

Overview and Analyses of Key National Policies, Strategies and Action Plans Relevant to Deforestation, Child and Forced Labour, and Smallholder Inclusion in Cameroon



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Acronyms

CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESP	Growth and Employment Strategy Paper
ILO	International Labour Organization
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGP	National Gender Policy
PFE	Permanent Forest Estate
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and justification

Cameroon is defined by its geography. With its 47.54 million ha stretched around six countries – Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo – the country links the “vibrant and densely populated” West Africa with the forested and “less lively” Central Africa.¹ This geostrategic position determines its involvement in various regional bodies from West and Central Africa, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea on maritime security, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Commission of Central African Forests.

Cameroon’s surface area is shared among coast, desert, mountains, rainforest and savanna. Based on their ecological, climatic and edaphic characteristics, these landscapes have been grouped around five agro-ecological zones, which cover approximately the following surface areas: i) moist monomodal rainfall forest zone (4.57 million ha), ii) moist bimodal rainfall forest zone (16.58 million ha), iii) high plateaus zone (3.12 million ha), iv) high savanna zone (12.31 million ha) and v) sudo-Sahelian zone (10.04 million ha).²

Cameroon is also home to some of the most diverse biodiversity of the continent, with a high degree of endemism. It ranks fourth in floral richness and fifth in faunal diversity and represents 92% of Africa’s ecosystems.³

Cameroon’s ambition to become an emerging country by 2035 seems fraught with difficulties. Its long-term development of ‘Vision 2035’, developed in 2009, states the following objectives:

- Reduce poverty to a socially acceptable level
- Become a medium-income country
- Acquire the status of a newly industrialised country
- Reinforce national unity and consolidate the democratic process.

Cameroon suffers from weak governance, which affects the country’s development and ability to attract investments. It ranked 130 out of 168 countries in the 2015 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index and 172 out of 189 economies in the 2016 Doing Business report by the World Bank Group.⁴

The country is richly endowed with natural resources ranging from fertile land for agriculture to extractive resources (minerals, oil) and forest. These resources constitute a crucial economic life wire for the country.

In 2017, the agricultural sector alone provided an estimated 76.38% of Cameroon’s gross domestic product (GDP). This contribution came from both cash and food crops like cocoa, coffee, rubber, rice, banana, manioc, etc. For some of these commodities, like cocoa, coffee and palm oil, Cameroon ranks amongst the world’s top producers. For cocoa, the country ranks fifth globally with 275,000 tons/year; for coffee, it ranks 31 globally; for palm oil, it ranks 13 globally; and for rubber, it ranks fourth in Africa and 16 globally. Cameroon presently has a land cover of 44,000 ha for rubber plantation with an annual production of about 61,000 tons.⁵

1 Vircoulon, T. 2015. Cameroon: Africa’s Pivot. *World Policy Journal*, 32(2): 113–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0740277515591549>

2 République du Cameroun, 2018. Stratégie nationale de réduction des émissions issues de la déforestation et de la dégradation des forêts, gestion durable des forêts, conservation des forêts et augmentation des stocks de carbone. 76 p.

3 Republic of Cameroon, 2012. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – Version II – MINEPDED. www.minep.gov.cm.

4 <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploreconomies/cameroon/>

5 Umar, H.Y., et al. 2011. An Overview of World Natural Rubber Production and Consumption: An Implication for Economic Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 33(1): 53–59.

It is important to emphasise that the cocoa sector is estimated to contribute about 0.89–1.45% of Cameroon’s GDP and accounts for between 5% and 9.652% of annual total export revenues.⁶ About 50% of Cameroon’s cocoa beans come from the Southwest region, 35% from the Central region and 15% from the Southeast region.⁷ Apart from agriculture, another crucial natural resource commodity is timber. With the fall in international oil prices in Cameroon in the late 1980’s, timber resources emerged as one of the major sources of foreign earnings, eventually leading to an increase in logging. Cameroon produces about 3 million m³ of round wood logs per year, which makes it a major producer of tropical logs in Africa.⁸ The contribution of timber to Cameroon’s GDP has increased steadily from about 3.5% in 1989 to 6.7% in 1995 and finally reached 12% of GDP in 2000.⁹

While these sectors are essential to Cameroon’s economic development, there is no doubt that their development could create certain negative impacts from deforestation to the violation of human rights. Cameroon, like most of the countries of the Congo Basin, has an impressive forest cover estimated at about 29 million ha, representing 10% of the total forest cover of the Congo Basin sub-region and making it one of the largest forest areas in the region after the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Between 1990 and 2000, Cameroon lost an average of 220,000 ha/year of forest. This amounted to an average annual deforestation rate of 0.90%, which was among the highest in the Congo Basin sub-region. Between 2000 and 2005, the rate of forest change increased by 9.9–0.98% per annum. In total, between 1990 and 2005, Cameroon lost 13.4% of its forest cover, or around 3,300,000 ha. Measuring the total rate of habitat conversion (defined as change in forest area plus change in woodland area minus net plantation expansion) for 1990–2005, Cameroon lost 8.4% of its forest and woodland habitat. These figures are further confirmed in the National Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Strategy, which estimated that the average annual rate of loss of forest cover between 2000 and 2014 was 0.12%. According to the report on drivers of deforestation in Cameroon commissioned as part of the development of the National REDD+ Strategy, agriculture is considered the main cause of forest cover change. The report further analysed deforestation as per the five agro-ecological zones in Cameroon.

Deforestation is not the only visible impact related to the exploitation of natural resources; there have also been cases of the non-respect of human rights, such as child labour, community rights, etc. However, the Cameroon government, through different regulatory and policy instruments, has undertaken measures to regulate questions of deforestation, child and forced labour and favour smallholder inclusion in the country’s macro-economic equation.

1.2. Objective of this study

The overarching objective of this study is to identify laws and policies on deforestation, child labour, forced labour and smallholder inclusion in Cameroon and analyse how these policies support the private sector to align with the sustainable production of timber, palm oil, cocoa and rubber. This entails:

- Identifying and reviewing the various national and sub-national sector policies and how these policies align or do not align to some of the private sector commitments related to deforestation, child labour, and gender and smallholder inclusion.
- Identifying practical entry and leverage points, implementation opportunities and constraints for private sector involvement in the sustainable production of timber, palm oil, cocoa and rubber.
- Recommending workable measures that will enable the private sector to align with the existing policies to promote the sustainable production of timber, palm oil, cocoa and rubber.

6 Ibid.

7 Tankou, M.C. no date. *The Cameroon Cocoa Story. sudwind, supply chainge and Global 200*, P.14. http://www.supplychainge.org/fileadmin/reporters/at_files/Cameroon_cocoa_story.pdf

8 Eba’a Atyi R. 2001. *Modelling Sustainable Timber Production in South Cameroon*. Tropenbos-Cameroon Programme, University of Dschang, Foret-Bois.

