

**CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP**

**CBFP COUNCIL**

**Third meeting**

**Douala, Cameroon, 24 October 2017**

**M I N U T E S**

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

Notes were taken by the EU CBFP Facilitation team.

**Representing CBFP colleges:**

For the CBFP Regional College:

COMIFAC H.E. Jean-Baptiste Habyalimana, Rwandan Ambassador to the Republic of Congo and the CEMAC countries, representing the President-in-Office of COMIFAC

Mr. Raymond Ndomba Ngoye, Executive Secretary of COMIFAC

ECCAS Ms. Thérèse Chantal Mfoula, Deputy Secretary General of ECCAS, Department of Physical integration, Economic and Monetary Affairs of ECCAS (DIPEM)

For the CBFP Civil Society College:

ACRN : Mr. Maixent Fortunin Agnimbat Emeka, Regional Coordinator, African Community Rights Network (ACRN)

CEFDHAC : Ms. Dancille Mukakamari, REFADD Secretary General

For the CBFP College of international NGOs:

AWF : Mr. Hugues Akpona, Director AWF - DRC

WWF : Mr. Marc Languy, Regional Director WWF - Central Africa

For the CBFP Private Sector College:

ATIBT : Ms. Jacqueline Lardit Vandepol, ATIBT Central Africa Representative and FLEGT Project Coordinator

For the CBFP Donor College:

USA: Mr. Dirck Byler, USFWS Africa Director

EU: Ms. Chantal Marijnissen, Head of Unit for the Environment, Natural Resources and Water, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission

For the CBFP Scientific and Academic College :

CIRAD: Mr. Denis Depommier, Regional Director, CIRAD

UCLA : Dr. Virginia Zaunbrecher, Deputy Director, Center for Tropical Research, UCLA and Representative of the ACCBFP

For the CBFP Multilaterals College:

FAO: Ms. Sandra Ratiarison, Forestry Advisor, FAO

UNE : Dr. André Kamdem, Expert, UNE and Ms. Leila Maziz, UNESCO World Heritage Center

## **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Mr. Anders Henriksson, EU Facilitator of CBFP. He welcomed the participation of the representatives of all colleges at the Council, which he considered to be a clear sign of the continued commitment of all partners to ensure the success of the reform of the governance of CBFP.

On behalf of all the CBFP partners taking part in the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Parties (MOP), the Chair expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Cameroonian authorities for the warm welcome extended to the CBFP partners.

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

## **2. Report on the activities and perspectives of the EU Facilitation of CBFP**

*Chair*

The Chair informed the Council members of activities conducted by the Facilitation since the second meeting of the Council in Libreville in May 2017.

The activities were conducted in accordance with the lines agreed at that Council meeting for the preparation of the 17<sup>th</sup> MOP.

The objectives of the EU Facilitation for this MOP are as follows:

- To consolidate and harness the potential of the new CBFP cooperation structures - the colleges and the Council - to conduct a structured and results-oriented dialogue within this growing partnership ;
- To adopt the list of CBFP medium term priorities for the period 2018-2022 ;

- To introduce, on a pilot basis, a system of annual CBFP priorities ;
- To establish an adjusted working method for the thematic streams :
  - o By reducing their number from 5 to 3 ;
  - o By ensuring crosscutting participation of the Private Sector College and the Scientific and Academic College in each of the 3 streams ;
  - o By ensuring that the streams produce a limited number of recommendations that can realistically be implemented and followed up.

The Chair also noted that, after the second meeting of the CBFP Council, there had been continued progress in strengthening the dialogue between COMIFAC and ECCAS and in developing better coordination between the two institutions. He further noted some other developments of importance for the prospects of the Congo Basin forests, including the evolution of the process initiated through the Marrakech Declaration. He invited the representatives of the two regional organizations to update the Council on the most recent developments in regard to these matters.

The Chair then addressed the issue of the end of the EU Facilitation and the prospects for the next CBFP Facilitation. The EU Facilitation will end on 31 December 2017. The current Council and the MOP in progress were thus the last meetings held under the chairmanship of the EU Facilitation.

The EU had invested heavily in the CBFP Facilitation, with the reform aimed at ensuring a results-driven governance of the Partnership as its main priority. The EU Facilitation considers that the governance structure established over the past two years, as well as the joint consultation efforts to identify clear priorities for the Partnership, have made possible substantial progress towards this objective. That being said, much remains to be done in enriching the structured dialogue, in working to achieve the priorities identified and in delivering tangible and consistent results to strengthen the CBFP and its effectiveness.

