

WCC-2012-Res-073-EN

Conservation and sustainable management of mangroves in Central Africa: the case of Cameroon

RECALLING that mangroves in Cameroon play an important role in the protection of beaches against coastal erosion, through the stabilization of coastal substrates, protecting them from wind and waves, and by acting as a natural biological purifying agent, retaining eroded soil and silt by means of their root system and also filtering pollutants, as well as by producing organic nutrients, assisting to stabilize micro-climates and also favouring ecotourism activities;

RECALLING that mangroves in Cameroon provide shelter and breeding grounds for fishery resources, leaves for the marine food web, trap sediments from uphill erosion, serve as resting and feeding grounds for migratory birds, as well as biotopes for native species such as the Blue Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*) and a wide variety of protected species, and also constitute important carbon sinks;

RECALLING that mangroves in Cameroon are home to a wide diversity of flora, that they are living ecosystems, generate new inhabitable land by advancing towards the water, while at the same time protecting local inhabitants from natural disasters, and also reducing erosion of coastal areas and small islands by the action of water;

NOTING that for the past 50 years the mangrove ecosystems in Cameroon have been under enormous human pressure, which has led to the loss of over 33% of their surface area (from 600,000 ha to 400,000 ha to date), in other words around 4,000 ha/year, and that, as a result of this destruction, Cape Cameroon and the small surrounding islands are threatened by wave action, with many homes destroyed, and that the rise in sea level threatens not only the supply of drinking water, but also of wood, thatch used for covering roofs, and fodder for domestic animals, and other non-timber forest products (NTFP) which coastal communities depend heavily on;

FURTHER NOTING that mangroves have often been transformed for a variety of purposes, including fish farming, agriculture, salt production, sand mining and urban development;

NOTING that, given the root system of mangrove forests forms an ecological transition zone between several ecosystems, the destruction of mangroves could lead to coastal erosion, that each hectare of mangroves destroyed releases around 110 kg of carbon into the atmosphere, that vast areas of mangroves have also been degraded by pollution and wood harvesting, and that mangroves also suffer from illegal exploitation; and

AWARE that fishing constitutes the main traditional activity carried out by coastal communities, who view it primarily as a cultural activity rather than simply as one necessary to cover financial needs, and mangroves play a key role for sustaining fisheries;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. RECOGNIZES the need to conserve the resources provided by mangroves in Cameroon;
2. CALLS ON the Cameroonian Government to adopt rules regulating activities linked to the resources provided by mangroves carried out by several organizations;
3. REQUESTS the Director General to:

- a. as part of the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016* take up a leadership role in order to mobilize resources in favour of the sustainable management of mangroves globally and with special reference to the situation in Cameroon;
 - b. encourage all IUCN Member States and the Government of Cameroon in particular to designate, in line with Aichi Target 11, mangroves as protected areas (for Cameroon the mangrove areas of Rio del Rey, Cameroon Estuaries and Rio Ntem); and
 - c. encourage the establishment of platforms for dialogue between the stakeholders involved in mangrove management;
4. ENCOURAGES IUCN Members to raise public awareness about the need for a sustainable management of fauna, flora, fisheries and birdlife resources in mangrove ecosystems, and the recognition of the important ecological, educational, climate, economic and socio-cultural roles mangroves play;
 5. URGES governments of the Congo Basin States to declare the mangroves under their jurisdiction as protected areas;
 6. ENCOURAGES Cameroonian NGO Members and other NGOs working in Cameroon to:
 - a. work in collaboration with local populations to restore the degraded mangrove areas of Rio del Rey, Cameroon Estuaries, and Rio Ntem in Cameroon;
 - b. strengthen the capacity of populations living close to the mangroves to protect and optimize the management of arborescent flora, in this case the Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), the Black Mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), White Mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), Button Mangrove (*Conocarpus erecta*), and the flora of the backshore zones, in this case beach Morning Glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), Marine Couch (*Sporobolus virginicus*), Seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), Beach Moonflower (*Ipomea macrantha*), and Shoreline Purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*);
 - c. convince the populations, whose main activity is fishing, to use regulatory mesh fishing nets and to ban the use of chemicals for fishing;
 - d. popularize and generalize the use of improved stoves in fish smokehouses;
 - e. create biological corridors for transhumance around public infrastructures;
 - f. restore degraded breeding grounds;
 - g. restore degraded beaches used by migratory birds as resting grounds;
 - h. monitor the physical and chemical quality of the mangrove water;
 - i. raise awareness among the urban communities of Douala and Kribi of the problems of aquatic, atmospheric and soil pollution;
 - j. assess and set up a monitoring system for the Rio del Rey, Cameroon Estuaries and Rio Ntem mangroves; and

- k. strengthen the skills of the populations living near the mangroves in terms of the development of mangrove nurseries in order to reforest the degraded mangrove areas;
- 7. ENCOURAGES the Cameroonian administrative and municipal authorities as well as those of the Congo Basin to work incessantly to protect the mangroves and control all types of pollution;
- 8. ENCOURAGES both the economic operators and the local communities to optimize the management of the waste they produce; and
- 9. ENCOURAGES the local municipalities located in the area near the mangroves to create controlled waste disposal facilities.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.