9 Njimanted, G.F. and Aquilas, N.A. 2015. *The Impact of Timber Exports on Economic Growth in Cameroon: An Econometric Investigation*. *Asian Journal of Economic Modelling*, 3(3): pp. 44–60. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.8/2015.3.3/8.3.46.60>

1.3. The relevance of policy review

The government of Cameroon has been making efforts to regulate different aspects of policy, such as deforestation, child labour, forced labour and smallholder inclusion, in the production of the selected commodities.

Some of the key legal and policy frameworks in place include:

- The Constitution of Cameroon adopted as Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996
- The Labour Code adopted as Law No. 92-007 of 14 August 1992
- The Orientation Law on Land Use Planning and Sustainable Development adopted as Law No. 2011/008 of 6 May 2011
- The Environmental Management Framework Law adopted as Law No. 96/12 of 5 August 1996
- The Land Tenure Ordinances No. 74-1 and No. 74 -2 of 6 July 1974
- The Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Law adopted as Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994.

In addition to these laws are international conventions and treaties duly signed and ratified by the Cameroon government. Also, there are policies and strategies aimed at economic and development planning like the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), the Rural Sector Development Strategy, the National Gender Policy (NGP) as well as sector-based strategies, like the National Forestry Policy, National REDD+ Strategy, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) prescribed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) within the framework of the Paris Agreement on climate change. These national policies and strategies are complemented by international or regional initiatives, like the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea on maritime security, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Commission of Central African Forests Convergence Plan, the African Palm Oil Initiative, the Accountability Framework Initiative and private sector led initiatives, like the Forest Stewardship Council, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), UTZ, etc.

There has been growing commitment from the private sectors to improve and transform their business practices so they reflect a more thorough compliance to sustainability principles. At the global level, a newly established industry platform, the Consumer Goods Forum, responded in 2010 to the increased pressure from civil society groups by having its members collectively pledge to work towards achieving zero net deforestation for high forest-risk commodities by 2020. The palm oil companies at the RT16 in Indonesia adopted a new RSPO standard, incorporating concepts of the High Carbon Stock Approach. In October 2017, stakeholders in the rubber value chain launched the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber, initiated by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development. Further, at the sideline of the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Bonn, the world's largest cocoa and chocolate companies agreed to end deforestation and forest degradation in the global cocoa supply chain.

As indicated in the introduction of this report, the different laws, policies and strategies shall be analysed here to identify opportunities for and constraints on private sector involvement in national processes.

1.4. Selected landscapes and commodities

The Campo Ma'an landscape, legally referred to as the 'Campo Ma'an Technical Operations Unit' is one of Cameroon's productive landscapes, and it has been selected for this review because it is composed of a complex landscape with agro-commodities and other land uses, including protected areas, logging concessions, mining concessions, and more. It's agro-industrial commodities include:

- Rubber
- Palm oil
- Timber
- Cocoa.

1.5. Companies

Rubber, palm oil, timber and cocoa companies of the Campo Ma'an landscape considered in this review include:

- Société Camerounaise de Palmeraies (SOCAPALM; a Socfin subsidiary)
- Hevecam (a Halcyon subsidiary)
- Cameroon United Forest
- SCIEB/WIJMA – Société Camerounaise d'Industrie et d'Exploitation du Bois a subsidiary of the Dutch Timber company, WIJMA
- Cargill Cocoa (Cargill is sourcing from the pilot landscape through its partner Telcar Cocoa Ltd)
- Barry Callebaut (Barry Callebaut is sourcing from the pilot landscape through its subsidiary Sic Cacaos)
- Olam Cameroon (Olam Cameroon is sourcing cocoa from the pilot area).

1.6. Approach of the study

The study was carried out mainly based on desk research, with short field trips and informal interviews. The initial draft of the study was presented to a diverse stakeholder group, made up of indigenous and local community members, actors involved in the key commodities described above and government officials from diverse ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Wildlife; Environment and Nature Conservation; amongst others. Please see Annex 2 for a summary of the deliberations.

2. Overview of policies and regulations related to deforestation, child and forced labour, gender and smallholder inclusion

2.1. Regulations and policies related to deforestation

2.1.1. The 1994 Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries Law

Since its participation in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992, Cameroon has undertaken an array of reforms to protect its environment and especially its rich biodiversity, including the forest and its resources. The first major reform was at the institutional front with the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Cameroon's forest policy reforms were largely influenced through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund sponsored structural adjustment programme, but it was galvanised by the ideals of the Rio conference on the importance of the rainforest. Another element that influenced the policy reforms in the 1990s was the forestry sector's dwindling revenues from oil and agriculture, and the country was seeking alternative income sources or broadening its narrow export base. Timber emerged as a main export commodity in Cameroon in the late 1980s, and its contribution to GDP increased steadily from about 3.5% in 1989 to 6.7% in 1995 and finally reached 12% of GDP in 2000.¹⁰

It was against this backdrop that the Cameroon government got the bill on a new forestry law adopted by the Cameroon National Assembly in 1994. The 1994 Forestry Law is considered a major turning point in the history of Cameroon's forest policy. By adopting this law, the government aimed to achieve five key objectives related to the forest sector:¹¹

- i. Rationalising the use of forest land
- ii. Enabling communities to benefit more significantly from their right to use forest resources
- iii. Allocating harvesting rights with greater transparency and efficiency
- iv. Supporting sustainable forest management
- v. Reforming the taxation system.

It also noteworthy to mention that the law was adopted amidst a steady increase in deforestation and forest degradation. According to certain sources, it was during this decade (1990–2000) that Cameroon lost an average of 220,000 ha/year, amounting to an average annual deforestation rate of 0.90%.¹²

Essential elements of the 1994 Forestry Law related to deforestation

The 1994 forestry reform process was a culmination of several external and internal influences with the goal of balancing politics, economics and conservation to meet development objectives, direct material interests and political concerns.¹³ As indicated earlier, the objectives of the 1994 Forestry Law included rationalising the use of forest land, providing local communities certain rights to use forest resources, improving transparency and efficiency in attribution of logging rights, ensuring sustainable forest management practices and reforming the forest taxation system.

The one key development of this Law, with some bearing on the concept of deforestation, was the categorisation of the forest into two categories: i) the Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) and ii) the Non-Permanent Forest Estate.

¹⁰ Njimanted G.F. and Aquilas, N.A. 2015.

¹¹ Singer, B. 2008. *Cameroonian Forest-related policies: A Multisectoral overview of public policies in Cameroon's forests since 1960*. Institut d'Études Politiques and CIRAD, Paris.

¹² Karsenty, A. 2016. *The contemporary forest concessions in West and Central Africa: chronicle of a foretold decline? Forestry Policy and Institutions Working Paper No. 34*. FAO, Rome. Available at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/45021-04023cd52f4619cd28fe747b7e42c167f.pdf>

¹³ Ekoko, F. 2000. "Balancing Politics, Economics and Conservation: The Case of the Cameroon Forestry Law Reform". *Development and Change, International Institute of Social Studies*, 31(1), 131–154.

