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CAMEROON



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

ABOUT WWF CAMEROON

Our Vision

“Healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity supporting people and driving green growth”

The WWF Cameroon Country Program Office (CCPO), henceforth referred to as WWF Cameroon in this report, started in 1990 as a small office with one field project (Korup Project). Twenty-seven years after, WWF has grown in scope and vision.

Scope

WWF supports the Government of Cameroon in the implementation of the medium term development strategy, the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, thereby contributing to progress towards the country’s 2035 vision of becoming a middle-income country. WWF offers support in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in sectoral policies, strategies and programs, and supports implementation of the Forest and Environment Program. We operate from 11 field offices in five landscapes and a national office in Yaoundé.

Main Strategic Pillars

Sustainable Wildlife Management
Sustainable Forest Management
Food and Agriculture Practice
Climate and Energy

Four major field programs

Jengi Southeast Forest Program

The program focuses on the conservation of forest and wildlife and co-management of natural resources with local communities and indigenous peoples. It has two components:

Jengi TNS Program (Lobeke)

This program provides technical assistance for the management of Lobeke National Park, which is the Cameroon segment of Sangha Tri-national landscape (TNS), a UNESCO World Heritage site and its surrounding zones.

Jengi TRIDOM Program

This program focuses on the management of Nki and Boumba-Bek national parks and the Ngoyla and Dja wildlife reserves, Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary and their surrounding multiple used zones. Coastal Forest Program
With head office in Limbe, the program provides technical and administrative support to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife at the regional level and in Bakossi, Korup and Mount Cameroon national parks and the Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary. The Program also promotes promising models of sustainable natural resource management to influence policies through effective civil society, youth and indigenous people actions.

Kudu Zombo Program

This program supports the management of Campo Ma’an National Park and focuses on the development of a gorilla habituation project in the perspective of promoting eco-tourism.

WWF Cameroon in a few dates

- 1990: Creation in Douala as a small office with a field project
- 1992: Co-operation Agreement signed with the Government of Cameroon
- 1994: Bilateral Agreement signed with WWF Netherlands for phenomenal growth
- 2002: Regional Office for Central Africa (CARPO) is moved to Cameroon
- 2004: Government of Cameroon signed agreement to host the WWF Central African Regional Programme Office
- 2006: Partnership agreement signed with MINFOF
- 2015: Convention signed with Cameroon’s Ministry of Environment.

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Nature Positive Cameroon: A Voice for Humanity



Dear readers,

Since January 2020, the world has been grappling with one of the biggest health challenges of the century, the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has disrupted all aspects of daily life, caused physical, mental and economic damage and killed millions of people in the world. Though the spread of the pandemic does not seem to be waning anytime soon, we are hoping that humankind will soon find a solution to this pandemic and to prevent further pandemics. We however believe that, solutions may only be found if people begin to change the way they interact with nature.

Nature can play an important role in the origin and prevention of pandemics. Humans rely on biodiversity for medicine, food, air and shelter. For instance, around 25% of the drugs required by modern pharmaceuticals are derived from rainforest plants, making nature our life support system. But the way developing societies convert land for agriculture, build infrastructure, illegally or unsustainably exploit wildlife and forest resources, has resulted in increased interactions between animals, pathogens and people. In times like this, we must heed the call to speak up for nature in order to stop ecosystem disruptions and loss of biodiversity.

Collective human action is required to stem the challenges confronting the planet. For instance, under the campaign dubbed New Deal for Nature and People (ND4NP), influencers; youths, civil society, religious and traditional rulers, have added their voices to encourage the government of Cameroon to commit to more ambi-

tious actions to protect nature. And through the BIODEV2030 initiative, government and private sector engagement is gradually on the rise, with prospects for greater commitment to work towards reducing the impact of their activities on biodiversity in particular and on the environment as a whole.

The year 2020 opened a new chapter in efforts to ensure protection of human rights, of vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, within conservation policy landscapes. For instance, Government action following the publication of a report by an independent panel of experts on allegations of violations of human rights of indigenous peoples within a WWF conservation landscapes, is a case in point. The fall-out from the report, which was commissioned by WWF International, shows the commitment of Cameroon's Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) to ensure that violations of rights of indigenous and local people, are henceforth, severely sanctioned. Simultaneously, WWF-Cameroon has ensured that all her staff, and collaborators receive training on recommended Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework. These safeguards are designed to preempt and manage risks, uphold human rights, and ensure conservation projects deliver better outcomes for communities and for nature. A public consultation on WWF's social policies is currently underway.

Meanwhile, the quest for greater access rights, increased participation in natural resources management and assistance to indigenous people to find their voices in an increasingly competitive world were sustained in 2020. With other civil society organisations, WWF supported a Baka-led initiative for the creation of the first ever third class chiefdom in the Baka village of Assok, in the South Region of Cameroon. With the setting up of a human rights centre in the village of Mambele near Lobeke National Park, East Region of Cameroon, communities can safely report cases of abuse, receive human rights training, counselling and psychological support.



Forest

In times when the forests are under pressure from agro-industrial expansion and unsustainable logging, there is a strong quest for better tools to reinforce governance in the sector. The WWF Enabling Environment Assessment Tool (EEAT), is being rolled out in communities. The tool will assist both indigenous and local communities to analyse and assess the state of forest governance based on the principle of accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency in forestry management.

In a similar vein, there has been in recent times greater visibility and involvement by Sino-Asian investments in the forestry Sector in the wood trade in Cameroon. A study commissioned by WWF found that the surface areas of forest exploited by Chinese and Asian Companies increased by 15% of the total area under logging concessions in Cameroon. from 562 256 ha in 2014, to 1 046 594 ha in 2019.

Climate

WWF carried out a 'Community-Based Vulnerability Assessment', which gave more insight on community climate change adaptation perspectives as well as informed decisions to mainstream climate change related issues into strategic interventions for the communities in the TRIDOM landscape. Indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) members can now plan their activities based on their perceived vulnerability to climate change.

WWF also signed an agreement with the Cameroon Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPD-ED) with a mandate to facilitate, permanent dialogue in the REDD+ process in collaboration with other stakeholders in the country.,

Sustainable Agriculture

We continue engaging companies and communities involved in the production of palm oil and cocoa to embrace sustainability in their value chains. Through a Companion Modelling Game (ComMod) oil palm smallholders and agro-industries have engaged in a win-win partnership to improve production and profit while reducing the impact on forests.

Building on our experience in promoting sustainable production in the palm oil sector, improving community livelihood and protect forests, WWF is developing a Green Cocoa landscape program that focuses on increased cocoa

production in partnership with the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH). This model will be replicated in other major cocoa producing areas in Cameroon.

Wildlife

In the Southeast of Cameroon, communities are joining the fight against poaching and wildlife crime. With support from WWF for instance, they sometimes appear in court as civil claimants in wildlife cases and seek damages suffered from poaching.

Meanwhile, a gorilla habituation project led by WWF in Campo Ma'an National Park in the South Region of Cameroon is making remarkable progress with gorillas almost wholly tolerating the presence of humans. This holds hope for the development of ecotourism in the region and will help generate income for local communities and boost protection of wildlife and nature.

The Task Ahead

The year 2021 is full of challenges. Cameroon, like many other countries, will be engaged in discussions about the future of our planet. Nations are expected to make greater commitment to reverse biodiversity loss during a meeting of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (COP15) to be held in Kunming, China. A similar action regarding climate change is envisaged during the COP 26 scheduled for Glasgow.

Reconciling economic and social development, and protection of nature remains our biggest challenge in Cameroon today. WWF will work with other civil society organisations and partners to ensure that use of forest lands respect international norms and does not impact negatively on local populations.

We will mobilise Cameroonians to speak up for nature - our life support system.

We will continue to promote the rights of indigenous people, support efforts to stop wildlife crime and work towards the mitigation of the impact of climate change.

We will federate actions with other stakeholders for a New Deal for Nature and People in Cameroon.

We understand that it is only by working together that success can be possible.



