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Congo Basin Forests and Climate Change Adaptation

N E W S L E T T E R

N° 03 December 2008

## Foreword



# Tropical forests : the peak of global attention

by Nkem Johnson, Project Leader



Tropical forests are at the peak of global attention with a central place in discussions at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference of parties (CoP) in providing cost-effective ways for mitigating climate change impacts through sequestering greenhouse gas (GHG) and reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD). With such a great emphasis on forest for mitigation, little attention is paid on forest for adaptation. This provides a unique niche for the CoFCCA project as one of the flag bearers in drawing attention on forest for adaptation particularly in the Congo Basin which is one of the global sites for REDD implementation, but surrounded by highly vulnerable people. Since after the regional kick off meeting where priorities were set for adaptation, there has been a steady progress in the project activities in multiple dimensions. Members of the project participated in various training workshops organized by IDRC – Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA), to build capacity in some crucial areas of all their funded projects in Africa. Several presentations were

made in various national, regional and international meetings Including CoP14 in Poznan, Poland. An information brief was released in December as part of drawing attention to the need for adaptation in the Congo Basin forest. The project have been actively pushing its capacity building agenda hosting a graduate student on internship, and enlisted as host institution for the African Climate Change Fellowship Program, and now rounding up the selection process for the CoFCCA graduate fellowship award for 2009-10 academic year. With a high place for partnership in implementing the activities, Dr Carolyn Peach of Guelph University, Canada, spent one month conducting research in Cameroon with the team in Yaoundé. Finally, the project is happy to welcome Mr Olufunso Somorin who recently joined CIFOR as APO for the project and will be based in Yaoundé. Several members from the project were present at CoP14 through their various organizations beside those representing their national governments, e.g. Cyrie Sedashonga & Johnson Nkem– CIFOR; Guy Patrice –WRI, Joseph Amougou –Government of Cameroon etc. Following the Bali Road Map, CoP14 in Poznan provided a prelude to CoP15 coming up in Copenhagen in 2009. As the overwhelming topic currently in the negotiation, there were highly passionate and vigorous debates on the merits and demerits of REDD implementation, and questioning the inadequacy in the available knowledge base so far, in making the right decisions. Forest Day organized by CIFOR and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forest provided a unique opportunity in exploring other dimensions of forest for climate change from a more scientific perspective that could feed the negotiation process. Over nine hundred people including members of the project participated in the event that was characterized by parallel plenary sessions, several side events, and a rap up session that was graced with the participation of the UNFCCC Secretary, Mr Yves de Boer. Like in previous CoPs, there were very limited discussions on adaptation which of major concern, but should inspire the project to advance its course.

## CLIMATE CHANGE EXHIBITED AT THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

By Denis Sonwa

During the 3rd International Trade Fair (dubbed PROMOTE) that took place from the 5th to the 14th of December 2008 at the Conference Centre in Yaoundé, CIFOR and the other structures involved in forest conservation and development activities (e.g. SNV, IUCN, WWF, GTZ, etc. ) organised a forest village. The PROMOTE Forest Village was a place where information could be gathered on the management of natural resources and mainly forests. CIFOR's stand devoted a day, the 12th of December, to climate change. On that day, Denis and Youssoufa presented CIFOR's climate change activities (mitigation and adaptation) and provided answers to visitor's questions. The visitors wanted to have more information on REDD and on Climate Change Adaptation. Amongst other documents, CoFCCA folders and CIFOR books on

REDD (Simple REDD) were distributed to visitors. This was an opportunity to "popu-

larise" the notions of climate change and how it is related to the forest sector.



## IN THE MEDIA

Climate change and desertification

[http://www.john-libbey-eurotext.fr/fr/revues/agro\\_biotech/sec/e-docs/00/04/22/83/resume.md](http://www.john-libbey-eurotext.fr/fr/revues/agro_biotech/sec/e-docs/00/04/22/83/resume.md)

On the same website :

Signification and usage of the pluviometric index in Sahel

Abdou Ali, Thierry Lebel, Abou Amani

[http://www.john-libbey-eurotext.fr/fr/revues/agro\\_biotech/sec/e-docs/00/04/46/CD/article.phtml](http://www.john-libbey-eurotext.fr/fr/revues/agro_biotech/sec/e-docs/00/04/46/CD/article.phtml)

Contribution to an integrated approach of pastoralism. Poverty, vulnerability and ecological perturbation

Martin Wiese, Idris Yosko, Marianne Donnat

## PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

By Youssoufa Bele

From the 16th -19th was held in Nazreth in Ethiopia a "Participatory Action Research Learning and Knowledge Exchange Workshop". The objective of the workshop was to facilitate Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA) grantees and facilitators to share experiences on Participatory Action Research concepts, and improve skills in applying PAR in their respective research programs.

32 participants represented 18 CCAA project grantees attended the workshop. The workshop was mostly for English speaking participants. The CIFOR project on The Congo Basin and Climate Change Adaptation (CoFCCA) in Central Africa was represented by M. Youssoufa Bele.

