



Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Eighth CBFP Council Meeting

Report of the CBFP Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany

11 December 2020

Your Excellency Mr. Jules Doret Ndongo, Minister of Forestry and Wildlife of Cameroon, Acting Chairman of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)

Your Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen, Ministers of the COMIFAC member countries

Dr Honoré Tabuna, Commissioner for Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

Mr. Executive Secretary of the COMIFAC

Ladies and gentlemen in your various capacities.

Following the handover of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership Facilitation (CBFP), from Belgium to Germany in December 2019 in Douala, chaired by ECCAS and COMIFAC, I took office as the Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany, in Berlin, with effect from February at a solemn ceremony chaired by Dr Gerd Müller, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany.

- The first order of business upon taking office was to hold consultations to develop the roadmap of the German CBFP Facilitation for the next two years. Having obtained the approval of the Acting President of the COMIFAC, we released the German CBFP Facilitation roadmap which is aligned with the COMIFAC Convergence Plan and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It was subsequently harmonized to be in line with the roadmap of the Acting President of the COMIFAC.

The following are some of the strategic axes of the Roadmap of the CBFP Facilitation of the Federal Republic of Germany and activities conducted as part of their implementation:

- **Strengthening collaboration between the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and the CBFP:** It should be noted here that Germany runs both of these initiatives. In this capacity, the German CBFP Facilitation has successfully worked in close collaboration with CAFI's Board of Directors and Secretariat to better coordinate and strengthen synergies between the CBFP and CAFI, at the political, diplomatic, strategic and operational levels. Also, talking of support, a major concern of the Congo Basin countries, I am pleased to inform you that I have been receiving growing support from major donors, especially from my own country, the Federal Republic of Germany.
- **Regarding Collaboration between COMIFAC and the CBFP:** I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the openness and transparency that have marked my collaboration with the Acting President of COMIFAC, Minister Doret Ndongo. We worked especially closely to organize this meeting.
- **Implementation of the N'Djamena Declaration.** Following a series of videoconferences with the Co-Leaders of the geographical blocs and recent advocacy efforts at the political and diplomatic levels during my last working visits to Kinshasa and Yaoundé, a special day dedicated to Transhumance was held in the framework of the ongoing Kinshasa meetings. From the beginning of next year, there will be a greater focus on mobilizing financial partners around the topic of Transhumance. I am delighted to say that these awareness-raising and donor mobilization efforts have been conducted in my country and at high levels. This is proof of the CBFP Facilitation's strong commitment to implementing the budgeted programmatic roadmap, derived from the logical framework for the implementation of the N'Djamena Declaration, notably the CBFP Facilitation's To-do List of political and diplomatic actions, financial needs for cross-border agreements, land use plans, protected area management, infrastructure, and capacity building;
- **With regard to intensifying the dialogue with China** at the scientific, economic and political levels, we facilitated a large-scale project involving German and international partners as donors. The project aimed to promote and strengthen the principle of "sustainability" in the international tropical timber trade and Asian investments as a way of fostering the sustainable management of Congo Basin forests. The project is now run by the BMZ. It is a large triangular

project between Germany, Central Africa and China that was initiated by the Partnership. Furthermore, talks are underway with our partners AFORPOLIS (Goettingen University), a partner of the Global Environmental Institute, to hold the second workshop on the China-Central Africa Dialogue aimed at building collaboration between Central Africa and China by means of MoUs.

- **Consolidating the CBFP governance** by successfully organizing and holding several meetings of the CBFP colleges to include them and involve them in the CBFP Facilitation's activities, especially in developing its common position. I welcome this meeting which is a major component of the CBFP's governance. Next year, we will hold the 19th Meeting of CBFP Parties.
- **Facilitation of a common position of the Congo Basin countries** with all the CBFP colleges bringing inputs to the development of a **common declaration**. Following an extensive survey of numerous experts and actors in our partnership, I was delighted to note the partners' engagement in the process. We received responses to the technical questionnaire including proposals/ideas, requests and forward-looking proposed solutions which our consultants compiled and analysed to produce a proposal which could shape the outcomes of future conferences on the Congo Basin. You have been provided with a draft statement as well as a summary document with a table presenting all the inputs forwarded to the Facilitation Team by members of the Partnership. The documents are also an excellent illustration of the lofty and unique expectations of the members of the Partnership and highlight the potential added value of these expectations in guiding the work and decisions to be taken at upcoming international gatherings. The draft declaration discussed during the thematic workshops over the last two days and during the High-Level Political Dialogue will be submitted shortly to the CBFP Council for review. This is all being done in a context of pressing international issues, namely the two United Nations conferences on Biodiversity and Climate, the World Congresses on Biodiversity and Forests on the one hand and the EU-Africa, and EU-China Summits, the G7 and the G22 on the other hand. I need to be proactive in seeking your advice and in-depth expertise so that we can join forces to mobilize the international community in favour of the Congo Basin.

- **In a bid to ensure Strategic communication:** The German Facilitation has equipped the CBFP with a revamped and better organized website. The CBFP communication Platform remains a regional and international reference for information on the Congo Basin. The German Facilitation has also enriched the CBFP with other visual communication tools such as Flyers/leaflets, a banner and a corporate logo. The CBFP communication tools are available to all the partners.
- **In the framework of collaboration with Donors:** It is also important to note that the German Facilitation has launched an advocacy campaign for increased funding which is conducted partly via videoconferencing with the Donor College but also through face-to-face encounters in Berlin and Brussels.
- The CBFP Facilitator has also helped to establish **a new biodiversity fund (Legacy Landscape)** within the German Ministry of Development, which will support two protected areas in Central Africa in its initial phase.
- Finally, I should mention my working visit to the DRC and Cameroon, which included working meetings with nine ministers of the two countries and the Cameroonian Prime Minister, two high-level donor meetings and meetings with the Civil Society and Scientific Colleges of both countries. The visit also served to promote support for CAFI in the DRC and revive it in Cameroon.

I would like to end by thanking you for your commitment to this common effort, this joint endeavour which is an international collaborative effort in favour of Central Africa. I would like to reiterate my gratitude for your actions and efforts to preserve this heritage of humanity, which is what the Congo Basin represents, for your work towards conservation, sustainable management of biodiversity, the fight against climate change and towards community development.

Thank you for your kind attention

Honourable Dr Christian Ruck

CBFP Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany

Berlin, Germany