

**Ambassador Hoza's Continuing Engagement Remarks  
15<sup>th</sup> Congo Basin Forest Partnership Meeting of Partners**

June 19, 2015

*Palais de Congres* – Tripartite Plenary Hall, Yaoundé, Cameroon

- Excellencies, honored guests, partners, once again let me emphasize how impressed I am with the breadth of cooperation and engagement that all of you are undertaking in Central Africa. I am truly inspired by what I have heard here and throughout this 15<sup>th</sup> Partners Meeting.
- In 2015, the United States has pledged more than 47.8 million to work with many of you in achieving our shared objectives for CBFP. The 20 years of sustained support invested tens of millions in sustainable forest management across the Congo Basin.
- We intend to continue our engagement in the region and with CBFP in the near future. Our engagement will strengthen and build ties between African institutions and stakeholders; and will include initiatives that encourage open and inclusive governance, biodiversity conservation; efforts to enhance natural resource management while addressing critical threats such as illegal logging and wildlife trafficking; and climate change.
- Biodiversity Programs
  - Through the Central Africa Regional Program Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), the United States will continue to implement biodiversity programs, focused on sustainable forests and wildlife conservation, as well as support to environmental monitoring and policy (CARPE/EMAPS project) aimed at capacity building and improved environmental policies and regulations.

## UNCLASSIFIED

- To combat wildlife trafficking and enhance wildlife conservation, USG agencies will continue to partner with member countries to address serious threats to wildlife from poaching, commercial trade in bush meat, trafficking in wildlife products and wildlife disease. Programs will focus on key hotspots, like protected areas and national parks where the region's iconic species like the great apes, forest elephants and marine turtles are targets of poaching and wildlife trade. Our initiatives are multi-pronged: they combine science based methods, such as Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART), which improves patrolling and monitoring effectiveness in the parks and strengthen economic incentives for local communities to protect wildlife.
- To address impacts of climate change the U.S. will continue to work with CBFP partners, other multilateral donor platforms and private organizations to reduce emissions from deforestation using the REDD+ policy framework. Our climate change and SilvaCarbon programs build capacity for monitoring and verification and support the development and design of Monitoring Reporting and Verification methodologies. In addition, scholarships are provided for the staff of Environmental Ministries of CBFP member states to obtain graduate degrees and training in state-of-art technologies.
- Support for regional capacity building and interconnectivity
  - In addition to the support the U.S. has been providing to member country ministries and organizations, we are also committed to strengthening regional interconnectivity.

## UNCLASSIFIED

- We have continued our assistance and support to COMIFAC through the Protected Area and Wildlife Working Group and the Climate Working Group; and we have assisted COMIFAC in continuously raising its profile at international events.
  - We will support the engagement of ECCAS in exploring sources of new funds for the region and in supporting COMIFAC and the member states in putting together political and regional cooperation frameworks to allow for the expansion of green growth.
- Civil Society engagement: Prix d' Excellence
    - The United States is very pleased to spearhead and support the launch this year of the CBFP Prix d' Excellence, an innovation to recognize and elevate civil society leaders who have undertaken impactful projects that have yielded benefits to their communities, societies and the wider environment.
    - This Prix will showcase the work of outstanding leaders of communities and associations, who have had great impacts in their regions.
- Closing
    - On behalf of the United States, I once again want to commend you all for your dedication to CBFP and we look forward to working with you over the next few years to continue to strengthen this very important organization.