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## Best Wishes

### Foreword

## 2009 : A challenging Year

Dear readers,

Keeping the tradition, we sincerely wish you a happy new year 2009. Looking back 2008, many things, good and bad, are going through our mind. We hope that 2009 will be for sharing and accomplishing a lot with you. And only the best, that's our wish. Your favorite Newsletter is at its 4th edition this 1st term.

We would like to share with you through this publication on Congo basin forests and climate change adaptation, quality informations. So much is still to be done, after almost a year of publishing. At the end, the most important is to reach the purpose, keep on sharing, with different people involved within the project CoFCCA, must of all, with

those engaged in climate change issue and its impacts upon the forest.

We will do our best to respect our engagement taken in 2008 of producing this newsletter. We wish you once more an excellent year 2009 hoping that it will be full of enjoyment and accomplishment.

### New staff/JPO

By Denis Sonwa

## Research: Netherlands Cooperation supports the training of junior researchers

The CoFCCA Project has received funding from the Netherlands Cooperation to host a junior researcher (JPO) under its activities in Central Africa. This funding from the Netherlands Cooperation will enable young Dutch men and women and nationals of developing countries to be hosted in research/development structures where while working as junior researchers they will be trained under the guidance of mentors. In the case of CIFOR/CoFCCA, after the call for candidatures, it is Somorin Olufunso (a Nigerian) who was finally selected. He will work on institutional aspects of climate change in Central Africa with the perspective of mainstreaming them into development plans. He has been enthused with joining CIFOR, and very shortly after coming on board, he has already taken part in an international confer-



ence on climate change that took place in Copenhagen. Olufunso is a holder of a Masters in Forest Nature Conservation Pol-

icy from the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands (obtained in 2008).



## Climate change

By Felix Ngana

### Protecting vulnerable groups – an emergency

A training workshop on gender and adaptation to climate change in Africa was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 26 to 30 January 2009.

Climate change, more than ever before, remains a core concern of humanity. In Africa, it may jeopardise poverty alleviation efforts and aggravate food security. Indeed, it indiscriminately affects all regions of the world. Human beings, men and women, rich and poor, young and old alike face the same threat. However some people raise the question of equity, for the impact of climate change will be felt more by some groups, especially women and children, given their weak capacity to adapt. It is in a bid to understand this vulnerability inequality that a training workshop on gender in the face of climate change adaptation in Africa was organised by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), from 26 to 30 January 2009 in Kampala.

The objective of the workshop was to provide participants with knowledge and skills required for them to mainstream gender into their climate change projects. It also aimed at improving the capacity of climate change researchers to better put into practice the gender

concept in their analysis. It is a strategy to create awareness on gender issues and adaptation to climate change in Africa.

The participatory method was used during the workshop. Group and plenary discussions enabled the participants to share their experiences. In fact, two working groups were formed, one English-speaking and another French-speaking. This method facilitated communication and sharing of experiences between participants.

The training was organised and conducted in eleven sessions. The plenary sessions enabled the two linguistic groups to share the summary of group work and to deliberate on key day-to-day issues. The projection of a film on the theme "Energy and poverty in Senegal" opened the deliberations. The tenth session was devoted to visiting a village on the bank of Lake Victoria. Fishing, farming and handicraft are the main activities of this village. The eleventh session was reserved to summarising the field trip, to evaluating the outputs of the workshop, to remarks made by the trainers and to the closing ceremony.



### Scholarships : junior researchers supported

By Denis Sonwa



#### New Masters Students selected to work on "Forest and Adaptation to Climate Change".

In view of contributing to capacity building in the sub-region, the CoFCCA Project has undertaken to offer scholarships to students. These scholarships should enable them prepare their Masters on forests and adaptation to climate change. Following a call for candidatures launched in the last quarter of 2008, three Masters Students were selected and they will be supported in their research work by the CoFCCA Programme. The Project will thus enable students and their university supervisors to have first hand experience of the realities of interface research on forests and adaptation to climate change during the conduct of their research.

