



CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP

CBFP COUNCIL

Inaugural Session

Kigali, Rwanda, 24 November 2016

MINUTES

Chair: The EU Facilitator of the CBFP, Mr Anders Henriksson assisted by the Deputy Facilitator of the CBFP, Mr Maxime Nzita.

Notes were taken by the EU CBFP Facilitation team.

Representing CBFP Colleges:

For the CBFP Donor College

EU: Ms Francesca di Mauro
USA: Dr Daniel Reifsnyder

For the CBFP Civil Society College

CEFDHAC: Ms Dancille Mukakamari
ACRN: Mr Maixent Fortunin Agnimbat Emeka

For the CBFP International NGO College

AWF: Mr Charly Facheux
WWF: Mr Marc Languy

For the CBFP Private Sector College

ATIBT: Ms Jacqueline Lardit - Van De Pol
THE FOREST TRUST (TFT): Mr Erith Ngatchou Towo

For the CBFP Scientific and Academic College

UCLA: Ms Virginia Zaunbrecher
CIRAD: Mr Eric Forni

For the CBFP Multilaterals College

FAO: Mr Jean-Claude Nguingui
OIBT: Mr Marcellin Nziengui

In addition, H.E. Mr Raymond Mbitikon, Executive Secretary of COMIFAC, attended the meeting on behalf of the CBFP Regional College.

Agenda:

- 1. Introduction by the EU Facilitator of CBFP**
- 2. Tour de table**
- 3. Next meeting**

1. Introduction by the EU Facilitator of CBFP

The Facilitator welcomed the college representatives to this inaugural session of the CBFP Council and thanked them and their college peers for the preparatory work that had made this meeting possible. He outlined the Facilitation's vision for the role of the CBFP Council, highlighting i.a. the following points:

- The idea behind the establishment of the Council is to provide an opportunity for a structured dialogue at the heart of this maturing Partnership, enabling partners to work more effectively together on promoting solutions to the increasingly complex challenges facing the Congo Basin forests;
- Questions are being asked about how to improve cooperation and dialogue within the Partnership with its growing membership without changing its nature as a “Type 2” non-binding partnership. The Council and college system is an approach aimed to address this matter;
- The Council is not intended primarily as a decision-making body, but rather to be a place where partners will share and discuss, and try to reach a stronger convergence of views on important issues of common concern;
- The Council should also help ensure a better follow-up of the conclusions and recommendations produced by the annual Meeting of Parties and the semi-annual meeting rhythm of the Council should help to improve the continuity in the activities within the Partnership;
- The responsibility for steering the Partnership should in future not rest solely with the Facilitation, but increasingly be shared by the membership through the College-Council system. This collective sharing of responsibility should help make the CBFP more representative, transparent and useful to partners;
- College representatives that represent their peers on the Council are reminded that they are not speaking only for their own organisations but as representatives of their respective colleges. In some cases this may mean that they cannot always react spontaneously in these meetings. They may in some cases need to consult their peers in their college before they can respond to questions raised during Council debates;
- This is an inaugural session aimed at establishing the Council and not a working session with a substantial agenda. However, the next meeting will have a substantial agenda and the colleges will be invited to propose items for discussion. At this symbolic first session, college representatives are invited to speak about developments so far in their respective colleges and, if they so wish, to provide ideas for issues the Council may need to address in its future work.

2. Tour de table

On behalf of the **CBFP Donor College**, the USA and EU took the floor.

The US representative, Dr Daniel Reifsnyder, noted the timeliness of this reform within the CBFP. He provided some of the main points from the meeting of the Donor College held on 23 November, at which representatives were present from EU, France, Germany, Norway, UK and USA. At their meeting the donors had considered:

- That given its characteristics, CBFP has a comparative advantage in addressing certain specific priority issues and that partnership activities should therefore be focused on these areas. Specific examples of such priorities had, however, not been discussed but would be considered later;

- That there are some issues of importance to the CBFP that are cross sectorial, that need to be addressed by all members, not just within each respective college. There is therefore a need to consider how to promote such interaction in the new structural set-up.

