



## Best Wishes for 2023

By the Honourable Dr. Christian Ruck, CBFP Facilitator of the Federal Republic of Germany



**Dear CBFP Partners,**

In the aftermath of the World Forestry Congress held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, the first African Protected Areas Congress in Kigali, Rwanda, the COP 27 Climate Conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and the COP15 Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, Canada, it is safe to say that **Central Africa's tropical forests were once again prominently featured in global negotiations** and that the voice of the sub-region was heard loud and clear during plenary sessions, high-level meetings and side events.

The much advocated "**Fair Deal**" alliance is gradually becoming a reality as proven by the historic first step taken in Glasgow (COP 26) and the launch of the Task Force for the Fair Deal in Sharm El Sheikh (COP 27). The recent steps respond to the COMIFAC member countries' pleas for a fair and equitable share of international climate and biodiversity funding as well as incorporation of the economic and environmental value of the Congo Basin forests in the global climate budget in return for the Central African countries' efforts to protect, sustainably use and properly manage their forest resources, which have become the planet's primary lung.

With the 2022 end of year holiday season in full swing, it gives me great pleasure to convey my gratitude and admiration for everything we were able to accomplish this year. Through our multiple interactions and your enriching, varied contributions, we were able to put the German CBFP Facilitation's roadmap into action. Some of our accomplishments include:

- The partnership's governance consolidated for transformational change, in view of a sustainable future for the Congo Basin forests and their surroundings, their people, flora, and fauna, as evidenced, among other things, by the successful organization of the 19th Meeting of the Parties in July 2022 at Libreville, including the 10th Meeting of the CBFP Governing Council, as well as some sixty related events and the CBFP college meetings. The MoP19 also provided the setting for celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of our remarkable and unique partnership. **Happy birthday to all of us!** The CBFP leadership would like to take this opportunity to extend its congratulations to the newly appointed Co-Leaders of the following CBFP colleges: Laval University of Quebec in Canada and RIFFEAC (*Réseau des Institutions de Formation Forestière et Environnementale en Afrique Centrale* [Central African Network of Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions]) for the scientific college; the United Kingdom for the donors' college; REFACOF with RECEIAC for the civil society college; Volcanoes Safaris with Olam for the private sector college.
- In terms of membership, we were pleased to welcome the following partners to the CBFP in 2022: the Kingdom of Sweden, Republic of Angola, Republic of Korea, Bezos Earth Fund, INBAR and IFED-Canada.
- The common position of the COMIFAC member countries and the expanded international reach of the Congo Basin forests at international events, as expressed in the COMIFAC Declaration, and the "Fair Deal" Task Force which was launched at the COP 27 Climate Conference and its first working session held at the COP 15 Biodiversity Conference.

To achieve this, the countries of the N'Djamena Declaration are expected to develop their own transhumance-related investment plans based on the framework documents produced by the experts' conference in July 2021. Preparation work is underway to create national as well as bilateral and trilateral agreements between the states in order to enhance cross-border management of transhumance and protected areas. The political and institutional organisation of the implementation of the N'Djamena Declaration has also been adopted. ECCAS deserves credit for providing institutional and political support for the N'Djamena Declaration in close coordination with its regional organizations, ECOWAS and IGAD.

- The dialogue with China is progressing well as part of the process of creating a triangular collaboration between Germany, China, and COMIFAC on the international trade of tropical timber. This is being achieved through an ongoing project to develop a Tropical Timber Trade Facility.

I look forward to meeting you at the 2nd International Conference of Ministers of Security, Livestock, Agriculture, and Forestry on the nexus between cross-border transhumance, protected areas, natural resources, security and sustainable development. The technical preparatory work is scheduled to take place in the first half of March 2023 and the ministerial conference is scheduled for the week of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023. This second high-level meeting could help to accelerate the implementation of the N'Djamena Declaration. An official handover **between the outgoing German Facilitation and the incoming French and Gabonese CBFP Facilitation** is planned to take place at this transhumance conference.

Together, we have made progress, and the achievements of this year 2022, which is now coming to an end, are proof of that. This is our shared success! Together, we have raised the profile of the Congo Basin and its surroundings.

As one year ends and another one begins, we look towards 2023 which will be an important year with many challenges for the Congo Basin and its surroundings. We look forward to continuing our efforts to protect biodiversity, manage forest ecosystems sustainably, combat climate change and promote sustainable development for the benefit of the Central African people. To this end, we will be working closely with you and the incoming **French-Gabonese CBFP Facilitation** during the transition period ending in June 2023.

I would like to seize this opportunity to wish you happy holidays and convey my best wishes for 2023.

**Thank you**

**We are partners**

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