



CAMEROON MANGROVE CONSERVATION NETWORK

► Chapter of the African Mangrove Network (AMN) ►

www.mangrove-africa.net

Matanda News

To inform and educate the Cameroonian public on mangrove conservation issues

Quarterly newsletter

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Editorial

Dear Friends,

As we are entering into the 4th year of existence of the Network, it's usually time for evaluation and projections. There is no doubt that the Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) has made the difference as major actor of the civil society. Its members met regularly, having mobilised major stakeholders,... especially its brilliant involvement through a big exhibition in the recent African Meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in preparation for Conference of Parties (COP10) in Korea. To facilitate access to issues outside the traditional mangrove blocks, a new block was put in place during the 6th Executive Committee Meeting in Mouanko. This block named Block D Yaounde with Focal Point directed by the NGO Volontariat pour l'Environnement (VPE) represented by M. ATEBA Dieudonné Xavier will assist in aspects relating to issues such as policy, environmental education, lobbying...

The perspectives of the Network for the year 2008, is to develop many projects through its members, lobby for fundraising, the organisation of a national meeting for the conservation of mangrove among others. A reflection will be made on the integration of inland wetlands into the Network so that the Network captures all wetlands related issues and actors. In other words, the 7th Executive Committee Meeting that will be held in Block D during the first quarter of the New Year 2008 will be interesting and challenging.

We wish all of you a prosperous new year 2008. Happy reading!!!

Dieudonné Xavier ATEBA
Focal Point Block D Yaounde

Block Info

*Littoral***CWCS /GEF Small Grants Programme Mangrove Project**

The mangroves of the Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve cover a surface area of more than 16 000 ha with 0,72 % constituting degraded and fragmented zones, due to the activities of the populations living in these zones that use the wood of mangroves for fish smoking, construction of the traditional smokehouses and dwellings, etc. In view of the increasing threats on this ecosystem and to reduce or minimise the human pressure on the mangroves, CWCS with the support of the GEF Small Grants Programme is working within the framework of the project entitled: «Capacity building of coastal communities on sustainable management of mangroves in the Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve»

The objectives as well as the results expected from this project are:

- To strengthen the organisational and functional capacities of community groups in order to maximise their administrative and financial sustainability.
- To plan and organise the cut of the mangrove wood and to restore degraded area so that the forest of mangrove is cut in a sustainable way and that the degraded zones are restored with the involvement of the local populations.
- To improve fish smoking techniques by putting in place and promoting wood energy saving smoke houses that will considerably reduce the quantity of wood cut for fish smoking.

In order to achieve objectives to reach the expected results, the following activities have been previewed:

1. Sensitisation/training of the populations for community organisation and facilitation of the creation of new user groups;
2. Training of groups on the community dynamics; opinion leaders on leadership and management, communication, gender and sustainable management of natural resources skills;
3. Elaboration of improved methods of mangrove wood cutting;
4. Setting up of the mangrove wood cutters groups;
5. Training of groups on improved techniques of mangrove wood cutting;
6. Realisation of a participative cartography of mangrove wood cutting zones;
7. Training on mangrove regeneration;
8. Establishing community mangrove nurseries;
9. Setting up community mangrove plantations;
10. Selection of Traditional smokehouses to improve;
11. Improvement of Traditional smokehouses selected.

Presently, the activities (1) to (7) have been done and the eighth has been realised in some sites and is being implemented in others. The rest of the activities is planned for 2008.

By DIYOUKE MIBOG Eugene, CWCS

*South***CWCS/WWF-CARPO Mangrove Project (Continuation)**

In the previous edition of this newsletter, we announced the field implementation of Project “Mangrove Resilience to Climate Change “in the Ntem Estuary Mangrove Zone. We present the following achievements so far:

Before that, it is important to remind that this Project is jointly implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature – Central Africa Regional Programme Office (WWF - CARPO) and the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS) with more than ten (10) years experience in participatory mangrove management in Cameroon.

