



PFBC



8th CBFP Council and related meetings

Kinshasa, 8 - 9 December 2020

Expert technical segment

Press release

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Facilitation of the Federal Republic of Germany in close collaboration with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hosted the Expert Technical Meeting alongside the 8th meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Council from 8 to 9 December 2020 in Kinshasa, DRC.

The main aim of the meeting was to review the draft Declaration of the ECCAS / COMIFAC countries for the Congo Basin forests and their vicinity and was organized with the financial and technical support of the German Ministry of Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Technical Cooperation GIZ.

Chaired by Mr. Claude Nyamugabo Bazibuhe, Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the meeting gathered representatives of the following ECCAS / COMIFAC member countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad. The following sub-regional organizations were also in attendance: ECCAS, COMIFAC, OCFSA, CEFDHAC, donors, national, sub-regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society representatives that are active in conservation and sustainable forest management.

The opening ceremony began with a performance of the DRC's national anthem and was marked by speeches from three dignitaries: the Honourable Dr Christian Ruck, CBFP Facilitator, Mr. Honoré Tabuna, ECCAS Commissioner for the Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development and Mr. Claude Nyamugabo Bazibuhe, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the DRC.

Taking the floor during the opening ceremony, Dr Christian Ruck recalled the purpose of the Declaration which would be the focus of the participants' deliberations and would help enhance the position of the Central African countries, notably the Congo Basin, in international negotiations on climate change, biodiversity and the fight against desertification. He underscored the need for the CBFP to support this position to ensure that more financial resources are effectively devoted to achieving the above-mentioned goals. In closing, he stressed the need to map out a clear course of action that would be recognized as such by international partners and would build their trust in the commitments of Central African States, and thus enable favourable financing conditions.

Speaking next, Mr. Honoré Tabuna, the ECCAS Commissioner for the Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development, revisited past milestones in environmental diplomacy achieved in our sub-region on the eve of major international forestry and environmental events. He congratulated the Congolese authorities and the Facilitation of the Federal Republic of Germany of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership once again, for maintaining and championing environmental diplomacy in the wings of high-profile international events. He further noted that this

form of cooperation between States and the Partnership is a core feature of the ECCAS strategic plan 2021-2025 approved on 27 November 2020 following institutional and organizational reforms within the institution. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the draft declaration being prepared for expert review would be guided by past Declarations of Heads of State and Ministers, made on the eve of major international events or at other times, regarding sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin.

The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Claude Nyamugabo Bazibuhe, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the DRC. He welcomed and thanked the participants for honouring the invitation and encouraged them to spare no effort in ensuring the success of this meeting. Before wishing every success to the proceedings, he conveyed his gratitude to the CBFP Facilitation for the choice of the DRC as the host country for the meeting of paramount importance to the sub-region.

The opening ceremony was followed by a round of introductions and the adoption of the agenda built around a single item: a review of the draft Declaration of the ECCAS / COMIFAC countries on the Congo Basin forests and their vicinity.

A meeting bureau was set up comprising a:

- **Chair:** Ms Victoire Eheth, representative of the Acting Presidency of COMIFAC held by Cameroon;
- **Co-Chair:** Ms Léonie Baka, MEDD expert for the host country.

The Secretariat was provided by the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat. The deliberations were moderated by Mr Jean Marie Noiraud.

The proceedings began with an overview of the draft Declaration built around the following five sections:

- A preamble
- A background
- Main challenges
- The commitments of the ECCAS / COMIFAC member countries with respect to the Congo Basin forests and their vicinity
- The countries' expectations from the international community.

Following a reading of the draft Declaration and amendments to the preamble in plenary session, discussions around the said draft Declaration continued within the Partnership's colleges. The colleges reported back with their conclusions in plenary session and debates ensued. At the end of the debates, the participants validated the draft Declaration.

The participants thanked the Federal Republic of Germany through the BMZ for financing the proceedings of the 8th CBFP Council. They also conveyed their gratitude to the Government and People of the Democratic Republic of Congo for their hospitality and the warm reception they enjoyed during their stay in Kinshasa.

Done in Kinshasa, 9 December 2020

The participants