



CONGO BASIN

POSITION NOTE BY CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS ON REDD +

Meeting in Douala from October 29 to November 2, 2019, in a session dedicated to the challenges related to the fight against climate change, transhumance, raising the climate ambition, community adaptation and resilience to the adverse effects of climate change, civil society actors discussed relevant initiatives to address these effects in a view to improving the level of carbon sequestration and, hence, the contribution of Congo Basin forests to raising the climate ambition. For that end, they placed particular emphasis on REDD + and other initiatives beneficial to civil society actors, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC).

With regard to the REDD + in particular, civil society notes that in light of recent developments, including the fires that ravaged nearly 10% of the Amazon, and the current position of the Brazilian government on the forest issue, the Congo Basin hence presents one of the most important stakes for humanity in the fight against climate change. Considering that growing level of interest in the Congo Basin, civil society in the sub-region calls upon stakeholders to equip themselves for a better understanding of REDD + mechanisms as well as the rules and subtleties of the carbon market, which remain very complex, and require sharp and specific knowledge.

In order to avoid being left behind in the new Congo Basin interest games' dynamics, the civil society of the sub-region, recognizing the lead and facilitation role of CEFDHAC overall, and in particular in the framework of the Civil Society Actors' College, the CBFP governance body, agreed to work on developing more synergy between actors and various stakeholders that endeavour in the preservation of Congo Basin's natural heritage, specifically with regard to access to financing resources and their utilization in the field.

With that in mind, the civil society encourages the Congo Basin Member States to:

- *Develop the most inclusive approaches as possible for all actors by putting in place mechanisms for direct access to funding dedicated to REDD + initiatives or to combating the adverse effects of climate change, for civil society actors and other stakeholders ;*

- *Show more trust in organizations that have not been set up simply because of REDD + resources and whose institutional setting allow them not only to effectively reach indigenous peoples and local communities, but also to contribute to building political dialogue and effectively influence decision makers;*
- *Get validated standards approved by political decision-makers that are likely to place the Congo Basin forest on the international market in a socially more profitable way;*
- *Render management of Congo Basin forests exploitation markets more transparent;*
- *Insure more involvement and integration of the civil society and indigenous and local communities in the management of the Congo Basin forest;*
- *Ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of the Congo Basin Forest among all stakeholders;*
- *Work in collaboration and in synergy with non-state actors and the civil society in particular, to develop projects that are likely to capture innovative financing available under climate funds;*
- *Conduct a complete forest inventory in the Congo Basin, in order to inform decisions and future strategic choices.*

To Technical and Financial Partners, the Congo Basin Civil Society College recommends that they facilitate, for their relevant members, direct access to available financial resources for the implementation of existing initiatives, without going through actors of another sub region, whose ecosystems are totally different and do not present the same issues, particularly as regards:

- *Capacity building of civil society actors and IPLC on climate change, mitigation and REDD+ specifically, as well as on carbon market monitoring or adaptation to climate change;*
- *Restoration and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity;*
- *Support to Local Councils in the development of climate action plans and REDD + implementation at municipal;*
- *Rainwater harvesting for agricultural activities in Central Africa in areas with fragile ecosystems;*
- *Protection of watersheds and fight against erosions;*

While commending ECCAS for its dedication and commitment toward them, civil society actors stress the urgent need that in the context of the ongoing reform, a well-developed partnership be established with CEFDHAC, in a view to better supporting the institution in the implementation of regional integration dynamics around forest and sustainable development.

Aware of the importance and the need for all and especially for the IPLC to be able to sustainably enjoy the Congo Basin forests resources, the civil society invites all actors to remain attentive to the preservation of that basin, which represents a great

part of the global heritage, and to make this wealth a cross-cutting and essential development tool for the sub-region.

All stakeholders should therefore build on the Congo Basin's potential to better contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union, to ensure coherence and subregional stability, as well as the emergence of Central African countries, through multi-stakeholder dialogue and the recognition of the pioneering role of civil society in the development and implementation of government programs, for the well understood interests of the communities living in and around forests.