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How can NDCs contribute to forest governance
and resilient local communities?





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**"The ambition
of NDCs needs
to be raised.**

**Forests can, and must,
contribute substantially
to reaching
the objectives
of the Paris Agreement."**





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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
CAEP	Climate Action Enhancement Package
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CAR	Central African Republic
CBFP	Congo Basin Forest Partnership
CCKSP	Climate Change Knowledge Sharing Platform
CFLEDD	Coalition des Femmes Leaders pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable
CI	Conservation International
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
COP	Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERPA	Emission Reductions Payment Agreement
ERPD	Emissions Reductions Programme Document
ERPIN	Emission Reduction Program Idea Note
EU	European Union
FAO	Forest and Agriculture Organizations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FONAREDD	Fond National REDD
FPIC	Free, prior, and informed consent
GDRNE	Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
GTCRR	Groupe de Travail Climat REDD Rénové
ICTU	Information clarity, transparency and understanding
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
LOI	Letter of Intent
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry
MEDD	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFPS	Non-timber Forest Products
ONACC	National Observatory on Climate Change
PGDF	Programme Gestion Durable des Forêts (Republic of Congo)
PGDF	Programme Gestion Durable des Forêts (DRC)
RFUK	Rainforest Foundation UK
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROC	Republic of Congo
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WRI	World Resources Institute

Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are a cornerstone of the Paris Agreement goals. They are submitted by countries every ten or five years as their contribution towards global climate action. In 2018, Fern and its partners found that the pledges made by many African states in their initial NDCs were falling far short of integrating forest governance to meet climate targets. 2020 brings an opportunity for change: it is the first year that countries are scheduled to prepare and communicate new or updated NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat. This is an opportunity for governments “to reflect the highest possible ambition in response to the urgency of addressing climate change as well as recently adopted guidance in their NDCs”.¹ This is also an opportunity to better engage with civil society, to draw lessons from other forest governance processes, to account for the indispensable role to be played by forests in both adaptation and mitigation, and to integrate indispensable and dramatically lacking gender measures.

This report analyses progress, challenges, and opportunities in six African countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Liberia, and Republic of the Congo (RoC). The analysis was conducted through a literature review and a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with a large range of stakeholders (civil society in the South and in the North, governments of countries that give and receive donor funds, international organisations, private sector, and academics). An online survey complemented the information collected.

WHAT ARE NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS?

NDCs constitute a national voluntary commitment to achieve the Paris agreement. As such, they have the potential to act as a transformational roadmap to fight the climate crisis. Their successful delivery lies at the heart of achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement: as stated in Article 4 of the Agreement², “each Party shall prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs that it intends to achieve. (...) Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation and adaptation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions”.³ NDCs describe each country’s self-determined plans for curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. They should be a primary source of information regarding countries’ plans for climate action and provide the UNFCCC with crucial information to see, measure and assess the trajectory the planet is on when it comes to addressing the climate crisis. While many NDCs are still very general and unspecific about mitigation and adaptation plans, the objective promoted by UNFCCC is to make them an exhaustive and detailed commitment to specific actions under the Paris Agreement.

NDCs are the UNFCCC’s primary tool for monitoring and assessing countries’ contributions to tackling the climate crisis. NDCs are intended to promote a concerted and cross-sectoral approach to shaping national development strategies.⁴ In forested countries, this means focusing on the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector. However, NDCs have not yet been used in country’s development planning processes. This means that NDCs have been created and revised externally and in an ad hoc manner, often conducted by environmental ministries alone, despite agreement on the need for a cross-sectoral approach.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/news/virtual-training-on-ndc-preparation-launched>

² Paris Agreement, article 4 paragraph 2, available here: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

³ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs#eq-3>

⁴ Each country shall, under the Paris agreement, analyse its own emission profile and choose low-carbon development pathways.

The development of the first NDCs, or INDCs (intended nationally determined contributions), was done in haste, with very little or no engagement of civil society organisations and local communities, ahead of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015.⁵ The NDCs were typically written by international consultants, following a very technocratic and technical process, largely deemed as non-transparent by civil society organisations (CSOs). In the six countries covered in this report, the possible measures to be adopted were classified by sector and by domain (adaptation and mitigation) and presented in closed expert workshops,⁶ with very little or no civil society engagement. Many countries had no information about emissions coming from deforestation when drafting their first NDC, and their baselines must now be revised.⁷

The guidelines provided by the “Katowice Climate Package” giving the information necessary for clarity, transparency and understanding (ICTU), are an opportunity for all stakeholders to progress towards inclusivity. These guidelines, which will become mandatory in 2024, outline how the State parties should “communicate clearly on their efforts to adapt to climate impacts” and implement “the rules for functioning of the Transparency Framework, which will show to the world what countries are doing about climate change”.⁸ CSOs could already use them as an argument to request more transparency and engage in monitoring their country’s engagements.

NDCS AND FORESTS

Forests – and their protection, restoration, and sustainable management – play a primary role in addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change.⁹ Several countries have included forest adaption or mitigation targets in their first NDC.¹⁰ However, not all countries are at the same stage in developing plans or strategies that will guide national implementation. African countries face challenges when it comes to enhancing and rolling out their NDCs including capacity development/technical support and mobilising resources. They also face challenges in creating databases and monitoring systems, institutional structures, and coordination mechanisms for sustainable development impacts of their NDCs, and engaging with relevant stakeholders, including CSOs. Strengthening awareness and creating broad ownership of NDCs at the national level will also be key to ensuring the revision is effective and includes forest governance processes.

Most of the first NDCs ignored key qualitative indicators linked to governance, institutions, reforms, or gender equality. This, added to the lack of a cross-sectoral approach, resulted in two major processes being left aside: Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of Forests (REDD+) and Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT)’s Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA). The focus of NDCs has been on technical issues and technological tools requiring significant funding, while key issues such as land use, governance, legal and institutional frameworks, illegal logging, or communities’ empowerment have been neglected.

Scientific reviews of quantitative and sectoral aspects of NDCs highlight the inadequacy of government commitments in the context of limiting warming to 2°C. On the one hand, studies have pointed to uncertainties in the promised mitigation strategies.¹¹ On the other hand, a common feature of the NDCs in the six countries in this study is that

⁵ As noted by CSOs who participated to this study. For instance, in DRC: GCF DRC country programme 20 February 2019

⁶ For instance, in DRC: GCF DRC country programme 20 February 2019 - <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/dr-congo-country-programme>

⁷ Approaching point of no return, Regnskogfondet, 2018

⁸ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package>

⁹ See Issues Brief “Forests and Climate Change”, International Union for Nature Conservation, November 2017 - <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/forests-and-climate-change>

¹⁰ These countries are Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guyana, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, and Sudan – See Petersen K. and Brana Varela J., INDC Analysis: an overview of the forest sector, WWF Issue Brief, 2015

¹¹ Mills-Novoa, M., & Liverman, D. M. (2019). Nationally Determined Contributions: Material climate commitments and discursive positioning in the NDCs. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 10(5)

forest degradation has not been sufficiently included, despite the mitigation potential of intact forests. Recent studies suggest that emissions from the degradation of tropical forests could supersede those of deforestation;¹² it is thus important not only that tropical forest countries include forest governance programmes in their NDCs, but that these forest governance programmes monitor and address forest loss and forest degradation adequately.

Another important area that is currently underdeveloped is the need, both in terms of human rights and of mitigation outcomes, to secure Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure rights. The preamble to the Paris Agreement states that parties should "respect, promote and consider"¹³ the rights of, amongst other groups, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities. While 1,000 gigatons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) is stored in collectively managed lands globally, NDCs have failed to recognise and promote the role communities play in domestic climate policy and to respect their right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) before any mitigation action is taken on their land.¹⁴ All measures included in the NDC should require adequate consultations in line with FPIC to ensure they are inclusive, and to avoid negative impacts on local rights and livelihoods. The NDC could thus include specific qualitative and quantitative indicators for ensuring climate action is in line with FPIC requirements. It is important to both highlight the link between communities' rights and livelihoods, and the forest mitigation potential.

WHY IS THE ROAD TO COP26 CRUCIAL FOR NDCS AND FORESTS?

As forest-rich African countries revise or prepare new national climate plans, there is a major opportunity for them to increase their ambitions through strengthening the role of forests in proposed solutions and ensuring broader ownership of proposed actions. Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, which countries are also invited to submit in 2020, can provide a useful blueprint for achieving the milestones for resilient and just development trajectories that help to keep to the 1.5°C temperature goal.

Fern has been supporting its local partners in Cameroon, CAR, Ghana, Liberia, RoC, and DRC to engage effectively in climate related processes. It is therefore essential for Fern and its partners to be fully informed of the state of play of NDCs. Transparency and proactive engagement will allow civil society organisations to advocate for stronger inclusion of forest governance and local communities' rights, as well as for a full integration of gender issues, in both the NDCs and the national climate long-term strategies. It is equally important for the EU and the international donors who support climate action in these countries to receive transparent information to facilitate their coordination.

