

Cameroon's forest policy within the overall national land use framework: from sectorial approaches to global coherence?

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SUMMARY

In Cameroon, the forest sector competes with other sectors in contributing to achieve national development goals. The current trend in policy making in this wise is characterized by sectorial approaches. This poses serious threats to sustainable forest management in the absence of a national land use planning, and an undervaluation of the contribution of forests to the national economy due to an ever increasing informal economy and the way other forest products and services are framed. The study builds on policy subsystem governance fragmentation and cross-sectorial policy impact frameworks to highlight the reality that, despite efforts in setting bridges between sectorial development policies such as mining, forest, agriculture, energy and infrastructures, information asymmetry poses bias to policy-makers' knowledge for rational policy hierarchy setting and global policy coherence in Cameroon. And despite this reality, some examples show that policy-makers still can innovate to facilitate offsetting among competing land use sectors for the sake of a more sustainable development pathway.

Keywords: Sustainable forest management, natural resources accounting, development goals, coordination, land-use

Les politiques forestières et le contexte national de l'utilisation des terres au Cameroun: Des approches sectorielles vers une cohérence globale?

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Au Cameroun, le secteur forestier s'oppose souvent aux autres secteurs dans la réalisation des objectifs de développement national. La mise en oeuvre des politiques nationales est majoritairement sectorielle. Ce type d'approche pose des défis sérieux à une gestion durable des forêts, en raison de l'absence d'une réelle planification de l'utilisation des terres, de la croissance de l'économie informelle, et de l'insuffisante appréciation des autres produits et services forestiers. L'étude se base sur la fragmentation de la gouvernance des sous-systèmes de politiques, et l'impact intersectoriel des politiques. Elle met en exergue qu'en dépit des efforts visant à construire des passerelles entre les politiques sectorielles de développement (tels que les secteurs minier, forestier, agricole, énergétique et infrastructurel), l'asymétrie d'information entre secteurs biaise la définition des priorités politiques par les décideurs ainsi que leur cohérence. Malgré cette réalité, quelques exemples montrent toutefois que des solutions innovantes existent pour aboutir à des arbitrages positifs entre secteurs allant dans le sens du développement durable.

Política forestal de Camerún en el marco general nacional de la utilización de tierras: ¿desde los enfoques sectoriales a la coherencia global?

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En Camerún, el sector forestal compite con otros sectores en la consecución de los objetivos nacionales de desarrollo. Así, la tendencia actual de desarrollo de políticas está caracterizada por enfoques sectoriales. Esto implica graves riesgos para la gestión sostenible de los bosques en ausencia de una planificación nacional de la utilización de tierras, además de una subestimación de la contribución de los bosques a la economía nacional debido a una economía informal creciente y a la manera en la que se enfocan los demás recursos y servicios forestales. Este estudio utiliza los marcos teóricos de la fragmentación de la gobernanza del subsistema político y de los impactos políticos entre sectores tales como el minero, forestal, agrícola, de energías y de infraestructuras. La asimetría de la información genera sesgos en el conocimiento de los legisladores para el establecimiento de un marco político jerárquico racional y una política global coherente en Camerún. A pesar de esta realidad, algunos ejemplos muestran que los legisladores aún pueden innovar para facilitar las compensaciones entre sectores de utilización de tierras conflictivos en vistas a un camino de desarrollo más sostenible.

INTRODUCTION

Cameroon is planning to become an emerging country by 2035. To this end, numerous development projects are initiated. They are mainly located in the non-permanent forest estate in the south of Cameroon, close to evacuation routes and target various sectors of the economy including the forest sector. Historically, activities impacting forests were limited to various forms of agriculture, firewood collection, formal and informal logging, and macroeconomic policies (Etoga Eily 1971, Hedon 1930, Essama-Nssah and Gockowsky 2000, Brown and Ekoko 2001). Today agriculture (industrial and traditional), infrastructures (roads, ports, hydro-energy, etc.), town planning, logging, mining, exploitation of oil and gas resources have evolved to become the more powerful and put more and more pressures on forests (MINEPAT 2009, Lescuyer *et al.* 2014, Tchatchou *et al.* 2015). These powerful development sectors compete with the forest sector in contributing to national gross domestic product (GDP) and social development. This coexistence has remained normal until the pressure on the forest led to unbearable deforestation and forest degradation. These pressures highlight the multiple functions of tropical forests lands (Leroy 1991, Smouts 2001, Prior *et al.* 2005 and Cesaro *et al.* 2008) and they reinforce the idea of a multi-purpose and multi-user forestry (Schmithüsen 2007) in the Congo Basin.

