



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

When mangrove situation worries us...

What can a socio economist and moreover an environmentalist say on the distress in the mangroves? The word "worry" finds its etymology in the Latin term 'Quietus' that means always in a state of restlessness. The mangroves thrive in an ecosystem with perpetual movements in the inter-tidal zones under the movement of waves, animals and people. The quality of these movements determines the state of survival of this ecosystem or its condemnation. In fact, the following questions can be asked:

What are mangroves? What problems do they face? What are the solutions?

Mangroves are forest ecosystems made up of stilt roots that develop in the inter-tidal zones in the tropical and subtropical countries of the world. They are almost composed of trees and other evergreen shrubs with stilt roots or pneumatophores fixed in hydromorphic soils under tidal movements.

Mangroves face multilevel problems:

- Mangrove ecosystems are unstable and fragile;
- They are exposed to pressure both from endogenous and exogenous factors;
- They are subjected to multiple uncontrolled actions of local populations in coastal areas, to perpetual variations of the coastal environment and to urban and maritime pollutions;
- These ecosystems are exploited uncontrollably, not protected and little valued, compromising their vital functions;
- The excessive exploitation of mangrove wood contributes to the destruction of nursery zones necessary for the reproduction of fisheries species, to climatic changes in the coastal zones, the degradation of mangrove flora, coastal denaturation, etc.;
- Mindless fishing (use of explosive chemicals and non selective mesh sizes), clandestine immigration of foreign nationals from some neighbouring countries that settle in large numbers in the mangroves carry out abusive fishing without formalities by the administrative authorities. The worst is that they are unstable always in search of fish stocked areas;
- Over fishing in the mangrove zones reduces fish catch despite high fishing effort and also the reduction in the sizes of the fish and mammals caught because of rarefaction of aged individuals.
- Cameroon mangroves are exposed to coastal pollutions from liquid and solid effluents toxic to the mangrove ecosystem substrate;
- Petroleum exploitation has serious impacts on mangrove flora and fauna. These inland metallic pollutants end in the fragile coastal zone of mangroves promoting eutrophication and compaction of frequently inundated anaerobic soils;
- Pollutions by direct and indirect seeping of the liquid and sewage effluents, crude or aromatic hydrocarbons, excessive non biodegradable nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides from agro-industrial plantations not far from mangrove zones, that end up causing the degradation (eutrophication...) and biodiversity loss in the mangrove ecosystems;
- Mangroves that exist close to some coastal cities are subjected to threats from fast extension and encroachments of these cities, pollution from liquid and sewages disposals, rural exodus, spontaneous settlements and concentration of industries;
- Faced with the absence of management and regulatory texts on mangroves, fishermen cut mangrove wood to smoke their fisheries products.

Today, these mangrove ecosystems are reducing and degrading at an alarming rate. This contributes to coastal denaturation, degradation and total destruction of these ecosystems, with negative consequences of loss of flora and fauna species, climatic change (change in precipitation regimes and temperature increase or the warming up of coastal regions), sea level rise increasing the risk of flooding events (no mangroves to shelter coastlines from strong waves) and the destruction of sea grass and coral reef communities.

This newsletter is one of the solutions through the sensitisation, education, training and information geared towards resolving these problems.

Enjoy it!!!

Sosthene AHANDA, Ph.D

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Block Info

*Littoral***Celebration of the World Wetlands Day by WTG**

Traditional authorities in the Lake Ossa Complex, Dizangue Cameroon spearheaded the celebration of 2008 World Wetlands Day (WWD), by creating traditionally protected zones to control fisheries recruitment and revitalizing the hangabinda cultural rites and festival.

The Lake Ossa wetlands complex which includes one major lake, 8 small lakes, more than 20 small Islands and parts of the River Sanaga is a veritable biodiversity hot spot covering more than 6000 hectares. The lake is very often referred to as one of the key habitats for the African Manatee and Freshwater Turtles amongst others (large mammals, water fowls, more than 40 species of fish etc. About 80% of the approximate surrounding inhabitants depend on fisheries resources for their livelihoods. Major threats like industrial pollution, unsustainable harvesting of fisheries resources has caused the fisheries population to be on the decline. Efforts through the local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the government technical ministries on the field in reversing these threats have yielded fruits which are not insignificant.

The traditional authorities led by *His Royal Highness, Paramount Chief Yakalag*, now very conscious and aware of the goods and services provided by the Lake Ossa Complex, have in a very grand style decided to restore in their own way the health of fisheries population, hence the health of people through the creation of four traditionally protected zones which will culminate in the revitalization of the Hangabinda cultural rites and festival (which has not been done for 15 years now); this consist of giving food, drinks, and other things to the ancestors. (guarantors of wetland resources) living in the lake.