During the four days of the workshop, participants :

- Improved their understanding of PAR key concepts, steps and their application;
- Shared and discussed key PAR tools



and processes;

- demonstrated and practiced the effective facilitation of key PAR processes;
- and Field tested PAR Reference Guide.

The workshop definitively helped me develop PAR plans within CoFCCA project and most importantly, helped agree on outputs and possible peer support arrangements by the International Development Research Center (IDRC).

## CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE CENTRE OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN CAMEROONIAN BIO – SCIENTISTS

Par Denis Sonwa

"Biosciences and climate change" is the topic that brought together Cameroonian bio-scientists at the University of Yaounde 1 and at the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation (MINRESI) from the 4th to the 6th of December 2008. Bio-scientists from the USA, France and South Africa and Cameroon brainstormed on the consequences of climate change, mitigation measures and how to adapt to these changes.

Youssoufa Bele and Denis Sonwa of CoFCCA – CIFOR took part in this meeting and Denis made an oral presentation on "Ecological research in the

perspective of using forests to adapt to climate change in Cameroon (Central Africa)". In the presentation he shared with the other participants, research actions needed to use forest resources in the process of adapting to climate change. All oral presentations and posters made it possible to highlight how climate change influences, or may likely influence natural resources, human settlements, health systems, and the agricultural sector in Cameroon. In the final communiqué, it was clear stated that the Cameroon coastline is fragile and is exposed to high anthropisation and rise of sea

water. It was change has serious socio-cultural impact (population migrations, concentration in cities and clustering around water resources), resulting in increased risks of conflicts. This underlines the need to develop adaptation strategies. In contexts like that of Cameroon where the people are highly dependent on forest resources, the latter have a great role to play. The bio-scientists promised to meet again in 2009 to discuss about bio-science and food security. Even this food security is not free from climate change.



## SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS IN NATURAL FOREST MANAGEMENT

By Youssoufa Bele

From the 3rd to 7th November 2008 was held in Stellenbosch in South Africa a Symposium an international Symposium on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa: African Solutions to African Problems in Natural Forest Management. Many reasons necessitated the organization of such a symposium. The most important being the lack of large body of information regarding the causes of forest cover losses; little information available to assess forest dynamics; lack of sound assessment on the African forest capacity to produce forest goods and services; advocate the importance of forest in poverty reduction and national development; and most importantly the role of forests in climate change adaptation. More than 100 participants (including 14 CIFOR staff) working in or for Africa attended this symposium. The symposium brought together national, regional and international policy- and decision-makers, forest scientists, forest ecologists, planners and resource managers from the forestry industry and trade (public and private sectors), farmers and rural communities, the education community, consumers of forest/tree-derived products, NGOs with forest, environment, social and other foci of work, individuals, and others. These participants shared information, concepts and ideas within the symposium topics through papers and posters and most importantly, advocate



activities that have the potential to raise the profile of forestry, highlight threats to forest resources and the environment, and champion better management of African forests. A full section was allocated to the theme "Forests and Climate Change Response: adaptation and mitigation balance in climate change response programmes" 10 papers were presented during this section and Youssoufa topic was on "forestry, climate change adaptation and national development in cameroon". Emile Mulotha of

CoFCCA-DRC also attend such a meeting in Benin where Francophone speaking participants receive the same training. With two staffs trained on PAR, Cofcca can now move ahead by taking these tools in the activities in Central Africa. We are planning to share our experiences with Bruno of Cofcca-CAR (Central African Republic) so that we can have a coherent implementation of PAR in the tree countries.

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This newsletter has been prepared by Nicole Owona and Denis Sonwa (CIFOR). For questions and contributions to this newsletter, please contact Denis, [d.sonwa@cgjar.org](mailto:d.sonwa@cgjar.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

7-11 June 2009

• **Small-scale Forestry Symposium**

*Morgantown, West Virginia, United States*

9-12 June 2009

• **Forest Measurements in Complex Tropical Forests**

*Akure, Nigeria*

15-18 June 2009

• **2nd Gender and Forestry Conference: Making a Difference in Theory and Practice**

*Umeå, Sweden*

21-24 June 2009

• **Change in Governance as Collective Learning Process: Management, Politics and Ethics in Forestry**

*Nancy, France*

• **Conference on climate change**

*Niamey, Niger*

26 -29 May 2009

There is a call for communications. Deadline 02 March 2009. For more information, see [http://www.sifec.sifec.org/Niamey\\_2009.htm](http://www.sifec.sifec.org/Niamey_2009.htm)



## COFCCA ALIGNS INTO RESEARCH AREA 2 OF CIFOR OF JANUARY 2008

### Members of the CoFCCA project participated in the traditional CIFOR annual meeting.

Held in Bogor, this meeting was an opportunity for CIFOR researchers to come together, make a run down of the activities of the past year and formulate strategies for the future. During this meeting, activities supported by the main budget of CIFOR and those from external assistance such as the CoFCCA project were taken into consideration in scientific discussions. The topic of this year's annual meeting was "be aligned". CIFOR was thus completing the transitional phase whereby research activities were only segmented into programmes ("livelihood" ; "governance" ; forest services and livelihood") to another one whereby they shall also be managed within research domain.

