

PREPARATORY WORKSHOP FOR THE N'DJAMENA HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FIGHT AGAINST POACHING, ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING IN WILDLIFE, ARMED GROUPS MOVING IN AND AROUND PROTECTED AREAS AS WELL AS ARMED TRANSHUMANT GROUPS BETWEEN THE SAHEL AND EQUATORIAL AFRICA



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Douala, Cameroon, 12 and 13 November 2018

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of its roadmap, the CBFP Facilitation plans to organize an International Conference on poaching, security and stability as well as control of armed transhumance practiced by pastoralists groups operating between Equatorial Guinea, the Sahel, the two Sudans and the DRC.

To this end, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership along with COMIFAC, the EU and the German Cooperation, will be organizing a workshop expected to gather experts to map out the strengths and weaknesses of anti-poaching instruments developed so far in the sub-region and ensure that the upcoming deliberations in N'Djamena culminate in an operational roadmap driven by direct results and visible impacts which best reflect the political commitment of States and Partners to the issue from both a geo-spatial and thematic standpoint.

The main objective of the workshop is to map out the strengths and weaknesses of anti-poaching instruments developed so far in the sub-region and ensure that the upcoming deliberations in N'Djamena culminate in an operational roadmap driven by direct results and visible impacts which best reflect the political commitment of States and Partners to the issue from both a geo-spatial and thematic standpoint. Specific objectives include:

- - Reviewing the level of efficiency of the fight against poaching in the Congo Basin sub-region (COMIFAC, TRAFFIC)',
- -Reviewing direct and indirect threats linked to poaching and armed transhumance as well as armed conflict in the sub-region (EU)
- -Proposing operational thrusts based on the possibilities of signing cross-border agreements as part of LAB as well as efficient deployment mechanisms between Equatorial Africa, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, CAR, Sudan, South Sudan and northern DR Congo.
- Designing the technical engagement plan (operational) and valuing political commitments to be made in N'Djamena.

Workshop attendees included:

- Experts from State agencies in charge of wildlife and protected areas of the following countries: Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DR Congo and South Sudan;
- Representatives of the following sub-regional and regional organizations specialized in biodiversity issues: COMIFAC, OCFSA, OFAC, WWF, AWF, WCS, LAGA, PFBC et GIZ;

SESSION 1 OPENING CEREMONY

a) Speeches

The opening ceremony featured four statements: introductory remarks by the CBFP Co-Facilitator who began by welcoming the participants to the preparatory workshop and then highlighted the importance of the workshop while recalling the specific outcomes the highest authorities at the N'Djamena international conference will be expecting from the workshop.

Next was the GIZ representative who made a statement in which she recalled that the N'Djamena conference due to hold in January 2019 falls in line with efforts to boost and foster the functioning of cross-border consultation platforms for four COMIFAC member countries (Cameroon, CAR, DRC and Chad) and three non-COMIFAC countries (Niger, Sudan and South Sudan) dealing with the ecosystems of Equatorial Africa and the Sahel region. She further recalled that it is in line with this objective that the German Ministry of Cooperation (BMZ) through the GIZ's COMIFAC Support Program has been supporting the Belgian CBFP Facilitation. The GIZ Program operates in a multidisciplinary environment involving several actors not only in the management of Cross-border Protected Areas but also other components related to sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin. Hence the theme of the N'Djamena Ministerial Conference slated to hold from 23 to 25 January 2019, "Threats posed by armed groups moving between the Sahel, Sudan and north of Equatorial Africa to their protected areas and surrounding populations: Analysis and Action Plan" is more relevant than ever, given the challenges facing the States of Equatorial Africa and the Sahel, relating to sustainable natural resources management and the associated conflicts. She concluded her remarks by urging the participants to stay on the path of constructive ideas and come up with a realistic and feasible action plan.

Taking the floor as the third speaker, the Permanent Secretary of OCFSA began by thanking the organizers for the commendable step they had taken to organize a meeting to review the situation and discuss possible solutions. He provided a brief background on OCFSA since its creation, restructuring and the installation of a new management team on 9 April 2018 and stated that the workshop's concerns and objectives were at the heart of the Organization's main mission. The technical facilitator of the workshop equally underscored the fact that poaching, trafficking and the illicit trade in wildlife species are causing a dramatic decline in numerous species' populations on all continents and pose a threat to national and regional security. In order to eradicate this scourge to which no country in the Central Africa sub-region is immune, there is a need for partnerships which implies fostering a coalition of active and committed actors, he underscored.