These zones in question will be monitored by people initiated according to the indigenous culture. Field activities began on the 25th of January 2008 and ended on the 28th of January 2008 and extended up till the 2nd of February, 2008 with a massive information and sensitization campaign to raise awareness about these protected zones.



Family photo of traditional authorities, some key fishermen, WTG & partners, MINEPIA & MINFOF after a planning and concertation meeting at the Yakalag Paramount Chiefdom.

Recent studies have indicated Lake Ossa and the lower Sanaga already qualify as wetland sites of International importance (Ramsar sites) .This initiative is being Facilitated by Watershed Task Group (WTG) and partners (EDCIF and CBC) through the support of UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, and IUCN Netherlands Committee Ecosystem Grants Programme.

Reported by Chi Napoleon F (Project Team Leader) and Chekoua Justin Landry. (Field support staff) of WTG & Partners (EDCIF & CBC)
Email: wtgcam@yahoo.co.uk

Current mangrove area coverage estimate for Cameroon

United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (WCMC) have published in June 2007 a report entitled “Mangroves of Western and Central Africa” available online at: http://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources/publications/UNEP_WCMC_bio_series/26.htm

The report is a fruit of contributions from partners, donors, and mangrove experts from the region.

The report presents country profiles for 19 countries of West and Central Africa from Mauritania to Angola, considering the status, distribution, biodiversity, uses, threats and drivers of change for their mangroves. The report further notes that although there is considerable work being undertaken to research this habitat at the national, regional and global levels, there are still significant gaps in information, emphasizing a need for continued efforts to improve assessment in the region. This report concludes that there has been a decline in mangrove cover in the region over the last quarter of a century, and that there will be consequences as a result of this decline.

For Cameroon, with a land surface of 465 400km², coastline of 1,798.7km, population 16 322 persons with density of 34 persons/km, growth rate of 1.60% per year; the present mangrove cover is estimated at 1 957km² (195 700 ha) with six principal species: *Avicennia germinans*, *Conocarpus erectus*, *Languncularia racemosa*, *Rhizophora mangle*, *R. racemosa*, *R. harrisoni*. Cameroon mangrove coverage represents 6% of African mangrove cover falling fourth in the following classification of five countries with largest coverage of mangroves in the region: Nigeria (7 386), Guinea Bissau (2 999), Guinea (2 039), Cameroon (1 957) and Gabon (1 606). About 7.1% of Cameroon mangroves fall within protected areas. The mangroves have declined by 28% between 1980 and 2006 as follows in km²: 1980 (2 720), 1990 (2 563), 1997 (2 494), 2000 (2 515), 2005 (2 500), 2006 (1 957).

Key drivers of change in Cameroon include population growth and urban development; economic pressure from petroleum exploration. The majority of the threats facing mangroves resulting from the key drivers identified above include: urban infrastructure and agricultural development; eutrophication and algal blooms – pesticide and fertilizer run-off from large-scale plantations (rubber, palm oil, banana) in the coastal region of the Cameroon, inhibiting transpiration in the mangrove; low protection/legislation for mangroves – with large tracts still unprotected, except within the newly created Ndongoro National Park at the border with Nigeria, Bois de Singe, Douala-Edea National Park, and the Campo Ma'an National Park with the border with Equatorial Guinea. Outside this area, the mangroves are threatened with large scale petroleum/gas exploration and exploitation activities. In spite of the abundant use of timber and non-timber forest products from the mangroves, an adequate legislation does not exist yet. Invasive species – the nipa palm (*Nipa fruticans*) is an introduced species, which has colonized several areas and competes to a significant degree with the indigenous mangroves such as *Rhizophora* spp, water hyacinth (*Echorhina crassipes*) is also abundant. Most of the threats identified are well known but not properly quantified and documented for management applications.

Key uses for mangrove and mangrove forests include: construction of bridges; traditional fishing gear; production of charcoal (in particular, *Rhizophora*); tannins; wine and other distilled beverages; construction of roofing materials and decorations; food and medicines; fishing in and around the mangroves, as well as offshore for the mangroves, they are important nursery habitats for fish and shrimp, important for the fishery; fish processing through smoking with mangrove wood.

Recent events: partnership development especially the role of FAO, creation of Cameroon Mangrove Network, sensitisation, capacity building, construction of improved smoked ovens by Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS), wetlands policy development process amongst others.

By Gordon Ajonina

Workshop of the National Hydrocarbons Corporation at Kribi

The Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee (PSMC) has organised on the 14th February at Kribi, South Province, a workshop on the presentation of provisional report of cumulative impact studies of ongoing projects or future projects in Kribi Zone.