Countries who had submitted an initial NDC aiming for reductions by 2030 can continue with the same commitment but are encouraged to present an enhanced contribution at COP26 in 2021.¹⁵ This means that CSOs have an even more important role to play in pushing their government to develop stronger commitments, to be accountable and to deliver more. Countries are also encouraged to start complying with the ICTU requirements, which implies the facilitation of an inclusive process, information dissemination, and a commitment to high transparency standards. While these

¹² Pearson, T.R.H., Brown, S., Murray, L. et al. Greenhouse gas emissions from tropical forest degradation: an underestimated source. *Carbon Balance Manage* 12, 3 (2017)

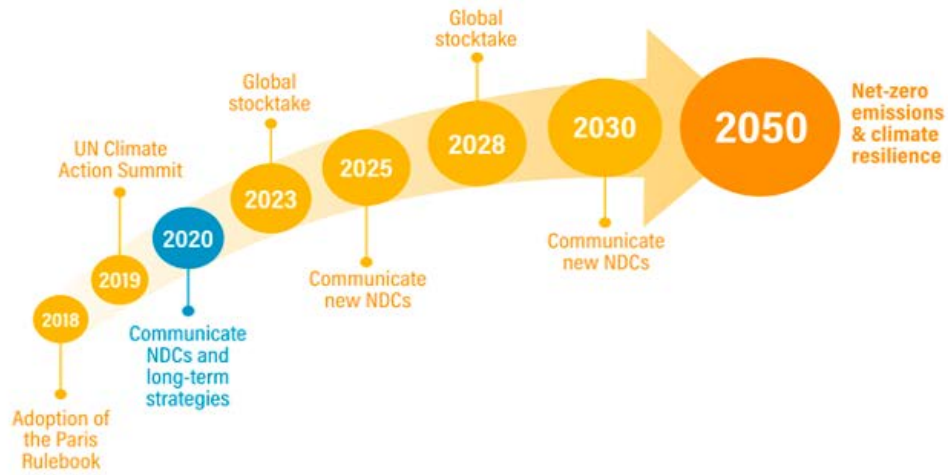
¹³ Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, 2015, available here: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

¹⁴ Dooley, K et al. (2018) *Missing Pathways to 1.5°C: The role of the land sector in ambitious climate action*. Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

¹⁵ Amongst the six countries of this study, only the Republic of the Congo had not yet submitted a proposal for the horizon 2030, aiming only at 2025. They will thus submit a new NDC in 2021.

requirements become mandatory only for the next NDC (to be submitted in 2025), the UNFCCC strongly recommends that countries start applying these guidelines in 2020.¹⁶

CSOs stand ready to advocate for enhanced ambition, strengthened national processes and attainment of the objectives of their countries' NDCs. The report concludes with four recommendations for effective civil society strategies in all six countries.



Source: Fransen et al. 2017



¹⁶ The pocket guide to NDC, ecbi, 2020, <https://unepdtu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-pocket-guide-to-ndcs.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 1:

INTEGRATE RIGHTS-BASED FOREST GOVERNANCE APPROACHES TO SCALE UP NDC AMBITION

The ambition of NDCs needs to be raised.¹⁷ Forests can, and must, contribute substantially to reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement. In addition, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognises that securing Indigenous Peoples' rights is a critical part of solving the climate crisis.¹⁸ Meanwhile, both agroforestry and rights-based forest restoration are under-estimated ways of adaptation to climate change, a key issue for African countries. Lessons need to be learned from existing VPA processes about forest governance as well as structured and transparent institutional frameworks. Putting an end to key deforestation drivers such as illegal logging needs to be at the heart of climate policies to address forest-related emissions.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

DESIGN SOLID AND PARTICIPATORY MRV PROCESSES IN THE LULUCF SECTOR THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION

The lack of Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems and accurate data collection over the past years has been a major challenge to following up government actions and taking stock of what has been achieved. This lays additional responsibility on both civil society and the international community, who must monitor and ensure the integrity of the NDCs together with the government. Civil society and Indigenous Peoples' representatives are uniquely positioned to strengthen the assessment of positive or negative social impacts of climate responses. Participatory MRV systems provide accessible, understandable, relevant, and timely information and data to inform the design of new climate targets and policies. They deepen overall understanding of actions to address climate change. They allow governments to discern what works, what does not, and why. Mandated Independent Monitoring¹⁹ has proven to be key to improving forest and land governance throughout VPA implementation,²⁰ and these lessons should be applied to the NDC's MRV systems. Solid and participatory MRV processes should be part of an enhanced donor coordination not only around the NDC per se, but in terms of long-term climate action.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

REINFORCE CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION TO GUARANTEE TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSION

The NDC revision process is highly technocratic: it is led by experts, who rely on consultations of CSOs, and sometimes of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. A different approach would be to build on local climate plans, better tailored to local context and needs; map local CSO initiatives (community-based restoration, agroforestry, or conservation projects) and consult local NGOs, communities, and local governments. This would make the NDC inclusive of real field experiences and existing local and national plans. It would also ensure it complies with key transparency guidelines embedded in the Katowice Climate Package.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

USE GENDER-DISAGGREGATED CLIMATE DATA AND PROMOTE GENDER AS A KEY ELEMENT OF CLIMATE POLICIES

All of the initial NDCs looked at in this study failed to address women's rights and the linkages between the climate crisis and gender more broadly. The lack of gender-disaggregated²¹ climate data inhibits the government's ability to monitor gender-related impacts associated with climate-specific spending.²² Yet the importance of explicitly addressing these linkages in national and international climate policy-making is well-documented. Comprehensively addressing the intersection of gender and climate change is essential for both fulfilling women's rights and gender equality, and effectively addressing the multiple challenges that the climate emergency poses. A focus on institutional arrangements could constitute an opportunity to support gender mainstreaming, by looking at how climate-related institutions address gender issues and making sure gender focal points are empowered to act. Gender Analysis, such as the one planned in CAR under United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support, will be key to identifying country-specific barriers and inequalities, so as to suggest effective measures to tackle climate change.

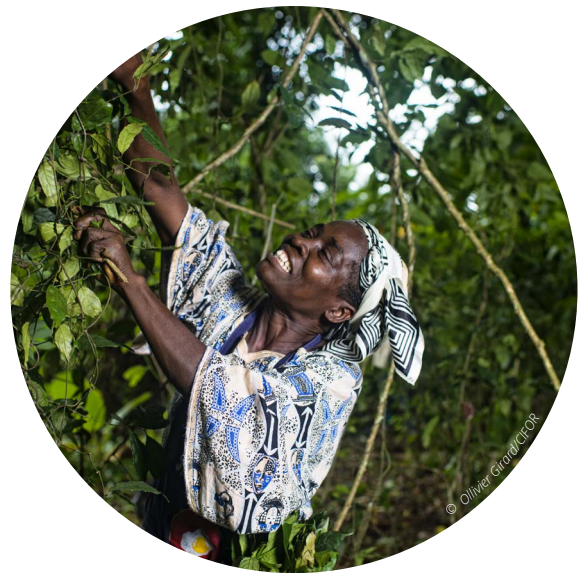
¹⁷ Emissions gap report 2018, United Nations Environment Program, November 2018

¹⁸ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems* [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)]. <https://loggingoff.info/independent-forest-monitoring/>

¹⁹ <http://civicsresponsegh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/forestmonitoring.pdf>

²¹ "Gender-disaggregated data" relates to any data on individuals broken down by sex. Gender statistics rely on these sex-disaggregated data and reflect the realities of the lives of women and men and policy issues relating to gender.

²² Pearl-Martinez, R. 2017. "Financing Women Farmers." Oxfam Briefing Paper. Oxford: Oxfam. https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3public/file_attachments/bp-financing-women-farmers-131017-en.pdf.



KEY ISSUES AND OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS SINCE 2018

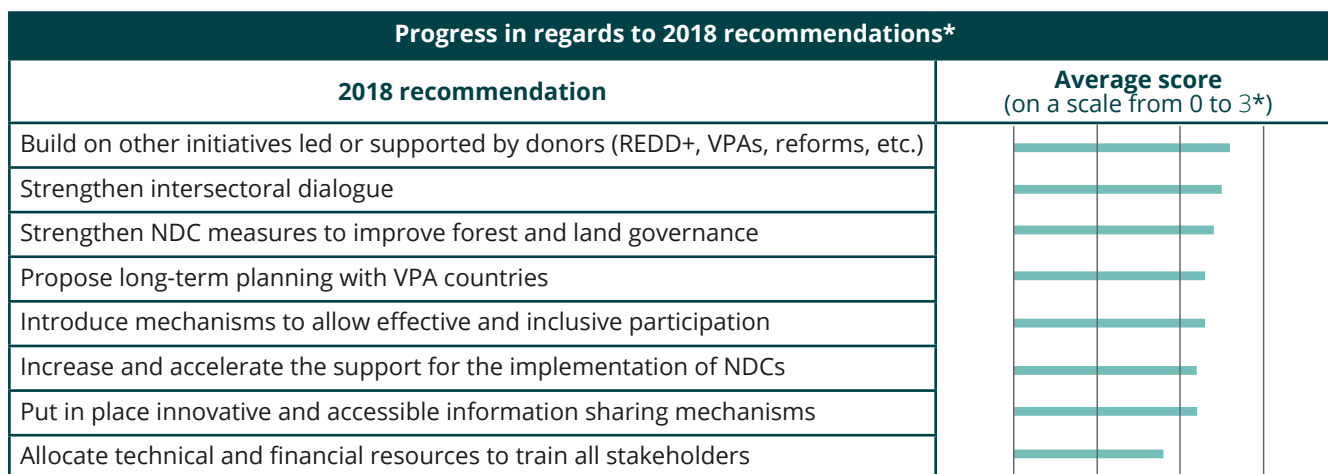
The report *VPAs and NDCs: Sharing the toolbox?*, published by Fern in 2018, explored how lessons learned from FLEGT could be put to work for the Paris Agreement. The report concluded that “Forest governance issues have been overlooked in the NDCs we studied (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Republic of Congo), and key governance areas such as participation and accountability are either imprecise or absent”.²³ This conclusion suggested eight recommendations:

- 1. Strengthen NDC measures to improve forest and land governance, based on appropriate analyses of the impact of GHG emissions from deforestation, forest conversion or land-use change.**
- 2. Put in place innovative and accessible information sharing mechanisms to improve the transparency of the NDC process.**
- 3. Introduce mechanisms to allow effective and inclusive participation of all key stakeholders.**
- 4. Strengthen intersectoral dialogue on the fight against climate change, and more specifically on NDCs.**
- 5. Allocate technical and financial resources to train all stakeholders.**
- 6. Increase and accelerate support for the implementation of NDCs in African countries that already have a VPA.**
- 7. Propose long-term planning with VPA countries to define key areas of support and set up programs well in advance.**
- 8. Build on other initiatives led or supported by donors, especially VPAs.**

The lack of transparency and the lack of clear monitoring system on NDC implementation have been making it difficult to assess progress made. No country has set up an appropriate MRV system to follow up achievements and to communicate transparently about challenges.