Having thus invested in strengthening the Partnership, the EU Facilitation hopes that its mandate will be resumed in a constructive and credible manner without delay. For this reason it has since the beginning of 2017 conducted consultations with the partners most likely to take on the facilitation. However, until now these consultations have not resulted in an agreement.

The Donor College, which met on the morning of October 24, 2017, discussed the issue of the renewal of the CBFP Facilitation. Following the discussion, the Donor College:

- duly noted that the EU Facilitation will, as already announced in 2015, end at the end of 2017 ;
- welcomed the confirmation that the EU will remain a highly engaged and active member of the CBFP ;
- welcomed the results achieved by the EU Facilitation ;
- stressed particularly the importance of the reform of the CBFP cooperation structures, initiated and successfully implemented during the mandate of the EU Facilitation. This reform will without question ease the work of the next Facilitation ;

- noted that several of its members had expressed their willingness to support the next facilitation, including through financial support ;
- agreed to continue its consultations, in order to find a constructive and effective solution to the issue of the next CBFP Facilitation, so as to ensure a smooth transition when the EU Facilitation comes to an end at the end of 2017.

### *Multilaterals College*

On behalf of the Multilaterals College, Mr. André Kamdem requested further details from the Chair on the discussions that had taken place in the morning within the Donor College, with respect to partners that were most likely to take on the facilitation. He also asked whether new facilitation models had been discussed, for instance the option of donors providing funding for entities or parties interested in taking on the CBFP Facilitation.

In answer to these questions, the Chair informed the Council members that the discussions within the Donor College had mainly focused on the experience and lessons learned from the EU Facilitation. The members of the Donor College had *inter alia* discussed how the reform of the CBFP cooperation structures initiated by the EU Facilitation would ease the functioning of the facilitation of the Partnership in the future. In particular, the establishment of the Council, already allows increasing the number of points of support on which the Facilitation can base its leadership of the Partnership, thereby reducing its workload.

### *Regional College*

The Deputy Secretary General of ECCAS joined the Chair in expressing deep gratitude to the Cameroon Government for the warm welcome extended to the CBFP partners. On behalf of the Secretary General, she extended heartfelt congratulations to the Facilitator and his team on the organization of the 3rd meeting of the Council and the 17th MOP of the CBFP.

The DSG then referred to the CBFP's medium-term priorities, which were discussed at the May 2017 CBFP Council meeting in Libreville. She pointed out that among the thematic priorities, the SG of ECCAS was particularly interested in the following four priorities :

- Sustainable management and conservation of forest resources, especially by combating poaching and wildlife trafficking ;
- Taking into account the impact of non-forestry sectors and land use-related decisions on the Congo Basin forests ;
- Fostering sustainable economic development of local communities ;
- Climate change.

For ECCAS, its interest in these four thematic priorities is justified notably in the light of their role in the implementation of the Green Economy in Central Africa, an approach approved by the Heads of State to reconcile the fight against climate change with economic development and the improvement of people's living conditions.

This approach also incorporates activities aimed at combating the criminal exploitation of natural resources in general and anti-poaching activities in particular. In this context, the DSG informed the Council members of the recent adoption in July 2017 by the ECCAS Ministers of the

N'Djamena Declaration on eco-security and human/wildlife conflicts. In parallel, a feasibility study for a program on the eco-security of natural resources in Central Africa is currently being launched with the support of the European Union (funded under the Regional Indicative Program of the 11th EDF).

The DSG also reported that since COP22, the ECCAS Secretariat General has also increasingly been involved in the implementation of the fight against climate change. She specifically mentioned the first results achieved in operationalizing the Blue Congo Basin Fund and the establishment and launching of the Congo Basin Climate Commission.

Finally, the DSG recalled the importance of the institutional and organizational reform of ECCAS that has been underway since 2015. The reform is expected to strengthen the already harmonious manner in which ECCAS works with its specialized agencies, such as COMIFAC. The results of an audit should become available before the end of 2017 and the DSG expressed confidence that the results will help to further strengthen the synergies between the activities of ECCAs and the actions undertaken within the CBFP.

The representative of the President-in-Office of COMIFAC, His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Republic of Congo, thanked the EU Facilitation for initiating the reform of the Partnership's governance and cooperation structures, and welcomed the fact that the results of this reform could already be felt at the level of the discussions held within the Colleges and the Council. He was confident that the next facilitation would benefit from this new structured dynamic, thereby enabling the Partnership to achieve increasingly tangible results.

The COMIFAC Executive Secretary, Mr. Ndomba Ngoye, highlighted two issues of particular importance to his organization and to the COMIFAC Member States.

