

# THE EGI BULLETIN

A quarterly publication of the Environmental Governance Institute (EGI)

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## A season of new beginnings

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# Introduction: A season of new beginnings



implement good agricultural practices and so on, are lasting solutions to ensuring that man and nature co-exist harmoniously.

In addition to keeping you informed of our activities, this newsletter is a tool to facilitate a better understanding of important environmental issues. Hence, we invite you to follow us on this exciting journey with a stop at a new port each quarter.

This quarter is one of launchings: the launch of two community programs - a bee-keeping project and an agro-forestry project, both in Manyu Division; the launch of our newsletter and welcoming of new members to reinforce our team.

Mindful that we have made information sharing with our stakeholders a priority, in this edition we also share stories from other ongoing activities such as eco-clubs in secondary schools and the second West Africa round of the International Environmental Moot Court competition.

Law is one of the most important instruments used in environmental protection. That is why we will discuss aspects of environmental law and implications for their implementation in every edition. In this edition, we start by introducing Cameroon's 1994 Forestry law.

Our hope is that this newsletter will provide a forum for us to interact with you. In this regard, we will be delighted to receive your comments, questions and general feedback. We hope you enjoy taking this walk with us.

Dear reader,

It's my pleasure to present you the first edition of our quarterly newsletter. We are constantly looking for ways to fulfill our commitment of reshaping human interaction with the environment. One of these ways is education for sustainable development.

We are convinced that the best way to protect the environment is to ensure human development. Educating people on conserving forests and biodiversity, on how to use natural resources sustainably and to share the benefits stemming from them in an equitable manner, to



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# Eco-challenge 2013: Sustainability in our community

## Students propose sustainable solutions to environmental problems in Buea

Environmental clubs of four secondary schools in Buea identified what according to them, is the most pressing environmental problem in their community and suggested sustainable solutions during the eco-challenge 2013 organized by EGI.

The theme of the eco-challenge was “sustainability in our community.” Over a period of one month, students reflected on the environmental problems in their communities and designed concepts of practical projects that they could implement.

Government Technical High School (GTH Buea) , Bilingual Grammar School (BGS Buea) , St Therese Bilingual College and Government High School Buea Town (GHS Buea) participated in the inaugural event.

GHS Buea proposed to solve the problem of insufficient water supply by building a water catchment. St. Therese Bilingual College felt that their priority intervention should reduce emission of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and other dangerous gases in to the atmosphere to prevent green house effect and air pollution which is very harmful to human health. To achieve this, they presented a prototype fuel efficient stove using locally available natural resources. In order to improve waste management, GTHS Molyko proposed a project to promote waste recycling among the community members, while BGS Molyko suggested a plastic waste collection project.

The event was well received by the teachers and students of the four schools. Apart from the certificates of participation and small gifts awarded to them, the students appreciated the opportunity of getting an audience for their ideas. “This forum has been important because I have shared my idea with my friends, and they will share it

with other people. I will also transmit their ideas to others and through this communication, the best ideas from all this will be adopted,” Njikem Fonju Jude, BGS Buea.

Whereas the event was successful, it did not come without its share of challenges. “Some of our events were hampered by a lack of adequate funds. We look forward to a few changes in the next school year. Most importantly, we have increased our capacity and will now be able to work with an additional 11 schools in Mamfe subdivision and 10 schools in Eyumojock subdivision,” says Salome Ebangha, the EGI environmental education officer.

For young people to take control of protecting and improving their environment, it is important for them to have adequate information and to participate in practical activities in their communities. Debates, tree planting, waste management, creative arts and working in the communities, are just a few of the activities that can be done to promote environmental education among school going youth between the ages of 10 and 18. Through its work with environmental clubs and events such as the annual eco-challenge, EGI aims to promote creativity, initiative and sharing of ideas.



# Bee-keeping: One man's honey, another man's poison

**Bee-keeping can help to achieve conservation objectives, but only if community members embrace the practice.**



He is known as Rambo, and he does not want to be photographed, the camera might steal his soul. Nonetheless, he is willing to tell a few stories. In true keeping with his name, his tales are reminiscent of those told in action films. The hunter and the hunted, in a rhythm as old as time itself. But Rambo senses that the tide is changing, and he, like other hunters, will have to change with it.

"I do not have any bush meat to sell today, and even when I do, I only sell small game," he states firmly.

Tightening controls over the species that can be hunted for meat has made people around the Takamanda national park wary of strangers. For many years, they relied on the forest's rich biodiversity for food, wood, medicines and non-timber produce.

