



UNFCCC COP23



Mangroves in the Tropics: Realizing their Potential for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

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Women in mangroves restoration and management in Cameroon: linking gender to mangroves in the context of Climate Change

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The African women's Network for community management of forests (REFACOF)



- Created in May 2009 in Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Composed of 17 West and Central African countries and Madagascar
- REFACOF is **an advocacy platform** focused on African women's **tenure rights** in land and forest reforms

Mission:

- Promote women's rights in Africa and influence policy to achieve gender equity in land and forest tenure
- 5-year strategic plan with 4 strategic pillars: Capacity building, Equitable, Tenure reforms, Advocacy and experience sharing



Cameroon's Mangroves general information



- The total area of Cameroon mangroves is **232.723 ha**; they are part of the Gulf of Guinea Mangroves and are spread over about 177km; that is **30%** of the 590 km of the coast of Cameroon.
- Cameroon Mangroves are divided into three main zones: (1) the Rio Del Rey, (2) the Cameroon estuary and (3) the Rio Ntem
- Four main species: (1) *Rhizophora racemosa* (red mangrove), the most widely represented species, (2) *Rhizophora Avicenia* (white mangrove) developed along the main canals, (3) *Rhizophora mangle* and (4) *Rhizophora harrisoni*
- Very rich in fauna, flora and hydro biodiversity
- Annual deforestation rate is 2,5% in average (FAO, 2007 and CIFOR 2011)
- It is currently estimated that only **30-35%** of the mangrove ecosystem is in a good state of conservation!

Légende

- Chef-lieu d'Arrondissement
- Chef-lieu de Département
- Chef-lieu de Région
- Mangrove
- Plan d'eau
- Réseau routier





Gender in mangrove management in relation to Paris agreement



Why does gender matter in mangrove management?

•5 main reasons:

1)The ecological, socio-economic and cultural importance of the mangroves :

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation : mangroves are long-term carbon sinks, storing carbon in the plants themselves but more importantly in the soils
- Valuable environmental support services : fisheries nursery and habitat, mitigation damage and coastal protection, storm/flood protection ...
- Livelihood benefits for local communities : food, fiber, energy, medicine, income, culture, shelter, ...



Gender in mangrove and Paris Agreement (2)



2) Paris Agreement has very clearly included references to gender both at the field level as well as at the decision-making levels:

- The preamble calls for gender equality and women's empowerment
- The sections on adaptation and capacity-building efforts specifically call on countries to adopt gender-responsive approaches (Art 7, para 5; Art 11, para 2)

3) The SDG 5 is about *Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls*:

In relation with mangrove management, Target 5.5; 5.a; 5.c are particularly relevant:

- **Target 5.5** on women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- **Target 5.a** on reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.



Gender in mangrove and Paris Agreement (3)



- **Target 5.c** on sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

5) Women are leading mangrove management and conservation:

- Restoration and rehabilitation activities
- Mainstreaming agroforestry practices into food cultivation
- Development of clean energy technologies such as improved cook stoves to reduce the utilization of wood from mangrove
- Development of alternative income generation activities to reduce the pressure on mangroves, etc.





Way forward



- **Take advantage of the Paris agreement to promote Gender-responsive mangrove management and restoration:**
 - **Promote gender-responsive approaches in implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Forest investment Plans**
 - According IUCN, 37.5% of the submitted INDCs explicitly mention Gender or Women in the context of their national priorities
 - **Empower women in mangrove management and conservation as well in climate change initiatives**
 - Ensure technologies, build capacities and provide adequate financial resources to women
- **Encourage governments to carry out reforms to ensure women's ownership rights to land and forest**
- **Promote access to decision making and leadership for the women at all levels**



Let's implement the **Paris Agreement** and **SDG5** to achieve the sustainable management of mangroves and to combat climate change!



Thank you for your attention!

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