

Gender analysis of the laws and policies that govern the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon



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Introduction

This report presents a gender analysis of the laws and policies guiding the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon. Gender analysis is the study of different roles and responsibilities of men and women; their differentiated access to and control of resources; and their priority needs to better understand and address gender inequalities (FAO, 2011b). This report seeks to determine from a gender perspective the extent to which the laws and policies governing cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon address the different roles of men and women and their access and control of resources so as to bring about gender equality and equity in those commodity sectors. Women's participation and eventual benefits from forest products depends on diverse factors including; intra household power dynamics, cultural norms, laws, policies and regulations (Colfer et al., 2015) that govern the sector. But the differences in gender roles/responsibilities of men and women coupled with the power relations in terms of access to and control over resources, pose a major challenge for women in the production of and benefits from cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber. Therefore, this report aims to valorise and mainstream women in national projects, programmes and policies and enable women and particularly smallholders to enjoy equal opportunities in the above-mentioned sectors. A gender analysis according to March (et al. 2005) is an analysis that explores and highlights the relationships of women and men in society, and the inequalities in those relationships, by asking: Who does what? Who has what? Who decides? How? Who gains? Who loses? When we pose these questions, we also ask: Which men? Which women? Gender analysis breaks down the divide between the private sphere (involving personal relationships) and the public sphere (which deals with relationships in wider society). It looks at how power relations within the household interrelate with those at the international, state, market, and community level.

Background

The goal of this report is to undertake a detailed gender analysis of the policy environment in relation to the cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon. The work primarily entails a desk review and a small number of key informant interviews to be conducted remotely to understand how policies, laws, strategies, initiatives and regulations differently affect women and men, and where the government and private sectors could use existing legislation to improve their work to advance women's rights, or to make recommendations, where the legislation is weak to improve this. Specifically, the report seeks to:

- Unpack and analyse women and men's respective roles and power relationships in the production of cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber and assess their opportunities, barriers and decision-making opportunities.
- Understand how existing policies and laws could be used by government or private sector actors to support the advancement of women's rights and gender equality within the commodity production areas.

Conceptual Frameworks

The Gender Analysis is anchored within the concepts of the Gender and Development (GAD) framework, Smallholders Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Programme in Sub-Saharan Africa for Cameroon (SAPEP) and Agropastoral Council Consolidation and Sustainability Programme (PCPACEFA). This report attempts to define these concepts and highlight the theoretical intersections / nexus among them within the Cameroonian cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains.

Conceptual, Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

The study made use of three frameworks, namely the Harvard analytical framework (also called the gender roles framework), the Moser framework and the gender relations framework.

1. The Harvard analytical framework was used to map out work, the activity profile, and the access and control profile over resources of men and women in the community and in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chain.
2. The Moser framework focuses on gender roles and gender needs assessment and gender disaggregated control of resources and decision-making. It was used to identify the different roles of men and women (productive, reproductive and community) and how this can facilitate or impede the success of women and men in the commodity supply chains.
3. The gender relations framework was adopted to enable understanding of gender dynamics and to establish power relations. Gender relations are the ways in which a society defines rights, responsibilities and identities of men and women in relation to one another. Gender relations are based on power and negotiations.

Methodology

The study takes place in Cameroon and is purely qualitative, focusing on the review and analysis of laws, policies, strategies and regulations that govern the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains. The review and analysis are done from a gender perspective with the aim to ascertain the gender sensitivity or gender blindness/bias of these documents and thus determine how they affect women and men who are involved in the above supply chains. Three women smallholders between the ages of 28 and 50, in the capacity of labourers and landowner, and involved in the cocoa, oil palm and rubber supply chains were interviewed to get in-depth information of their experiences and challenges in the commodity value chains.

Following Hill (2011), the classical gender analysis questions were used to interrogate the laws and policies governing the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon.

They are:

- Who does what? How? Where? When? Why? (Labour);
- Who uses what? How? Where? When? Why? (Access);
- Who controls what? How? Where? When? Why? (Decision-making and control = power);
- Who knows what? How? Where? When? Why? (Information = power);
- Who benefits from what? How? Where? When? Why? (Benefit-sharing);
- Who is included in what? How? Where? When? Why? (Participation) (Hill, 2011).

The above questions fall within the Harvard Analytical Framework and the Moser Framework used in this study.

Women's human rights in Cameroon

According to the Global Fund for Women (2019) women's rights are the fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human being on the planet nearly 70 years ago. These rights include the right to live free from violence, slavery, and discrimination; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn a fair and equal wage.

Women in Cameroon make up 50.5% of the estimated population of 19,406,100 inhabitants according to third General Population and Housing Census results published in 2010 (MINPROFF, 2011). However, despite this numerical advantage, women's rights are not given the attention they deserve. Today, women are among the most disadvantaged, subjugated people. As girls, children or wives, women according to Ngassa (1999:24) are generally regarded as a source of wealth and subject of male domination and exploitation from which they (men) derive material benefit and convenience. That is, women act as housekeepers, cooks, water and wood fetchers, child bearers and nurturers, care providers for sick and old people, providers of extra labour in men's cash crop farms and subsistence food crops for the family, extra income from bride price and, when they are employed, additional income for the family. The traditional African culture and the effects of interplay between foreign cultural, economic, social and political structures are largely responsible for this state of affairs (Tumnde, 1998), which has degenerated to widespread gender-based discrimination as reflected even in the laws, policies, customs and practices, with negative outcomes for women. These include severe inequalities in their ability to access and control resources, which limit their participation in decision-making in governance, from the household to local and national institutions (Daley et al., 2013).

It is important to note that Cameroon is governed by two legal systems inherited from two different colonial powers, Britain and France. When the two Cameroons (British Southern Cameroon and La Republique du Cameroun) joined to form a single state at independence, the country was faced with two legal systems in addition to already existing traditional and customary practices - Civil Law practiced in the French-speaking part and common law, in the English-speaking region (Ateki, 2017). These laws were harmonised in 2007, which entailed revising the Criminal Procedure Code and reforming the Civil Law to develop a civil code applicable to all (Tande, 2007). This notwithstanding, Cameroonian laws have not been generally friendly to women.

The Preamble of the Constitution of Cameroon includes several provisions that enshrine gender equality:

"We the people of Cameroon declare that the state shall guarantee all citizens of either sex the rights and freedom set forth in the preamble of the constitution: the human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights; all shall have the same equal rights and obligations."