Cameroun : Nature Positive, Une voix pour l'humanité

Depuis janvier 2020, le monde est aux prises avec l'un des plus grands défis sanitaires du siècle, la pandémie de COVID-19. Le COVID-19 a perturbé tous les aspects de la vie quotidienne, causé des dommages physiques, mentaux et économiques et tué des millions de personnes dans le monde. Bien que la propagation de la pandémie ne semble pas vouloir s'arrêter de sitôt, nous espérons que l'humanité trouvera bientôt une solution. Mais les solutions ne peuvent être trouvées que si les gens commencent à changer la façon dont ils interagissent avec la nature.

La nature peut jouer un rôle important dans l'origine et la prévention des pandémies. Nous dépendons de la biodiversité pour les médicaments, la nourriture, l'air et les abris. Environ 25 % des médicaments requis par les produits pharmaceutiques modernes sont dérivés de plantes de la forêt tropicale, faisant de la nature notre système de survie. Mais la manière dont nous convertissons les terres pour l'agriculture, construisons des infrastructures, exploitons illégalement ou de manière non durable les ressources de la faune et de la forêt ont entraîné une augmentation des contacts entre les animaux, les agents pathogènes et les personnes. Dans des moments comme celui-ci, nous devons répondre à l'appel à défendre la nature afin de mettre un terme aux perturbations des écosystèmes et à la perte de biodiversité.

Une action collective de l'homme est nécessaire pour relever les défis qui assaillent la planète Terre. Dans le cadre de la campagne intitulée New Deal for Nature and People (ND4NP), des personnalités influentes, des jeunes, des membres de la société civile, des chefs religieux et traditionnels ont ajouté leur voix pour encourager le gouvernement camerounais à s'engager dans une action plus ambitieuse pour protéger la nature. Grâce à l'initiative BIODÉV2030, l'engagement du gouvernement et du secteur privé s'intensifie progressivement, avec la perspective d'un plus grand engagement à travailler à la réduction de l'impact de leurs activités sur l'environnement.

L'année 2020 a ouvert un nouveau chapitre dans l'effort de sensibilisation aux droits de l'homme et

au respect des droits des populations autochtones dans la conservation. La publication du rapport d'un groupe d'experts indépendants chargé par le WWF International d'examiner les allégations de violations des droits de l'homme dans les paysages protégés par le WWF a été accueillie favorablement par le gouvernement camerounais. L'engagement pris par le ministère camerounais des Forêts et de la Faune (MINFOF) de veiller à ce que les violations des droits des populations autochtones et locales soient sévèrement sanctionnées a marqué un changement de ton et de rhétorique. Entre-temps, le WWF-Cameroun a veillé à ce que l'ensemble de son personnel reçoive une formation sur le cadre des garanties environnementales et sociales. Ces garanties sont conçues pour gérer les risques, faire respecter les droits de l'homme et veiller à ce que les projets de conservation produisent de meilleurs résultats pour les communautés et la nature.

Dans le même temps, la quête de droits d'accès plus importants, d'une participation accrue à la gestion des ressources naturelles et d'une aide aux populations autochtones pour trouver leur voix dans un monde de plus en plus compétitif a été soutenue en 2020. Avec d'autres organisations de la société civile, le WWF a soutenu une initiative menée par les Baka pour la création de la toute première chefferie de troisième classe dans le village d'Assok, dans la région du Sud du Cameroun. Grâce à la création d'un centre des droits de l'homme dans le village de Mambele, près du parc national de Lobeke, dans la région de l'Est du Cameroun, les communautés peuvent signaler les cas d'abus, recevoir une formation aux droits de l'homme

Forêt

À une époque où la forêt est soumise à la pression de l'expansion agro-industrielle et de l'exploitation forestière non durable, il faut rechercher de meilleurs outils pour renforcer la gouvernance dans le secteur. L'outil d'évaluation de l'environnement favorable (EEAT) du WWF est actuellement déployé dans les communautés. Cet outil aidera les communautés autochtones et locales



à analyser et à évaluer l'état de la gouvernance forestière sur la base des principes de responsabilité, de transparence, d'inclusion et d'efficacité dans la gestion forestière.

Dans le même ordre d'idées, les investissements sino-asiatiques dans le secteur forestier et l'implication dans le commerce du bois au Cameroun sont plus visibles. Une étude commandée par le WWF a révélé que les surfaces de forêts exploitées par les Sociétés chinoises et asiatiques sont passées de 562 256 ha en 2014, à 1 046 594 ha en 2019, soit 15% de la surface totale des concessions forestières au Cameroun.

Climat

Le WWF a réalisé une "évaluation de la vulnérabilité à base communautaire", qui a permis de mieux comprendre les perspectives d'adaptation au changement climatique des communautés, ainsi que de prendre des décisions éclairées pour intégrer les questions liées au changement climatique dans les interventions stratégiques pour les communautés du paysage de TRIDOM. Les populations autochtones et les communautés locales (IPLC) peuvent désormais planifier leurs activités en fonction des tendances de la vulnérabilité au changement climatique.

Le WWF a également signé un accord avec le Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la Nature et du Développement Durable du Cameroun (MINEPDED) avec pour mandat de faciliter, en relation avec toutes les parties, le dialogue permanent dans le processus REDD+ dans le pays.

Agriculture durable

Nous continuons à encourager les entreprises et les communautés impliquées dans la production d'huile de palme et de cacao à intégrer des considérations de durabilité dans leurs chaînes de valeur. Grâce à un jeu de modélisation compagnon (ComMod) développé dans le cadre du projet « Oil Palm Adaptive Landscapes (OPAL) et un modèle intégré « Agrobusiness-Conservation » développé par WWF, les petits exploitants de palmiers ont compris l'importance de mutualiser les efforts à travers la mise en place des coopératives agricoles et se sont engagés dans un partenariat gagnant-gagnant avec les agro-industries pour améliorer la production et les bénéfices tout en réduisant l'impact sur les forêts.

S'appuyant sur son expérience en matière de promotion de la production durable d'huile de palme, le WWF, en partenariat avec l'Initiative pour le commerce durable (IDH), a développé un programme de cacao vert dans une approche paysagère

qui se concentre sur l'augmentation de la production de cacao, l'amélioration des moyens de subsistance des communautés tout en protégeant la forêt. Ce modèle sera répliqué dans d'autres bassins de production au Cameroun, ainsi que les autres pays membres du paysage TRIDOM.

Gestion de la faune

Dans le sud-est du Cameroun, les communautés se joignent à la lutte contre le braconnage et les crimes contre la faune. Avec le soutien du WWF, elles se portent partie civile dans les affaires de faune devant les tribunaux compétents et demandent des dommages et intérêts pour les préjudices subis du fait du braconnage.

Parallèlement, un projet d'habituation des gorilles que nous soutenons dans le parc national de Campo Ma'an, dans la région du Sud du Cameroun, fait des progrès remarquables, les gorilles devenant curieux et acceptant totalement la présence de l'homme. Cela laisse espérer le développement de l'écotourisme dans la région et permettra de générer des revenus pour les communautés locales et de renforcer la protection de la faune et de la nature.

La tâche à venir

L'année 2021 est pleine de défis. Le Cameroun, comme de nombreux autres pays, sera engagé dans des discussions sur l'avenir de notre planète. Les nations devraient s'engager davantage pour inverser la perte de biodiversité lors d'une réunion du Secrétariat de la Convention sur la biodiversité (COP15) qui se tiendra à Kunming, en Chine. Une action similaire concernant le changement climatique est envisagée lors de la COP 26 prévue à Glasgow.

Concilier le développement économique et social, et la protection de la nature reste aujourd'hui notre plus grand défi au Cameroun. Le WWF travaillera avec d'autres organisations de la société civile et partenaires pour s'assurer que la conversion de la forêt respecte les normes internationales et n'a pas d'impact négatif sur la population. Nous mobiliserons les Camerounais pour qu'ils élèvent leur voix en faveur de la nature - notre système de survie. Nous continuerons à promouvoir les droits des populations autochtones, à soutenir les efforts visant à mettre fin à la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages et à œuvrer à l'atténuation de l'impact du changement climatique. Nous fédérerons les actions avec les autres parties prenantes pour un New Deal pour la Nature et les Hommes au Cameroun. Nous comprenons que c'est seulement en travaillant ensemble que le succès est possible.



