



***First Africa-China International Workshop on "Forestland Governance, Investments and Sustainability" - Yaounde, 3-5 September 2019***

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

The first Africa-China workshop on "Forestland Governance, Investments and Sustainability" held in Yaounde -Cameroon from 3 to 5 September 2019 brought together about 120 participants from China, 11 different African, North American and European countries. This workshop represented a great multi-stakeholder exchange setup involving policy makers, researchers and academics, journalists, representatives from civil society organisations, local communities and indigenous peoples, as well as international technical and financial partners. The workshop was fully funded by UKaid/DFID.

Unanimously, the participants sincerely want this Africa-China dialogue initiative to continue because of its substantial contribution to discussions necessary to improve the governance and sustainability of natural resources in Africa in general and the Congo Basin in particular.

The participants and international partners at the workshop:

- Urged China's Global Environmental Institute (GEI) and the African Forest Policies and Politics (AFORPOLIS) to work with the Chinese government and that of Congo Basin countries, COMIFAC as well as CBFP authorities to establish foundations for the sustainability of this Africa-China science-policy dialogue and exchange initiative. The aim of the long-term sustainability of this dialogue is to establish a win-win partnership between China and African countries in joint strategic priorities related to the governance of natural resources. Specific sectors such as those related to industrial innovation in forest and agro-forestry commodity value chains and the development of a social and ecological economy for improved natural resource sustainability could be tangible examples of strategic priorities between the two parties;
- Suggested that this cycle of dialogue on sustainability issues of African forestlands in relation to Chinese investments be included in the dynamics of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Economically, it would also explore options for convergence with other recent initiatives such as the



African Wood Forum, the Global Green Supply Chain (GGSC), the Chinese Timber Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA), the Chinese Forest Products Industry Association (CFPIA) and the Shanghai Timber Trade Association (STTA);

- Encouraged greater experience sharing and interactions between Chinese and African stakeholders in forest production, management and control. Particular emphasis will be placed on rigorous law enforcement systems, capacity building on forest control, technology transfer in the field of traceability and customs control on wood and wildlife products, innovative forest plantation techniques, agroforestry, restoration of degraded landscapes and forestlands, processing of wood and non-timber forest products;
- Proposed the establishment of a China-Africa platform for science-policy interaction in Africa to promote and monitor the ecological and social sustainability of Chinese investments in the use and preservation of natural resources;
- Emphasised that law enforcement and governance improvement in the management of natural resources in Africa is first the responsibility of timber-producing countries and then of consuming countries, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility;
- Proposed the establishment of a development and financing mechanism for China-Africa international research programmes on ecological, economic and social issues for Chinese investments in the field of natural resources in Africa. Particular attention should be given to the dynamics of converting forestlands into other uses (exploitation of wood, mining and oil under forests, creation of agricultural plantations in forest areas, etc.). These programmes will ensure the permanent renewal of knowledge for many stakeholders including policy makers;
- Urged policymakers to review the current model of community forestry in the Congo Basin to ensure more effective local management systems and equitable benefit sharing for local communities and indigenous peoples. It



is also about aligning the legal framework and governance of community forests with the increasing presence of foreign investment at the local level;

- Called on participants to take interest in the activities of the Global Green Supply Chain Conference and the ATIBT Forum from 21 to 25 October 2019 in Shanghai. Discussions from this forum could contribute to advancing reflection on some of the points discussed at the first Africa-China International workshop on forestland governance in Yaounde.

The participants expressed their sincere gratitude to the decision-makers of the Republic of Cameroon and the People's Republic of China, the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife of Cameroon for their support and patronage of this first workshop. They were grateful to the main organisers, namely Global Environmental Institute (GEI), the African Forest Policies and Politics (AFORPOLIS), and UKaid/DFID, who fully funded this first workshop. The participants also expressed their sincere thanks to the co-organisers and partners of this first Africa-China workshop, the University of Göttingen - Germany, IUFRO, the University of Dschang - Cameroon, CBFP, CIFOR, the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation, for their valuable contribution to the success of this first Africa-China workshop on "Forestland Governance, Investments and Sustainability" held from 3 to 5 September 2019 in Yaounde.

Yaounde, 6 September 2019