But this remains theoretical as many interrogate inequalities faced by women in terms of recognition of rape between husband and wife, protection for unemployed women, pension for widows, the continuation of child marriage, breast ironing, and other issues (Njikem, 2017).

Pertaining to marriage, Article 361 of the Penal Code defines the crime of adultery in favour of men. While a man may be convicted of adultery if the sexual act takes place in his home, a woman may be convicted without respect of venue. Also polygamy in the form of polygyny is permitted by law and customs, which is contradictory to General recommendation No 20, on and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women, whereas polyandry is not (Committee against Torture, 2003).

Furthermore a married woman has the liberty to engage in a different trade or profession other than that of her husband but Article 223 of the Civil Code and Article 75 of the Ordinance of June 1981 gives the husband the power to object to his wife's pursuit of a separate trade or profession, but does not give the woman reciprocal rights (Endeley, 2000; Committee against Torture, 2003). Moreso, the Cameroonian

Penal Code, penalises families that have the financial means to send children to school but do not (Njikem, 2017). However there is no tracking mechanism for girls who are in school. In addition, women continue to be under-represented in decisionmaking processes and positions of responsibility. On average only one in four members of the national parliaments and ministers of the national government is a woman (Djapou, 2018). This lack of opportunity for women to make decisions at the political level has serious implications for the promotion and enjoyment of women's human rights.

Relating to customary practices, the tendency which cuts across the nation is predominantly patriarchal, which fosters gender inequality and male domination. Most of these customs are tantamount to misdemeanors and crimes contrary to natural justice, equity and good conscience. For example the practice of breast ironing or excision (female circumcision, practiced by Ejagham tribes of the Manyu Division), depriving women of part of an essential organ. This constitutes an assault and gross violation of human rights which are contrary to article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and section 277 of the Cameroon Penal Code (Ngassa, 1999).

Nevertheless, there have been some major achievements in the women's rights portfolio in Cameroon. This includes:

- The abolition of legislation that prohibited women from travelling abroad and obtaining a passport without a written permission from their husbands (Galega, and Tumnde, 2000);
- The restoration of women's land rights which has suffered prejudice under the Customary Laws as in the case of the Estate of Chibikom (Zamcho Florence Lum v.Chibikom Peter Fru and Others (Fonjong, 2017).

These achievements have been the results of major international commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Maputo Protocol, the Declaration of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Equality Between Women and Men, and the Sustainable Development Goals. By ratifying these Conventions due to Article 45 of the revised 1996 Constitution, Cameroon incorporated these Conventions into its domestic laws and accorded them priority (Tabe, 2000). Consequently these international and regional commitments take precedence over Cameroon's national laws, customs, and traditions. But unfortunately, the preference for customary law remains, and means that discrimination against women continues in Cameroon, especially in rural areas (Njikem, 2017) which eventually hinders gender equality and women's empowerment.

In conclusion, Cameroon's legislation is enshrined in relevant international, regional, and national legal instruments but this does not necessarily guarantee effective enjoyment of women's rights by women. It is clear that the legal rights that women enjoy are closely linked to the productive and reproductive role they play in society, and their status in relation to man within a patriarchal system.

The extent to which existing laws and policies in Cameroon apply to women's rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains

The agricultural sector in Cameroon plays a strategic role in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. This is often reiterated by the President of Cameroon in speeches especially on the eve of the celebration of National Youth Day, during which he encourages the youth to become involved in agriculture. Cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber are some of Cameroon's key cash crops which are exported. However, the practice of gender inequality in this sector is inhibiting substantial contribution from women which can enhance Cameroon's growth potential (Biseleua and Kumase, 2008).

Pertaining to laws and policies in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains, the following were identified and analysed in this study:

- The Cameroon Labour Code
- Cameroon Forest and Investment Plan
- National REDD+ Strategy
- Climate Change
- Cameroon National Cocoa Plan
- Growth and Employment Strategy Paper
- Law Forestry CMR
- Law Environment and Protection
- National Gender Policy Document

An overview of the above laws and policies expose them as being either gender blind or gender neutral by virtue of the fact that they are fashioned in a generic manner. Every category of human being, irrespective of their, gender, roles, needs, concerns, priorities, experiences, power relationships, opportunities and challenges is lumped together using terminologies like; “Everybody”, “any person”, “Anyone”, “all”, “adult citizen”, “an individual”, “all persons”, “everyone” etc.

All the above laws and policy documents have been analysed from a gender perspective in relation to women’s rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains using the Harvard analytical framework, the Moser Framework and the Gender relations framework.

1. The Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Laws in Cameroon

Title of the Document: Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Law

Type and references of Document: Law/ Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994

Year of entry into force /time frame: 1994

Overview

The Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries regulations LAW No 94/01 of 20 January 1994 provides clear orientation toward sustainable forest management in Cameroon. This law defines forests, wildlife and fisheries giving their ownership to the state, councils, communities and private individuals as the case may be.

In addressing the forestry sector, the law turns a blind eye to the gender differences and inequalities that exist between men and women in society. It does not take into consideration the socio-cultural imposition of the gender division of labour, or gender gaps and inequalities in access to and control over resources. Consequently, these gaps hinder the productivity of women and reduce their contributions in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains. The Harvard Framework matrix 3: Analysis of influencing factors – charts factors that influence gender differences in the activities of men and women and the access to and control of resources for men and women. (ILO, n.d.).

There is continuous and repetitive use of gender neutral language in the provisions of the law.

- Section 7: The State, local councils, village communities and **private individuals** may exercise on their forests and aqua cultural establishments; all the rights that result from ownership, subject to restrictions laid down in the regulations governing land tenure and State lands and by this

law. (page 2)

- Section 8: (1) Within the context of this law, logging or customary right means the right which is recognised as being that of the **local population** to harvest all forest, wild life and fisheries products freely for their personal use, except the protected species. (page 2)
- Section 11: The State shall ensure the protection of the forestry, wildlife and fishery heritage.
- The genetic resources of the national heritage shall belong to the state of Cameroon. **No person** may use them for scientific, commercial or cultural purposes without prior authorisation (page 3)
- Section 39: (1) Private forests shall be forests planted by **natural persons** or corporate bodies on land they acquired in accordance with the laws and regulations in force (page 10)
- Section 41: (1) Any **natural person** or corporate body wishing to carry out forest exploitation activities shall be granted approval under conditions fixed by decree (page 11).

