



[Côte d'Ivoire Global Warming] Attention to forest cover

The Ivorian forest massif, which was once the pride of Côte d'Ivoire, is transformed from year to year into sparse vegetation, exposing the country to the danger of global warming.

Abidjan, 22-9-21 (crocinfos.net) The Ivorian forest massif that once was the pride of Côte d'Ivoire, is transforming from year to year into sparse vegetation, thus exposing the country to the danger of global warming.

Seen from the sky, the Ivorian forest massif of 16 million hectares of the 60s is now sparse. On the ground, the footprint of agriculture, especially cocoa-cultivation in deforestation, to date, is 62% with 6 million direct jobs. As for logging, it is around 18%. To this sad scenery is added the illegal gold panning with the complicity of villagers, elected officials and executives, according to the Ivorian forestry administration. "The realities of forestry in 1960 are not the same as they are today. The State is making every effort to save our forest by adapting our forest code to the current situation," explains Alain Bley Bitignon, head of the communication department of the Société de développement des forêts (Sodefor).

The available data from FAO, UNDP, UNEP and the UN-REDD Programme of 2017 carried out as part of the research work called "Baseline Forest Data for REDD+ in Côte d'Ivoire, Mapping Forest Dynamics from 1986 to 2015", indicates the report of forest cover estimates, as defined by the table below.

From 7,850,864 hectares of forests in 1986, the country had only 3,401,146 hectares of forests in 2015, representing a spatial occupation of 10.56% of the territory.

(See link: <http://www.fao.org/3/i8047f/i8047f.pdf>)

Illegal exploitation, corruption, clientelism...

The German Society for International Cooperation, formerly a partner of Sodefor, points out in one of its reports that several dubious operating permits were granted to individuals in 2008 and 2009. At this time when Côte d'Ivoire was divided in two from Bouaké (center), the management of the forest heritage of the 234 classified forests managed by Sodefor was done, most of the time, outside any legal context. As a result, forest cover fell sharply from 1986 to 2015, from 7,850,864 hectares in 1986 to 5,094,452 hectares in 2000 and 3,401,146 hectares in 2015.

The annual rates of this crime against the forest are, respectively, 3.04% for the period 1986-2000, and 2.66% over the period 2000-2015. Thus, the loss of forest cover is estimated at 2,756,412 hectares between 1986 and 2000 and 1,693,306 hectares between 2000 and 2015, according to the report.

Lack of civility

In 2018, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a new forest policy at a cost of 616 billion CFA francs over a ten-year period to recover at least 20% of the forest cover, according to the Ministry of Water and Forests.

To monitor the 234 classified forests, the Ivorian government created, in 2019, the special surveillance and intervention brigade (BSSI) of the Ministry of Water and Forests. 650 trainees including 79 girls made their official exit on Thursday, August 6, 2020, at the headquarters of Sodefor in Abidjan-Cocody, after four months of joint basic training and initiation to jungle and nautical commando techniques. This brigade is composed of a command, two jungle commando intervention companies, an intelligence company, a wildlife company, a water company, a lagoon squad and a music section. "This brigade is the spearhead of the fight against all forms of crime related to the forest, wildlife and water resources," reassures the Minister of Water and Forests, Alain-Richard Donwahi.

However, the BSSI and Sodefor agents are faced with real problems of frank collaboration between agricultural populations. Here, there is a real lack of civic citizenship denounced by an expert in environmental science and management, forestry option and community development. "The population is comfortable informing the gendarmerie and the police about a robbery, but uncomfortable informing Sodefor agents about infiltrations into the forests which are an essential link in the Ivorian economy," he said.

Danger in the middle of the forest

Faced with the disruption of the tropical ecosystem, this brigade has destroyed several camps in classified forests, but some farmers whose crops have not been destroyed continue to harvest

their cocoa because, they argue, they have no choice, let alone solutions. "Our camps were set on fire, but nothing was found for us to do new activities," laments our interlocutor on condition of anonymity.

In addition, extreme violence is part of the fight against deforestation. Sodefor agents stabbed by peasants, crews of the brigade who are under fire, intimidation of executives, elected officials and villagers. There is no shortage of testimonies, the facts are alive. The agents in the development of the safeguarding of the Ivorian forest are caught in a spiral of violence. Bad habits therefore have hard skin. "In 2012, our agents were attacked in Niegré 2012 and 2021, in Boundiali in 2019 and Bossematié in August 2021. To this, we must add the shots that our patrols are coming under in these forests," regrets Alain Bley.

Solutions, but...

Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cocoa producer with about 2 million tons per year, is not giving up in the face of the danger of global warming.

It assumes its evil by the multiplication of initiatives across the country. REED+, which contributes to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gases through the reduction of emissions related to deforestation and forest degradation while promoting economic and social development, raises awareness with Sodefor about reforestation around cocoa cultivation. That is to say, agroforestry which consists in combining forest, food crops and cocoa.

For example, REED+ pays a premium per kilo of cocoa produced in agroforestry to encourage producers. "It's really a success because, through the added value we give to the price per kilogram of organic cocoa, it's really incentivizing," says REED+ technical advisor, Paris Toman.

This fight is reinforced by the various national tree planting operations, launched by the Minister of Water and Forests Alain-Richard Donwahi: "1 day 1 million trees" in 2019, then "1 day 5 million trees" in 2020, and "1 day 50 million trees" in 2021.

All these actions are being carried out to address the urgent need to achieve 20% national forest cover by 2030. "We sell, in seeds simply, more than 5 tons and, in terms of plan production, we have a mobilization capacity of 20 million plans per year. But as the plans are conditioned on demand, Sodefor makes more than 10 hectares of reforestation per year," reassures Alain Bley Bitignon.

Before the end of October, when the update on the situation will be made public, the Minister of Water and Forests continues to raise awareness, in these speeches, of all national and non-national citizens. "This year, we are counting not only on your mobilization, but also on the financial contribution of all for the restoration of our forest cover," he says.

Côte d'Ivoire has the expertise and technicality, it can exceed and even do more than the 20% target by 2030, but it lacks financial support. "Redoing the forest cover is very expensive, we need the support of donors," argues Sodefor.

Sériba Koné

[Box] Providing Côte d'Ivoire with financial resources

The global danger to which no continent, let alone a country, is spared is global warming. The devastating effects of his actions already began with floods, with climate change making meteorologists lie about some data.

In a forest area like Côte d'Ivoire, the best way to mitigate or mitigate the effects of global warming is through reforestation. And the Ivorian government is active according to the means at hand. Thanks to the National Security Council, from 2013 to date, the classified forest of Niégré has a growth of 14% in forest cover, according to Sodefor.

The country is one of the most paved with a forest seed treatment and conservation center based in Adzopé, in eastern Côte d'Ivoire. With about 220 thousand hectares of reforestation, including 60 thousand hectares of agro-forest reforestation, substantial financial resources are needed.

Sériba K.

Note

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<https://crocinfos.net/cote-divoire-rechauffement-climatique-attention-au-couvert-forestier/>?