

Youth speech made at the MoP20 of the CBFP

General Rapporteur: *Mr. Fabrice Ntchango, Permanent Secretary, One Forest Youth initiative (OFYI)*

Your excellencies,

H.E. the Minister Delegate to Environment and Sustainable Development,
Ladies and Gentlemen Co-facilitators of the CBFP.

H.E. ECCAS Commissioner in Charge of the Environment, Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Rural Development Department,

Dear partners of the Congo Basin forests and representatives of COMIFAC
member states,

Dear young leaders, all protocols respected, Distinguished guests,

I am very pleased and I know how privileged I am to take the floor amid these prestigious guests as president and spokesperson of the first CBFP Youth Forum.

First and foremost, the youths wish to thank authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the CBFP Gabonese and French co-facilitation, the COMIFAC and ECCAS for organising the Youths Forum.

The youths unanimously wish for the protraction of this CBFP Youth Forum as a platform for synergy development, mobilisation and cohesion among our different organisations while promoting mobility and cross-volunteering programmes to preserve forests of the Congo Basin.

In view of different topics discussed during deliberations, particular emphasis has been laid on employability and youth insertion in growth industries of the forestry and sustainable development economy.

Fully aware of its geographic dividend and of the active role that is hers to play, the youths, representing about 70% of the population in the CEMAC/ECCAS region, fully commits to the sustainable preservation and management of the forests of Central Africa.

Youths of the CBFP are definitely committed to actively take part in the implementation of practical programmes and initiatives suitable to strengthen awareness, access to information together with the promotion of green and innovating entrepreneurship.

It is in this perspective that the youths have made a number of propositions and recommendations that go as follows:

Workshop 1: Support the network of protected areas in Central Africa to meet the Kunming-Montréal (30x30) objectives;

- Devise conservation strategies outside protected areas and strengthen existing protected areas;
- Harmonise at regional level, a strategy including all countries of the region, while maintaining a participative approach;
- Financial support of jointly elaborated strategies;
- Promoting youth involvement: capacity building, participation in decision-making activities, share testimonies of youths committed in their communities;
- Sharing profits with local communities and indigenous peoples whose development initiatives should be strengthened.

• Workshop 2: Ensure an efficient and sustainable use plan of soils.

- Plan an economic incentive to impel sustainable agricultural practices
- Promote agroforestry, agroecology and permaculture (a mixture of cassava, acacias, etc.)

- Layout green spaces in urban areas to sensitise youths to respect the environment;
- Implement volunteering programme at national level to promote youth commitment in remote areas;
- Involve youths in the recommendation monitoring process by their participation in training programmes, data collection and their representation in decision-making bodies;
- Considering indigenous people – knowledge transfer – create a group of experts;
- Monitor unenforced regulations and set up a participative and inclusive monitoring committee with the participation of representatives youth organisations committed to sustainable management of forests.

Workshop 3: Strengthen sustainable value chains in Central Africa

- Assess the different chain value links of products;
- Launch an international and regional communication strategy to promote subregion products
- Ensure continuous training of actors;
- Youth involvement: create a knowledge transfer space for continuous youth training including entrepreneurship support.

Workshop 4: Fight against environmental crimes

- Develop international cooperation in the protection of natural resource areas;
- Re-enforce law application in Congo Basin States and dismantle trafficking networks;
- Allocate a fund in the national budget for the fight against environmental crimes;
- Raising awareness on the consequences of environmental crime.
- Involve local populations as much as possible in resource management;

- Involve youths in the fight against crimes as agents of change: funding actions, promoting environmental education and capacity building.
- Systematically include volunteering in forest preservation projects to enable active commitment of youths and populations so as to position youths at the heart of solutions.

Workshop 5: Promote cooperation and scientific and academic dialogue

- Strengthen existing institutions;
- Cooperation and integration of researchers in institutions by promoting mobility towards other countries;
- Involvement of youths: provide them with affordable access to science through online research and training, e.g. with AFD; encourage mobility of young researchers (coaching seminars, e.g. CIRAD);
- Call for research projects, innovative training courses, etc. - make them better known to the public;
- Enabling the local community to take ownership of the wealth of science;
- Underscore the knowledge of indigenous populations – risk of disappearing

Thank you for your kind attention.

Done in Kinshasa on June 1, 2024.