



Community and Forest Platform (CFP) Position Paper on Cameroon Mid-Term Report on REDD+ Implementation

Dear members of the FCPF Participants Committee,

In order to improve the quality of REDD+ process implementation in Cameroon and ensure the effective participation of all stakeholders in this process, we, the undersigned organizations, bring to your attention the following comments on Cameroon Mid-term Report within the framework of the REDD+ process,

These include the following points: weak participation of CSOs and communities (1), poor implementation of communication strategy (2), and lack of an efficient capacity-building strategy for indigenous peoples' representatives (3).

1- Weak participation of CSOs and communities

The participation of non-state actors, and more specifically the civil society and local and indigenous communities, in the REDD+ process and all REDD+ related activities in Cameroon remains a real challenge.

- Limited participation of communities and CSOs in REDD+ decision-making institutions

The Mid-Term Report underscores that efforts have been made to improve the participation of stakeholders in the REDD+ process and that, after an evaluation of existing structures, a new organizational structure with decentralized institutions at regional and national has been put in place. A law on this subject will be proposed to the Prime Ministry through the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development. However, no information is provided on the composition of this new organizational structure (number of participants, quality of the members, etc.) and the decision-making process within the structure. At the same time, communities and part of the civil society feel excluded from the REDD+ process in Cameroon. By way of illustration, the current Steering Committee is made up of nineteen members (19), including fourteen (14) representatives of the Government and only one CSOs representative and one communities' representative (p.12). Decisions are taken by a majority of the members. This limits the capacity of these communities and representatives of the civil society to influence the progress of the work. Establishing a new

structure and new entities at regional and local levels will not have an impact on their participation if the same composition, the same representativeness and the same functioning are repeated.

We suggest that the representativeness of non-state actors should be increased, and that decisions within this new structure should be taken by consensus rather than by a majority of members.

- *Lack of implementation of the National Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) within the framework of REDD+ in Cameroon*

The implementation of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in the REDD+ process in Cameroon remains a challenge despite the development and validation of the National Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) by the Government of Cameroon within the framework of REDD+ in Cameroon.

In order to improve community participation in the REDD + process in Cameroon and facilitate the implementation of REDD+ projects in the field, National FPIC Guidelines were adopted in 2014. They stipulate that community FPIC Should be obtained before and throughout the development and implementation of REDD+ process and initiatives (projects, programs and activities) in Cameroon¹. Unfortunately, these guidelines have so far never been applied as stated in developing REDD+ related activities in Cameroon. The latest example is the development of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN), where information and consultation of communities in potential areas for development of future REDD+ initiatives, have not been carried out according to FPIC Guidelines. Similarly, it was noticed that ongoing REDD+ pilot initiatives/projects in Cameroon are developed without respect for these Guidelines. The weak implementation of National FPIC Guidelines is one cause of the very low community participation in the REDD+ process in Cameroon. The Mid-term Report commented here slightly mentioned this reality.

We recommend a strict application of community FPIC in all activities related to the development of REDD+ in Cameroon as stipulated in National FPIC Guidelines.

- *Clarifications on the civil society participation*

Within the framework of the REDD+ process in Cameroon, a CSO platform has been set up. Besides this platform, there are several civil society dynamics that follow the REDD+ process on a daily basis and implement concrete actions to promote the rights and interests of local and indigenous populations. Unfortunately, the proposals made by these categories of stakeholders are poorly taken into account and the recommendations made by the FCPF to the Government of Cameroon following the analysis of position papers of these actors, namely those meant to ensure the participation of various civil society dynamics, are not translated into concrete actions.

The mechanism and procedures for the participation of other civil society dynamics in the REDD + process in Cameroon need to be clarified.

¹ National Operating Guidelines for Free, Prior and Informed Consent in REDD+ in Cameroon

2- Poor implementation of communication strategy at the local level and lack of assessment of communications actions

A communication strategy was developed in 2016, and it must be acknowledged that communication efforts are being made in particular for civil society organizations. However, this communication strategy remains poorly disseminated, and communication efforts mentioned in the report are so far focused at the national level with few actions undertaken at the community level. Moreover, no mechanism for assessing communication actions has been put in place in order to get feedback on the level of understanding of targeted groups. Also, there is no mechanism to harmonize the content of messages to be delivered within the framework of REDD+. Consequently, each stakeholder provides information in his/her own way based on what he/she has.

The communication strategy must be widely disseminated for better appropriation (understanding) by stakeholders,

There must be more consistency and harmonization in the content of messages to be delivered on REDD+ and a mechanism for the monitoring and assessment of communication actions in the REDD+ process must be developed.

3- *Lack of an efficient capacity-building strategy for indigenous peoples' representatives*

Within the framework of REDD+ activities, capacity-building actions have been planned and support is provided to indigenous civil society organizations. However, the quality of representation for this group of stakeholders is an issue. It is mainly the lack of an endogenous process for the designation/selection of indigenous peoples' representatives by their peers and the lack of an effective strategy to ensure support and prior preparation of current representatives to the various information and decision-making meetings on REDD+ related issues. This limits the quality of their contribution during discussions in decision-making bodies, and significantly reduces their ability to influence decision-making to better respond to their concerns.

The capacity-building process for indigenous peoples should contribute to the development of an efficient capacity-building strategy for indigenous peoples' representatives sitting on national decision-making and REDD+ process monitoring bodies.

Summary of recommendations:

- A steering committee and local and national institutions with a balanced representation of all stakeholders and consensus as a mode of adopting decisions must be put in place within the framework of the institutional reorganization;
- A law must be signed that requires the implementation of National Guidelines for Free, Prior and Informed Consent in (FPIC) within the framework of REDD+ in Cameroon;
- An annual operational planning for communication must be drawn up taking into account the cultural specificities of communities and including an assessment of the effectiveness of activities carried out;
- Procedures for the participation of other CSOs in the REDD+ process should be defined;
- An efficient capacity-building strategy for indigenous peoples' representatives participating in REDD+ discussions and sitting on national decision-making and REDD+ process monitoring bodies in Cameroon must be developed.

List of signatory organizations:

AAFEBEN, ADD, ADEBAGO, ADEBAKA, ABAGUENI, ABAWOMI, AFDECDH, AJESH, APED, APRIAATE, ASBAK, ASTRADHE, BACUDA, CADER, CAFER, CAFT, CAJAD, Cam-Eco, CARFAD, CeDLA, CED, CEFAID, CENDEP, CERUT, CEPFILD, CIEFE, CRADIF, COMINSUD, FCTV, FAJOIED, GDA, NATURE CAMEROON, OCBB, ONED, OKANI, PAPEL, PERAD, PLANET Survey, ROCAME, ROLD, RUDEC, SAILD