Adopting a “gender neutral” approach in provisions in a law makes the law “gender-blind” with a blind assumption that gender neutrality represents equality. This of course is not true. Gender neutral projects are gender blind and always end up being gender biased as they do not take into consideration the different activities, roles, responsibilities and experiences of men and women which affect their capacities in different ways giving advantages to the former.

The phrases “**no person**”, “**natural person**”, “**anyone**”, “**local population**” are not sex defined and so makes the sex of the person being referred to in the above laws unknown. By doing this, the law is undermining the reality that men and women are different biologically, have different needs, remain highly segregated across and between sectors and across and within jobs and there exist the differences in gender roles/responsibilities heightened by power relations in terms of access and control of resources. This is confirmed in the Harvard analytical framework tool 3 in that legal parameters, some institutional structures, and the dissemination of knowledge may serve as influencing factors for women not to achieve greater equality as men, thus reinforcing their subordinate position. Hence the framework advocates for the removal of institutionalised forms of discrimination such as laws and legal systems which are biased in their approach leading to gender gaps, inequality and inequity.

Additionally, some sections of the law actually use the masculine pronoun “his” when talking about exploitation and contracting.

- Section 46: (1) An exploitation contract shall be an agreement in which the licence-holder is granted the right to collect a specific volume of wood from a forest concession, for the long-term supply of **his** wood-processing industry or industries. The contract shall include specifications, and shall define the rights and obligations of the State and the license-holder.

The above section shows the law to be gender biased. The use of the masculine pronoun completely excludes women as they are not expected by law to be license-holders. This shows that the gender neutral language of “private individual” “natural person”, “anyone” etc. in Sections 7, 39 and 41 above that talks about ‘ownership’ and ‘exploitation’ actually was referring to men only and not to women. Using the Harvard analytical framework Tools 2 and 3 that focus on who has access and control over a resource, and the factors that influence gender differences, this law contributes to gender discrimination by only giving men access and control over timber and other resources.

Furthermore, in relation to exploitation, the law is very vague.

- Section 53: (1) Communal forests shall be exploited by the sale of standing volume, by permit or individual felling authorisation.

- Section 54: Community forests shall be exploited, on behalf of the community concerned, under State management, by the sale of standing volume, by individual authorisation to cut poles or by permit, in accordance with the management plan approved by forestry services (page 14).

It talks about "sale of standing volume", "permit" and "individual felling authorisation" without explaining how these can be achieved in relation to cost, procedure, time etc. From common knowledge, these procedures are usually cumbersome, long and expensive with a lot of bottle-necks. This situation often discourages women who, due to their triple role of production, reproduction and community work, hardly have time and money for such ventures.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women's rights

- This law gives room for individuals and the local population to exploit community forests for their betterment and, if empowered, women can exploit this law to improve their position and production in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains

Challenges in relation to women's rights

- Culture and tradition do not allow women to have equal access and control over community forests which is a major resource for any in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chain.

2. The Cameroon Labour Code

Type and references of Document: Law- Law n°92-007 of 14 August 1992

Year of entry into force /time frame: 1992

Overview

The Cameroon Labour Code is a legal instrument that governs work relations between wage-earners and employers as well as between employers and apprentices under their supervision. It is divided into ten major parts; general provisions, trade unions and employers' association, contracts and employment, wages, conditions of employment, safety and hygiene in the workplace, administrative bodies and measures of implementation, professional institutions, labour disputes, penalties, and special transitional and final provisions. Though the laws seem to favour both men women with the use of generic and homogenous terms, there still exist some lapses. Women in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains who often work under their husbands as unpaid labourers are not covered by the Labour Code.

Section 1 (2) defines a worker as **"any person, irrespective of sex or nationality, who has undertaken to place his services in return for remuneration, under the direction and control of another person, whether an individual or a public or private corporation, considered as the "employer".**

The above definition of worker in such an important national document completely discards women's reproductive work which is mostly unremunerated, and sidelines women doing unpaid work. With reference to tool 1: (activity profile) of the Harvard analytical framework, men and women's work is categorised under productive, reproductive and community work. This tool identifies all relevant productive, reproductive and community tasks and answers the question: who does what? But if work is only defined in monetary terms then the majority of women's work, mostly carried out in the reproductive and community spheres, are not accounted for and not considered as work. Meanwhile such work equally contributes to human development. Besides, most women in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains do unremunerated work in family projects as wives or daughters, and this work disappears in the supply chain since the work is unpaid. The exclusion of women is further confirmed with use of the pronoun "his" which shows that the law is directly talking about men.

On the formation of trade unions, **Section 3** of “the law recognises the right of workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, to set up freely and without prior authorisation (trade unions or employers' associations), associations for the study, defense, promotion and protection of their interests, particularly those of an economic, industrial, commercial or agricultural nature, and for the social, economic, cultural and moral advancement of their members”. However, as women involved in unpaid labour are not recognised as workers, they cannot benefit from this section which should have helped protect and promote their interest in commodity supply chains.

Nevertheless, some sections of the labour law can be seen as seemingly gender sensitive. In relation to night work, section 81 states that “any work done between ten p.m. and six a.m. shall be considered as night work”. In this regard section 82 stipulates rest periods for women and children, and also protects women from hard labour at night.

Section 82:

1. The rest period for women and children shall be not less than 12 (twelve) consecutive hours.
2. Night work in industries shall be prohibited for women and children.
3. This prohibition shall not apply to:
 - a. Women with executive duties;
 - b. Women working in services not involving manual labour.

However, prohibiting only women involved in manual work from night work, likening them to children and restricting women to a minimum of twelve hours of work shows that the Labour Code reduces women to minors who cannot take decisions about their lives. In addition, even though it is clear that women and men have different levels of physical strength, exempting women from work deemed beyond their strength and rather transferring them to more suitable work without any particular criteria/ measurement/instrument to qualify ‘work suitable or beyond the strength’ of women is problematic. This explains why extension workers will hardly target women in cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber as producers in their own right, because such work is attributed to men.

Furthermore, the Labour Code takes care of female wage workers in pregnancy.

Section 84 (1) Any pregnant woman whose condition has been the subject of a medical declaration may terminate her contract without notice and without thereby having to pay the indemnity provided for in Section 36 above (*Section 36 (1)Whenever a contract of employment of unspecified duration is terminated without notice or without the full period of notice being observed, the responsible party shall pay to the other party compensation corresponding to the remuneration including any bonuses and allowances which the worker would have received for the period of notice not observed*). During this period, the employer cannot break the employment contract of the person concerned because of the pregnancy.