TIME TO BUILD A NATURE POSITIVE WORLD

The world biodiversity is veering dangerously towards the precipice. Sixty eight of biodiversity has been lost since 1970 and we are on the path to losing one million species in the next decade if we do not change our ways. Humanity has a challenge to renegotiate their relationship with nature in a bid to save the planet and people. WWF and partners believe it is time for a New Deal for Nature and People (ND4NP). The ND4NP will be expressed through an emergency declaration by heads of state and governments before the UN General Assembly committing to an ambitious plan to stop the loss of biodiversity and put nature on the path to recovery by 2030.

A WWF 2020 Living Planet Report, stated that human beings are the main cause of biodiversity loss. In our quest for space for infrastructure development, mining and agriculture to feed the world's ever growing population, we have massively destroyed forests and wildlife habitats, we have created industries that pollute the environment, thereby jeopardizing nature, our life support system. However, there are rays of hope.

Through the ND4NP, Governments, business, civil society, indigenous and local communities, will commit to protect and restore natural habitats, safeguard diversity of life, halve footprint of production and consumption for the wellbeing of people and nature.



A photograph of a gorilla in a lush green forest. The gorilla is positioned in the upper right quadrant, looking towards the camera. The background is filled with dense green foliage, creating a natural and vibrant setting. The text 'WILDLIFE AND PROTECTED AREAS' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

WILDLIFE AND PROTECTED AREAS



COMMUNITIES ‘DOING WHATEVER IT TAKES’ TO PROTECT ELEPHANTS, GORILLAS

In the small district of Ngoyla that harbours the pristine Nki National Park and the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve in eastern Cameroon, a quiet revolution is taking place. Unlike in the years of yore, when rangers (eco-guards) had to go it alone to stop poachers from decimating iconic wildlife species such as elephants, local people are picking up the gauntlet. They have grouped into associations to denounce and engage actions against poachers to obtain compensation for civil damages in court.

“We must do whatever it takes to protect our wildlife and biodiversity for our wellbeing and that of our children,” says Sodja Denis Achille, coordinator of an association called GIC CODENZOP that is helping to stem poaching of elephants and gorillas in the Southeast of Cameroon.

GIC CODENZOP is one of four associations in Southeast Cameroon supported by WWF to fight against poaching, in a region that has witnessed alarming decline of about 60% of elephants in the last 10 years. “We get more and more restive as we witness the massive decline of wildlife and biodiversity loss,” Sodja continues. “Since we swung into action in May this year, we have been to over 36 villages and sensitized 410 people on the urgency to stand up against poachers,” he reveals during a meeting with a visiting WWF team including Stephane Riquet from WWF France.



“We have created three units to effectively reach out to the remotest areas in this wholly inaccessible landscape,” Sodja adds. However, GIC CODENZOP faces several challenges including communicating with the different units for prompt action. “Transport difficulties is one of our biggest challenges. Sometimes the roads are wholly impassable, we need bikes to move to the different units and telephones to promptly contact members in the field,” members of GIC CODENZOP chorused during a meeting with the WWF team in Ngoyla.

They all agreed that the challenges are many, but their will to stay the cause is even stronger, especially as key stakeholders like the judiciary and administrative authorities and the conservators of Nki National Park and Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve have expressed support for the initiative. “The administration of Ngoyla supports the fight against poaching and wildlife crime,” declares Mpouom Blaise, Divisional Officer for Ngoyla. “I recommend more awareness raising so the communities can better understand this project. And, whenever there is compensation, let it be shared equitably,” he adds.

The project aims to increase the involvement and commitment of local communities living in the Cameroon segment of the Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) trans-border conservation landscape in the fight against wildlife crime. This will be done through legal support to enable the communities appear as civil claimant in wildlife cases before competent courts and seek damages for prejudice suffered from poaching.

Stephane Rinquet, Head of Wildlife Trade Program at WWF France, thinks local communities are gradually getting at it. “Despite the enormous challenges they face, I see a people determined to take on poachers. They are now organised, and well structured, they have sensitised increasing number of people and have received the buy in of stakeholders,” states Stephane. “This was the case six months ago,” he says.

By Humphrey Ekane & Nancy Amabo



WILDLIFE CRIME: BLEEDING ELEPHANTS, FEISTY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ivory trafficking continued unabated in 2019 as 169 elephant tusks were seized by law enforcement agents, up from 153 seized in 2018, according to WWF records. These figures show the persistent increase in the number of elephants killed by poachers for ivory in Cameroon.

However, 2019 marked a decline in the number of traffickers arrested as only 12 were arrested compared to 24 in 2018, 144 in 2017 and 44 in 2016. Out of the 12 traffickers prosecuted, five were sentenced before competent courts to imprisonment terms ranging between six months to one year. The courts awarded some FCFA 15.000.000 (circa US\$ 24.442.632) as civil damages to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) and FCFA 945.000 (US\$ 1.603) as fines.

In a bid to combat wildlife crime, WWF worked with MINFOF to train 63 eco-guards (rangers) of Nki, Boumba Bek, Campo-Ma'an National Parks, Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and the Ngoyla-Mintom technical operation unit on wildlife laws, criminal procedures, and respect for human rights and indigenous people's rights during anti-poaching activities.

This resurgence in wildlife crime and its negative social and environmental impact, have jolted local communities to take up the mantle against poaching. WWF supported GIC CODENZOP, one of four community based groups within the Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) transboundary landscape, by training them on information gathering and denunciation of illegal wildlife activities as well as strengthening collaboration with local and administrative authorities and the judiciary. "The support of administrative and judicial authorities buttressed our efforts in fighting wildlife crime. We look forward to collaborating with these authorities in the areas where we work," says Sodja Denis Achille, Coordinator of GIC CODENZOP.

"More communities are becoming aware of the ills caused by poaching in their zones. Local communities in both the Sangha Tri-national (TNS) and the Tri national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) landscapes are taking judicial action against poaching," says Alain Ononino, WWF Central Africa Head of Policy for Wildlife Crime.

However, corruption, weak collaboration, poor mastery of wildlife laws and procedures, non-enforcement of court decisions, bedevilled efforts against wildlife crime in 2019.



TRENDS SHOW WILDLIFE STABILISING IN LOBEKE

Contrary to a bleak picture of a drastic decline in elephant population in Lobeke National Park in 2015, a wildlife inventory carried out in the park and its peripheral areas in 2018 shows a slowdown in the decline rate of elephants. Findings of the wildlife survey show a general stability in the wildlife population in the park and its peripheries.

The result of the study conducted by the Lobeke Conservation Service with the support of the Trinational de la Sangha (TNS) Foundation and WWF was validated during a workshop organised in Bertoua on June 7, 2019 involving representatives of the central and decentralised services of the Ministry of forestry and wildlife (MINFOF), government technical and financial partners (WWF, ZSL, TNS Foundation and WCS), and logging companies (SEFAC and CTSC).

The inventory, conducted every four years, sought to update data on the dynamics of wildlife populations and human pressures in the TNS-Cameroon landscape. The wildlife survey was conducted from August to November 2018 using the distance sampling method, with a sampling effort of 744 km of transects systematically distributed throughout the park and its periphery, covering 934 884 ha.

Data analysis showed an estimated elephant population of 3,518, witnessing approximately a 17% decrease between 2015 and 2018, which biomonitoring scientists consider insignificant. This decrease is attributed to poaching for ivory and degradation of wildlife habitats that pushed elephant to migrate to more secure areas. However, the elephant population remained relatively stable in Lobéké between these two periods.

By contrast, great apes population is estimated at 14,992 individuals representing an 83.51% gorilla, witnessing a slight increase between 2015 and 2018. This stability is due to the fact that they are not among the main poaching targets in the Lobéké area, according to scientists.

A large population of duikers and other ungulates of 188,190 individuals were estimated in the study area with 79,229 individuals in Lobeke.

