

## **Topic 1. Rule of Law: The Role of Protected Areas and Protected Species**

**10:30-11:00**

Presentation: M. Lekealem Joseph, DFAP

Facilitation: Emma Stokes/Jef Dupain

Protected species and protected areas are two related but distinct concepts. Protected species are protected by national law both inside and outside protected areas. Protected areas protect the residing populations of non-protected and protected species. These issues often seem to be forgotten in discussions on conservation, wildlife and bushmeat. They sound evident and straightforward but are often not so in practice.

Firstly in this session we will explore the role and effectiveness of protected areas in the region. Protected areas are designed for the most part with the primary objective of conservation – not sustainable use. Yet many protected areas in the region are failing on this most basic goal. To what extent are protected areas able to deliver on their core wildlife conservation objectives, where are examples of successful protected areas in the region, and what can we draw from these?

We raise the issue of certification of Protected Areas, as proposed under the **IUCN Green List of Protected Areas (GLPA)**. Certification can be seen as a strategy that can both guide and incentivize protected areas to increase targeted and effective investment in conservation, and both recognize and reward performance in fulfilling the goals and objectives of protected areas. But certification has also certain costs and risks for implementation. How to ensure the best way forward to avoid the scenario of ‘good’ protected areas getting better at the risk of ‘bad’ protected areas stagnating.

Secondly, we will address the issue of protected species living outside of protected areas. We should recognize the unique asset of the Congo Basin in having considerable habitat available for protected species outside of protected areas. Wildlife laws exist that protect these animals irrespective of whether they live in or outside PA's, yet attitudes to these populations differ. In practice, how protected *are* protected species living on lands that are used for purposes other than conservation? There is increasing reference to ‘zero tolerance’ approaches on the killing or trade of fully protected species, such as great apes and elephants irrespective of whether that species resides inside or outside of PAs. Awareness building, sensitization AND effective law enforcement will be needed, as will strict enforcement of a ban on protected/endangered species sales and consumption amongst urban retailers.

Finally, how do we prioritize our investments? Available resources and expertise are currently insufficient to meet existing objectives of protected areas – how then do we set about expanding the scope of protection to species outside of protected areas? We do not have the means to protect everything, everywhere. Should we set aside more critical habitats for conservation even if there are no practical means of resourcing the necessary law enforcement and anti-poaching measures in these areas? In which case, who has the responsibility of assuming this protection, what political and legal instruments can be leveraged, and does this fall on the shoulders of protected area agencies, wildlife agencies or the private sector (extractive industry and agribusiness)?

We illustrate and discuss the examples from Cameroonian legislation, which allows for identification of “permanent forest”, the Zero Net Deforestation and Forest Degradation approach promoted by WWF, the costs, opportunities and benefits of High Conservation Value forests, and the option of creating Protected Areas Cat VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources) – all of which offer various costs and benefits in protecting suitable habitat from attribution to land use practices that require forest conversion.

In Cameroun, the Ministry of Forests and Fauna is responsible for both the management of protected areas and of wildlife. The Director, J. Lekealem, will give us insights in his vision on above topics.

*With above summary of the presentation in mind, participants will be invited to think about challenges*

*when dealing with protected species outside protected areas, and how to avoid the risk that protected areas do not become isolated islands for wide-ranging protected species.*