



Forests and the Biodiversity Convention

**Independent Monitoring of the
Implementation of the Expanded Programme
of Work
in Cameroon**

EU-GoC



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Tropical forest Cameroon.

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CONTENT

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2. SURVEY RESULTS	4
❖ 2.1. Environmental, geophysical, economic and social map of Cameroon	4
❖ 2.2. Characteristics of the Cameroonian forests	5
❖ 2.3. General survey on forest and land schemes in Cameroon	6
❖ 2.4. Condition of forests and forest peoples before and after the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity	7
❖ 2.5. Dominant practices of forest management in Cameroon before and after the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in 2002	8
3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15
❖ 3.1. Main conclusions or findings of this study	15
❖	
❖ 3.2. Main recommendations	15

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is about the efforts made by Cameroon to implement the Expanded Program of Work on Forest Biological Diversity created in 2002. It has been produced following the Global Forest Coalition's initiative, under the supervision of the CED (*Centre for the Environment and Development*), a non governmental organization from Cameroon.

Cameroon has a massive forest estate, estimated at 21.2 million ha in 2005. It produces about 3 million m³ of timber per year, including almost 2.27 million m³ of industrial wood and 1 million m³ of domestic firewood. The country has an annual deforestation rate of about 0.6%. Forestry employs more than 10,000 people and contributes more than 6% to its GDP. Cameroonian forests are home to local communities (Bantu) and Indigenous communities, including the Baka, Bagyeli and Bedzan peoples, commonly known as Pygmies.

Long before the adoption of the CBD/POW, Cameroon had already nearly completed the establishment of a legal and institutional arsenal considered capable of guaranteeing a good level of biological diversity within its forests. This is partly thanks to an important sectoral reform plan implemented through the third Structural Adjustment Loan.

After the adoption of the Programme, Cameroon kept on working to develop its legal and institutional structure, including through the Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples, the Forest Management Norms, the Development Plan for the Pygmies (PDPP), the Computer System for the Management of Forestry Information (SIGIF), the Sectoral Programme for the Forest Environment (PSFE), the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biological Diversity (SPANB), the National Management Plan for the Environment (PNGE) and the Strategic Document for Poverty Reduction (DSRP).

Additionally, various bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements have provided and continue to provide Cameroon with support in dealing with various aspects relating to forest biodiversity. These include the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation.

Indeed, Cameroon seems to have spent the last twelve years putting its forest sector reforms in place, primarily by establishing a range of legal and institutional tools. These should now be used to relieve, among other things, the increasing poverty suffered by forest peoples, the rising degradation, the environmental problems increasingly felt in forest areas, the pressure that market forces exert on the forest sector, the rise of poaching due to social pressures, and various other factors.

2. SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 Environmental, geophysical, economic and social map of Cameroon

Cameroon is situated in central Africa, from the Gulf of Guinea to the Lake Chad, between latitude 2° and 13° north and longitude 8° 30' and 16° 10' east. Independent since 1960, it is a member of the CEMAC¹. It has a total surface of 475.440 km² (469.440 km² of land and 6.000 km² of maritime area), and is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Nigeria, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea. The climate zones are varied: wet tropical in the Southern region, semi-arid in the North, and mountain climate in the western and north-western Plateau regions. Its highest peak is Mount Cameroon, 4.000 m

¹ CEMAC: *Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa*

high, and the lowest lands are at sea level. In its volcanic regions, eruptions and seismic events may be frequent.

Cameroon's 18 million inhabitants include more than 200 ethnic groups: Baka, Bagyeli, Bedzan and Mbororos which are identified as indigenous peoples², and other groups such as Bamiléké, Bafia and Beti. Over 70% of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture and cattle breeding. The country produces oil, wood and aluminium and will also produce bauxite and nickel shortly.

Cameroon has a rich biodiversity, with more than 900 bird species, 200 mammals, over 300 reptiles³ and 9,000 plant species. It comprises five agro-ecologic zones and six ecosystems. Its coastline is more than 402 km long and its drainage system includes more than ten rivers and several lakes⁴. Two out of ten Provinces of Cameroon (North and Far North) account for almost ¼ of its total surface (about 100,000 km²). They are part of the Sudan-Sahel zone, a desert and semi-desert area. The high population density in this part of the country (about 200 inhabitants per km² in certain zones of the Far North province) has resulted in soil degradation due to overgrazing, among other factors⁵.

2.2. Characteristics of the Cameroonian forests

Cameroon's forest area is the third in the Congo basin, covering 21.5 million hectares (about 45% of the national land area⁶), with 600 exploitable species of which 300 are tradable. Its wood potential is estimated at 1,517 billion m³ and, in 2006, the wood production was about 2.3 million m³. The forestry sector accounts for 11% of the GDP and employs over 12,000 people⁷, more than any other formal sector of the national economy.

Cameroonian law differentiates permanent forests (the state permanent forest domain) covering more than 12 million hectares, which represents more than 50% of the total forest lands of the country, from non-permanent forests (the state non-permanent forest domain). In 2007⁸, the permanent domain included 110 *Unités Forestières d'Aménagement (UFA)*⁹, 90% already allocated and 9% on allocation process; 14 community forests¹⁰, and 105 protected areas¹¹ including 36 parks, zoos and wildlife sanctuaries, and 69 areas of hunting interest. Almost every permanent forest must have a Management Plan, as the main tool for a sustainable management or exploitation.

² The Bagyeli are about 3,500 to 4,000 people, the Baka 25,000 to 40,000, the Bedzan about 300 and the Mbororos more than 600,000. See also Albert K Barume, *Etude sur le cadre légal de protection des droits des peuples indigènes et tribaux au Cameroun*, ILO, Geneva, 2005, pp 24-25.