Lastly, the representative of the COMIFAC Executive Secretary conveyed the gratitude of COMIFAC, the Co-organizer of the meeting, to the participants for accepting the invitation. He particularly acknowledged the presence of the South Sudanese delegation among the participants.

He went on to recall that Central Africa's forest ecosystems contain unique biodiversity which holds great potential for the sub-region's socio-economic development. It is in recognition of the economic and ecological value of these ecosystems and the growing threats they face that the Central African Heads of State pledged in March 1999 in Yaounde, through the "Yaounde Declaration" to make concerted efforts to preserve and manage the forest ecosystems in their countries in order to support their populations' economic and social development efforts. This political will of the States was demonstrated among other things through the creation of cross-border PAs, the adoption in June 2012 of an Action Plan on Strengthening National Wildlife Law Enforcement (PAPECALF), the establishment of a sub-working group on protected areas and wildlife (SGTAPFS) in 2012...

In spite of these biodiversity conservation efforts, many fauna and flora species are increasingly endangered. Poachers are constantly changing their tactics and grabbing headlines as they slaughter elephant herds and kill the park rangers responsible for protecting wildlife. There is therefore an urgent need to design and implement cross-border programs and projects, especially aimed at controlling transhumant pastoralists. Thus, the International Conference of Ministers of Defense, Security and Protected Areas on the fight against poaching and other criminal activities must be held as a matter of urgency as it will provide an opportunity, among other things, to take an in-depth look at the nature and scope of the threat and subsequently adopt a programmatic and operational road map both at the national and regional levels. He ended his statement by wishing a successful outcome for the proceedings and declaring the preparatory workshop for the N'Djamena International Conference open.

b) Overview of workshop objectives and establishment of the bureau

Following the official opening ceremony, the Permanent Secretary of OCFSA serving as the facilitator of the workshop, presented the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting.

A presidium comprising a president, two vice-presidents and two rapporteurs was established to lead the workshop proceedings.

- President: Cameroon
- 1st Vice-president: Chad
- 2nd Vice-president: South Sudan
- 1st Rapporteur: CAR
- 2nd Rapporteur: DRC

A group photo came to close the opening ceremony of session 1.

SESSION 2 INTRODUCTION OF COUNTRIES AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Presentation of the RIOFAC Project, Observatory for Central African Forests (OFAC)

This entailed a presentation of the map of protected areas in the sub-region, which covered three main themes:

- Cross-border poaching;
- Insecurity caused by armed groups;
- Uncontrolled transhumance activity

The data were obtained from the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme on elephant carcasses and from the conservation offices of the countries concerned:

The data on transhumance were provided by OCHSA and APN. They cover the CAR (CHINKO) and the DRC (Garamba).

The data on insecurity, armed conflicts, (Boko Haram, LRA (the Lord's Resistance Army)) were drawn from newspapers and other information sources such as United Nations missions and stakeholder networks.

The response from participants was swift as the map did not indicate the source of transhumant traffic going from Nigeria through Chad and Cameroon to the CAR and ending in the DRC.

It is also worth noting that the transhumance corridors fell in the same areas that were identified as highly insecure zones. This is sufficient proof of the linkages between uncontrolled transhumance and insecurity in the sub-region.

2. Chad's presentation

The fight against poaching: By the DCFAP

The presentation entailed an overview of: protected areas in Chad, players in wildlife crime, causes and factors driving poaching, the regulatory framework, the issue of wildlife conservation, the anti-poaching strategy and biodiversity conservation measures undertaken.

3. The CAR's presentation: Threats to Protected Areas by the DFAP

The presentation focused on:

- A review of wildlife;
- Threats related to poaching, transhumance and armed conflict;
- The consequences for wildlife;
- Anti-poaching instruments;
- And a few Tripartite Agreements the country has signed in the sub-region;

Main threats include: poaching, uncontrolled and armed transhumance, logging and mining activities.

Transhumants are armed and are usually behind the proliferation of weapons of war. They poison their dead cattle's carcasses in order to kill carnivorous wild animals. The transhumants no longer remain within official transhumance corridors.

Next to the transhumants, the Seleka, Anti Balaka and LRA armed groups, present a serious threat to wildlife and security in the sub-region.