Section 84 (2) Every pregnant woman is entitled to 14 (fourteen) weeks of maternity leave starting 4 (four) weeks before the due date of confinement. Such leave may be extended by 6 (six) weeks in case of a duly certified illness resulting either from the pregnancy or confinement. During such leave, the employer shall not terminate the employment contract of the woman in question

Section 84 (5) Apart from the various benefits provided for by legislation in matter of social and family welfare, the woman is entitled, during maternity leave, to a daily allowance, payable by the National Social Insurance Fund and equal to the amount of the wages actually received at the time of suspension of the employment contract; she shall retain the right to benefits in kind.

Section 85 (1) For a period of 15 (fifteen) months following the birth of the child the mother is entitled to nursing breaks.

Section 90 (2) For mothers, the leave is increased by either 2 (two) working days for each child under 6 (six) years of age on the date of the departure on leave who is officially registered and lives in the home, or 1 (one) day only if the mother's accrued leave does not exceed 6 (six) days.

The above sections of the Labour Code largely apply to the rights and protection of women in paid jobs during pregnancy, of which women in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains are not excluded. However, not all women in these sectors are formally employed. Many of them work for themselves or as unpaid labour in family farms and have no choice but work until advanced stages of their pregnancies. These women are not covered by the Labour Code. The provisions above only cover women's practical gender needs (health) which are mostly short term.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women's rights

- Under the Labour Code, women have the opportunity to gain employment in whatever field of work that they can. Section 82 (1) states that "in all agricultural and allied undertakings, the hours of work shall be based on a total of two thousand four hundred hours per year, within the maximum limits of forty-eight hours per week". This can be exploited by women to make sure that their input in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains do not go unrewarded.
- The Labour Code also gives room for the creation of trade unions to address the problems of workers.

Challenges in relation to women's rights

- A revision of the Cameroon Labour Code to equate 'work' with 'energy spent' rather than to remuneration would mean that women's reproductive and community work can be valued.
- The lack of awareness by many women in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains of the existence of the Labour Code.
- The creation of a women-only trade union would address problems in commodity supply chains that are women-specific.

3. Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP)

Type and references of Document: Policy

Year of entry into force /time frame: 2010-2020

Overview

After the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2003 resulted in failure to maintain a stable macroeconomic framework and sustain growth as well poverty reduction, the GESP was developed, as part of Vision 2035, to revise the economic growth and poverty reduction strategy. It is an integrated framework aimed at medium-term sustainable human development for Cameroon and outlines the country's progress towards achieving the MDGs and realising the vision. The GESP comprises seven chapters: review of development policies; vision and goals; growth strategy; employment strategy; state governance and strategic management; macroeconomic and budgetary guidelines and Institutional framework, and the implementation of monitoring mechanisms.

How the GESP applies to women's rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains

The GESP prescribes "better respect for individual rights and civil liberties" and the promotion of gender

equality in areas such as access to education, agriculture, and public administration. This notwithstanding, the GESP is gender neutral. The document uses gender neutral language such as “population”, “all”, “individuals”, “producers” etc., does not make use of sex/gender disaggregated data, and above all, does not capture the perspectives and experiences of women.

According to article 174, the effective implementation of the ICT strategy “should lead to the control of production costs of products and services, thereby significantly reducing rates, to *massive use of ICT by all citizens nationwide...*”(p63). Using the Moser gender role identification and Harvard tool 1 (activity profile) and 2 (Access and control profile) women including those in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains could be left out of this massive use of ICT because more men than women make use of ICT. ICT is culturally seen as a male thing and, as the process of popularisation is not engendered, women will lose out.

The GESP (article 198) intends to promote medium and large-scale farms by facilitating access to farmland; encouraging the creation of groups and instituting synergies of family companies in the form of co-operative societies or Common Initiative Groups (CIGs), with targeted and privileged State support to such rural organisations regarding access to agricultural inputs (fertiliser and seeds in particular), and access to agricultural credit with the opening of micro-finance establishments and banks interested in this specialised credit line” (p67). Considering the patriarchal and very traditional nature of Cameroon and gender division of labour, it will be difficult for women to access farmland, create groups, cooperatives and CIGs to gain this state support. Culture gives men unequal advantage over women in access, control and ownership of land, and it is unclear how the GESP intends to facilitate this access to farmland equitably for women and men. Moreover, having ‘access’ to farmland does not automatically translate to control over the land for women.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women’s rights

- Article 195 states that the government “plans to implement a vast programme to increase agricultural production with the aim of satisfying not only the food needs of the population, but also agribusiness. If women in cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains could come together in their respective fields as Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) they will be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by the GESP.

Challenges in relation to women’s rights

- A major challenge is how to get women in cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains to form CIGs or Cooperatives. This is because women lack confidence in the smooth functioning and management of such organisations.
- Training women in ICT can enable them stay up to date with developments in their sector of activity. However, many women are unable to use ICT due to high rates of illiteracy.

4. Law relating to Environmental Management

Title of the Document: Law relating to Environmental Management

Type and references of Document: Law/ Law No. 96/12 of 5 August 1996

Year of entry into force /time frame: 1996

Overview

The environmental management law No 96/12 of 5 August 1996, like other laws, is a document

deliberated and adopted by the National Assembly of Cameroon and enacted by the President for the protection and the rational management of the environment - the geosphere, the hydrosphere, the atmosphere, their material and immaterial content, as well as the social and cultural aspects they comprise. The law on environmental management is divided into 3 parts made of 12 chapters, comprising definitions, fundamental principles, national environmental management plan, environmental impact assessment, natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, and liabilities and sanctions.

Firstly, general provision (3) mentions the fact that the President of the Republic defines the national environmental policies, and the government shall apply it with the help of decentralised territorial authorities, grassroots communities, and environmental protection associations. Using the access and control profile of the Harvard Analytical Framework to analyse grass roots communities in relation to who has access and control over resources and decision-making, it is seen that women have access to community land and space, but the power and control over decision-making concerning these is in the hands of men. If the application process of this law is not engendered, culture, tradition, traditional gender roles, gender division of labour etc. will automatically exclude women. This will affect any production investment that women do in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains.