In order to assure its development, man has greatly modified the ecological and environmental equilibrium opening the door to climatic changes. As time passes, the climate changes to our disfavour. This situation brought United Nations to organise a world dialogue on occasion of its 62nd

General Assembly on climate change. The Cameroonian President His Excellency Paul BIYA had taken the floor to announce the imminent creation in his country of a National Observatory on Climatic Change.

In this context and considering the sensitivity of mangrove ecosystems to climatic change, WWF - United States initiated a program of research in four countries of the world with goal to understand and to quantify the climatic change impact on Wetlands in general and on mangroves in particular. This program consists of the development and the implementation of a general methodology to assess the vulnerability of the mangrove and associated ecosystems to climatic change. Among the 4 pilot countries, 2 are in Africa notably Tanzania and Cameroon.

In Cameroon, the estuarine mangrove zone of Ntem in South Province bordering Equatorial Guinea had been chosen to test the developed methodology for three years.

The project started in September 04 to 14 2007 with the organisation of a workshop and field work involving local NGOs and CBOs that were trained in various aspects of the methodology with a team of consultants.

These local organisations were then involved in the implantation of socioeconomic and ecological monitoring structures within the mangrove zone.

Data have been collected with these local support structures (NGOs, CBOs) on 3 aspects: climatic, ecological and socio-economic. More field evaluations are being planned.

By **DONGMO MINKEM Merlin, CWCS**

Centre and Others

Cameroon Environmental Watch (CEW) puts "Full fires on mangroves in Cameroon"

In 2007, the NGO Cameroon Environmental Watch (CEW), member of the Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) spread out in the Universities of Yaounde, Douala and Buea, Secondary establishments of Buea and Douala and coastal Cameroonian mangrove localities to mobilise students, teachers, researchers, pupils, coastal population of mangrove and the public around the mangrove ecosystem of Cameroon.

Context

In January 2006, after many negotiations, Cameroon ratified the RAMSAR Convention and joined the mainstream of knowledge and conservation of wetlands in general and mangroves in particular. This ratification came at the moment where Cameroonian mangroves are in a critical situation for these reasons: It is a complex and focused domain of research which is not accessible to the large public; it is a very rich (fauna, flora, aquatic, agricultural, energy resources) and very fragile ecosystem; concern has been expressed by different actors especially the abusive exploitation of fish (Cameroonians and foreigners), abusive extraction of sand, oil-bearing exploitation, non controlled lands extension, abusive cut of mangroves...; there is little knowledge by these different actors on the various aspects of this ecosystem.

Another report is that the surface of the mangrove in Cameroon reduced from 472 500 ha in 1980 to 250 000 in 2002, a reduction of half (FAO) in about 20 years. There was need to generate awareness on the values and threats of this ecosystem in order to promote debate, from where the initiative "Full fires on mangrove in Cameroon " of CEW put in place in partnership with the IRD, the French Ministry of foreign affairs.

Thematic areas retained by CEW

For the implementation of this initiative, the CEW retained the following thematic areas:

- The present area extent of mangrove (in the world, in Cameroon);
- Importance and functioning of the mangroves;
- Threats on mangroves;
- Possible repercussions.

Targets of “Full fire on mangroves in Cameroon”

Public identified as targets of the Project: students; pupils (high schools and colleges); teachers (University, Secondary); residents of mangrove zones (coastal and urban quarter's people); large public.

Media tools and their specificity

“Full fires on mangroves in Cameroon ” is a project of Scientific, Technical and Cultural Promotion (PCST). It requires relays adapted to target for a better diffusion of information. The following tools have been elaborated by CEW for its target: **thematic posters** (They facilitate the diffusion of information and perpetuate information in the time and space); **painted pictures** (attract looks toward information); A **mangrove calendar** (to inquire about the date while inquiring about the characteristic species of mangrove); **comic strip** (good tool of environmental education for high school students); **flyers** (simple and convenient mean to transmit information); **puzzles** (to learn by the game, it is easy for children); A good radio, television, press communication; video documentaries for coastal residents.