4. Presentation of the Republic of Cameroon

Cross-border Protected Areas, drivers of integration and development/ Sub-Director of Wildlife Conservation (SDCF)

Cameroon is a multisectoral space in which protected areas face various challenges, namely:

- Poaching involving park rangers' deaths;
- Illegal gold mining;
- Security challenges brought on by Boko-Haram in the North;
- Shifting agriculture in the North involving slash and burn clearing;
- Transhumant pastoralism beginning in West Africa and extending to the Congo Basin.

The State agency in charge of Protected Areas through MINFOF works jointly with other departments of the central administration and decentralized entities.

Actions undertaken by the government are reflected in the signing of agreements with regional and sub-regional partners and international organizations for biodiversity protection, technical and material strengthening of MINFOF services and park rangers in PAs, construction of welcoming and accommodation facilities in PAs.

5. Presentation of the Republic of South Sudan

Challenges related to trafficking in wildlife species and movements of armed cross-border groups as well as transhumance and pastoralism in South Sudan. The country has 19 protected areas including 6 on the border with the CAR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Cross-border issues with armed groups and armed and uncontrolled transhumance are identical to those of the CAR and the DRC. It equally underscored a lack of logistic and financial resources to monitor these protected areas. It also appealed for stronger cross-border cooperation in order to ensure better cooperation.

6. Presentation of OCFSA: Briefing note on the organization / Technical director

The presentation included a brief recap of the briefing note on the organization following its revamp and restructuring in the wake of the Extraordinary

conference of wildlife ministers of member countries which took place from 26 to 27 October 2017 in Douala. The presentation places special emphasis on the organization's mission, vision and interim strategic plan 2019-2022.

7. WWF Presentation: Zero poaching toolbox by the WWF project coordinator

“Zero poaching” is a toolbox designed for the fight against poaching.

In his statement, the WWF representative pointed out that the plethora of actors involved in the fight against poaching was resulting in duplicate work and therefore little or none of the expected impacts, hence the crucial need for the toolbox which aims to strengthen and improve collaboration between the actors for better distribution of efforts.

The toolbox targets either a protected area or one or many wildlife species. It comprises 6 pillars, namely: Evaluation (using the PAMET, MEE tool), Technology (SMART, Drones, Dogs) Capacities (training, working conditions), Communities (prevention of man/wildlife conflict, informants), prosecution (in-depth investigations) cooperation (coordinating unit, taskforce).

The strategy established to make the most of the toolbox aims to get the 6 pillars integrated in the countries' conservation and law enforcement strategies

SESSION 3 PRESENTATION ON THE THEMES OF THE WORKSHOP

8. Presentation « Efficiency in the fight against trafficking in wildlife species »/LAGA/TRAFFIC/WWF.

The speaker presented an overview of the situation from 2003 to 2018, challenges and solutions. Overall during this period, 500 traffickers were arrested.

- In all, 284 investigative missions were conducted in the country's 8 regions.
- Operations were conducted in the country's 6 regions, with 36 high-profile traffickers arrested at a rate of 1 arrest every 10 days, leading to 41 lawsuits.
- LAGA provided legal assistance to some law enforcement units in five (05) of these cases.
- Cases involving pangolin scales, primates and ivory made up of 65% of all the operations.
- The imprisonment rate for arrested offenders stood at 73%.
- Operations were carried out in 3 regions, with 18 leading traffickers arrested.
- LAGA provided legal assistance in 3 other cases

- Operations involving pangolin scales made up 75% of all seizures.

9. Presentation on implementation status of BSB Yamoussa binational and LAB tripartite agreements in N'Djamena delivered by the representative of the German Cooperation (GIZ)

The speaker presented the BSB Yamoussa complex and proceeded to report on the implementation status of the BSB Yamoussa and Tripartite anti-poaching Agreement of N'Djamena and concluded by sharing observations and recommendations.

As a matter of fact, the Bouba-Ndjida National Parks (in Cameroon) and the Sena-Oura (in Chad) make up a 300, 000 ha bloc. Featured in the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, the APT complex which has become the “BSB Yamoussa binational”, works hand in hand with RAPAC. An agreement on cooperation and management of the BSB Yamoussa cross-border complex was signed on 02 August 2011 in Yaounde.