Until recently and despite this plurality of characteristics of forested lands, forest policies have always been designed via sectorial approaches in a context where forestry co-exists with other sectorial development policies that impact on forests. This approach of policy making has had no major consequences as far as pressures on forests remained limited. Today, it is clear that if effectively implemented, the development pathways of several projects will have an important impact on forests, leading to a forecasted loss of almost 7.36% of national rainforests by 2020. Indeed, agro-industrial projects (palm oil and rubber), hydro-energy (Lom Pangar and Mem Vele'e), roads (Douala-Yaounde), railway (Mbalam Kribi), and mining supersede forests as contributors to visible national development trajectory. They convey people at realizing that agriculture and different natural resources exploitation are more economically profitable than forest exploitation on the short term (Lescuyer *et al.* 2014). When facing diverse demands for land from different and sometimes competing land use actors and sectors, policy makers in Cameroon rely only on information about logs and some special forest products when assessing the forest's contribution to the national GDP. Forest ecosystem services provided by forests, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and energy wood used by local populations, and informal timber exploitation are all left aside. Setting policy priorities for land management therefore becomes a major challenge with regards to providing the various development sectors with the opportunity to muster their full potential for human development and well-being.

The question is then to know how the current trend in policy making in Cameroon does impact on forest cover. In other words, what characterizes the current way of setting priorities about the different land uses? Does information

asymmetry influence policy makers for decision making in the policy system? Will shift from sectorial to multisectorial approach enhance policy coherence and secure a better forest management? This study aims at contributing to a better understanding of the role that an integrated multisectorial approach of the national development process and more complete information about the contribution of the forest sector to socioeconomic development may have on policy choices in Cameroon and the design of forest policies that can lead to a sustainable development of forest exploitation. The study analyses qualitative data from literature made of political and legal national documents, and scientific research results.

NATIONAL LAND USE CONTEXT: AN OVERVIEW OF POLICY MAKING TREND

Cameroon land use planning context: Sectorial policy-making and growing pressure on forests

Cameroon counts about 22.5 million hectares of humid forests. Its deforestation rate was of 0.8% per year between 1990 and 2000, against 0.3% between 2000 and 2005 (de Wasseige *et al.* 2012). The population was about 20 million in 2005 (MINEPAT 2010), out of which the forest sector (including formal and informal, timber and non-timber sub-sectors) provided about 617,000 jobs (Eba'a Atyi *et al.* 2013). An assessment of the economic importance of forests tells that its formal and informal approved components contributed 3.95% to Cameroon's GDP in 2013 or about € 696.54 million (Eba'a Atyi *et al.* 2013). The economic benefits of the forest wildlife sector can be divided between private operators, local and indigenous peoples and the forestry administration (Eba'a Atyi *et al.* 2013). Forests also provide non-economic goods such as ecosystem services and livelihoods for local peoples that are more difficult to quantify. In a context of multiple land uses, the 1993 forest policy and the 1994 forest law also had as offshoots a number of documents: Decree No. 95/678/PM to establish the land use plan for the southern part of the country, Framework Law No. 96/12 1996 on environmental management, Decree 2005/099 to organize the ministry in charge of forestry (MINFOF) and Decree No. 2005/117 to organize the ministry in charge of the environment (MINEP). More recently in 2012, a forest wildlife sub-sector strategy by 2020 was developed with strategic areas that come straight from the 1993 policy document and the 1994 Law and they are broken down into four programs, three of which are technical (development and renewal of forest resources, conservation and enhancement of wildlife and protected areas, enhancement of timber and non-timber resources,) and a cross-cutting one on support to the steering, institutional management and governance of the sub-sector (Ondoa Manga 2013).