³ <http://rainforests.mongabay.com/20cameroon.htm>

⁴ Rivers: Wouri, Nkam, Noun, Sanaga, Bok, Lobo, Sangha, Dja, Mayo kebi, Benoué, Faro, Logone, Vina, and Chari. Lakes: Oku, Tizong, Bini, Barombi, Ossa, Dissoni, Ejagal, Tchad and Fianga (see Cameroun-plus website: <http://www.cameroun-plus.com/b05/index.php?page=hydrographie>).

⁵ Republic of Cameroon, UNDP-Cameroon, *Plan d'action national de lutte contre la désertification (PAN-LCD)*, UNOPS, pp 2 and 11

⁶ Republic of Cameroon, *National assessment on forestry resources of Cameroon, 2003-2004*, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), December 2005, p 28.

⁷ Alain Karsenty et al, *Economic and financial assessment of the forestry sector of Cameroon*, Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2006, pp 38 and 39.

⁸ Joseph Claude Abena, *Aperçu du secteur forestier camerounais. Présentation à la mission de suivi multipartenaires du Programme Sectoriel Forêts Environnement*, June 2007, p. 3.

⁹ The UFAs are forest blocks of several tens or hundreds of thousand hectares, divided in thirty plots, one of them being logged every year.

¹⁰ Community forests belong to a public body (the Commune) but they are exploited according to the same principles than the UFA; see 2004 Forestry law, art 30 (1).

¹¹ While the IUCN list of 1998 recognizes only 7 protected areas (Korup National Park, wildlife reserves of Douala Edéa, Kimbi, Ossa Lake, Nanga-Eboko and Santchou, and the hunting zone of Kalfou), at the national level there are 10 national parks recognized, 6 wildlife reserves and 1 wildlife sanctuary. See Dr. Ir Ngandjui Germain, *Assessment report on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, preliminary report, August 2006*.

Non-permanent domains or woodlands that can be allocated to non-forest activities include community forests, "Ventes de coupe" (Sales of Standing Volume) and, on most of them, logging permits, Individual Felling Authorizations and Wood Recovery permits¹².

The Forestry law of 1994, which regulates the use of forests and wildlife, established that 30% of the national territory should be protected areas. This objective has been partially achieved: 19.5% of the country's territory is protected, including 36 parks, reserves, zoos, sanctuaries, 69 zones of hunting interest and many others¹³.

2.3. General survey on forest and land schemes in Cameroon

The edict 74/01 of July 6th, 1974 which sets the land scheme in Cameroon, determines that the State is the land's guarantor. The same principle is taken up by the Forestry law of January 20th, 1994 and several implementation decrees¹⁴, which regulate forestry, wildlife and fishing activities.

Land issues are regulated both by formal and customary law. The customary law system prevails in rural areas, with a set of regulations essentially pre-colonial, tacit and non-written. For example, being the first to clear a plot confers an almost exclusive right to use that land, and such right can be turned into a legal land property title¹⁵. However, Cameroonian formal law is considered superior to customary law¹⁶. Furthermore, the edict of 1974 differentiates national domains¹⁷ from private lands, and property titles are the one and only proof of acquisition of a land estate¹⁸. Therefore, almost all non-registered lands are considered vacant and ownerless, thus becoming part of the national domain¹⁹.

In this country, land rights do not automatically confer any right over the resources on the land in question, including forests owned by the State. Like Cameroonian ground law, forest laws in this country only protect the customary right to land use, which allows communities living next to a forest to exploit forest, wildlife and fishing products for personal purposes, with the exception of protected species²⁰.

¹² Community forests, estimated at more than a hundred today, are allocated to local communities under a special procedure and their exploitation is carried out either by the communities themselves or through subcontractors. The "ventes de coupe" are logging titles valid for one to three years periods depending on the case, covering a certain timber volume and number of trees and not more than 2,500 ha. All other small logging titles are also limited in time and space and cover a well defined volume and number of trees that can be logged for a wide variety of reasons.

¹³ Six protected areas are being created currently: Ebo, Ndongoré, Mount Cameroon, Takamanda, Panghar and the marine park of Kribi. Five other management plans are being elaborated: National Parks of Nki, Boumba Bek, Boumba Njidda, Kom and the gorilla sanctuary of Mengame. There are three wildlife sanctuaries, one of them under construction: Banyang Mbo, Mengame and Kilum jim.

- 6 wildlife reserves: Kimbi, Dja, Lac Ossa, Mbi Crater, Santchou, Douala-Edéa
- 3 zoos: Limbé, Yaoundé, Garoua

- 69 zones of hunting interest, in Adamaoua, North, Centre, South and East provinces. 23 are under community management, 2 of which are being established; 48 are leased to economic operators that manage them according to the terms of reference signed with the wildlife administration.

Not counting the six National parks that are being set up, the rest of the parks cover a total surface of about 3.6 million hectares (7.5% of the national territory). The zones of hunting interest (ZIC) and those of hunting interest under community management (ZICGC) cover 12% of the country's land area.

¹⁴ Decrees 95/531/ of August 23rd, 2005 and 95/466/PM of July 20th, 1995, on the implementation of the forestry and wildlife schemes respectively.

¹⁵ According to Article 17 of the edict of 1974, traditional communities, their members and all Cameroonian subjects that, by the time this ordinance comes into force, occupy or exploit the lands in the first category as per Article 15, can continue occupying or exploiting them. According to Article 7, they can also ask for and obtain property titles. They are also recognized hunting and gathering rights in the lands of the second category, provided the Government has not allocated them to a specific activity.

¹⁶ See Supreme Court of Cameroon, *Affaire Bessala Awona c/Bidzogo Génévienne Cor.* A N° 445 of April 3rd, 1962.

¹⁷ Art 15 of 1974 edict on land property: "national domain lands are classified in two categories: 1- inhabited lands, agricultural and grazing lands, plantation and rangelands where occupation is confirmed by an evident human activity and a certified exploitation; 2- lands with no effective occupation."