The presence of eight species of small primates was confirmed during the inventory; putty-nosed monkey, grey-cheeked mangabey and the colobus guereza being the most abundant species. Three species of pangolins were also detected during the survey, with the giant pangolin being the most abundant species.

“It is comforting to know that the decline rate of species like the elephant has slowed down. However, poaching pressure is still very high and as such we need to urgently improve our anti-poaching strategy in the park and its periphery if we hope to stop the haemorrhage,” states Dr Zacharie Nzoo, WWF Cameroon Biomonitoring Coordinator.



Gorillas in forest clearing in Lobeke National Park



Curious and tolerant: Gorilla looks down at visitors from a tree inside Campo Ma'an National Park, South Region of Cameroon



TOLERANT GORILLAS RAISE HOPE FOR HABITUATION IN CAMEROON

Standing seven meters away from them, the gorillas in Campo Ma'an National Park in the East Region of Cameroon seemed even more tolerant, oblivious of the very close human presence. As Michael Kuwong, WWF veterinarian for Campo Ma'an and his team of trackers stooped to catch a glimpse of the gorillas numbering about 18, the dominant male peeped through the thickets and their eyes met.

"I winked but he did not wink back. Instead, a female gorilla waddled from behind and stood near the male's left shoulder steering at us," Kuwong says. After five minutes of steering and winking, the gorillas decided to ignore Kuwong and started foraging for food, pulling off herbs and guiding leaves with their thumbs and index fingers into their mouths. They ate and frolic, then waddled away 20 minutes later, time enough for Kuwong to take some videos and photo shots.

As the team hiked back to their base camp, they encountered several other groups of gorillas in the thickets and in the trees. "We marveled at the acrobatic display of a couple of gorillas on the tree branches," says Kuwong. One of them howled and let loose a "shower of blessing" (I mean fecal drops) that spilled down from about 11-meter-tall treetop. "We scampered away to avoid the drops but it was too late.

According to the gorilla habituation team, this behavior betokens outstanding progress in the habituation process. "After 7 years of data collection, analysis shows that the target gorilla group under habituation known as "Akiba" is closed to the stage of tolerance to human presence," says Eno-Nku Manasseh, WWF Kudu-Zombo project executive. "We recorded a 60% curiosity and ignorance and field teams were able to take video footages and still pictures as long as 8 minutes at a distance less than 10 meters," Eno-Nku says. He adds that a combined curiosity and ignorance recording a percentage of 60 and above sustained over a period of six to twelve months implies the gorilla group is ready for observation tourism.

In 2011, WWF started the process for gorilla habituation in Campo Ma'an National Park. Going by a 2014 wildlife survey result, Campo Ma'an has a relatively stable gorilla population numbering over 2000 with a large group concentrated in Dipikar Island, which is the focused site for the habituation process.

The Campo habituation team has been tracking a group of 32 gorillas since 2011. WWF launched the tolerance phase of the habituation process in July 2015. The remarkable progress registered so far in 2018, has enhanced hope for gorilla observation tourism, first of its kind in Cameroon. It is hoped the habituation project, upon completion will boost ecotourism thereby generating sorely needed income for the communities and the state. It will also contribute to the protection of wildlife in and around the park.

However, for the project to succeed more effort is needed to protect the home range of the gorilla, functional gorilla-human health component, sustainable funding and an appropriate government policy framework (private-public partnership) for the management of gorilla observation ecotourism program.

Michael Kuwong & France Anougue

ENGAGING GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Cameroon Minister of Forest and Wildlife Jules Doret Ndongo (L) and Ernest Adjina, Representative of Baka exchange files after signing

Two milestone events occurred in 2019 that contributed to reinforcing effort for the protection of the rights of indigenous and local communities to access and participate in decision making regarding natural resources management.

On February 26 Cameroon's Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) and Baka communities under the banner of their association ASBABUK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the city of Bertoua in the east of the country. The government committed in the MoU to facilitate Baka access to resources use zones within Lobeke, Boumba-Bek and Nki national parks. The government will also tap into Baka traditional knowledge in the management of the parks.

Baka committed to ensuring sustainable use of natural resources in the parks, denounce perpetrators of illegal activities and participate in planning meetings and communication activities linked to the management of the parks.



WWF Cameroon Country Director (L) and Cameroon's Minister of Social Affairs shake hands after signing partnership agreement

Meanwhile on April 10, 2019, WWF-Cameroon signed a partnership agreement with Cameroon's Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) to jointly promote and protect the individual and collective rights of indigenous and other vulnerable people in the framework of biodiversity conservation.

The partnership agreement defines strategic areas of collaboration between WWF and Cameroon's Social Affairs Ministry. The ceremony took place in the presence of Cameroon's Minister of Forestry and Wildlife and representative of indigenous Baka people.

According to the agreement, MINAS commits to increase advocacy with public and private actors in a bid to ensure the integration of the interests and preoccupations of indigenous and vulnerable groups in development of policies, programs and projects. The convention, which will last for five years renewable, is the outcome of fruitful collaboration between WWF and MINAS that started in 2016

Social Affairs Minister, Pauline Irene Nguene, said, the partnership agreement is an effective response and proof that in Cameroon the exigencies of biodiversity conservation are not incompatible with the protection of rights of local communities, especially indigenous people. "The protection of indigenous people's rights is a priority for the government of Cameroon," she added.

WWF Cameroon Country Director, Clotilde Ngomba, said WWF is committed to making special efforts to ensure respect and protection of the rights of indigenous people, especially their customary rights to natural resources within the context of biodiversity conservation.

ERNEST ADJINA: THIS IS MY STORY

Baka patriarch, Ernest Adjina, remains a hero among the indigenous community of Southeast Cameroon. Adjina led the Baka to sign a historic memorandum of understanding with the country's Minister of Forestry and Wildlife in February 2019. The convention grants Baka access right to three national parks; Lobeke, Boumba-Bek and Nki.

Born in the forest of Lobeke, Adjina, 63, was among few Baka who welcomed and worked for the creation of Lobeke National Park at a time their forest faced threat from timber exploitation and poaching. In collaboration with WWF and other conservation NGOs, Adjina sensitised Baka on the importance of protecting the forest. Having received primary and secondary school education, Adjina knew that the forest is sacred and central to Baka's survival and must be protected.

"I grew up with my parents in Lobeke forest, feeding on wild yams and honey. My parents carried out fishing and hunting. They showed me the way of the forest by initiating me into the Jengi (a Baka traditional ritual that is performed to fortify and protect young Baka men).

Adjina says the forest is more than just home for the Baka. "That is where we get food, medicine and train our children in the ways of our ancestors. Today, I am the one who initiates young Baka men into the Jengi. I take my children to the forest and train them. Other Baka parents do the same," he says.

Evolution of the forest

With the passage of time, Adjina would witness the brutal disruption of the once quiet and intact forest due to timber exploitation. "This was around 1978 when a road was carved out through the forest. A logging company was installed in the area, attracting many people. They began to destroy the forest and kill animals indiscriminately," he says.

The unfolding transformation was a source of worry for Adjina. "I was worried about what was going on. There was a lot of de-

struction and poaching was intense. People came from everywhere to kill elephants for their tusks," he recalls.

Creation of park

If NGOs like the WCS, WWF and the then German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) installed in the Lobeke area in the early 1990's and succeeded in conservation and community work, Adjina played a vital role. "When these NGOs settled here for research and wildlife inventories, I helped show them the forest and different animal and plant species. I attended many meetings and workshops organized by GTZ and WWF. We learnt many things from them and also shared with them things we knew about the forest," Adjina explains.

The Baka leader was equally instrumental in the success of most sensitization meetings organized within communities before the creation of Lobeke National National. In many cases he served as interpreter and facilitator. "I went everywhere in Baka villages (Yokadouma, Mambele, Malea-Ancien, Ngatto-Ancien, Moloundou, Libongo, Salapoumbe, Kika) sensitizing my brothers, telling them why it was important that our forest be protected," he says.

Birth of ASBABUK

With the creation of Lobeke National Park, "there were restrictions as to where we could go. Nonetheless, we still had some access into the park to collect non-timber forest products. I was bothered by the way things were going. I began thinking of how Baka could make their voices heard and to present their worries," says Adjina.