Also, the law is not explicit in some definitions. According to 4. d), "sustainable development" shall be a mode of development which aims at meeting the development **needs** of present generations without jeopardising the capacities of future generations.

This definition, though globally used, does not guarantee gender equality and equity. "Needs" here is not explicit. If the law has to ensure equitable sustainable development, it should make sure that it properly covers both the Practical Gender Needs (PGN) and the Strategic Gender Needs (SGN) of women and men according to the Moser framework. This is because experience has shown that whenever "needs" are defined in laws, programmes and projects, they are usually limited to PGN (Moser, 1989).

Furthermore, the law uses gender neutral and sometimes gender biased language in almost all its sections. For example:

4. t) "a polluter" shall be any **private individual** ...

(v)"pollution" shall be any contamination or direct or indirect modification on the environment provoked by any act likely to:

- negatively affect positive use by **man**;
- threaten the health, security and well-being of **man**, the flora, fauna, air, the atmosphere, waters, soils and collective and individual goods;

5. The laws and regulations shall guarantee the right of **everyone** ...

7. (1) **All persons** have the right to be informed on the negative effects of harmful activities on man, health and environment

9. (d) the principle of liability according to which **any person** who, through **his** actions creates conditions likely to

23 (1) ... **persons** ...

43 (1) ... **Any person** ... **the person** ... etc.

Although gender neutral language is sexless, gender specific or gender inclusive language is better in societies that are highly traditional and patriarchal like Cameroon. This is because gender neutral language

in such settings is easily taken to represent the male, like in Article 4 (t) above where “**private individual**” turns out to be “**man**” and article 9 (d) where “**any person**” turned out to be “**his**”. According to the European Union (2018), “language powerfully reflects and influences attitudes, behaviours and perception”.

Article 6 (1) talks of the **sensitisation of the population** about environmental problems. The cultural setting in many traditions in Cameroon separates men and women in public activities. Experience has shown that agricultural and environmental sensitisation in rural communities usually target owners of large farmlands, plantations and mining companies etc. who are mostly men. Despite the fact that women manage natural resources on a daily basis in their various roles as household providers (managing the provision of food and water), farmers, or seafood harvesters, and therefore need unique and critically important knowledge about the environment (FAO 2014; 2013; 2011), they are rarely the target of extension services and sensitisation campaigns. Despite their daily interaction with and dependence on natural resources, they have less control over them than men. Thus sensitisation will remain with the men who are heads of companies which exploit the environment, for example timber companies, heads of farming associations and traditional authorities.

Furthermore, the use of general statements like in 9(e) ‘each citizen shall have access to information on the environment...’ does not specify how the information will be accessed, especially in rural areas where official information is mostly discussed in bars and other public places mostly frequented by men. According to Hafkin (2017), sociocultural obstacles such as customary law, patriarchy and gender stereotyping, limit women’s and girls’ access to and use of information, especially in rural areas. This excludes women from vital information that they need to upgrade their production in agro-forestry supply chains like cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber.

Similarly, article 9(f) states that “the principle of substitution according to which **in the absence of a written general or specific rule of law on environmental protection, the identified customary norm of a given land**, accepted as more efficient for environmental protection shall apply”.

Almost all customary norms in Cameroon are patriarchal, thereby giving more advantages to men in the control of the environment and productive resources like water, forest, land etc. If a customary law of such communities is accepted as environmental law, it is obvious that women will have little or no say in decision-making and control and this will negatively affect them in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains because these are ventures that need the above resources.

Article 72 talks of encouraging the population to participate in environmental protection through “**free access to environment information...**” as well as through “**consultative mechanisms to take stock of the opinion and contributions of the population**”. This provision, like article 6 (1), does not consider the fact that women’s access to information especially in rural areas is very limited. Furthermore, non-gendered consultative mechanisms would only bring forth the voices of men representing the community as women’s reproductive work usually makes them unavailable for public activities, and even when they do participate, some cultures do not allow women to speak in a gathering with men, or to publicly contradict men.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women’s rights

- If women are mobilised and organised, they can take advantage of the opportunities offered by this law to improve on their situation in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains. The law on environmental management supports associations involved in environmental protection carrying out significant activities in this area. It also offers free access to environmental information and consultative mechanisms to take stock of the opinions and contribution of the population, allows the representation of the population within the environmental advisory bodies and the sensitisation, training, research, and education of the

population on environmental issues.

Challenges in relation to women's rights

- Mobilisation and empowerment of women is needed to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered.

5. Cameroon Forest Investment Plan (CFIP)

Type and references of Document: Strategy

Year of entry into force /time frame: 2016-2035

Overview

The Forest Investment Plan is an initiative that seeks to contribute to reducing emissions in the land use and forestry sector; developed in a participatory and collaborative manner with the representation of all stakeholders involved in forest management and practices. The objectives of the CFIP are: to enhance carbon stocks by promoting sustainable forest management practices in wet and dry forests; to encourage low-carbon agriculture; to restore degraded agro-sylvo-pastoral landscapes; to enhance investment in wood energy: to popularise green energies; to promote sustainable mining; to ameliorate land use planning and governance, and to promote eco-tourism.

How CFIP applies to women's rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains

Gender is recognised as an important component in the Forest Investment Plan. It starts by acknowledging the fact that men and women have different roles, priorities and interests regarding forest resources and management and therefore are affected differently by the impacts of climate due to their attachment to those sectors and their different uses of the resources to meet family livelihood needs.

The CFIP also affirms the fact that women have limited access and control of productive resources, especially land; are often restricted from full and effective participation in consultations or decision-making processes related to the natural resources upon which they depend; have limited access and/or control of information, technology and tools; lack access/or control of income-generating forest activities; and receive unequal benefits from natural resource-related activities due to gender blind benefit sharing schemes (CFIP Pg 14).

This largely follows the findings of Harvard tool 3 which dwells on factors that influence and shape gender relations and also determine the different opportunities and constraints for men and women. These factors are far-reaching, broad and interrelated.

Thus the CFIP holds that reducing vulnerability is dependent on overcoming these gender disparities. Consequently, CFIP seeks to reinforce the respect of indigenous peoples and local communities' rights and gender consideration at full scale, particularly women and youth: actions based on understanding the nature and extent of dependence on forests, especially within vulnerable groups, particularly women, and to guarantee the involvement of all stakeholders at every phase and level of the process.