Those selected are Jacques Calvin Fanche Nzale, Martial Gapia and Alexis Murhula Cizungu. The research topic chosen by Alexis Murhula is "Climate change and availability of mushrooms for food and medicinal purposes for the population living around the Kahuzi-Biega National Park (South Kivu, DR Congo)". Martial Gapia's research topic is "The meandering valley of Mpoko River in Central Africa Republic: morpho dynamics in a context of hydro climatic variability and adaptation systems of the local population" as for Jacques Fanche, he intends to explore "Climatic variability and the health of the population of South-East Cameroon: the case of Yokadouma". The topics retained will allow for the priorities retained during the kick-off meeting of the political science dialogue to be explored. (See CoFCCA Newsletter No. 2).

In a nutshell, the work of Alexis Murlula in the DRC will focus on the food sector, that of Martial G. in the CAR is related to the water sector, while that of Jacques F.N. in Cameroon will be on the health sector. All of these young researchers are very welcome by CoFCCA and it hopes that thanks to this support, it will make of these young people "pioneers" in this research area (i.e. forest and adaptation to climate change) that is still in its infancy in Central Africa.

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## Participation at the Copenhagen Climate Congress

There is a need to advance the frontiers of knowledge in climate change science and policy beyond the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report in 2007, informed the organization of the congress by University of Copenhagen and nine other universities under the 'International Alliance of Research Universities'. Over 2000 scientists all over the world attended the congress; with the consensus of the need to chart a new course in political decision-making during COP 15 which is also holding in Copenhagen.

CIFOR team, which was lead by the General Manager, comprises researchers from the headquarters in Bogor and from the regional offices. Cyrie Sendashonga, Olufunso Somorin and Denis were representing the Central African Regional Office. CoFCCA researchers were also in attendance to present result outputs within the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Johnson Nkem and Somorin Olufunso made an oral presentation on « Tropical forest products markets and addressing adaptation priorities of forest communities of West and Central Africa ». Denis Sonwa, the regional scientist for CoFCCA also made an oral presentation on « Carbon stock in smallholder chocolate forest in southern Cameroon and potential role in climate change mitigation ». Carolyn Peach Brown of the University of Guelph - Ontario, presented a poster on her work done within COFCCA intitled « Institutional



CoFCCA Regional Scientist (Dr. Denis Sonwa) granting an interview for an international media while CIFOR Regional Coordinator (Dr. Cyrie Sendashonga) looks on.

factors for adaptation to climate change in the Congo Basin forest of Cameroon ». Beyond the presentations, participants also had many opportunities to meet other colleagues in the climate change field, to share

ideas, skills, information, tools, and thereby, fostering collaboration and partnerships of mutual interests and benefits.

## IN THE MEDIA

- **International Conference on Climate change 08-10 March**

[http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=International\\_Conference\\_on\\_Climate\\_Change\\_\(2009\)](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=International_Conference_on_Climate_Change_(2009))

- **Media alerts January 2009**

[http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/archive.php?m=01&y=2009&cat\\_id=20](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/archive.php?m=01&y=2009&cat_id=20)

- **World Climate Research Programme**

[http://wcrp.wmo.int/NewsArchives\\_index.html](http://wcrp.wmo.int/NewsArchives_index.html)

- **IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science: Volume 6, 2009**

<http://www.iop.org/EJ/volume/1755-1315/6>

- **Climate Change & Agrobiodiversity Research » 2009 » March**

<http://www.agrobiodiversityplatform.org/blog/?m=200903>

- **Worldchanging Bright Green: Climate Change Adaptation: From Big Taboo to Business Opportunity**

<http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/009316.html>

- **Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation - How to Adapt**

<http://www.climatemediapartnership.org/tag/adaptation/page/2/>



Research

By D. Sonwa/ Y. Bele

## How to boost adaptation to climate change

**Participatory Action Research is a vital tool in climate change adaptation activities.**

From 23 to 27 February 2009, the Regional Office of the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Yaounde, Cameroon hosted a planning workshop of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) of the Project "Congo Basin Forests and Climate Change Adaptation (CoFCCA) in Central Africa". The main objective of this workshop was . . . . During this workshop attended by 22 persons, made up of researchers from Headquarters, Trofcca and Cofcca, it was an opportunity to:

- Recapitulate progress made by the CoFCCA Project;
- Review PAR phases and tools and test with local communities some basic tools of PAR;
- Select execution sites;
- Develop a roadmap to execute the project in three countries.

