



20th Meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership: Sharing Innovative Approaches by IITA, RIKOLTO and UCB in Agroforestry and Sustainable land use management for Communities

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) was launched by former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. It is a non-binding partnership registered with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The CBFP consists of about 130 partners, including African countries, donors, international organizations, NGOs, research institutions, and private sector representatives. It collaborates closely with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), the regional body responsible for guiding and harmonizing forest and environmental policies to promote the conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin forest ecosystems. The CBFP meetings are held every two years.

In this 20th meeting, the consortium comprising the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), RIKOLTO, and the Catholic University of Bukavu (UCB) actively participated in the sessions held from June 3 to 5, 2024, at the Pullman Hotel in Kinshasa. During a panel focused on agroforestry and agribusiness, the consortium presented solutions for sustainable and effective land management around the Itombwe Reserve and the Kahuzi-Biega National Park through two main themes:

- 1. Technical support for reforestation and agroforestry within natural resource management investment projects.***
- 2. Ensuring effective and sustainable land use management around the Itombwe Nature Reserve (RNI) and Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB).***

Through these presentations, the consortium highlighted its experience in reforestation, agroforestry, sustainable land management, ecosystem preservation, and climate change adaptation. It is noteworthy that with IITA's support, RIKOLTO is working on restoring degraded lands through the use of sustainable energy, allowing

for a dual approach: ecosystem conservation and improvement of community livelihoods.

“In our actions, we have developed a sustainable energy program promoting the production of agroforestry species. Our customer approach, through the creation of nurseries managed by local committees, has enabled 11,000 households to develop their own businesses by selling thousands of seedlings. The project's goal was to leverage climate change and economic activities to boost job creation for households. Those who planted trees cut down and sold the mature trees after three years, generating income,” said Mr. Augustin Rushunda, Coordinator of RIKOLTO. The development of the consortium’s approaches aims to combat climate change and foster the creation of income-generating activities.

“We were invited to the 20th meeting of the CBFP parties to share our experience related to reforestation, agroforestry, and sustainable land management research projects. Regarding ecosystem preservation and climate change, we are involved in individual and community reforestation, forest preservation, and water resource management,” added Mr. Guy Simbeko from the Monitoring and Evaluation Team at IITA-Kalambo (Bukavu, DRC).

The presentations were followed by a Q&A session led by Mr. Felix Karume, which provided participants with an opportunity to better understand the contributions of IITA, RIKOLTO, and UCB to nature conservation and environmental preservation. As a reminder, the consortium IITA, RIKOLTO, and UCB work under the CANALLS project to promote agroecological transitions in the DRC through transdisciplinary agroecological living labs. Additionally, IITA and RIKOLTO, within the Agricultural Innovation Dissemination Accelerator Project (AID-I GLR), support the large-scale dissemination of agricultural innovations to address the most pressing challenges of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and natural resource degradation in Africa. The panel session, which started at 9:00 AM and concluded at 10:00 AM, ended with a group photo.

The CBFP’s 20th meeting showcased the importance of innovative approaches in agroforestry and natural resource management to achieve sustainable development and improve community livelihoods in the Congo Basin. The consortium’s efforts

highlight the potential of collaborative projects to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable land use practices.



