



**Green
Development
Advocates**
For a Green Congo Basin

The Green Development Newsletter

MAIDEN EDITION

MARCH / APRIL 2026



Dear readers,

Welcome to our maiden issue of the quarterly Green Development Newsletter.

In this issue we shall provide highlights of the essential news stories involving GDA covering the period, January to March 2026.

We are also bringing to your attention an article introducing the GDA's 2026 - 2030 strategic Masterplan, underscoring the spirit and letter of the organization as it navigates through the very challenging waves of current environmental changes affecting the planet in general and the Congo Basin in particular.

Featuring also is a publication relating to land grabbing in Apouh a Ngog in the Littoral region of Cameroon by the agro-industrial company SOCAPALM.

GDA KRIBI 2026

Stock Taking And Fine Tuning For Future Actions



Much more than she has been doing for over a decade and more now, the green development advocates is resolute in fine-tuning its avowed goals to promote environmental sanity in the Congo Basin.

From this year on, the emphasis is on ensuring the self-reliance of indigenous populations and local communities (IPLCs) in its area of operation - which for the time being is circumscribed around the forest regions of Cameroon.

The Kribi annual retreat from January 11 to 18 was to explore the grounds covered since 2011, and to re-calibrate her goals running along four main areas of

intervention, with greater emphasis laid on promoting self-reliance amongst indigenous and local

populations as a tool for social and economic empowerment.

The inclusion of IPLCs in the decision-making process of the natural resource

management of their localities is another battle cry to get prior attention, alongside other issues

on environmental protection like forest conservation, regeneration and reforestation.

GDA is fully convinced that environmental degradation as observed in current climate changes and global warming is a resultant of a number of known human factors amongst which is the abandonment of traditional and ancient practices of which, it is supposed, indigenous populations, still possess the knowledge and capacities to transmit and help save our world.

GDA HOSTS IFI MONITORING ASSEMBLY



GDA Photos

The Green Development Advocates has been hosting the first general assembly of the International Financial Institutions Monitoring Group (IFI Monitoring Group). The Group is a network of civil society organizations operating in Cameroon and specialized in environmental issues.

Created in 2015, the group has had as objective the monitoring of investment project financed by International financial institutions.

Discussions during the sittings Wednesday 26 February, did center on an evaluation of the 2025 plan of action which featured essentially, the improvement of the platforms engagement with the financial institutions and the follow up of projects by the individual CSOs in the various sectors (#mining,#agro-industry, #energy and road infrastructure).

The 2026 Plan of action was adopted with emphasis on capacity building of members and reinforcement of partnerships with other CSOs and platforms engaged in the follow up of financial investments at both the national and international levels.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS

IPLCs Cry Out Against Forest Destruction And Marginalization



The opportunity was double fold for the indigenous populations around Mintom in the Dja et Lobo Division and the local communities of Batchenga, Ntui, Campo and Kikot in the South region of Cameroon. A photo-book launch organized by GDA and Womin Africa Alliance in a webinar Thursday 19 March 2026 was another moment to highlight the importance of the forests and the dire need to take into consideration not only the natural resources that these forests contained but also the humanity that across time has been there, nurturing and protecting these forests to the level that capitalist multinationals are now feasting therein with only little regard for their welfare. The photo-book titled “In the embrace of the

Earth" (https://www.gdacameroon.org/media/attachments/2026/03/24/womin_photobook-digital-spread-2.pdf), depicts the Baka indigenous people engaged in several daily activities and feeling comfortable in the forest - their natural habitat - embracing their entire livelihood, reflected in the memories of the past, the joys of the present and the aspirations of the future.

This launch preceded the International Day of Forests, Saturday 21, whose theme “Forest and economies” was articulated in the Thursday webinar from the testimonies of the participating Baka community representatives, as well as those of the local communities affected by the extractive projects in #mining, #agriculture, logging and

#hydro-power generation in the South Region of Cameroon.

The cry of these communities hovered around the marginal considerations taken by the project owners as well as the administration providing the concessions, without due regard to the strict respect by the exploiting companies of their commitments undertaken beforehand as well as the environmental fallouts of the exploitation process.

