



*XIV World Forestry Congress, Durban 7–11 Sept 15*  
*FSC In Good Company 2015*

*Side event: Markets and challenges for tropical forest products*

Community rights on forests, land-tenure challenges in Central Africa and challenges for smallholders to get certified



By

**Cécile NDJEBET,  
REFACOF/Cam-Eco**



# Outline

1. Background information on REFACOF
2. What do we understand by tenure?
3. State of tenure in the World and in Africa
4. Communities tenure rights: challenges
5. Is FSC Certification possible for communities? : potential entry points
1. Conclusion



# What is REFACOF?

## **REFACOF is The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests.**

- REFACOF was created in May 2009 in Yaoundé, Cameroon under the auspices of the International Conference on Tenure, organized by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), International Timber Organization (ITTO) and Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI).
- REFACOF has elaborated its 5-year strategic plan with 4 strategic pillars:
  - Reinforce the institutional capacity of the network
  - Promote equitable tenure reforms
  - Influence the agendas and initiatives of forest tenure reforms at the national, regional and sub-regional levels
  - Favor horizontal exchanges of experience sharing among members



# Vision and mission of REFACOF

## ***Vision:***

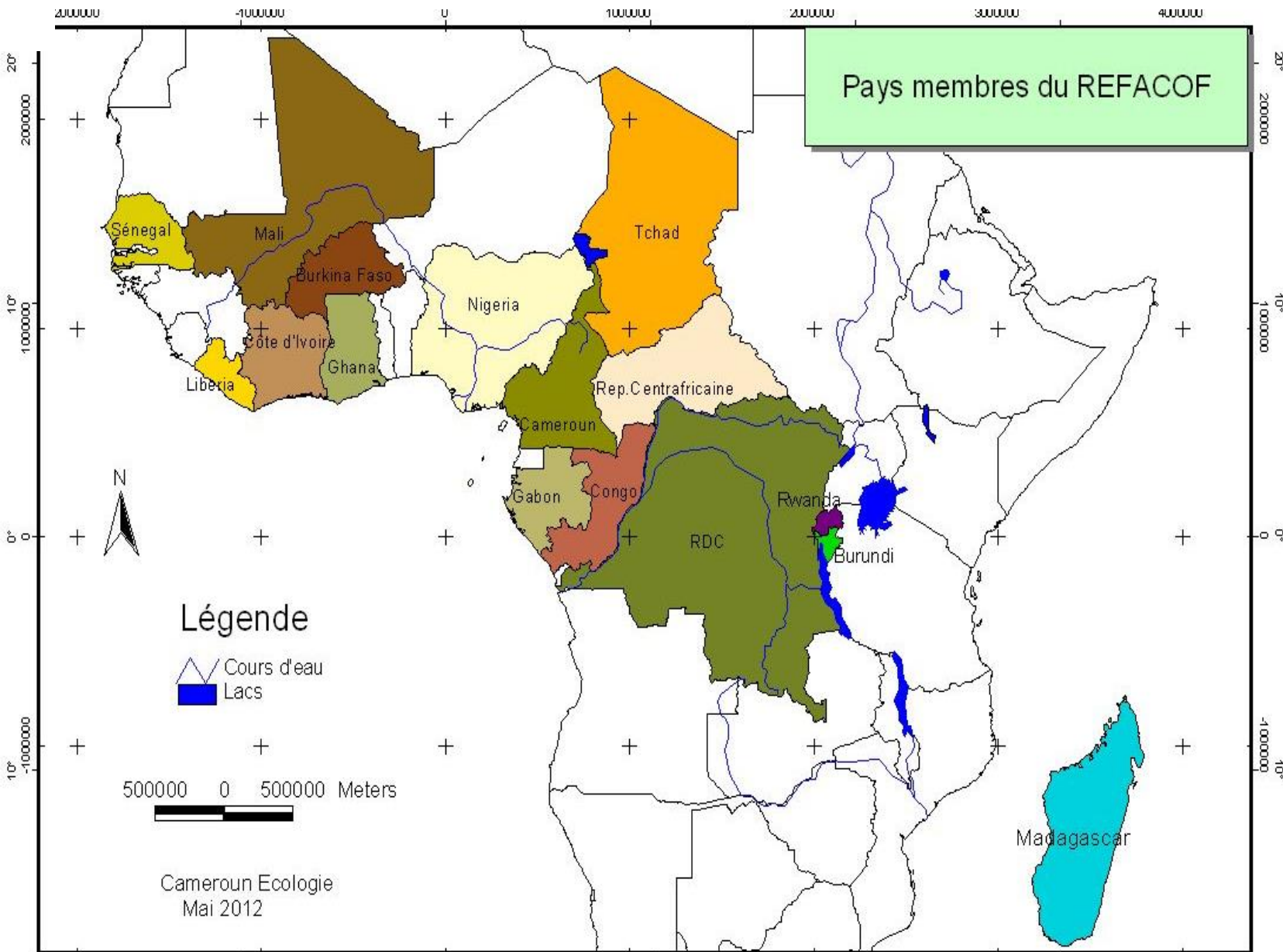
- Become a major actor for the promotion of land and forest rights of women in Central and West Africa