Regarding the objectives and cooperation within the CBFP, it would be very desirable that the Partnership would allow for a strengthening of the capacity of COMIFAC to coordinate the various interventions of partners around the COMIFAC Convergence Plan.

There is also a need to disseminate the updated CBFP Cooperation Framework adopted by the 16th MOP in Kigali in November 2016, in order to promote its ownership by all partners and stakeholders in the field of conservation and sustainable forest management in Central Africa.

Furthermore, given the currently weak capacity of the Congo Basin States to mobilize international financing, the CBFP and its successive facilitations should support the States, COMIFAC and ECCAS in putting in place competitive mechanisms that will enable them to gain better access to financing from international climate funds. In parallel, the CBFP and its successive facilitations should support the States' efforts to develop specific climate change strategies, that are effectively integrated in their national development policies.

### **3. Annual priorities of CBFP**

#### *Chair*

The Chair recalled that, at the second meeting of the CBFP Council in Libreville, it was decided that the EU Facilitation would submit, at the next Council meeting, a concept note on the introduction of a system of annual priorities for the CBFP, including a proposal for two annual priorities which would be pursued on a pilot basis, under the aegis of the CBFP, during 2018. If approved at the current Council meeting, the aim would be to have the introduction of such a system on a pilot basis, as well as the two pilot annual priorities, adopted at the plenary session of the CBFP scheduled for Friday 27 October.

The Chair recalled that the idea was to promote the continuity of partners' joint activities between two annual CBFP meetings. Moreover, by ensuring that results would be delivered on a regular basis under the aegis of the CBFP (every year), the work on the annual priorities would significantly increase the visibility of the Partnership.

The Chair explained that the concept note on the annual priorities and the two proposed pilot annual priorities for 2018 would be presented by the representatives of the European Union and COMIFAC.

### *European Union*

Ms. Chantal Marijnissen, Head of Unit for the Environment, Natural resources and Water at the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission, informed the Council members that based on the 19 medium-term priorities of the CBFP identified at the Libreville Council meeting, the EU had identified two annual priorities on which it would be ready to take the lead in order to make progress during 2018 under the aegis of the CBFP. These included, on the one hand, a proposal to work jointly on the nexus of fauna/flora and the security of populations, which are severely impacted by the fallout of natural resources-related conflicts, particularly in Central Africa, and, on the other hand, a proposal to support COMIFAC via its technical body OFAC, which the EU suggested should be presented in more detail by COMIFAC itself after the EU had completed its presentation.

For the EU, the choice of the first priority makes sense, since the EU can base its action on an Action Plan which is already under implementation with respect to this issue. In the framework of this Action Plan, a study is currently underway, which is expected to produce recommendations, on the basis of which interested CBFP partners can opt to work together, with a focus on the fight against poaching and on ensuring the security of populations. After highlighting the example of the Virunga case, Ms. Marijnissen called on Mr. Paul Elkan, the expert in charge of the ongoing study in the framework of the Action Plan, to complete the presentation.

Mr. Elkan stressed that the aim of the study was to come up with recommendations that were likely to be supported by the partners regarding the improvement of the security of populations and States, while enhancing the prospects for conservation of natural resources, especially in six study sites located in the Congo Basin. The study would help to identify cases where poaching and wildlife trafficking contribute to the insecurity of populations. It would also assess the impact of armed conflicts on conservation dynamics, and consider ways in which stronger action on the latter could help curtail the former. Impacts on the socio-economic lives of people and how corruption and trafficking lead to insecurity would also be taken into consideration. The study would also highlight the positive potential of protected areas to contribute to safeguarding and enhancing the security of populations and the way in which community-based wildlife monitoring could help improve the security of populations.

Concerning the identified priority regarding support to COMIFAC via its technical body, OFAC, Ms. Marijnissen invited COMIFAC to take the floor.

### *COMIFAC Executive Secretariat*

Mr. Ndomba Ngoye, COMIFAC Executive Secretary, said the aim of this proposed priority would notably be to support COMIFAC in standardizing and harmonizing data collection formats for all existing initiatives, with the assistance of OFAC. In this regard, he stressed that the efforts to make OFAC operational have been supported by the EU over seven years and urged other CBFP

partners to join the EU in providing support, given the central role of OFAC in the monitoring activities that COMIFAC is striving to put in place. The COMIFAC ES gave the floor to Ms Florence Palla, who coordinates the activities of OFAC.

Ms Palla pointed out that focusing the CBFP's attention on OFAC's activities would allow for making the existing database on environmental projects in the 10 COMIFAC member countries more comprehensive, and thus more relevant and useful. This specific focus on OFAC would be a good operational tool, in order to ensure that all CBFP partners regularly and systematically contribute to the existing database. This would also allow COMIFAC and all CBFP partners to share their expectations in regard to the existing database (in which about 100 projects have been encoded to date), so that the database, once it has been made more complete, would allow for an improved monitoring and would affect the strategies and the programming of activities.