¹⁸ Art 1, decree 76-165 of April 27th, 1976, ruling on the conditions to obtain a land property title.

¹⁹ Art 14, order 74-01 of July 6th 1974 on land property scheme.

²⁰ Art 8 (1), law 94-01 of January 20th 1994 regulating forests, wildlife and fishing.

2.4. Condition of forests and forest peoples before and after the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity

Cameroonian forests are divided as follows: dense moist forests of evergreen species (53.6%), dense moist forests of semi-deciduous species (29.6%), deciduous forests (0.0%), gallery forests (8.0%), swamp forests (8.4%), other natural forests (0.3%) and 23,000 ha of tree plantations²¹. The annual timber production has slightly increased during the same period of time, from 1,877,209 m³ in 2000-2001 to 2,289,416 in 2006²². During the second half of the 1990s, such production was estimated at about 3,000,000 m³ per year.

Cameroon loses about 200,000 ha per year to logging, that is to say 0.6% of its total forest area, which represents one of the highest deforestation rates in the Congo basin²³ in connection with small-scale and industrial logging.

According to the estimates, 60% of the tree species as well as different animals like chimpanzees could be endangered²⁴. It is also reported that 156 out of 260 plant species of Cameroon are endemic, and that 51 out of 250 mammal species are either vulnerable or highly threatened²⁵. Besides, there is an estimated 542 fish species, 850 bird species and 330 reptile species²⁶.

Logging in Cameroon is still selective. In 2006, a governmental survey revealed that wood extraction was still concentrated in two main species: Ayous and Sapelli, passing from 50% in 1998 to 55% in 2004. In the same period, the first 6 species increased from 72% to 75%. This shows that fifteen years ago harvesting was less selective²⁷. The sustainable management of wildlife resources depends on logging permits being issued and on controlling the implementation and monitoring of the terms of reference²⁸.

Cameroon wants to involve local communities in managing natural resources²⁹, but there are still important legal obstacles to that³⁰. Generally, forest peoples are not recognized as the owners of their ancestral lands, even less of the resources that abound on these lands. This situation especially affects indigenous forest peoples like Bagyeli, Bakola, Baka and Bedzang. Before the Program was adopted there was some hope, because the word 'indigenous' was included in the Constitution of 1996 and several programs related to them had been created, for example, the Indigenous Peoples Development Plan in the case of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline³¹, the Development Plan for Pygmy Peoples (PDPP)³² and the Environment and Forest

²¹ Republic of Cameroon and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, *National assessment on forestry resources of Cameroon, 2003-2004*, Yaoundé, December 2005, p 33. Deforestation rates are increasing due to the rising forest surface allocated to small titles (wood recovery permits, individual felling authorizations, etc), council forests and community forests, which were insignificant until 2002.

²² Joseph Claude Abena, *Aperçu du secteur forestier camerounais, Présentation à la mission de suivi multipartenaires du Programme Secteur Forêts Environnement*, June 2007, p 8.

²³ CIFOR, *L'impact de la crise économique sur les systèmes agricoles et le changement du couvert forestier dans la zone forestière humide du Cameroun*, February 2000, p 6.

²⁴ Forest Governance Facility (FGF) and Réseau d'Information pour le développement durable en Afrique centrale (RIDDAC), *Cadre juridique pour les forêts et l'environnement au Cameroun*, RIDDAC, Yaoundé, 2007, p.10.

²⁵ See art 2 and 3 of decree N°0648/MINFOF, December 18th 2006, which classifies animals in protection categories A, B and C.

²⁶ Tekeu Jean-Claude, *Report on the implementation of environmental impact assessments (EIA) in Cameroon. Report prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*, December 2004, p 10.

²⁷ Republic of Cameroon, *National assessment on forestry resources of Cameroon, 2003-2004*, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Yaoundé, December 2005, p 20.

²⁸ The hunting sector has 80 operators and 51 guides. Every year, 400-500 foreign hunters come to Cameroon and apply for permits on big and small game and on wildlife products extraction.

²⁹ Creation of community forests, zones of hunting interest managed by communities, allocation of 10% of the annual forestry tax.

³⁰ The indigenous peoples issue is not specifically included in the regulations in force, thus excluding them from access to community forests, ZICGC and RFA. The establishment of community forests and ZICGC within the permanent forest domain is not allowed; allocation processes are long, complex and expensive; the management of the RFA is characterized by a strong presence of the administration. Local communities seem to be consulted only at the time of classifying forests; use rights concern just the permanent forest domains. Besides, those rights are limited to self-consumption needs.

³¹ This pipeline conveys oil from Chad to the Cameroon port of Kribi. It was partly financed with funds from the World Bank.

Sectoral Programme (PSFE)³³. There was also the participative mapping that the Centre for the Environment and Development at South Cameroon developed together with the indigenous Bagyeli, related to their rights in Campo Ma'an National Park.

Besides, the mechanisms of participation in natural resources' management following the example of community forestry and the creation of common hunting lands are undermined at their implementation stage by the reduction of benefits from logging³⁴, by problems about forestry governance, cultural constraints, dysfunctions in the allocation of benefits to the communities, the communities' lack of management capacities³⁵ and the scarcity of financial means.

2.5. Dominant practices of forest management in Cameroon before and after the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in 2002

Management and certification

Before the adoption of the Expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, there was an acceleration of forest management in Cameroon. For example, in 2000, 10 out of 20 allocated UFAs were registered by decree after the approval of their management plans, while in 2005, from 24 allocated UFAs only 3 were registered by decree³⁶. But, although these management plans were approved by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, which is one of the main conditions required for the final contract, none of these contracts has been signed yet. Meanwhile, the quality and effectiveness of such management plans have been questioned³⁷.