In November 2008, the Takamanda forest reserve was upgraded to a national park. This trans-boundary park spans ca. 67,000 hectares and is home to the highly endangered cross river gorillas, forest elephants, chimpanzees and drills. Additionally, the Nta Ali forest reserve in Upper Bayang sub-division is home to gorillas and other charismatic species. Other high biodiversity value areas in the Manyu division include the Takamanda-

## **Gradual loss of access to natural resources**

Mone landscape, the Mone river forest reserve, the Mbulu forest and the Kangwene gorilla sanctuary. Moreover parts of Manyu form the Northern parts of the Banyang-Mbo wildlife sanctuary.

Furthermore, large sections of the neighbouring Ejagham forest reserve were transformed into Forest Management Units for commercial logging. Over time, village communities have gradually lost access to natural resources which formed a large part of their economic activities. With diminishing livelihoods options, people like Rambo are now forced to choose between continuing with now illegal practices and poverty.

"There was once someone who came here and followed me to the bush, he photographed me when I was hunting. I had no idea that he would use the photograph as evidence against me," he explains his aversion to cameras.

Whereas this fear of law enforcers could contribute to halting the hunting and trading in protected species such as the cross-river gorilla and the forest elephants,







Although there are some successful initiatives in the Takamanda area, stories of failed projects are not so hard to come by. Even where community members have embraced the practice, access to markets for their honey has been a hindrance to sustaining their ventures.

Furthermore, bees are not everyone's first choice however. For hardcore hunters like Rambo, dealing with insects is too large a learning curve to navigate. "I don't know anything about bees, but I know everything about forest animals, they have been my source of income for decades," he explains. "If I were to do another activity, then it would have to be related to meat, a pig farm for example. That is something I can do well."

While working with communities to establish or restart stalled bee-keeping projects, EGI will spend the next months discussing with them other practical alternatives to hunting and bushmeat trade.

experience in other parts of the world has shown that species conservation without due consideration of communities is not an efficient approach.

With support from New England Biolabs (NEBF) and the Rhodes Southern African Scholars' Forum (RSSAF), EGI F Environmental Governance Institute (EGI) will help villagers in Nkhogo and Babong to enhance their livelihoods through a bee-keeping project pilot. Eventually, the project will be expanded to neighbouring villages.

**"I don't know anything about bees, but I know everything about forest animals"**

Bee-keeping is a viable livelihood activity because it has a high rate of profits and does not require heavy manual labour. Furthermore, it can be carried out by those who are sick, disable people and the aged. People of Nkhogo village are not really strangers to bee-keeping, communities have traditionally harvested wild honey in the forest. Over the years, there have been efforts to train people and provide them with bee-hives so as to promote commercial bee-keeping.

## **Takamanda National Park**

**Established:** November 2008

**Location:** 6.17N 9.33E

**Ecoregion:** GUINEO-CONGOLIAN

**Area:** 61,816 HA

**Average annual rainfall:** 2247mm

**Altitude range:** 96 to 1644 m

The Takamanda National Park was upgraded from a forest reserve in November 2008. Located in the South-West region of Cameroon, it borders the Cross-river National Park in Nigeria.

Takamanda is home to valuable species that require protection and conservation, such as the Preuss' guenon, Cross-river gorillas, forest elephants, Crested genet, Drill, Chimpanzee, Red colobus, Red-eared guenon, African manatee, Red-flanked duiker, Common waterbuck, African buffalo. Some of these species are endangered, others are vulnerable and some are conservation dependent. The park came into international focus when it was found that they were home to the critically endangered cross-river gorillas.

There are many other species in Takamanda that are not under threat.



## Agro-forestry to restore Mamfe Central's deforested areas

Traversing the winding roads that cut through Mamfe Central sub-division, one easily gets an overwhelming sensation of taking a journey through a lush, evergreen paradise. What the eyes cannot perceive at first sight is the high rate of deforestation taking place behind the green façade.

"Individuals are clearing forests to farm crops like cocoa, coco-yams and cassava, which are short-lived seasonal crops," explains Agbor Adolf Tabi of Etemeteck, one of the 11 villages that make up the sub-division. But that is not all. International companies are also carrying out thriving logging activities in the area.

Mamfe Central lies in Manyu division, in which large chunks of forest were transformed into Forest Management Units (FMU). Through FMUs, companies could obtain concessions to carry out logging of timber in the forests.

Today, FMUs with a cumulative area of some 200,000 hectares all pertain to the sub-divisions of Manyu division.

According to villagers, the results of logging have been devastating to their environment. Indeed, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report by the African Centre for Applied Forestry Research and Development (CARFAD) conducted in June 2009 indicates that tree felling, road extension into the forest, skidding and yarding to ease logging are causing extensive forest degradation, resulting in soil erosion, habitat alteration and loss of species.