### *European Union*

After the presentation of the two proposed priorities, Ms. Marijnissen underlined that the objective in the case of both of these priorities is to create clearly defined fields of action, in which the EU would be intervening regardless in 2018, but in which CBFP partners would commit to collaborate further during that same year.

### *Chair*

Before giving the floor to the participants for their assessments and comments, the Chair recalled the dynamics that the EU Facilitation was seeking to promote through the annual priorities discussed. The idea was not to select two of the 19 medium-term priorities in order to favour these two to the detriment of the others. The Chair recalled that the 19 medium-term priorities remain fully covered by the activities of all CBFP partners in their normal programming and implementation, and that working on two annual priorities under the explicit aegis of CBFP would have no impact on what was already in progress and programmed regarding the other priorities.

The proposal is to select two priorities in order to test a slightly more coordinated and continuous form of collaboration between CBFP partners during 2018 and to do so explicitly under the aegis of the CBFP. This would help improve the visibility and branding of the Partnership and enhance the continuity of interaction between partners under the aegis of the CBFP between MOPs. A review would be conducted during the 18th MOP to assess whether this somewhat more specific and continuous mode of collaboration on particular activities had yielded encouraging results. If so, the experiment could be repeated and expanded in subsequent years, for example, through proposed priorities in the field of climate change.

The Chair also stressed that it would be wise to take advantage of the exchange venues offered by the 17th MOP in progress - and possibly also the streams - to organise, after this meeting of the Council, discussions between experts from the various colleges, in order to refine the formulation of the expected results of the work to be done in the context of the two priorities identified and possible commitments of various CBFP members to contribute to these.

Assessments and comments from Council members on the introduction, on a pilot basis, of a system of annual priorities and on the two proposed pilot annual priorities

*Private Sector College*

Ms. Jacqueline Lardit Vandepol (ATIBT) started by underlining that the reform of the CBFP cooperation structures is starting to generate great enthusiasm for private sector engagement, as reflected by the turnout of 15 participants at the meeting of the Private Sector College held the same morning in Douala (compared with 4 participants the previous year at the 16th MOP in Kigali).

Security – Conservation Nexus

The Private Sector College fully supports this choice, because it is a major concern for a growing number of industrial forest concession holders, that are facing growing security issues in their forest concessions in the form of large-scale poaching, sometimes involving arms intended for warfare. In addition, in some forest areas affected by security problems forest concessions form security networks resembling protected areas: these are also areas where the rule of law is more prevalent. Finally, prospects for public-private partnerships against poaching in and around forest concessions may be given greater consideration in the context of this priority.

OFAC Database

This proposal has also sparked much interest, notably as a large number of loggers have already submitted data to contribute to the OFAC database. However, the college recommends that OFAC focus on the specific added value that different types of partners would be seeking to get from the database. Loggers would likely not request the same type of data as would a donor or an NGO. They would tend to seek data on the presence or absence, in their area of activity, of specific partners (for anti-poaching activities, research, support and activities supporting the development of forest populations).

*Scientific and Academic College*

Security – Conservation Nexus

Dr. Virginia Zaunbrecher, UCLA, pointed out that a lot of information has already been collected on the topic and that this information should be taken into account in the study and in a more specific formulation of the priority (monitoring of samples and pangolin traffic, for example). It may be worthwhile to develop a strategy to monitor and evaluate anti-poaching activities. Finally, capacity building activities could be considered and these could draw on the supervision and training potential present in the Scientific and Academic College. (In regard to this, the EU noted that this request would have to be assessed in light of the needs identified by the study in progress.)

OFAC Database

It should be clearly stated whether the database will be a simple compendium of partners' activities, or whether it is also intended to provide support for the raw (or processed) datasets collected by the partners.



### *Multilaterals College*

Ms. Sandra Ratiarison, FAO, announced that her college had agreed to work on the two proposed priorities. UNESCO, UNDP and UNEP would actively collaborate, but nevertheless wished to make the following comments and suggestions:

#### Security – Conservation Nexus

Was the issue being discussed here security, or rather safety, the second being a broader concept? One would also have to pay attention to the sensitive nature of security issues, which usually fall within the purview of national sovereignty. Care should also be taken to use already existing institutions, even though these are often deficient and lack capacity. At the same time, one should draw on what has already been tried and tested (for instance at the level of the TNS). It would also be important to take into account the international conventions that can provide supporting instruments for the implementation of this priority.

