

# NDCs in Central Africa

CIFOR, COMIFAC, FOKABS, CIRAD

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## Key Messages

1. Despite a slight delay, the Central African countries were able to rapidly develop INDCs. The INDCs set out the vision of these countries and associated climate change related actions, taking into account their national and development challenges. The countries now need to prepare for revisions to these Nationally Identified Contributions (NDCs) expected in 2020, which must be more specific and hence more credible and ambitious while remaining fair and beneficial for both the countries and their populations.
2. Land-based sectors (AFAT: Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) play a major role in NDCs and should be taken into account in land-use planning processes (eg, land use). These sectors cannot be addressed separately. Responses to climate challenges need to be integrated into multi-sectoral development plans and policies and at institutional, national, regional and landscape level.
3. Establishing NDCs requires, not only engaging institutions in charge of environment and forests, but also mapping current and future climate finance initiatives, in order to build human and institutional capacity and development and transfer appropriate technologies with a focus on coordinating and building an enabling environment for mitigation and adaptation innovations. This calls for strong commitment on the part of the Ministries of Finance and Planning.
4. In the area of climate finance, NDCs will gain credibility and easily fit into government actions if: (1) the budgetary performance of past actions to combat climate change and its effects is well assessed; (2) climate finance sources are well integrated into government planning, budgetary execution and control systems.
5. COMIFAC member states must cooperate to pool resources and approaches that will enable them to revise their NDC scenarios to make them more credible, ambitious and consistent with their national interests. The idea is to identify policies with no regrets for these countries. In the forest and land sector OFAC is a valuable tool.

## 1. Context

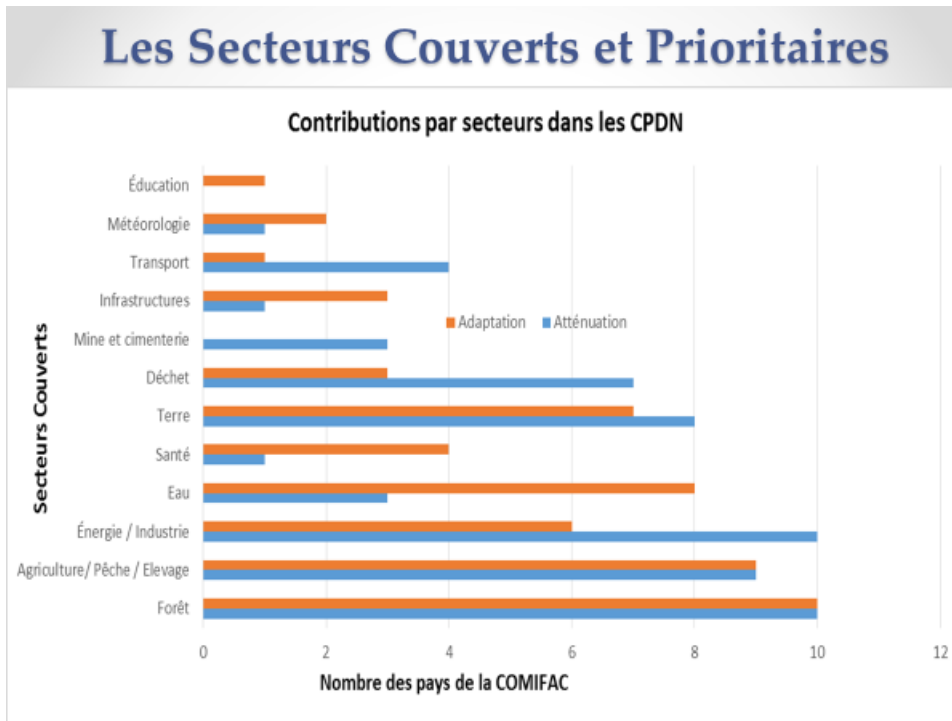
One of the most important elements of the Paris climate agreement is the nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The NDCs summarize the countries' climate response vision. At the moment, these documents involve a broad range of actions to be implemented with the support of the international community facilitated by the UNFCCC. While substantial effort went into their development, the NDCs now need to be implemented on the ground. Also below we consider the following issues: What do these INDCs / NDCs say? How can we move forward with their implementation while taking into account the realities of Central Africa?