Moreover in identifying and describing drivers of deforestation and degradation and strategic options (p16) the plan identified lack of consideration of the different roles, needs and priorities of men and women regarding forest resources and management and inadequate public resources, legal instruments and their implementation on the field. Coupled with a poor and rapidly growing population, and a lack of coordinated land development and land security especially for rural women and indigenous populations,

the report thereby showed concern for women's interests and rights as recommended by the Moser framework, especially at the levels of practical and strategic needs.

Talking about cross-sectoral options (p49) increasing gender and social equity is mentioned. More precisely CFIP aims at ensuring that the needs and priorities of men and women of different socio-economic groups are identified and addressed throughout the conception, implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases. The gender and social equity focus aims to achieve balanced decision-making, leadership and benefit distribution, while harnessing the strengths and contributions of all members of society to address critical forest conservation challenges.

In addition, there is a vast body of literature on ensuring the active participation and inclusiveness of vulnerable communities such as women and indigenous people in the planning process. For example in the consultation process, among the 700 people consulted, civil society formed 17%, local communities 6%, central and decentralised sectoral public administration 53%, local and elected authorities 4%, representatives of indigenous populations 4%, the private sector 2%, resource persons 3% and women 30% thus enabling substantial consideration of gender issues and specific dimensions of their vulnerability (p39). It also investigates and addresses barriers to women's equal rights and access to natural resource and engagement in decision-making about those resources.

However the CFIP is very generic and not specific. It states that sectors of intervention for the Cameroon's Forest Investment Programme include forestry, agriculture, livestock and energy with the cross-cutting concern for gender and social equity (p16). Within the agricultural sector, which is the core of this work, emphasis is just on developing the production of low-carbon impact agriculture and agricultural intensification projects implemented within the framework of large cropping systems such as cocoa and palm oil plantations, as well as through value chains that take into consideration small-scale farmers (p16&17). Considering the Categories WID/GAD Policy Matrix, the CFIP does not elaborate on issues that govern the cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber supply chains to determine their effectiveness in ensuring that women as well as men participate, influence and benefit equally from the agricultural sector.

The CFIP emphasises the need to ensure the implementation of gender and equity concerns and projects responsive to the unique needs of men and women of varying socio-economic groups, developed in each sector with the needed human resources. This should be end-to-end, from the conception phase through the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. As much as the CFIP takes into consideration the issue of gender and equity as well as the needs of men and women in different socio-economic groups, it ignores the fact that men and women are a heterogeneous group. Using the Harvard Tool 1 (Activity Profile) and 2 (which indicates whether women or men have access to resources, control, who controls their uses and benefits of a household/community), one notices that the CFIP did not consider the above factors in ensuring the implementation of gender and equity. By failing to identify and describe neither the activity profile nor the access and control profile, the approach thus adopts "one-size-fits-all" solutions that overlook the differences and specificities of men and women in cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains.

The participation of women in commodity supply chains is vital in sustainable development but the gender dynamics in the household, along with household power relations and bargaining power within the household is equally important. Consequently any neglect in such gender dynamics (which conforms to Harvard tool 2) in the enforcing of the CFIP may not only pave the way for gender-based inequalities, but will also inhibit supply chain effectiveness and undermine women's contribution within this chain.

In addition, not recognising the different roles allocated to women and men in society affects its evaluation of women's participation in the cocoa, palm oil and timber supply chains. Using the Moser framework, we realise the influence of women's triple roles in the chain is not adequately identified. The reproductive roles of women influence their productivity and affect the efficiency of the supply chain

(March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 2005). The underlying cause of this constraint is the fact that women carry a very heavy work burden. While they might influence the production process, they have little control over the time they allocate to household work, reproductive responsibilities and other productive activities which certainly have an impact on the palm oil, cocoa and timber supply chains. Thus intra-household power relations greatly influence their involvement, engagement, productivity and benefits.

Relating to literature on ensuring the active participation and inclusiveness of vulnerable communities such as women and indigenous people in the planning process, no gender sensitive framework is listed as used to ensure the implementation of the above. Besides, no sex disaggregated data has been given to determine the level of representation of men and women. The Harvard theoretical framework clearly examines the activity profile (Tool1) which illustrates the different activities of men and women in society (who does what and when) to facilitate participation and consultative meetings and ensure it is inclusive (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 2005). The Investment Plan also talks about addressing barriers to women's access to natural resources, yet the Harvard's access and control profile is not used to ensure its effectiveness. Again, the influence of cultural norms and beliefs as influencing factors (Tool 3) advocated by the framework which affects women's participation in commodity value chain is also neglected.

Lastly the CFIP raises the issue of harmonising and bringing policies and laws on land use and management of natural resources in line with each other and with international agreements on gender and social equity (CEDAW, National Gender Policy). This would provide equitable opportunities for poor women and marginalised groups to engage in the supply chain for improved living standards (p58&59), which largely applies to women's rights and gender equality. But, this can only be made possible if the gender dynamics within the household and power relations are taken into consideration. As illustrated above, power and agency has a lot to play in women's participation in the supply chain. Intra-household power relations greatly influence their involvement, engagement, productivity and benefits.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women's rights

- The CFIP should be modified in relation to gender dynamics in the household, as this will allow women to contribute and effectively participate in the supply chains of cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber.
- The CFIP emphasises the need to ensure the implementation of gender and equity concerns and projects responsive to the unique needs of men and women of varying socio-economic groups, developed in each sector with the needed human resources.

Challenges in relation to women's rights within these sectors

- There is an urgent need to employ gender sensitive frameworks to ensure the promotion of gender equality and equity in the CFIP.
- A sex disaggregated needs assessment should be completed to ensure that CFIP is gender responsive

6. REDD+ National Strategy

The main objective of the REDD+ national strategy is to elaborate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emanating from deforestation and forest degradation, increase removals via conservation, increase in forest carbon, and sustainable management of forests within the framework of sustainable development. To tackle the challenges of climate change in Cameroon, engagement of the forest sector is imperative, and the contribution of the forest will be achieved through the country's engagement in the REDD+ process. The government's efforts are simultaneously addressing the three

phases of REDD+: Readiness phase, the Investment and Demonstration phase and Performance-based Payments phase. CFIP is framed with implementing the REDD+ national strategy in mind.

It is worth noting that the investment approach proposed in CFIP is based on integrated REDD+ programmes, comprising cross-cutting and sectoral interventions to increase productivity and sustainability of specific production chains. Intervention programmes are at sub-national level and aim to address specific drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the five agro-ecological regions.