²³ *VPAs and NDCs: Sharing the toolbox?*, Téodyl Nkuintchua Tchoudjien, Fern, 2018 - <https://www.fern.org/publications-insight/vpas-and-ndcs-sharing-the-toolbox-how-lessons-learned-from-eu-flegt-can-be-put-to-work-for-the-paris-agreement-126/>

A survey of 40 CSOs from Africa, found **little improvement on most of the report's recommendations**. There is slight progress on building linkages with other initiatives led or supported by donors on forest governance, in particular the VPAs. This was confirmed during interviews with civil society leaders who were invited to information meetings on the NDC revision processes. However, these timid improvements are not strong enough to constitute fruitful synergies. Technical and financial resources to train all stakeholders are still lacking. In most countries, training activities primarily target government officials, while CSOs are under-informed and do not have the capacity to effectively participate.



Source: report survey, 2020

* 0: no improvement / 1: little improvement / 2: moderate improvement / 3: substantial improvement

Donor coordination was mostly poor, with few calls and face-to-face meetings among development partners. Some key partners such as the World Bank were entirely left out of discussions. In CAR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the NDC Partnership did share their roadmap, which allowed them not to duplicate efforts. The French Development Agency (AFD) Adapt'Action Facility, the UNDP's Climate Promise, and the NDC Partnership Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) are, however, all focusing on similar inputs, with potentially contradicting guidance.²⁴ Donor coordination is key as conflicting planning/budgeting cycles and NDC processes can lead to missed opportunities. Coordination with other related processes linked to national policies and forest governance programmes, also needs to be fostered. As highlighted by the NDC Partnership, NDC planning and revision cycles are often not synchronised with domestic planning and budgeting cycles.²⁵ The consequence of separate processes can increase workload, leading to planning fatigue and discourage government officials from full participation in the NDC process.

Civil society participation and inter-sectoral engagement has been very low, hindering effective implementation and monitoring. Unfortunately, climate action is not yet mainstreamed throughout all relevant sectors and existing CSO coalitions have not fully engaged in the process. While FLEGT has led to fruitful multi-stakeholder discussions and forums, most of them have been ignored when discussing, drafting, or implementing the NDC. The coordination, mostly through the Environment Ministries, may not have facilitated cross-sector coordination, given the difficult communications and transparencies between Ministries. CSOs working on VPAs and REDD+ have focussed mainly on sectoral issues such as forestry or land-tenure. They are now struggling to engage in the NDC revision process with sufficient cross-sectoral information to be able to provide meaningful inputs. Trainings provided by government partners have mainly targeted government officials, thereby leaving behind CSO representatives.

²⁴ The two roadmaps are quite closely linked; further coordination would be needed to ensure that, for instance, the evaluation of the proposals for the development of production projects new wood energy resources, including forest plantations and agroforestry, planned in the CAEP, is coherent with the redefinition of the strategic sectoral axis for the revision, and comply with the criteria to be developed in the Gender Action Plan, both falling under UNDP's Climate Promise.
²⁵ NDC Partnership. Experience with Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Key Lessons Learned, Insight Brief, August 2019

OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST NDCS

AND OF KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT ²⁶

NDCs : content of current versions						
	Cameroon	DRC	RoC	Liberia	Ghana	CAR
Latest submission	7/29/2016	12/13/2017	4/21/2017	8/27/2018	9/21/2016	10/11/2016
Intends to Enhance Ambition or Action in 2020 NDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stakeholder consultation in NDC preparation	●	●	●	●	●	●
Awareness raising	●	●	●	●	●	●
Training	●	●	●	●	●	●
Access to information	●	●	●	●	●	●
Monitoring	●	●	●	●	●	●
Co-benefits of mitigation	●	●	●	●	●	●
Co-benefits of adaptation	●	●	●	●	●	●
Human Rights	●	●	●	●	●	●
Gender	●	●	●	●	●	●
Land Use Change	●	●	●	●	●	●
Forestry	●	●	●	●	●	●
REDD+	●	●	●	●	●	●
Adaptation in the forestry sector	●	●	●	●	●	●
EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement	●	●	●	●	●	●
Training of national stakeholders	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Issue addressed

● Mentioned but not detailed

● Not addressed

²⁶ Sources: <https://klimalog.die-gdi.de/ndc/#NDCExplorer/worldMap?NDC??income??catIncome>

CAMEROON

National Focal point for NDCs:

Ministry of Environment, Nature protection and sustainable development (MINEPDED) - Inter-ministerial coordination body not yet established.

International partners and NGOs involved:

Fern, UNDP

NDC revision process

The first NDC was developed with limited consultation and the process still suffers from the absence of intersectoral or inter-ministerial coordination. Links with key existing processes such as REDD+ and the FLEGT VPA are still not established. Two focal points in charge of improving coordination have been appointed, but so far, there is no space for a multi-stakeholder dialogue to follow up Cameroon's response to the Paris agreement. A draft for setting up a dialogue has been developed with the support of GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation), and AFD and seems to offer support for improving governance.

In line with the Cameroonian Constitution, the government intends to conduct an inclusive process involving forest communities, CSOs and other stakeholders, but has complained that there is not sufficient funding to conduct a national consultation process. Potential European and non-European donors have been approached.

In August 2020, UNDP committed to support the MINEPDED (Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development) in the NDC revision, but detailed information was not made available. The MINEPDED developed a stakeholder map and a consultation plan, but they are not publicly available and so could not be evaluated. The MINEPDED announced that consultations will run from December 2020 until April 2021 when the revised NDC should be submitted.

The first NDC of 2016 provided for awareness raising and capacity building for CSOs and communities, but this has not materialised. In early 2021, the government will give priority to building the capacity of governmental representatives and experts to conduct MRV. This is likely to be supported by the African Development Bank (ADB). Yet it is unclear whether Cameroon will use the ICTU guidelines provided by the "Katowice Climate Package".²⁷

Opportunities for civil society participation²⁸

In 2018, Fern published a study of Cameroon's NDC which showed some positive elements in terms of good forest governance and efforts to reduce deforestation and ensure both sustainability and economic development. CSOs are currently showing renewed interest in forest communities, due to the opportunities presented by FLEGT VPAs or payments for environmental services related to REDD+ mechanisms. It is vital, however, for governance to adapt to economic, political, and social changes, as well as to key development issues and perspectives. Moreover, there is still insufficient consideration of the interests of some stakeholders. For example, civil society's monitoring and awareness-raising function cannot ensure forestry companies comply with social obligations. In addition, the NDC process still lacks information on how CSOs should engage and participate effectively.

It is the national government's responsibility to develop strategies for communication and dialogue among central and local administrations, CSOs and local communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples, to ensure multi-level and multi-stakeholder interaction and joint action. In this sense, space for continued stakeholder dialogue needs to be set up as soon as possible and include CSOs, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The government's stakeholder mapping is encouraging but should be made public and be regularly updated.

Donors should help build the capacity of stakeholders to conduct data collection, independent forest observation and supervision, and to develop a culture of accountability in forest resource management.

²⁷ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package>

²⁸ What role do forests and governance play in countries' nationally determined contributions to the Paris Climate Agreement? Case Study from Cameroon, Fern, 2018

Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC²⁹

In most Congo Basin countries, logging remains the main source of private sector paid employment, particularly in remote rural areas. In Cameroon, the exploitation of forests and wildlife resources includes practices such as: (1) industrial logging for timber (including council forests and plantations); (2) community and individual logging of artisanal timber; (3) logging for wood energy; (4) use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs); (5) hunting for food and sport; (6) ecotourism; and (7) environmental services and own use (water, charcoal, soil).

Cameroon adopted a Code of Transparency and Good Governance in Public Financial Management in 2018, but there is not yet a legal framework setting out requirements for transparency and participation on environmental and forestry issues.³⁰ The adoption of such a law would have a considerable impact on the accountability of

actors in these sectors and could be a governance indicator included in the NDC. The legal framework should also include operational mechanisms which civil society could use to raise complaints.

