

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership and its “facilitation”

A year after the taking over of the facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership by France, I am very happy to express myself today in the columns of the “International forest Review ”. It is for me the occasion to take stock of the actions already implemented since the Brazzaville Heads of State Summit (february 2005) to achieve the objectives laid down in the **Terms of reference of French Facilitation**, approved by consensus on this occasion with all the members of the CBFP.

These terms of reference comprise 6 major areas of intervention:

- Strengthening regional coordination;
- Setting up a financing Working Party on sustainable financings within the CBFP ;
- Training/Strengthening the capacities of the various actors involved in the Environment/Forest sector;
- Institutional support for the Commission of the central Africa Forests (COMIFAC);
- Improving the governance by the promotion of the AFLEG and FLEGT processes and by support for the initiatives for certification of wood in under region;
- Promotion of the CBFP, of the COMIFAC and of the biodiversity of the states of central Africa;

If for these aspects, all the interventions are not launched yet, a large number of significant actions can already be evoked:

1) strengthening of regional coordination

Concerning this transverse main principle of our facilitation actions, the principal "tools" announced in our terms of references are operational.

The PFBC Internet Site was revived during June 2005. The management of the site was entrusted to the Forest Department of the international Centre for agronomic Research and Development (CIRAD). Several new headings were created to make it possible for the users to find all information judged useful on the PFBC. A network of more than 300 correspondents is requested regularly to allow a continuous updating of information available on the site.

The regional Consultative Committee held two meetings, in June 2005 in Libreville and in December 2005 in Yaounde. These meetings made it possible for the representatives partners to exchange quantity of information and to coordinate better their actions.

2) adoption of the Working Party on sustainable financing PFBC

Sustainable financing the working party PFBC is in place since April 2005. It is made up of representatives of the COMIFAC, of the donors, of international NGOs...

- It brings support for the COMIFAC on the needs for financing of the Convergence Plan for:
- The development of a dashboard of the convergence plan;
- Clarify the role of the various actors in the implementation of the strategic areas of the convergence plan;
- The setting up of an autonomous financing mechanism of the convergence plan and of the COMIFAC. The study on the setting up of such a mechanism, on own resources of the Member States, will be presented to them in March 2006.
- This group also works on five types of mechanisms: redevances/taxes/droit of use – the trust funds for the environment – the mechanisms of lightening of the debt (natural debt trade) – the compensations for forestry Carbon sequestration and the strategy post 2012 within the framework of the mechanism of clean development (MDP) of the convention of the United Nations on the climate change – the financing involving the private sector (foundations/mining/forestry development industries).

First regional training, covering all the envisaged mechanisms of sustainable financing, was organised by the Working at the beginning of July 2005 Party in Libreville. Second regional, targeted training on the financing of the protected surfaces (*flat funds trust/of business*) is programmed for the first six-month period of 2006.

Three training on the topic of the Kyoto/clean development Mechanism protocol (MDP)/Carbon Sequestration already took place in 2005 in the Congo Brazzaville, in Gabon and in Cameroon.

On 30 September 2005, the Working Party met to validate the terms of reference of the provided interventions for to support the project drawing-up "MDP channel wood", to work out a practical guide for the use of the decision-makers (private public/) and contribute to the definition of a regional Strategy Basin of the Congo from the point of view of the negotiations on the arrangement post 2012.

3) training/Strengthening of the capacities of those involved

For this aspect, a narrow partnership between France and the European Union was set up to support the regional schools (ENEF, ERAIFT, CRESA Forêt Wood, School of Garoua Fauna). Several **regional training** diplômantes are already ongoing. Activities of continuing training on the topics of the forestry development, of the inventories, of the environmental impact studies, of the geographical Information Systems, of the integrated management of the forestry territories and development of business plans.

The regional framework of co-operation training, involving the RIFFEAC was set up at the beginning of November 2005, In this dynamics, the RIFFEAC enjoys significant joint supports of France and the European Union. The workshop of launching of the project of the European Union "support for the ENEF/ERAIFT" took place at the beginning of November 2005.

Concerning the strengthening of the capacities of those involved in civil society, it also is advisable to point out the start the first half of 2006 from several programmes of small subsidies to the local NGOs in Under Region, targeted on the safeguarding of the

biodiversity (*Programme small subsidies of the CARPE programme, Programme small local Initiatives of the FFEM...*).

4) strengthening of the institutions of the COMIFAC

The French technical assistant, placed at the centre of the office common Franco-German supporting council to the COMIFAC, joined his German colleague on 15 September 2005. The first subsidy convention to the COMIFAC signed itself in December 2005.

Supporting specific to the focal points of the COMIFAC are also set up in RD Congo, in RCA, in Gabon and in Cameroon.

The African facilitation of the PFBC has been in place since August 2005. The African facilitator, designated by the Member States of the COMIFAC, is the ex Minister for waters and forests of Cameroon, Mr Clarkson TANYI MBIANYOR. A French technical assistant was set up in December 2005 in Libreville to support, in connection with a Gabonese framework, the African facilitation of the PFBC.

5) strengthening of the Governance (AFLEG/FLEGT/Certification of wood)

Beyond the bilateral actions financed by France for promoting the forestry development, fundamental tool of sustainable forestry management (Frenchwoman Agency of Development), the facilitation actions in the field of the governance a support for the Programmes Sectoriels Forêt Environnement in RD Congo, for Cameroon, for Gabon, for the Congo Brazzaville and in RCA covers support for the AFLEG/FLEGT process, promotion of certification in the Basin of the Congo by of financier supports for WWF (FSC), IFIA (PAFC) and PAFC Gabon and.

A seconded national expert, financed by France, should be positioned in the Delegation of the European Union in Brazzaville as from the end of the first term 2006 to contribute to the setting up of the European action FLEGT plan in central Africa. Appropriations of French Facilitation will be allocated to our France Embassy to Brazzaville to finance the activities necessary for the preparation of the partnership agreements with the countries of the Basin of the Congo voluntary to involve oneself in this FLEGT process.

For the certification of the support are provided for to promote the PAFC system, placed back to back to the PEFC system, in Under Region (the Congo, Cameroon, RCA and DRC) and to accompany the association PAFC Gabon, already operational, in its promotion actions of certification in the private companies present on the Gabonese territory. A support for the FSC certification system, is also provided for to accompany, in partnership with WWF, the companies interested by this other internationally recognised certification system.

6) promotion of the PFBC, of the COMIFAC and of the biodiversity of the conditions of the Basin of the Congo

I ensure this promotion at the various international meetings of the environmental Agenda. For example, a meeting PFBC was organised in June 2005 at the council of the international

Organisation of tropical Wood in Brazzaville with the assistance of the facilitator precedent, the United States of America.

Later on, the taking into account of the topic ' ' protection of the tropical forests of the Basin of the Congo " in the agenda of the free Chinese Working Party – in the process of setting in place on questions of development, could make it possible to obtain the accession of China, major actor of the tropical wood market in central Africa, to the principles of the PFBC.

7) other current actions

Among the most important ones we can point out the drawing-up of the complete report on the state of the forest of the basin of the Congo in the first term 2006 (joint action European Union, USAID and France) and the translation into French of the atlas of the large central Africa monkeys at the first half of 2006 (French financing).

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As you could note it, since the Brazzaville Summit, the French facilitation of the PFBC did not remain inactive. The posted objectives are ambitious and, obviously, despite all her efforts, our regional team, could not advance at the same rhythm on all the priority aspects selected.

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