After the programme was adopted, certification has increased too: during the last four years, about 2 million hectares have been certified, including by the FSC³⁸. Legal certificates are different from sustainability certificates. Over the same period, 5 management plans for protected areas³⁹ were elaborated, unfortunately without an effective participation of indigenous peoples and without taking into account the rights of Pygmy communities, in spite of legal requirements. The only exception is the national park of Campo Ma'an where indigenous peoples Bakola and Bagyeli are recognized the right to move within the park and to use its resources.

Legal instruments, norms and framework programmes⁴⁰

³² *The main objective of this Development Plan of Pygmy Peoples (IPDP) is to ensure that the PNDP will respect the rights, culture and dignity of the Baka, Kola and Aka. The PNDP was created as part of the implementation of the DSRP in Cameroon.*

³³ *Launched in 2001, the PSFE was designed to support ministry services in charge of the implementation of the forestry policy, i.e. the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife and the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, with the global objective of perpetuating the economic, environmental and social functions of all the forest ecosystems of Cameroon through a sustainable management of its forest and wildlife resources.*

³⁴ *Timothée Fomété, La fiscalité forestière et l'implication des communautés locales à la gestion forestière au Cameroun, DFID, July 2001, p 18. See also: Cuny, P, Abe'ele, P, Nguenang, G-M, Djeukam, R, Eboule, S, Eyene, E, 2003, État des lieux de la foresterie communautaire au Cameroun, Ministry of Forests and Water.*

³⁵ *Community management is not exclusive to local communities since the law makes provision for the prior organization of communities in legal entities.*

³⁶ *Joseph Claude Abena, Aperçu du secteur forestier camerounais, Présentation à la mission de suivi multipartenaires du Programme Secteur Forêts Environnement, June 2007.*

³⁷ *Vandenhaute Marc and Heuse Emmanuel, Aménagement forestier, traçabilité du bois et certification. État des lieux des progrès enregistrés au Cameroun. February 2006.*

³⁸ *Benoit Martens, et al, Interactive forestry atlas of Cameroon, MINFOF, Global Forest Watch and World Resource Institute, 2007, p 23. The current certification processes in Cameroon are Origin and Legality of Wood (OLB by BVQI-Eurocertifor), Timber Legality and Traceability Verification (TLTV by SGS, Société Générale de Surveillance), and FSC. The first two cover 23 UFA and the FSC more than 3 UFA. Except for the FSC, these certification systems only consider legality and do not take other factors into account.*

³⁹ *Benoit Martens, et al, Interactive forestry atlas of Cameroon, MINFOF, Global Forest Watch and World Resource Institute, 2007, p 27: Campo Ma'an National Park, Benoue National Park, Korup National Park, Lobeke National Park, Waza National Park and Wildlife Reserve of Dja (data of December 2006).*

⁴⁰ *It is important to highlight that even though Cameroon has carried out strong actions in collaboration with various actors in the forestry sector, the legislation in force does not modify the trend towards illegal use of forest resources. In spite of progress at the theoretical level, the impacts of reforms on the sustainable management of forest biological diversity do not meet the expectations, since regulations lack implementation. On the other hand, there are*

Almost all legal instruments and framework programmes on forests were established before the Programme was adopted. Several documents can be mentioned: the 1994 forestry law and its implementation decrees, the decree establishing a zoning plan⁴¹ that regulates the land use in the southern forest region, the framework law on environment management⁴², a bylaw about forest benefits sharing as well as specific regulations on community forests⁴³, the permanent domain forests management⁴⁴ and the forests tax system⁴⁵, the 2006 law authorizing the ratification of the Treaty on the conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa⁴⁶, the adoption, in 2005, of a norm on the obligation of environmental impact assessments in forests⁴⁷.

Several plans and programmes can be mentioned: the National Forestry Action Programme; the National Plan of Environmental Management (PNGE) in 1996; the Compendium of Forest Intervention Norms⁴⁸; the Sectoral Programme Forests Environment (PSFE); the National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity (SPANB); the adoption in 2004 of a reference system of Principles, Criteria and Indicators of forest sustainable management; the scission of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in two different entities, in 2004: the Ministry for the Environment and Nature Protection and the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife; the adoption of a national strategy to develop ecotourism; the review of the SPANB in 2006⁴⁹; the participation in the project of the COMIFAC⁵⁰ treaty about forest control; the FLEGT⁵¹ process and the ratification of the RAMSAR convention on wetlands in February 2006.

Forest technical management

Before the Programme was adopted, there were several instances of technical management of forests: (i) the creation of the Forestry Information Management System (SIGIF, *Système Informatique de Gestion de l'Information Forestière*)⁵², (ii) the introduction of a mechanism to allocate logging titles through tender by an inter-ministerial commission including international development partners and an independent observer⁵³, (iii) an inventory of Cameroon's

unsustainable management practices, legally established, that have little respect for biodiversity sustainable management practices. Such is the case of small permits like individual felling authorizations, wood recovery permits, etc.

⁴¹ *This document is criticized because local communities did not participate in its elaboration. It establishes a rather unfair forest affectation: richest woodlands are set aside for production or protected areas, and almost nothing is said about indigenous and local communities' customary rights.*

⁴² *Law 96/12 of August 5th, 2006, setting the legal framework on environmental management.*

⁴³ *Joint order 000122/MINEFI/MINAT of April 29th 1998, on the use of revenues from logging intended for neighbouring communities, and Decision 253/D/MINEF/DF on the adoption of the document "Manuel des procédures d'attribution et des normes de gestion des forêts communautaires", published in November 1997.*

⁴⁴ *Order 0222/A/MINFOF of May 25th, 2001, establishing procedures to elaborate, approve, follow-up and monitor the implementation of development plans for production forests in the permanent forest domain.*

⁴⁵ *Decree 2001/1033/PM of November 27th 2001, reorganizing the forestry tax collection program, and decree 2001/1034/PM of November 27th 2001, establishing methods to collect and control collection of duties, fees and taxes related to forest exploitation.*