Government actors must show greater commitment to successful coordination, for example, by creating multi-stakeholder forums inspired by the framework for dialogue and deliberative process that exists in the VPA process. There must be better coordination of forest, land, and agriculture issues at the highest level, through meetings and inter-departmental dialogue. Donors should also support efforts to establish a reliable database on illegal logging, the use of forest resources and the production of forest risk commodities such as palm oil, cocoa and rubber, in order for GHG emissions from deforestation and degradation to be monitored.

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

A gender focal point for all climate policies has now been appointed. In the first NDC gender-mainstreaming was part of the adaptation strategy for the agriculture sector. Women are clearly identified as beneficiaries of projects to increase the resilience of productive (agricultural) practices and are specifically targeted by capacity-building activities.³¹ While women are both identified as a vulnerable group and recognised as stakeholders with an important role to play in thematic

Programme 13, (Water and Energy), Programme 19 on Forests unfortunately does not include any gender component. Given the important role played by women in sustainable forest management, agroforestry and forest activities, civil society should strongly advocate for a gender component to be included within Program 19.

Monitoring mechanisms

The guidance council of the National Observatory on Climate Change (ONACC), established in 2009, oversees planning,

coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the NDC.

²⁹ *Idem*

³⁰ *Forest Sector Accountability in Cameroon and Ghana, Research Paper, Chatham House, October 2020*

³¹ *Research Paper: Gender and Climate Change, WEDO, 2016*

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

National Focal point for NDCs:

The National Climate Coordination hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Finance and Budget.

International partners and NGOs involved:

Fern, NDC Partnership, UNDP

NDC revision process

The first NDC submitted by CAR was developed, as in many other countries, in haste, right before the Paris conference, with very little consultation. The 2020 revision process started in January 2020. Two major partners are now supporting the government: (1) The NDC Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP), supported by the Forest and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and the European Union (EU), which assists members of the NDC Partnership from the global South, and aims to enhance NDCs, including by raising ambition, as part of the Paris

Agreement's NDC update process; and (2) The UNDP's Climate Promise, which ensures that any country wishing to increase the ambition of their national climate pledge and requesting guidance receives technical and financial support to the revision process, based on a roadmap.³² The support and revision process were delayed because of COVID-19. Donor cooperation between NDC Partnership and UNDP will be key to achieve a coherent enhanced NDC in 2021. More clarity on the process is needed to allow civil society to participate effectively.

Opportunities for civil society participation

The revision process entails a series of trainings for different stakeholders (decentralised administration, NGOs and civil society, beneficiary communities, research institutes, etc.) based on a participatory needs' analysis.³³ The UNDP's Climate Promise also opens the way to a more inclusive process, as it includes as a first objective to "build political will and societal ownership at national and sub-national levels"³⁴ through inclusive workshops. A first information and awareness-raising workshop was held in August 2020 in Bangui,³⁵ gathering 30 participants. The workshop concluded with the following recommendations: a participatory evaluation of the first implementation phase, according to precise indicators; a cross-sectoral stakeholder mapping exercise; a large, inclusive, and participative consultation at the national level; a National Validation workshop; the development of an implementation plan for the revised NDC; and efforts to make NDC content more accessible. At the same time, according to national CSOs, the Central African government has been slowing down its efforts to implement forest governance processes.³⁶

Provisions to ensure full and effective participation of marginalised communities and Indigenous groups such as the Baaka and the M'bororo, and respect for FPIC are still lacking and should be included, along with human rights provisions. The implementation of a clear capacity-building programme targeting civil society and local communities is also needed to empower them to effectively participate in the revision process. Reinforcing the collaboration between National Climate Coordination and the CSO Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles (GDRNE) and making the NDC content more accessible are both important ways forward.

Beyond civil society's participation in the NDC revision process, stakeholder engagement with local communities and Indigenous Peoples will be key to ensure good coordination and transparency around preparation for COP26. The government's proposals should build on civil society recommendations, which were detailed in the Declaration of Central African CSOs, from members of the GDRNE platform, published in February 2020³⁷ and the CSO note on the NDC process published in November 2020.³⁸

³² <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/climatepromise.html>

³³ NDC Partnership Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) – Round 2 Support: Terms of Reference for Central African Republic

³⁴ UNDP's Climate Promise: Enhancing NDCs by 2020, Workplan for CAR

³⁵ Communiqué Final Atelier d'information et de sensibilisation des acteurs des secteurs concernés par la révision de la Contribution Déterminée au niveau National (CDN) sur le processus pour une meilleure connaissance de la CDN et de la feuille de route de la révision, Complexe Scolaire GALAXY, du 26 au 27 Aout 2020, République Centrafricaine

³⁶ Déclaration des organisations de la société civile centrafricaine, membres de la plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement (GDRNE) sur la pandémie de COVID-19 et la mise en œuvre des différents processus en lien avec la gouvernance forestière et climatique, Plateforme des organisations de la société civile pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement (GDRNE)

³⁷ Déclaration des organisations de la société civile centrafricaine, membres de la plateforme sur la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement, sur l'APV, REDD+ et les CDN, février 2020 - <https://loggingoff.info/library/declaration-des-organisations-de-la-societe-civile-centrafricaine-membres-de-la-plateforme-sur-la-gestion-durable-des-ressources-naturelles-et-de-lenvironnement-sur-lapv-redd-et-les-cdn/>

³⁸ Note de contribution des organisations de la société civile centrafricaine sur le processus de révision des Contributions Déterminées au niveau National en RCA – Novembre 2020 - <https://loggingoff.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Note-de-contribution-des-OSC-RCA-VF.pdf>



Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC

In the first NDC, forestry was identified as a priority sector: agroforestry, community forestry, sustainable landscape management via support to Non Timber Forest Products, Forest management plans, and the co-benefits of mitigation are all mentioned. However, because no MRV system was set up, it has not been possible to assess progress made. Both the MRV system and the national forest inventory are currently being developed, so a new baseline can be established, and indicators appropriately monitored.

The 2020 revision plans include, as per the NDC Partnership CAEP programme: the update of the WISDOM platform within the supply plan in wood-energy for the cities of Bangui/Bimbo; studies of agroforestry projects within public-private

partnerships; studies of the proposal for the development of projects for wood-energy supplies (forestry and agroforestry plantations); revision of sectoral policies, including land-use planning, wood energy, forest policy, biodiversity strategy and an action plan; and mapping of landscape and forest restoration opportunities in the South-West of the country.³⁹

Central to enhancing forest contributions in the NDC will be government capacity to (1) create synergies with the REDD+ national strategy, currently under development and expected to be validated in early 2021, and (2) use existing analysis on the rise of illegal logging in CAR to include this risk and the appropriate responses within the NDC.

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

Women are identified as a vulnerable group in CAR's adaptation profile.⁴⁰ The NDC partnership invites the country to apply gender principles to approach the assignment and wherever possible produce sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific actions. UNDP's Climate Promise plans to (1) carry out a study on the integration of gender and youth in the different interventions of each sector of the NDC 2015 and to develop a strategy and action plan to improve the consideration of gender and youth in the new NDC, and (2) produce communication

kits and tools to support the organisation of Information-Education-Communication activities on aspects related to the integration of Gender, Youth and Climate Change in the NDC 2020. The inclusion of women's groups and civil society in the formulation of the gender strategy will be key to ensure it is representative of many women. The NDC should not only identify women as a vulnerable group, but also as a key actor and beneficiary of both adaptation and mitigation measures, in a specific Gender section.

Monitoring mechanisms

The first NDC planned to establish an appropriate national MRV system, including regular consultations with stakeholders at the national, regional, and local level to update actions and make sure they are carried out. Unfortunately, no monitoring tools have been set up to follow up NDC implementation and it is very difficult for the government to analyse the gap and plan an accurate revision. The National Climate Coordination, together with a UNDP consultant, is currently analysing the state of play. CSOs report that little has been happening on the ground and that there is no ownership of the plan, even among local authorities. They also noted the lack of definitions of roles, responsibilities and of a

clear timetable has made it difficult to involve all sectors. The design, set up and implementation of an efficient MRV mechanism (as planned according to UNDP's Climate Promise) cannot happen without full and effective participation of civil society and community representatives, including women. Tools, including participatory monitoring, should be developed by the National Climate Coordination in close collaboration with CSOs to collect data based on the participation of local stakeholders. Ideally, the government should appoint one MRV officer within the National Climate Coordination, in charge of liaising with CSOs.

³⁹ NDC Partnership Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) – Round 2 Support: Terms of Reference for Central African Republic
⁴⁰ Contribution Prévüe Déterminée au niveau National (CPDN), République Centrafricaine, September 2015

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

National Focal point for NDCs:

A national committee on climate change, under the supervision of the Secretary General for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

International partners and NGOs involved:

Fern, UNDP, NDC Partnership, Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK)

NDC revision process

The Government of DRC, the NDC Partnership, and UNDP held meetings in July 2019 to coordinate Government stakeholders, ministries, the private sector, and civil society. With support from the NDC Partnership and UNDP, DRC is currently developing a roadmap for NDC implementation.⁴¹ The revision process began in April 2020, and started with a review of the existing version, initially planned to be completed by October 2020. The updating of national GHG inventories has been completed and the baseline scenario refined. The new version is expected by December 2020, and an implementation roadmap will be developed in January or February 2021. The institutional framework for the implementation is still to be defined. The inter-ministerial national committee on climate change will lead the process, in consultation with sectoral ministries, technical government experts, CSOs and the private sector. CSOs could require at least three permanent seats within this committee, to ensure their legitimacy and contributions to the process. This would also enable them to engage with consultants on the revision process.