The meeting also discussed the situation of the regional institutions and college members' concern over the difficult financial situation of COMIFAC;

The EU representative, Ms Francesca di Mauro, added that, while there are some databases trying to capture donor activities in the sub-region, the donors recognise that there is a need for better coordination of programmes at the identification, formulation and implementation stages.

H.E. Mr Raymond Mbitikon, Executive Secretary of COMIFAC, who attended the session on behalf of the **CBFP Regional College**, made the following points:

- In a partnership that has existed for more than ten years and finds itself at this stage of its expansion it is normal to look for ways to ensure efficiency and a better structuring of the dialogue. As such, the development of the partnership's structure now being undertaken is positive, particularly as members seem to broadly agree with the ideas of the reform;
- It would be good if activities within the CBFP platform could aim to work more closely with the countries of the sub-region on policy matters, in particular in regard to priority issues covered by the COMIFAC Convergence Plan;
- CBFP - and maybe in particular the CBFP Council - has a role to play in coordinating and promoting greater transparency of partners' interventions in the sub-region.

On behalf of the **CBFP International NGO College**, AWF representative Mr Charly Facheux took the floor, mentioning the following key points:

- The NGO College had been consulting for a month prior to this meeting via email, and this consultation was formalised in the college meeting on the morning of 24 November;
- The NGO College recommends that this new structure within the CBFP should have some stability and not be changed again by future facilitations;
- There is need for a better articulation between the colleges and the streams to help guarantee quality control of the streams and ensure that these do not remain inactive in between the annual Meetings of Parties.

Mr Marc Languy of WWF, completing the intervention from the International NGO College, noted:

- That the International NGO college has had a very positive dynamic so far and that members already have agreed on the working modalities of the college;

- That the college would like to put forward the following ideas for some key subjects which the CBFP Council could address at future meetings:
 - The importance of a multi-sectorial approach, including sectors such as mining, and not just focus on forestry;
 - The importance of land use planning and good governance, including that of protected areas;
 - Climate change;
 - The need to encourage more private sector involvement in the CBFP platform.

On behalf of the **CBFP Private Sector College**, The Forest Trust (TFT) and ATIBT took the floor.

Mr Erith Ngatchou Towo of TFT highlighted the importance of trying to engage large companies in the agro-industry and mining sectors in the discussions on the protection and sustainable management of the Congo Basin forests.

Ms Jacqueline Lardit - Van De Pol of ATIBT added the following points:

- It is difficult for the current members of the Private Sector College, who are mostly involved in the forestry sector, to represent different sectors, such as mining and tourism. One suggestion would be to organise workshops during the Meeting of Parties in which different private sector actors could be invited to take part;
- The CBFP has always had difficulties in attracting private sector actors, partly because it is not clear to these how they may benefit from membership. Steps should therefore be taken to demonstrate how engagement in the CBFP platform can benefit private sector operators, for example by producing political recommendations that help to improve prospects for the private sector in the region.

On behalf of the **CBFP Multilaterals College**, the FAO and OIBT took the floor.

The representative of FAO, Mr Jean-Claude Nguinguri, spoke first on the practical organisation within this college:

- Four out of eleven college members attended the meeting in the morning of 24 November;
- They decided that their representation to the Council should consist of one representative from the UN system (in this case the FAO), and one other;
- They have planned four future college meetings – these will be implemented either digitally via Skype or in the margins of other international meetings where college members are present.

Mr Marcellin Nziengui of OIBT added the following points which this college would like to suggest as possible items for discussion in the Council in the future:

- The importance of mapping all interventions that are undertaken in the Congo Basin – ideally by encouraging actors to utilise the OFAC database;

- How to have achieve an more operational and stronger COMIFAC;
- How to organise the monitoring and evaluation of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan
- How to make sure that the programming of interventions undertaken in the sub-region which are linked to the Convergence Plan's objectives take account of this linkage.

CIRAD and UCLA took the floor on behalf of the **CBFP Scientific and Academic College**.