#### OFAC Database

The database should also be considered as a tool for enhancing the effectiveness of development aid, which is often too compartmentalized.

### *International NGO College*

Overall, the members of the college were pleased to note that the two proposed priorities overlap with their own priorities for action in the Congo Basin, which is obviously seen as something positive. But they nevertheless wished to make the following suggestions:

#### Security – Conservation Nexus

One of the fears is that the priority is targeted too specifically towards the issue of armed conflicts, which are not the most widespread security issue in the Congo Basin forests. The most endemic problem in the forest areas of this river basin are more or less organized trafficking and criminal networks, which require a different response than armed conflicts.

Furthermore, there is a need to consider the insidious insecurity, in day-to-day life, affecting the populations in their interactions with all types of power (of a criminal nature, of course, but also trafficking practices which are more deeply rooted in poor governance and non-compliant administrative procedures). (Mr. Elkan, EU expert, seconded this comment and said that “soft” crime should also be considered, which is more a problem of corruption, poor governance and lack of rule of law, which undermines the security of populations by taking advantage of and exacerbating their socio-economic vulnerability).

Finally, it was pointed out that security issues arising from organized poaching in the sub-region should not overshadow the problems related to the core responsibilities of States to protect wildlife and enforce anti-poaching laws. Thus, there is a need to integrate this dimension in the issue of the effectiveness of law enforcement and good governance by the States, who are the main protectors of resources.

## OFAC Database

The data collected and compiled should be relevant and have added value for political and economic decision-makers. It is also important to promote discipline in the transmission of information by all actors, regardless of who they are. The EU added in this respect that this applies to all, including NGOs, who have decried information gaps on the part of others.

It is important to keep in mind the crucial link between OFAC data, the CBFP's priorities and, above all, the operational axes of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan.

On a more general level, in the further implementation of the reform of the CBFP cooperation structures, the college recommends that attention be given to strengthening the link between the streams, the medium-term priorities and the annual priorities, particularly with a view to enhance the prospects of continuity and follow-up between MOPs. It could be interesting to tie the discussions during the streams to the activities carried out within the framework of the annual priorities, either to initiate or to conclude these.

With respect to the above suggestions, the Chair recalled what he had stressed before he opened the floor to the Council members. The link between the streams, the medium-term priorities and the annual priorities would undoubtedly require improvement in the future, but this could only be done on the basis of experience. At the current stage of reform, it was important to test annual priorities on an experimental basis. As already proposed in the discussion, details on the formulation of the annual priorities could be discussed in the streams starting at the current MOP.

### *Chair*

The Chair thanked all the Council members for their overall positive endorsement and for their proposals to enrich the formulation of the proposed annual priorities. He underlined that the "OFAC database" priority was at the heart of the objective of CBFP set out in the founding documents of the Partnership of 2002-2003 regarding collaboration and information sharing in order to promote greater effectiveness. The fact that this priority would be one of the first two annual priorities highlighted in the reform would fit very well with the initial motives behind the establishment of the Partnership.

He also underlined, and the EU and COMIFAC supported this view, that it would be a good idea to set up, within the colleges, monitoring groups responsible for promoting data encoding by the respective college members, and within which support for, or more specific coordination with, OFAC could be discussed.

## **4. Conclusions and acknowledgements**

At the end of the Council proceedings, the Chair noted that the Council considered the list of medium-term priorities of CBFP ready for adoption at the Plenary of the ongoing 17th MOP.

The Chair also noted that the Council members were agreed on the introduction, on a pilot basis, of a system of annual CBFP priorities and that the following two annual priorities would be selected for the period up to the 18th MOP :

- Strengthening the integration of the security dimension in wildlife management and conservation ;
- Developing and enhancing a database for monitoring implementation and results of actions carried out by CBFP partners.

The Chair noted that the Council would like to see the list of medium-term priorities of CBFP and the decision to introduce, on a pilot basis, a system of CBFP annual priorities, including the two priorities selected for the period up to the 18th MOP, adopted by all the partners at the Plenary of the ongoing 17th MOP.

Before concluding his remarks, the Chair thanked the participants for the work they had done during this third meeting of the CBFP Council and expressed his hope that this would yield fruitful results. The idea of organising meetings of the Colleges and the Council on a single day was, in this respect, very appropriate and conducive to increased effectiveness.

In conclusion, and as this was the last meeting of the CBFP Council that he would personally chair in his capacity as the European Union Facilitator of the CBFP, Mr. Anders Henriksson thanked the members of the Council and all the participants in the meeting for their trust, contributions and collaboration over the past two years.

He also thanked the members of the Facilitation team for their support and trust.