Meanwhile, the DRC government is preparing a Climate Change Policy and the Climate Change Law. Coordination between these two reform processes is therefore important, which might require that the revision process be led by the President or the Prime Minister. However political leadership and support is not yet clear.

Links with decentralised territorial entities and provincial governments are also very weak, even though an Emission Reduction Programme has been launched in the Mai-Ndombe province and that several REDD+ provincial programmes (Equateur, Kwilu, Mongala, Nord-Ubangi, Sud-Ubangi, Tshopo) are being supported. The NDC revision needs to engage with provincial governments, CSOs, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, to learn from field experiences.

Opportunities for civil society participation

The civil society network Groupe de Travail Climat REDD Rénové (GTCRR) members called the first NDC elaboration process “unilateral”, characterised by a lack of civil society participation. They regret the lack of coordination with VPAs and REDD+, and the lack of integration of forests. The second version is currently being drafted, and the government has set up a participation strategy based on socio-professional groups: media, civil society, women, youth, private sector, and public administration at the national level and in few provinces, etc. This unfortunately does not allow the synergies and multi-stakeholder discussions needed to reach fruitful discussions and

commonly agreed decisions. A multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanism is now envisioned, as well as a reporting system for provincial efforts, awareness raising activities and the creation of communication materials.

CSOs could (1) request the enhanced NDC draft revision as soon as possible to have sufficient time to study and provide meaningful inputs; (2) encourage and participate in the multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms; and (3) reach out to their provincial governments.

⁴¹ <https://ndcpartnership.org/countries-map/country?iso=COD>

Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC

In their business as usual scenario, the DRC expects emissions from its land-use and forestry sector to approximately double from 2010 to 2030. The initial NDC target does not require the country to reduce its deforestation, indeed it may increase even after implementing the NDC.⁴² Land use and forestry are also targeted by adaptation action, but no link is made with forest governance and the national legal framework. Because the current system enables corruption and illegal logging, it is key for the NDC to tackle these issues to preserve the forest cover and carbon stocks. The 2015 NDC also requires a huge financial commitment from the country's partners (between US\$ 4 and 9 billion for adaptation and US\$ 12.5 billion for mitigation action). It is advisable that this commitment will

increase with the revised version, as the figures DRC operate with are not well substantiated nor realistic. The Green Climate Fund currently considers the possibility of contributing to the REDD+ Investment Plan and suggests synergies should be found with the NDC targets. The Green Climate Fund also pledged to fund an evaluation of the technological needs to come up with an appropriate Action Plan to achieve the NDC targets.⁴³ The government will therefore not only have to raise ambitions in the enhanced NDC, but foster synergies with existing processes and address issues pertaining to governance, corruption, and the legal framework in order to be able to reach the NDC targets.

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

Women are mentioned in the adaptation context as a vulnerable group and as beneficiaries of projects through a specific programme, the project to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of women and children to climate change in the DRC (PANA - AFE 2015-2020), through the objective of "Strengthening resilience of women and children to address climate change". However, women's participation in the forest sector remains forgotten, while successful experiences of women empowerment led by the Coalition of Women

Leaders for the Environment and Sustainable Development (known by the French acronym CFLEDD) in relation to REDD+ could serve as an important basis for further integrating gender in the NDC. The government should be encouraged to (1) include a gender section in the new NDC to fundamentally improve the recognition of women's roles and responsibilities in climate change mitigation and adaptation, (2) push for gender-disaggregated data and gender indicators to be included, and (3) ensure full and effective participation of women's groups.

Monitoring mechanisms

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), through the Sustainable Development Division, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the smooth and consistent implementation of government activities to deal with climate change. The development of key adaptation indicators has already been explored in the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change, with the aim of integrating adaptation and vulnerability indicators in the national system for MRV which must be developed. Unfortunately, such a system has not yet been outlined. Lessons could be drawn from the National REDD+ Fund (FONAREDD) and the

Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) MRV systems, set up by the World Bank. However, a recent analysis led by Rainforest Foundation UK has highlighted that there has been virtually no independent monitoring of REDD+ programmes under the World Bank, and that there is still no functioning grievance mechanism in place either.

Civil society, based on its extensive forest monitoring experience both related to forest governance processes such as FLEGT and REDD+, should fully be engaged in regular monitoring activities.

⁴² Approaching point of no return, Progression towards saving the world's last remaining tropical forests through enhanced ambition in the Nationally Determined Contributions, Regnskogfondet - <https://www.regnskog.no/en/publications/reports>
⁴³ GCF DRC Country Programme, 27 February 2019

GHANA

National Focal point for NDCs:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation

International partners and NGOs involved:

Conservation International, EU, Fern, UNDP

NDC revision process

Ghana was one of the first countries in West Africa to develop a comprehensive national climate change policy in 2012. Despite the pre-existence of this policy, Ghana suffered from the same pre-COP21 time-pressure as other countries. As a result, there were issues about how GHG emissions and baselines were measured. The baselines are currently being revised, and an MRV system is being designed. At least three consultations have been now held by the

government with CSOs, following consultation with the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Civil society's expectations are for the government to use lessons from the VPA to influence multi-stakeholder consultative processes and apply them to the NDC review and implementation. They have also asked to share the entire review framework and timelines with all stakeholders to enable them to become aware of the content and to improve engagement in the process.

Opportunities for civil society participation

While the first version of the NDC was designed with very little CSO engagement, opportunities are arising to improve this during the 2020 revision phase. Consultants have been hired by international donors to review the gaps, and they now need to engage with CSOs. The NDC revision process remains less transparent than

other forest governance processes such as the VPAs. Many lessons were learned during the VPA process about inclusiveness and transparency: CSOs would like to see these elements in the enhanced contribution.

Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC

Ghana already integrated forests into the first NDC. The government stated that it aims to scale up renewable energy through increased access and adoption of efficient stoves. The NDC pledges "2 million efficient cook stoves up to 2030". Ghana has also promised to "promote sustainable utilization of forest resources through REDD+". This will be achieved through reforestation and afforestation programmes on degraded lands. During the first implementation phase, linkages were made with the Emission Reduction Programme, but despite its advanced FLEGT process, the government did not include VPA related activities and indicators. Finding synergies would mean integrating laws, reforms and governance, a key missing point as the NDC focuses mainly on expanding plantations rather than on tackling the governance weaknesses that are driving deforestation. CSOs also raised their

concerns about the risk of potential monoculture plantations. The NDCs also need to consider biodiversity, a key issue for communities' livelihoods.

In 2018, a national multi-stakeholder workshop took place and was documented by researchers analysing the alignment between NDCs and West African Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴⁵ The workshop found that while agriculture and energy are sectors where NDCs have pledged significant commitments, forestry is far behind. Cross-sectoral discussions are marked by significant challenges relating to institutional capacity, such as a lack of coordination among institutions and agencies, and insufficient resources to move towards integrated implementation of national planning priorities.

⁴⁵ Philip Antwi-Agyei, Andrew J. Dougill, Thomas P. Agyekum & Lindsay C. Stringer (2018) Alignment between nationally determined contributions and the sustainable development goals for West Africa, *Climate Policy*

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

Within its Adaptation goal, the first NDC includes 'Resilience for Gender and the Vulnerable' as a Policy Action.⁴⁶ The NDC also prioritises action to build the resilience of women and the vulnerable by implementing 'community-led adaptation and livelihood diversification for vulnerable groups', while promoting innovations in post-harvest storage and food processing. However, as in the other countries, gender is

left out of the mitigation strategies, despite the key role of women in managing forest resources. An in-depth gender analysis has been developed with UNDP support to help integrate gender considerations into the NDC planning and implementation processes.⁴⁷ Access to this document should be requested by civil society to push for better inclusion of gender aspects in the enhanced contribution.

Monitoring mechanisms

Ghana's MRV system was planned to be an integral part of the existing national development monitoring and evaluation structures. It should have tracked progress towards achieving the NDC goals as well as any modifications to the priority policy actions to help achieve the NDC goals. The EPA coordinates this process and of gathering data from the different reporting ministries. However, the EPA is only now developing a reporting template to facilitate data collection, which reflects the lack of monitoring so far. Following the national multi-stakeholder workshop which examined the co-benefits of the

NDCs, workshop participants reported a lack of reliable data for tracking the success of the NDC across different sectors and governance levels. Authorities at national, regional, and local levels will be key for the successful implementation of the NDC. However, there is a lack of capacity within regional and local levels of governance. Participants concluded that while the EPA is mandated to coordinate the implementation of the NDC across sectors, it is constrained in terms of political influence to deliver this mandate.