## ***Mission:***

- Promote women's rights in Africa and influence policy to achieve gender equity in land and forest tenure



# REFACOF Member Countries





# What do we understand by tenure?

- Three dimensions to consider:
  - *Freedom to use* : use rights
  - *Freedom to control*: control rights
  - *Freedom to transfer*: transfer rights



# State of tenure in the World and in Africa

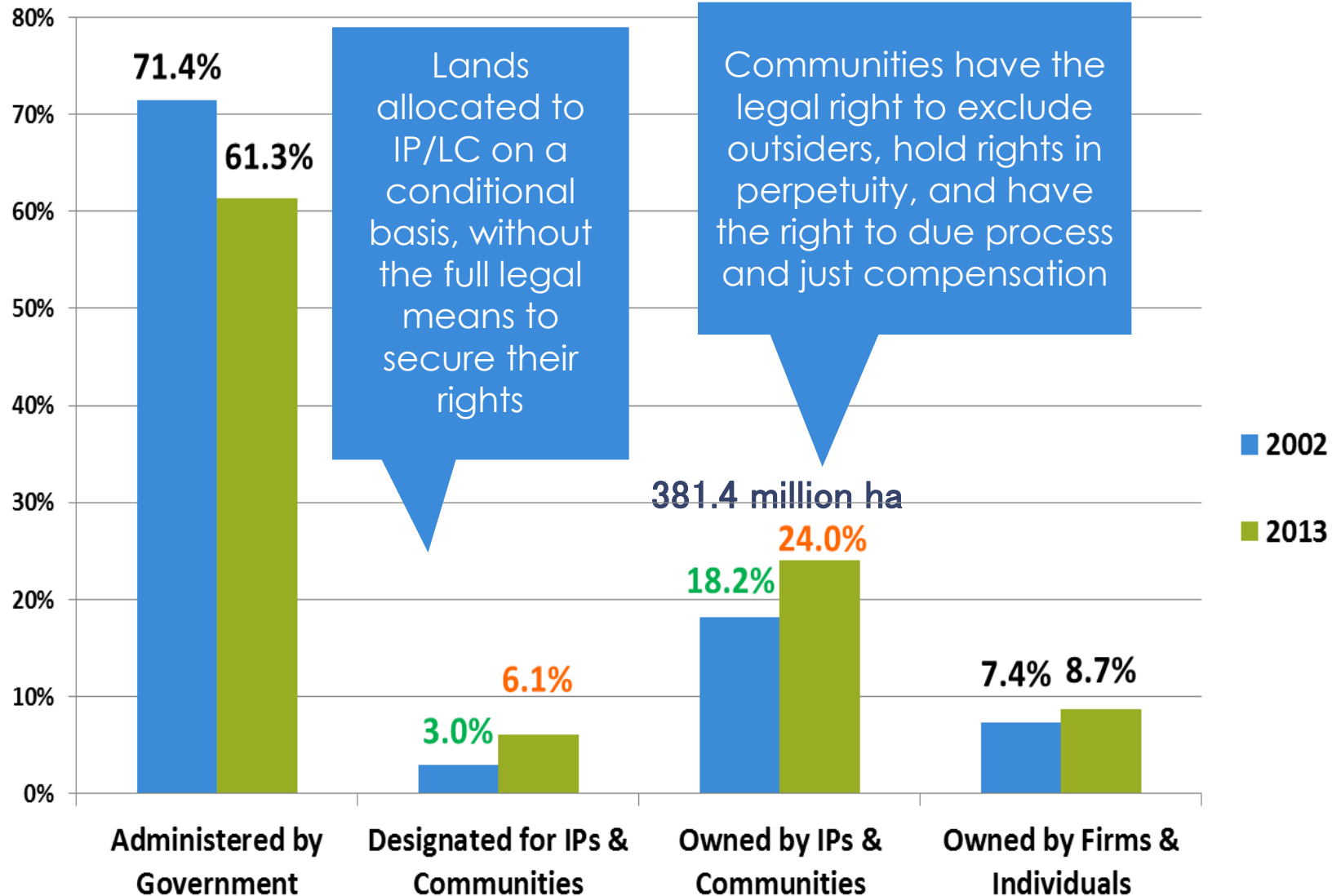
- According to [Rights and Resources Initiative \(RRI\)](#), between 2002 and 2013 :
  - without **full legal** recognition, there is a significant increase in community rights to lands and forests
  - communities legal rights to exclude, ..

