

## **Beijing mission report by the Facilitator and Deputy Facilitator of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership**

*(English translation of the original French version of 02 May 2009)*

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Following an invitation by the Beijing Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Facilitator, Mr Hans Schipulle, and Deputy Facilitator, Mr Samuel Makon, undertook a study trip to Beijing in the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 20 to 27 April. The main objectives for the trip were to:

- Participate in the IUCN/Forest Trends workshop exploring Chinese commerce in sustainably sourced legal timber and to deliver a presentation about the CBFP, its role, activities and experiences
- Reinforce relations between the key figures from the Chinese forestry sector (public and private) and the CBFP, to prepare the ground for an official visit to the PRC by the President and Executive Secretary of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)
- Better understand the economic relations between China and Central Africa, particularly in the forestry sector
- Learn from Chinese experiences in forestry including silviculture and soil conservation by undertaking business trips, visits, training etc
- Discuss and share thinking on Chinese forestry manuals such as 'Guidelines for sustainable silviculture for Chinese enterprises operating outside China' and 'Forest Management' (in development)
- Explore opportunities for COMIFAC/CBFP to contribute to the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) bilateral coordination mechanism.

### **1. Meeting of head officers of the State Forest Administration (SFA)**

This meeting follows a series of approaches and communications with Chinese officials in:

- Beijing, at the Europe-China FLEG meeting in 2007
- Paris, at the CBFP plenary meeting in 2007
- Libreville, at the consultation meeting, WWF-organised, with the Chinese Government mission and Chinese forestry companies operating in the states of the Congo basin
- Kinshasa, Brazzaville and Libreville with their respective Chinese ambassadors.

Taking part in the SFA discussions on 23 April 2009 were:

- SU Ming, Deputy Director General of the International Forestry Cooperation Centre, SFA
- Chen Jiawen, Director of the Foreign Investment, Overseas Capital and Trade Division, SFA
- LIU Daoping, Director of the Quality Management Division, Department of Reforestation and Silviculture.

It emerged from these discussions that China generally cooperates with African countries in two ways:

1. Official cooperation through:

- i. Chinese-organised capacity building workshops where African countries are invited to participate
  - ii. Direct financial aid to African states
  - iii. Cooperation between the USA, China and Africa on firewood and the conservation of natural forests. In this area the IUCN helps targeted countries to benefit from the China's experience. A trilateral meeting is currently being arranged and will take place in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) in June 2009
  - iv. The EU-China bilateral coordination mechanism (see paragraph 4).
2. Unofficial cooperation through, amongst other things, IUCN (Central Africa) and WWF (East Africa) mediation of investments in logging and timber industry, where China is ready to respond to the increasing desires of African countries to further process timber locally.

To support silviculture and forest management capacity building in both African countries and the Chinese companies working in the sub-region, the SFA has prepared the following guidelines:

- i. Sustainable silviculture – meant for Overseas Sustainable Silviculture by Chinese Enterprises; these guidelines have already been applied in five South East Asian countries (see appendix for full text of the guidelines). The WWF, working closely with the SFA for their dissemination, has been specifically charged to identify companies operating in Central Africa where they can be tested. It will also roll out capacity building seminars on silviculture across the sub-region with the implication of the CBFP and COMIFAC.
- ii. Sustainable forest management – still in the process of being finalized.

Furthermore, China's SFA is currently developing with the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FORCAC) in partnership with the African Union (AU). The fact that the AU, in the context of the Forum, can sign up the forestry sector within the programme under preparation, could be the impetus for releasing Chinese development funding earmarked for training programmes. It may also help structure relations with the CBFP and COMIFAC. However, the SFA is not ruling out the possibility of having its experts participating to the implementation of forestry-related projects or in CBFP- and COMIFAC-run meetings. Moreover, the SFA is seeking to host an official COMIFAC delegation (President and executive Secretary) in China at the nearest opportunity. The dates for this visit must be arranged through diplomatic channels.

## **2. Economic relations between China and Central Africa**

Mr Hongfan LI, President of China Wood International Inc (CWI), and Mr Robin QIU, Head of the Department for Foreign Markets, gave an account of relations between China and Central Africa. The CWI is a private Chinese company specialised in wood market research. It also publishes a trade magazine on the international wood market: [www.chinawood.net](http://www.chinawood.net).