## 2. What do we know about NDCs in Central Africa?

The NDCs documents show that the ten Central African countries have adopted a multisectoral approach in their contributions to adaptation and mitigation (Figure 1). At sub-regional level, priority sectors for mitigation measures include forestry, energy, agriculture, land, waste and transport. With respect to adaptation, the priority areas are forestry, agriculture, water, land, energy and health sectors. Forestry is the most important sector for contributions to adaptation and mitigation. Thus there is a need to foster synergies between adaptation and mitigation in the implementation of forestry actions.

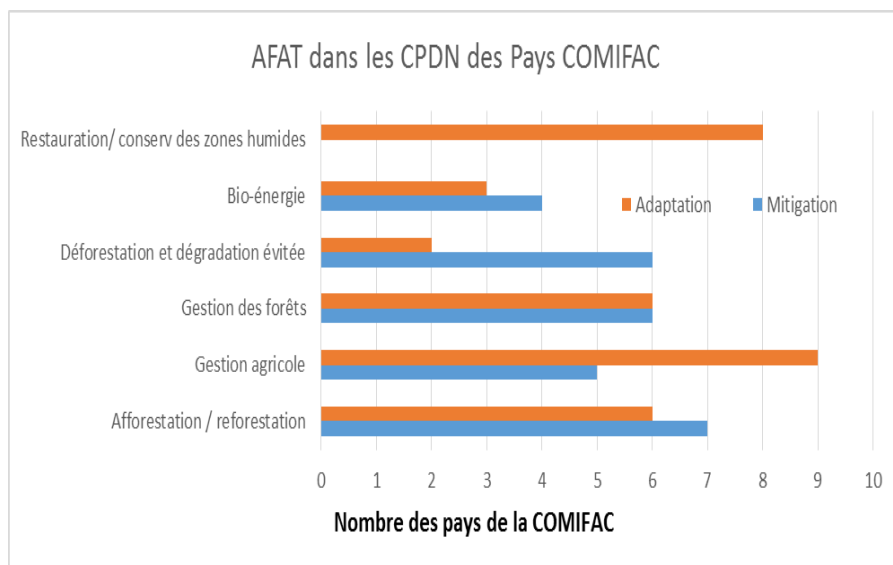
Contributions to adaptation are anchored within the framework of the National Adaptation Program for Adaptation to Climate Change (NAPA) and the National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change (NAP) of the Central African countries. On the other hand, contributions to mitigation are among the pilot programs for REDD + (Burundi), coherence between agricultural policy and REDD + (Cameroon), combating unplanned deforestation through REDD (Congo), and programs for the implementation of REDD + strategies and processes (Equatorial Guinea, DRC, Rwanda and Chad).

Figure 1: Ranking of different sectors covered in the INDCs of Central African countries in order of importance



On agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFAT), most countries in Central Africa have proposed the following actions: wetland restoration and conservation, bioenergy development, preventing deforestation and degradation, forest management, agricultural management and reforestation (Figure 2).

Figure 1: AFAT actions proposed by the COMIFAC countries



### 3. Ways of implementing NDCs

In order to contribute to the global effort to combat climate change and at the same time become emerging nations, Central African countries need to pay more attention to the role of financing, technology transfer and capacity building in the implementation of NDCs.

**Financing:** The 10 countries of Central Africa need at least USD100 billion to reduce the emissions described in the NDCs in 2030 by 455.4 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (Mega tons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent). Potential sources for mobilizing this funding are: donors, government budgets, private finance or investment, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), domestic and international carbon market credits, etc. Funding is a means of implementing NDCs that can potentially help Central African countries meet their targets and bring the necessary effectiveness to the fight against climate change. While endeavoring to mobilize external funding, the countries of Central Africa must adequately map their national climate finance. Ministries of finance and planning ministries must take the lead in mobilizing funding for climate programs. Countries in the COMIFAC region are actively involved in readiness phases supported by various financial mechanisms, notably the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Climate finance planning and identification of national designated authority (DNA) activities are underway in many countries, including the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Gabon, DRC, Cameroon, Chad, Central Africa etc. A host of funding mechanisms, usually mobilized under REDD+, PANA and NAP, are currently operational in the field. In implementing the NDCs, there is a need to better coordinate national and international planning and mobilization.

**Technology transfer:** NDCs from countries in the sub-region have identified actions expected to bring the benefits of technology transfer to adaptation and mitigation. Some countries (e.g DRC, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe) have mentioned technology transfer in a vague manner with no concrete examples. A clear and precise mapping of technologies and sources / places of mobilization is necessary to transform the vision of the NDC into reality.