The various development goals of Cameroon are undertaken under the auspices of the sectorial ministry that has the lead over the project related activities. Agricultural projects are led by the ministry of agriculture (MINADER), mining by

the ministry in charge of mining (MINMIN), Forest exploitation by the minister in charge of forest (MINFOF), hydro-energy projects by the ministry in charge of energy (MINEE), infrastructures projects by the ministry in charge of public works (MINTP). Finance issues are held by the ministry in charge of finance. The ministry in charge of the territorial administration (MINEPAT) is vested with the authority of supervising these as it has a cross-cutting vocation, and is a kingpin institution on regional development in accordance with Law No. 00211/008 of 6 May 2011 to guide regional development. The sectorial initiatives are developing separately and inconsistently and there is no evidence yet of rational and concerted efforts to manage lands. This leads to constraints in achieving the sectorial reforms (BAD 2009, Dkamela 2011 and Oyono *et al.* 2014). These reforms at the governmental level respond mostly to a bi/trilateral plan between the sectorial ministry, the ministry in charge of planning and the ministry of Finance that ensures the financial supervision of these initiatives.

Several categories of instruments are used to serve development goals in Cameroon. The first category consists in regulatory instruments, such as the zoning of the forest of the southern part of Cameroon as per Decree No. 95/678/PM enacted for this purpose. The management plan (MP) requires from any applicant a logging title in the permanent forest estate. The Forest Revenues Enhancement Programme (FREP) objective is to secure revenues from logging, and their distribution under the terms of the joint Order No. 076/MINATD/MINFI/MINFOF of 26 June 2012 to lay down the conditions for planning, use, and monitoring of the management of revenues derived from the exploitation of forest and wildlife resources for councils and local village communities. The Forestry Law also provides for law enforcement instruments for forestry and environmental crimes as provided for in the law.

The second category of instruments comes from bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This is the case with the 2003 forest environment sector program (FESP), a planning tool for the national forestry policy. It received multiple bilateral supports respectively from Germany via the *Pro-FESP* and France via the *C2D*. There is also the FLEGT-VPA between Cameroon and the EU ratified on 1 December 2011. The REDD + mechanism that is being negotiated. There is the Joint Order No. 0878/MINFOF/MINCOMMERCE of 26 April 2010 establishing a domestic timber market (DTM). An Independent Observer of logging activities has also been instituted as well as the development of an Interactive Forestry Atlas of Cameroon in collaboration with the World Resource Institute (WRI), in view of preparing for the establishment of baseline information on the management of forest concessions (OFAC 2013).

The third and the last category consist in informational instruments, including voluntary certifications like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for the forest sector. Cameroon also created the Norms National Agency in charge of designing norms applicable to products to be produced in the country.

Forest and environmental policy instruments are facing difficulties for their implementation due to weak ownership

of forestry policy implementation processes on the one hand (Brunner and Ekoko 2000, Dkamela *et al.* 2014, Ekoko 1997 and Topa *et al.* 2010), and funding for the enforcement of instruments on the other hand (Achancho 2013, Ondo Manga 2013 and Soh 2011).

Natural resources accountancy and policy choices

The commonly accepted distinction between “developed” and “underdeveloped” or “less developed” is based on the criterion of wealth, whose measurement indicators come from the volume of resources, mostly financial, available to a society/country (Albertini 1983). Thus, development policies are all policies that contribute in the production of an increasing quantitative and/or qualitative amount of monetary, social and human resources. Alongside the pure/classical economic model, there is the emergence at the international level of a new paradigm that now considers the value of environmental services provided by forest resources (Lescuyer *et al.* 2009). Accounting national wealth in a multi-purpose forest background raises the fundamental issue of assessing natural capital and how this accounting influences the understanding of sustainable development policy (World Bank 2013).