The workshop brought together CIFOR researchers from Headquarters (Indonesia), from the West Africa Office and from the Central Africa Office. Research assistants of the CoFCCA Project in Central Africa Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as Cameroon universities and the fellow of the START Programme also

took part in the workshop. Dr. Anne-Marie Tianie was the main facilitator of the workshop. She was assisted by Dr. Maria Brockhaus. Dr Laura German and Nathalie Beaulieu also contributed in the methodological brainstorming that preceded the preparation of the workshop.

During this meeting, some participants shared their experiences of the study on vulnerability and participatory approaches used in other projects related to adaptation to climate change. Based on several indicators, an example of a vulnerability map was produced for each of the three countries executing the project.

After indoor work, the participants moved to Nkol Evodo, a village in the Lekie Division, north of Yaounde. This field trip made it possible to test some PAR tools. A roadmap was drawn up and it should serve as a guide to implementing the PAR in each country. The CoFCCA Project thus provides an opportunity for methodological development to mainstreaming PAR into "Forest and adaptation to climate change in Central Africa"



PAR workshop, CIFOR Yaoundé Cameroon



Test-exercise of PAR tools at Nkol-Evodo (Sa'a-Batschenga, Lekie Division)



Test-exercise of PAR tools at Nkol-Evodo (Sa'a-Batschenga, Lekie Division)

## Participation at the NESDA Climate change meeting

By Youssoufa Bele

On the 4th March 2009, Youssoufa Bele represented CIFOR (CoFCCA) at the 1st meeting of the Multi-stakeholder Support for Legislative Environmental Representation (MSSG-LER) convened by NESDA-Cameroon. The meeting was held at Franco Hotel in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Many different actors participated to the meeting, some of them representing either local communities or International organizations, and they aimed at strengthening the capacity of Parliamentarians by providing them with proper and sound information they can be used while adopting laws related to the Environment.

Most specifically, this meeting was all about raising key points that would empower Parliamentarians on the role they can play:

- On the revision of the Forestry Reform in Cameroon 15 years after and;
- On climate change and the fight against desertification in Cameroon.

At the end, NESDA expressed the need to collaborate with CIFOR on issues related to forests, particularly with the CoFCCA team on climate change issues. Since then, there has been lots of information sharing related to forest and climate change.



## International day of the Tree

# Climate change explained to youths

By Y. Bele/D. Sonwa



Presentation during the International Day of the Tree at Forêt-CRESA Bois.

Within the framework of the celebration of the World Forests Day that took place on 21 March 2009, Denis Sonwa and Youssoufa Bele of the "Congo Basin Forest and Climate Change Adaptation in Central Africa (CoFCCA)" Project of the Central Africa Regional Office of CIFOR actively took part in conference discussions organised by students of CRESA-Forêt-Bois. Thus, during educational discussions on climate change that took place on Wednesday 18 March 2009 at the Government Grammar and Technical High Schools of Nkolbisson, Youssoufa Bele enlightened the students on climate change related challenges. At the end of the discussions, the students were better informed about the magnitude of the phenomenon in the world and in Central Africa, and particularly in Cameroon as well as on the importance for the populations to adapt to these disturbing developments about the climate.

Among the papers presented on Friday 20 March 2009 in the CRESA-Forêt-Bois conference, Denis Sonwa's paper was on the "Tree and adaptation to climate change". After going through the importance of the tree in particular and the forest in general in mitigating and adapting to climate change, Denis Sonwa provided the participants with recent and exhaustive information on tropical forests, and particularly the Congo Basin forests, and their place in international discussions on climate change.