⁴⁶ *Law 2006/002 of April 25th 2006, following the Convergence Plan adopted at the 2005 Summit of Congo Basin Heads of State.*

⁴⁷ *The 2005/0577/PM document of February 23rd 2005 establishes the implementation norms on environmental impacts assessments, and the ministerial order 0070/MINEP of March 22nd 2005 defines the different operation categories subject to an environmental impact assessment.*

⁴⁸ *These norms aim at protecting the environment when organizing forest management activities defined by law 94/01, art 23, 63, 64 and 65, of January 20th 1994 on forest, wildlife and fishing. They apply to any holder of a logging title, who carries out one of the forest development activities described in such law, either in the permanent or in the non-permanent forest.*

⁴⁹ *The SPANB of Cameroon is a global document which divides the country in six main ecosystems (Marine and Coastal, Tropical Humid Forest, Tropical Wooded Savannah, Semi-arid, Montane and Fresh Water) and gives priority to actions with the aim of conserving each ecosystem.*

⁵⁰ *The Central African Forest Commission is a sub-regional organization.*

⁵¹ *Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade.*

⁵² *SIGIF was implemented with support from the Canadian Cooperation and turned out to be an essential tool for the daily monitoring of logging. However, its reliability is questionable at present, since the system is barely used and data have not been updated.*

⁵³ *Order 0315/MINEF, establishing pre-selection and selection criteria and procedures for the allocation of logging titles. The allocation mechanism through invitation to tender is criticized for insider dealings, allocation of titles to illegal loggers and lack of confidentiality. See Greenpeace, «Réforme du secteur forestier: échec au Cameroun, pillage annoncé en RDC», The Netherlands, February 2007, p 4.*

biological diversity⁵⁴, and (iv) 9 UFAs covering 867,000 ha of dense forests were set aside for conservation⁵⁵.

After the adoption of the Programme, more significant measures and tools were created for the general management of Cameroonian forests. The most important is the introduction of an external support mechanism to the forest and wildlife control. An international NGO, together with the control services of the MINFOF, plays the role of independent observer to monitor and follow-up infractions to the forestry regulations. All reports are published on the internet⁵⁶. Besides, Cameroon signed an agreement with a NGO which supports the country in the struggle against poaching⁵⁷. In 2005, it also adopted the National Strategy on Forests and Wildlife Controls (SNCF) and a computerised system for sanctions monitoring and case tracking (SIGICOF, *Système Informatique de Gestion des Informations et du Contentieux Forestier*). Since 2005, Cameroon developed a remote sensing system in collaboration with Global Forest Watch, and during 2003 and 2004 they made an assessment of the national forest resources⁵⁸.

Finally, we can mention that Cameroon joined the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN, www.glin.gov) in 2007, in order to facilitate the access to forestry legislation. There is also the Environmental Information Management Programme (PRGIE) for the Congo Basin which was implemented through the Association for the Environmental Information Development (ADIE, *Association pour le Développement de l'Information Environnementale*).

Cameroon has still a lot to do regarding different problems related to forest inventories, overexploitation, the extraction rate of non-timber forest products, growth rates and available stocks, the institutional deficit and poor capacity, which affect the preservation of the forest biological diversity.

Access to resources, participative management and benefit sharing

Almost all the mechanisms related to access to resources, participative management and benefit sharing were implemented in Cameroon before the Programme was adopted. The main one is the rule about forestry tax revenue sharing: 40% to councils and 10% to local communities. There is also a rule about pre-emptive right, a mechanism allowing forest communities to ask for a community forest in all forest land that might be set up as "vente de coupe"⁵⁹; the rule⁶⁰ stating that communities are paid 1,000 CFA Franc (about US\$ 2) per m³ of timber from UFAs and "ventes de coupe"⁶¹; the Zones of Hunting Interest (ZIC) and the Zones of Hunting Interest under Community Management (ZIGC)⁶².

⁵⁴ The survey was undertaken in 1999 with support from the Nations Fund for the Environment. The results show that the Cameroonian forest management has logistic problems of control teams, other issues related to property rights of the different stakeholders, an increasing deforestation due to timber extraction and a poor participation of local communities in forest and wildlife management.

⁵⁵ However, a certain group has just been put in place to decide about the eventual logging of part of this surface. See decision 0836/MINOF/D/MINOF/SG/DF/DFAP of September 5th 2007. This working group includes representatives of the MINOF, IUCN, WWF and some donors.

⁵⁶ This role was played by the British NGO Global Witness until March 2005. Then, another British NGO named Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM), took over (<http://www.observation-cameroun.info>).

⁵⁷ Based on a collaboration agreement signed in 2006, LAGA (Last Great Ape Organisation) works together with MINFOF controllers against poaching, especially in the case of protected and endangered species.

⁵⁸ Republic of Cameroon and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Assessment of national forest resources of Cameroon 2003-2004*, Yaoundé, December 2005.

⁵⁹ Order 0518/MINEF/CAB of 2001.

⁶⁰ A benefit granted to local communities neighbouring forests and included in the terms of reference of every logging company. Instituted by circular 370/LC/MINEF/CAB of February 22nd 1996 on a trial basis, and only to be applied to "ventes de coupe" of the national domain.

⁶¹ This practice was never the object of any formal regulation, but was implemented because it became a common practice, very difficult not to apply.

⁶² Zones of Hunting Interest are protected areas reserved for hunting and managed by the administration in charge of wildlife, by a natural or legal person or a local community. All hunting in these zones is subject to payment under finance law. Hunting of protected species is forbidden (see art 3 of 1995 decree on wildlife). Zones of Hunting Interest under Community Management are jointly managed by the wildlife authority and a local community holding customary rights on the area.

