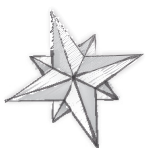




Recommendations to improve the impacts of agro-industrial activities on great ape conservation and livelihoods in Cameroon

Workshop report, Yaoundé, Cameroon
30 June 2015

PCLG EVENT REPORT



Poverty and
Conservation
Learning Group



GREG
forêts

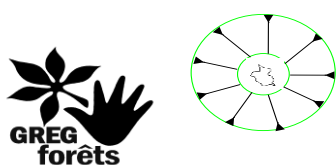
Author information

This report was compiled by Stanley Dinsi.

About the event

For more information about this event and the project “Great ape conservation and poverty reduction: PCLG Cameroon 2013-2015”, visit <http://povertyandconservation.info/en/pages/cameroon-pclg>, or contact Stanley Dinsi (dinsistanley@yahoo.fr) or Angeline Ndo (ndoa03@yahoo.fr).

This meeting was organised by



Groupe de Réflexion et d'Echange sur la Gouvernance des Forêts, with the support of the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Africa (NESDA-CA).

GREG-Forêts is an independent network that brings together experts from various organisations working in the sectors of forest and environmental governance in Cameroon. Founded in Yaoundé in May 2006, GREG-Forêts' main goal is to reflect on relevant issues (nationally and internationally) with regards to forest governance. Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of the range of social, economic and environmental benefits derived from the management of forestry resources. This is done through a participatory approach, improved governance, exchange of experiences at national and international levels, and capacity building.

GREG-Forêts consists of about 20 members coming from key segments of the forestry and environment sectors in Cameroon, including members from ministries in charge of forestry and wildlife (MINFOF) and environment, protection of nature and sustainable development (MINEPDED), the National Assembly, international NGOs, research institutes, bilateral and multilateral organisations, private sector and civil society.

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“Great ape conservation and poverty reduction” (April 2013 to March 2016) is a project that brings together conservation and development practitioners to share their experiences and to work together to better inform development and conservation policy and practice, particularly in great ape range states. In Cameroon, this work is convened by GREG-Forêts (also known as Cameroon PCLG) - an alliance of independent organisations with a shared interest in forest governance. In June 2015, GREG-Forêts organised a workshop to reflect on the results of a study carried out to evaluate the impacts of agro-industrial and logging activities on great ape conservation and poverty in Cameroon. Presentations of the results of the study were followed by discussions in plenary. The goal was to propose concrete recommendations for policy makers to improve great ape conservation and livelihoods in areas where agro-industrial and logging activities are carried out in Cameroon. This report outlines the workshop’s proceedings.

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Acronyms

AMFN	African Model Forest Network
GREG-Forêts	Forest Governance Learning Group
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
MINADER	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINEDUC	Ministry of National Education
MINEPAT	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development
MINEPDED	Minister of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development
MINEPIA	Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries
MINFOF	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
MINMIDT	Ministry of Industry, Mines and Technological Development
MINTOUL	Ministry of Tourism and Leisure
NESDA-CA	Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Africa
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
PCLG	Poverty and Conservation Learning Group
REPAR	Network of Parliamentarians in Central Africa
RGA	Revenue Generating Activities

Background

Since 2013, GREG-Forêts Cameroon and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have been working together within the context of an initiative called Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (PCLG)¹. The present workshop was organised as part of Cameroon PCLG's plan of action for 2013-2015 aimed at improving our understanding of the links between great ape conservation and the socio-economic development of local populations. More specifically, one of the things Cameroon PCLG looked at during this project is how to improve the impacts of agro-industry activities on great ape conservation and poverty. Two studies were carried out, one mapping great ape conservation organisations and policies in Cameroon, and the other on the impacts of private sector investment on great ape conservation and local livelihoods in two sites in the south and south west regions of Cameroon. This workshop, which focussed on presenting the main results of the field research to members of the network of parliamentarians, REPAR-Cameroon, came after two previously organised workshops. In April 2014 to share and enrich the results of a research study carried out to map conservation organisations, and existing conservation policies in Cameroon; and in November 2014 to present and validate the results of a field study carried out to evaluate the impacts of agro-industrial and logging activities on great ape conservation and poverty in Cameroon.

Workshop participation

The workshop was attended by the following key stakeholders:

- Members of the network of parliamentarians, REPAR-Cameroon;
- Representatives of key government ministries concerned;
- Representatives of national and international organisations;
- Members of GREG-Forêts (PCLG-Cameroon).

Please see Annex 1 for a full participants' list.

The one day workshop was moderated by Dr. Stanley Chung Dinsi.

Workshop activities

The workshop took place on 30th June 2015 from 9:00 am to 12h30 pm and had five main items on the agenda: opening word; presentation of workshop objectives and expected results; a summary presentation of key research findings by the researchers; discussions and proposals of key recommendations to be submitted to policy makers; and a closing ceremony.

