

**Congo Basin Forest Partnership  
Facilitation of the Federal Republic of Germany (2020-2021)  
EIGHTH CBFP COUNCIL MEETING  
11 December 2019, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Minutes**

**Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) - 11 December 2020** – the CBFP Council held its eighth meeting. The gathering was chaired by the Honourable Dr Christian Ruck, CBFP Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany, co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Jules Doret Ndongo, Cameroon Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Acting Chairman of COMIFAC and hosted by: His Excellency Barrister Claude NYAMUGABO BAZIBUHE, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting was graced by the presence of politicians, Forestry/Environment Ministers from the Central African countries and the High Representatives of ECCAS, COMIFAC, OCFSA and GVTC.

Close to 150 delegates also participated, representing the seven colleges that make up the CBFP with about fifty participants joining online, namely:

- CBFP Regional College: ECCAS, COMIFAC and Ministers accompanied by the National COMIFAC Coordinators of the COMIFAC member countries;
- CBFP Civil Society College: CEFDHAC-CPR and ROSCEVAC accompanied by representatives of REJEFAC, REFADD, REPALEAC, REPAR networks, representatives of RECEIAC and local CSOs;
- CBFP International NGO College: AWF, WCS accompanied by WWF, WRI, FERN, TI
- CBFP Private Sector College: ATIBT and Earthworm Foundations represented by the DRC's Timber Industry Federation;
- CBFP Donor College: Norway accompanied by Germany, Belgium and France;
- CBFP Scientific and Academic College: CIFOR;
- CBFP Multilateral College: UNESCO and GVTC represented by ICCN.

The Eighth CBFP Council Meeting was structured around a first segment which was devoted to the opening ceremony. **During the opening session of the 8th CBFP Council meeting, the Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany**, the Honourable Dr Christian Ruck, provided a brief overview of the objectives and activities conducted by the German Facilitation for close to a year, underscoring the need to quickly develop a common position for Central Africa on Climate and Biodiversity issues, in order to strengthen the sub-region's voice at international negotiations coming up in 2021.

**Coming after the Mayor of Kinshasa, the Ministers** of Forestry of the Congo (Acting President of OCFSA), and of Cameroon (Acting President of COMIFAC), the ECCAS Commissioner for Forests and the DRC Minister of Forestry took turns making statements. They all thanked the German Facilitation for all its efforts and especially for holding the meeting in Kinshasa amidst the turmoil of the COVID crisis. Furthermore, they were unanimous in acknowledging the need to quickly reach a common position for Central Africa through a Declaration that could be put forward at international Climate and Biodiversity negotiations. They pledged to work actively to help finalize the text speedily, noting that there was significant room to increase the funding granted to date for forest and biodiversity preservation in the Congo Basin, to compensate the countries for the efforts they are making both individually and collectively.

**The Commissioner representing ECCAS**, while recalling that the ongoing reform of the sub-regional organization envisages the centralization of various existing institutions, reiterated his wish that the Declaration on the common position would be taken to the international scene by the President of ECCAS, thereby expanding the political reach of the commitment made by COMIFAC, the specialized sub-regional institution dedicated to forests.

**The moderator of the thematic workshop that gathered all the 7 CBFP colleges** that had worked on the draft Joint Declaration of the Central African States, presented a summary of the text submitted for review to the Ministers of Forestry and the partners. He underscored the need to hammer out a “deal” outlining payments for ecosystem services of global importance. Such a deal would entail a commitment of the States to do more to preserve the Congo Basin forests and their biodiversity, on the one hand, and a commitment of funding partners to increase their contributions to match the magnitude of challenges facing the climate, biodiversity and forests in the Central Africa sub-region, on the other hand. The German Facilitation will continue to assist the States in finalizing the Declaration, by collecting inputs from the States and funding partners, in order to come up with a document that reflects both the common position of the States and the consensus among the partners.

**The presentation of the transhumance workshop report** stressed the importance of this issue for the countries concerned across the Sudano-Sahelian fringe and the increasing pressure from livestock movements in transit areas and the northern edge of the Congo Basin forests. The experts recommend awareness raising at the highest level in the States, to ensure better institutional integration, greater cooperation between countries, especially in cross-border areas, including on issues of security, taxation and related levies, which will require bilateral agreements that clarify the laws applicable to transhumants and communication actions on the rules established. The **CEFDHAC** report summarized the actions conducted by the organization, particularly by civil society throughout the Congo Basin. The President underscored the need to prepare well for international meetings coming up in 2021 and reiterated the availability of CEFDHAC and civil society to contribute to the preparatory work.

