

## **Congo Basin Forest Partnership – 8th meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee, 27 – 28 September 2010 Kinshasa**

### **Daniel Haas (Deputy Division Director, BMZ)**

His Excellency Minister José ENDUNDO BONONGE, Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism of the Democratic Republic of Congo,

His Excellency Minister Emmanuel BIZOT, Minister of Waters, Forests, Fisheries and Hunting of the Central African Republic and current President of COMIFAC,

Martial PAGE, Canadian Embassy to the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues.

Since many years Germany recognizes the **global importance and responsibility of preserving the world's tropical forests**, and the positive impact that sustainable management of these forests has on peoples' livelihoods, not only on the local but also on the international level. This is why the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) was an early supporter of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. Eight years after the initial launch at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, CBFP is **still prospering and represents one of the most dynamic examples of the innovative partnership concept, contributing to the intergovernmental commitment laid down in the Yaoundé Declaration**. It is a great pleasure for me to see that Germany's participation as one of the founding members and now with three years experience as facilitator of CBFP has been a successful investment of German financial resources as well as of some individual's energy and dedication. In this respect I would like to thank Mr Schipulle for his enduring commitment to enhance, deepen and guide the partnership. Thanks also to the other members of the facilitation team who contributed to the impressive record of inputs and results presented here today in the previous session. I refrain from commenting on the "*rigide method allemande*"...

I would like to recall some points of the evaluation report (presented by Jean-Marie Noiraud):

- CBFP and the facilitation successfully **promoted the role and objectives of COMIFAC as the regional inter-governmental organization** responsible for defining and monitoring forest sector politics in Central Africa.
- CBFP was able to **attract new partners** ready to support special programs – such as Norway, FSC, individual corporate members such as Precious Woods and ALPI Group, or the African Development Bank.
- The facilitation has consolidated the existing network by **structuring communication and information flows**, surely based on the achievements of the French and US

Facilitation. Given the fact, that members are based all over the world improving communication was an important element of the German facilitation. Response from the German-Canadian evaluation gave us great satisfaction that the website and the management of information flow in general received quite a positive feedback.

These results towards better stakeholder participation, more transparency, coordination and harmonization is fully in line with the targets of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda of Action (2009). Both documents provide essential guidance for German Development Cooperation. This is why I am glad to state that the Congo Basin Forest Partnership has developed as a **dynamic platform**, capable of generating dialogue on core issues concerning the Congo Basin Forests. CBFP and COMIFAC members successfully utilized this forum to consolidate positions and respond to new issues emerging on the international political agenda, like for example the role of forests for mitigation of climate change (REDD+) or topics associated with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This has led to an increased visibility and influence of the Congo Basin in the international arena.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 where the concept of the so called UN type II partnerships for sustainable development had been launched as voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives for implementing the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. A core principle of type II partnerships is the concept **of shared responsibility. Partnerships are meant to contribute but never to substitute regional governments' commitment and responsibility.** CBFP's members' activities to implement of the regional Convergency Plan and to strengthen regional forest institutions can only be successful if COMIFAC member governments undertake efforts to make subregional institutions operational and financially independent through their own budgetary contributions. COMIFAC and its regional partner institutions gain legitimacy if COMIFAC member governments continue to sustain the concept of sub-regional cooperation and policy-making in the forest sector by implementing the **autonomous financing mechanism.**

However, implementation of this **mechanism is still lagging behind**, and the declaration of the last COMIFAC Council of Ministers meeting (March 2010) is less encouraging than those that have been signed before the Copenhagen summit. **Progress in this matter would provide a strong demonstration of regional ownership and political will to develop institutions for good forest governance in the Congo Basin thus promoting a positive reputation of the Central African forest sector.** This could pay off fundamentally in the regions prospects to attract funding in a future climate regime and from the envisaged REDD+ mechanism now under negotiation. I consider it as a very positive sign that the CEEAC Secretariat attends the CCR meeting, and look forward to further discussions with CEEAC officials and COMIFAC on how to finance SE COMIFAC and other institutions in the future.

**Germany recognizes and welcomes the efforts undertaken in the region to reform forest laws, combat illegal logging and timber trade, strengthen the implication of all stakeholders in forest politics and manage transboundary protected areas.** I also wish to express my sincere

appreciation for the supportive and proactive role Central African countries play with regard to the EU's FLEGT Action Plan, with Cameroon, Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic being among the first countries ever to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU. The "early movers" among timber exporting countries, which start to introduce timber tracking and legality assurance systems rather soon may expect competitive advantages in a world timber market which will more and more request assurances for wood products coming from legal sources and sustainable, eco-friendly production. The EU's envisaged due diligence regulation and legal initiatives like the US Lacey Act amendment provide momentum for this emerging trade environment. With the region expanding certified timber production rapidly during the last years to almost 5 million hectares it seems that the private sector already is responding to shifting demands.

A workshop on "Forest Governance and Sustainability Standards in the Congo Basin" hosted by the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC with facilitation of German Development Cooperation here in Hotel Memling from Wednesday to Friday will explore synergies between regulatory approaches and voluntary standards. The workshop intends to foster understanding of recent market trends and about the possible impact of new regulations on importing and producing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to reconfirm the German government's commitment to support regional approaches for sustainable forest management in the Central African region. COMIFAC will continue to play a core role for this endeavor. Continuous bilateral support to Cameroon is also secured with last week's successful governmental negotiations in Bonn, Germany. With regard to DRC we hope to solve some problems which presently put new bilateral commitments in question. Canada has offered in its road map the idea of shared priority areas among the CBFP partners. Germany will – after consultation with all partners concerned - possibly play a major role in continue promoting the China-Africa dialogue during the next facilitation phase

Before giving the word to Martial Page, Chief of mission of the Canadian embassy to DRC, **I would like to welcome on behalf of the German government the new Facilitator Gaston Grenier**, and to wish him all the best for his upcoming mandate. Canada has set up an ambitious regional program, and the facilitation is only one part of it. Gaston, keep up good faith in the dynamics of a broad network like CBFP, don't lose patience with regards to problems that may not be solved during the two years of facilitation, and keep your palpable enthusiasm and conviviality that will help you excel in becoming the "rowing ambassador for the Congo Basin forests".

***Bonne chance – et bonne coopération. Nous sommes avec vous.***