How the REDD+ National Strategy applies to women's rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains

The REDD+ National Strategy applies to women's right and gender equality as reflected in its principles (p36 &37) related to the implementation of the REDD+ national strategy namely:

- The respect of indigenous peoples and local communities' rights and gender consideration at full scale, particularly women and youth;
- The acknowledgement and integration of traditional values and practices in drafting and implementing REDD+ activities;
- Actions based on understanding the nature and extent of dependence on the forests; especially within vulnerable groups, particularly women and IPs;
- The fair and transparent distribution of advantages and responsibilities, both vertically and horizontally, while paying particular attention to vulnerable groups;
- The guarantee of rights and access to information regarding the process and outcomes of REDD+, including information on the positive and negative impact on the environment and local communities' livelihoods;
- The guarantee of the involvement of every stakeholder (sectoral administrations, civil society organisations, the private sector, indigenous peoples, gender oriented and other target groups) at every phase and level of the process.

These principles address factors of marginalisation and vulnerability, strengthen inclusive leadership, decision-making and benefit sharing, while harnessing the strengths and contributions of all members of society to address critical forest conservation challenges. However no gender sensitive framework or criteria was mentioned in ensuring that these principles affect women positively in terms of actions, distribution and information. Consequently women, and particularly women involved in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains, are likely to be ignored.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women's rights

- REDD+ guarantees the involvement of every stakeholder. Women in cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber can take advantage of this guarantee to prove their dependence on the forest so that they will not be excluded from projects.
- The REDD+ policy of gender consideration is a wonderful entry point for women in the cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber supply chains.

Challenges in relation to women's rights within these sectors

- Transforming these principles to real actions

7. The Cameroon National Gender Policy

Title of the Document: Cameroon Nation Gender Policy Document

Type and references of Document: Policy

Year of entry into force /time frame: 2011 – 2020

Overview

In 2011 the Government of Cameroon published a National Gender Policy (NGP) that runs up to 2020. This document, which was produced with the participation of interested civil society organisations and development partners, is supposed to plan, guide and ensure consistency in “Government and other stakeholders’ actions in favour of gender equality and equity in all sectors of national development”. This Policy Document, according to the government, “is intended for all stakeholders, notably government ministries, public and semipublic organisations, the private sector, civil society organisations and development partners, whose assistance and various support will further facilitate the process of achieving gender equality and equity, and hence the sustainable development” of Cameroon. The Cameroon National Gender Policy is divided into four parts namely: The General Context, Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Cameroon, Basis of The National Gender Policy and Institutional Framework and Implementation Mechanisms.

How the Cameroon National Gender Policy applies to women’s rights and gender equality in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains

The policy is in favour of women’s rights and gender equality in all sectors including agriculture. Relating to agricultural cash products and cocoa in particular, the policy acknowledges that women are engaged in cash crop farming and they face enormous difficulties including access to land and land ownership, agricultural inputs, financial resources (credit, subsidies, grants etc.) and modern agricultural techniques (p39).

Nonetheless the extent to which women are involved in cash crop agriculture is not mentioned. Also using the Moser framework, the various roles women play in cash crop production is not identified. Moreover, using Harvard tool 2: access and control profile, one realises that the policy fails to articulate whether women in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains actually control their resources or even benefit from these resources.

8. The Cameroon National Cocoa Plan

Title of the Document: Cameroon National Cocoa Plan

Type and references of Document: Plan

Year of entry into force /time frame: N.D

Overview of the Plan

The Cameroon National Cocoa Plan maps out the progress and implementation of the global cocoa agenda.

The plan has as global objectives to;

- identify and agree on main fundamentals of a sustainable cocoa economy,
- enhance professionalisation of players especially farmers and their organisations,

- transforming cocoa farming into veritable agribusinesses,
- appropriation of the cocoa economy by national private sector operators along the entire value chain,
- improve quality with a view to repositioning the “Cameroon Origin” on the international market,
- reinforce the Public-Private partnership for better coordination and creating synergies in the sector, and
- attract a new breed of cocoa farmers.

The Cameroon National Cocoa Plan developed a six-phase process for the sustainability of the plan. There was a document review of existing reports on sector performance by the secretariat of the Special Coordination Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office, the designation of focal points within relevant ministries and private sector organisations, terms of reference of innovations supplied to focal points for input and contributions, receipt of inputs and hosting of first plenary and production of interim report, the pre-validation of the interim report by the Special Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office and the finalised report submitted to government in July 2014. The plan further presents the achievement of the cocoa sector as; rehabilitation and construction of cocoa driers, progressive return to price stabilisation and creation of a commodity exchange for internal marketing which at the time was under creation, improvement of internal marketing, market information system, rehabilitation/creation of seed gardens for the production of high yielding planting material, and Public Private Partnership Platform -PPPP which was also under creation.

How the Cameroon National Cocoa Plan applies to women’s rights and gender equality in the cocoa supply chain

The Cameroon National Cocoa plan which is supposedly a gender neutral plan, is not only gender blind but also gender biased.

From the challenges identified, through the objectives of the plan to the process for sustainability and noting achievements, there is no consideration of gender. There is no consideration of the fact that women and men have different biological and socially constructed roles and responsibilities that influence access and control over resources and decision-making as articulated by the Moser and Harvard frameworks. There is either a blind assumption that the cocoa sector has a level playing field for all its actors, or that women are not part of the sector. No mention is made of how the different segments of the population, especially women, are faring in the sector. The activities specifically targeted in the supply chain have to do with distribution of seeds and fertilisers, disease and pest control, extension and capacity building, quality and transformation. These activities if not interrogated by gender will bypass women involved in the sector as cash crop farming is culturally a male domain. Even the list of government ministerial partners does not include the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family which is the machinery for the improvement of the status of women.

Key Policy Opportunities in relation to women’s rights within these sectors;

- The distribution of seeds, fertilisers and, extension and capacity building could be exploited by women cocoa farmers to improve on their situation in the cocoa supply chain.