**Significant increase:**  
from 21% of forested lands to more  
than 30%

- No legal frameworks created since 2008 to recognize local communities and IP' s ownership in REDD+ countries



# Forest tenure transition in LMICs 2002-2013 (RRI)

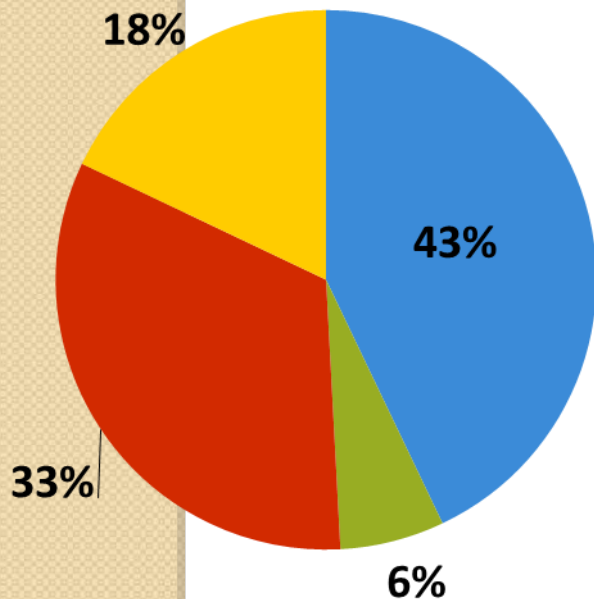




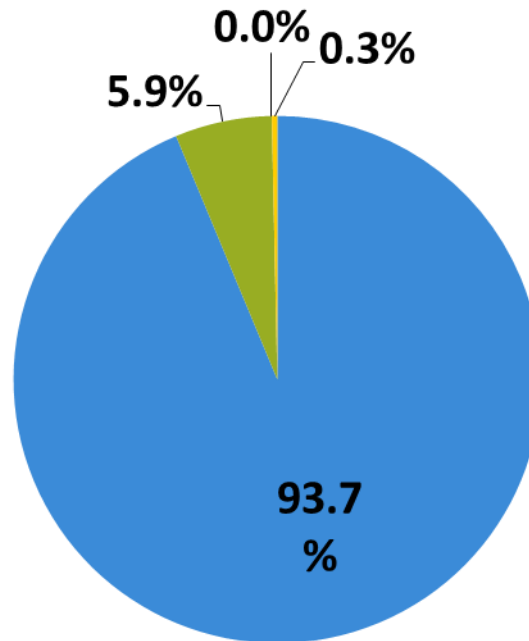


# Uneven progress across regions 2013 (RRI)

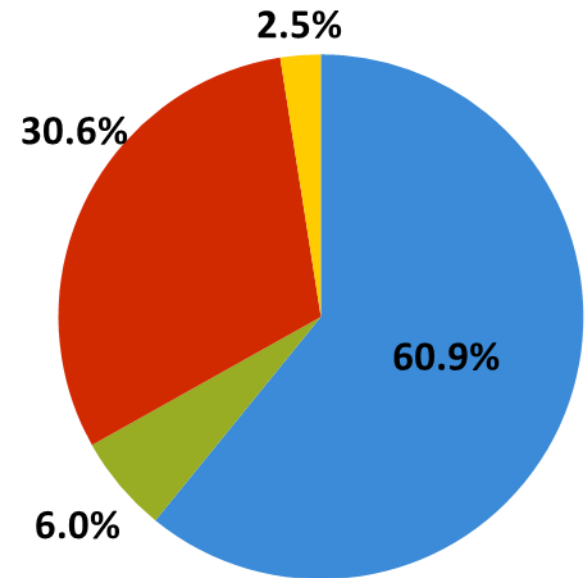
**Latin America**



**Africa**



**Asia**



■ Administered by Government

■ Designated for IPs & Communities

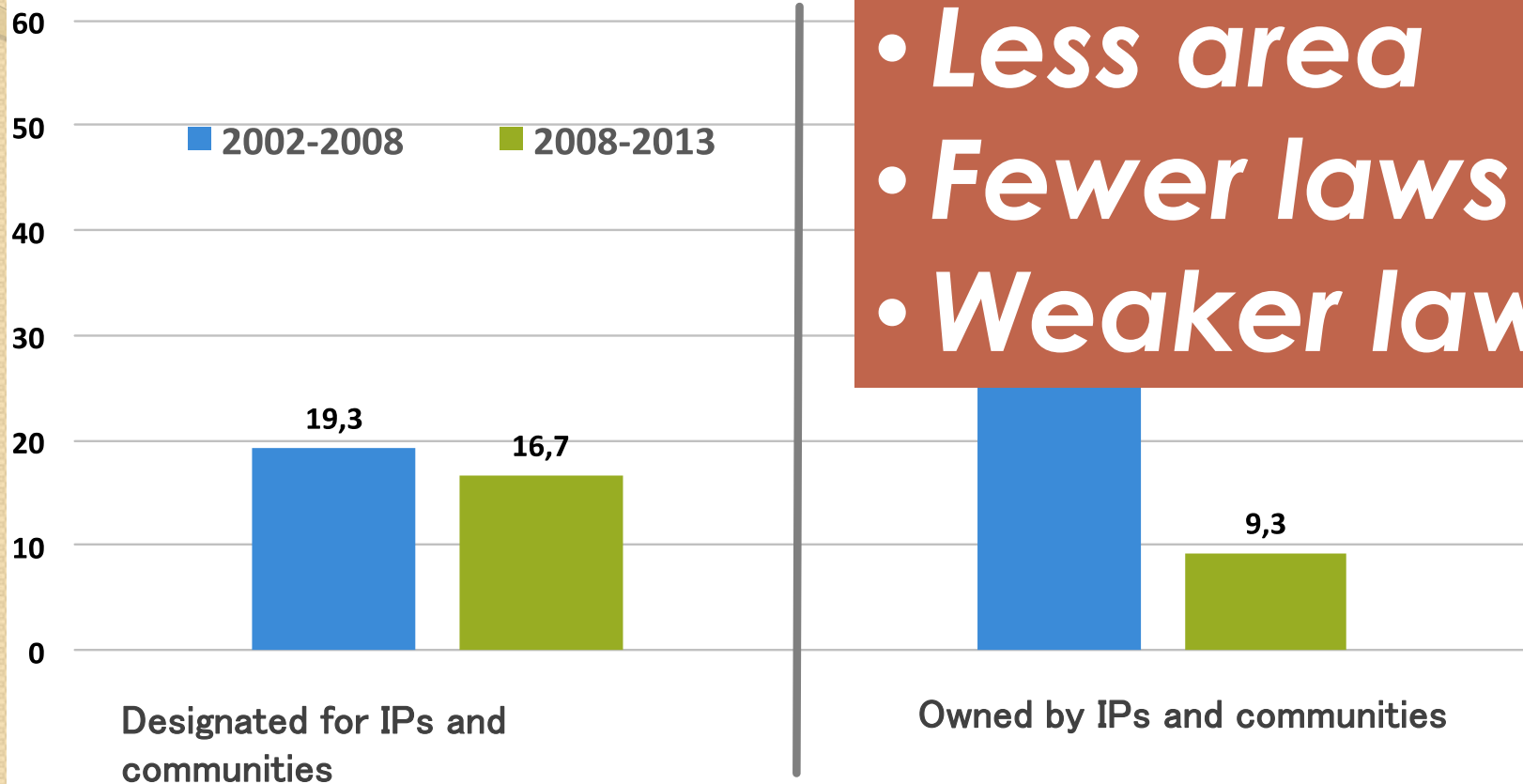
■ Owned by IPs & Communities

■ Owned by Firms & Individuals



# And recognition has slowed in REDD+ countries since 2008...

Decrease in area recognized by time period and tenure category, in Mha



- *Less area*
- *Fewer laws*
- *Weaker laws*

No legal frameworks created since 2008 recognize ownership



# Communities tenure rights: main challenges

- How to reverse the situation in Africa ?
  - Government controls 95% of the forests?
  - Only 5% are shared among private property (mainly individuals) and communities
- Within the communities, how to better secure the rights of women?
  - Women have a vital role, but their positions are often precarious.
  - They are frequently disadvantaged in a range of interrelated cultural, socio-economic and institutional ways, in their access to and control over forest resources and in the availability of economic opportunities.



# Main challenges (2)

- Women have very limited access to and almost no control over forest and land;
- Women often have highly specialized knowledge of trees and forests in terms of their species diversity, management and uses for various purposes, and conservation practices