The natural capital refers to the stock of natural resources or the environmental potential that provides useful goods and services today and for the future (Pearce and Turner 1990, MacDonald *et al.* 1999). Natural capital is not included in measuring instruments of national wealth in tropical countries (World Bank 2013). According to the 1992 Rio conference, the sustainable forest management refers to “... *policies, methods, and mechanisms adopted to support and develop the multiple ecological, economic, social and cultural roles of trees, forests and forest lands*”. It hence accepts the diversity of areas to mobilize for the purpose of natural resource accounting. Natural resources accounting is the collection of data on natural resources in an accounting setting, but also the interpretation of these data and the presentation of the information gathered (Rekenkamer 1998). It has two major goals: contributing in the formulation of environmental policies (Hamilton 1996) and providing information on incomes and expenditures meant for the conservation or remediation of natural resources. The procedure is therefore a qualitative view for non-commercial resources such as air, water, soil and biological life, while marketable resources are appreciated in terms of their quantities (Rekenkamer 1998). Natural resource accounting is therefore based on a set of accounts: reserves; flows, emissions, combined flow and emissions, waste and environmental expenditures (Rekenkamer 1998). It can be done at macro and micro levels and serves *inter alia*: the development of natural resource management and related decision making, monitoring sustainable development, and analysis of public policies.

The informal economy made of informal sector, informal employment, non-market production from households in a defined local context (Sézurier 2009), is also one of the problem areas of forest governance on the ground as it poses bias to national natural resources accounting. In the new national accounting system manual NAS2008, the United Nations recommended the inclusion of the informal sector’s

contribution for better GDP measuring. The objective of this recommendation is to not underestimate the GDP and thus provide better information to decision makers (Talom Kamga 2013). In Cameroon, the objective of the ongoing national strategy for the development of statistics is to generate data critical to enlighten the design of policies and development programs monitor and measure achievements and ensure accountability of development results (INS 2010a). In this wise, account of the informal sector was incorporated into the classical accounting elements during the EESI 1 and 2 surveys of 2005 but was mainly located in urban areas (INS 2010b). It thus attempted to consider the contribution from the informal sector and employment to the national GDP (Talom Kamga 2013).

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: POLICY SUBSYSTEMS, GOVERNANCE FRAGMENTATION AND CROSS-SECTORIAL POLICY IMPACTS

Policy subsystems and governance fragmentation

Thurber (1992) describes policymaking systems as divided into three levels: the macro policy system, the policy subsystems and the micro policy systems. The policy subsystem is the primary unit of analysis as they tend to dominate the landscape in policymaking (Thurber 1992). This is the case with agriculture, mining, infrastructures, forestry, etc. The governance of tropical countries of Central Africa is characterized by the presence of many policy subsystems whose interactions may be appreciated both during policy formulation and during governance once the policy is devised. In these pluralist political systems public policy results from activities of several decision-making subsystems operating over time.

The difference in interest and objectives of different governmental portfolio, may explain horizontal governance fragmentation at the national governmental level (Krahmann 2003). This fragmentation is reinforced in the context of tropical countries such as Cameroon even though characterized by a state-centered system (Ongolo 2015). This fragmentation influences the relations between policy subsystems. It will all depend on how the policy is implemented, the instruments used and the behavior of various groups of actors influenced by policies (Culas 2006). In a context of fragmented governance, account should be given to three main considerations as far as sustainable forest management (SFM) is concerned. First, social positions around forest value are interdependent and a preference to a specific forest value does not exclude the existence of others and call for striking a balance between various claims. Secondly, SFM requires the involvement of networked groups of stakeholders, and the expected outcome is that preference is given to natural resources co-management. Thirdly, natural resource co-management aims at achieving distribution and redistribution between and within groups (Shashi and Lee 2004).

Cross-sectorial policy impacts

In middle-income countries, policies that put into action a forest management institutional framework have greater

influence on forestry policies than in higher income countries (Broadhead and Dubé 2002). Policies that may influence forestry policy are: (i) policies that promote the national economy, (ii) policies to improve on well-being and poverty alleviation, (iii) free trade policies, (iv) environmental protection policies, (v) natural resource use policies, and (vi) policies on forestry institutions (Culas 2006). Besides these policies, there is also a set of externalities related to changes in the international scene and governance issues in general (Culas 2006 and Schmithüsen 2003). Reforms of macro-economic and sectorial policies (Grindle and Thomas 1989, 1991) as well as those of agricultural policies as described by Bates (1981), or those of the rice policy in Cameroon (Van de Valle 1989), clearly confirm the trend of sectorial policy impacts in tropical countries of Africa.

