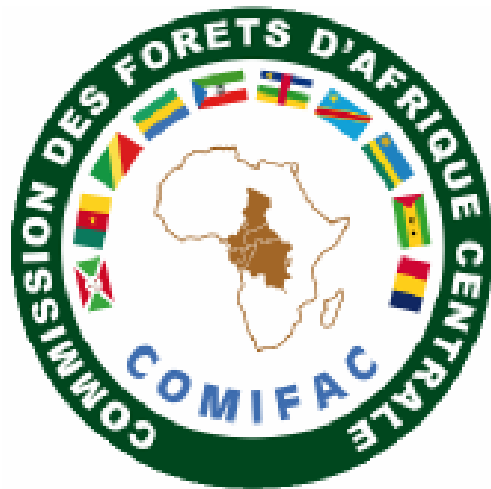


REGIONAL WEBINAR FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA "SHARING INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES ON NATIONAL FOREST GOVERNANCE RESPONSES TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF FOREST RESOURCES TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA"

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2021



Speech of Mr Chouaibou NCHOUTPOUEN,

Deputy Executive Secretary and Technical Coordinator of COMIFAC

GUEST OF HONOR

Representatives of the Ministers in charge of Forests and environment in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Directors in charge of Forests and the Environment

Mr. and Mrs. representatives of other public and private institutions invited

Representatives of civil society organizations

Representatives of media organizations

Dear experts involved in the implementation of the studies

Dear colleagues and delegates in your respective ranks and ranks

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a real pleasure and honor for me to speak today here in Douala, Economic Capital of the Republic of Cameroon, headquarters country of the Central African Forestry Commission (COMIFAC) on the occasion of this opening ceremony of a regional webinar for Francophone Africa on the theme "sharing information and experiences on the responses of national forest governance to the Paris Agreement and the contribution of forest resources to the resilience of communities to climate change in Africa". It is held in hybrid mode (face-to-face in each country concerned and by videoconference) for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

First of all, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Forum Forestier Africain (AFF) and the Réseau des Gommés et Résines Naturelles d'Afrique (NGARA) for having organized this webinar in collaboration with COMIFAC and other institutions in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I would like to salute all the participants. As of August 29, 2021, AFF had registered more than 200 online registrations to which should be added the hundred or so stakeholders who participate face-to-face in the six countries mentioned above. This testifies to the interest of this theme for forest stakeholders in Africa and elsewhere.

Ladies and gentlemen

Indeed, the importance of the sustainable management of forest resources for the protection of the environment and the well-being of communities has been recognized by the Heads of State of Central Africa who committed themselves in March 1999 through a declaration called "Yaoundé Declaration" to work in a concerted manner for the conservation and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of their countries. To reaffirm their commitment, the Heads of State of Central Africa signed in February 2005 in Brazzaville, the Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa and establishing COMIFAC, as a reference institution for the harmonization and monitoring of the implementation of forest and environmental policies in Central Africa. In accordance with its missions, COMIFAC helps its Member States to adopt common positions during international negotiations and debates in the forest-environment sector for the benefit of our continent and the populations who depend on forest resources.

The AFRICAN FORESTRY FORUM is one of the privileged and strategic partners of COMIFAC, which it accompanies in the various international negotiations. It is therefore with great pleasure that COMIFAC accepted this proposal as guest of honor at this webinar.

Ladies and gentlemen

The major challenge of this webinar is associated on the one hand with the challenges related to climate change and on the other hand with the solutions offered by the forest sector to meet them. The exchanges of these three days therefore challenge us on the measures taken in our respective countries to exploit these solutions in order to mitigate the effects of climate change and at the same time seize the opportunities that result through good forest governance.

The global environmental governance system builds on conventions and agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its

landmark agreement reached in Paris in 2015 "**to combat climate change and to accelerate and scale up the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future**". Countries-parties to this agreement are required to formulate their national vision to address climate change while demonstrating at the international level their political will and readiness to contribute to global adaptation and mitigation efforts. A stronger response from governments, public organizations, communities and the private sector requires a better understanding of these issues in order to inform appropriate actions.

It is with this in mind that the African Forest Forum has conducted with the help of its network of experts an analysis of national responses to the Paris Agreement and has generated knowledge to guide forest governance processes to strengthen forest management and better address the negative impacts of climate change. Similarly, with the aim of strengthening the resilience of local dryland communities to the adverse effects of climate change, experts explored options for the use of dryland forest resources and products that can promote entrepreneurial opportunities and improve livelihoods, national incomes and employment.

These analyses revealed that while the proliferation of these global conventions has been very positive for the promotion of the forest sector, there are some gaps in the contextualization of these decisions in forest policies, programmes and activities. The recommendations proposed by the studies to improve forest governance processes in Africa will be discussed at this webinar in order to formulate appropriate intervention measures to strengthen forest management in response to the negative impacts of climate change.

The results on the analysis of gum and resin value chains revealed that while their natural potential remains considerable to strengthen the resilience of rural communities to climate change in the arid and semi-arid areas of the continent, their development remains very limited compared to the expected potential on the international market. Among the recommendations proposed by the experts, policy

and capacity-building interventions are among the priorities to improve the sector to improve livelihoods, national incomes and employment.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are therefore all called upon to contribute to these debates by placing the conclusions and recommendations in our national context, in order to identify good forest management practices that will strengthen the sector's place in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on the one hand, and enhance the socio-economic and environmental role of non-timber forest products in general and resin gums in particular.

These provisions are in line with several strategic axes of the convergence plans of both COMIFAC and also the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to which our countries are called upon to contribute effectively to their implementation.

While wishing you rich and fruitful deliberations for the promotion of the African forest sector, I declare open this webinar for the French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa!

Long live international cooperation

Long live regional cooperation

Long live the African Forest Forum

Live the COMIFAC

Thank you