Heads of the research domains are responsible for scientific coordination while the Programme Directors manage human resources placed under their authority. The annual meeting is structured into a plenary meeting, group work in research areas, as well as within programmes, side events and informal discussions.

Although CoFCCA is a multi-disciplinary project, it continues to be a project under the environment programme. However, it is also part of the CIFOR's Research Domain. This means that the project will benefit from the dynamics of cohesion in this area.

The project will therefore be complementary to other ongoing initiatives on climate change adaptation or others still to be initiated within CIFOR. Although most of the human resources of the CoFCCA project are part of the Environment Programme, the project shall continue to benefit from the expertise of 2 of the other programmes, namely "Livelihoods" and "Governance". Similarly, coordination with other fields will make it possible to draw from the varied expertise in the project. During this annual meeting, a side event enabled Johnson, the Project Coordinator, to present the objectives, progress made and what is still to be done. His presentation allowed him to provide more details to researchers on the situation of the project and to have their observations in order to forge ahead with the project. Persons from the CoFCCA project who took part in the annual meeting were Nkem Johnson, Denis Sonwa, Youssoufa Bele and Cyrie Sendashonga, the Central African Regional Coordinator of CIFOR. This meeting made it possible to be

aware of the important place the CoFCCA project occupies in CIFOR, given that it is one of the first such projects within CIFOR. This project therefore has to play an important role to enable CIFOR better put in place its Research Domain on the use of forests to adapt to climate change.





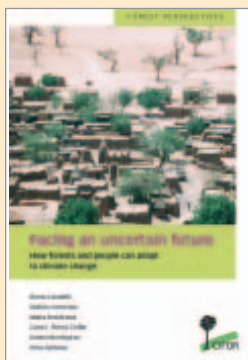
## IS THE FUTURE OF FORESTS GUARANTEED IN SPITE OF CLIMATE DISTURBANCES?

By Denis Sonwa

In the face of climate change (CC) there are two sets of important measures that are necessary: prevent / slowdown CC (better known as mitigation) and adapt to new climatic conditions (better known as adaptations). Quite a number of people are still asking themselves the question of knowing how forests and forest resources can be useful in the process of adaptations to CC. The book written by Bruno Locatelli and his CIFOR colleagues provides answers to these questions. The one hundred page document, which is in fact a literature review of scientific works, explores the links that exist between forests, vulnerabilities and adaptations to CC.

In the first part on adaptation of forests, the authors talk about (1) Vulnerability of tropical forests to CC, (2) Adaptation of forests to CC ; and (3) How to put in place a process for forest adaptation to climate change. The reader can thus learn that the change of the values of climatic parameters (temperatures, rainfalls, etc...) and the concentration of GHG (such as carbon) will affect the structure and functions of ecosystems, ecological interaction between species, and geographical distribution of these species. These changes therefore affect biodiversity and ecosystem services. Adaptation strategies include measures to protect forests from disturbances (e.g. management of bush-fires) and those that allow forests to develop under new climatic conditions (e.g. increasing connectivity at the level of landscapes in order to facilitate species migration).

In the second part on the use of the forest to adapt to CC, the authors first present (1) the link that exist between ecosystem services and the livelihood of the population, (2) tropical forests in the adaptation initiatives of companies, and (3) how to mainstream tropical forests into adapta-



tion policies. Forests are already one of the rare resources of poor people. In situations where climate is disrupted these resources are sometimes only ones that are available to enable the people to adapt. The book that is very easy to read has good illustrations of tables, photographs and figures, an appendix to recall climate change scenarios in the tropics, concepts of vulnerability, international Policies and funds available in the area of CC adaptation. As stated by Frances Seymour, the Director General of CIFOR, in the preface of this book, taking forests into consideration in the adaptation process and taking into consideration adaptation in forestry policies cannot wait. The two are required to enable forests fully play their roles in mitigating the negative effects of the cli-

mate that are already manifesting themselves. It is high time foresters aligned on adaptation policies and climatologists and their climate science counterparts aligned on forest management policies. Such initiatives would thus make it possible to have a more reassuring future for forests in spite of CC.

Link to the document:  
[http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf\\_files/Books/BLocatelli0801.pdf](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/BLocatelli0801.pdf)  
 Locatelli, B.; Kanninen, M.; Brockhaus, M.; Colfer, C.J.P.; Murdiyarsa, D.; Santoso, H. 2008. Facing an uncertain future: how forest and people can adapt to climate change. Forest Perspectives No. 5. 86p. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia.