

Statement of Central African Civil Society concerning the REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) of the Central African Republic

Bangui, 19 March 2011

The R-PP (Readiness Preparation Proposal) developed by the Central African Republic (CAR) was submitted in January 2011 to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), managed by the World Bank. This nationally significant document will be discussed at a meeting of the Participants' Committee of the FCPF from 23 to 25 March 2011 in Vietnam.

For this reason, members of the *Réseau de la société civile sur le changement climatique et la REDD+* (Civil society network on climate change and REDD+), met from 17 to 19 March 2011 in Bangui, CAR. Approximately forty representatives of civil society organizations active in the field of environment, human rights and gender attended the workshop, as well as indigenous peoples representatives of Aka and Peuhl Mbororo peoples.

At this meeting, participants identify the strengths and weaknesses of the content of the R-PP. Discussions focused on four main themes:

- Consultation and governance of REDD in CAR;
- Legal framework in CAR and benefit sharing in REDD;
- Causes of deforestation and degradation and social and environmental impacts;
- REDD Strategic Options and pilot projects.

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We, workshop participants, welcome the government's initiatives to strengthen its involvement in a national process of sustainable management of forest resources. Nevertheless, we have noted some difficulties in understanding the national strategy related to the forestry sector. We note that the policy of the government regarding the sustainable management of forests is related principally to four initiatives managed by four different departments:

- Implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) part of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process - Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (*Ministère des Eaux et Forêts*);
- REDD + process- Ministry of Environment and Ecology (*Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Ecologie*);
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) - Ministry of Mines and Energy (*Ministère des Mines et de l'Energie*), and
- Implementation of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) - High Commissioner for Human Rights (*Haut Commissariat aux Droits de l'Homme*)..

We note some inadequacies in coordination and information sharing between different departments. We, workshop participants, encourage the administration to develop a coordinated

and coherent strategy for the forestry sector.

Regarding the R-PP, discussions were held around four themes identified in the national document:

1: CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE OF REDD IN CAR

Certain inadequacies were identified in the consultation process in the preparation of the R-PP. For example, only one of the ten workshops was held outside the capital, in Mbaïki. We regret also the way in which organizations were designated in the R-PP to represent the views of the Central African civil society. Lastly, there have been no specific consultations of indigenous peoples, despite the fact that they are principal stakeholders in the REDD+ process (pages 19-21 of R-PP, 5th March 2011 version).

Recommendations:

- Civil society organisations and indigenous peoples' representatives should participate and be implicated in the roll out of consultations which the R-PP suggests will take place between 2011 and 2013 (pages 21-22), in accordance with the provisions of ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;
- Concerning representation of stakeholders in the structures to be created to manage REDD+ in CAR, we propose that:
 - four representatives of civil society should sit on the National REDD+ Committee (*Comité National REDD+*) and that the *Plateforme de la Société Civile Centrafricaine pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et l'Environnement*¹ should be the body responsible for submitting the names of the representatives. The R-PP currently proposes two representatives of civil society on the National REDD+ Committee to be selected by CIONGCA (pages 12-13).
 - the number of indigenous peoples representatives on the National REDD+ Committee be increase from two to four (2 Aka and 2 Mbororos), and that they be chosen by representative indigenous peoples structures;
 - the frequency of meetings of the National REDD+ Committee be increased from two to four per year to ensure it fulfils its monitoring role;
 - an adequate budget is allocated to the National REDD+ Committee to ensure the full operation of its functions;
 - the minutes of meetings of the National REDD+ Committee and the *Comités inter-préfectoraux* are made available to the public within one month of the meeting;
 - REDD revenues be managed by a "REDD Fund" created for this purpose and not housed in the *Fonds national de l'environnement* (FNE) as proposed in the R-PP (pages 14-15 ; 63);
 - civil society is represented in the management committee of the "REDD Fund";
 - the media and trade unions be implicated in the REDD + process.

¹ *La Plateforme de la Société Civile Centrafricaine pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et l'Environnement* (Platform of Central African Civil Society for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Environment) is the result of a recent collaboration between many organisations in the Central African civil society, involved in issues of human rights and indigenous peoples rights, environment and development. Currently, the Platforms' Charter has been adopted and indicates a willingness to work collectively and in a coordinated manner in the various political processes underway.