THE LAND USE PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND FOREST POLICY IN CAMEROON

In a fragmented context where forestry policies compete with other development sectors policies whose implementation involves deforestation or forest degradation (Megevand *et al.* 2013), a better understanding of the socio-economic importance of forests and their effective incorporation in national accounts are key pieces of information in determining policy options on land use allocation.

Non-forest policies and forest policy implementation

The different sectorial legal framework provides a lens to understand how non-forest policies influence the implementation of forest policy. Within the forest sector, the article 7 of Decree No. 95/678 / PM of 18 December 1995 institutes an indicative framework for land use in the southern forest lands, allowing for pending or speculative multipurpose development for the non-permanent forest estate.

Section 4 of the Mining Code states that unless legally exempted, any land, including water that flows thereon shall be open for the granting of mining titles. However, it provides in Section 63 (1) that where there are protected areas such as national parks, wildlife reserves and gazetted forests and any area deemed necessary for environmental protection, research and mining may be subject to restrictions. The text stipulates in Section 74 (1) that once a mining title has been obtained, it gives right to fell wood needed for the activity. However, the title holder must comply with the forestry law with regards to such logging. As for mining, there were already 82 exploration permits as against 4 exploitation permits granted in 2009 (Fenjou Njoya 2011 and Matip 2009). The case of iron in Mbalam shows the impact of infrastructure development with the project to build a 510 km railway in the Deep South forest between Mbalam and Kribi with an impact on forest evaluated at 2,330.50 hectares (Tchatchou *et al.* 2015)

In the case of development projects (which include road and energy infrastructure), they are subjected by the 1996 Law to prior environmental impact assessment (Section 17 (1)). Furthermore, the forestry law provides that in the case of

these projects the forestry administration is in charge of felling the wood in the areas concerned (Section 73 (1)). In the energy sector, only 48% of Cameroonians have access to electricity. Since 2012 the country launched the construction of hydroelectric dams, including Lom Pangar in the East Region, and Memve'ele in the South Region of Cameroon. Both dams will impact the forested lands for a total of almost 5,230 hectares (Tchatchou *et al.* 2015).

In the agricultural context, although the country does not have an agriculture law, the holder of a farm title in a forest land must be issued a felling or salvaging authorization to fell wood just like a logger and can only own the land under the condition of the land law. With a contribution of about 40% to the GDP, Cameroon's agricultural sector recruits about 62% of the country's workforce. The RSDS focuses on the following points: (i) ensure food security, (ii) contribute to export growth, (iii) increase the income of producers, (iv) improve the living conditions of farmers and (v) ensure better use and management of the natural capital (CCIMA 2006). Thus, there is an increasing pressure for large-scale agricultural development, including on forest lands, both for food crops and for industrial agriculture for a targeted surface of 10,025,000 hectares by 2035 (Tchatchou *et al.* 2015). Oil palm is favored in this latter perspective with requests for a medium-term target of one million hectares of plantations (CIRAD/FPAE 2011 and Hoyle and Levang 2012), as against about 112,430 ha in 2010 (MINADER 2012) or 190 000 ha on the same date (Hoyle and Levang 2012). In view of the GESP and DSDSR, MINEPAT is host since 6 August 2012 and by Decree No. 2012/2274 / PM, of an agro-industrial programme (Agropole) with a current budget of € 33.53 Million, that may also request for land for its implementation.

The formulation of the GESP by the MINEPAT in 2008 had to be followed by the alignment of sub-sectorial strategies to ensure coherence of various sectorial policies in the country. Theoretically, the efforts made in this direction organize the various land uses for a better efficiency of forest management.

The vitality of the forestry policy framework and strategy is based on the following areas: (i) the forestry sector is divided into the Permanent Forest Estate and the Non-Permanent Forest Estate, (ii) introduction of the granting of logging licenses through a bidding process based on technical and financial criteria, (iii) reorganization of government management bodies, and transfer of production activities to concessionaires, community and council forests, (iv) obligatory management plans required for concession holders, (v) the possibility for local communities and councils to assert their right to manage forests in the context of a contractual relationship with the forestry administration (MINFOF 2012).