The purposes of these two categories are well spelt out in the Law (Section 20). According to this provision of the Law, PFE “shall comprise lands that are used solely for forestry and or as a wildlife habitat” and Non-Permanent Forest Estate “shall comprise forest lands that may be used for other purposes than forestry”. According to the Law, permanent forests shall cover at least 30% of the country’s national territory and need to consider the country’s ecological diversity. The permanent forests are subjected to a management plan to ensure that activities within the forest are carried out based on clearly stated objectives, including maintaining “primitive value” or not compromising the future productivity of the forest (Section 23).

The dispositions of the 1994 Forestry Law were rendered operational through Decree No. 95/531/PM of 23 August 1995, which laid down the procedures for implementing the Forests System. PFEs, also referred to as ‘forets domaniale’ or ‘National Forests’ include:

- Strict ecological reserves
- Flora reserves
- Protection forests
- Recreational forests
- Research and teaching forests
- Production forests
- Reforestation areas
- Botanic areas.

Prima facie, the 1994 Forest Law prohibits certain activities that will lead to deforestation or forest degradation in the PFE. Article 9 of the 1995 Decree stipulates that clearing of a national forest (forêt domaniale) may be authorised only after the proposed forest is degazetted or declassified. The degazettement or declassification must be done only for “public interest” and only after an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been duly carried out.

This provision raises a number of issues, including what constitutes ‘public interest’. In Cameroon, the concept of ‘public interest’ is increasingly becoming a buzzword to legitimise violations often attributed to land attributions. This concept is grounded in the Land Tenure Law, especially the texts related to expropriation and compensation. For example, does a private sector led investment like attribution of land for large-scale palm oil plantation qualify as an investment of public interests? Therefore, public interest according to practices could be qualified within the space of economic development aimed at promoting the national economy.

The Decree further states, regarding the issue of degazettement of a PFE, that any such degazettement either in “whole or in part” can only be valid where a forest of “the same class and equivalent area in the same ecological zone” is classified or gazetted (Article 22).

The forestry law reform process in Cameroon is criticised on many fronts, including its “flawed formulation process, conflicting interests and weak government administrative capacity” but also because the law has not been fully implemented.¹⁴

To ease implementation and align with one of the objectives of the 1994 Forestry Law to rationalise the use of forest lands, the Cameroon government adopted Decree No. 95-678-PM on 18 December 1995, establishing an indicative land use framework for the Southern Forest Zone. The indicative framework for the past two decades has served as a tool for planning, orientation and exploitation of natural resources. This plan established forest management units and secured the different protected areas; but unfortunately, this process has been limited

14 Ekoko, F. 2000.

to only the Southern Forest Zone running from the Southwest, Centre, South, Littoral and East regions. The intention of the indicative framework is also to encourage integrated management of resources, considering potential sectoral conflicts. The question today is whether it has really helped to rationalise the use of the forest land to ensure long-term sustainability.

Unfortunately, Cameroon has witnessed a huge overlap in the implementation of its different policies that have affected forest cover in the last decade and a half. It was during this period that Cameroon witnessed a drastic increase in the rate of forest change estimated at 9.9% against 0.98% per annum. This could be justified if one considers that it was during this period that Cameroon started the implementation of its new economic policy defined in the GESP. This new policy focused on transforming its agricultural production with attribution of lands for large-scale plantations and introduced its concept of “agriculture of the second generation” and attribution of mining permits. A World Wildlife Fund report, produced in collaboration with two national non-governmental organisations, depicted the extent of these conflicts, with about 30 mining exploration permits overlapping 12 protected areas and dozens more in the immediate vicinity of protected areas, and a high potential for conflict with the government’s conservation objectives.¹⁵

2.1.2. The 2011 Law on Orientation for Development and Sustainable Development of the Territory in Cameroon

In 1995, Cameroon elaborated and validated a forest-zoning plan but only limited it to the forestry sector and did not take into consideration other land uses, such as agriculture or mining and the development of infrastructures. Another drawback of the 1995 forest-zoning plan was that it covered less than half of the country and focused only in the meridional tropical forest. With increasing demand for other land uses, in contradiction with the forest-zoning plan, there was a need to have a new plan that covered the entire national territory and it is multi-sectors. It was within this context that the Cameroon government adopted a new framework law on land use planning and sustainable development. The objectives of this law are three-fold:

- i. Integrate the management of national space within development policies to give more visibility and method to land allocation.
- ii. Balance the distribution of activities, infrastructures, equipment, services and populations across the national territory.
- iii. Support the implementation of major projects.

If implemented, this Law and its different tools (national land use master and zoning plans, regional land use plans, sector-based land use plans, and local land use and sustainable development plan) aim to organise land allocation in a sustainable development perspectives, which could contribute to Cameroon minimising the increasing loss of its forest cover. Since the adoption of the Law, the government has engaged in a number of initiatives, including the elaboration of the national land use master plan (Schema National) with a diagnosis of the land use in Cameroon. The government also encouraged the development of regional land use plans, and the first tier of regions earmarked were the most forested, such as the Southwest, the East and South regions. However, due to the ongoing socio-political crisis in the Southwest region, this process is currently stalled. Meanwhile, the process is ongoing for the East and South regions.

2.1.3. The 1996 National Environmental Management Plan and the Environmental Management Framework Law

In 1996, a National Environmental Management Plan was elaborated, following the reform process that began after the Rio conference of 1992. The overall objective of the Plan was to develop policies, strategies and actions for environmental protection and the rational management of resources to contribute to sustainable

¹⁵ Schwartz, B., Hoyle, D. and Nguiffo, S. 2012. Emerging Trends in Land-use conflicts in Cameroon: Overlapping natural resource permits threaten protected areas and foreign direct investment. WWF/CED/RELUFA, Yaounde.

development. The policy identified five priority areas: i) participatory land use management, ii) sustainable management of natural resource, iii) restoration of degraded land and improvement of soil fertility, iv) capacity building and v) concerted management of shared resources at the sub-regional level. Borne out of this policy was Law No. 96/12 (on environmental management) of 5 August 1996.

This is a framework law and provides the basis for different environmental protection mechanisms, such as the EIA regime. The introduction of the EIA was aimed at determining the direct and indirect impact of any project on its ecological balance, the physical environment and the local population of the area where the project is located. Because the establishment of most industrial plantations is subject to an EIA, this Law should help to curb instances of deforestation or degradation, as the establishment of plantations that are destructive to the environment can also affect the wellbeing of the local population.