Now, the residents of Mamfe Central sub-division are faced with the difficult task of halting the rate of deforestation in their area.



Trees are a long-term project, whose benefits can be reaped only after many years. This does not seem to discourage the farmers; rather, their sense of responsibility for future generations seems to only strengthen their patient determination.

Ebot Beltha from Egbekaw village is saddened by the loss of indigenous knowledge that has always been passed on from generation to generation. "Medicinal plants in the bush have been destroyed. The generation coming after us and even I myself cannot identify some medicinal plants that are very vital for our health," she states. Her sentiments are shared by Takang Norbert, a resident from Eyangchang village who has been practicing agro-forestry together with members of his common initiative group. "Some of the children growing up only know the common cash crops like cocoa, oranges and palm. Through this project, maybe they will begin to learn about other useful tree species," he says.

## Having a care for future generations

In July 2013, the Environmental Governance Institute (EGI) initiated an agro-forestry project that will be implemented in Mamfe Central sub-division. The project was made possible by a grant from the UK based Rufford Foundation. Currently in its pilot phase, the project has carried out community mobilization and training. In the next months, tree seedlings will be provided to the villages for planting. EGI is partnering with government agricultural extension officers and foresters to support the project participants.

The project is a welcome support to an area which for decades, has seen natural resources going out in large quantities and almost nothing being invested back. According to Arrey George Arrey, the Divisional Supervisor for Agricultural Extension and Research Program, a multi-stakeholder approach will encourage more farmers to regard agro-forestry as a primary activity and increase

## We must protect our land and trees

their commitment to plant and nurture trees.

One effective way to protect precious natural resources is to engage local communities and support their own efforts. One way to do this is through education on the technical and practical aspects of environmental protection and conservation. It is such an initiative that propelled Eyong James Tabot, the regent chief of Mfaitock II village, to mobilize his community to protect some of their land. "A local organization once trained us and advised us to protect some of our land because when the roads to Mamfe open up people will come in to buy it, so we secured a section in the forest," he says.

In Mfaitock II, the community plans to plant the trees on the community land they had kept aside. In other villages, community initiative groups have teamed up to plant and take care of the trees. With one thought for the present and another for the future generations, Tabot says, "We plan to plant trees on that land so that they can help us in future. I hope that those trees will be in place so that our children's children can grow up to see them as a landmark."

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**- Eyong James  
Tabot - Regent  
chief of Mfaitock  
II village**



The chief of Eshobi, HRH Abang Gregory Ojong and his wife share a light moment with participants during a community mobilization meeting

## Participants of the EGI agro-forestry training held in Mamfe on 23 August share their views, experience and hopes for Mamfe Central



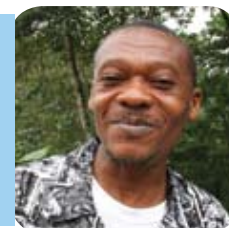
The government of Cameroon is interested in agriculture and is dedicating a lot of resources to improve it. This is a laudable initiative which can partner with the government. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. EGI has come to sensitize and educate the people. Now, they should match actions with words, so that their projects can be visible - **Egbe George Ayuk - Personal Assistant to the Divisional Officer, Mamfe Central sub-division (Representing the Divisional Officer)**

Most trees have been extracted by timber dealers. Our forest is no longer fertile. If we plant trees we will fertilize our soils so that we can have good yields in future. The palace already has a coconut orchard and I have also planted 4 acres of palm trees. I hope to get some seedlings so that I can increase my farm size and help the local population. I would like to plant oranges and palm trees because they grow fast and have a high demand in the market - **Paul Eyong Betek, Small Mamfe, Palace Administrator of Paramount Chief**



I went for training on environmental protection. We were told that we should protect our land because when the area opens up, buyers can come and buy it all up. We decided to secure a section in the forest. We are indeed happy that we will be able to plant trees on that land. The trees will help us in future and I hope that our children's children can grow up to see them as a landmark - **Eyong James Tabot, Regent Mfaitock II village, Mamfe Central**

Farmers should work as common initiative groups and associations to enable extension officers to give them technical support and help them access financial support. By belonging to groups, most farmers can enjoy the benefits of solving their problems more easily. Although farmers often consider agro-forestry as a secondary activity, though awareness creation, they may begin to understand that they can build enterprises from agro-forestry - **Arrey George Arrey, Divisional Supervisor for agricultural extension and research program, and coordinator of ACEFA program**