Competing land use sectors and information asymmetry

In Cameroon, the forest, mining and agriculture sectors are dominated by informal practices in a political and legal context in which the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) provides no solution for now. These informal practices have as consequence that they distort competition in many aspects, including costs (burdensome regulations, bureaucracy, and high tax rate), mostly in

terms of lower job creation (Zeng 2008, De Soto 1989 and Djankov 2008). On the one hand it is conducted on out-of-public regulation, thereby constituting a statistical difficulty for its poor quantification in Cameroon. According to MINEPAT, sectorial administrations in charge of various land uses should effectively produce statistical data needed for decision making. However, it has no instruments to coordinate the implementation of this activity except the National Institute for Statistics (NIS). Current and potential competition and inconsistencies of policies are outcomes of this strategic vacuity on the one hand and a priori on the importance of each of other sector on the other hand. The evaluation of this importance in Cameroon is still based on traditional indicators, including that of wealth generated by available resources, but do not by today do any economic and environmental accounting (NIS 2011). As such, the country relies on produced capital and social and human capital, traditional economic indicators to measure cash flows that represent the country's economy in a given period.

It is noted from the analyzed policy documents and the 1994 forestry laws that some recently recognized environmental functions of forests are not acknowledged and clearly included in national accounts systems. As noted by Eba'a Atyi *et al.* (2013), "the effects from the forest and wildlife sector of central Africa countries remain little documented to give them the visibility they deserve". Some ignored aspects include carbon stocking (and its impact on the climate), soil protection, preservation of water sources and soil enrichment for agriculture. This leads to the perception that the contribution of forest resources and services to economic growth remain marginal. The reasons to this lack of available and reliable information are partly due to informal activities that are not captured by national statistics used for national planning.

In the absence of complete and/or reliable quantitative or qualitative information on the actual potential of various development sectors, and in the absence of a national land allocation plan for various uses, it is still difficult to define priorities in the allocation of project areas within these sectors of the national economy. Therefore, the sectorial governance trend disrupts information and reduces the rationality of the decision-maker in the specific sector concerned.

AVAILABLE AND RELIABLE LAND USES INFORMATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST GOVERNANCE

Accounting forest products and services: Implication for policy choices in national land use planning

An important question at this level of the analysis is to know if being informed of the real value of forests really makes a difference in prioritizing during national land use planning. Whatever the perspective chosen, there is consensus on the fact that the forest multi-functionality includes the ability of forests to simultaneously provide a wide range of public and private, commercial and non-commercial goods and services

(Cesaro *et al.* 2008). The actual accountancy system still needs some improvements. These have been undertaken as Cameroon is a member of the 2008 National Accounts System aligned to the African strategy for this purpose, called SCN2008. This system provided for two initiatives including the inclusion of the informal sector in national accounts. However economic assessment of environmental functions continues to be a challenge mainly because of the high availability of resources, their public good status and common goods functions. For now, the country still lacks a real environmental statistical information system (NIS 2011). Similarly, despite the existence of a department of statistics in each of the Cameroonian ministries, actual production of data is problematic because of the rather small share of resources allocated to this specific activity (NIS 2011), and secondly to the central role of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) in that direction, under the umbrella of MINEPAT.

According to research results, when accounting all forests products and services including fauna, forests have more value than what is actually acknowledged (Eba'a Atyi *et al.* 2013). However, this value remains by far inferior to that of agriculture as a whole (Nkou et Aba'a Atyi 2013). On a timeframe perspective, the durability of benefits/rewards from different land uses shows that the current model of forest management is economically less profitable than agriculture. Along the same line, agriculture provides benefits on shorter terms than forest exploitation. Informal factions of other development sectors, that are impacting the forest sector, are characterized by the almost invisible impact on the livelihoods of local communities (Bomba 2004, Oyono 2004 and Bigombé Logo *et al.* 2010) which look up to the immediate alternative to poverty via informal activities. Once the perspective is changed, the other option is to abide by the informal with regard to local traditions, which refers to the primary meaning of the term. In fact, the term refers to traditions, customary standards of interpersonal discussions and interactions (Fontaine and Weber 2010). In Cameroon, the mining, firewood, village hunting and non-timber forest products sectors, mostly fall under customary practices. Thus, in the minds of people living in these areas, resources harvested here rightfully belong to them, despite provisions of the law that outline "artisanal" activities in various sectors, provisions only come later after practices that sometimes date back several decades, and that have expanded only with the quest for a transition of these traditional activities to a market economy.