In 2007, while working with local NGO CEFAID, Adjina suggested the idea of creating an association of Baka that could articulate their worries. "We created ASBABUK (Association of Baka of Boumba and Ngoko Division). With the support of WWF and local NGO CEFAID, we began working to secure access right into the forest for Baka.



Adjina secures access right for Baka
After more than a decade of lobbying, an unrelenting Adjina would finally meet Cameroon's Minister of Forests and Wildlife and present their request to him. On February 26, 2019, Adjina signed a historic MoU with the Minister, granting Baka free access right into Lobeke, Boumba Bek and Nki national parks.

With the support of WWF, Adjina and ASBABUK have been raising awareness in Baka villages on the content of the MoU. "Since the signing of the MoU, things are changing. Baka are now carrying out their activities freely," he states.

Challenges

Adjina's advocacy for the protection of the forest exposed him to criticism and endless questions. "There were moments I thought of giving up. Some people thought I had something to gain from the creation of the park. Trekking long distances to the villages to carry out sensitization was tough and negatively impacted my health. Besides, we were usually welcomed by a barrage of questions. It was a difficult moment," he says.

"Even the process to gain the access right for Baka into the forest took a very long time. Each time we knew we were close to obtain something, some objections came up and the process was jeopardized.

Today, Adjina appears satisfied in his native Mbateka Village near the park. Here he carries out subsistence farming to feed his family and coordinates the activities of ASBABUK as President. The group comprising leaders of Baka villages around Lobeke and Boumba Bek national parks, oversees problems relating to Baka rights and education.

The future with education

Adjina looks into the future with optimism. Not only do Baka have access to the forest and natural resources, their children are also embracing education. "Over the years, WWF has supported the education of our children. Our children are now going to school like those of the Bantu. I know that one day my child will become an important person like others," Adjina says.

By Ernest Sumelong



CLIMATE AND ENERGY

MOST PROTECTED AREAS IN TRIDOM VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The rich biodiversity of one of the world's most intact tropical rainforests is vulnerable to climate change risks, a study has revealed. Conducted by Anchor Environmental Consultants, the study forms part of the WWF Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI), which encourages mainstreaming of climate change adaptation within WWF offices across Africa.

The study assessed vulnerability in terms of potential climate change impacts on biodiversity within the 11 protected areas in Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) landscape. Habitat change, species loss and resource pressure from neighbouring communities is likely to increase as climate change impacts livelihoods. It finds that deforestation leading to habitat loss, loss of resources and loss of carbon are exposing the landscape to climate change risks. The study, which ranks the protected areas from resilient, vulnerable to highly vulnerable, shows that most of them are vulnerable. Of the 11 protected areas surveyed, two are ranked resilient, two highly vulnerable and the rest vulnerable.

With a surface area spanning over 15 million hectares and harbouring 11 protected areas across three countries (Cameroon, Gabon and the Republic of Congo), TRIDOM makes up nearly 10% of the Congo Basin Rainforest. It is one of the priority conservation sites in Africa and one of 12 Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) transboundary conservation programs in the Congo Basin.

According to the study, potential habitat changes within TRIDOM protected areas is relatively low but for two: Boumba Bek in Cameroon and Ivindo in the Republic of Congo. Predicted species loss is high for all protected areas. Poaching for ivory and bush meat, deforestation and forest degradation

constitute the main threats to wildlife and forest, thereby jeopardizing conservation efforts in the area.

The TRIDOM landscape has witnessed over 60% decline in forest elephant population during the last decade due to poaching. These factors, coupled with the fact that most protected areas are underfunded, leave the landscape vulnerable.

Small scale agriculture and timber harvesting account for 95 % of forest clearing. With over two thirds of TRIDOM landscape under logging concessions, there has been an increasing movement of people in search of jobs. Deforestation reduces the forest's resilience to climate change.

The study states that, "in the TRIDOM landscape, climate change will exacerbate and extend the already-severe threats to biodiversity and the protected area system which forms the core of conservation efforts." It proposes the strengthening of conservation measures to secure biodiversity and natural capital, including strengthening biodiversity protection, holding logging companies accountable, strengthening indigenous peoples' rights over land and resources and develop and implement a strategy to influence urban household choices and reduce unsustainable demands for bush meat.

This, according to the study, should form the basis of a holistic strategy to increase the resilience and effectiveness of TRIDOM's protected areas in the light of all existing and future impacts."

By Fidelis Pegue Manga & Ernest Sumelong



WWF INITIATES PROJECT TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY IN CAMEROON

Within the context of the Sida and WWF Sweden-funded Leading the Change: Civil Society, Environment and Rights project, WWF Cameroon and its partner – Environmental Governance Institute (EGI), have initiated a project with the goal of supporting the expansion of energy access and productive use of renewable energy in Cameroon.

The project is built within the backdrop of energy challenges in most of rural Cameroon. Only about 14% of the population of most of rural Cameroon has access to electricity. This represents a fundamental barrier to progress in human well-being and nature conservation. Without access to energy, women and children spend hours away from home in search of firewood. This is not only risking their personal

safety but also saps their energy and takes away time from educational and livelihood activities. Delivering energy services to rural Cameroon faces many challenges. Firstly, the rural populations are either remote, or poor, or both. Secondly, lack of sufficient power generation capacity, poor transmission and distribution infrastructure, high costs of supply to remote areas, or simply a lack of affordability for electricity, are among the biggest hurdles for extending grid-based electricity. Even using off-grid systems to serve the dispersed populations can be financially challenging, compounded by poor policies, inadequate regulations, lack of planning and institutional support, lack of financing for off-grid entrepreneurs, and affordability for poorer households.



Cameroon is determined to become an upper-middle income economy by 2035. The medium term strategy to attain this status emphasizes growth and employment. Developing the energy sector is seen as key to attracting investment and strengthening growth. Through her Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Cameroon has indicated the mitigation and adaptation contributions of ecosystem-based sectors towards global efforts to fight climate change, reduce poverty and promote low carbon and climate-resilient development and priorities.

The NDC carries an emission reduction target of 32% (11% unconditionally and 21% conditional on international support) by 2035 relative to potential business-as-usual emissions. Through it, the country is committed to generate 25% of energy from renewable sources other than large-scale hydro-power by 2035 and has also prioritized the supply of electricity to remote rural areas, especially those around protected areas. Through her Cameroon country strategy, WWF has committed to supporting government deliver the NDC commitments.

So far, WWF and EGI have completed a renewable energy and energy access stakeholder and institutional analysis. Policy barriers and opportunities, including opportunities for mainstreaming renewable energy and energy access across sectorial policies and programs to facilitate end-user uptake of productive uses of energy, gaps and linkages have been identified. Furthermore, the partners have assessed the capacity of the institutions and stakeholders to determine entry points for strengthening their capacity to work together to influence the renewable energy and energy access policy and have also proposed potential mechanisms to promote coordination and cooperation among them. WWF Cameroon is determined to complete two other phases that include, assessing Energy resource availability and forecasting demand near protected areas and High Conservation Value (HCV) areas in selected regions of the country and promotion of energy service delivery and access to finance and markets.

By Theophilus Ngwene & Janet Mukoko



LIVING ON THE COAST OF STORMS

That fateful Friday night, Jarvis Esombi Lingate and his family of six spent part of their night picking up whatever they could find left of their property.

They had always grappled with storms but this one was too powerful blowing off the roof of their modest home, constructed with woods that had known better days on the coastline overlooking the Atlantic Ocean in the Southwest Region of Cameroon.

“We lost everything, including the over 30 kilogram of smoked fish we were hoping to sell to customers that come to buy every Saturday,” he says, looking pathetically at his roofless house.

“I have lived here for over 25 years. My wife and I moved to this coastal area in 1994 and built this house. We have seen several storms but not as strong as this,” he says.

As his wife and two children mopped the floor of their home covered with mud and debris from the sea, Lingate reflects on his next step. “I begin to fear for the safety of my family. May be I should move to a safer place,” he wonders aloud.