Opening speech

In her welcome speech, Mrs Angeline Ndo expressed her appreciation to participants, notably to the members of Parliament, REPAR-Cameroon, present. She briefly traced the background of the workshop and highlighted the fact that the workshop was one of the outcomes of the fruitful collaboration between GREG-Forêts (PCLG-Cameroon) and PCLG International. Mrs Ndo called the attention of participants to the fact that the study on great ape conservation was at the centre of the discussions at that workshop and that during the preceding months of April and November of 2014 this study had already been presented to and examined by government representatives. She told participants that the main goal of this workshop was to get the points of view of the people's representatives on the issue of great ape conservation and to define an appropriate lobbying approach

¹ <http://povertyandconservation.info/>

to incorporate the recommendations coming out of the field study into the work plans and activities of policy makers.

Introductory word of the coordinator of the network of parliamentarians, REPAR-Cameroon, Honourable JJ ZAM

Honourable JJ ZAM began by thanking the organisers for giving him the opportunity to speak during such an important workshop organised around a very important topic, great apes. He was happy with the turnout of the members of his network, who were able to attend the workshop despite their busy calendars. He also recognised the presence of representatives of major government ministries. After thanking NESDA-CA, which he reminded participants has a longstanding relationship with REPAR-Cameroon and REPAR-Central Africa, he recalled that for the past ten years the two organisations have been working closely on different thematic issues, and one of their main results was the position of REPAR-Cameroon members of parliament in considering the rights of the indigenous populations of Central Africa. According to Honourable JJ ZAM, the workshop is of prime importance because it addresses the lives of “our ancestors”, great apes. He said that REPAR subscribes to all conservation initiatives in general, and to biodiversity conservation in particular. He assured the organisers of the workshop of the fact that REPAR will pay much attention to the results of the field study and will take the engagement to follow up with key stakeholders for consideration.

Word of welcome from the representative of the Ministry of Forestry (MINFOF), Mrs Agnes EBANGA

According to Mrs Agnes EBANGA, the conservation of great ape is a major preoccupation of the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife, which is responsible for the implementation of sustainable management measures of the sector, including the creation of National Parks, forest reserves and zoos. She reminded participants that her ministry had followed up with the project activities since it was launched. She said that in order to realise its mission, MINFOF deems it necessary to engage with all actions and studies carried out by its partners such as NESDA-CA and GREG-Forêts. She pledged that her ministry will work closely with REPAR-Cameroon to put in place a better lobbying strategy with competent government departments based on the results of the workshop.

Presentation of objectives and expected results of the workshop

Main objective

The main objective of the workshop was to present the key recommendations coming out of a study done by Cameroon PCLG on the impacts of private sector investments on great ape conservation and local livelihoods to REPAR-Cameroon members and sector ministries. The ultimate goal was to stimulate dialogue and lobbying on these issues with parliament and other competent government ministries.

Specific objectives

- Share study results with REPAR-Cameroon members and key sector ministries;
- Carry out advocacy with REPAR-Cameroon to champion the inclusion of research findings into relevant sector policies;
- Lobby conservation organisations to integrate workshop results in their respective policies.

Methodology

A participatory approach was used during the workshop to ensure everyone had the opportunity to contribute to the discussions. PowerPoint presentations were used to present the key findings of the study. Hard copies of the study recommendations were also provided as an handout to all participants.

Summary presentation of study results by Simeon Abe and Stanley Dinsi

Linking the conservation of great ape and poverty alleviation is one of the major challenges in transforming local economies in favour of local communities. This study was carried out by Cameroon PCLG in two sites: in communities around the FMU 09025, close to the Campo Ma'an National Park, in the south region of Cameroon; and in communities around the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) in the south west region of Cameroon. The study aimed at analysing the impacts of agro-industry and logging activities on great ape conservation and local livelihoods. The analysis focused on understanding the perceptions of the communities affected by great ape conservation and the best ways of changing these perceptions by showing the economic potential of these highly threatened species. Enemy, a source of danger, a source of protein, or a source of income, are just some of the perceptions local people have of ape that were captured during interviews with communities, and elements used to animate workshop's discussions.

According to the views of the researchers involved in this study, changing people's perceptions of great ape by showing their potential as a source of income, could contribute to poverty alleviation as well as the conservation of great apes. In conclusion, the researchers propose the adoption of a range of different management and revenue generating activities (RGA) identified by the local communities themselves, such as:

- Collection of NTFPs;
- Development of local agriculture, including solutions to land issues, training and access to improved technologies and techniques;
- Fishing;
- Small scale animal husbandry;
- ecotourism;
- More employment of youth and women in local enterprises;
- Development of trade.

Debates and discussions

This section summarises the comments and suggestions made by participants aimed at improving the study results. It is followed by the recommendations for lobbying activities with competent institutions working on great ape conservation.

Comments

Initiatives related to conservation are very complex and the balance between conservation and economic development is often very difficult to achieve. This explains why this study, which is spreading light on the linkages between great ape conservation and poverty alleviation, was highly praised. The experiences of countries that have succeeded in managing this sector can be very helpful.