Workshop on manual of research procedures in protected areas organized by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF)

A workshop has been held in Sangmélima, South Province, from the 13 and 14 March 2008, on the development and validation of a manual of research procedures for protected areas organised by the MINFOF.

Participative evaluation of HIPC initiatives in the Sanaga Maritime Division

A one day workshop was organised on the 17 March 2008 grouping over 100 stakeholders including the administration, rural council, NGOs, Civil Society at Edea, the Sanaga Maritime Division, Littoral Province, like elsewhere in Cameroon to evaluate the achievements of the Highly Indebted Poor Country initiatives with orientations for future actions to be incorporated in the next generation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Document.

Cameroon prepares for REDD projects

The World Bank (WB) has put in place a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) for the reduction of emissions geared towards supporting forest bearing countries in their efforts towards the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources within the framework of the fight against climate change. Within this framework, Cameroon has received an assistance of the WB through the World Wide Fund for Nature- Central Africa Programme Office (WWF-CARPO) for a preliminary study. It is within this context that a lunching workshop was organised in Mbalmayo, Centre Province, involving Cameroon forestry actors. The main outcome of which was the elaboration of the Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) sheet to be submitted to the WB for consideration. If approved, Cameroon will benefit from the first phase of financial support of 5 millions US dollars (2.5 billion Fcfa) for the period 2008 – 2012 for the preparation of projects of the post Kyoto nature. Owing to their potentials in the sequestration of atmospheric carbon, the mangroves are also of equal right as inland forests in these projects.

Merlin DONGMO MINKEM, MINEP

GEF National Dialogue

A National Dialogue of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the periods 2006 – 2010 (GEF4) and 2010 -2014 (GEF5) has been organised by the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MINEP) from the 16 – 17 June 2008 at the Mvog-Bétsi Zoo-botanical Garden, Yaounde. The Dialogue mobilised more than 117 participants from the various sectors including administration, private sector, NGO, civil society and GEF implementing agencies with the objective of strengthening the integration and impact of GEF activities within national sustainable development and poverty reduction policies. There was the issue of defining national strategic priorities in line with GEF focal areas of climate change, international waters and persistent organic pollutants that will serve as the basis for the elaboration of the national strategy for Cameroon for GEF 4 and 5.

Merlin DONGMO MINKEM, MINEP

7th Executive Committee Meeting of CMN at Edea

The seventh Executive Committee Meeting (ECM) of the Cameroon Mangrove Network (CMN) was held at Edea on the 26 June 2008 at the premises of the NGO Cameroon Ecology (CamEco). Key points on the agenda were: evaluation of the progress of implementation of the ongoing 2008 Action Plan which was put at between 40-50%, organisation of the National Seminar and General Assembly (GA) of CMN and that of the African Mangrove Network to which the network also belongs. Two new organisations GIC Va - Mangrove and APEMEN from Littoral were registered raising the CMN membership from 37 to 39 member NGOs and CBOs.

Extra

Interview with the National Co-ordinator of the GEF-SGP

Matanda News met with the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) National Coordinator Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck and asked her some questions about the programme.

Matanda News: What is GEF-SGP and how does it operate?

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: Launched in 1992, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries towards climate change abatement, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation while generating sustainable livelihoods. Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a corporate programme, SGP is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF partnership, and is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). At present, 101 countries participate in SGP having ratified the conventions on biological diversity and climate change. At country level, non-governmental and community-based organizations submit project using the proposal guidelines provided. Project proposals are selected and approved by a National Steering Committee.

Matanda News: How many organisations have benefited from your scheme and especially those working within the mangrove and coastal zone?

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: Four organisations have benefited from the GEF Small Grants scheme for a total amount of 58.199.000 cfa francs (US\$130 000).

Matanda News: How can networks like the Cameroon Mangrove Network benefit from your programme?

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: Through the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Cameroon Mangrove Network and through the GEF Small Grants Programme grantees network can be selected as a key stakeholder of the GEF medium size or full size projects mainly in the implementation of community initiatives in the coastal and marine focal area.

Matanda News: What are the future perspectives and orientations of your programme?

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: Our orientations for the medium term are aimed at supporting local initiatives in the preservation and regeneration of the rich and diverse fauna and flora of Cameroon coast.

Matanda News: What advice can you give to this network?

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: I advise the network to continue working as a team and supporting each member in the achievement of the objectives and engagements taken vis à vis communities and partners.

Matanda News: Thank you for talking to us.

Dr (Mrs) Marie-Laure Mpeck: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you.

Partners

AMN Info

The second edition of the newsletter of the African Mangrove Conservation Network (AMN) "*The voice of the mangrove*" is out and has commended the efforts of Cameroon Mangrove Network in producing the "*Matanda News*" newsletter.