Challenges in relation to women’s rights

- To get women in the cocoa supply chain organised so they can request training and capacity building

Interviews

Three women smallholders in the cocoa and palm oil supply chains were interviewed (one in cocoa and two in palm oil). These women were identified through quarter heads in a farming community and purposefully selected by virtue of their involvement and experience in cocoa and palm activity. All three women were married with two of them between the ages of 40-50 years and the third under 30 years old. All three women had at most secondary education and none of them belonged to any association, cooperative or Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). While the women involved in palm oil production had been in this sector for more than a decade, the woman engaged in cocoa production had been in the activity for seven years. The women dealing with palm oil cultivated on family and government land respectively, while the woman cultivating cocoa worked on a private plot she personally had bought. Those engaged in palm oil production said they were in it because it was less expensive to manage compared to cocoa, but the reason the woman engaged in cocoa production gave was that she was attracted by the high profit margin.

Key informants involved in palm oil production

1. The first woman interviewed, who was involved in palm oil, reported that it was a family farm where she works with her husband. She revealed that “our first product was cocoa, but it was very expensive to manage since we had to buy chemicals to spray the product, so we had to switch to palm oil production. We harvested some few young palm trees from the CDC palm farm and planted them inside the cocoa farm and they did well. It motivated us to plant more”. The farm they are working on is owned by the government. In relation to activities in the palm oil supply chain, she said that she is involved in almost all stages; from the nursery, through the separation of male and female seeds, to planting of palms. Her husband and children do the harvesting and then she gets involved again by picking the nuts, then boiling and manual milling to extract the oil. She is also involved in boiling the oil to get rid of water. After that is done, she explained that it is poured into drums ready for marketing. She is the one mostly involved in the marketing in the local market, but she gives all the money to her husband for family upkeep and children’s fees.

A major challenge that she reported is farm-to-market transportation. The roads are very bad and she has to cover long distances on foot to get the oil to the market. She confessed to not knowing of any law or policy that governs the palm oil industry, neither does she belong to a cooperative.

2. The second woman interviewed, like the first, is involved in the palm oil supply chain. She is also working on a family farm which the husband owned before getting married to her. They employ labour for harvesting but she is involved in picking, boiling, milling and marketing. However, all her money goes to her husband who decides on how much he gives her for the upkeep of the family. She too does not belong to a cooperative or NGO.

Her major difficulty is that the work is too much. Since her children are still young she has to do most of the work. Sometimes she spends about three days in the bush before coming back home coupled with housework and children. Another serious problem is transportation of the finished product to market.

Key informant involved in cocoa production

3. The third woman has a cocoa farm. She has seven children and a household of ten and has been involved in the cocoa supply chain for seven years. She says she was motivated to get into the cocoa business because “I saw some of my friends planting and harvesting cocoa and making money so I was motivated to start my own farm. It was not easy at the beginning because I didn’t have land. I had to save and borrow money to buy land”. She does most of the work in the supply chain by herself. “I made a

nursery of cocoa and then I transplanted in the farm. I use chemicals to treat the plant so that I will have good fruits” she said. “I do chemical weeding or weed with my hands. When the cocoa is ready, I harvest with my children, and some hired hands break the pods and put them inside bags for six days for them to ferment” she continued. She further said that “considering that I do not have an oven, we dry under the sun, but during the rainy season I take it to neighbours who have ovens to dry”. She produces about six bags of cocoa monthly during the cocoa season and confessed that it is actually difficult to calculate profit because after sales they pay those they hired.

As with the other two women, she reported that “I do the marketing but I give all the income earned to my husband who decides what to do with it”. Responding to whether she is satisfied or not the woman said “I should say I am satisfied. I don’t have a choice; it is my own means to generate income that takes care of the children”. As regards challenges she said that “I face a lot of difficulties; presently I have chest pain because of too much hard work. I spend most of my time on the farm; I sleep in the farm house for days to do work on the farm. It is too difficult for a woman, because I have to carry the cocoa on my back using a basket to transport it to the house since there is no means of transportation from the farm. I also wish I had the help of chemicals”. She does not know of any laws or policies that govern the cocoa sector but wishes that the “government could provide us with good farm-to-market roads to facilitate transportation of the crop from the farm, and also supply us with new seedlings to replace the old ones”.

Analysis of Interviews

From the above findings, women were involved in almost all the phases of the production process except for the last phase which has to do with control of profits. Even the woman who owned land could not control profits made from produce from her land. This clearly articulates the magnitude of power relations in the household. Women by custom are expected to carry out reproductive and productive roles which demands intense labour and time, and women in the agriculture sector are not exempted. But using tool 2 (Access and control profile), men predominantly enjoy access and control of benefits even in cases where women own a factor of production such as land. This imbalance is largely compounded by women’s limited education, discriminatory gender norms and cultural beliefs and a lack of awareness of their human rights. Thus, the influence of power relations which starts at the reproductive sphere is systematically connected to the productive sphere, where the women are disadvantaged.

Specific recommendations on bridging the identified gaps which would serve as pointers to government, businesses and companies working on women’s rights and gender equality in Cameroon.

- It is imperative to organise gender sensitive training seminars for local stake holders like chiefs, notables, forestry workers, agriculture extension workers etc. on the importance of women’s rights especially in the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains.
- The Cameroon Labour Code has to be reviewed so as to redefine “work” to cover all forms of work and not only remunerated work. This will give women’s unpaid work the value it deserves and women doing unpaid labour can also benefit from the provisions therein.
- In a patriarchal and traditional society like Cameroon, it is important that gender sensitive language is used in laws and policies rather than gender neutral or even biased language.
- The laws and policies governing cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and timber supply chains should be made readily available and accessible to all, especially women, so that they can know of their existence and benefit from their provisions.
- The labour code should allow and encourage women labourers to create a women-only trade union to address problems in their different professions and services that are women-specific.
- There should be capacity training for women to enable them to take advantage of opportunities

offered by the different laws and policies.

- There is an urgent need to employ gender sensitive frameworks in the implementation of laws and policies to ensure the promotion of gender equality and equity.
- There is a need to do a gender disaggregated needs assessment to ensure that projects are gender responsive.

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Annex

Questions from the participants of the Douala Workshop

- What is the meaning of gender?
- Why use western tools to evaluate policy documents in Cameroon?
- What are the practical actions that can be adopted in reviewing the laws and policies?

Inputs from the participants of the Douala Workshop

The major input was the recommendations where participants indicated the need to include industrial sectors to the list of actors to be sensitised on the importance of women's rights, especially in commodity supply chains.

Other inputs focused on general gender discrimination against women and traditional stereotypes which affects women's lives, which was not in the scope of the study. However such inputs like the provision of increased time to enable women to access information, since stereotypes do not permit them do so by the same methods as men, was a laudable input to improve women's participation in any sector.



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