Relation with researchers and scientific community

A project that says itself of promotion of the scientific and technical culture should be executed in close collaboration with researchers. The CEW didn't disregard this aspect as: during the conferences in universities, there were presentations of the results of the works of some researchers (Teachers and students). We had 4 researchers in the University of Yaoundé I; 3 researchers in the University of Buea and 4 researchers in the University of Douala. All targeted Universities accepted and authorised the conferences “Full fires on mangroves in Cameroon “as scientific manifestations were taking place in their institutions.

Balance sheet of “Full fire on mangrove in Cameroon”

At the end of this campaign, close to 600 people will have been mobilised directly in universities and secondary schools through: 03 scientific manifestations organised in universities of Yaoundé I, Douala and Buea; Open door days in 4 secondary schools of Buea and Douala; meetings with coastal residents; exhibitions of supports in the different stages of the campaign; institutional relation with Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MINEP) and the academic institutions.

Broadcasts radio, press articles, TV diffusions will have touched indirectly on an important number of people that we cannot yet evaluate.

Impact

Though it is very early to evaluate the impact of CEW initiative on the target, we can already note: An orientation of the activities of academic clubs towards the thematic areas of mangrove and a permanent follow-up by contacts persons of the project; the choice of the CEW to display its supports and to represent the Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) at the African Regional Preparatory Meeting of Ramsar Convention COP 10 that took place from the 26 to 30 November 2007 at Yaounde Conference Centre; an invitation addressed to the CEW by the Cameroonian Ministry of External Relation to display these tools during the euro - Cameroonian meetings on the December 14, 2007 in the City Hall of Yaounde.

Way forward

The CEW was eligible a second time to conduct the second phase of the project that is currently in progress; A bank of environmental education tools is presently available in the CEW for campaigns and actions. However, it is required to find sponsors and other partners to multiply and to distribute to a large scale supports which are already produced and to perpetuate the achievements at the level of targets.

By MOMO Achille, CEW

Cameroon coastal wetlands of international importance

Wetlands on the Cameroon coast are of international importance for migratory water birds and are home to an exceptionally rich diversity in wildlife. Ratification of these sites under the Ramsar convention is needed to promote wise and sustainable use of the natural resources in these vulnerable coastal areas. These conclusions could be drawn from a survey of the Cameroon coast, carried out in January and February 2007.

The coastal survey was initiated by the Foundation Working Group for International Wader and Waterfowl research (WIWO) and carried out by the Watershed Task Group in collaboration with the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS), the Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society (CBCS), the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINEF) and a team of expatriate ornithologists.

The project received financial support from Wetlands International, Koop Cameroun and Pecten Cameroun. Cameroon has recently ratified the Ramsar convention, an international convention which aims to protect wetlands of international importance, and is now in the process of identifying such wetlands within its borders. The aim of the water bird count was to identify wetlands of international importance on the Cameroon coast.

Migratory birds from Canada, northern Europe and Siberia use the Cameroon wetlands for their wintering period before returning North to breed. The Ndian Basin, the second largest mangrove forest in West Africa, borders on the Korup National Park and the Nigerian border and is home to a wide variety of wildlife. The largest ever observed group of African Skimmer, a near-threatened African bird species, was seen in the Ndian basin.

This group may represent as much as 20% of the global population of this species, underlining the importance of these wetlands. Near Douala, the second city of Cameroon and a regionally important harbour, the estuary of the Wouri River forms an extensive zone of mudflats and mangrove swamps, home to large numbers of water birds.



The survey team in the Ndian Basin

The Ndian Basin and Wouri estuaries contain large areas of non-disturbed mangrove forests which form important breeding grounds for fish, shrimp and other important wildlife. Local communities in both areas are engaged in fishing and fish smoking. Since they are mostly (illegal) settlers from other West-African countries, basic services are lacking and un-sustainable use of resources make life difficult for these people.