MAP Info

World Wetlands Day Saturday 2 February 2008

World Wetlands Day marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997. Since then government agencies, non-governmental organisations and community groups have celebrated World Wetlands Day by undertaking actions to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands. These activities include seminars, nature walks, festivals, launch of new policies, announcement of new Ramsar sites, newspaper articles, radio interviews and wetland rehabilitation.

The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2008 is "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People". This is in recognition of the importance of the impacts of wetland-related diseases and poor sanitation on the quality of water and wetlands.

[Http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html).

From: "Seagrass-Watch HQ": hq@seagrasswatch.org

Source: *MAP News, 194th Ed. 1 of 2 2-03-08*

Site web: <http://www.mangroveactionproject.org>

Shell and Wetlands International tart partnership

05-03-2008

Announcement

Royal Dutch Shell and global NGO Wetlands International have established a five-year partnership to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands by Shell and its affiliates. It will strengthen the capacity of Wetlands International through building in-house business skills and sharing knowledge in the communication, HR and finance disciplines. The partnership was signed by Jeroen van der Veer, Chief Executive of Royal Dutch Shell and Jane Madgwick (CEO Wetlands International).

The partnership is in recognition of the disproportionately high global significance of wetland ecosystems in terms of biodiversity, water provision, people's livelihoods and climate change. Wetlands such as deltas, shallow marine systems, inter-tidal marshes, rivers and peatlands are also particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the energy industry policies and practices.

As part of this new partnership, Shell will seek to develop new strategies, policies and tools to protect wetlands biodiversity and people, and to fulfill its sustainable development objectives. Wetlands International will provide the knowledge about wetland areas, their values and advice on how to manage them in a more sustainable way. The cooperation will in general aim to minimise the loss of nature and negative impacts on associated livelihoods.

The activities under the partnership will promote the efficient use of wetlands in river basins and along flyways of migratory birds; develop and demonstrate innovative mechanisms to address environmental poverty in wetlands and address climate change mitigation and adaptation. Jane Madgwick, CEO Wetlands International: "This ambitious partnership provides a great opportunity for Shell and Wetlands International to combine their competencies and to learn from each other. We aim to leave a positive legacy from these joint activities for wetlands and their peoples, especially in developing countries".

Jane Madgwick
CEO of Wetlands International

Contact for more information:

Wetlands International
alex.kaat@wetlands.org.
+31 (0)317 478856
+31 (0)6 5060 1917 (mobile)

Royal Dutch Shell
Global Media Relations
+44207 934 3505
<http://www.wetlands.org/news.aspx?id=64f8a011-07e0-4529-b2c1-d4fceb89ff17>

Cameroon

BBC coverage of community mapping in Cameroon

30 Jan 2008

New technology used by indigenous peoples to map traditional lands and monitor illegal logging given wide coverage on BBC

Fergal Keane of the BBC was in Cameroon meeting indigenous peoples using new technology to document their traditional use of forests, to map their lands and to monitor and report illegal logging activity.

Local NGO, Centre for Environment and Development in Cameroon (CED) and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), have been working directly with indigenous peoples to support and develop this approach over several years. These maps support indigenous peoples to assert their rights in dialogue and negotiation with government authorities, conservation NGOs and logging companies. Indigenous peoples, with support from FPP, are also mapping their lands in Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela, Thailand and Indonesia.

Such grassroots initiatives can offer concrete solutions to crucial global issues, such as the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, the management of protected areas and the protection of forest biodiversity. These issues are being discussed at the UN level, including the upcoming 2nd Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity Working Group on Protected Areas, 11 - 15 February 2008, at the FAO headquarters in Rome.

Coverage includes:

BBC 10 O'Clock News, UK, Wednesday 30 January

BBC World, Breakfast news and subsequent hourly updates featuring interviews with Baka community members, Thursday 31 January

BBC Online, live discussion between London school children and Baka community, Thursday 31 January

Another email will follow broadcast, with links to BBC Online broadcasting of programmes and to additional articles.

For further information please visit

http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/africa/bases/cameroon_base.shtml.

From: "M F Ferrari" : maurizio@forestpeoples.org

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Site web: <http://www.mangroveactionproject.org>

Announcements

► Web site to consult

www.ramsar.org/wwd/7/wwd2007_rpts_cameroon_wtgforum1.pdf

All correspondence should be addressed to:
Cameroon Mangrove Conservation Network Secretariat
P.O. Box 54 Mouanko, Littoral Province, Cameroon
Tel. +237 77 87 31 08 / 75 40 30 25
E-mail: matandanews@yahoo.fr