Lingate’s story is one of many others told by hundreds of fishermen living on the coastline. Their houses are continually battered by the ranging storms and strong winds. During the day, the heat is scourging. Worse still they have progressively witnessed decline in the amount of fish caught.

Blame changes in climate

A study that assessed the vulnerability of the Tiko-Douala-Muanko and the Ntem segments of mangroves in Cameroon to climate change, revealed changes in weather and climate are negatively affecting livelihood activities of people in coastal areas.

According to the study conducted by WWF in 2017, changes in weather and climate have led to infrastructure destruction, especially homes, hospitals, schools, bridges and fences.

“This has resulted in financial losses, decreased water, sanitation and hygiene, decreased in fish productivity as well as aquaculture products, food insecurity, loss in lives and diseases,” the study found.

A number of changes were observed in the communities linked to socioeconomic development in terms of schools, hospitals, pipe borne water supply and electricity. This was closely followed by environmental changes and pollution and population changes. Most of the people interviewed in the study said four the past five years (2013 to 2017) they have observed sea level rise, flooding, changes in winds and increase rainfalls.

Not giving up yet

“We are not moving out of here anytime soon,” Silo, Lingate’s wife declares. “Where do we go to. We have come a long way,” she says. In 2018, WWF carried out a number of activities in Cameroon aimed at building the capacity of civil society organization, government and other related institutions on climate change adaptation and vulnerability assessment in the coastal zone of Cameroon. The aim is to support local communities grapple with the possible impact of climate change.

By Fidelis Pegue Manga

A YOUTH DEFINES HIS DESTINY



Signe Gerry Williams, aged 34, is the sole proprietor of Ferme Gerry Williams, a chain of poultry farms located in Manjo, Moun-go Division of the Littoral Region, within the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape of Cameroon.

His quest for financial empowerment started at age 10. As a child, all he was interested in was making money of his own. He hawked along the highway, he sold anything he had the opportunity to, and also sold for traders on small commissions. Going to school did not interest him much, which is the reason why he dropped out of school so young and started seeking for financial freedom.

At age 14, he took keen interest in poultry farming and with some money he had saved from petty businesses, he was able to purchase 150 one day old chicks. Without any formal training on how to rear and manage a poultry farm, he used his indig-

enous knowledge to get it through. As the years passed by, he learned directly from his farm, and followed up closely with the behaviour of the birds.

21 years on, young Gerry is now a self-made expert in poultry farming, an occupation which he does with so much passion and dedication. It is worth noting that Gerry now has 6 poultry farms located in different parts of Manjo town, and each farm has a surface area of about 200 metres square, with each harboring over 2000 chicken. At the time of this visit, Gerry presented an active record and physical farms with 6476 fowls spread across 4 poultry farms as most of them had been sold out. A well organised Manager, he has 7 employees under his supervision who are already seeing him as a role model and who have decided to join him, so as to learn and subsequently be inspired to set up their own poultry business. Aside from the poultry farm, he owns sever-

al hectares of maize farm which he uses primarily for composition of feed for his poultry. Some staff work in the maize farms, others work at the grinding mill, while others work closely with him at the poultry farms.

What makes his farm Unique

Unlike other poultry farms within and out of his community, Gerry says his poultry farm is unique. “I do not fatten the fowls. I allow them grow naturally within 50 to 60 days. That means I do not hurry to sell. I do not inject them with overdose chemical products which makes the fowls appear big and healthy.” These are some of the reasons why he has an influx of clients from far and near who prefer his products to those of other farmers.

The quality of fowls produced by Gerry has attracted buyers of renowned hotels, supermarkets, and fish shops across the big cities in Cameroon.

“There are times when I cannot meet the huge demands, especially during festive seasons and special events. But whatever the situation, I give preference to people in my community.”

Partnership & capacity building

Gerry is proud to have his success with over 80% of personal and traditional knowledge. However, he does not ignore the local veterinary officers’ visit. But there are things he will accept they do and others that he will not. He does a lot of self-capacity building and research. In his office, well arranged and clean, Gerry has a giant chart which serves as a reference and diagnostic chart to detect chicken ailments. When detected, he goes online and googles for possible causes and chemical-free treatment. To avoid administrative bottle-necks and hassles usually experienced with the few veterinary officers in the area, he owns a mini-pharmaceutical section at his office that takes urgent care of his fowls when the need arises. “Because of my many years of experience and proven success in my activity, my farm is used as an internship centre for students from the National veterinary training centres within the Moun-go Division and Littoral Region.”

Gerry owns a grinding mill where the maize and soya beans are milled to compound feed for his poultry. He is also very open and ready to build the capacity of anyone, particularly the youth who wants to learn about his activity. The youth in Manjo are engaged mostly in agricultural activities, such as cultivation of coffee, pineapple, banana



and plantain. But, gradually, some are developing interest in livestock farming, particularly poultry.

In order to help his community desist from using chemical fertilizers that will eventually affect soil fertility, the wastes from his poultry are given out for free to community members. He encourages them to use as manure to grow healthy crops. He also uses that on his cassava, soya bean and maize farms.

“Meeting with WWF 20 years after establishing my poultry farm is an added value to me. I am always ready to learn about new things, especially about conservation, nature and the environment. I appreciate the financial and capacity building support received from them so far. I was part of a training organised by WWF on youth and green entrepreneurship, business planning, and transformational leadership. It has broadened my knowledge on many aspects.

By Janet Mukoko

AVANT PROJET DE LOI FORESTIÈRE: LES INTÉRÊTS DES POPULATIONS LOCALES PRIS EN COMPTE

La question des droits des populations locales et autochtones pourra bénéficier d'une attention particulière dans l'avant-projet de loi portant régime des forêts et de la faune au Cameroun. Les pouvoirs publics y travaillent depuis plus d'une dizaine d'années, afin d'être en conformité avec les engagements internationaux souscrits par le pays. Au cours d'un atelier de restitution des résultats de l'avant-projet de loi tenu le 9 juillet à Mbankomo au sud de Yaoundé, il a été constaté que des innovations étaient déjà intégrées dans le document en étude.

Il s'agit notamment de la gestion participative des ressources forestières et fauniques, du droit à la consultation, du droit d'acquisition de gestion des espaces forestiers à vocation communautaire, du droit à la chasse de subsistance et à la chasse rituelle, de l'accès aux bénéfices de la gestion des forêts et de la conservation de la biodiversité et aux produits des amendes, transactions et ventes aux enchères ou de gré à gré des produits et objets saisis et de la gestion des forêts communautaires, etc.

Selon le Fonds mondial pour la nature (WWF), les forêts communautaires génèrent autour de 350 à 400 millions de F par an. Les chiffres officiels du ministère des Forêts et de la Faune (MINFOF) indiquent en outre qu'en moyenne 300 forêts communautaires sont attribuées chaque année.

Toutefois, le consultant recruté par le WWF bureau national du Cameroun estime que certains droits des populations locales autochtones n'ont pas été pris en considération. Patrice Bigombe Logo a évoqué entre autres la reconnaissance des communautés locales autochtones comme propriétaires et gardiennes des forêts, l'accès aux ressources génétiques et au partage juste et équitable des avantages découlant de leur utilisation, le droit à la réparation et à la compensation des restrictions aux usages coutumiers des forêts et à l'utilisation des connaissances traditionnelles et locales, le droit d'accès et la valorisation des produits forestiers non ligneux. Les amendements apportés à la version post-Ebolowa d'avril dernier seront soumis à l'appréciation du groupe de travail mis en place par l'Etat en janvier dernier à travers le MINFOF. Ce groupe de travail se penche actuellement sur le décret d'application de la loi. C'est en l'occurrence la loi forestière du 20 janvier 1994 qui est encore en vigueur.

Par Ernest Sumelong







SURFACE AREA OF FOREST CONTROLLED BY CHINESE DOUBLES IN FIVE YEARS

A study commissioned by WWF-Cameroon in 2019 shows that the surface area of forest under the control of Chinese and Asian companies has doubled between 2015 to 2019.

The study mapped Sino-Asian investments in the forestry sector in Cameroon with the aim of establishing a better understanding of the influence of Chinese actors in the sector.