Further south, the lower beaches of the Sanaga River form seasonally flooded sandbanks bordered by pristine lowland forest. The sandbanks are home to one of the largest known breeding colonies of African Skimmer while Grey Pratincole, another African waterbird species, also reaches numbers of international importance.

The local population is dependent on the river for fishing and seasonal harvesting of freshwater clams. The Ndian Basin, Wouri River and lower Sanaga River can be classified as wetlands of international importance according to criteria under the Ramsar convention. All three sites are under threat of habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity. Oil & gas exploration is just starting in the Ndian Basin, an extension of the neighbouring Nigerian oil-rich delta region.

The Wouri estuary is under pressure from extension of the harbour and environmental pollution. Plans for extended hydropower production on the Sanaga River may affect the fragile ecosystems and livelihoods downstream.

The participating NGOs work to stimulate sustainable practices with local communities to reduce pressure on the fragile habitats. Improved fish smoking ovens are introduced to improve the quality of the smoked fish and reduce fuel wood consumption. Cane rat domestication is promoted among hunters to reduce bushmeat consumption.

The NGOs participating in this project are now in discussion with the Cameroon government to undertake the necessary actions to get these sites listed as Ramsar sites to promote sustainable and wise use of these wetlands.

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Meetings

Stakeholder meeting on the elaboration of Wetlands policy for Cameroon

Through the initiative of the CAUCUS (Caucus of Cameroon Parliamentarians on Environmental Protection), of the MINEP (Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection) and of the FGF (Forest Governance Facility), a consultative meeting took place on the 27 September 2007 in Yaoundé at "Forest Governance Facility (FGF) " Office to facilitate formulation and the setting up of a Wetlands Policy for Cameroon. The main recommendations were: continuation of the sensitisation on the national territory, signature of the collaboration conventions with the key ministries, setting up a steering committee which the criteria of selection of the members have been elaborated on the spot, training of parliamentarians, field visits in all provinces, then the eco regions of Cameroon.

Launching workshop of the CWCS/GEF SG Mangrove Project

On October 2, 2007 was held in Mouanko the stakeholders and launching workshop of the CWCS Mangrove Project supported by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) funds on the "Capacity building of coastal communities in sustainable management of mangrove ecosystem of Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve". A wide range of stakeholders took part in the workshop, under the direction of the Central Services of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOP).

6th Executive Committee Meeting of CMN

The Executive Committee of the Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) meets at least twice per year in order to: evaluate the action plan of the year in progress or to elaborate the action plan for the year to come, to allow zonal coordinators to present their reports, and finally to debate on problems encountered and even to consider some perspectives for the continuity of the Network.

It is in this light that was held at Mouanko, Network's Headquarters on November 1st the 6th Executive Committee Meeting of the CMN. This meeting permitted members to evaluate the state of implementation of the 2007 action plan, to elaborate the 2008 action plan, to consider the possibilities of real involvement of the Network in the development of national policies and its involvement in international conferences. Among the resolutions adopted at the end of the meeting, was the creation of a fourth block the Block D that integrates all other organisations and members of the Network which are not in a mangrove zone. This block covers the Centre and the Rest of the provinces of Cameroon. The NGO VPE (Volontariat Pour l'Environnement) was designated as focal point in Yaounde. The next meeting, the 7th, is previewed for April 2008 at Akonolinga, Centre Province.

African Regional Preparatory Meeting COP10

Last November 12, a meeting took place in Yaoundé in preparation to the African Regional Preparatory Meeting to the 10th Conference of the Parties of the RAMSAR Convention (COP10) in Korea.

The African Regional Preparatory Meeting was eventually held from November 2007 26 to 30 in the Conference Center in Yaoundé under the patronage of His Excellence Mr. Prime Minister and Head of Government Chief INONI Ephraim. The Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) with the support of WWF-CARPO distinguished itself by an exhibition made by members associations present. For more on the highlights of this meeting visit the Ramsar Web site: http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_africa2008_news_e.htm.