2.1.4. The land tenure related laws

Land is a fundamental asset for the livelihood of many indigenous people and forest dependent populations in Cameroon. It has also become a key issue underpinning the debate around key commodities, especially palm oil and rubber production, as investors require large expanses of land to establish their plantations. The government of Cameroon, in 1974, elaborated a regulatory framework to govern land tenure in the country. Cameroon's primary land law is ordinances No. 74-1 and 74-2 of 6 July 1974, which classifies land into private property, national lands and public lands. These laws create a system of land tenure based on land registration, and all privately owned land must be registered and titled to retain its character as private land.

In addition to these two foundational laws on land tenure, there is an array of other regulatory texts that deal with specific aspects of land tenure. Some milestone texts include Decree No. 76-166 of 27 April 1976, which establishes the terms and conditions of management of national lands, or Law No. 85-09 of 4 July 1985, which relates to expropriation for public interest and modalities for compensation. Some key elements on the interaction of the different land tenure regulatory instruments to deforestation is the extent to which the 1994 Forest Law treat customary land rights.

The most evoked element in Cameroon's land tenure regime is how it treats customary rights. Some sources argue that the current land tenure regime severely diminishes customary land rights; however, it does not directly extinguish these interests, preferring to achieve this effect by the back door.¹⁶ Section 17 of Ordinance No. 1 of 1974 or the founding land law refers to "customary communities and members thereof" but guarantees them only peaceful occupation and use of lands. Even the guarantee of peaceful occupancy and use is limited to those parts of their lands where "human presence and development is evident". Section 7 of Ordinance No. 2 of 1974 declares that "bona fide owners and occupants of public property may not be dispossessed thereof unless the public interest so requires, and subject to compensation". However, this too is heavily proscribed, requiring 'landowners, customary land holders, farmers and other holders of property interests' to be present at adjudication, "to declare every property that they hold" (Section 9).¹⁷

Also, to curb huge investment on compensation for the acquisition of land by the state for the so called public interest investments, the government resorted to creating land parks commonly called 'les reserves foncier'. This process has taken place in most regions of the country and has seen community lands taken over by the state without any consultations.

2.1.5. The Rural Sector Development Strategy

In 2016, Cameroon elaborated a new Rural Sector Development Strategy to replace the one that was in existence since 2005. The new Strategy was developed to ensure alignment with the government's new economic and development orientations provided in the GESP. The strategy aims to ensure a successful

¹⁶ Wily, L. A. 2011. Whose land is it? The status of Customary land tenure in Cameroon. Centre for Environment and Development/FERN/The Rainforest Foundation UK. Available at <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/exported-pdf/cameroonenginternet.pdf>

¹⁷ The 1974 Land Ordinance in Cameroon, Ordinance No. 2 of 1974. Government of Cameroon.

transition of the rural sector towards green and inclusive growth based on the principles of sustainable development and provide the necessary platform for Cameroon to attain emergence by 2035. The document proposes four strategic axes:

- i. Modernising agriculture, development of production value chains and improving market access for products.
- ii. Developing and modernising rural infrastructures, facilitating access to factors of production, financing and insurance.
- iii. Land use planning, equitable allocation and sustainable management of rural lands and natural resources.
- iv. Encouraging private initiatives, improving governance and the institutional framework, and capacity building of actors.

2.1.6. The National REDD+ Strategy and the NDCs

Due to its great forest potential, Cameroon has been a key player in international climate change discourse and strategy development. Its rainforests alone cover approximately 46.3 % of the national territory and account for 11 % of Congo Basin forests. Cameroon, therefore, has the third largest forest range in the Congo Basin, after DRC and Gabon. As is the case with other countries of the Congo Basin, Cameroon is grappling with the adverse effects of climate change and with the increasing pressure on forests. To tackle these major challenges, the government is committed through its NDC to reduce emissions by 32% by 2035 from its projected baseline of 2010 emissions.¹⁸

The forest sector is expected to contribute significantly to the realisation of this objective. The contribution of the forest sector will be achieved through the country's engagement in the REDD+ process. The government's efforts simultaneously address the three phases of REDD+. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Participants Committee approved Cameroon's Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) in 2013. The R-PP states that the sum of USD 28.911 million is needed to formulate the National REDD+ Strategy, and roughly USD 60 million is needed to implement pilot projects in all agro-ecological zones of the country.

With regards to the Investment and Demonstration Phase of the R-PP, the country has been admitted into the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), making it possible to prepare an investment plan for these initiatives. This plan will serve as the basis for mobilising investments to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation within and outside the forest sector.

To ensure coherence and synergies between developments in FIP, CAFI and the National REDD+ Strategy, the development of the FIP and CAFI investment plans are placed under the supervision of the National REDD+ Coordinator. This allows for the efficient use of human and financial resources and provides a direct link between the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility funded readiness phase and the investment funds, which will lay the groundwork for carbon payments through the Carbon Fund. In terms of performance-based payments (Phase 3), the government submitted an Emission Reduction Project Idea Note to the Carbon Fund. The Emission Reduction Project Idea Note was approved in June 2016, and the development of the Emission Reduction Programme Document is under way.¹⁹ The National REDD+ Strategy was validated on June in 2018.

¹⁸ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. 2017. Mid-Term Progress Report. Republic of Cameroon. Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development. Available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/system/files/documents/Cameroon%20MTR%20-%20final%20for%20posting.pdf>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

2.1.7. FLEGT VPA

The FLEGT VPA is a legally binding trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and a timber-exporting country outside the EU. A VPA aims to ensure that all timber and timber products destined for the EU market from a partner country comply with the laws of that country. It can also be noted that in addition to promoting trade in legal timber, VPAs address the causes of illegality there by improving forest governance and law enforcement. A major strength of VPAs is that they look beyond trade to consider development and environmental issues as well as the effects on local populations.

Between 2007 and 2010, Cameroon and the EU negotiated a VPA to promote trade in legal timber products and improve forest governance. Cameroon and the EU ratified the VPA in 2011 and are now implementing the commitments they made in the Agreement.²⁰ According to the VPA, once Cameroon has implemented a timber legality assurance system and other commitments outlined in the VPA, it will export to the EU only verified legal timber products accompanied by EU FLEGT licences. According to Article 2(c) of the VPA, the agreement intends to create and encourage economic opportunities for resident local communities and local enterprises, and Article 2(e) states that the VPA intends to strengthen the capacities of actors in Cameroon by encouraging the creation of a favourable climate for investment in the sustainable management of forests.

Therefore, it can be seen that Cameroon, in developing and implementing its forest management and logging policies, will have to ensure such policies are in line with the provisions of the EU VPA on timber regulation.

The VPA-FLEGT is the VPA with the EU on FLEGT in timber and wood products. Illegal logging is one of the drivers of deforestation in tropical countries. Conscious of this situation, the EU is committed to eliminating illegal timber from its consumer market. Cameroon, being one of the largest African exporters of hardwoods destined for Europe. On 6 May 2010, Cameroon and the EU signed an VPA-FLEGT.