We want to learn how we can re-enrich our soils and how we can mix forests, planting and animal breeding. The agro-forestry project will help us to live in a good environment tomorrow. By improving our skills and helping us to farm in groups, we will have a better life. In a number of years I dream to be a big and prosperous farmer. This will help me to bring my family up in a better way, not through suffering but in a light and smooth manner - **Agbor Adolf Tabi, Etemeteck village**

People have been cutting down the trees to plant their food and cash crops. There are some people who intrude in the forest while clearing land through bush burning, they burn down trees. This causes serious devastation. Education on environmental protection and conservation will refresh our minds and remind us why we should protect our environment and keep trees alive - **Ebot Beltha, Egbekaw village**



In our farming group, we cultivate cassava, maize, rear fowls and pigs and we also have palms. Through agro-forestry, we improve soil fertility and reduce the amount of money we spend buying fertilizer. Although trees take a long time to mature, we can mix short-term ones like palm and cocoa that take four to five years with long-term trees, as well as practice animal husbandry - **Takang Norbert, Enyangchang village**

Mobilizing communities to take part in this project has been an exciting and enriching experience. The enthusiasm with which the people received us is indicative of their will to solve the problems of low yield resulting from infertile soils. I am very pleased to see the fruits of the mobilization on the occasion of today's training workshop - **Stanislaus Ekukanju Takangeyong, EGI community mobilizer**





# The environmental moot court as a tool for conservation education



“My participation in the international environmental moot court competition raised my interest in juridical aspect of conservation issues”

- miss mbuton ulrike kahbila



In December last year, Mbuton Ulrike Kahbila, then an undergraduate law student at the University of Buea, saw a poster announcing the inaugural West Africa Round of the Environmental Moot Court competition. Out of curiosity, she went to the University's Law Department to find out more. Both the head of the law department and her lecturer gave her the necessary information, and this, according to Ulrike, was the beginning of a new journey for her.

Having only a fleeting idea about legal aspects of environmental protection, the competition opened her eyes to the possibilities of working in this field.

The International Environmental Moot Court Competition sees legal pathways as a means to resolving conflicts over shared natural resources and inter-state environmental disputes. It aims to build a new crop of committed environmental lawyers in West and Central Africa to do just that.

Through this competition, young law students will learn

how to use legal and political action beyond the nation state. “I am now very interested in conservation issues, especially the juridical aspect. I must confess this interest was not born until time I participated in the International Environmental Moot,” Ulrike says.

To explore this interest further, Ulrike has now taken up a volunteer position at EGL, to help organize this year's moot court competition and improve her knowledge of international environmental law.

She encourages other law students to take the opportunity and broaden their horizons. “It was so wonderful. Till date, my involvement in this competition has remained the most enriching experience in my educational career. I successfully drafted my first official memorial for the competition and how to use international legal action to achieve the protection and preservation of the nature and the environment,” she says.

According to a recent IUCN Netherlands report “Assessment of Education Components in Grant Projects

in Africa”, few projects in West and Central Africa targeted post Secondary Schools students. The environmental moot court competition is therefore a welcome event, where upcoming lawyers are tested on their, drafting, presentation analytical and argumentation skills. The competition is based on a fictional dispute between countries before an International Court. Problems cover realistic international legal questions that are directly related to natural resources and the environment.

The West Africa Round of the Environmental Moot Court Competition is an annual event that is carried out by EGL in collaboration with the Institute for Biodiversity Law and Policy of Stetson University College of Law. This year's moot court competition, whose theme is “sea turtle protection and cultural practices” will take place in the last week of November, in Buea, Cameroon. Law schools from over 20 countries are eligible to apply. Details are available at [www.engov-institute.org](http://www.engov-institute.org).



# **Environmental conservation law series**

**What is conservation law and why do we need it?**





Dear reader, welcome to the Conservation Law corner of our newsletter. In this edition, we would like to introduce you the Cameroon's Forestry law. Mindful of its breadth, a detailed discussion of the law is not possible in a single contribution. We therefore call on you to stay tuned to future editions of this newsletter.

The fact that Cameroon is rich in biological diversity, the variety of species of plants and animals, is stale news. Well, it is good that Cameroon is endowed with more than a fair share of species of hardwood and animals such as forest elephants and gorillas. But how can Cameroon ensure that her future generations will enjoy these resources just as the present? At best, we hope to provide some useful answers in this section and even better still, we hope to engage you in a discussion on how this could be achieved.

Conservation law in Cameroon like in other countries of the world intends to achieve three principal goals: the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its parts and to guarantee access and equitable sharing of benefits that emanate from such use. In other words, conservation law is not just about protecting parts of the natural environment. It is also about distributing and redistributing the profits that result from using natural resources such as forest. These profits could arise directly from commercial logging and the use or commercialization of medicinal plants, or indirectly from ecotourism and social and cultural practices.