PRESENTATION OF RESSAC REPORT ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LAND GRABS AND FOREST CONVERSION IN THE CONGO BASIN



National Elites as wolves in sheep clothing

A study carried out by the Research on ecology and social science in support of the sustainable management of central African forest systems (RESSAC) led by Essaga Etame Salomon Ph.D has revealed that besides the notorious land grabs usually known to be carried out by foreign companies engaged in large scale extractive activities, with the complicity of the administration, local national elites are also increasingly involved in this spoliation initiatives.

Dr. Etame and his research team, studying the phenomenon of land grabbing of indigenous peoples and local community (IPLC) territories by local national elites with the accompanying impacts of loss of biodiversity and forest degradation in Cameroon, Congo and Gabon, were able to come out with the following findings:

- Land grabbing of forest lands by national elites in Cameroon, the Republic of Congo and Gabon is steadily increasing and attaining a critical point of concern with Cameroon already involved in grabs of up to thousands of hectares of land affecting entire villages;
- 69 % of documented evidence demonstrates that those highly involved in the process are the politico-administrative elites;
- Land conversion in these three countries and especially in the localities involved is leading to massive loss of biodiversity
- Local communities especially women and children as well as indigenous communities are the primary victims of the land loss and degradation process since they have neither the legal means nor economic resources to counteract.

The results of these findings were presented to the public in Yaounde

Monday 30 March 2026 under the coordination of the Centre for International Forestry (CIFOR), and the Green Development Advocates (GDA) in the presence of government officials representing the Ministry of State Property and Land Tenure, Forestry and Wildlife, and Agriculture as well as other partner agencies like the European Union and the University of Yaounde.

It should be very disconcerting to realise that land spoliation at a critical moment of unfavourable environmental hiccups in the Congo Basin as now, should be the handiwork of local elites whose civic responsibility obliges them to protect the fatherland from exploitation and annexation.

Like, share and comment on the attitude of local elites contributing in the grabbing of local forest lands for selfish motives in the section below.

FEATURED ARTICLE

GDA 2026 - 2030 MASTERPLAN

Strategic adjustment for a “greener” Congo basin



GDA staff at annual meeting mapping out strategies for a new phase (GDA Photos)

For some decades now, the world has been observing a gradual change of climate as temperatures rise leading to an increase of water levels in the oceans resulting from the melting ice in the temperate regions. At the same time, the myriads of rivulets, streams, rivers and seas in the humid zones have been dwindling both in the quantity of water, quality of its potentials as well as in their sizes. This has been due to the decreasing rainfalls and the attendant deteriorating humidity levels leaving the air dry and subject to penetrating sun rays and increasing

sunshine helping to render the soils dryer and harder for plant growth. They call this global warming.

Trilateral perspective

Humans have not been unaware of these changes. They have had to react to this in three different ways. There are the skeptics and pessimists wailing over the situation as they hold that there is nothing that can be done about the natural course of things. There are also the fence sitters and free riders not knowing or caring to know how the situation can be addressed, not proposing a way out but reaping from whatever



GDA in communion with indigenous Bagyelli in Nyamabande (GDA Photos)

outcome a situation may produce. The third group is that of optimists and positivist who never lose hope nor courage while they are still alive and can fight to reverse the situation by testing situations through experimentation in accordance with natural and physical laws.

Positive thinking

The Green Development Advocates falls within this group of fighters against adversity. They are the positivists who may be the few Spartans who never surrender. If it is in the natural course of things to change or mutate, GDA has carved out an army of followers, ready to join the bandwagon that believes in the changes and mutations through resilience and adaptation.

This spirit lives on even after the departure to eternity of some of its architects. The flame keeps burning and much brighter, fifteen years on, as its soldiers march on, wearing the advocacy armour of environmental protection, resilience and adaptation. With the largest deserts land mass in the world, not far away, sending very frightening signals of encroachment by the day, as

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seen in the dwindling of the surrounding water spaces and the attendant consequences on the basic livelihoods of the contiguous areas, the forest peoples of the Congo Basin are bound to join in the crusade for forest protection, resilience and adaptation in anticipation against the ongoing - voracious and rapacious environmental challenge.

It has been the vocation of the green Development Advocates to be a crusader for the Indigenous Peoples and Local Populations (IPLCs) living within these forests, to be actors in the sustainability process. This is a process that stands out to be the most appropriate strategy to adopt in managing today’s environmental changes and resilience.