Through this trade agreement, Cameroon is committed to ensuring that timber marketed within the country and shipped to the EU does not contain any illegal timber. By signing this agreement, Cameroon is committed to implementing a comprehensive programme to advance the forest sector reform process, including strengthening forest sector control. In return, the EU is committed to excluding unauthorised timber from its entire market, while providing technical assistance to Cameroon for the implementation of a legality assurance system and a wood traceability system in Cameroon.

2.2. Regulations and policies related to respect of human rights in Cameroon

The exploitation of natural resources has often been tainted by human rights violations. Cameroon has affirmed in its Constitution preamble its commitment to protect human rights as inscribed in the different international human rights declarations, conventions and treaties duly signed and ratified. It has also affirmed this commitment in the various laws and other regulatory instruments at the national level. For instance, aspects of labour rights as well as the protection of children are treated within the labour code and related regulatory instruments and in the different conventions and treaties ratified by Cameroon.

2.2.1. Labour rights

The respect of labour rights in Cameroon is a right duly inscribed in the constitution of the country. The preamble stipulates the right and obligation to work for all citizens. The provisions of the preamble are made enforceable by the provision of Article 65 of the Constitution, making the preamble an integral part of the constitution.

The Cameroon Labour Code adopted as Law No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992 governs labour relations in Cameroon, especially between employers and employees. It is important to note here that the greatest labour force employed in Cameroon is in the informal sector and especially in agriculture and non-agriculture, which

²⁰ EU FLEGT Facility. 2020. The Cameroon-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement. Available at <http://www.euflegt.efi.int/background-cameroon>

makes up more than 90% of the overall labour force. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the agriculture sector, including the sub-sectors of crop and animal production, forestry and fishing and aquaculture, is a source of livelihood for over 85% of rural people.²¹ There is no doubt that the worst forms of human rights violations, such as working without contracts, occur in these sectors.

The Cameroon Labour Code provides contracts of employment and states that a contract may be concluded for a specified or unspecified duration (Section 25.1). Another serious issue related to labour contracts in Cameroon is the wages paid to workers. According to the International Labour Organization, agricultural workers are considered the poorest of the rural poor, as they receive wages that place them on the bottom rung of the rural poverty ladder and even below the minimum subsistence level.²² The Labour Code provides non-discrimination in wage payment, as it stipulates that “for the same type of work and level of proficiency, workers shall be entitled to the same remuneration, irrespective of their origin, sex, age, status and religion, subject to the provisions of this section” (Section 62.2).

2.2.2. Child protection and child labour in Cameroon

Child protection is a prime concern in Cameroon. One of the government’s priority actions is to address the issue of protection and promotion of the rights of the child. Cameroon has ratified legal instruments protecting children’s rights, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993). Rights of children protected by national laws in Cameroon are affirmed in both the Constitution as well as other national laws, such as Decree no. 2001/041 of 19 February 2001 on compulsory and free education. Other laws related to securing the child’s right to education and well-being include:

- Decree No. 82/412 of 9 September 1982 on the procedure for granting state relief to indigent and needy persons.
- Circular letter No. 80/I/658/MINEDUC/CTD of 18 January 1980 on admission of disabled children and children of disabled parents to public and semi-public institutions.
- Circular letter No. 90/02800/LC/MINASCOF/SG/DRS of 10 December 1990 on provision of aids to needy and disabled persons.
- Act No. 67/LF/7 of 12 June 1967 instituting a family benefits code.

Through the legislative process, Cameroon has also undertaken to prohibit child labour. In 1992, Cameroon adopted a new Labour Code as Law No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992. The Law has a dedicated chapter on employment of women, young persons and children. Section 61 (1) for instance states that “No child shall be employed in an enterprise even as an apprentice before the age of 14 (fourteen) years, except as otherwise authorised by order of the minister in charge of labour, taking account of local conditions and the jobs which the children may be asked to do”. This disposition is complemented by other regulatory texts:

- Decree No. 69/DF/287 of 30 July 1969 on apprenticeship contracts.
- Order No. 16/MTLS/DEGRE of 27 May 1969 on female labour, with an annex listing work prohibited for women and children.
- Order No. 17/MTLS/DEGRE of 27 May 1969 on child labour.

The Law prohibits certain categories of work for children:

- Work that is beyond a child’s strength, such as the transport and handling of goods over a certain weight calculated in relation to the sex and age of the child and the transportation of goods by truck or similar vehicle.

²¹ Yeshanew, S. 2018. Regulating labour and safety standards in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome.

²² ILO. 1996. Agricultural Wage Workers: the Poorest of the Rural Poor. Press release 23 September 1996. Available at https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008067/lang--en/index.htm

- Dangerous or unhealthy work, such as work underground in mines or in quarries or foundries and the manufacture, handling or manipulation of explosives.
- Work harmful to the morals of children, such as the fabrication and sale of written or printed products (posters, drawings, sculptures), which may have an adverse influence on the moral and psychological development of children, even if such work is not prohibited by criminal law.

The Law equally prescribes certain affirmative action measures:

- A ban on night work for women and children as per Article 81 of the Labour Code. The maximum duration of daytime work cannot exceed eight hours, with a compulsory break of at least one hour for children.
- Compulsory rest time of at least 12 consecutive hours.
- Compulsory granting of leave on the basis of two and a half days per month instead of one and a half days for adults.

Criminal penalties are provided for in articles 167, 168 and 190 of the Labour Code against anyone who contravenes the provisions of articles 82, 86 and 90 of that Code concerning, inter alia, children's working conditions.

While it may seem that the current legal dispensation is adequate to cater for the right of children and prevent any such violation either in terms of education or in terms of work, there are reported cases of child labour and forced labour. The one common justification associated with child labour in Cameroon is that it is considered as a cultural norm and often not considered as an abuse. Common forms of child labour according to the US Department of Labor are concentrated in the agriculture and service sectors, including commercial sexual exploitation. In addition to these violations, Cameroon is a source of transit for traffickers.

The Bollore Group, the main shareholder of SOCAPALM, were accused of using child labour in their Oil Palm plantations in Cameroon. Meanwhile, during a discussion at the Accountability Framework Initiative consultations in Cameroon, smallholders argued that working with their children in the farm holdings is not child labour but a means of preparing the children to take over the farms as their parents grow old. Participants at the consultation suggested the need to clarify and differentiate between child work and child labour.