⁴⁶ Research Paper: Gender and Climate Change, WEDO, 2016

⁴⁷ https://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/projects/ndc_sp_gh.html

LIBERIA

National Focal point for NDCs:

Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia
and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

International partners and NGOs involved:

Conservation International, EU, Fern, UNDP

Revision process

Conservation International (CI) reviewed and analysed the content of Liberia's first NDC, considering issues related to conservation and natural resources management. They concluded that the document was too ambitious, but also lacked defined targets, activities, and strategies. The publication highlighted errors and progress made along with clear recommendations. After the publication, they joined forces with the EU and UNDP to provide technical support to the government in their revision process. The support provided is divided on a sectoral basis: the EU focuses more on waste, transport and energy, UNDP on youth and private sector

engagement, and CI on nature-based solutions, including forests. A consultant was hired in September 2020 to take charge of the revision process, receive information, and feed them into the enhanced contribution. Experts will also be hired to look at specific issues such as capacity, investments needed, emission reduction targets and monitoring. A Climate Change Knowledge Sharing Platform (CCKSP) was launched, and regional workshops are being organised to foster engagement. It is essential that CSOs have access to the CCKSP and to adequate information and training, and that consultants have access to the necessary information.

Opportunities for civil society participation

As in the other countries, the first NDC was produced in haste, with no regional consultations nor civil society participation. More robust engagement is proposed in the revision process, including meetings organised in rural areas. However, despite the good proposed process, CSOs have not received a draft to review or comment on. The meetings took the form of awareness raising workshops rather than debates and opportunities for comments; the participants did not receive the documents ahead of the meeting and were not given the opportunity to review the content. While the government is slowly opening the process, more CSOs should be able to participate, as the number of participants has often been highly restrained. Synergies with existing actors on FLEGT should be emphasised. It was also pointed out that no community-based consultations have been led or planned so far, and that community consultations should be undertaken by representatives of civil society.

The regional consultations are an opportunity for the experts and the government to map the actors who are active on issues related to the climate crisis. In addition, over the last few months, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been utilising support from the EU Technical Assistance Facility, UNDP, NDC Partnership through CI and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to hold broad based consultative and technical meetings at the national and local levels for the purpose of defining the objectives and targets for the NDC revision process. The EPA clearly stated its appreciation of the participation of sectoral experts, research and academic institutions, local authorities, youth groups, and organisations involved with gender equality and women empowerment. During a multi-stakeholder workshop held in November 2020, they called CSOs to ask them to conduct further meetings with the NDC team to broaden the scope of engagement and take on board contributions from various actors including CSOs specialised in forest governance.

Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC

The mitigation potential of forests was completely ignored in the first NDC. While adaptation ranks as a high priority, many CSOs are pushing for forests to become a key sector of the mitigation strategy. Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry is completely overlooked despite its high contribution to the GHG emissions of Liberia. While the VPA has been long discussed, and implementation is now advancing, no link was made with the NDC and no synergy was fostered. According to interviewed stakeholders, a consistent and ambitious programme on forests should be integrated in the new version. It should encompass existing efforts to reduce illegality in the forest sector, to promote community forestry, to support conservation efforts and to tackle issues such as charcoal production. The recent national forest inventory, the Emission Reduction Programme efforts and studies, and the Forest Atlas should also be integrated. Barriers to conservation should be addressed

by fostering links between the NDC, human rights, and communities' livelihoods. This would mean including both qualitative and quantitative forest indicators. The EPA has now pledged that Liberia's revised NDC will consider the inclusion of new sectors, including forestry, natural capital accounting, short-lived climate pollutants, green corridors, and land. The draft Guidelines on Community Forestry Management Planning could also be considered as an interesting basis to enhance forest contribution in the NDC. They require 30 per cent of all Authorised Community Forests to be zoned for conservation purposes. Integrating such guidelines could incentivise the enforcement of this requirement, alongside the Protected Forest Area Network Law, which requires 30 per cent of Liberia's forests to be allocated as protected areas. Both national commitments would support climate mitigation aims.

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

Gender has not been addressed and should be addressed in the enhanced version. Stakeholders are deciding whether gender should be a cross-cutting theme or a stand-alone issue.

The government partners have expressed their will to address gender, but the Ministry of Gender has not yet been involved in discussions.

Monitoring mechanisms

The MRV system was initially planned to build on existing structures for monitoring, evaluation, and coordination. However, no system has been set up and the only monitoring conducted was done by CI independently. The EU is now supporting the design of the MRV system which will then be monitored by the EPA. EU funding

includes three months of training for government staff on data collection, management, and processing. This will enable different sectors to contribute to the NDC objectives and ensure that their GHG emissions can be efficiently assessed on a regular basis. There is no plan to include CSOs as participants and so they should request to be an

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

National Focal point for NDCs:

Climate focal point, Ministère du Tourisme et de l'environnement
(Ministry of Tourism and the Environment)

International partners and NGOs involved:

AFD, Fern, UNDP, RFUK

Revision process

The NDC process has suffered, since the first INDC, from the absence of intersectoral coordination, meaning that links with key existing processes such as the FLEGT VPA, are not made. Consultants were recruited by AFD through their Adapt'Action programme to work on the enhanced contribution, expected for June 2021, and the need for such synergies should be emphasised by civil society. The National Climate Plan is currently being defined and should be drafted on the basis of the enhanced NDC.

The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) has been following up the process and included the publication of the NDC, the National Communication and the biennial report (BUR)¹² as a 2023 milestone in its Letter of Intent⁴⁸ which specifies that "a multisectoral working group reviews the NDC (...) for coherence and

compliance with UNFCCC guidelines before they are submitted". This inclusion ties the NDC with CAFI funding and may thus be key in pushing for an enhanced NDC which works across sectors. RoC estimates the annual investment required to finance implementation of its NDC to be EUR 5.14 billion between 2014 and 2025,⁴⁹ a figure to which both REDD+ and VPA investments contribute. Other major partners, such as the World Bank, have not yet been consulted and it is difficult for donors to know whether they share a common vision on natural resources governance, as no moves have been made towards country-led donor coordination. Civil society should encourage the government to launch a country-led donor platform to discuss the revision and funding needs. They could also request to be represented and empowered as part of the multisectoral working group in charge of reviewing the NDC.

Opportunities for civil society participation

While civil society has been very active on the VPA through the Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts (PGDF), there was little engagement in the NDC process until the end of 2020. Fern and RFUK have now been supporting CSOs to review their NDC, develop a position paper and collaborate with government officials to take on board their recommendations. In October, November and December 2020, local civil society platforms held various meetings with government officials to present their recommendations⁵⁰ and demand effective CSO participation in the NDC revision and implementation process. 2021 will be dedicated to following up with the government to ensure civil society recommendations are integrated into the NDC and that they continue to participate in the revision process.

Because of the lack of synergies with other processes, capacity-building activities on REDD+ and the VPA have not integrated UNFCCC

requirements and the NDC. This is considered a "blind spot". AFD's Adapt'Action programme plans to set up and facilitate a "NGO Climate Network" in RoC which would gather all sectors and include existing CSO networks. The networking rules are still to be defined. The aim of such a network would be to offer a setting for CSOs to structure their advocacy work and to build a common strategy for COP26. Kinomé, a French consulting firm, has been mandated by AFD to conduct this activity, and to set up a training programme for CSOs. Donors and the Congolese government should create synergies with networks that are already active and knowledgeable on climate and forests issues, as well as Indigenous organisations. If they join the AFD platform, CSOs should be cautious about keeping their independence regarding current NDC support programmes by diversifying their sources for trainings and funding.

⁴⁸ <https://www.cafi.org/content/cafi/fr/home/all-news/republic-of-congo-and-cafi-sign-65-million-dollars-letter-of-int.html>

⁴⁹ GCF Concept Note: Implementation of the Congo's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the land use and forestry sector, 27 November 2017

⁵⁰ Note de contribution des organisations de la société civile à la révision de la Contribution Déterminée au Niveau National - République du Congo, décembre 2020 - <https://loggingoff.info/library/note-de-contribution-des-organisations-de-la-societe-civile-a-la-revision-de-la-contribution-determinee-au-niveau-national-republique-du-congo-decembre-2020/?lang=fr>

Progress and challenges in enhancing forest contribution in the NDC

The RoC's first NDC takes into account the country's existing development strategies but unfortunately ignores many aspects related to REDD+ and the VPA. Their adaptation strategy implements a sectoral approach, including forestry.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the country's mitigation strategy states that its GHG reduction targets will be achieved through measures in all sectors of the economy including forestry. This provides a solid basis to push for further synergies with existing forest governance processes and to better value their ability to contribute to both adaptation and mitigation goals. The World Bank is currently moving forward with its REDD+ Emission Reductions Payment Agreement. The reference levels are currently being adjusted and a benefit-sharing mechanism is being set up, with the help of the French consulting firm Forest Resources Management (FRM). The World Bank has however not been involved in NDC discussions. REDD+ studies led by FAO on forest carbon stocks could also be integrated as key information. The long awaited and recent revision of the Forest Code, adopted in July 2020, should provide more ground for (1) including indicators on governance and

institutions, not only GHG emissions reductions, and (2) seizing new opportunities such as community forestry as a way for RoC to both guarantee communities' rights and preserve forests, hence reducing the country's emissions and encouraging good and inclusive governance. Community forestry is now enshrined in law but implementing decrees are required for the law to be fully operational.

These aspects should be completed by a larger approach to LULUCF: tackling deforestation requires stronger action on agriculture, land use planning, environmental law, etc. One of the most important challenges in the RoC is the lack of coordination between the two Ministries in charge of forestry and environment. While forest regulations and reference levels, including the forest inventory, are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment is the focal point for the NDCs and the Biennial Update Reports (BUR). Their mandates are closely connected, and coordination needs to be enhanced.