- Women's interests and issues are not taken into account in almost all forest and land policies, legislations and regulations; neither in climate change strategies



# Communities tenure rights: main challenges (2)

- How to address the growing demand for resources, justice, livelihoods improvement and for infrastructure?
  - Land grabs? REDD+?
- Which schemes to secure local communities tenure rights?
  - Community forests?
  - Capacities?
  - Funding?
  - Market?
  - Governance issues: traceability chain / Chain of Custody, illegal logging activities?
  - Reforms?





# Is FSC Certification possible for communities? : potential entry points

- FSC certification major benefits for smallholders:
  - Help promote and ensure a legal, responsible and sustainable forest management at local level
  - Ensure permanent access to European market (EUTR compliant / FLEGT compliant) and certified woods products market
  - Provide added value for forest products and good market prices
  - Help build the capacities of smallholders
  - Help promote biodiversity conservation
  - Combine social, economical and environmental benefits



# Is FSC Certification possible for communities? : potential entry points (2)

- Commitment for funding:
  - There is a need for a dedicated funding mechanisms for forest smallholders to make certification effective
  - Engage Private sector and Government
- Commitment to promote community forestry scheme that will secure property rights to local communities including women and IP's
  - Encourage and support Governments to undertake reforms
  - Empower women to create significant development opportunities for them



