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Development
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For a Green Congo Basin

Preparing for the Implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution in Cameroon 5 years after its Adoption: What is the Outcome?



Policy brief

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Background and Rationale

In Cameroon, as in the rest of the world, climate change is a real phenomenon that affects all of humanity. This phenomenon stems from the increase in greenhouse gas emissions resulting from forest conversion, construction of structural projects, mining, and the use of non-renewable energy sources, among others¹. As a result, there is a disruption of the climate at the local and international levels which translates into floods, reduced agricultural production, disruption of seasons, migrations, famine, sea level rise, soil, water and air pollution, among others (PNACC, 2015). However, Cameroon, along with the international community, has committed to address the increase in greenhouse gas emissions through several initiatives under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), namely the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 at the COP21, whose objective is to reduce the increase in emissions and global temperature to less than 2° Celsius compared to the pre-industrial period². To this end, 183 of the 197 UNFCCC signatory countries have ratified the Paris³ Agreement and submitted their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The NDC is a document that embodies the efforts made by each country to reduce its national emissions and to adapt to the effects of climate change⁴.

Cameroon, on the eve of the COP21, developed its Expected Nationally Determined Contribution (ENDC). This ENDC document was changed to the CDN just after the country's ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016. The objective set by the country in its NDC is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 32% by 2035 compared to the year 2010, without slowing down its economic growth. To this end, Cameroon, like all the countries that have ratified the Paris Agreement, had the responsibility to prepare for the implementation of the NDC during the 2016-2020 period. Is Cameroon ready to implement its NDC, 5 years after its elaboration?

¹ <https://chm.cbd.int/api/v2013/documents/9AC174A3-DA9D-FD8C-764C-E2691FA90EE8/attachments/Rapport%20Provisoire%20Moteurs%20DD.pdf>

² <https://unfccc.int/fr/process-and-meetings/l-accord-de-paris/qu-est-ce-que-l-accord-de-paris#:~:text=L'objectif%20central%20de%20l,pour%20limiter%20encore%20davantage%20l>

³ <https://unfccc.int/fr/node/513>

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/fr/processus-et-reunions/l-accord-de-paris/l-accord-de-paris/contributions-determinees-au-niveau-national-ndcs>

Brief Review of the NDCs Preparation and Implementation Stages

The development and implementation of NDCs go through three key stages (Edwige et al. 2015), namely:

1. A Preparation or Pre-2020 Phase

In this phase a number of essential activities should take place, including: stakeholder engagement, national capacity building of different stakeholders (managers, experts, institutional actors), setting up of institutional arrangements, identification of planned policies and projects, NDCs review after every 05 years. This is the phase we shall review to see if Cameroon is truly ready to implement her NDC.

2. A Strengthening and Accounting Phase (2020-2030)

Characterized by the implementation of programmes and policies covering the broadest sectors or fields. Cameroon is about to launch this phase.

3. A Long-Term Perspective Phase (post-2030)

Consisting of emission trajectory scenarios covering the whole economy without mentioning adaptation aspects. For developing countries, adaptation will be encouraged as well as MMV (Measurement, Monitoring and Verification).



COP21 • CMP11
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Assessment of the 5 Years of preparation for the Implementation of the NDC

The assessment of Cameroon's preparation for the implementation of the NDC remains very mixed, as a gap can be observed between the country's emission reduction objective and the reality on the ground with regard to the implementation of the national development policy and the country's legal and institutional framework, five years after the elaboration and submission of the NDC to the UNFCCC. This is visible through:

Weak consideration of emission reductions in major projects

In January 2020, the country adopted her development policy from 2020 to 2030, called the National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS-30), which replaces the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) that covered the 2009-2019 period. The objective of the NDS-30 is the achievement of Cameroon's 2035 Vision of being «an emerging, and democratic country, united in her diversity». The government, in its NDS-30, shows willingness to fight against climate change and even emissions through, among other things, the enhancement of waste management control by industrial companies, the promotion of corporate social responsibility, the fight against pollution and the strengthening of flood control measures⁵. However, we still observe the implementation of development projects that are the source of greenhouse gas emissions. This is the case of the Nachtigal hydroelectric dam currently under construction on the Sanaga River, which will generate greenhouse gas emissions estimated at 55,968.32 tCO₂e.an-1 (ASE, 2021), the Lom Pangar hydroelectric dam whose construction caused an estimated loss of forest cover of 36,000 ha⁶, thus resulting in greenhouse gas

emissions. Same with the installation of agro-industries, especially the SudCam agro-industrial project, which has already resulted in the loss of more than 10,000 hectares⁷ of forest cover. Also, part of the FMU 09-025, that is to say 60,000 hectares of forest in the Campo and Niète subdivisions was declassified in 2019 for the benefit of agribusiness. Thus, the implementation of Cameroon's emergence programme is expected to cost at least 2.02 million hectares of forest, or 8% of the country's total current forest cover⁸.