## Conservation of birds

# The need to take climate change adaptation into consideration

By Emile Mulotwa

From 9 to 11 July 2008, an international workshop on adaptation to climate change in the Albertin Rift (an area rich in biodiversity situated at the edge of the Congo Basin and made up of a strip linking Central and East Africa) was held in Kigali (Rwanda). This strip of land runs from the extreme north of Lake Albert to the extreme south of Lake Tanganyika. It is recognised as having a prominent place in the conservation of biodiversity in Africa.

The said workshop was attended by at least 30 persons representing countries of the Albertin Rift (DRC Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and Rwanda) and Great Britain. The participants were coming from public institutions (ministries of the environment, nature conservation and lands; ministries of forestry, tourism, etc), nature conservation NGOs, universities and research centres, private partners, etc.

The main objective of the workshop was to develop a model to improve resilience in biodiversity rich areas based on projections on climate change impacts and thus ensure that they maintain their effectiveness in protecting biodiversity and providing ecosystem services in future. The strategic objectives of the workshop were amongst others to:

- Evaluate possible impacts of climate change in Important Bird Conservation Zones (ZICO) of the Albertin Rift;
- Identify potential adaptation measures aimed at increasing resilience of ZICO networks in the Albertin Rift;
- Identify and prioritize specific sites to implement adaptation measures.

This workshop that was attended by the CoFCCA Assistant for the DRC had not only to lay the foundation for taking into consideration adaptation measures in the conservation of birds, but also make it possible to learn lessons that may be extended to other parts of Africa. The workshop was organised by BirdLife International (Africa Partnership Division), with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the University of Durham (Great Britain). The delegations of each country outlined a series of potential activities, which amongst others would enable the taking into consideration of national and regional socio-cultural context.

## Drought : the Amazon forest threatened

By Denis Sonwa

A study published by the Science Review shows that future droughts are like to disrupt the functions played by forest massifs such as the Amazon (sister to the Congo Basin).

A well known adage says: "there can be another side to a mishap". In order words, even under difficult conditions, something "good" may spring up. A research team (more than fifty researchers) led by Olivier Phillips of the University of Leeds (UK) has just seized the "opportunity" of the 2005 drought in the Amazon Basin to produce more information on how sensitive this great forest massif is.

These research activities were published in the prestigious Science Review (of 6 March 2009). The Amazon forest stores a huge quantity of carbon in the biomass, but also, through the mechanism of photosynthesis and respiration, it annually processes a quantity of carbon twice higher than fossil fuel emitted by human activities. This therefore underscores the important need to balance the planet, if CO<sub>2</sub> (or other greenhouse

gases) derived from human activities emitted into the atmosphere and responsible for climate change is taken into consideration. It is already well established that prolonged drought can kill trees and thus disrupt the functions that it usually provides to the ecosystem.

One of the major difficulties of the research is studying the effect of a calamity such as drought on a large expanse of trees. The 2005 drought thus provided an opportunity to verify how trees and the forest massif behaved and would behave later on if the climate became harsher. Thanks to the RAINFOR plan made up of 136 permanent plots, researchers have tried to observe links between meteorological data and aerial biomasses of the forest.

For the biomass, they used the diameter of

trees, their density and allelometric models. They observed how the forest behaved for 25 years before 2005 and how it particularly behaved in the year 2005. During the 2005 drought, the increase of forest biomass was observed in 51% of the plots studied as against 76% during the period before (25 years observation before 2005). It showed that the drought caused a reduction in biomass. In fact, a deficit increase of 100 mm of the water deficit results in the loss of 5.3 Mg of aerial biomass per hectare.

This information makes it possible to understand that forest massifs like that of the Amazon ("sister to the Congo Basin") are sensitive to climate change, and that future droughts would disrupt the functions that they provide. Human behaviour that is likely to lead to climate change resulting (inter alia) in drought may thus cause additional emission of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. The consequence would therefore be disruption in planetary balances ... Though the researchers exploited the 2005 drought, they benefited from the fact that a plan of permanent forest observation plots already existed. They have thus collected data on microclimate and forest biomass.

To read the full text, go to :  
<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2009/03/05/amazon.carbon.sink.threatened.drought>

