

**GEF Secretariat: Summary of the High-Level Roundtable on Congo Basin Sustainable landscapes, June 28 2018, Ariyana ballroom, GEF Assembly, Da Nang, Viet Nam**

**Congo Basin Sustainable landscapes:** around 70 persons took part in this High-Level Roundtable moderated by **Cyriaque Sendashonga, Global Director for Programme and Policy at IUCN<sup>1</sup>**. The discussions focused on the protection of global important biodiversity in protected areas, the management of biodiversity out of protected areas through large-scale landscape approaches, the importance of forest dependent communities and traditional knowledge, and the need to develop long term strategies and projects to reinforce the connections among communities. Bushmeat management, poaching, and international wildlife trafficking are huge issues in fragile and vulnerable countries. There are obviously high expectations about the contribution of private sector and innovative public-private partnerships.

**Raymond Ngomba Ndoye, COMIFAC<sup>2</sup> Executive Secretary**, gave a general overview of the Congo basin system with the Congo river, the dense rainforests, and the forest dependent people. He highlighted the efforts of the countries to set up an institutional framework at regional level: the COMIFAC.

**Emma Stokes, Central Africa Regional Director, WCS**, asked for the reinforcement of protected area networks, the need for protected areas to generate incomes and benefits to local communities, and the management of biodiversity out of protected areas in buffer zones and corridors through a landscape approach - notably to manage the bushmeat market, poaching, and illegal trafficking (ivory).

**Edmond Dounias, Research Director, IRD**, considered the forest as the result of an intimate evolution with indigenous communities. There are 150 ethnical groups, with different specializations. Projects should reinforce cooperation between communities. The coexistence of several land tenure systems is a limit for Payments for Environmental Services mechanisms.

**Pierre Hele, Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Cameroon**, explained the ambition of the country to reach a middle-income level while reducing the GHG emissions of 32% in 2035. The NDC includes 30 projects. Financing will be key.

**Jacques-Denis Tsanga, Minister of Water and Forests, in charge of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Gabon** highlighted the role of Gabon in international conventions, the problem of elephant poaching, and the importance of a GEF7 program for regional coherence.

**Sanjay Waggle, CEO of Lightsmith Group** considered that it is possible to produce food, create jobs without increasing pressures on forests, restoring degraded lands, or even in urban areas. There are huge opportunities to develop the private sector in Least Developed Countries.

**Tom Lovejoy, STAP**, highlighted the importance of water ecosystems, and the need to rethink our energy systems and their impacts on natural resources. Innovation, technologies, and international cooperation are part of the solutions.

The debate with the participants was an opportunity to highlight the case of Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, with huge protected areas, size of Belgium, needing resources, access, and land-use planning. **Lauren Gisnås, NORAD**, asked about the role REDD+ in sustainable forest management. The financing

---

<sup>1</sup> IUCN : International Union for Conservation of Nature

<sup>2</sup> COMIFAC: Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale

modalities of the future program were clarified upon a question from **Jonas Kemajou Syapze, OPED**. **Juliette Biauou, UN Environment**, insisted on the potential role of the private sector, but the need for derisking. **Roger Mpan, GEF OFP, Republic of Congo**, underlined the identification of a huge carbon storage area of 146,000km<sup>2</sup>, a peatland area, shared by DRC and republic of Congo. Last, but not least, **Antonio Micha Ondo Angue, Equatorial Guinea GEF OFP** insisted on the need of knowledge sharing, also with other forest basins like the Amazon.

**Cyriaque Sendashonga** thanked the panelists for the quality of the exchanges and closed the session.