The implication of the above for policy choice in Cameroon is that there is a need for better rationality of policy-makers. They should go beyond the simple idea of economically framed forest contribution to national development to seriously consider contribution from other forests products and services to local livelihoods and to the protection of environment and the fight against climate change. A better coordination of government action on planning for competitive and sometimes incompatible land uses, can lead to a better understanding of stakes, and of the overall (formal/informal and timber/non-timber) economy when accounting forest contribution to the national economy. In a context where there is a weak attempt at setting a development land

use plan, made through a participatory process, a better understanding of the economic and social importance of the forest sector is a necessity for policy makers, to balance between competing sectors when setting priorities during the land use planning process. This does not seem to be the case in the context of Cameroon yet, despite the multiplicity of ongoing reforms that constitute opportunities in this wise.

Land use policy choices and implications for sustainable forest management

The second question to be answered is to know if a better planning and cross-sectorial approach is the solution for setting priorities in land use planning and ensure a sustainable forest management in Cameroon. The multifunctional role of land on the one hand and forests on the other hand have to be included as additional elements of the complexity that provide constraints to the formulation of objectives, the choice of instruments to achieve development goals and ensuring sustainable management of forest lands. Discourses behind forest multi-functionality present it as the solution to sustainable forest management. These discourses meet limits when accounts for multiple forests land uses. These limits are framed around the nature of the activities to be undertaken that are sometimes incompatible with forest conservation. It's the case with palm oil and rubber agro-industries that require a total clearing of the areas to be exploited. It is also the case with mining exploitation and infrastructures, which have the same exigencies over the forest cover.

What is expected is to facilitate offsetting among competing land use sectors. In the forest sector, the objective of the 1994 Law to set aside 30% of the land as protected areas is not yet reached. Yet, there is degazettement by Decision No. 214/C/MINFOF/SG/SDAFF/SAG of 28 August 1012, in the area of Ngoyla-Mintom, for a total area of approximately 32% of the forest land considered as one of the most intact in the world (MINFOF 2012). However, there are innovating instruments to ensure the possibility to reconvert these areas for conservation. In this wise, the decision is allocating this forest land "for exploitation and/or conservation". Another striking example is related to the intentions of the 1994 lawmakers with respect to local processing of 100% of the softwood logged in Cameroon, which in 1999 was a victim of Decree No. 99/781 / PM of 13 October 1999 to lay down detailed rules for the implementation of Section 71 (1) new of Law No. 94/01 of 20/01 / 94. Giving only a list of 23 species whose export in the form of logs is henceforth prohibited, the decree paves the way for export in the form of logs of 66 so-called promotion species. In the case of the Mbalam mining project, an agreement has been signed between the State of Cameroon and Cam-Iron about the conservation of FMU 10034. This is again an innovation in contractual formula between the State and private investors in the mining sector. These examples showcase and confirm the capacity of national policy makers to innovate in the policy-making in a context of uncertainty and give the forest management the opportunity to exist and contribute in achieving more sustainable development pathways.

CONCLUSION

The neoliberal development pathway observed in Cameroon is a general trend in the Congo Basin. Cameroon's development trajectory explains the fragmented policy making and implementation processes, marked by weak intersectional coordination and coherence. An explanatory factor of this situation lies in the belief systems within different sectors, whose core build around the competing importance of different natural resources for meeting the national development visions and strategies. Secondly, ensuring global coherence does require political will to move from business as usual to a more inclusive policy making. However, what remains as a question to be tackled is about managing shifts in the values of goods and services provided by forests within the implementation course of planned land uses. Rationality of the policy-making in Cameroon remain a challenge for it is a permanent construction that can only work in a well-organized governance system where financial and human resources are provided to all stakeholders to achieve their duties on due time.

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