Weak implementation of Emission Reduction Initiatives

In order to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, Cameroon adhered to many international mechanisms, including the REDD+ mechanism, in which the country has carried out numerous activities in its preparatory phase, such as the study on deforestation drivers, the development and validation of the national REDD+ strategy

⁵ Downloads/SND30_Stratégie-Nationale-de-Developpement-2020-2030.pdf

⁶ <http://www.saild.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Briefing-note-PHLP.pdf>

⁷ <https://rainforestjournalismfund.org/fr/projects/agro-industriels-et-deforestation-au-cameroun-le-mal-etre-des-populations-villageoises-cas>

⁸ https://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/OccPapers/OP-120.pdf

and the establishment of the REDD+ Technical Secretariat. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives have been implemented to re-launch the REDD+ mechanism, such as the letter from the Climate Change and REDD+ platform to the World Bank requesting the re-launch of the REDD+ mechanism in Cameroon, the signing of the MoU between MINEPDED and WWF Cameroon to re-launch REDD+ activities in Cameroon, Also, the African Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR-100) in which the country committed to reforest 12,062,768 hectares of degraded land and forests by 2030⁹, is not immune to this reality, however, many initiatives to facilitate the implementation of AFR-100 have been carried out, such as the development and validation of the National Reforestation Strategy, the establishment of a technical secretariat to monitor the implementation of AFR-100 and the creation of the inter sectoral consultation platform, which is currently being reorganized.

Inadequate Legal Framework

When Cameroon submitted its NDC to the UNFCCC in 2016, the country was supposed to also revise her laws and regulations in order to integrate the fight against climate change, but this is still pending. To date, laws and regulations in sectors such as forestry, environment, agriculture, transport, land, mining, etc., take little account of the objective of reducing emissions. In these very old legal frameworks, most of which date back to the 1990s, the fight against climate change is most often only addressed when referring to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, reforestation, etc. (MINEPDED, 2017). However, some of these laws have been under revision for decades, in particular the forestry law and the land law, and their adoption is still awaited with the hope that the numerous proposals made by the different actors to integrate the aspect of emission reduction will be integrated into the main line, which will allow the country to reach its ambition of emission reduction.

Weak Inter-Sectoral Coordination

Institutional practice in Cameroon is marked by a compartmentalization of public administrations (MINEPDED, 2017). The implementation of the NDC is no exception to this reality. This situation is characterized in several ways. First, each ministerial department, although part of a sector of activity, tends to close in around its missions, without consideration for complementarity and synergy requirements needed for the achievement of government objectives. Secondly, the multiple inter- and intra-sectoral coordination frameworks, which are clearly relevant, are not always functional. Finally, the institutional instability orchestrated by the regular changes in the organization of the government, often affects the coordination dynamics under construction (MINEPDED, 2017). Within the Government, MINEPDED provides leadership in the fight against climate change as the political and operational focal point of the UNFCCC. In this sense, a NDC focal point has been designated within it to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the NDC. Five years after the elaboration of this document, we note that the fight against climate change remains solely a problem of MINEPDED, whereas it should be, in view of the global climate emergency, a problem carried by the entire government. This results in the weak integration of the climate aspect in the elaboration and implementation of policies, programmes and projects carried/managed by the sectoral ministries and even Local and Regional Authorities.

⁹ <http://www.foretcommunale-cameroun.org/download/documents/ENGAGEMENT%20DU%20CAMEROUN%20INITIATIVE%20RESTAURATION%20PAYSAGES%20AFR100.pdf>

Some Ways to Improve the Implementation of the NDC in Cameroon

Achieving Cameroon's emission reduction objective as formulated in its NDC could be achieved through the following recommendations. It includes:

- Establish an effective process of participation and consultation with all stakeholders, especially local and indigenous communities who are the first victims of the negative effects of climate change;
- To integrate GHG emission reduction objectives into the development and implementation of policies, strategies and sectoral laws related to deforestation and forest degradation (land use planning, infrastructure, energy, transportation, urbanization, industrialization, land, forests, mining, environment, agriculture);
- To integrate the climate aspect into environmental and social impact studies;
- Set up a body at the Prime Minister's Office to implement and monitor the NDC, which will be made up of representatives of the sectoral ministries, the private sector, local authorities, traditional authorities, civil society organizations, the media and local and indigenous communities;
- Appoint a NDC focal point in each sectoral ministry who will be responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of sectoral policies that integrate the climate aspect.

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Green Development Advocates (GDA) is a Cameroonian civil society organization, created in 2009 and legalized on the 30th June 2011. It works spans from development that respects social and environmental requirements. Its mission is to contribute to the sustainable development of African tropical forests while respecting the culture, rights, interests and needs of African peoples. A particular attention is paid to situation of indigenous forest peoples also known as "pygmies".