It appears from their presentations that the CWI supports the creation of a Chinese branch of the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) answerable to the WWF. This GFTN should aim to support Chinese concessionaries operating in Central Africa in their transactions with Chinese tropical wood buyers and to encourage progressive and gradual improvements in forest management. This will move the transactions from simple legality to full certification. In Beijing in October 2009, the CWI is organising a seminar and international fair for the trade of legal forest products. Also at this event, the CWI and GFTN are proposing to promote

trade of legal and sustainable forest products, the role of the CWI being to make research work on companies to permit GFTN to select the most exemplary one in sustainable forest management.

Moreover, the CWI head officers informed us that the trade in tropical woods between Africa and China is flourishing, 90 percent of imported timber being constituted with logs. However, China having also been hit by current world economic crisis, these imports have fallen by around 20 percent.

(See the appendix document detailing the CWI presentation at the IUCN/Forest Trends workshop.)

### **3. Learning from Chinese practices in forestry (silviculture, soil conservation, planning, logging and wood processing)**

#### **Learning point 1**

China Wood International maintains a large database covering all aspects of tropical wood production, importation and processing (<http://www.chinawood.net/english/index.jsp>).

Therefore, discussions focused on:

- Tropical wood production and its export from Central Africa to China by Chinese companies and others
- The large Chinese importers of African woods
- Transport companies
- The major ports for tropical wood importing in China (the biggest being Zhangjiagang)
- China's first and second processing units.

These data are necessary in order to understand and develop business ties between China and Central Africa.

#### **Learning point 2**

The objectives of the Beijing Forestry Department of International Cooperation (<http://www.bfdic.com/en/>) are:

- i. To actively participate to the environment preservation in Beijing, China and the world
- ii. To undertake research and development activities to improve Beijing's environment and to develop techniques for urban reforestation
- iii. To promote international adoption of techniques in landscaping, forestry and environmental management
- iv. To demonstrate, integrate and apply cutting-edge technologies in these areas.

We were privileged to visit a Sino-German project for protection and management of the watershed area of the Miyun Reservoir, 40 kilometres northeast of Beijing (<http://test.bfdic.com/en/Our%20Projects/National%20Projects/95.htm>), which is designed to provide drinking water to Beijing's 14 million residents. A new approach in forest management, called 'Close to nature', has been successfully trialled here. The approach does not involve new tree planting but, instead, focuses on managing the forest's existing natural resources.

#### **Learning point 3**

Since 1955 the Beijing Forest Society, a multi-actor NGO, has brought together more than 2,500 members, including politicians, university professors, civil servants and the private sector. All the Society's members are forestry-sector experts and part of their brief is to work together to promote sustainable forest management. The Society has established working partnerships with more than 130 Chinese and non-Chinese organisations and is currently a member of the acclaimed Forest Stewardship Council. The Society's serving chairperson is

Ms Nu Yun Li who is also vice-president of the SFA. We met Mr Xiaoping WANG, Managing Director of Parks and Forests in the Department of International Cooperation, who holds the post of Secretary-General and presides over a China-Africa working group.

#### **4. China-EU bilateral coordination mechanism for the FLEG and the possible contributions of COMIFAC and CBFP**

##### **Discussions with the European Commission delegation and the Department for International Development (UK)**

Discussions were held between Magnus Gislev and Simon Sharpe from the EU Commission delegation and Adrian Davis and Leo Horn-Phathanothai from the Department for International Development. The conversations focused on the FLEG 'bilateral coordination mechanism' agreement, signed by China's State Forestry Administration and the European Union on 30 January 2009 in Brussels. It should be pointed out that this agreement has implications for the wood sector in Central Africa in terms of the Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and in terms of China's concern to ensure that its forest companies working in Africa respect the forestry laws of the countries in which they operate. As a result of the discussions, the CBFP was identified as a suitable intermediary for the SFA and COMIFAC to facilitate implementation of the agreement, once the action plan is drawn up by Chinese and European specialists. The CBFP could already advise consultants charged with the formulation of this action plan.

