

# African NGOs grasp the challenge of advocating for a fairer share of climate projects in future international carbon markets

Civil Society Capacity-Building Workshop on international climate politics and carbon markets in Douala, Cameroon, 27-28 August 2019

“Everything is urgent in Africa” - so can we expect African NGOs to prioritise the ongoing international carbon markets negotiations in their advocacy work? This is one of the questions Carbon Market Watch tested by holding a capacity-building workshop for African NGOs together with its member organisation ACDESPE (Association Camerounaise pour le Développement, l’Entraide Sociale et la Protection de l’Environnement).



Group photo of workshop participants

The workshop promptly led to the creation of a new network: The “Réseau Afrique Carbone & Changement Climatique” (RAC3), which adopted the general objective “to make the voices of African civil society organisations heard in national and international negotiations on carbon markets”.

This network will now set out to strengthen the strategic and operational capabilities of its members, participate in national and international meetings on climate issues, and support African states in the development of climate policies. Our member, ACDESPE, was provisionally charged with the coordination of this new network, and Carbon Market Watch is called upon to support its development.

## **Out with the old, in with the new - Africa could benefit from project age restrictions under the Paris Agreement**

Under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Africa has had a very small share of projects globally (3% equivalent to 250 projects) and their development benefits, e.g. in terms of technology transfer, have been insignificant.

A 'vintage restriction' on CDM credits (meaning that only new projects would be allowed after 2020) under the prospective new Sustainable Development Mechanism (SDM) could, therefore, be beneficial for African countries. Such a restriction would reduce the number of available credits and hence drive new projects to issue new credits.



Speaker Yves Nzitat (CREPD) answering questions about the CDM to SDM transition

### **“Everything is urgent in Africa”**

The workshop counted around 35 participants from civil society organisations of Cameroon and seven other African countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Sénégal, Congo, Algeria and Benin). Most of them were new to the topic of carbon markets.

In their daily lives, the participants work on a broad range of environmental challenges, from forest protection to the cleaning of rivers poisoned with mercury, to finding solutions to household waste being burnt in backyards. Cameroonian NGOs, in particular, receive no ongoing financial support from their government, yet have to jump many bureaucratic hurdles to be able to carry out their work.

Cameroonians already experience directly some of the effects of climate change - unreliable weather patterns challenging agricultural production or rising sea levels threatening the islands off the coast of Cameroon. Yet, it is difficult for their NGOs to give climate policy immediate priority because “everything is urgent in Africa”.

## Carbon markets 101

The workshop participants learned about the ongoing international climate negotiations - specifically the negotiations on article 6 of the Paris Climate Agreement, which lay the groundwork for future global carbon markets. Another topic of discussion - closely linked to article 6 - was CORSIA, the international offsetting scheme under which airlines are to compensate for the increase in their emissions from 2020.

As regards the future demand for carbon offset credits from international aviation, it was highlighted that the role of African civil society could be to encourage airlines to invest in good new carbon emission reduction projects. Further advocacy could be directed at influencing the UN aviation body ICAO via their governments regarding the quality criteria which will apply to emission reduction projects. In the longer run, African NGOs might survey any new projects which produce carbon credits for their environmental integrity and sustainable development benefits.



From left to right: Moise Mbimbe (Young Friends of the Treaty Movement, Cameroon), Amina Bendaoud-Talabat (Association Écologique de Boumerdes, Algeria), Jean de Dieu Musengamana (Rwanda), Parfait Dihoukamba (REPALEAC, Congo) presenting their projects

## Media interest

During the three-day visit, Carbon Market Watch and ACDESPE also held a meeting with representatives of African airlines, airports and the Cameroonian government. The purpose of the meeting was to find out how high the challenge to reduce aviation emissions already figures on their agendas and whether they have preparations underway to implement CORSIA.

It turned out that the Civil Aviation Authority of Cameroon is making good progress with an Action Plan for emission reductions at Cameroon’s airports, but otherwise, a lot of civil society advocacy is required to raise both awareness and ambition of all concerned. The meeting with the officials attracted significant press coverage in Cameroon which is a first reward for our partner ACDESPE in its efforts to organise African NGOs around negotiations on carbon markets.





Third-day meeting about the aviation sector, with representatives from Cameroon's airport, its Civil Aviation Authority, its Environment Ministry, as well as from ACDESPE and CMW

*Report by Sabine Frank, Executive Director of Carbon Market Watch, who was on the CMW delegation together with Gilles Dufrasne, Policy Officer.*

*We would like to warmly thank the participants and speakers of the workshop. A special thanks to our partner Anyssé Kenfack.*

