIFAC and members of the CBFP.
- COMIFAC for his part stressed that these guidelines should serve the interests of all parties, especially as their content broadly reiterate its Convergence Plan
- The fact that Central African countries have problems similar to China regarding the applicability of laws, the Chinese government wants Chinese companies in this sub-region to be in good standing vis-à-vis national laws. China also wishes to promote the development of African countries; therefore, it is willing to partner with these countries. Currently, the Chinese government accepts that it is facing a problem of lack of information about the registration of certain Chinese logging companies operating outside of China. In this regard, it seeks the support of African partners to improve on this situation. Furthermore, to better understand the forest issue in Central Africa countries, China wants its African



partners to send it their national laws for it to take cognizance of them so that it can forward them itself to the Chinese companies working in Central Africa.

- **Can China join the CBFP ?**

Before addressing the question of China joining the PFBC, the National Forestry Administration of China has been asked to clarify whether **China has stopped logging its own natural forests**

- On the issue of exploitation of its natural forests, the National Forestry Administration of China said the Chinese Government has never considered stopping the exploitation of its natural forests, but rather use them sustainably.

- **Concerning its joining the CBFP, China has no objection.** However, it suggests, as is the case with the European Union, where negotiations are underway for it to integrate the FLEGT process, that African countries



include the issue of forests as one of the subjects in the China / Africa Summits. As long as timber is not a manufactured product like others, the Forestry Administration of China proposed that the question of its trade be separated from that of forest certification. This could be subject of future discussions between China and Central African countries.

- **What common strategy for sustainable forest management in Central Africa between China and Central African countries?**

- Before discussing the identification of elements for a common strategy between China and Central African countries for sustainable forest management, the National Forestry Administration of China has asked its African partners to dwell on the problem of timber legality in order to develop a partnership to solve it. **How do I know that timber is legal if there's no dialogue between the parties?** As long as aspects of illegality are not clearly established, it is not possible to say that Chinese companies produce illegal timber. Currently, everyone should work in this direction. This is why we speak of certification, especially in the direction of certificate of legality and sustainable management
- To come back to the **elements of developing a common strategy** between China and its African partners in sustainable forest management in Central Africa, China intends to initiate seminars / training for its companies and Chinese administration in China to inform them about aspects of timber legality. China expressed willingness to share with the COMIFAC countries, its experience in management of forest resources. Thus, she wants to collaborate with national government ministries to develop a joint strategy for forest management in Central Africa on the basis of its guidelines. Although several discussion of ideas have so far taken place between the COMIFAC countries and China, the latter proposes to COMIFAC arrange for discussion areas so as to formulate proposals to work



together on issues of sustainable management of forest resources. COMIFAC for its part has to facilitate the sharing of information about Chinese companies operating in Central Africa with the Forestry Administration of China. Regarding legality, it is proposed that COMIFAC forwards to the Forestry Administration of China, the legality framework of Central African countries so that it can be informed about it. Following these proposals, COMIFAC and China pledge to continue discussions in the coming months on verification of legality of African timber sent to the Chinese market.

3 – Roadmap for China – Central Africa cooperation

After discussing the added value of the guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China in the process of sustainable forest management in Central Africa, and on the elements of a common strategy between China and Central African countries, all actors recognize the need for a roadmap for China / Central Africa cooperation to progress.

- Central African countries and China are ready to work together to solve the particular problem of timber legality. Thus, the Forestry Administration of China requires its African partners to use its forest management guidelines as an element in solving this problem. In addition, China wants to use these guidelines to strengthen its legislation on the location of Chinese companies operating out of China. However, she insists that these guidelines do not replace national laws that must be enforced.
- In order to advance China- COMIFAC countries cooperation, items identified as elements of this roadmap include:
 - (i) the **official forwarding of guidelines for sustainable forest management by the Chinese government to Chinese logging companies** operating in the Central African sub region;
 - (ii) **joint formulation (China / COMIFAC countries) of a common strategy for sustainable management of forest resources based on the guidelines of the Forest Administration of China** developed for Chinese companies operating out of China;
 - (iii) **organisation of training seminars in China to educate Chinese companies and the forestry administration of China on aspects of timber legality** in force in the Central African sub-region;
 - (iv) **integration of the forest as a subject of discussion at the China / Africa summit;**
 - (v) and **China join the CBFP network.**



Appendix 1: Terms of reference of the China - COMIFAC Countries workshop.

I - Background

The Congo Basin Forests Partnership, to support COMIFAC member countries, aims to promote direct discussions between China and COMIFAC countries concerned with the implementation of timber production and trade with the objective of promoting sustainable forest management and legal trade of timber from the sub-region.