Extra

Regional workshop of the Conservators of Central Africa

The Network of Protected Areas of Central Africa (RAPAC) is instituting a certain number of reference mechanisms at the disposal of the managers for the evaluation of the management of all protected areas of Central Africa.

It is in this light that it decided to test the World Bank/WWF tool for the monitoring of follow-up of the efficiency of the management which has been conceived in order to integrate the elements of evaluation proposed by the World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA). It has also put in place an activity titled "Development of capacities for the evaluation of the management of protected areas in Central Africa" with the technical and financial supports from the European Union under ECOFAC IV Program, and the World Bank/WWF Alliance.

RAPAC conducted the first test on the methodology and the implementation of the tool on twenty pilot protected areas in five countries of the region (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, RCA and RDC). At the end of this first pilot phase, a regional workshop was held to validate this tool (on the basis of the results of the test achieved) had been organised in Kinshasa, RDC, in May 2007. The main recommendation of this workshop, approved by the Administrative Committee of RAPAC, was the promotion and the generalisation of the application of the tool on the pilot sites. It is therefore in this light that from the 1st to 7th of October 2007 a regional workshop on training of the Conservators of the CEMAC Zone took place in Cameroon on this tool of management of protected areas with a field trip to the Douala-Edea Wildlife Reserve, Littoral Province.

Partners

AMN Info

The 2006 activity report of the African Mangrove Conservation Network (AMN) is available on the Web site: www.mangrove-africa.net

African Mangrove Network (AMN) www.mangrove-africa.net

MAP Info

Mangroves more threatened than rainforests

By Rhett A. Butler

Destruction of mangrove forests could leave the world deprived of their important ecological services by the end of a century, warns an international team of scientists writing in the July 6th issue of the journal Science.

Mangrove forests, which once covered more than 200,000 square kilometers of coastline, have been diminished by 35-86 percent in extent in locations around the world, according to the U.N. Food and

Agriculture Organization, and are critically endangered or approaching extinction in 26 out of the 120 countries in which they are found. Further, mangrove forests are disappearing at a rate of 1-2 percent per year, a pace that surpasses the destruction of adjacent ecosystems, coral reefs and tropical rainforests. These losses, combined with increasing fragmentation of mangroves, reduces their viability and the quality of the services--including controlling coastal erosion, buffering against storm damage, and serving as a refuge for wildlife--they provide.

"Where mangrove forests are cleared for aquaculture, urbanization, or coastal landfill or deteriorate due to indirect effects of pollution and upstream land use, their species richness is expected to decline precipitously," write the authors. "Examples from other ecosystems have shown that species extinctions can be followed by loss in functional diversity, particularly in species-poor systems like mangroves... Therefore, any further decline in mangrove area is likely to be followed by accelerated functional losses."

The scientists warn that deforestation of mangroves "reduces their dual capacity to be both an atmospheric CO2 sink and an essential source of oceanic carbon," while damaging fisheries, worsening siltation, and adversely affecting coastal communities by putting them at greater risk of flooding from storm surges, sea level rise, and tsunamis.

Despite their importance, the authors say that mangroves are under appreciated and that growing pressure from development, agriculture, and industry will put these forests at ever greater risk. The authors add that climate change and the associated rise in sea level could be particularly detrimental to mangroves and that urgent action is needed to protect them.

Source: <<http://news.mongabay.com/2007/0705-mangroves.html>>mongabay.com

From: icsf@icsf.net

Source: MAP News, 190th Ed. Pt.1 of 3, Oct. 27th, 2007
Site web: <http://www.mangroveactionproject.org>

Announcements

► Web site to consult

Still concerning the discussion of the last CCPM on the communication relative in the Forest Environment Sectoral Programme (FESP), Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Program (Formerly PGDRN and newly named Pro - PSFE) of the GTZ has one very rich Web site. For those that it interested: <http://www.cameroun-foret.com/>

Still concerning the communication on the PSFE, the site of the Common Fund PSFE is: <http://www.minfof-psfe.com>

Very cordially,

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GTZ

Technical Advisor MINFOF/MINEP

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