

# **1st International Conference on the Biodiversity of the Congo Basin**

## **Participants' statement**

From 6-10 June 2014, the Biodiversity Monitoring Centre ('Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité') at the University of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) hosted the 1st International Conference on the Biodiversity of the Congo Basin. The conference was attended by well over 200 academics and researchers of the DRC, 20 different African countries in addition to researchers from several European, Asian and South-American countries and the USA. Many representatives of the DRC government and civil society from all 11 provinces of the DRC also attended the conference. The following themes were addressed:

- The present state of knowledge of the biodiversity in the Congo Basin
- The impact of climate change on biodiversity
- Biodiversity and sustainable development
- The conservation of biodiversity

After a first day dedicated to the state of knowledge of the biodiversity in eleven DRC provinces and the subsequent three days of scientific presentations and thematic discussion sessions, a round table was organized. The conference participants unanimously agreed that there were significant gaps in terms of current knowledge of the biodiversity in the Congo basin countries. More specifically, the following recommendations for a future research agenda for the biodiversity in the Congo basin and the conditions required to support their implementation, were formulated:

- Establish a robust system to fund scientific research and its application for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity at both national and regional levels;
- Strengthen capacities to undertake multidisciplinary studies on biological processes that are designed to monitor and evaluate the impact of climate change on biodiversity;
- Develop a training program to strengthen the scientific capacity of countries in the region;
- Develop long term research programs by making use of the network of institutions and organizations, permanently established in the Congo Basin;
- Develop research programs addressing the human-forest conflict with particular emphasis on understanding land allocation processes and the use of biodiversity resources linked to the wood energy and bush-meat trade;
- Develop research projects related to large-scale investments that are not financed by the investors or industries concerned, especially those that may have a potentially high impact on biodiversity resources (for example, mining, energy, timber and large-scale hydro-electricity projects etc.).
- Strengthen existing efforts in terms of promoting good governance, transparency and respect for the law;
- Improve access to, and sharing of information resulting from scientific research;
- Increase mechanisms for data sharing between all stakeholders;
- Ensure that the results of scientific research are used to address and solve problems that meet the needs of communities in the Congo Basin countries;
- Develop stronger partnerships between scientists and biodiversity managers, both within and outside protected areas;
- Provide technical and financial support for the "Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité" to enable it to fulfil its role as a centre of excellence in the Congo Basin region;

The unique richness of the biodiversity in the Congo Basin requires a strong commitment from all stakeholders, especially the governments of the countries concerned.

Kisangani, 10 June 2014.