

International Conference of Ministers of defense, security and protected areas on the fight against poaching and other cross-border criminal activities

N'Djamena Declaration

On the need to guide regional transhumance dynamics by giving greater consideration to issues relating to security, management of large fauna and the increasing degradation of ecosystems resulting from climate change.

The countries and organizations meeting during the high-level political dialogue held in N'Djamena from 23 to 25 January 2019, convened jointly by the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the Government of the Republic of Chad, under the Distinguished Patronage of His Excellency, Mr. IDRIS DEBY ITNO, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State:

Reaffirm their ongoing commitment to work towards the sustainable economic and social development of all the local communities of the central regions of the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and the forest and savannah regions extending north of the Congo basin, in a manner consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals;

Acknowledge that sustainable economic and social development is built on models that vary depending on the region under consideration and that each of these models deserves to be developed and supported by the public authorities;

Consider that regional transhumance dynamics, whose local socio-cultural roots run deep and have long played a role in maintaining the economic and food balances of the Sahelian regions and their outskirts, should be a key investment of national and sub-regional policies and therefore deserve attention within the cooperation programs of the sub-region's international partners;

Stress that the areas affected by these regional transhumance dynamics are also home to major hotbeds of biodiversity whose conservation and sustainable management hold potential as a major driver of inclusive economic growth and job creation for all the local communities in the regions concerned;

Note, however, that owing to the cumulative impacts,

1. of climate change which is exacerbating aridity levels in an ever larger part of the main grazing areas in Sahelian regions, leading to the geographical spread of transnational transhumance dynamics southwards;
2. of growing financial investments in livestock by local non-pastoralist economic actors, with a resultant increase in transhumant livestock numbers;
3. of persistent hotbeds of terrorist instability in several parts of the subregion, which help maintain and promote armed trafficking fueled by the illegal exploitation of natural resources (including large fauna), notably as part of transhumance dynamics, including some which are preyed upon and whose legitimate foundations are threatened;
4. of transhumance dynamics between the Sahel region and northern Equatorial Africa that are likely to jeopardize prospects for development, peace and security, and biodiversity conservation in some areas where they are currently not adequately monitored.

Undertake to halt this downward spiral by implementing joint operational strategies based on:

1. The establishment and operationalization of an observatory of cross-border transhumance movements;
2. Implementation of concerted intersectoral initiatives to combat cross-border poaching, notably involving the Ministries of Environment and Forestry, Defense, Agriculture as well as the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs;
3. practical and efficient implementation of cross-border anti-poaching agreements (LAB);
4. Information exchange by means of appropriate tools such as Africa-TWIX developed by COMIFAC and TRAFFIC;
5. A stronger role for relevant protected area management units as part of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models to be established or strengthened, in close collaboration with the relevant State agencies in the countries concerned;
6. Enhanced support for transhumance dynamics, particularly by establishing relevant corridors equipped with beacons and the requisite infrastructure.

Recall that the success of these operational strategies will hinge largely on the effective implementation of applicable legal and regulatory frameworks and the establishment of effective governance frameworks in the countries concerned, notably entailing the active involvement of civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities, women stakeholders and youth;

Undertake to:

1. Help establish and operate multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral platforms at the regional, national and local levels to ensure concerted management of issues relating to transhumance, poaching, protected areas and other cross-border crimes;
2. Establish and secure national and cross-border transhumance corridors;
3. Prioritize management methods that ensure protection and added value of protected areas, especially Public Private Partnerships (PPP);
4. Operationalize agreements on the fight against poaching and concerted management of protected areas and cross-border corridors ;
5. Conduct concerted diplomatic efforts entailing advocacy and awareness raising in poachers' countries of origin and in transit and destination countries for illegal wildlife products;
6. Develop integrated income-generating programs and projects for the benefit of local communities in protected areas and transhumant pastoralists.
7. Hold a consultation to assess the existing conservation services of the States Parties to Agreements involved in the Fight against Poaching (LAB) in order to take steps to address their operational deficiencies especially those relating to intelligence and appropriate responses by specialized anti-poaching units;
8. Conduct studies on economic, social, political and security dynamics to promote better understanding of issues associated with transhumance;
9. Develop an appropriate legal framework to ensure better governance and efficient management of transhumance.

Request:

1. That His Excellency IDRISS DEBY ITNO, President of the Republic of Chad kindly appeal to his peers to organize the third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the COMIFAC countries.

2. that ECCAS, within the framework of the fight against cross-border poaching and eco-security, organize a meeting of authorities in charge of protected areas, security and defense, with the purpose of understanding and implementing the "Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons";
3. that UNESCO, within the framework of the Man and Biosphere Program (MAB), in collaboration with technical and financial partners, help establish and operate a consultation framework on transhumance that would allow analysis of key issues relating to cross-border transhumance and come up with appropriate solutions ;
4. That the OCFSA member States and technical and financial partners strengthen the institution to enable it to properly fulfill its mandate;
5. that the LCBC, COMIFAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, the CILSS and and technical and financial partners facilitate the construction of watering points, fodder production and pasture management in order to restore ecosystem function in the Lake Chad Basin area;

Furthermore, the countries and organizations meeting in Ndjamená extend special thanks to His Excellency IDRIS DEBY ITNO, President of the Republic of Chad, Head of State, for his leadership and call on him to work with his peers to follow-up on the implementation of this declaration.

N'Djamena, 25 January 2019 :

The Ministers