Progress and challenges in enhancing gender inclusion in the NDC

The NDC does not refer to women and gender, but the protection of vulnerable populations is mentioned with regards to adaptation. The fact that the NDC process and content are gender blind needs to be raised and addressed by CSOs, the State and the technical experts provided by technical and financial partners, throughout the revision process. Current measures such as quantitative indicators requesting the presence of women in training cannot make up for the absence

of gender-sensitive measures - such as specific consultation processes, training to both men and women on women's leadership, targeted support to women representatives -, and will not ensure the quality of women's participation. Urgent action is needed to (1) include a gender section in the new NDC; (2) push for gender-disaggregated data and gender indicators; and (3) ensure full and effective participation of women's groups.

Monitoring mechanisms

No specific monitoring mechanism has been put in place. There would however be an opportunity to draw lessons on independent monitoring from the VPA process. Existing MRV processes (Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and VPA) to which civil society participates, should be used as a basis. A detailed diagnosis of what exactly should be monitored,

what is already monitored, and how best to coordinate, is needed. Civil society should also engage in monitoring the NDC and request support to monitor the government's progress. In their position paper on NDCs, civil society called for greater support to mandated and non-mandated CSO-led independent forest monitoring.

⁵¹ <https://ndcpartnership.org/countries-map/country/?iso=COG>

NDCS: WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE CONTENT AND PROCESS?

RECOMMENDATION 1:

INTEGRATE RIGHTS-BASED FOREST GOVERNANCE APPROACHES TO SCALE UP NDC AMBITION

The 2018 Emissions Gap Report of the United Nations Environment Program concludes that the NDCs are not ambitious enough: if unconditional commitments were to be met, they would not even result in sufficient emission reductions. NDC ambitions thus need to be raised.⁵² The first NDCs of the six African countries considered in this study did not make full use of forests potential and are thus missing substantial opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in cost-effective ways.

Without radical efforts to improve rights-based forest governance, halt deforestation and forest degradation, and restore degraded forest and peatlands, it is virtually impossible to achieve the Paris Agreement objectives.⁵³ Fostering synergies and establishing policy coherence with VPAs would be an important way of starting to integrate governance related indicators on forest legality, anti-corruption, institutional frameworks, transparency, and accountability. In the case of RoC, the NDC could be strengthened as it is now a 2023 milestone within the binding Letter of Intent signed between CAFI and the government.

As Fern and its partners already noted in 2015, “those who live in and depend on forests are increasingly recognised to be the best guardians of these ecosystems and are therefore a vital part of the climate solution.”⁵⁴ The benefits of securing rights over Indigenous and customary lands in order to avoid and sequester carbon at the global level are now proven.⁵⁵ In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognised that securing Indigenous Peoples rights is a critical solution to the climate crisis.⁵⁶ Further, when the protection and restoration of forests is achieved through the stewardship of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, securing collective land and forest rights represents a far more equitable and cost-effective way to achieve climate mitigation targets than other carbon capture and storage measures.⁵⁷

Ongoing legal and political discussions at the VPA multi-stakeholder platforms can help clarify how the country will respect and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities when implementing their NDC, especially how FPIC will be respected and how secure land tenure rights is part of the strategy.

In addition, agroforestry and rights-based forest restoration are under-utilised in terms of adaptation, a key issue for African countries. As advised by the UNFCCC, “if Africa is to fulfil Agenda 2063’s commitment to prioritising climate adaptation, effort must be redoubled to enact a COP26 decision on agriculture addressing adaptation”.⁵⁸ Given the central role played by agriculture in the livelihood of most people in Africa, it is critical to rescue the sector from the imminent threats that the climate crisis imposes through focusing more on adaptation.⁵⁹ Addressing some of the key barriers to agroforestry and rights-based forest restoration could help scale up the NDCs substantially, including improved recognition of community tenure rights, giving greater voice to women farmers, strengthening agroforestry value chains, adaptive planning, and community-to-community capacity building. Fern’s new report *Restoring More Than Forests* explores current restoration practice and makes recommendations for policy mechanisms to support rights-based approaches, beginning with the elaboration of an agreed definition of what restoration entails and the integration of a holistic landscape approach.⁶⁰ Enhancing forests’ contribution to adaptation targets presents an opportunity for national governments to increase their focus on the rights and needs of particularly vulnerable communities, and to engage in inclusive, transparent, and participatory planning and implementation processes.

⁵² Emissions gap report 2018, United Nations Environment Program, November 2018

⁵³ *Approaching the point of no return*, 2018, Regnskogfondet

⁵⁴ *What role should land and forests play in the Paris agreement? Policy brief - December 2015*, Regnskogfondet, Naturvernforbundet, Fern

⁵⁵ Dooley, K et al. (2018) *Missing Pathways to 1.5°C: The role of the land sector in ambitious climate action*. Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

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⁵⁷ *A Global Baseline of Carbon Storage in Collective Lands, Indigenous and local community contribution to climate change mitigation (Sept 2018)*, Rights and Resources Initiative

⁵⁸ UNFCCC decision on agriculture: *Africa must continue prioritising adaptation in the Talanoa Dialogue and (I)NDC processes*

⁵⁹ Fransen, T., Northrop, E., Mogelgaard, K. & Levin K. (2017). *Enhancing NDCs by 2020: Achieving the Goals of the Paris Agreement*. World Resources Institute.

⁶⁰ <https://www.fern.org/jfi/ressources/restoring-more-than-forests-2246/>

RECOMMENDATION 2:

REINFORCE CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION TO GUARANTEE TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSION

The NDC revision process is highly technocratic: it is led by experts, who in turn consult CSOs, and sometimes local communities and Indigenous Peoples. A different or complementary approach could consist of revising the NDCs on the basis of local climate plans, better tailored to local context and needs, with demonstrated innovation and increasingly ambitious policy. Mapping local CSO initiatives (community-based restoration, agroforestry, or conservation projects) would allow experts to engage with both local governments and local communities, so that national policies can be built on concrete field experience and local knowledge. Such activity would require significant investment, yet the cost and time would be reduced by building such knowledge based on existing CSO networks. Clear communication channels would ensure CSO inputs were included in the planning process, thereby giving stronger context, and improving decision-making. Focussing on local issues would also help integrate local knowledge in efforts to fight the causes and consequences of the climate emergency. Unfortunately, due to the technicality of the NDC process, it is difficult to see how to bring in local knowledge.

All those who took part in this study pointed to a lack of clarity about the process and the limitations to civil society and community participation. The

UNFCCC ICTU guidelines pave the way for a more inclusive process, and CSOs should request to be trained on these guidelines so that they can then push their own government to be compliant. However, these guidelines are not specific and should also be translated into concrete and meaningful processes at the national level.

Ambitious participatory processes are needed to improve content, but also to trigger society buy-in. Such community engagement will be key in the implementation phase. As shown in the VPA processes, civil society should be included from the beginning and given thorough information in time to be able to review it. Lessons learnt from REDD+ in the DRC also show that criteria such as timing of participation, multi-donor support to civil society networks, donor coordination and technical support are necessary to ensure meaningful participation.⁶¹ However, local communities and many civil society organisations in DRC are still not able to meaningfully participate in REDD+ processes, according to a recent study led by Rainforest Foundation UK. A clearly communicated roadmap will allow CSOs to plan their interventions and to effectively play their safeguarding and implementation role.

"Ambitious participatory processes are needed to improve content, but also to trigger society buy in."

⁶¹ La société civile rassemblée pour la REDD+ en République démocratique du Congo: Analyse et leçons apprises du processus d'engagement et de structuration de la société civile et des peuples autochtones dans le processus REDD+ national (2009-2015),(2018), UNDP, Regnskogfondet

RECOMMENDATION 3:

DESIGN SOLID AND PARTICIPATORY MRV PROCESSES IN THE LULUCF SECTOR ON THE BASIS OF HIGH-LEVEL CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION

The lack of MRV systems and accurate data collection has been a major challenge to following government action and to taking stock of what has been achieved. A recent analysis found that countries have exploited the lack of clear and solid rules by designing their LULUCF mitigation strategies in diverse ways, jeopardising the transparency, attainability, and comparability of land use mitigation actions.⁶² It is essential therefore that enhanced NDCs have credible MRV.

Solid and participatory MRV processes should be part of enhanced donor coordination not only around the NDC, but in terms of long-term climate action. Technical and financial partners need to contribute, beyond 2021, to greater coherence of development and climate plans, to securing high-level cross-sectoral commitments, and to identifying the strategic focus for key emission sectors. As we have seen throughout this report, LULUCF is a central and strategic sector in heavily-forested countries, and challenges related to LULUCF should be tackled and monitored at the highest government level, supported by strong civil society participation. The success of climate action at national levels depends on the capacity of states and donors to ensure transparency in their efforts to (1) monitor joint cross-sectoral efforts; (2) avoid incoherence between their sectoral commitments; and (3) value existing processes and commitments such as the VPA and the Letter of Intent (LOI) signed with CAFI. This should not just lead to a new NDC-specific MRV system but to a cross-sectoral climate action monitoring system.

Mandated independent forest monitoring⁶³ has proven to improve forest and land governance throughout VPA implementation,⁶⁴ and these lessons should be applied to MRV systems. Governance indicators pertaining to corruption and illegal logging will be an opportunity to improve independent monitoring.⁶⁵ Regular and transparent civil society participation in land use planning as well as continuous and regular field monitoring through collaborative mapping could support MRV efforts. Government transparency regarding progress towards climate goals is key to strengthening trust while being accountable to civil society. This lays additional responsibility on civil society and the international community to monitor and ensure the integrity of the NDCs.