II - Objective

This workshop proposed by China and COMIFAC, will aim to enable discussions between China and Central African countries as well as key actors in the forest sector on the forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China for Chinese companies operating out of China and the experience of Central African countries on the management and sustainable use of forests and responsible timber trade.

The specific objectives of this workshop were:

- Enable the Forestry Administration of China to present to Central African technical experts involved in the forest sector, the forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China for the Chinese companies operating out of China.
- Enable Central African countries to share with the Chinese Delegation their experience in promoting sustainable management and certification.
- Enable the Chinese Delegation and representatives of Central African countries and their partners discuss the added value of the forest management guidelines of the Forestry Administration of China for Chinese companies operating outside China in the process of sustainable forest management and certification in Africa.
- Enable the Chinese Government and experts of Central Africa to identify aspect to formulate a common strategy for the promotion of sustainable management and use of forests in Central Africa and responsible timber trade between China and Central Africa countries.
- Develop a roadmap for cooperation between China and Central African countries in the formulation and implementation of a common strategy for the promotion of sustainable management and use of forests and responsible timber trade.

III - Organisation

The workshop will be organized with the support of COMIFAC member countries, members of the Congo Basin Forests Partnership as well as the technical partners involved in the process of promoting responsible forestry in the Congo Basin. It will be chaired by the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC and animated by the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. The general organization of this workshop will be done by WWF. The



Chinese Delegation, representatives of Central African countries and resource persons will provide support with thematic contributions.

IV Target Group / participants: (maximum of 50 participants)

1. Representatives of the Forestry Administration of China (SFA);
2. Representatives of the Forestry Administration of COMIFAC member countries;
3. Representatives of national and international forest companies established in Central Africa.
4. Representatives of partners of Central African countries involved in the promotion of responsible forestry in the Congo Basin.



Appendix 2: Agenda of the China – COMIFAC countries workshop

Douala, 26 April 2010, Hotel Sawa

Working languages: French - Chinese (simultaneous interpretation services)

Moderator: Jean-Marie Noiraud

Chair: COMIFAC Executive Secretariat, Animation CBFP, Organisation and Facilitation
WWF

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome: Presentation trade opportunities and mutual perspectives

- Keynote address by the Regional Representative of WWF (Natasha Quist);
- Statement of the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) (Hans Schipulle)
- Statement of the Representative of the Chinese Delegation
- Opening speech of the Executive Secretary of COMIFAC (Raymond Mbitikon)
- Presentation of draft agenda and objectives of the workshop by the Facilitator of the workshop
- Group photograph

10:00 – 10:30 *Coffee Break*

10:30 – 11:30 Presentation of guidelines for forest management of the Forestry Administration of China for Chinese companies operating out of China;

11:30 – 13:00 Presentation of the experiences of Central African countries in the promotion of sustainable management and certification with emphasis on the implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan

- The role of the State in the promotion of sustainable forest management (a presentation by a country of the Congo Basin with complement by each represented country)
- Promotion of forest certification (WWF)
- Promotion of legality (UICN)
- The role of the private sector in the promotion of sustainable management of forest resources (Hervé BOURGUIGNON, IFIA)

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:00: Discussions on added value of the guidelines on forest management of the Forestry administration of China for Chinese companies operating out of China to the process of sustainable forest management and certification in Africa.

15:00 – 16 :00 Formulation of a joint strategy for the promotion of forest management and use in Central Africa as well as responsible timber trade between China and Central African countries.

16:00 – 17:00 Preparation of a roadmap to formulate and implement a common strategy for the promotion of forest management and use in the Congo Basin and responsible timber trade between China and the Congo Basin.



17:00 Closing session

Presentation and adoption of workshop outputs

Point of view of the representative of the Chinese Delegation

Point of view of the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Closing speech by the Executive Secretary of COMIFAC.

18:00 Cocktail



Appendix 3 : Speeches

Opening Speech of the ES of COMIFAC

Mr. Facilitator Congo Basin Forests Partnership

Mr Facilitator Delegate

The Head of the Delegation of the Forestry Administration of the Republic of China,

Representatives of national forestry administrations of COMIFAC countries

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear participants,

It is really a pleasure and an enjoyable duty for me to take the floor at the opening ceremony of the sub-regional meeting on the presentation of guidelines for the sustainable management of forests for Chinese companies working abroad.

I would like to first of all thank the Regional Representative of WWF, Natasha Quist, for her invitation and for honouring the Executive Secretariat of the Central Africa Forest Commission with the opportunity to chair this meeting.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Senior Officials of China's forestry administration as well as representatives of national forestry administrations COMIFAC member countries who came to attend the workshop, I welcome them and wish them a very good stay in Douala.