1. The problem of conservation cuts across all sectors;
2. The solution lies in a concerted approach involving government ministries and all other relevant stakeholders;
3. It is necessary to put in place a strategy able to exploit the income generating opportunities deriving from conservation efforts, like ecotourism. Income generating options must be clear not only to the state, but mainly to local actors;
4. The education system must focus on training entrepreneurs in the field of conservation;
5. MINTOUL and MINFOF have signed a partnership agreement for a concerted management of National Parks.

Suggestions

- Highlight the damage of private sector investments on the environment, on great ape and local communities;
- Emphasise the need to protect the livelihoods of populations around protected areas;
- Demystify the perception that local communities have that great apes are given more attention than humans;
- Establish an improved conservation strategy with sector ministries;
- Clearly show the financial value to the state and to the local communities of ecotourism in general, and great ape tourism in particular (e.g. job opportunities generated);
- Expand media coverage, reporting and documentaries on great apes;
- Create time on radio and TV for environmental education programmes;
- Integrate knowledge and know-how of local actors in tourism and eco-tourism enterprises;
- Integrate local population's culture in ecotourism enterprises;
- Draw from experiences of similar studies carried out by other organisations such as African Model Forest Network (AMFN) and its partners on the eco-tourism opportunities in the south and East regions of Cameroon;
- Find incentives for local populations to invest in great ape conservation;
- Integrate great ape conservation in the education curriculum right from the start.

Key recommendations

The final key recommendations focused on how conservation in general, and great ape tourism in particular, can generate revenue for the state as well as the local communities. The recommendations formulated by workshop's participants have been grouped according to the ministerial department concerned.

Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUL)

- Promote tourist sites;
- Encourage local populations to get involved in tourism;
- Improve the marketing of our primates;
- Draw from the successes of others;
- Define tourism prices based on heritage, economic, social and cultural values;
- Draw the interest of investors by showing the added economic value of National Parks;
- Emphasise security when promoting national tourism;
- Allow decentralised administrations to promote tourism.

Ministry of National Education (MINEDUC)

- Introduce the teaching of biodiversity conservation into the educational system from primary level;
- Promote an educational system that trains independent and creative entrepreneurs and engineers.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER)

- Tourism should be accompanied by many related revenue generating activities.

Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF)

- Stimulate reflections around reforms;
- Take note of legal instruments that permit the development of income generating activities around National Parks;
- Initiate reforms (the actual law tax is 40 year old) that encourage investors to invest in the conservation sector;
- Put in place a control system to oversee the creation and management of conservation areas.

Cameroon PCLG

- Contact Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT) which is currently carrying out a study on the reform of protected areas in Cameroon.

Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony was characterised by three speeches.

Word from the moderator, Dr. Stanley Chung Dinsi

Dr. Dinsi expressed gratitude to all participants for their presences and pertinent contributions made during the workshop. He also showed appreciation to key stakeholders who, in the course of the workshop, agreed to lobby with MINEPIA and other competent government ministries such as MINFOF and MINTOUL.

Word from Coordinator of the network of parliamentarians (REPAR), Hon. J. J. ZAM

For over 15 years, and with lots of efforts, the economic growth rate of Cameroon has been around 5%. The accepted growth rate at the international level to transform the living standards of households is 7%. Reforms such as those in the field of great ape tourism could contribute to achieve this required growth rate. These reforms will contribute to the tourism sector by showing that conservation can generate income, but also by instituting mechanisms to stimulate action from the basic level of education based on very clear models. REPAR-Cameroon has pledged to facilitate the actions of Cameroon PCLG, by lobbying for the consideration of the study on the reform of the tourism sector of protected areas led by MINEPAT.

Word from the coordinator of NESDA/PCLG Cameroon, Mrs Angeline Ndo

In her closing words, Mrs Angeline Ndo expressed happiness for the success of the workshop. She expressed special thanks to the following:

- All participants for their presence, punctuality, their excellent observations and above all, for contributing to realising the objectives of the workshop;
- The researchers, for the brilliant reports;
- The Convenor of GREG-Forêts, for his availability and coherent ideas and scientific orientations in such workshops;

- The coordinator of REPAR-Cameroon, for facilitating the participation of members of parliament and for the proposals and commitments taken to lobby with MINEPAT on behalf of Cameroon PCLG.

Mrs Ndo promised participants that the workshop report would be sent to all within the shortest time possible to enable participants to read through the report and make adjustments where necessary. She reminded participants that the contact with REPAR-Cameroon and other government departments would be maintained in order to implement the lobbying process detailed in the workshop recommendations. The recommendations coming out of this workshop could be taken into account first of all in the document undergoing reform in the forestry sector and secondly in the study to promote tourism under elaboration in MINEPAT.

The workshop ended at 12:30 pm. A group photo was taken and a cocktail was offered to participants by Cameroon PCLG.

Biodiversity, Poverty

Keywords:

Ape conservation, Poverty, Biodiversity,
Global Learning Network

The Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (PCLG) is an international network of organisations and individuals that promotes learning on the linkages between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, in order to improve policy and practice.

The PCLG is coordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), one of the world's most influential policy research organisations working at the interface between development and environment.



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