Much more than meets the eye

Actions generally speak louder than words, and GDA has quite much to show these fifteen years of its existence. The measurements could start with its staff strength that started from a one digit counting and is now floating on a two. A testimony of its dynamism and vitality read through the youthfulness of the staff and their unquenching enthusiasm and thirst to produce results.



GDA staff assisting local communities in self-reliance initiatives (GDA Photos)

From a few projects in its early years, GDA now operates core programs attracting support from several partners very much impressed with what the organization has achieved so far within the years.

The organization had since articulated and activated itself on four basic operational areas:

A decade and a half now, the perspective has been rather successful but steeped in a desire and determination to do much more with only the sky as the limit. This is what accounts for the adjustments put into operation in the 2026 - 2030 strategic master-plan.

From a “green” to a “greener” Congo Basin

While maintaining its fundamental mission of contributing in the sustainable development of African tropical forests with

respect to the culture, rights, interests and needs of African peoples, GDA’s objective of promoting good environmental governance and ensuring that this is integrated in government local development policies remains non-negotiable. So also, is the desire to provide alternative services like legal assistance, defense and protection of citizen’s socio - economic rights to perceived poor and vulnerable populations.

The organization’s objectives go further to:

- strengthening the capacities of actors in the civil

- securing and recognizing land and forest rights as well as traditional governance systems of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- participatory and sustainable management of forests and other natural resources,
- climate change and
- capacity building.

society sectors in environmental protection and advocacy;

- support indigenous peoples and other threatened populations for self-promotion that respects their environments and culture;
- inform and raise awareness on issues related to the environment and human rights and
- contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources, fight against climate change and promote gender equality and minority integration in the implementation of

development policies and programs.

These lofty orientations still remain intact and are now fine-tuned into much clearer objectives as maintained in the four major operational codes or programs now addressed as follows:

- self-reliance and promotion of IPLC rights
- Promotion of forest governance and natural resources
- Community and ecosystems resilience against climate change
- Capacity building, communication and resource

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mobilization

All of these outlines are anchored on GDA's overall goal of contributing religiously to the sustainable development of the continent's tropical forests with the dream of ensuring that those in the Congo Basin continuously remain green and aspire at even becoming greener, indisputably, with the implication of those natural communities that for millennia have lived within these forests and nurtured them to the state at which they are now objects of economic covetousness by capitalist predators and self-seeking and insensitive administrations.