Sustainability embodies social, economic and ecological components. It therefore constitutes the guiding principle that must inform law making in the sphere of conservation and other social and economic spheres. Judged from this angle, Cameroon's Law N° 1994-1 to lay down Forestry,

Wildlife and Fisheries regulations was clearly very well intended because it incorporates all the three components

## **Forests of Cameroon: a source of income for the state and communities**

of sustainability. In plain terms, through the law, the government of Cameroon aimed to maximize profits from the forestry sector, while at the same time ensuring rational use of its rich biodiversity.

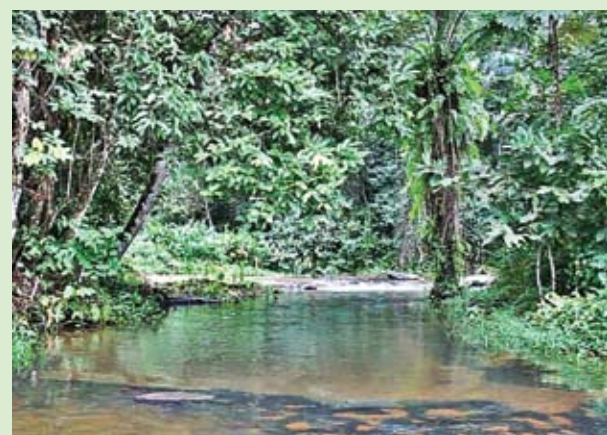
In terms of maximizing profits from the forestry sector, the 1994 forestry law, it can be argued, was quite novel. It uses instruments such as auction sales to allocate forest concessions. Additionally, it sets 200.000 hectares as the maximum size of a forest concession, renewable every 15 years. While auction allows for the highest bidder to carry the day, one would expect the renewals to keep commercial loggers in line, because they clearly have an interest in logging over long periods of time. Moreover, according to the 1994 forestry law, only 30 percent of logs should be exported. This has the potential to open up space for logs to be processed in Cameroon before being exported. Processing would in turn mean more employment opportunities in the sector, and an increase in taxes from enterprises engaging in such activities.

As far as rational use of forest resources goes, the overall policy objective is to ensure that 20-30 per cent of Cameroon's territory is under one form of nature protection or the other. So one distinguishes for instance between permanent forests, reserves, parks etc. For an example of a national park see the section on the Takamanda in this issue.

Perhaps among the most important features of the 1994 forestry law, is the inclusion of Cameroonians in the forestry sector, or at least facilitating their inclusion. In this regard, the forestry law reserves some forests to Cameroon nationals only. On a similar note, the law does not only include forest communities by introducing the notion of community forests, but also through allocating parts of royalties from commercial logging to them.

As already noted, the 1994 Forestry law is a comprehensive law of some 171 articles, broken down into 7 parts. Before we proceed with our discussion, let us underline the fact that this kind of law is best described as a framework law. That is, one which addresses several aspects, in our case, biological diversity, forests, wildlife and fisheries. This approach is an excellent one because it treats nature just as nature is - interconnected. You see, there is no point in making a separate law for forests and another for biological diversity protection for the simple reason that forests on the one hand are very rich in biological diversity and on the other hand, they serve as habitat for several species, especially of birds, primates and other animals. A framework law thus allows for an integrated approach to regulating all these aspects together.

This article has introduced the 1994 Forestry Law more generally. Follow the quarterly editions of our newsletter and get to understand its component articles in more detail. We will share examples, challenges and successes of implementing these components.





*EGI is proud to host the*

# **18th International Environmental Moot Court Competition**

**West Africa Round - 28 to 30 November 2013  
to be held in  
BUEA, Cameroon**



*Theme: Sea turtle protection and cultural practices*

To find out how you can participate or sponsor this event, please contact  
[ulrike.kahbila@engov-institute.org](mailto:ulrike.kahbila@engov-institute.org) OR [john.takang@engov-institute.org](mailto:john.takang@engov-institute.org).

**Editorial Team:** Christine Bukania, John Takang, Colette Endale  
**Contributors:** Dieudonne Takangyong, Ruth Mobia, Salome Ebangha, Ulrike Mbuton

**Our contacts:**

Paramount Street, Molyko  
P. O. Box 211 Buea  
South West Region – Cameroon  
Tel.: 0023733778882  
E-Mail: [info@engov-institute.org](mailto:info@engov-institute.org)  
[www.engov-institute.org](http://www.engov-institute.org)