2: LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR REDD+ AND BENEFIT SHARING IN CAR

Concerning the review of the legal and regulatory framework, we recommend that coherence between the commitments made by the government in the FLEGT process and the REDD+ process is assured. We also wish to underline several fundamental elements which are prerequisites to all processes. The need to:

- revise the regulatory framework governing land rights in the CAR to ensure that indigenous peoples and local communities have a right of use and ownership of the forest, and to be able to benefit from REDD +;
- align national legislation with the provisions enshrined in the ILO Convention 169, ratified by CAR, in order to secure the rights of indigenous peoples;
- ensure a transparent and participatory process to identify gaps in existing laws and regulations that will be corrected in the REDD+ Law (*Loi REDD+*) according to the R-PP (page 59);
- ensure dissemination of information (including in *Sango*, the national language) concerning the existing legislative framework to guarantee an understanding of all stakeholders.

3: CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

We believe that there are some weaknesses in the analysis of these causes:

- We believe that pastoralism (nomadic herding), shifting cultivation and gathering of non-timber forest products are not the main causes of deforestation and forest degradation, contrary to the view expressed in the R-PP (pages 39-40);
- Industrial logging does not appear in the R-PP as a direct cause of deforestation and forest degradation (pages 39-40). Given the constraints on this sector, the lack of human resources and control and the weak enforcement of legislation relating to forest management, industrial timber exploitation should be considered a direct and major cause.

Recommendations:

- Implement operational mechanisms for monitoring the *Plan d'Exploitation et d'Aménagement* (PEA, Exploitation and Management Plans), involving all stakeholders;
- Studies on the drivers of deforestation are foreseen in the R-PP, however we note that the information concerning these studies is insufficient (pages 40-41). We would like the establishment of a participatory process involving all stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of these studies;
- Allocate sufficient funding for the preparation of these studies and the monitoring of social and environmental impacts; currently only 0.3% of total R-PP budget is allocated to this (pages 66 et 97);
- Train stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring of environmental and social impacts.

4: STRATEGIC OPTIONS AND REDD+ PILOT PROJECTS

There lack of coordination between the FLEGT VPA and the REDD+ strategy could lead to a lack of understanding of the national forestry sector strategy.

In addition, we recognize that the initial funding available under the FCPF totalling \$ 3.5 million cannot alone meet the challenges of REDD +. Therefore, we recognize that the process is likely to depend largely on funding from the carbon market. This would mean that the future international carbon market, which will follow the law of supply and demand, would guide future strategic options.

Recommendations:

- The R-PP suggests the establishment of a zoning process of the forest estate (pages 45-46). We ask that this zoning process is implemented in a participatory manner, notably through participatory mapping;
- The R-PP suggests strengthening protected areas (pages 46-47). This must be done through the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of forests;
- The R-PP suggests the expansion of industrial logging into the south-eastern forested area of CAR (page 48). Civil society stresses the need to preserve the forests of south-east from any form of industrial exploitation;
- Provide more information on pilot projects to the public and their funding (pages 53 ; 97);
- More awareness raising, training and communication on the principle of the carbon market in order that civil society can reach a position and more broadly, a national position can be reached, concerning the potential benefits to be derived (or not) from the carbon market. These prerequisites are necessary before any steps are taken in this direction (page 60-62).

Signed by:

Action pour les Initiatives de Développement des Communautés Rurales (AIDECOR)
Amis de la nature (AN)
Association Centrafricaine des Professionnels en Evaluation Environnementale (ACAPEE)
Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique (AFJC)
Association des Maman de Gbazabangui (AMG)
Association Droits et Développement des Peuples Autochtones de Centrafrique (ADPAC)
Association pour la Défense des Intérêts des BaAka de Centrafrique (ADIBAC)
Association pour la Sauvegarde et le Développement des Vulnérables en Centrafrique (ASDV/CA)
Centre d'Information Environnemental pour le Développement Durable (CIEDD)
Centre de Recherche et d'Appui au Développement (CRAD)
Comité pour le Développement Intégré des Communautés de Base (CODICOM)
Coordination Nationale du Programme des Peuples Non Atteints (CONAPPENA)
Femme et Environnement Bata Gbako
Femme Forêt et Développement (FFD)
Fondation de Recherches et d'Actions pour le Développement (FRAD)
Groupement des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs de Boali et Bimbo (GAERBB)
Groupement des Agriculteurs pour la Lutte Contre la Désertification et la Pauvreté (GALDP)
Maison de l'Enfant et de la Femme Pygmées (MEFP)
Mur- Africa Universel (MAU)
Nouvelle Vision

Organisation Centrafricaine des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH)
Organisation Centrafricaine pour la Défense de la Nature (OCDN)
Plate Forme de Concertation de Société Civile pour le Développement Humain (PCSCDH)
Presse Ecrite DEMOCRATE
Représentants Peulh (trois personnes)
Réseau Jeunesse Centrafrique pour la Culture de la Paix (REJECAP)
Tropical Forest Central Africa (TFCA)

[Translated from the French. Refer to the original text for any necessary clarifications.]