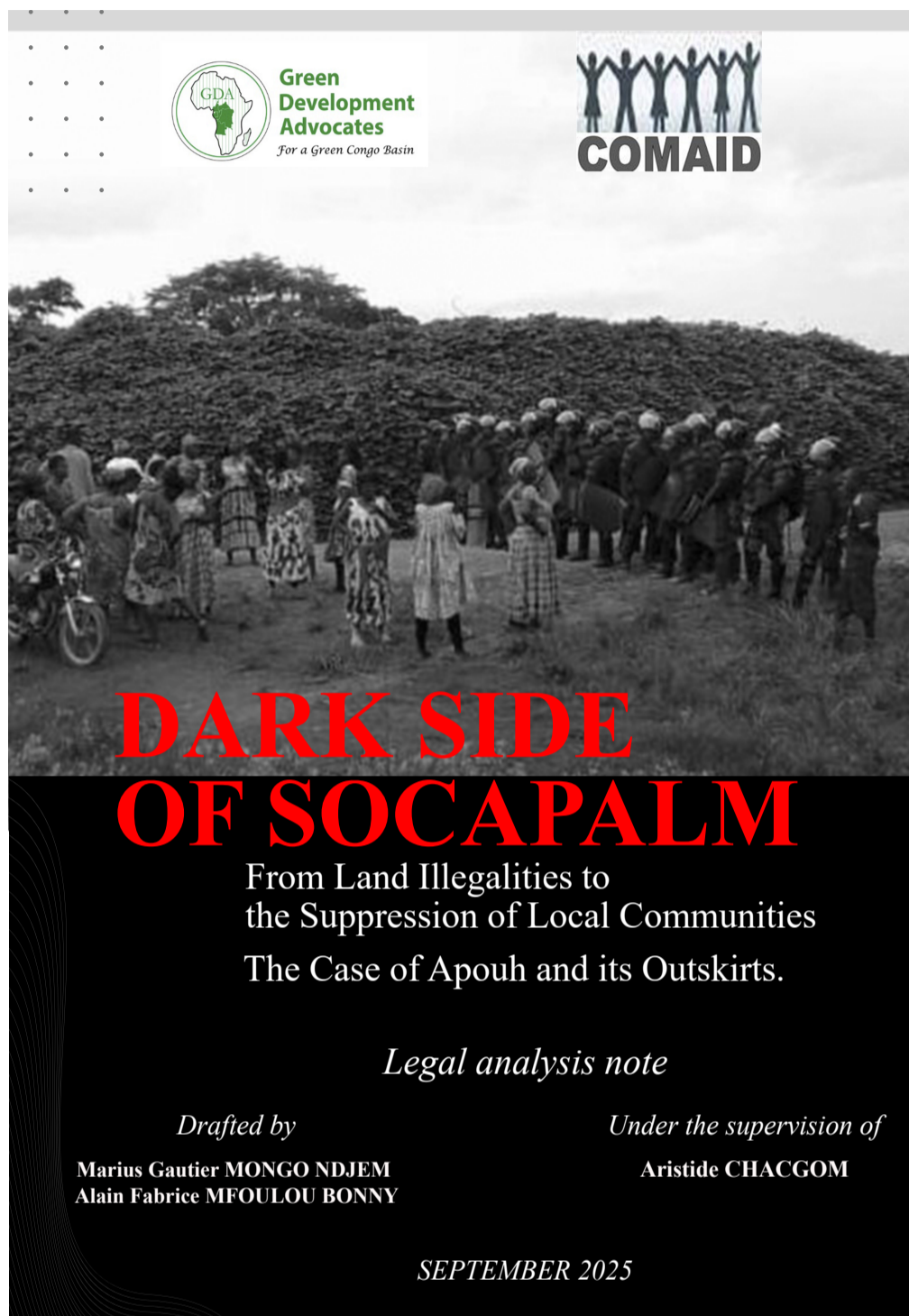
Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter for more writeups relating to our five year strategic masterplan and many other interesting issues relating to the environment and especially as regards the welfare of indigenous people and local populations as they struggle to adapt to the pressures of modernity, capitalism and inordinate policies taken on their behalf by their governments.

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the SOCAPLM company whose plantations are pushing the Apouh population to asphyxiation.

The SOCAPALM Edéa plantation was established amidst land and social problems. The history of this operation reveals both legal and material blatant anomalies. Unfortunately, the establishment of this agro-industry is based on these serious errors. These irregularities have had significant impacts on local communities, whose ancestral lands have been gradually seized in favour of the palm oil plantation. Stifled by the proximity of this plantation, the local populations are demanding vital space for their survival. They organized and protested peacefully to express their grievances. However, they encountered the intransigence of the management team of the agro-industrial company and the administration. These two parties claim the benevolence and legality of their actions while casting aspersions on the traditional leaders of the Apouh community.

This document presents the blatant illegalities underlying the land issue of the SOCAPALM Edéa, highlighting a range of evidence that showcases the extent of the injustice suffered by the local communities. The backdrop of the abuses suffered in these communities is marked among other things by questionable property deeds, concessions arbitrary granting in defiance of the law, factious occupations of community lands, and brutal and illegal repression of protests. Besides highlighting all these anomalies, the article also proposes possible solutions that may go a long way to reach a compromise.

GDA explores land acquisition illegalities in Apouh a Ngog

The land problem in Apouh A ngog is a manifest insensitivity of the administration towards the plight of local populations as they tend to downplay and ignore the cries of the riverain population on their pleas for a vital space to irk their living.

GDA legal specialists having carried a study on the legal undertones of the dispute between the Apouh community and the SOCAPALM company reveal the numerous illegalities surrounding the concessions made in favour of

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Worthy to remind our readers that GDA is a non-profit-making civil society organization focused on forest conservation and advocating for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) living in the Congo Basin.

It is funded by humanitarian and philanthropic organizations concerned with the environmental challenges of the times and willing to promote environmental resilience through, amongst other strategies, the resort to, and encouragement of erstwhile traditional methods of soil and plant conservation and management observed in indigenous and local communities.

Join in this partnership if environmental issues may be of concern to you also.

Subscribe to our newsletter for more highlights of our activities in the forest conservation process.

Our Partners

