

**High Level Political Dialogue der CBFP  
(11.12.2020, 15:00 – 18:00 Uhr)**

**Statement BMZ (DR. Stefan Oswald, DG Africa)**

- Let me initially greet you all from my office here in Germany. My name is Stefan Oswald, and I am BMZ's Director General for Africa. Having said that, I would also like to convey the warmest greetings from my minister Dr. Gerd Müller, whose interest not only in Africa but especially in the natural resource sector is largely known. I am delighted to see that the CBFP-facilitation together with COMIFAC managed to gather this group of dedicated people in Kinshasa in order to elaborate on topics the sector can certainly benefit from.
  
- Our engagement in the forest sector in the region goes way beyond "just" development interventions: Our commitment is long-standing, trying to cover all aspects between conservation and sustainable use of forests, thus demonstrating our perception of forests as carbon sinks to preserve the climate of our planet, protect the incredibly huge treasure of biodiversity as well as recognizing forest also as a space of economic activities and residential area of people. In that sense, I would like to state here and now: We are in this sector to stay, in order to showcase together with you as our valued partners, that maintaining intact forests is possible.
  
- Having said all that, I would like to spend a few sentences on where we are and what we as BMZ do exactly: The Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon are outstanding partners for us in the regional forestry sector. Notably in Congo, we support the management of six National Parks in partnership with the National Institute for Forest Protection, ICCN. This goes hand in hand with measures for local inhabitants around the parks to improve their living conditions. In this respect, I am happy to announce that during last week's intergovernmental negotiations we pledged an additional amount of 20 Mio EUR to continue our good work. This includes an allocation for the Fonds Okapi, which shall become a

**key instrument for the self-financing of the national parks in the near future.**

**Looking at Cameroon, the overall amount of more than 200 Mio EUR in running projects in this sector points out our commitment and caters a wide range of subject matters: Park management, or more specifically, the improvement of Co-management structures, eco-guarding as well as the well-being of local and indigenous people living in and around protected areas are just a few out of many areas of involvement. Beyond that, we support the establishment of REDD+ as an instrument of the Paris Climate Agreement and engage in the rehabilitation and restoration of forested landscapes. Looking more closely at the sustainable use of forests and timber production, we partner with the EU to help introducing the Forest Law on Governance and Trade, FLEGT. I think I will not be going too far announcing that we will consider topping-up our engagement in Cameroon's forestry sector as soon as we recognize sufficient progress in sector reforms.**

- **These bilateral engagements are complemented by our long-term commitment to the regional organization COMIFAC, whose representatives I'd also like to greet here at this point. Since the year 2005 we have supported COMIFAC with an overall funding of more than 180 Mio. EUR. Currently, we support transboundary national parks, such as the Tri-National de la Sangha. It goes without saying that this encompasses the support for the socio-economic development of the people that live close to these parks, with special attention given to indigenous people. With the goal to further the sustainable use of forests we support a project to strengthen the certification of timber production. The core of our partnership with COMIFAC is the support of its secretariat. We aim to strengthen the Secretariat in its efforts to promote regional strategies for forest protection in fulfilment of its so called Convergence Plan. One path to this goal is the strengthening of regional institutions and networks. RIFFEAC, the network of institutions of education in forest and environmental studies and REPALEAC, the network of local and indigenous people, may serve as examples for**

**these efforts. Also focusing a bit on future engagement, I am observing that the CBFP-Facilitation under Christian Ruck is undertaking tremendous efforts to support the dialogue between Central Africa and China as the most important wood extractor of the region.**

- **Lastly, talking about current engagements, it is of special pleasure to report that my country contributes to the Central African Forest Initiative CAFI with 80 Mio € so far. It needs to be underlined that this contribution we mobilized over just the past two years, putting tremendous expectations on your countries' engagement with CAFI to jointly plan and realize real sector reform. We therefore will stay committed to CAFI and count on you all to make it a successful endeavor.**