After the adoption of the Programme, there was little advance on the issue of access to resources, participative management and benefit sharing. Actions on this issue can be summarized in the adoption of programmes and plans that have never been implemented⁶³. Besides, the mechanisms that were previously implemented proved to be inadequate for certain communities or were wrongly implemented due to bad management. For example, more than 100 community forests have been allocated in Cameroon until 2007. However, less than 10% of those went to the Baka, Bagyeli and Bedzan, even though they are recognized as forest indigenous peoples. These peoples' life conditions are not good: their high illiteracy and poverty rates leave them below the national average; their communities have no access to financial benefits from logging because they are marginalized by the other forest communities and their customary land rights have never been recognized⁶⁴. Subsistence hunting carried out by these groups is also a problem, since it conflicts with several conservation norms.

Role of international institutions in the implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in Cameroon

International institutions give considerable help to implement the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in Cameroon. Depending on their profile, their support is financial or technical, and cooperation is bilateral, multilateral, regional or sub-regional.

Among the institutions providing technical support we could mention: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations which helped Cameroon evaluate its forest resources between 2003 and 2004⁶⁵. The resulting report shows, for example, that Cameroonian forests produce an average of 144 tons of carbon per year, which means a potential production of more than 3.06 billion tons⁶⁶. The International Labour Office produced important surveys about legal protection of indigenous peoples in Cameroon and their involvement in the national programme against poverty⁶⁷. Likewise, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) is carrying out studies about the Cameroonian forest sector⁶⁸. The World Wild Fund (WWF) supports Cameroonian government to develop and manage several protected areas. Regarding the private sector, the WWF has just created the Central Africa Forest and Trade Network (CAFTN), the regional branch of the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN)⁶⁹. The WWF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are assisting Cameroon to update its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SPANB), which was elaborated in 1999 without considering some elements of the recent national and international policies like the OMD and the Cameroonian DSRP, as well as recommendations issued by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The UNDP also helped Cameroon to elaborate the national programme against desertification (PAN-LCD, *Plan d'Action National de Lutte contre la Désertification*) and another one on tropical forestry (*Plan d'Action Forestier Tropical*); it contributed to draft an action plan for the Congo Basin forests (*Plan d'Action Forestier pour les Forêts du Bassin du Congo*) which allowed COMIFAC to have a Convergence Plan. Other projects were carried out, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF): the Bamenda High Land Forest Project and the Cameroon interne Conservation Forest. The United

⁶³ These are mainly: the *Programme pour le Développement des Peuples Pygmées (PDPP)*, the *Plan National de Développement Participatif (PNDP)* and the *Programme Sectoriel Forêts Environnement (PSFE)*. Management plans for forest concessions establish mechanisms for forest and indigenous communities' access to resources.

⁶⁴ Albert K Barume, *Étude sur le cadre légal de protection des droits des peuples indigènes et tribaux au Cameroun*, ILO, Geneva, 2005, p 10.

⁶⁵ République du Cameroun, *Evaluation des ressources forestières nationales du Cameroun 2003-2004*, Ministère des forêts et de la faune (MINFOF) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Yaoundé, December 2005.

⁶⁶ *Idem*, pp 58-59

⁶⁷ Albert K Barume, *Étude sur le cadre légal pour la protection des droits des peuples indigènes et tribaux au Cameroun*, ILO, Geneva, 2005.

Belmond Tchoumba, *Peuples indigènes et tribaux et stratégies de réduction de la pauvreté au Cameroun*, ILO and CED, Geneva, 2005

⁶⁸ Jum, CN; Nguiebouri, J; Zoa, M; Diaw, C 2007. *The model forest experience in Cameroon*. ITTO Tropical Forest Update 17(2): 11-14; Eyog Matig, O; Ndoye, O; Kengue, J; Awono, A 2006. *Les fruitiers forestiers comestibles du Cameroun*. International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Cotonou, Benin. ISBN: 978-92-9043-707-9 and 92-9043-707-3, Cerutti, L, 2006. *Forests, illegality, and livelihoods in Cameroon*. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia. CIFOR Working Paper 35, 22p

⁶⁹ See WWF website:

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/forests/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=18253&uLangID=1

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is also assisting Cameroon in several activities like the preparation of the third national report on biological diversity. With its Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Programme, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is also contributing to the process of forest certification through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP)⁷⁰, participating at the Cameroonian programme of eco-tourism *Mt Cameroon* and facilitating the FLEGT process, where the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) plays a role too.

At the sub-regional level (Congo Basin), the creation of the CEFDHAC⁷¹ in 1996, as an instance for all sub-regional actors of the forest sector to dialogue and discuss, including other stakeholders once excluded, like indigenous peoples, women, NGOs and other members of the civil society. In 1999, the Summit of Heads of State of the Congo Basin produced the *Déclaration de Yaoundé*, from which resulted a Convergence Plan that was adopted in 2000 and updated in 2004⁷². The COMIFAC (Central African Forest Commission)⁷³ was created in 2004 at the Libreville summit, replacing the former *Conférence des Ministres en charge des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale* and establishing its headquarters in Cameroon. Also, the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) ministerial conference was held in Yaoundé in 2003, thus launching the FLEGT process within which Cameroon has just started negotiating a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. We must also mention the creation of cross-border protected areas like the *Tri National de la Sangha* which covers the North region of Congo, the South-west of the Central African Republic and the South-east of Cameroon. Furthermore, Global Forest Watch⁷⁴ helps Cameroon and several other Central African States with the digital mapping of forest areas.

Finally, various bilateral and multilateral donors provide financial support to carry out the Expanded Programme of Work through the implementation of different programmes like the PSFE. In particular, the European Union, the World Bank and FAO have contributed several million dollars.

