

18th Meeting of Parties of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership
Inaugural opening ceremony and High-level statements

Brussels

28 November 9:00 – 13:00

Statement of Günter Nooke, Personal Representative of the German
Chancellor for Africa – BMZ Commissioner for Africa

Royal Highness, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

- It is an honor and a pleasure for me to deliver a statement on behalf of the German Government at the Opening Session of the 10th Meeting of the Parties of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.
- As Chancellor Merkel's Personal Representative for Africa since 2010 I have travel the entire continent and I can appreciate the importance of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership or CBFP for Central Africa.
- We Germans have a special relationship with forests. After all, it was a German forester who invented the notion and practice of "sustainability", round about 300 years ago (and, just as a footnote, this famous man, Carl von Carlowitz, was born in the eastern part of Germany, not far from where I was born...).
- Tony Rinaudo, "der Waldmacher", "the Forest-Maker", this year's recipient of the Right Livelihood Award, or "Alternative Nobel Prize", is

a friend of mine; I had the great pleasure of visiting with him some of the reforestation sites in Ethiopia a few years ago. His work is essential for the livelihood of many Africans, in particular in the Sahel-Zone and the effects of the reforestation he started can now be seen even from space.

- So I am aware of the utmost importance of forest resources for preserving biodiversity and the climate as global common goods. So is the Chancellor: in 2008 at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn she announced that Germany, from 2013 on, would provide 500 million euros annually for the conservation of forests and other ecosystems worldwide.
- A major proportion of this money is being used in and invested into the three green lungs of our planet: the Amazon Basin, Indonesia and, of course, the wider Congo Basin.

- With respect to the Congo Basin, I wish to underline the importance within our overall development cooperation in the region: BMZ is currently investing more than 2 billion EUR in the forest sector. Almost 300 million EUR go directly into the Congo Basin, in addition to the country packages of the multilateral initiatives like FCPF that Germany is supporting to a significant degree.
- We are pursuing several goals through our engagement in the Congo Basin.
 - One: there are the bio-physical aspects, which I already mentioned.
 - Two: the forests also provide livelihoods for people. On a global scale, more than 1.6 billion people depend directly and indirectly on the forest eco-system. Thus, development cooperation in the forest sector impacts directly on people's livelihoods. Over the past few years, Germany has shifted from a "do no harm" to a

“do good” approach to maximize the positive impact of our development cooperation. This is demonstrated – among other things – by the indigenous peoples’ component, a vital part of our support program for the COMIFAC secretariat.

- Three: Germany also has bilateral sector programs in the region with DR Congo, Republic of Congo and Cameroon. In Cameroon, for example, Germany is currently engaged with funds that amount to almost 150 million euros. In addition, we reach out to almost all countries neighboring the Congo Basin through our massive financial engagement with COMIFAC.
- So this is where we are today: longstanding and, this is my hope, reliable partners for the governments in contributing to forest preservation in the region as a whole.
- It is clear, however, that forests cannot be preserved by state actors alone. Communities, civil society, private business, academia,

research, and others also play a key role in this regard. They all have to cooperate for finding an economically viable balance between long-term use and resource protection. Especially civil society has a strong interest in how forests are administered and has to be closely integrated in allocation processes. All actors need the findings and data of academia and research as the basis for their work and as the starting-point for new approaches to forest preservation.

- The CBFP is *the* platform enabling all these actors to jointly find solutions. This is what is needed and it is steered very well by our Belgium friends and partners. They are pursuing a reform agenda, which is soundly based on the structural reforms put in place under the good facilitation of the European Union.
- Germany has played an active part in the work of CBFP since its beginnings. Let me assure you that we see this as a responsibility to the forests of the Congo Basin and to the people who live in and from

these forests. We will continue to do so. My minister, Gerd Müller, has given his consent and support for Germany to once again take up an active role within the Partnership. However, to do so we will need the support – both morally and financially – of our friends and partners in CBFP. There is still ample time to determine together how this can be achieved. We look forward to working with and in the CBFP in the years to come.