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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Joint Declaration of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)

Delegations will find in Annex the text of the Joint declaration of the Central African Forest Initiative as transmitted by the European Commission.

CENTRAL AFRICAN FOREST INITIATIVE – CAFI

Joint Declaration

September 29, 2015



PREAMBLE

Recognising the multiple ecosystem goods and services provided by the Central Africa forest - the world's second biggest tropical rainforest - in particular its contribution to climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation and sustainable development, and the vital role these forests play for livelihoods of forest-dependent peoples and communities;

Acknowledging that the pressure on this forest is increasing, that reforms to orientate Central African economies towards a low emission sustainable development path need to be strengthened, and that efforts to save this forest are often dispersed, non-coordinated and underfinanced;

Underlining that the drivers of deforestation in the region are multifaceted, both direct and indirect, and often related to weak governance and law enforcement, inadequate land use planning, insecure tenure rights for peoples and local communities, poverty, demographic pressure and food and income insecurity, and that measures to tackle deforestation will have to address these underlying causes in a manner that will allow the countries in the region to develop and prosper, while sustainably managing their natural resource base;

Recognising the progress made by Central African countries in establishing enabling conditions, ambitious policies and new institutional mechanisms to fight illegal logging, reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and implement low carbon development strategies – as well as a growing global trend for private sector commitments to move towards deforestation-free commodity supply chains;

Recalling that, in accordance with the Cancun Agreements, scaled-up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding shall be provided to developing countries;

Acknowledging the financial constraints of Central African countries, as well as the limitations of existing multilateral initiatives to target upfront investment support necessary to implement essential reforms and address deforestation drivers in Central Africa.

OBJECTIVE

On this basis, Central African countries with high rainforest forest cover (above 20 000 km²) and a coalition of dedicated donors have decided to enter into partnership and establish the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). The objective of this Initiative is to recognise and preserve the value of the forests in the region to mitigating climate change, reducing poverty, and contributing to sustainable development. This objective will be attained through the implementation of country-led, holistic low emissions development investment frameworks that include national policy reforms and measures addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The range of activities to be supported will depend on the specific context of the country and the dynamics of the drivers. The Initiative will be a forum of partnership and cross-country learning.

DONOR COUNTRY COMMITMENTS

Through the Central African Forest Initiative, donors commit to ensuring better coordination and harmonisation among themselves and to mobilising resources for the implementation of national investment frameworks developed by Central Africa countries. Parts of the donor support will be channelled through a distinct financing mechanism managed by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. Complementary contributions through other channels will also be encouraged. The Initiative will be open to public and private donors.

PARTNER COUNTRY COMMITMENTS

High-forest cover partner countries in Central Africa that choose to join the Initiative commit to developing and implementing national investment frameworks to drive national reforms and carry out various multi-sectorial programs aimed at transformational change to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and contribute to sustainable development. These national investment frameworks will be elaborated in a transparent and participatory manner, meet established environmental and social safeguards, and will tie in with the country's general planning cycle with links to the country's overall development vision and objectives.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

CAFI encourages and is open to support South-South and triangular cooperation programmes. Interested Third country Parties and international organisations are welcome to participate in CAFI by means of programmes that aim, in particular, at capacity building and exchange of experiences and expertise in the implementation of policies that may contribute to fulfilling the objectives set by CAFI, as well as to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Initiative has an initial capitalisation target of minimum USD 500 million over the 2015-2025 lifetime of the Initiative. The possibility of seeking co-finance from other sources, including the Green Climate Fund, to national investment programmes through appropriate accredited entities will be explored.

The Initiative will finance one national investment framework per eligible country upon request of the national government at the highest level and based on a strong commitment to reforms that address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The Initiative will take a performance-based approach with disbursements based on agreed targets.

Upon approval of a financial allocation to such a national investment framework, a Letter of Intent agreed upon between the partner country and the donors under the Initiative will specify the mutual commitments relating to these investments. Due to the cross-sectorial character of such investments, a high-level inter-ministerial task force under the lead of a cross-sectorial ministry or government body in charge of finance coordination and reforms will oversee the implementation of the programs.

COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CAFI

Central African Partner Countries: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Gabon

Donor Countries and Organisations: European Union, Federal Republic of Germany, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of France and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

South-South Partners: Federative Republic of Brazil