Environmental changes that took place in Cameroon since the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity

A recent survey (2005) carried out by MINFOF-FAO shows that, from 1975 until 2004, the degradation of Cameroonian forests went from 4.5 million ha to 8.5 million ha because of human pressure (bush fires) and logging⁷⁵. The same survey indicates that windfall (41.5% of total cases), new diseases (16.3%), low water levels (9.8%), floods (8.2%), erosion (5.4%) and poor quality of water (5%) are the environmental problems that most impact on Cameroonian forests⁷⁶. The hydroelectric dam project to be built at the confluence of the Lom and Pagar rivers, in the Eastern province, will flood several thousand hectares of forest.

Since the Programme was adopted, poaching has reached worrying levels in Cameroon; certain wildlife species have disappeared and/or are greatly endangered. Such is the case of the Black Rhinoceros that international NGOs declared extinct in Cameroon in 2006, and several big apes like gorillas, their meat being frequently found on the local market.

⁷⁰ This program is being carried out with the groups SEFAC (*Société d'Exploitation Forestière et Agricole du Cameroun*), SEBAC (*Société d'Exploitation des Bois d'Afrique Centrale*) and FB (*Filière Bois*).

⁷¹ Conference on the Ecosystems of the Dense Rainforests of Central Africa.

⁷² "Plan de convergence": this document consists of a regional framework for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable management of forest resources.

⁷³ The COMIFAC includes the following countries: Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon and São Tomé e Príncipe. Its main objectives are to standardize legal texts, to harmonize forest policies, mobilize funds and to coordinate regional efforts in the Congo Basin.

⁷⁴ This work is done with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), the Environment Systems Research Institute (ESRI), and the European Commission.

⁷⁵ République du Cameroun and FAO, Evaluation des ressources forestières nationales du Cameroun: 2003-2004, MINFOF-FAO, Yaoundé, 2005, p 42.

⁷⁶ République du Cameroun et FAO, Evaluation des ressources forestières nationales du Cameroun: 2003-2004, MINFOF-FAO, Yaoundé, 2005, p 45.8

The 2006 National Programme Against Desertification (PAN-LCD) identifies the decrease in rainfall levels, the use of firewood, the increasing demand of agricultural land due to the degradation of soils in other regions and the prolonged drying up of watercourses as the main reasons for the threatening desertification in Cameroon⁷⁷.

The cobalt and nickel extraction project in the Eastern province will affect a forest area of 1,250 km²⁷⁸. An environmental impact assessment of this mining project was approved, with little or no comments from the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife. Before and after 2002, the trend to exert an increasing pressure on forests did not change, due to illegal logging, demographic pressure and the establishment of large plantations⁷⁹. Logging, high rainfall levels and uneven grounds cause considerable erosion, silting and disruption of aquatic ecosystems. These environmental changes can be observed anywhere in the Congo Basin and they are closely linked to economic development. The decreasing resources and the loss of biological diversity result in the disappearance of species.

Global comparative analysis on the situation of forests and forest peoples before and after the adoption of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity

Generally speaking, in spite of the legal and institutional arsenal provided and implemented long before the Programme was adopted, Cameroonian forests are still characterized by the ever increasing deforestation rate (particularly in environmentally vulnerable zones), the slowing down of development efforts and the poor, or non-existent, execution of several action plans and sustainable management tools, as it resulted from a survey commissioned by GTZ-Cameroon⁸⁰. This problem is greater in forest areas in production than in conservation areas. Gallery forests are severely reduced and the advance of savannahs is highly perceptible. Poaching and threats to several wildlife species are persistent. Governance problems, illegal logging⁸¹ and lack of means are mayor obstacles to achieve a sustainable management of Cameroonian forests, apart from other problems related to approaches and the inefficient use of several available tools. For instance, a problem of approach exists in several protected areas, where forest wardens sometimes make abuses or apply regulations inadequately.

The SPANB should include the systemic approach in Cameroonian forest management, but it takes a long time to update and apply this strategy, as it is recognized by the government in its 3rd Annual Report on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)⁸². The same report highlights the lack of far-reaching actions towards reducing forest pollution. However, the creation of a brigade for environmental inspection and control⁸³ is seen as a source of hassles by various actors of the Cameroonian forest sector.

The situation of forest peoples and communities has not improved since the Programme was introduced. The community concept is ambiguous and is open to various interpretations. It is actually difficult to know who is a community member: all the inhabitants of a village? Of a group of villages? This allows for several illegal practices. Furthermore, some mechanisms do not adjust to certain forest peoples; other tools, intended for the protection of community rights, are badly implemented and further impoverish them. Another factor is the bad management of forestry incomes meant for communities. Indeed, local forestry income administrators are not sufficiently informing the government and local communities about their management: only 20% of local forestry incomes are invested in local development⁸⁴.

⁷⁷ République du Cameroun, Plan d'Action National de Lutte Contre la Désertification (PAN-LCD), MINEP and PNUD, Yaoundé, 2006, pp 11 and 12.

⁷⁸ Décret Présidentiel no.2003/077 of April 11th, 2003.

⁷⁹ These plantations are located in southern Cameroon and belong to Société des Palmeraies du Cameroun, Hévéa du Cameroun...

⁸⁰ Vandenhautte Marc and Heuse Emmanuel. Aménagement forestier, traçabilité du bois et certification. État des lieux des progrès enregistrés au Cameroun. February 2006.

⁸¹ See the reports of the Independent Observer of forest law enforcement, REM Cameroon (Resource Extraction Monitoring) : <http://www.observation-cameroun.info>.

⁸² Gouvernement du Cameroun, 3^{ème} Rapport National sur la diversité biologique, Yaoundé, pp 52-56

⁸³ Idem, pp 27 and 59-60 and Decree 205/117 about the organization of the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature.