The source of wood supply estimated at 562 256 ha in 2014, jumped to 1 046 594 ha in 2019, representing 15% of the total area under logging concessions in Cameroon. In 2019, 17 Sino-Asian companies had logging concessions and sale by standing volume licences, while 14 out of the 36 communal forests were in partnership with Sino-Asian companies, with the approval of Cameroon's Ministry of Forest and Wildlife.

Meanwhile, more than 40 wood transformation factories have been established the Littoral, Centre, South and East regions of Cameroon resulting in remarkable improvement of the transformation capacity.

Between 2015 and 2019 increase in Sino-Asian investments has had positive impact in the wood sector in Cameroon, according to the findings of the study. "There is a diversification of the wood market and wood species and products exported and many opportunities for partnership between small Sino-Asian economic operators and Cameroonian economic operators," stated the study.

Consequently, massive Sino-Asian investments have engendered several problems besetting the wood sector in Cameroon. For example, the growing demand for wood is far higher than the forest can provide in the long term, especially in the non-permanent forest estate.

This problem and others must be keenly examined by the Cameroonian authorities, in order to find appropriate solutions within the framework of international commitments taken by the country," the study recommended.

By Alphonse Ngniado



PRES DE 5294 HA D'ARBRES PLANTES DANS LE SUD EST CAMEROUN

Conformément aux obligations légales de l'aménagement des forêts, les exploitants forestiers ont l'obligation de restaurer les zones dégradées. Dans le Sud Est Cameroun, les efforts se mettent progressivement en place en matière de reforestation. En effet, l'exploitation forestière en générale contribue à la déforestation et la dégradation de la forêt à travers l'ouverture des routes d'évacuation du bois, des parcs de stockage des billes de bois, des carrières de prélèvement latéritique et des troués suite à l'abattage des arbres.

Le Ministère de l'Environnement de la Protection de la Nature et du Développement Durable MINEPDED avec l'appui du WWF accompagne les exploitants forestiers dans le suivi de mise en œuvre des plans de gestion environnemental et social, la sensibilisation sur le changement climatique et la formation sur les techniques de reboisement. A ce jour, la reforestation proprement dite dans les concessions forestières est une réalité.

Toutes les entreprises disposent au moins d'une pépinière où on retrouve majoritairement des jeunes plants à haute valeur économique. Par exemple « Pour le compte de l'année 2019, le nombre des jeunes plants d'arbres dans quatre pépinières était de l'ordre de 32 030 couvrant 18 espèces d'arbres forestiers. En 2018, la reforestation a été effective dans 7 blocs annuels de coupe. Elle a ciblé les parcs à bois situés le long des routes principales. La superficie des parcs reboisés a été de l'ordre de 9,85 ha où environ 5294 plants d'arbres appartenant à 11 espèces d'arbres ont été mis en terre sur près de 17 espèces d'arbres abattus pour les besoins économiques des entreprises ».

Malgré les progrès remarquables enregistrés, plusieurs défis restent à relever à savoir :

La faible capacité des pépinières a fourni des jeunes plants d'arbres pour remplacer les arbres abattus en nombre et en espèces dans toutes les assiettes annuelles de coupe. En effet le rapport jeunes arbres plantés et arbres abattus est encore faible de l'ordre de 33% ; des nombreux parcs à bois situés le long des pistes secondaires, ainsi que tous les troués d'abattage et les carrières de prélèvement de la latérite ne sont pas reboisés. Leur reforestation contribuerait à augmenter les superficies reboisées ; la non maîtrise des périodes de fructification des espèces exploités par les responsables des pépinières couplé à la consommation des graines par la faune et immaturité des graines obligent les exploitants à s'orienter vers les techniques de bouturage qui coutent plus chers ; la faible capacité technique des membres des équipes chargés de la reforestation (recherche des graines, trouaison et mise en terre.) et enfin les faibles moyens (humains, financiers et matériels) affectés à la reforestation dans les entreprises.

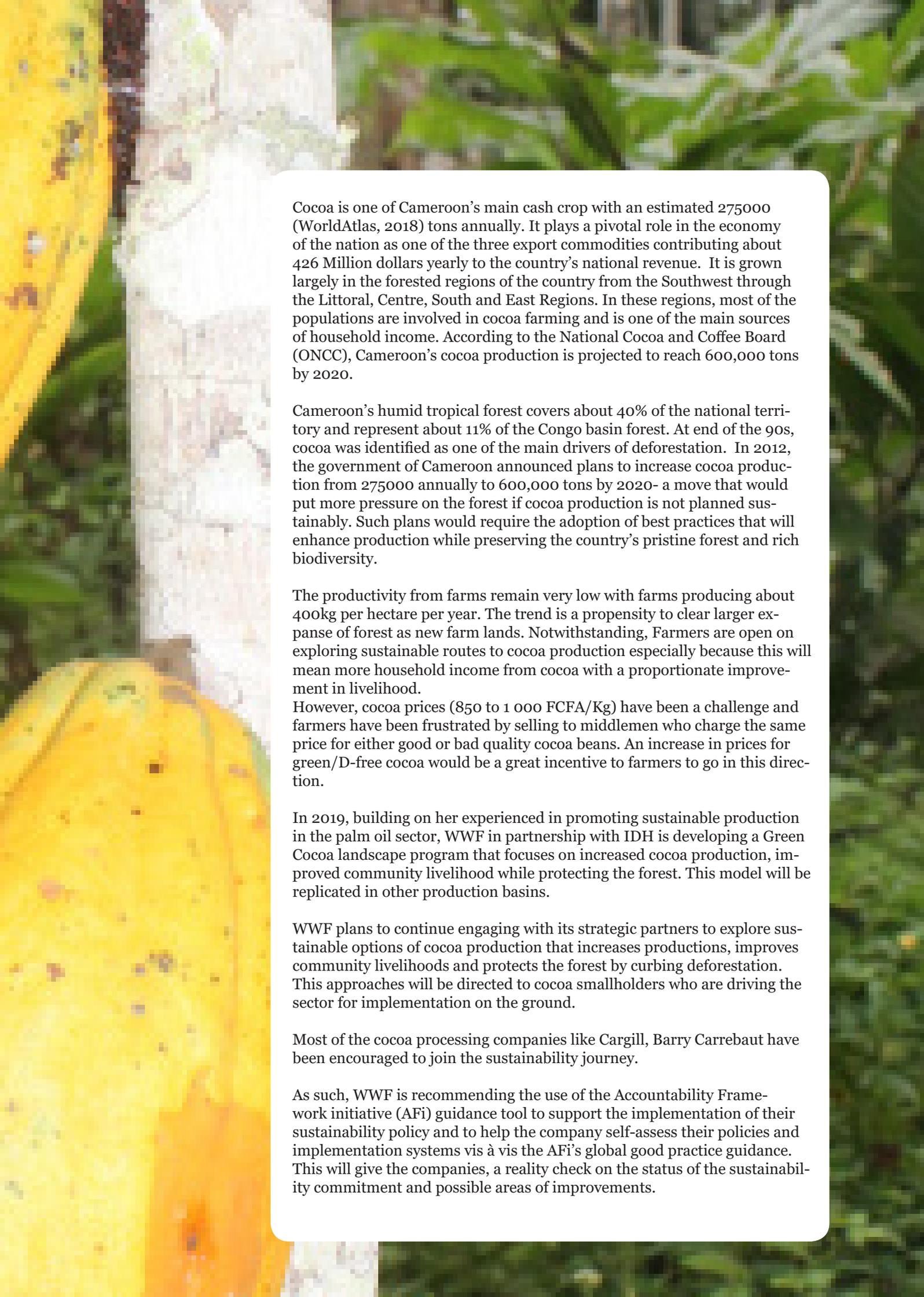
En perspective le WWF avec MINEPDED vont continuer l'accompagnement des exploitants forestiers en matière de recherche des graines de qualité, d'extension progressive du reboisement dans toutes les zones déforestées ou dégradées et de renforcement des capacités techniques des membres d'équipe impliqués dans les activités de reforestation.