##### **Contact with Ralph Ridder, European Forest Institute**

The European Forest Institute is an international organisation set up by the Member States of the European Union. It looks after and manages EU funds for the implementation of the FLEGT Action Plan. This funding is provided by the European Commission and the Governments of Finland and the United Kingdom. Discussions centred on the possibility of using the Institute as a conduit for organising FLEGT workshops and seminars. These would bring together experts from COMIFAC and the Chinese public and private sectors under the terms of a Convention to be agreed between China and COMIFAC for this purpose.

#### **5. Meeting with WWF and IUCN**

##### **Meeting with WWF China**

The discussions with the WWF China Office involved:

- Mr Yu GAO, Director of the Global Shift Initiative
- Ms Lin LI, Head of Conservation Strategy
- Ms Nan LI, Trade and Investment Programme
- Ms Karin Wessman, Leader of the Global Shift Initiative
- Ms Zheng HANG, Director of the Forests Programme.

After having recalled the CBFP objectives and the WWF commitments as a member of the CBFP, the WWF China Office then laid out its programme of engagements in Africa which is delivered through the 'China for a Global Shift Initiative' and its forthcoming China-Africa unit. The possibility was mooted of both parties taking advantage of the upcoming WWF study group visit to Cameroon to identify areas where WWF China and the CBFP can work together. There is already the option of the recently completed 'triangular study' which looks at the Global Shift Initiative and which is referenced in the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) study on the impact on forests of trade between China and Central

Africa. To move Chinese and Central African cooperation in forestry forward, it will be necessary to:

- i. Identify bottlenecks that hamper the embedding of sustainable forestry management practices in Chinese companies operating in the Congo Basin, and to put forward win-win solutions
- ii. Promote the positive experiences of Chinese forest companies operating in the Congo Basin
- iii. Aim to support on-the-ground trials of the new SFA silviculture and sustainable forest management directives
- iv. Ensure WWF China and the CBFP share information and update each other about contacts made and activities undertaken with the Chinese stakeholders.

### **Meeting with IUCN China**

The CBFP delegation's first action was to take an active role in the fourth IUCN/Forest Trends workshop about the sustainable and legal wood trade in China (see the appendix and further documentation at: [http://www.forest-trends.org/resources/meetings.htm#beijing\\_2009](http://www.forest-trends.org/resources/meetings.htm#beijing_2009)). On that occasion, the delegation gave a presentation about the CBFP, its creation, objectives, modus operandi, and main achievements since its foundation in 2002. It also set out opportunities for collaboration with China in the context of, amongst other things, the FLEG China-EU bilateral coordination mechanism.

Discussions were then held with the following representatives from the IUCN China Office and Forest Trends (who ran the workshop):

- Hao ZHUANG, Coordinator
- Ke DONG, Forests Programme
- Jia LI, Forests Programme
- Xiufang SUN, Forest Trends.

It was apparent from these discussions that those (from the public and private sectors, and NGOs) who take an interest in China and Central Africa's relations in terms of forests and the wood trade are better informed and organised due to these communications activities and consultation exercises. Using the medium of the CBFP, the two organisations are ready to contribute to an ever more intensive working relationship with COMIFAC and, in so doing, share their information, research and training methodologies.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

We can confirm without hesitation that the CBFP Facilitators' mission to China has been a success. It has provided a picture of the strengthening ties between public, private and NGO stakeholders from both COMIFAC and China, and it has established a more formal working relationship between COMIFAC and the SFA. This is all the more important given China's ever increasing economic presence in Africa and its forestry sector. This is an opportunity to promote to the forestry sector, for example, the sustainable management practices that are strongly recommended by the Yaoundé Declaration (1999) and supported by the international community.

All those in China with whom we held discussions – the forestry authorities, private sector, NGOs, CBFP members in China – encouraged the Facilitation Team to pursue the approaches repeatedly considered at the CBFP meetings, such as those discussed recently at the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting in Brazzaville, October 2008. They also keenly expressed their desire to establish formal and direct relations between COMIFAC and the Chinese authorities as soon as possible and thereby obviate the need for an

intermediary such as the CBFP. The next steps involve developing a road map to bring on board all those who can help us meet this objective. This will be put to partners by the CBFP Facilitation Team at the next RAC meeting in Douala, Cameroon on 18 and 19 May 2009.

In the meantime, it is recommended that from this point forward COMIFAC becomes fully involved in all China's cooperation activities (meetings, workshops, seminars and studies) in Central Africa.