Each CBFP college was given the floor to present the state of affairs within the College (news), and prospects or activities planned by the College. The focus was on the Regional College, with a special interest in news from the regional organizations (ECCAS; COMIFAC; OCFSA; the Congo Basin Climate Commission).

**In their statements, the representatives of the respective CBFP colleges** were unanimous in affirming the need to urgently come up with a common position for Central Africa at upcoming international meetings. They further insisted

- (i- **Regional college**) on the need to settle COMIFAC's arrears to allow the transition towards a new Executive Secretariat for the organization and the launch of the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Convergence Plan;
- (ii- **-NGO College**) on human rights compliance and the need to promote economic and social development in the periphery of protected areas;
- (iii- **-Private Sector College**) on the crucial need to help the private timber industry become truly lucrative again by improving logistical connections, reducing taxes and related charges, reimbursing VAT to exporters without delay, stepping up the fight against illegal logging, facilitating the mobilization of new investments in order to quickly ramp up local processing capacities in preparation for the ban on log exports coming into force on 1 January 2022, providing professional training in the timber processing trades, formalizing and legalizing domestic timber markets, in accordance with FLEGT commitments, and renewing land use plans for forest concessions as part of a secure long-term land zoning framework, taking into account emerging international issues ;
- (iv- **-Research**) on the development of a new issue of the State of the Forests report due in 2021 with contributions from over 150 researchers and the release of a new information platform on the Congo Basin forests on the OFAC website
- (v- **-Donors College**) on the donors' commitment to continue and especially increase their contribution to the financing of forest preservation in the context of climate change, and conservation of biodiversity in the second tropical green lung of the planet, and also renewing their commitment to support efforts to curb the negative impacts of transhumance, and support dialogue on a sustainable timber value chain, particularly dialogue with China
- (vi- **- Multilateral College**) on supporting protected area authorities, on the need to make more resources available for conservation and improve the livelihoods of communities; on the need to equip protected area authorities to manage man-wildlife conflicts, and help develop a "Zero poaching" strategy; on the need to improve governance in sharing benefits from natural resources; and combat climate change by better understanding the drivers of change and mitigation measures that need to be put in place. **The Colleges' statements are here attached.**

**The FONAREDD representative from the DRC** shared her organization's experience in REDD financing in the country, stressing the importance of strengthening cooperation between the respective financing tools to ensure greater consistency of actions taken, the need to focus on direct and indirect causes and to strengthen territorial governance for better territorial planning across all sub-sectors. She further underscored the need for a fund that would allow building on a foundation of trust

where the responsibilities for implementation lie with the States and their implementing partners on the ground, hence reducing the scope of conditions and prerequisites.

**During the closing session, the CBFP Facilitator** recalled the calendar of major events coming up in 2021, including the Symposium on Tropical Forests in Berlin, the World Conservation Congress in Marseille, the World Forestry Congress in Seoul, the China-Africa Forum in Dakar, COP 15 on Biological Diversity in Kunming and COP 26 on Climate in Glasgow. With these in mind, and based on the report of the CBFP Regional College and the Ministers' consultations, Honourable Dr Christian Ruck made it clear that the Joint Declaration of the Central Africa States needed to be finalized speedily in the COMIFAC countries (the ball is now in the Ministers' court), especially in view of the upcoming symposium in Berlin, and reiterated the availability of the German Facilitation to assist the States and their CBFP partners in this endeavour.

**The Acting Chairman of COMIFAC** renewed his commitment to ensuring that a common position is finalized as soon as possible so that the Joint Declaration can be taken to the top international bodies, particularly in climate and biodiversity negotiations.

**Taking the floor on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to close the proceedings, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development** recalled that the DRC would be taking over the presidency of the African Union in the month of January 2021. He reiterated his country's commitment to the sub-regional process of concerted forest management, and announced his government's decision to host the 3rd Summit of COMIFAC Heads of State in Kinshasa in the first half of 2021.

**Please download:**

The opening speeches.

Statements of the Co-leaders of the CBFP Colleges.