Mr Eric Forni of CIRAD made the following observations about this college:

- There are 14 members for the moment, of whom 9 were present at the college meeting in the morning of 24 November;
- Most college members are institutions from the North and the objective is that in time for the next Council meeting at least one of this college's representatives on the Council should be from the South;
- Like the Multilaterals College, this college had discussed its working modalities and decided to work mostly digitally (via email / Skype), possibly complemented by work in smaller groups.

The two representatives then set out three issues, which this college would like the Council to address in the future:

1. Research (presented by Mr Eric Forni of CIRAD): under "Axis 2" of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan a draft sub-regional forestry research strategy was developed in 2014. This strategy should be finalized and adopted;
2. Training and capacity building (presented by Ms Virginia Zaunbrecher of UCLA): the college had been working to collate feedback from stakeholders at the 2016 Meeting of Parties concerning capacity building in key areas related to CBFP objectives. Currently, there is a lack of capacity in the region. In particular, the college recommends reaching out to the private sector to ensure that universities are meeting the human resources demands of the private sector;
3. Communication of research (presented by Ms Virginia Zaunbrecher of UCLA): The college would like to know from other partners how research is being used in decision making and how such use could be strengthened.

Representatives from CEFDHAC and from the African Community Rights Network (ACRN) took the floor on behalf of the **CBFP Civil Society College**.

Ms Dancilla Mukakamari (CEFDHAC/ARECO/REFADD) made the following points:

- She thanked the EU Facilitation for taking the initiative to this strengthening of the Partnership structures and specifically for the creation of the Civil Society College, inviting its representatives to form part of the CBFP Council;
- She gave a quick overview of the Civil Society College meeting that had taken place earlier on the same day. The college encompasses a very large group of members with a great variety of actors. They had a rich discussion and were able to come to a consensus on a roadmap for their college. (A declaration adopted by the college and a report from its meeting are attached to these Minutes);

- As this is such a diverse group, they have decided to create a committee inside their college charged with drafting recommendations from the college and follow up of Council meetings.

Mr Maixent Fortunin Agnimbat Emeka of ACRN then briefly introduced ACRN, a network of 79 organisations working mostly on FLEGT, REDD and green economy in NDCs. He added the following points, which this college considered could be discussed by the Council at future meetings:

- How to ensure that internationally agreed recommendations, such as from the COPs, are carried out and to evaluate why this is not always the case;
- How to follow up on the recommendations produced by the CBFP and to evaluate what impact they have had over the Partnership's more than ten years of existence;
- A possible revision of the Durban Declaration.

At the end of the tour de table **the Chair** made the following final remarks:

- It seems that there is strong support for the general approach towards reforming the structure of the CBFP and that members are willing to engage proactively in this process – this is very encouraging;
- This time, as the Council has not held any debate, there will be no explicit conclusion. However, the aim should be to reach clear conclusions on issues to be considered at the next Council meeting, which will be a working meeting. In the meantime, the representatives are invited to report back to their colleges, and if there are any further materials or declarations to be shared, to send these to the EU Facilitation team so that they can be attached to the minutes from this session;
- Minutes of this meeting will be made available by the EU Facilitation Team to all CBFP members. They will also be published on the CBFP website;
- The main bulk of the work will now need to happen within colleges: the quality and impact of the work of the Council will be a direct function of how well the individual colleges function;
- The Facilitator thanked and congratulated participants on the well-reflected points they had made in the tour de table.

3. Next meeting

The time and place of the next Council meeting was not fixed at this stage but the Chair indicated that the next meeting will take place sometime in the spring. The EU Facilitation will contact partners on this at the latest by the end of January 2017.

As far as the agenda is concerned, the next meeting will consider the follow-up of the 2016 Meeting of Parties and the preparations of the 2017 Meeting of Parties. It will also need to discuss the issue of medium-term priorities for partnership action. Beyond what college representatives have expressed during the current inaugural session, the colleges can send further suggestions for possible agenda items to the Facilitation team (at caroline.rose@agreco.be) before the end of January 2017.

On the basis of input from the colleges, the EU Facilitation will prepare a provisional agenda for the next Council meeting and share this with the colleges before the end of February 2017.