



Conference pre-announcement – Save-the-date

The future of Central African forests and people What can we do to turn peril to prosperity?

The Hague, the Netherlands

Wednesday 31st May 2017, 14.00 – 17.00 hrs

VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland Building, Bezuidenhoutseweg 12



*What needs to be done to keep Congo Basin forests standing for the benefit of future generations?
What can **we** do? Renowned experts from Central Africa and the Netherlands will share their insights.*

Central African rainforests make up the largest, contiguous tropical forest in the world after the Amazon, covering more than two million square kilometres - an area larger than western Europe. And they remain one of the last large wilderness areas on earth, supporting mega-biodiversity and millions of people. Congo Basin rainforests generate rainfall for other regions and reduce global warming and climate change by storing carbon, and are an immense source of clean, sweet water. But for how much longer?

Deforestation has doubled in recent decades and 8000 square kilometres of forest cover are now disappearing every year from conversion to agriculture, illegal logging and urban and economic 'development'. And population growth, poverty and international demand for commodities and natural resources adds to the pressure, with some estimates suggesting that two-thirds of the Congo Basin rainforests may vanish by 2040.

What do Central African countries want to do with their forests? Will their visions and strategies deliver the desired results? What is needed and what is possible to ensure that developments are sustainable and produce equitable long term benefits? And what can countries like the Netherlands do to leverage the business case for sustainable forestry and land use? These and other questions will be the focus of this conference. It will take stock of current trends in the region and their effects, public and private business initiatives addressing deforestation, and how Dutch policy, business and civic society initiatives can have greater impacts locally and within international frameworks.

More on the conference:

The **future of Central African forests and people** conference counts on the keynote contributions of respected experts from the Central African region and those with a deep knowledge of the region.

Cecile Ndjebet, Director of the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), with members representing ten African countries - Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Alphonse Maindo, Director of Tropenbos DR Congo, Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo

Verina Ingram, Wageningen UR - Forest Policy and Management Group, the Netherlands

There will also be additional experts from the Dutch government, the private sector, and civil society organizations (to be confirmed)

The conference will include presentation and debate, including a forward-looking panel discussion with active floor interaction to ensure a rich outcome of ideas and practical actions.

International book launch: Central African Forests Forever

The conference will also include the official launch of the much-awaited book from Meindert Brouwer, **Central African Forests Forever**. A preview of the book can be found at www.centralafricanforests.org

For information, contact:

Herman Savenije, Tropenbos International (herman.savenije@tropenbos.org, +31 317 702024)

The conference is co-hosted by:

Global Compact Network Netherlands (GCNL) is an initiative of Dutch business leaders to further the contribution of private business within its sphere of influence towards the Sustainable Development Goals, stimulating collaborative actions and dialogue between companies and other actors in the Netherlands and with counterparts in developing countries. GCNL is a partner in the Central African Forests Forever Initiative

Tropenbos International (TBI) is a non-governmental non-profit knowledge network working on improving tropical forest governance and management as a means to contribute to the sustainable development agenda. Created in 1986 it has presence through partner programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Colombia and Suriname, and projects in Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, Philippines, Bolivia and Honduras.

Wednesday 31st May 2017 – Save the date!