Box 1: Child rights and child labour in Cameroon (sourced from the US Department of Labor 2017 child labour and forced labour reports)

Cameroon is a source, transit and destination country for child trafficking from neighbouring countries in Central and West Africa. Some traffickers have resorted to kidnapping children, as increased public awareness has resulted in fewer parents entrusting their children to intermediaries. Children engaged in cocoa production are exposed to dangerous working conditions, including exposure to pesticides and the use of sharp tools, such as machetes. The non-governmental organisation Child Soldiers International alleged that some officially sanctioned community neighbourhood watch groups, known as vigilance committees, may have used and recruited children as young as 12 in military operations against Boko Haram. Human trafficking provisions remain discordant with international standards, as they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking, and individuals ages 16–18 are not considered children. In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under the age of 18 are not comprehensive, as work underwater or at dangerous heights are not prohibited. However, the government earmarked approximately USD 8,000 for the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to revise the list in 2018. The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labour. However, gaps exist within the operations of Ministry of Labour and Social Security that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labour laws.

2.3. Regulation and policies related to gender and smallholder inclusion

2.3.1. The NGP

From its institutional architecture with a dedicated Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family, there is no doubt that Cameroon is keen to make the issue of gender a core element in its national development policy. To affirm its commitment to this issue, the country has taken part in most international conferences on gender issues, especially the landmark Beijing conference in 1995 with the adoption of the Beijing Action Plan. In 1997, The Cameroon government embarked on the elaboration of a series of normative instruments, including the policy declaration on the Integration of Women in Development, the Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action on Women and Development, and the National Plan of Action on the Integration of Women in Development. All of these documents were approved by the government in 1999.

Cameroon equally signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. These efforts culminated in the elaboration and adoption of the NGP for the period of 2011–2020. The development of this policy aligns with Cameroon’s economic development vision posited in the Vision 2035 document and the GESP. The purpose of the NGP is to contribute to the systematic elimination of inequalities between women and men at all levels. This goal is underpinned by a national gender vision “...where women and men enjoy the same rights and participate in development in an equitable and equal manner”. The NGP has six strategic areas of intervention:

- i. Promote equal access of girls and boys, women and men to education, training and information.
- ii. Improve women’s access to health services, particularly regarding reproductive health.
- iii. Promote equal opportunities for women and men in the economic and employment sectors.
- iv. Promote a favourable socio-cultural environment for the respect of women’s rights.
- v. Enhance women’s participation and representation in public life and decision-making.
- vi. Strengthen the institutional framework for gender promotion.

The NGP has been criticised, as the dynamics that embedded its development do not guarantee its social appropriation and its implementation.²³ If one considers the Policy’s strategic areas of intervention, it is difficult to ascertain which intervention could adequately address the challenges faced by rural women. For instance, the strategy on improving women’s access to health services will have to consider the link between gender and transport, especially rural transport infrastructure. This analysis of linking gender and transport is equally true for the strategy on promoting economic opportunities that consider economic and market access for women.

Another critical element to consider in the analyses of the gender policy environment in Cameroon is its mainstreaming in national processes. Gender equality and women’s rights have not been addressed in the conversation around climate change and REDD+ in Cameroon. The first attempt was through an International Union for Conservation of Nature pro-poor REDD+ project with the development of the Gender and REDD+ Road Map for Cameroon, which expected that both women and men are fully recognised as forest stakeholders. Another aspect that undermines the notion of gender equality relates to land tenure: a construct of a belief system built around customary practices limits women’s security of tenure over land.²⁴ According to Fonjong (2012), land discrimination based on sex is not only an issue of rights but also of economic injustice, which does not promote the fight against poverty at the local and national level. This is so even when considering that

23 Mefire, L.M., Vissandjée, B., and Bibeau, G. 2017. Cameroon and the Gender Issue. *Advances in Anthropology*, 7(1): 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.4236/aa.2017.71004>

24 Fonjong, L., Fombe, L., and Sama-Lang, I. 2013. The paradox of gender discrimination in land ownership and women’s contribution to poverty reduction in Anglophone Cameroon. *GeoJournal*, 78: 575–589. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-012-9452-z>

rural women in Cameroon play a major role in guaranteeing local food security through the production of an estimated 90% of food consumed nationwide.

Cameroon ranked 57 on the 2018 Global Gender Gap Index, demonstrating the country's strong determination to ensure gender equality. However, if Cameroon wants to move up this index ranking, the country needs to fast track its policy reforms, especially on land tenure, and take a renewed commitment to the NGP. Such renewed commitment to the NGP will permit appropriation by all stakeholders.

Box 2: The governance and human rights situation in Cameroon

The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance is a comprehensive statistical tool used to assess African countries' performance in the provision of public goods and services across four pillars: 1) Security and Rule of Law, 2) Participation, Rights and Inclusion, 3) Foundations for Economic Opportunity, and 4) Human Development. In the 2018 report, Cameroon ranked 36 on overall governance performance, with a score of 46.2 out of 100. On Safety and Rule of Law, which includes the rule of law, transparency and accountability, personal safety and national security, the country scored 40.3 out of 100. On Participation and Human Rights, which includes participation, rights and gender, the country ranked 39 out of 100. Sustainable Economic Opportunity encompasses the following elements: public management, business environment, infrastructure and rural sector, and Cameroon scored of 47 out of 100. Its best performance was on Human Development, including elements on welfare, education and health, with a score of 58.2 out of 100. On the World Bank Group Doing Business ranking 2019 report, Cameroon ranked 166 among 190 economies for the ease of doing business. In the 2017 National Resource Governance Institute Resource Governance Index, which assesses how resource-rich countries govern their oil, gas and mineral resources, Cameroon ranked 30 out of the 89 countries assessed and 7th out of the 31 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Cameroon is among the most corrupt countries in West and Central Africa, surpassing Ghana and Nigeria put together. Cameroon is the 152 least corrupt nation out of 175 countries. The crises of widespread human rights violations in the Southwest and Northwest regions have worsened Cameroon's human rights records.

2.3.2 Smallholder inclusion

Cameroon's economic development policy focuses on two key pillars to pivot its economic growth: i) infrastructure and ii) modernising production, which include the harnessing the potential of the rural sector. Agriculture in Cameroon employs more than 70% of the active population, but the sector is characterised by a high informal rate, and thus, actions on inclusion are difficult to ascertain. However, the Cameroon government, in its strategy in the GESP on modernising production, earmarks the promotion of medium- and large-scale farms by facilitating access to farmland and encouraging the creation of farmer cooperatives or common initiative groups. The underpinning elements of these objectives include:

- Provision of "privileged" state support to such rural organisations regarding access to agricultural inputs (fertiliser and seeds in particular) at affordable prices.
- Access to new production techniques through mechanisation, awareness campaigns and agricultural consultancies.
- Access to agricultural credit with the opening of micro-finance establishments and banks interested in this specialised credit line, not excluding the plan to create an agricultural bank.
- Access to markets through better organisation of domestic marketing channels, neighbouring markets and support for the promotion of Cameroon's agricultural produce on the international market.

Both the 2005 and 2016 Rural Sector Development Strategy outline actions to enhance inclusion, without alluding to the notion of inclusion. The 2016 Rural Sector Development Strategy outlines the challenges of the sector and recommends, like in the GESP, the need for restructuring and organising smallholders into groups to render them professional.