Regarding the implementation of cross-border agreements, the drafting of the specific anti-poaching memorandum related to the N'Djamena AT-LAB Tripartite Cooperation Agreement between the AR, Cameroon and Chad, the holding of the first CTPE session in 2017 in Ngaoundere, and concerning the bi-national agreement between Cameroon and Chad, several sessions of the Binational planning and implementing Committee were held in Garoua and Pala. Specific draft memoranda on freedom of movement, joint patrols, the specific memorandum on local development between the two protected areas are currently being signed

There have been a few observations, notably:

- The scope of issues relating to transhumance, pastoralism and poaching far exceeds the conservation capacities and isolated actions of the States;
- In the absence of an institutionalized framework for consultation, mediation and arbitration which is accepted by all actors, it would be difficult to sustainably address the issues related to the concerted management of APTs;
- Several agreements have been signed today in the sub-region and beyond Central Africa, however their efficiency and effectiveness require the conduct of an inventory of Agreements and cross-border platforms/committees related to the securing of APs as a first step towards action in the N'Djamena Conference.

The speaker formulated a few recommendations, including among others:

- Intensifying the frequency of consultations with parties to the two Agreements in the MEO of the specific protocols: establishing bodies to

manage the Bi- and Tri-National Agreements; establishing the Binational Brigade and associated units: Stepping up patrols in both parks; developing the LAB strategy of the Tripartite agreement and the action plan;

- Creating/ reviving an institutional framework for consultation, mediation and/or arbitration which is accepted by all actors with a view to implementing joint LAB programs in cross-border areas;
- Establishing/activating a mechanism for sustainable management of issues related to concerted management of resources in Cross-border Protected Areas (APTs)
- Addressing governance issues related to resource use

The DRC representative delivered a presentation showcasing the experience with Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as one of the solutions to challenges in managing Central Africa's protected areas. He then distributed a briefing note presenting an overview of direct and indirect threats related to poaching, armed transhumance and armed conflict in the Garamba-Bili-Uéré landscape.

SESSION 4 THEMATIC GROUP WORK

Three groups were formed to analyze and propose actions to address the following concerns:

1. What are the ways of responding to uncontrolled transhumance around and in protected areas; what prevention measures can be taken to control these movements? What countries are affected? How should the countries collaborate? (Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC);
2. How efficient are Cross-border Agreements? What practical action is needed to activate these processes? Identify cross-border areas that need or warrant Agreements (Chad, Cameroon, CAR, South Sudan, DRC);
3. What Protected Area management system should be promoted in the sub-region, given the strengths and weaknesses observed in PPPs, the cases of Zakouma, Garamba and others? (Chad, Cameroon, CAR, South Sudan, DRC)
4. How can institutional data be managed to guide all these themes and steer decision-making at the N'Djamena conference?

SESSION 5: PRESENTATIONS ON WORKSHOP THEMES

The results of the group work are available in the appendix. Details of these recommendations can be found in the attached reports

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following these presentations, discussions were held and the following recommendations were made:

To the countries

1. Data on seizures of arms and ammunition and other products must be provided by countries to populate the OFAC database;
2. Continue improving knowledge on data in order to have a reliable information system by identifying indicators to be collected in the field in the different sectors;
3. Invite the heads of security, defense and land use planning of each country concerned to the next meeting of country experts before the N'Djamena conference;
4. Group countries into three geographical and thematic zones (blocks) to facilitate institutional management for the implementation of activities;
5. Encourage economic development, land use planning in order to solve the problem of insecurity, transhumance and poaching;
6. The security, economic and conservation dimensions must be analyzed according to the major blocks (North Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria-Chad, CAR and DRC-South Sudan, DRC), as well as other cross-border activities.

To international organizations and technical and financial partners

1. Make transhumance data available to OFAC for centralization with the help of partners.
2. Strengthen climate change resilience of indigenous peoples and local communities;
3. Provide OCFSA with the operational and institutional capacities to address wildlife and safety issues
4. Take note of the four emerging geographical blocks below as central points of interest for securing protected areas and controlling transhumance and then concentrate support on them. Namely:
 - a. Northern Cameroon-Chad-Niger-Sudan
 - b. Cameroon-Chad-CAR;
 - c. CAR-DRC-South Sudan;
 - d. Cameroon-Nigeria.

To the CBFP, COMIFAC and OCFSA:

Finalize the thematic fact sheets and send them to the countries by 15 December 2018.