**Capacity building:** The capacity building needs identified in the NDCs of many countries in Central Africa are presented as too few and sketchy. These needs touch on strengthening of human, institutional, legal, operational and technical capacities in various fields, sectors and projects, involving different actors. A detailed assessment of capacity building needs in the implementation of the NDC is required.

#### **4 What are the lessons learned from the development of NDCs?**

The timely submission of the NDCs was successfully achieved by the Central African countries, which significantly contributed to the signing of the Paris Agreement. In the process, many lessons were learned on how to revise and improve the NDCs. Some of them are presented below in the form of strengths and challenges. The biggest challenges facing the countries of Central Africa are tied to the ability to translate the vision of the NDC into realities in a context of pluralized administrations.

##### **Challenges**

- ✓ The means of implementation (finance, capacity and technology needs) remain a key issue for many developing countries. However, these issues are not uniformly integrated into the NDCs of the COMIFAC Member States. It is therefore necessary to clearly state these needs when preparing projects and programs. The Green Climate Fund and the Climate Center and Climate Technology Network (GCF-CCCTN) funds are useful for this purpose.
- ✓ Countries have had very little time to develop their NDCs, making it difficult to ensure effective participation of different actors and the promotion of strong national ownership. The review of NDCs in the future should provide opportunities and resources for a more inclusive process.
- ✓ The emission reduction targets and financial demands of some countries are not supported by credible and robust methods. Yet the entire climate negotiation process hinges on confidence in the validity of these CDNs. The quality of the data and models, which is the basis for the ambitions displayed by country, will have to be significantly improved during the review of the NDCs in 2020.
- ✓ The translation of the ideas proposed in the NDCs into concrete bankable projects and programs remains a challenge in Central Africa due to insufficient capacity to prepare and implement these projects effectively.
- ✓ Compliance with the Green Climate Fund's fiduciary standards and other existing financial mechanisms is fundamental; only a few Central African countries are proactively preparing their national institutions for direct access to the GCF. Sharing experiences from other countries, coupled with political will, can be a driving force in overcoming such a challenge.
- ✓ Most international processes related to the implementation of NDCs are in English. This is a major challenge for the COMIFAC member states, which are mainly French speaking. Individual and collective efforts to learn English can help in the medium and long term. Persistent pressure at the UNFCCC, so that the documents be translated into French and other UN languages is useful in the long term, but short term it will not be possible given the UNFCCC's financial difficulties.

##### **Strengths**

- ✓ Almost all NDCs in COMIFAC Member States are well structured into different sections that are aligned with international expectations, including specific sections related to adaptation actions.
- ✓ The NDC process has received strong political support at the highest level from many governments, with many ministers and decision-makers deliberating on the development and validation process.
- ✓ Gaps in the NDCs development process are emerging. However, as living documents, the NDCs may be revised, in particular in their design, with a view to improving their implementation at project or program level - guidelines on important issues such as gender or inclusion are encouraged at international level (GCF).

- ✓ Most NDCs are country-driven and aligned with national development visions and other key sectorial policies and programs on climate change. This approach promotes synergy with development objectives set at national level.
- ✓ Many Central African countries have been very clear about the nature of their commitments. They classify and differentiate between climate adaptation and mitigation actions that they can implement without any external support or resources (unconditional contributions) and additional climate measures that they can only implement if they receive external support or means of implementation (conditional contributions).

### **Issues**

- ✓ Lack of data and data quality are an issue. Despite efforts to prepare the INDCs, some countries have not had the resources to cover all climate-related sectors. Many of them had to resort to proxies to establish their scenarios. Without transparency in the making of data and scenarios, trust - which is at the root of the Paris agreement process - will be lacking.

### **Opportunities**

- ✓ With the establishment Observatory of Forests of Central Africa (FOCA), COMIFAC has set up an instrument that, in collaboration with countries, allows data to be validated in a transparent manner and made available to all. This will be very useful in the context of the NDC process and should be fully utilized by countries. It could also bring together experiences and efforts to improve capacities for the production of scenarios.
- ✓ In general, COMIFAC's well organized structure is an asset for the countries in the region. COMIFAC Member States are taking steps to strengthen their climate actions. Several training and capacity building activities were held on climate finance. A regional action plan for the operationalization of the NDCs was elaborated and validated at a ministerial session in May 2016 in Kinshasa. The development and deployment of this plan at national level is under way.