- Support CSO/Networks in their efforts to promote community tenure rights, certification and sustainable management of forests
- Support capacity building for communities and CSO/networks
- Support Indigenous Peoples and local communities to defend, demarcate, their territories (RRI)
- Scale-up the coordination/collaboration/investment in securing community land rights (RRI)
- Commit to promote gender equality in land and forest tenure



# Conclusion

- There is a need for **collective action and commitment** from all stakeholders to promote community rights and improved livelihood of local people (including women and IP' s). We need money, technology, capacities, reforms, ...
  - if we want to achieve sustainable management of forests!
  - If we want to combat deforestation and forest degradation!
  - If we want to fight against poverty and climate change!
- Certification is a **great tool** that should more than ever before **target forest smallholders**!
- There is a need to **upscale community-based** forest management in Africa for more impact!!!



## Conclusion (2)

- We need to promote **partnership** between local communities and the Private sector!
- We need Corporates/Companies/funding agencies/Governments that can **commit to mobilize funding** for forest smallholders to engage in certification!
- Local people, women, IP' s should be **part of the solution!!**



# Contact

Mrs Cécile NDJEBET

Permanent Secretariat REFACOF

P.O. Box 791 EDEA, Cameroon

Tel.: +237 699 91 96 23

Email: [refacofsecretariat@gmail.com](mailto:refacofsecretariat@gmail.com)

Web Site : [www.refacof.org](http://www.refacof.org)