Done in Douala, 13 November 2018

**For the participants
The rapporteurs**

ANNEXES
FEEDBACK FROM GROUP WORK

GROUP 1

N°	THEMES	PROPOSED ACTIONS/RESPONSES
01	UNCONTROLLED TRANSHUMANCE (cross-border transhumance)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affected countries: CAR, Chad, Cameroon, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Niger 2. A land-use plan/micro-zoning, delineate transhumance corridors and define new corridors where necessary, update the texts delineating transhumance corridors taking into account the expansion of farming areas, raise public awareness of existing texts; initiate a model for the economic development of transhumance (including, among other things, the identification of actors linked to transhumance, the sedentarization of shepherds, the use of improved breeds, intensification of livestock farming), revisit land use plans; create ranches; secure PAs (creation of green belts around PAs), restore Lake Chad ecosystems; ensure security of transhumants; map problem areas and bring in the army to ensure compliance with weapons transportation laws; combat land degradation, carry out concerted water management, establish a fund for the economic development of transhumance;

02	CROSS-BORDER AGREEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Tripartite (CMR, Chad, CAR), Yamoussa BSB (Chad, CMR) - Difficulties in implementing various existing agreements; - The entire area including the CAR, Chad, Cameroon, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Niger needs to revise existing texts to adjust to current realities
03	PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek sustainable financing for state management or co-management of PAs; - Promote ecotourism for self-financing of PAs with private partners; - Conduct pilot PPP experiments
04	MANAGEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DATA	ECCAS/OCFSA should get involved at the strategic and political levels AWF/WWF, should be involved in operationalization

FEEDBACK FROM GROUP 2

Question 2: How efficient are Cross-border Agreements, what practical steps are needed to activate these processes? Identify cross-border areas that need or warrant such Agreements (Chad, Cameroon, CAR, South Sudan, DRC).

International agreements in the sub-region

- LCBC

- Chad-Cameroon
- Chad - CAR
- Chad - Cameroon - CAR

Collaboration in theory, often not followed by specific protocols

- No cross-border activations (legal proceedings, exchange of information, etc.)
- Lack of political leadership, lack of clarity on roles (who initiates arbitration? ...)
- Even actions that do not require specific protocols are not implemented
- No follow-up on implementation or funding

An operational plan is required based on:

- Evaluation of agreements and the identification of overlaps/contradictions with traditional and historical agreements
- Identification of realistic and effective actions
- The establishment of a monitoring mechanism with clear funding and assigned responsibilities

Historical and cultural links as well as traditional agreements must be taken into account

Get traditional leaders involved in the implementation of these specific protocols

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Transnational "block" approach in the sub-region

- DRC - CAR - South Sudan - Sudan
- Lake Chad Basin
- Chad - CAR - Cameroon
- ? Nigeria – Niger – Cameroon?

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- No activation
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- The establishment of a monitoring mechanism with clear funding and assigned responsibilities

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- Get traditional leaders involved in the implementation of these specific protocols

Question 3: What Protected Area management system should be promoted in the sub-region, given the strengths and weaknesses observed in PPPs, the cases of Zakouma, Garamba and others? (Chad, Cameroon, CAR, South Sudan, DRC)

Management methods do not have to follow a one-size-fits-all model

- PPPs, Foundations,
- Effective but short- and medium-term solutions to governance problems

We must not confine ourselves to the geographical areas of protected areas

- Regardless of management method, the protected area must be VALUED
- Strengthen mainstreaming of protected areas into regional dynamics, sustainably managed landscapes
- Diversify support in terms of geography and also field of study

Strengthen the professionalization of conservation officers

- Certified training courses (Wildlife School, ALU Conservation, ERAIFT,)
- Refresher courses/training in new conservation issues and practices
- Establish a monitoring mechanism with clear funding and assigned responsibilities

Historical and cultural links as well as traditional agreements must be taken into account

- Get traditional leaders involved in the implementation of these specific protocols

FEEDBACK FROM GROUP THREE

SAMPLE CASE GARAMBA (DRC) AND LANTOTO (SOUTH SUDAN)

- The discussions were focused on the cross-border area of South Sudan and DRC.
- The need for political will
- Use of the security argument (solving transhumance problems as part of a larger solution to solving security problems within the region)
- Use of the economic argument (unlocking the economic potential of transhumance and other resources of the area)

PROPOSALS

- Tri national agreement between Garamba in DRC and Lantoto in South Sudan. Chinko in CAR and Boro in South Sudan,
- Rapid response framework to address transhumance problems – collaborative and communication framework to address transhumance (movement of pastoralists)
- Mapping out migratory corridors and implementing a sustainable land use system.
- Creating livelihood projects and development activities around parks
- Sub regional institutions and organizations for managing data (suggestions COMIFAC/OFAC to be the data hub)