



UNFCCC COP 26 Glasgow

HALL 4, PV 05, Blue Zone

Pavilion COMIFAC - Congo Basin Initiatives

Concept Note

THEME:

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS AS AN APPROACH TO THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CONGO BASIN FOREST LANDSCAPES AIMED AT MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

EVENT: HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSION BETWEEN MINISTERS OF THE CONGO BASIN COUNTRIES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

LOCATION: Hall 4 COMIFAC GIZ CBFP COP26 PAVILION Glasgow and Virtual

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2021

TIME: 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

Context:

For thousands of years, all major ecosystems of the various forests of the Congo Basin have been very important components of the Earth's biosphere. The international community now recognizes that these vast forest landscapes play and must continue to play a crucial role in balancing the climate on a global scale and safeguarding global biodiversity, which is of universal importance. Recently, scientists have even given the forests of the Congo Basin the distinction of being the "first lung" among the world's tropical forests.

Simultaneously, we have to observe in the Congo Basin the fastest rate of ecosystem degradation in the world in recent years (FAO 2020). We are witnessing a process of forest fragmentation and degradation, caused and maintained by humans and their unsustainable and unnatural economic activities. These occur at an ever-increasing rate despite many efforts to replace them with transformational approaches and concepts of sustainable development for over thirty years.

Expectations of the initiatives:

The challenge for initiatives in the Congo Basin is to develop synergies between climate stabilization efforts on one side and to safeguard the last relics of biodiversity hot spots and Terrestrial ecosystems already affected by degradation. The vision is to prevent the current environmental crises from ending in climatic and ecological disasters, marked by severe and irreversible disruption to the entire biosphere and threatening life on Earth.

At the strategic level, the main solution is both nature-based, including in particular ecosystem services, and compliant with the ecological requirements of the living organisms which constitute these same ecosystems. This strategy directly contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals set out by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including those related to food security, water sanitation and soil fertility, as well as resilience against climate change and risks of future epidemiological diseases.

The vast majority of the international community welcomes all voluntary expressions of engagement and commitment by Central African countries in the above-mentioned solution strategy. It would promote the well-being of all African peoples and base itself on the services offered by a nature carefully maintained in a structurally and functionally intact state (Nature-based Solutions).

To this end, great importance is assigned to joint efforts to clarify common positions and to facilitate the translation of international agreements into the regional context of the Congo Basin (international mainstreaming).

It is essential to harmonize efforts for the implementation of the Convergence Plan (common vision of the States) for the conservation and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin (sub-regional mainstreaming) with the requirements and guidelines of international agreements.

It is considered imperative that all efforts to develop and implement mitigation and adaptation policies are made jointly and in line with national investment plans, as well as in conformity with the commitments made in the framework of international agreements and sub-regional strategies.

Last but not least, it is a strong hope that monitoring of impacts on natural capital and socio-cultural values will be set in motion and supported by the common efforts to live up to **the expectations of the "decade for the restoration of ecosystems" 2021 to 2030.**

At the operational level, COMIFAC, in cooperation with its regional networks and partners, including GIZ, has provided **support to the countries of the sub-region in**

creating trans-boundary protected area complexes at the landscape level. Their joint management is governed by international agreements between several countries in order to ensure an effective ecosystem approach.

Landscape approaches, which describe the governance of complexes formed by protected areas and productive zones, aim to experiment with solutions based on concrete interventions to sustainably protect or restore natural environments, either intact or already modified. Those solutions are suitable to respond to societal challenges in a promising and adaptive manner. These **inclusively managed landscapes simultaneously offer benefits for human well-being, biodiversity conservation and climate stabilization**. They are seen as **model learning platforms in many parts of the Congo Basin**, which promote the gains of biodiversity conservation and sustainable local development in the context of sub-regional integration for peace and security.

Advocating for a new "FAIR DEAL" climate and biodiversity agreement for the Congo Basin, the "COMIFAC Declaration" demands a fair share of funding and political commitment for the Congo Basin ecosystems that commensurate with their global value in terms of biodiversity and carbon sinks. In the light of this, **this high-level event will serve as a catalyst for longer-term dialogue and partnerships across the region**, as well as for **increased ambition** on the part of donor countries and Central African forest countries alike.

The panel discussion will focus on the prospects for the Congo Basin based on one and/or more of the following questions, which will be addressed at the convenience of the panelists.

Guiding Questions:

1. What actions and strategies should be prioritized in order to facilitate the transition to a healthy development of the economic and ecological potential of the Congo Basin in the medium and long term, while remaining aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals for Humanity?
2. How can the technical and financial support needed to reverse the current negative trends in biodiversity and climate degradation be mobilized?
3. Which efforts are already being undertaken to deliver sound data outputs on management impact monitoring of implementation models? Where do you see challenges?
4. What role can the international community play in supporting the ambitions of Central African forest nations?
5. How can Central African countries contribute to attracting more forest finance? How do they plan to assume a leading role in the protection and sustainable management of their tropical forests and natural resources, which is defined as integrating issues of forest and biodiversity conservation into all sectors while ensuring that the livelihoods of local communities are safeguarded.

6. How can the joint announcements of donor countries at COP26 for the Congo Basin be used to catalyze greater funding and improve the enabling environment for funding, including from the private sector?

Tentative Agenda

Hours	Event	Responsible
16:00-16:10	Opening Remarks	His Excellency Jules Doret Ndongo, Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Cameroon, Acting President of COMIFAC
16:10-16:25	Keynote Speech	Mrs Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Board of GIZ Presidium (Vorstand)
16:30-16:50	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers of COMIFAC Member States • German CBFP Facilitator • Representatives of development agencies and EU: UE-IPC; DANIDA; NORAD; SIDA; USAID (TBC) • Managing Director FSC International, a.D. Vice President DANIDA • Message from REPALEAC Regional Coordinator on the \$1.7 billion provided at COP 26 for the world's indigenous and local communities 	
16:50-17:10	Q&A Session	Moderator COMIFAC
17:10-17:15	Closing Remarks	CBFP Facilitator and President COMIFAC