In the past, Cameroon has undertaken projects aimed at building competitive value chains and harnessing the potential of inclusion of vulnerable groups involved in agriculture, especially women and youth. One such project was the Rural Microfinance Development Support Project. This International Fund for Agricultural Development funded project aimed to reduce poverty by increasing income and food security for target groups. The specific objectives include improving the enabling environment of the micro-finance sector to address the problems of rural sector financing by facilitating access to financial services for the target groups that are adapted to their needs. To facilitate inclusion of women and youth groups involved in economic activities, especially in the rural areas, the project developed a gender and youth strategy with the purpose of ensuring equitable access of women, men and youth in rural areas to both financial and non-financial products, adapted to their needs, with a view of improving their revenue and living conditions.

The government also implemented a USD 60 million funded World Bank project targeting smallholders and their organisations as direct beneficiaries with the aim of increasing competitiveness on target value chains. The Agriculture Competitiveness Project, in terms of inclusion, had the following components:

- Rehabilitation of rural roads, covering about 500 km of rural roads, with the main purpose of connecting high-potential production areas to markets (sub-component 1.1).
- Support of linkage and coordination between different stakeholders to help them analyse and propose solutions to specific bottlenecks in the development of competitive value chains (sub-component 2.1).

The African Development Bank is currently financing a EUR 115.081 million project to improve the competitiveness of the oil palm, plantain and pineapple value chains, create employment for the youths and increase the incomes of crop sector stakeholders. The Agriculture Value Chain Development Programme will help to eliminate constraints on the competitiveness of the three targeted crop sectors (oil palm, plantain and pineapple). The project plans to engage in infrastructure development through:

- The rehabilitation of 1,000 km of rural roads, linking farming areas to consumption centres.
- The construction of community infrastructure: 30 storage spaces and warehouses, 15 rural markets, 30 Drinking Water Supply systems; extension of low voltage electricity over 30 km.
- Construction and equipment of a quality control laboratory.

On the component of crop sector development, the Project aims to:

- Strengthen farmer organisations: institutional and organisational development, technical guidance, facilitation of interface with suppliers of agricultural services and training.
- Strengthen crop sector development support institutions: support for research in the production of quality seeds and seedlings, and establishment of crop sector development committees with public and private stakeholders.
- Finance value chains: establishment of crop sector development funds to finance various value chain stakeholders.

The Project also has a component on the development of youth agricultural entrepreneurship: seeking to integrate young graduates into the value chains by helping them to create their own businesses. This entails the following:

- Training in incubation centres and support for business development in the areas of agribusiness, production, marketing, processing and management, and business plans.
- Assisting youths in the preparation of requests to secure financing through the credit mechanisms established by the project.

There are also specific projects at the level of the ministries of youth, agriculture, livestock and vocational training to facilitate inclusion, especially of young farmers. The government has also set up specific facilities, including a small- and medium-sized enterprise bank and an agricultural bank. However, the effectiveness of these institutions to facilitate inclusion is still embryonic.

Box 3: Land grab and community rights in Cameroon.

Cameroon is considered to be one of the African countries that is most exposed to land grabbing. The most noted land grab case was that of SG Sustainable Oils Cameroon, a subsidiary of United States based Herakles Farms, which in 2009 acquired a concession of 73,000 ha in the Southwest region for the development of a palm oil plantation. This attribution sparked off national and worldwide condemnation, as the project envisaged the destruction of the rainforests and endangerment of the natural habitats of many animal species, including elephants, chimpanzees, baboons, and other rare monkeys. But more significantly, the project sparked tensions in local communities. In November 2013, the Cameroon government reduced the concession to about 20,000 ha, but this has not reduced the pressure of both national and international non-governmental organisation, as the project is considered to be a “wrong project in a wrong place”. In 2016, 244 farmers filed two court complaints and an international petition, calling upon the Cameroon government to halt the project. Other instances that local civil society organisations have denounced and considered as land grabs include the Biopalm project in Kribi and the Sudcam rubber plantation in the South region.

3. Constraints and opportunities for private sector engagement to the development or implementation of policies and processes related to curbing deforestation

There is no doubt that the different laws, policies, initiatives and processes analysed in this review could be complex and challenging both for the government and private sector aiming to curb deforestation and/or protect human rights. This review provides an opportunity for the private sector to reaffirm its global commitment to engage in removing deforestation from its supply chains and protecting human rights. There are different opportunities that could help the private sector to meet these obligations without necessarily requesting for policy reforms. Cameroon is currently developing its National Forest Stewardship Council Standards for the logging sector and plans to initiate the National Interpretation of the RSPO Principles and Criteria as well as develop a roadmap for deforestation free cocoa. Initiatives like the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, African Palm Oil Initiative, CAFI, and the National REDD+ Strategy provide platforms to drive private sector involvement in eliminating deforestation for the selected commodities presented in this review. There is no doubt that forests hold enormous benefits, not only for people's wellbeing; when protected, they can contribute to enhancing profitability for commodities like cocoa.²⁵ Private sector companies are becoming aware of both the risks and opportunities related to deforestation and have adopted aspirational goals of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, evidenced with commitments of zero deforestation. As of March 2017, there are more than 760 public commitments from about 447 producers, processors, traders, manufacturers and retailers to reduce deforestation from supply chains.²⁶

Such commitments demonstrate the increasing interest of the private sector, and this policy review identifies opportunities for developing robust corporate sustainability strategies within the current regulatory and policy framework that are not in contradiction with laws and policies in place. Take the instances of the NGP, which aims at promoting a favourable socio-cultural environment for the respect of women's rights, or the Labour Law provisions on the prohibition of child labour. This equally relates to the forest and environmental legislations providing opportunities for public consultations, be it through the gazetting of a forest or in the development of environmental and social impact assessment.

There is no doubt that the current policy environment has challenges that may affect an effective private sector engagement in both the process of curbing deforestation or enhancing the respect of human rights; these, however, are situated at the level of implementation.

25 Mullan, K. 2014. "The Value of Forest Ecosystem Services to Developing Economies." CGD Working Paper. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. Available at <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/value-forest-ecosystem-services-developingeconomies-working-paper-379>.

26 Lambin, E.F., et al. 2018. The role of supply-chain initiatives in reducing deforestation. *Nature Climate Change*, 8: 109–116. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-017-0061-1>.

4. Conclusion

This review clearly demonstrates that both government and private sector can achieve targets of curbing deforestation and ensuring effective respect of human rights along the supply chains of the selected commodities.

Some of the notable gaps within the current policy review remain in the non-definition of smallholders, as this may make it difficult for companies to be subjective about who to bring into a programme of inclusion. Another critical element, especially relating to the landscape approach, which is not highlighted in this review, relates to the governance structure in Cameroon, which has limited competence in terms of policy-making, despite being decentralised with sub-national governments (regional and local authorities). The central government maintains supervisory powers and delegates competences as it deems fit and in accordance with the law on decentralisation adopted in 2004. Thus, companies operating at the landscape level will have to assess how to internalise these governance dynamics in their operations.