We thank the authorities of the Republic of Cameroon for accepting that this meeting to be held here in Douala.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Barely one month ago in this beautiful and synaptic conference room of Hotel SAWA, I chaired a workshop held on the sidelines of an event called RACEWOOD organised by IFIA. It was a workshop on forest governance processes including FLEGT. That workshop was attended by: Mr Fu, Deputy Director of the Chinese Forest Service, Representatives of Chinese logging companies operating in Central Africa; other stakeholders concerned with the sustainable management of forest resources. Also in attendance were officials of private companies specialized in monitoring timber trade activities. It is worth noting that during this workshop, the guide subject of today's meeting was distributed to participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I can only rejoice that the Douala meeting to present the guide for the sustainable management of forests for Chinese companies working abroad, is once again demonstrating the commitment of the authorities of Forestry Administration of China to contribute toward the implementation of policies on sustainable forest management that COMIFAC member States have decided to implement since the Yaoundé Declaration in 1999 which has been followed



by the signing in 2005 of the Treaty on the Conservation of Central African Forest Ecosystems and the creation of the Central Africa Forest Commission COMIFAC.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The commitment of Congo Basin countries to responsible forestry is a reality although the road ahead is still long to achieve the goals set by our countries. The achievements made in recent years in terms of sustainable forest management are very significant. They include: the ever-increasing surface areas of certified forests and managed forests; the adoption of regional guidelines non-timber forest products, the signing of the agreement on forest control, ongoing or already completed revision of forestry laws in many countries, and negotiations on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU which have been initiated or which have already been concluded.

All of these efforts towards good forest governance would be wasted if local or foreign partners are not involved in the process and continue to work in accordance with national forestry laws and international convention norms to which our countries are parties.

Collaboration between countries of Central Africa and the Republic of China in the forestry sector will grow and diversify, especially. Also, logging and timber trade will not be done in transparency and legality, as desired by all, without the aspects of training and sharing of experiences are not taken into consideration.

COMIFAC hopes that real multifaceted cooperation in the forest environment sector is established between the Republic of China and COMIFAC countries. It remains confident that all actions undertaken in this direction will lead to satisfactory results.

Before ending, I would like thank the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, WWF and IUCN who helped organize this meeting.

I wish full success in our deliberations and I declare open the meeting to present the guide for sustainable forest management for Chinese companies working abroad.

Long live China – Central cooperation

Ling live COMIFAC

Thank you for your kind attention

Closing Speech of the ES of COMIFAC

Mr. Facilitator Congo Basin Forests Partnership

Mr Facilitator Delegate

The Head of the Delegation of the Forestry Administration of the Republic of China,

Representatives of national forestry administrations of COMIFAC countries



Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear participants,

We have come to the end of this workshop and I would like to congratulate all participants who were very attentive to discussions that just took place.

I also congratulate the Moderator and all those who have had to make presentations during the workshop for their contributions.

This workshop being the beginning of collaboration that is expected to be stronger and constructive in the near future, I am convinced that new opportunities will bring us together and give us the opportunity to assess progress made within the framework of the China-Central Africa Cooperation on sustainable forest management.

I now have to appeal to Chinese logging companies operating in Central Africa and that are 12 in number as at now, a number that may change a few years, to implement this guide.

We must, I mean the Chinese party and forestry administrations, continue to seek ways and means necessary to better monitor the implementation or compliance with this guide.

I thank the Chinese partner for their contributions during this workshop and I wish them a safe journey back.

My gratitude also goes to the representatives of forestry administrations of COMIFAC countries who made the trip to Douala.

On this point, I declare closed the experience sharing workshop between China and Central African countries on the management and sustainable use of forests.

Long live China - Central Africa cooperation

Long live COMIFAC

Thank you for your kind attention



Appendix 4: List of participants

N°	Name	Organization and Country	Contact address
1	André K. Toham	WWF	atoham@wwfcarpo.org
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Appendix 5: Presentations

1. Presentation of guidelines for forest management of the Forestry Administration of China for Chinese companies operating out of China; Dr. Yu Ninglou, SFA - Chine ; ;
2. Presentation of the experiences of Central African countries in the promotion of sustainable management and certification with emphasis on the implementation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan:
 - The role of the State in the promotion of sustainable forest management, Alain Marius, Ngoya Kassy, Congo
 - Promotion of forest certification, Elie Hakizumwami, WWF – CARPO;
 - Promotion of legality, Rene Oyono, IUCN Consultant
 - The role of the private sector in the promotion of sustainable management of forest resources Jacques Dupanloup, GFBC - IFIA).