⁸⁴ Patrice Bigombe, Fiscalité forestière décentralisée et développement local au Cameroun méridional forestier: leçons apprises des expériences récentes et proposition d'un processus de renforcement des capacités locales,

Thus, while logging continues and the number of protected areas increases, indigenous peoples and forest communities sink into poverty. This is especially true for forest indigenous peoples: other forest communities have social plans funded with forestry incomes, but not indigenous peoples, which are still marginalized by their neighbours.

In its third report, Cameroon accepts the fact that there are "great difficulties" about the implementation of articles 8j and 10c of the CBD. When asked whether a national target has been established to 'maintain socio-cultural diversity of indigenous and local communities or to 'protect traditional knowledge, innovations and practices', or whether the Akwé: Kon Guidelines were considered, the answer is NO, but the reports insists on action plans, like the PNDP, which mostly remain non-operational. Regarding article 10c of the CBD, the 3rd national report of Cameroon insists on the fact that the Forestry Law recognizes the customary right of usage⁸⁵, but it does not mention the fact that this law does not recognize the customary land rights of Pygmy indigenous peoples that live in Cameroonian forests. Besides, the Forestry Law makes no distinction between local communities and indigenous peoples, the latter being in fact excluded from all these mechanisms' benefits, such as the redistribution of the RFA, the community forests and the social plans of logging companies (water conveyance, roads, schools, health care centres, etc), because of the prejudices and discrimination against these peoples. The excessive consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs is increasing in Pygmy indigenous areas. The introduction of VIH/AIDS in their environment could also be linked to logging activities⁸⁶.

Furthermore, communities still consider protected areas as a threat to their livelihood and cultural identity due to almost radical conservation approaches, hostiles to cohabitation principles between humans and wildlife, as well as other rules of participative management.

Cameroon has taken some measures regarding indigenous peoples, related to the elaboration and implementation of legal regulations, but they are scarce⁸⁷ and, in general, not quite noticeable. Indigenous and local communities are not included in the different processes that could affect their lifestyle, and the same happens about projects to create protected areas. We are witnessing a meagre consultation of these social groups, marked by the pre-eminence of the State and a poor spreading of environmental information.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Main conclusions or findings of this study:

- 1) Cameroonian forests are rich in biological diversity.
- 2) Cameroon has already set up almost all the laws, national plans and institutions necessary for a good implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work.
- 3) Several forests are under management plans, even though their implementation still raises many questions.
- 4) Cameroon has a high deforestation level and the logging of its forests is still selective.
- 5) The customary use of lands and forests by indigenous and local communities is barely protected by the laws.
- 6) There is an increase in protected areas' number and surface but little participation of local communities in their creation and management.
- 7) Wildlife is threatened by human pressure, by poaching, by the increasing poverty in forest areas and by forestry incomes meant for communities being badly managed.

Communication faite au séminaire sur la gestion de la redevance forestière et développement local au Cameroun méridional forestier, GTZ and FAO, July 2002, pp. 70-83.

⁸⁵ République du Cameroun, 3^{ième} Rapport National sur la diversité biologique, Yaoundé, pp 7 and 31-34, 72-75.

⁸⁶ Albert K Barume, *Etude sur le cadre légal pour la protection des droits des peuples indigènes et tribaux au Cameroun*, ILO, Geneva, 2005.

⁸⁷ *This is the case of some traditional chiefs that were installed in southern Cameroon, in spite of a circular suspending the creation of third level traditional chieftainships, and the recognition of Bagyeli villages in the same zone.*

- 8) There is an almost complete legal and institutional framework, but it is wrongly implemented in many cases.
- 9) Systemic approach is delayed due to the implementation of the SPANB.
- 10) The main forest environmental problems result from floods, windfall, mining projects, bush fires and excessive logging of gallery forests.
- 11) Environmental information has not been spread among all actors concerned yet.
- 12) Constraints of international markets are more and more imposed on Cameroonian forestry sector with the Certification and the FLEGT process. These mechanisms could contribute to a better implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in Cameroon.
- 13) International partners have played a determining role in setting up tools and institutions that could contribute to a better implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity.
- 14) The regional approach (Congo Basin) is having a stronger impact on Cameroonian forests management and could also help achieving a good implementation of the Programme.

3.2. Main recommendations:

- 1) To make forestry and environmental information available at the lowest community levels.
- 2) To make the Development Plan of Pygmy Peoples operational and to respect indigenous peoples' rights of participation and consultation (prior, free and informed consent) in forest logging and management.
- 3) To strictly enforce the Development Plans already produced for production and conservation forests.
- 4) To take legal measures or regulations that give forest communities wider and stronger rights over land, forests and resources. Such rules should take into account the particular vulnerability of indigenous peoples Baka, Bagyeli, Bakola and Bedzan.
- 5) To stabilize forest logging and to control deforestation rates.
- 6) To achieve a real enforcement of environmental norms in order to reduce forests' pollution.
- 7) To take measures in order to balance forest and wildlife controls, given the different importance attached to these two aspects; this could be done, for instance, through an independent observer on wildlife and the implementation of the national strategy for wildlife control.
- 8) Effective use of a zoning plan as a way to identify lands so as to make it possible for the local and indigenous communities to access community forests or ZIGC.
- 9) To take into account the situation of indigenous and local communities and to simplify the long and expensive procedures for the allocation of spaces intended for the sustainable management of natural resources.
- 10) To fill the gaps in the implementation methods concerning benefits for local communities in order to ensure that payments are actually made.
- 11) To provide local communities with training in different areas such as local development planning, financial management and conflict management.
- 12) To ensure that local communities' complaints are considered during the stage of forest classification.
- 13) To make the SPANB operational with a more systemic approach in mind.
- 14) To consider various aspects of forest diversity in the FLEGT process and the Voluntary Partnership Agreement that is being negotiated between Cameroon and the European Union.
- 15) International partners have to face now the implementation of diverse action plans and programmes that they helped Cameroon organizing, in order to achieve a better management of its forest diversity.

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Depleted forest cameroon



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