The review also notes that the civil society organisations at the local, national and international levels have a significant role to play in the governance system towards reducing deforestation and curbing human rights abuse in the value chains of commodities. As local civil societies strengthen their organisation, with the creation of active civil society organisation land observatories, first with the Northwest Regional Land Observatory that inspired and triggered the creation of the South and the Southwest Regional Observatories. These observatories, at provincial and local levels, have strong potential for linking local with national and global advocacy to curb land grabbing and ensure effective land governance. Understanding, recognising and reviving community traditional knowledge and ecological governance systems is equally primordial.

Further, the coherence of operations, policies sector and regulations (e.g. in agriculture, forestry, mining and planning sectors) is something to be addressed.

Annex 1: International legal instruments relevant to biodiversity, gender, labour and child's rights in Cameroon

Key international law instruments to which Cameroon is a party	Date of signature/ratification/ accession by Cameroon
Biodiversity and other key environmental related conventions and treaties	
Convention on Biodiversity Diversity, 5 June 1992	Ratified on 2 October 1994
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 9 May 1992	Ratified on 19 October 1994
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 1992	Ratified on 17 June 1994
The Paris Agreement, 15 December 2015	Ratified on 29 July 2016
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	Signed on 5 June 1981 Ratified on 3 September 1981
Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC, 11 December 1997	Ratified on 28 August 2002
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa	Ratified on 29 May 1997
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 16 September 1987, amended on 29 June 1990	Signed on 8 June 1992
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, 1971, amended in 1982 and 1987	Ratified on March 20, 2006
Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 16 November 1972	Ratified 7 December 1982
Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	Ratified 1 November 1983
The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Signed on 3 September 2002 Ratified 19 December 2005
The International Plant Protection Convention	
Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (10 September 1998 amended in 24 September 2004, 31 October 2008, 24 June 2011, 10 May 2013 and 15 May 2015)	Ratified on 20 May 2002
International Tropical Timber Agreement (18 November 1983, 26 January 1994 and 27 January 2006)	Signed on 3 February 2007 Ratified on 21 August 2009
Treaty on Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa and to establish the Central African Forests Commission, February 2005	Signed 2005
The Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Cooperation and Mutual Support in Conservation of Wild Fauna and Flora (The Lusaka Agreement Task Force), 8 Sep 1994	Ratification not required
Governance and human rights related International treaties and conventions	
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 20 October 2005	Signed on 22 November 2006
United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2000	Ratified on 6 February 2006 Ratified on 14 December 2005
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 17 October 2003	Ratified on 9 October 2012
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979	Signed on 6 June 1983 Ratified on 23 August 1994
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	Ratified on 27 June 1984
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	Ratified on 27 June 1984

Key international law instruments to which Cameroon is a party	Date of signature/ratification/ accession by Cameroon
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 21 December 1965	Signed on 24 June 1971
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 20 November 1989	Signed on 25 September 1990 Ratified on 11 January 1993
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 01 June 1981	Signed on 23 July 1987 Ratified on 20 June 1989
Specific International Conventions related to Labour	
International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention (No. 143) on Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975	Ratified on 4 July 1978
ILO Convention (No. 97) on Migration for Employment, 1949	Ratified on 3 September 1962
ILO Convention (No. 29) concerning Forced Labour or Compulsory Labour, 1930	Ratified on 7 June 1960
ILO Convention (No. 105) on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957	Ratified on 3 September 1962
ILO Convention (No. 138) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973 (specified at 14 years)	Ratified on 13 August 2001
ILO Convention (No. 10) on Minimum Age Agriculture 1921	Ratified on 25 May 1970
ILO Convention (No. 111) concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958	Ratified on 13 May 1988
ILO Convention (No. 100) on Equal Remuneration, 1951	Ratified on 25 May 1970
ILO Convention (No. 98) on Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, 1949	Ratified on 3 September 1962
ILO Convention (No. 87) on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948	Ratified on 7 June 1960
ILO Convention (No. 182) on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999	Ratified on 5 June 2002
ILO Convention (No. 103) on Maternity Protection (Revised), 1952	Ratified on 25 May 1970
ILO Convention (No. 11) on Rights of Association (Agriculture), 1921	Ratified on 7 June 1960
ILO Convention (No. 101) on Holidays with Pay, (1952)	Ratified on 25 May 1970 but, denounced on 7 August 1973
International Conventions Related to the Protection of the Child	
CEDAW, 1979	Signed on 6 June 1983 Ratified on 23 August 1994
Optional Protocol to the CEDAW, 1999	Ratified on 7 January 2005
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2003	Signed on 13 December 2000 Ratified on 6 February 2006
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	Signed on 13 May 1988
"Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa." (The Maputo Protocol	Ratified on 28 December 2012
Minimum Age Convention, 1973	Ratified on 13 August 2001
UNCRC, 1989	Signed on 25 September 1990 Ratified on 11 January 1993
Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on Sex Trafficking, Armed Conflict	Signed on 5 October 2001
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990	Signed on 16 September 1992 Ratified on 5 September 1997
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	Signed on 5 June 2002

Annex 2: Questions and comments raised during the validation of the study

Generally, the participants were very impressed by the work presented in this review. However, we observed that very few people read the draft sent prior to the workshop by the workshop organisers. As such, most questions and comments regarding policy issues were beyond the scope of the study. Nevertheless, some of the comments from the participants concerning policy issues included:

- There is a need for a public-private sector to facilitate coherence in decision-making and implementation of policies, especially in the cocoa sector.
- There needs to be a list of all the international instruments, treaties and conventions related to the study that have been ratified by Cameroon. This list is found in Annex 1 of this report.
- There needs to be a proposal to make sure that the laws are popularised to local communities and workers so they are aware of their rights.
- Even local government authorities at the local levels do not know the laws.
- Even when the laws exist, they are not usually applied because of corruption and negligence.
- There is a need to build capacity of relevant government authorities on the laws and processes on safeguarding workers' rights and the environment.
- The private sector needs to consider labour law and collective agreements or 'conventions collectives'. Most companies do not sign contracts with clients or workers.
- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is very capital, but the private sector has not been involved in the process.
- The private sector initiatives to reduce deforestation is driven by international market commitments rather than by national programmes to reduce deforestation.
- The National REDD+ Strategy is not well known to stakeholders, as they were not or inadequately involved in the strategy elaboration process.
- There is a need for the Cameroon government, precisely the National REDD+ Coordination, to have a clear and robust Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- Private sector and government should work together to harmonise actions carried out by the private sector (driven by international market commitments like zero deforestation along major commodity value chains) and governments' REDD+ programmes (driven by commitments within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).



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