MAJOR MESSAGES, STRONG FINDINGS AND KNOWLEDGE GAINED,
Parallel Event of July 5, 2022 during CBFP MOP 19

Theme: Reducing deforestation in commodity supply chains in the Congo Basin: Recent initiatives, constraints and future prospects

Organised by Denis J. Sonwa (CIFOR), Louis Defo (PROFOREST) and Elsa Ordway (UCLA)

Context/Objective: In a global context marked by the need to reduce the carbon footprint of perennial crop value chains, this side event aimed to explore realities of deforestation and forest degradation associated with crops produced in the Congo Basin. It was structured around an introductory presentation, five presentations and discussions. After Denis’ introductory speech, Richard Eba’ opened the presentations with a paper on “imported deforestation” and the “zero deforestation” strategy. This was followed by presentations by Elsa Ordway, Eric Bososila, Louis DEFO and Gilles Etoga respectively on the dynamics of commodities in sub-Saharan Africa, the oil palm sector in the Yangambi landscape (DRC), the prerequisites for sustainable commodity production in the Congo Basin and WWF's interventions in the field of commodities.

Key messages, major conclusions and insights learned from this work are as follows:

- In the context of discussions on ‘imported deforestation’ and the exclusion of deforestation from agricultural commodity supply chains, there are a number of issues including the definition of forest and by implication deforestation (net or gross? legal or illegal?), the tools for monitoring deforestation and the year from which it should be considered;

- Since 2005, agribusinesses have acquired nearly 23 million hectares of land in sub-Saharan Africa and there has been a significant expansion of agricultural land in that region of the world at the same time;

- The expansion of agricultural land has been driven much more by agricultural production for domestic markets and cocoa production than by other export-oriented agricultural commodities;

- The most vulnerable countries in the Congo Basin to agricultural expansion at the expense of forests are the DRC, Cameroon, Gabon and Congo;

- In Cameroon, between 2000 and 2015, the increase in palm oil production was driven much more by the expansion of cultivated areas than by increases in yields or productivity;
Smallholders and artisanal millers are very important players in the oil palm sector both in terms of cultivated area, production volume and forest footprint. Any attempt to eliminate deforestation from the value chain should consider them properly;

In terms of eliminating deforestation from commodity supply chains, efforts to define and implement land-use plans, land-use planning, coordination of policies and actions of sectoral ministerial departments and good governance in land tenure are prerequisites in the Congo Basin;

The payment of sufficiently remunerative prices to smallholders and the fight against poverty within communities in forest areas are also prerequisites for the sustainable production of agricultural commodities in the Congo Basin. This sustainable production also requires the development and effective implementation of appropriate agricultural codes by the states concerned;

How can the emergence ambitions of the Congo Basin States, whose economies are partly based on agriculture, be reconciled with the imperatives of "zero deforestation"?

Read more...

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https://youtu.be/YqBSeZE3BWA