Civil society and Indigenous Peoples' representatives are uniquely positioned to strengthen assessment of positive or negative social impacts of climate actions. Participatory MRV systems provides accessible, understandable, relevant, and timely information and data to inform the design of new climate targets and policies. They deepen overall understanding of actions to tackle the climate crisis. They allow governments to discern what works, what does not, and why. MRV can also be a useful communication tool for motivating climate action among all stakeholders.

"Governance indicators pertaining to corruption and illegal logging will be an opportunity to improve independent monitoring."

⁶² Hargita, Y., & Ruter, S. (2016). *Analysis of the land use sector in INDCs* (Thunen Working Paper No. 50).

⁶³ <https://loggingoff.info/independent-forest-monitoring/>

⁶⁴ <http://civicsresponsegh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/forestmonitoring.pdf>

⁶⁵ <https://norad.no/en/front/funding/climate-and-forest-initiative-support-scheme/grants-2013-2015/projects/improving-forest-governance-through-independent-monitoring-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

RECOMMENDATION 4:

USE GENDER-DISAGGREGATED CLIMATE DATA AND PROMOTE GENDER AS A KEY ELEMENT OF CLIMATE POLICIES

All NDCs in this study failed to address women's rights and the linkages between the climate emergency and gender more broadly. Gender is rarely perceived as a relevant consideration in the context of mitigation strategies, which underlines the vulnerability of existing commitments to women's rights and gender equality in national climate change policies.⁶⁶ The lack of gender-disaggregated climate data inhibits the government's ability to monitor gender-related impacts associated with climate-specific spending.⁶⁷ There is a complete absence of gender-responsive budgeting in the NDCs, apart from Ghana's NDC which quantifies the cost of increasing the resilience of women to climate change.

Yet the importance of explicitly addressing these linkages in national and international climate change policy-making is well-documented:

comprehensively addressing the intersection of gender and climate change is essential for fulfilling women's rights, achieving gender equality, and effectively addressing the multiple challenges that the climate crisis poses. The UN-REDD Methodological Brief on Gender⁶⁸ provides guidance and concrete entry points and outlines how a gender approach can be effectively operationalised and monitored. Gender analysis, such as the one planned in CAR under UNDP support, are key to identifying country-specific barriers and inequalities, and hence to offering adequate measures to tackle climate change. Among the many experts and consultants involved in the NDC revision processes, there is limited engagement of gender experts, a situation that civil society and especially women's groups could raise with international partners.



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⁶⁶ WEDO, *Gender and Climate Change, a closer look at existing evidence*, November 2016 - <https://wedo.org/gender-and-climate-change-a-closer-look-at-existing-evidence-ggca/>

⁶⁷ Pearl-Martinez, R. 2017. "Financing Women Farmers." *Oxfam Briefing Paper*. Oxford: Oxfam. https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/file_attachments/bp-financing-women-farmers-131017-en.pdf.

⁶⁸ <https://www.un-redd.org/post/2017/02/17/new-publication-un-redd-methodological-brief-on-gender>

Glossary of NDC, forests and climate change terms

ADAPTATION

Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits opportunities.

AFFORESTATION

Afforestation is the direct human-induced conversion of land that has not been forested for a period of at least 50 years into forested land through planting, seeding and/or the human-induced promotion of natural seeds.

AGROFORESTRY

Agriculture incorporating the planting or conservation of trees.

BASELINE SCENARIO

In seeking to measure whether greenhouse gases have increased or decreased, it is necessary to know the amount previously emitted (often connected to a baseline date or year), to make a comparison over time. This is often referred to as the «baseline scenario» or «baseline», i.e., expected emissions if the emission reduction activities were not implemented.

BENEFIT-SHARING MECHANISMS

The principles, model and processes developed and applied to distribute benefits, both direct and indirect, of project activities, including project funding, between stakeholders.

BIODIVERSITY

The total diversity of all organisms and ecosystems from genes to entire biomes.

NATURAL CARBON CAPTURE

The storage of carbon by plants, trees, and other flora, which absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while they grow, release oxygen, and store the carbon.

CARBON STOCK

The quantity of carbon in a carbon pool.

CLIMATE COMPLIANCE

Fulfilment by countries/businesses/individuals of emission reduction and reporting commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.

COMMUNITY FOREST

A community forest is a forest that is managed collectively by local people, usually with timber and non-timber forest product extraction.

NATURAL CONSERVATION

The preservation, management, and care of natural and cultural resources.

CUSTOMARY RIGHTS

Customary rights to lands and resources refers to patterns of long-standing community land and resource usage in accordance with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' customary laws, values, customs, and

traditions, including seasonal or cyclical use, rather than formal legal title to land and resources issued by the State.

COP

Conference of the Parties. The supreme body of the UNFCCC. It currently meets once a year to review the Convention's progress. The word «conference» is not used here in the sense of «meeting» but rather of «association». The «Conference» meets in sessional periods, for example, the «fourth session of the Conference of the Parties.»

DEFORESTATION

Conversion of forest to non-forest.

FLEGT

Acronym of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade.

GENDER SENSITIVE

Is to understand and give consideration to socio-cultural norms and discriminations in order to acknowledge the different rights, roles and responsibilities of women and men in the community and the relationships between them. Gender sensitive policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and organisational procedures will: differentiate between the capacities, needs and priorities of women and men; ensure that the views and ideas of both women and men are taken seriously; consider the implications of decisions on the situation of women relative to men; and take actions to address inequalities or imbalance between women and men (definition provided by WEDO).

GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF)

At COP16 in Cancun in 2010, Governments established a Green Climate Fund as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention under Article 11. The Green Climate Fund supports projects, programmes, policies, and other activities in Parties from the global South.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

Established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation and the UN Environment Programme, the IPCC surveys world-wide scientific and technical literature and publishes assessment reports that are widely recognised as the most credible existing sources of information on climate change. The IPCC also works on methodologies and responds to specific requests from the Convention's subsidiary bodies. The IPCC is independent of the UNFCCC.

LAND USE, LAND-USE CHANGE, AND FORESTRY (LULUCF)

A greenhouse gas inventory sector that covers emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

MITIGATION

In the context of climate change, a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. Examples include using fossil fuels more efficiently for industrial processes or electricity generation, switching to solar energy or wind power, improving the insulation of buildings, and expanding forests and other «sinks» to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

MRV

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification. A process/concept that potentially supports greater transparency in programmes.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

A convening of civil society, the private sector, the public sector, and other stakeholders to promote better decision making by ensuring that the views of the main actors are heard and integrated at all stages, through dialogue and consensus building. The approach aims to create trust between the actors and solutions that provide mutual benefits (win-win). The approach is people-centred, and everyone involved takes responsibility for the outcome. Because of the inclusive and participatory approaches used, stakeholders have a greater sense of ownership for decisions made. They are thus more likely to comply with them.

NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES OF ACTION (NAPAS)

Documents prepared by least developed countries (LDCs) identifying urgent and immediate needs for adapting to climate change.

NATIONALLY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION ACTIONS (NAMAS)

At COP16 in Cancun in 2010, Governments decided to set up a registry to record nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking international support, to facilitate the matching of finance, technology, and capacity-building support with these actions, and to recognise other NAMAs. More information here.

NDC

According to Article 4 paragraph 2 of the Paris Agreement, each Party shall prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.

REDD+

A mechanism created by the United Nations with the view of making forests more valuable standing than felled. Under the REDD+ mechanism, the carbon storage services of forests are quantified and assessed, and funds are given to provide incentives to conserve or enhance forests stocks. REDD+ is often linked to carbon trading and has been controversial for several reasons outlined in the Fern video Story of REDD.

REFORESTATION

Replanting of forests on lands that have previously contained forests but that have been converted to some other use.

REGISTRY

Electronic databases that track and record all transactions under the Kyoto Protocol's greenhouse-gas emissions trading system (the «carbon market») and under mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism. «Registry» may also refer to current discussions on a system for inscribing nationally appropriate mitigation actions.

STAKEHOLDER

The stakeholders in a process or an activity are the people, companies and institutions that can affect or can be affected by that process or activity. Forests have many economic, environmental, and cultural values at local, national, and international levels, so any forest policy will have many stakeholder groups. In the case of VPAs, stakeholders in the timber-exporting country and the EU include governments, private sector actors, civil society organisations, communities and/or Indigenous Peoples.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency means that decisions taken, and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Information should be provided in easily understandable forms and media.

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

A draft article considered during the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol that would have permitted developing countries to voluntarily adhere to legally binding emissions targets. The proposed language was dropped in the final phase of the negotiations. The issue remains important for some delegations and continues to be discussed, currently in the context of the Bali Action Plan, in terms of what constitutes «voluntary».

VULNERABILITY

The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.

VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (VPA)

A legally binding bilateral trade agreement between the EU and a timber-exporting country outside the EU. Each VPA aims to ensure that timber and timber products imported into the EU from a partner country comply with the laws of that country.

VPA PARTNER COUNTRY

Any timber exporting country that enters into negotiations to conclude a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union or is implementing a VPA.

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"Strengthening awareness and creating broad ownership of NDCs at the national level will be key to ensuring the revision is effective and includes forest governance processes."