Par Alphonse Ngniado





**PROMOTING DEFORESTATION
FREE COCOA CULTIVATION**



Cocoa is one of Cameroon's main cash crop with an estimated 275000 (WorldAtlas, 2018) tons annually. It plays a pivotal role in the economy of the nation as one of the three export commodities contributing about 426 Million dollars yearly to the country's national revenue. It is grown largely in the forested regions of the country from the Southwest through the Littoral, Centre, South and East Regions. In these regions, most of the populations are involved in cocoa farming and is one of the main sources of household income. According to the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (ONCC), Cameroon's cocoa production is projected to reach 600,000 tons by 2020.

Cameroon's humid tropical forest covers about 40% of the national territory and represent about 11% of the Congo basin forest. At end of the 90s, cocoa was identified as one of the main drivers of deforestation. In 2012, the government of Cameroon announced plans to increase cocoa production from 275000 annually to 600,000 tons by 2020- a move that would put more pressure on the forest if cocoa production is not planned sustainably. Such plans would require the adoption of best practices that will enhance production while preserving the country's pristine forest and rich biodiversity.

The productivity from farms remain very low with farms producing about 400kg per hectare per year. The trend is a propensity to clear larger expanse of forest as new farm lands. Notwithstanding, Farmers are open on exploring sustainable routes to cocoa production especially because this will mean more household income from cocoa with a proportionate improvement in livelihood.

However, cocoa prices (850 to 1 000 FCFA/Kg) have been a challenge and farmers have been frustrated by selling to middlemen who charge the same price for either good or bad quality cocoa beans. An increase in prices for green/D-free cocoa would be a great incentive to farmers to go in this direction.

In 2019, building on her experienced in promoting sustainable production in the palm oil sector, WWF in partnership with IDH is developing a Green Cocoa landscape program that focuses on increased cocoa production, improved community livelihood while protecting the forest. This model will be replicated in other production basins.

WWF plans to continue engaging with its strategic partners to explore sustainable options of cocoa production that increases productions, improves community livelihoods and protects the forest by curbing deforestation. This approaches will be directed to cocoa smallholders who are driving the sector for implementation on the ground.

Most of the cocoa processing companies like Cargill, Barry Carrebat have been encouraged to join the sustainability journey.

As such, WWF is recommending the use of the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi) guidance tool to support the implementation of their sustainability policy and to help the company self-assess their policies and implementation systems vis à vis the AFi's global good practice guidance. This will give the companies, a reality check on the status of the sustainability commitment and possible areas of improvements.



GILLES ETOGA: MY LIFE WITH WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

Gilles Etoga, a senior forest and wildlife engineer, started his career in conservation in 1996 at the then Ministry of Environment and Forestry as a Protected Area Advisor for Boumba Bek and Nki forests in Southeast Cameroon. He later joined WWF as a full time employee in 2005. After working in several landscapes, today Gilles is Senior Policy and Conservation Coordinator for WWF Cameroon. He shares his rich experience with us in this interview. Excerpts:

J.M.M.: How did you get into WWF?

Gilles: I started working in partnership with WWF in 1996 when I was the Boumba Bek and Nki Protected Areas advisor at the then Ministry of Environment and Forestry. I finally joined WWF as a full time employee in 2005.

Tell us about your work journey with WWF?

It has been huge learning experience. First I joined WWF as project executant in the Northern Soudannian Savannah project in Garoua. I later moved to Yaounde as a technical advisor for WWF Cameroon country Program Office (CCPO). A few months later, I went to Campo as Protected Area Advisor and acting Kudu Zombo Programme Manager between 2007 and 2013. I finally joined the Jengi TRIDOM landscape as Programme Manager in 2013 and in 2019 I came back to Yaoundé as Senior Policy and Conservation Coordinator.

What do you find most challenging working to protect wildlife?

It's a whole complex career path, but also interesting. It requires a high level of passion, focus and determination. However, its challenges are enormous. When you are faced with wildlife in the forest, anything can happen. These animals do not talk and so you will never know their reaction at any given time. Working with wildlife requires a lot of tact and experience. One could be attacked or get injured trying to defend yourself from an attack. Meeting with poachers in the forest is another big challenge. Though they are aware that they are committing an offence, they could harm you in self-defense.

Your certainly spend more time in the forest than at home. How do you reconcile work and family?

It is a big challenge, especially with the kids who rarely have the opportunity to spend quality time with their dad. And my wife of course, you know how these things are. But they all have been so supportive to me and they understand that is what my job entails. To make up for the days out of home, I spend quality time with my family during holidays and when I am not working in the forest. I make my presence felt so that I compensate for the long period away from home.

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What's the best or worst thing that has happened to you since you started working for WWF?

I think the best things outweigh the worst (laughs). Firstly, WWF is a learning ground. I have been able to learn about things far beyond my profession. Cross cutting issues that will help me in my later life. I have also met amazing people. Thanks to WWF, I have had the opportunity to travel to so many countries across the world, learnt a lot from diverse cultures, traditions, and policies. This has boosted my team spirit and leadership skills.

Why are you staying on?

I don't think I have given back enough to the organization. Sometimes work is not only about what you earn, it is also about the legacy you want to leave behind. There are still a lot of young conservationists who have to learn from my expertise. I would want to leave when I will be remembered for adding value to the organization's mission, or quoted as someone who transferred positive skills to the younger ones.

What does nature mean to you?

Nature means everything to my very existence. To crown it all, nature is life. From the air we breathe, the food we eat, medication, water, climate, in fact life will come to a halt without nature.

There is much talk about the year 2020 being a super year, what in your opinion should world leaders, decision makers, businesses, the civil society and communities focus on?

Marco Lambertini, WWF Director General, rightly said in 2020, we have an incredible opportunity to make an ambitious global commitment to restore nature. To me they all should in their own little way "Act Now". There has been a lot of strategizing and conferences held. This is 2020 on our feet. World leaders, businesses, decision-makers, the civil society, communities, you and me, should adopt green behavior, sustainable lifestyles and projects that make the planet breathe healthily. No one can fix this planet except us.

What advice do you have for young people who want to take up a career in your field?

Young people need to be strong and conscientious, and above all have the willingness to learn and believe that they can make an impact. They should be innovative and passionate in this field because there are a lot of challenges involved. The world is fast changing and so is science. Young people should take advantage of the internet with all that it offers and make positive use out of it. Protecting forest, wildlife and the environment is the only way to keep humanity safe.

Interviewed by Janet Mukoko



Timely help that bodes well for Lobeke

Lobeke National Park situated in the East Region of Cameroon, is a biodiversity haven par excellence. The Park that was created by the Cameroon Government in 2001 and is a refuge for thousands of lowland gorillas, chimps, elephants and other species of mammals.

Over the years, however, Lobeke has come under increasing pressure from elephant poachers and traffickers in African grey parrots. As the challenges facing Lobeke increases so too are its needs for resources and logistics to stem them. A crowdfunding effort organised in Japan between May and June 2019, provided sorely needed support for the managers of the Park to pursue the Park's objective of protecting its flora and fauna for the benefit of people and nature.

Though the crowdfunding effort was the first trial for Lobeke, the organisers, led by Naobi Okayasu, succeeded in raising funds donated by over 400 Japanese people to purchase a landcruiser for the Park. "There was incredible rise of attention with the tipping point made by the crowdfunding platform mail magazine, SNS outreach by Montbell



New vehicle handed over to Lobeke Conservation service

along with UAPACAA (United Action for the Promotion of Conservation in Africa and Asia communications)," Naobi Okayasu said. This is the second time the Japanese public had donated money to support the purchase of a car for the park with the first being in 2013.

By Fidelis Pegue Manga



Our shared vision:

“Healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity supporting people and driving green growth”



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



M. Kobayashi



WWF Network

- WWF Network
- WWF International
- WWF Sweden
- WWF UK
- WWF Netherlands
- WWF Germany
- WWF Switzerland
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International Inst
for Environment
and Development

Notre Vision

“Des écosystèmes sains et une biodiversité florissante pour soutenir les populations et stimuler la croissance verte au Cameroun”



Why we are here.

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony and nature.

<http://cameroon.panda.org>

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